

Community Service Handbook

Academy of American Studies



September 2011

COMMUNITY SERVICE Overview and Requirements

Community Service and Volunteerism are significant aspects of the college application and scholarship process therefore, the Academy of American Studies as a college preparatory high school, requires all 10th, 11th, and 12th graders to complete a minimum community service hour requirement.

Students will benefit from the opportunity to make meaningful connections and enrich the lives of others by providing service for individuals or public organizations for the benefit of the community. Service should be performed outside of school hours unless under the supervision of a staff member. Service credit can be awarded to active members of student organizations and teams.

The Academy of American Studies Community Service Requirement will be documented on the student's Final Report Card and Official High School Transcript.

Successful completion of all three year grade requirements will be necessary for a student to earn the Academy Honors Endorsement on their diploma.

The Criteria:

1. Students are required to complete a minimum number of service hours per year between their sophomore and senior year.
 - 10th Grade Minimum Requirement = 20 hours
 - 11th Grade Minimum Requirement = 35 hours
 - 12th Grade Minimum Requirement = 45 hours
 - The above hours are minimums and all students should remember that quality service is more valuable than quantity of hours.
 - Honor Society Community Service Requirement: Grade requirement plus an additional 25 hours
 - Students who complete more than 50 or 100 hours will be recognized at the annual Academic Awards Night in June of each school year.
2. A community service class and grade will appear on your final report card and transcript.
3. All community service must be performed without monetary reward, however, just because you work for free, does not mean it is community service. If you work for a private business, or a doctor's office—you are not performing community service. To be sure your hours will count, work for NON-PROFIT organizations. Places like the YMCA or senior-citizen homes are ideal.
4. The service hours cannot be performed for a family member unless pre-approved by the Mr. Randle.
5. As a standard, the community service should benefit at least one person other than the student or the student's relative(s).
6. Students may select their own sites/activity using the list provided in the Community Service handbook or they may seek approval for an alternative site/activity from Mr. Randle.
7. Students may earn community service hours performed with a club and/or school sports team. To earn the credit you must have personally put in the hours and your advisor/coach must verify your contribution and performance to the community service project. Students can only earn up to ten hours of community service through their club and/or school sports team participation.
8. You must have signatures on the Community Service grids verifying the exact hours and dates which you volunteered. If you misplace your grid, you will find new ones in the information center outside of Room 451 or the Student Activities Office in the South building.

9. Students who perform 100 or more hours for any organization or individual must submit a letter of documentation/recommendation from the sponsor of the community service activity.
10. Performing religious activities, like singing in a church choir, do not count for community service credit. For specific inquiries about this criteria, speak with Mr. Randle.
11. With the exception of the 12th graders with special programs, community service may not be completed during school hours.
12. Upon completion of their volunteer work, students will write a two page reflection describing their experience. You must include photos to document your service as part of your reflection paper. See Mr. Randle for specific guidelines. Reflections and community service grids will be due to Mr. Randle in the Student Activities Office between May 15th and May 30th.
14. If you have any questions, please see Mr. Randle BEFORE you begin the community service. It is better to find out your service would not count—before you start it!
15. If you volunteer on a regular basis for an organization or charity, make sure to get a letter of recommendation as documentation of your service.
16. Community Service that is performed in June, July, and August will count towards your requirements for the upcoming school year.

“Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing”-T. Roosevelt

Ideas to Get You Started!

Connecting through volunteer service is a powerful tool for bringing people together and solving many problems that face our communities. Volunteer service helps young people and the adults with whom they work create a far better future for all of us. In addition, nothing can compare with the feeling you’ll get from making a positive difference in someone’s life, including your own.

You can begin with a short-term service activity or perhaps a more long-term commitment. Whether you start small or large, every effort has impact and everyone’s effort is needed.

Here are some ideas to help get started:

- Contact a service organization in your community that has volunteer opportunities. They’ll help you get involved. (A suggested listing of organizations is provided for you in this handbook.)
- Tutor a student in reading or math skills.
- Coach a youth sports team.
- Sign up to be a Peer- Tutor
- Participate in the many community service events and fundraisers sponsored by the Academy’s Student Government and many other Academy Clubs.

Other Ways You Can Help

Help People in Need

- Prepare and serve meals for the homeless.
- Sort food/clothes at a social service agency.
- Help build shelves and fill them for a local food bank.
- Collect clothing for the homeless.
- Put together “care boxes” for families or military personnel in need.

Provide Assistance for Senior Citizens

- Organize grocery shopping trips for the elderly in your neighborhood or building.
- Perform household chores for an elderly or homebound person.
- Do yard work for elderly citizens.
- Help decorate a hospice or nursing home.

Improve the Community

- Help paint a community building that is in need of improvement.
- Clean up a neighborhood recreation area.

Community Service Opportunities

The following is a list of community service sites which are pre-approved for Academy of American Studies students to complete their service hours at.

Contact the organization, call or email the volunteer coordinator. Explain that you are an Academy of American Studies high school student and that you are looking for opportunities to provide community service. Ask whoever answers the phone to refer you to the person or persons who could direct you to a service activity for volunteers.

REMEMBER: You are NOT limited to the sites on the list. You may gain approval from Mr. Randle for a different community service experience.

- 1) There are many ways to earn service hours within our local school. Contact your neighborhood elementary school or junior high school to find out what opportunities are available for tutors and classroom assistance.
- 2) You will find the Queens Public Library branches welcoming to students who will make long-term commitments to volunteer and perform numerous activities.
- 3) Hospitals, Nursing Homes, and Food Banks are ideal locations for community service projects.
- 4) Charitable organizations such as the American Cancer Society or American Red Cross are approved sites for community service.
- 5) YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Community Centers are sites that offer numerous community service opportunities.

Recommended Sites and Organizations for Community Service Opportunities

- 1) Queens Boulevard Extended Care Facility (Nursing Home)- 61-11 Queens Boulevard, Woodside, NY (718) 205-0287 Contact: Linda Newby
- 2) Variety Boys and Girls Club of Long Island City- 112 30th Rd, LIC, NY 11102 (718) 728-0946
- 3) Sunnyside Community Center - 43-31 39th Street, Sunnyside, NY call (718) 784-6173, ext. 401
- 4) American Cancer Society- 19 West 56th Street- NY, NY (212) 741-1790
- 5) American Cancer Society- Queens Office- 97-77 Queens Blvd., Suite 1110 Rego Park, NY 11374
- 6) Ronald McDonald House- www.rmhc.org
- 7) The Bowery Mission- 152 Madison Avenue 1-800-871-6347
- 8) Central Park Conservancy- www.centralparknyc.org
- 9) Children's Museum of Manhattan – 212 West 83rd Street - (212) 721-1223 ext 256
- 10) City Meals on Wheels- 355 Lexington Avenue (212) 687-1234 (16 years or older only)
www.citymeals.org/volunteer
- 11) Goodwill Industries- Astoria- (718) 728-5400 or (718) 545-8875
- 12) Alley Pond Environmental Center – www.alleypond.com
- 13) Future Voters of America – www.futurevotersofamerica.org
- 14) Korean American Family Service Center(Youth Community Project Team) www.kafsc.org

HELPFUL WEBSITES THAT ARE UPDATED REGULARLY WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

<http://www.nycservice.org/> *NYC Service is a database of community service projects sorted by zip code*

www.dosomething.org/volunteer *Do Something Organization*

www.volunteernyc.org *The Mayor's Volunteer Center in partnership with United Way of NYC*

<http://www.voa-gny.org/> *Volunteers of America- Greater New York*

www.kidsforcommunity.org *Database of student-friendly community service opportunities*

www.nycares.org/volunteer/youth_service *New York Cares Organization*

www.servenet.org *Database of community service projects sorted by zip code*

www.ysa.org *Youth Service America contains information about the annual National Youth Service Day*

A NOTE ABOUT STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES WHILE PERFORMING COMMUNITY SERVICE

Remember that as a student of the Academy of American Studies, you should at all times represent the school with a positive, professional, and cooperative attitude. The connections that you make during these community service projects can open doors for greater opportunities and rewards later on. Any inappropriate conduct while performing community service will be subject to disciplinary action.

YEAR END REFLECTIONS

You will submit your hours chart with a reflection about your community service experience. This should be a reflective writing piece. Reflect on what you did; where you did this; who benefited from it; what you learned; what you experienced and what impact did it have on you? Include a description of the best parts of your service experience.

Upon completion, submit your log of community service hours and your reflection essay to Mr. Randle in the Student Activities Office.