

Dear 8th Grade Families,

The class of 2017 has been participating in the SFX Service Program since 2nd grade. Over the course of these years, they have been exposed to many different service themes and participated in various acts of charity. **Acts of charity** are good works directed toward meeting the immediate needs of others.

In eighth grade, the service theme is social justice. **Social Justice** involves good works directed towards eliminating injustice. It is not simply doing the good works, but *questioning* the policies and choices, as well as naming the root causes of social injustice. It is important to keep in mind that social justice applies to everybody. According to our shared beliefs, all persons, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, possessions, race, religion, etc. are to be treated equally and without prejudice.

As they prepare to move on to high school, our goal is for St. Francis students to graduate with a genuine desire to do acts of charity and a passion to eliminate injustices through social action. **With this in mind, the Service Program and 8th grade teachers have collaborated to create an 8th Grade Culminating Service Project.** The project, which is in its second year, will allow each student to focus on an area of service that interests them and to consider how they can continue working within their chosen theme after leaving St. Francis.

Below you'll find an overview of some of the activities and accompanying due dates that are involved with this project.

September 20: Introduction to 8th Grade Service Project

October 6: Theme & service action plan due

November 9: Preliminary project idea due

December 14: Service experience completed & handed in to Ms. Miller (this will count towards the 5 hours that are required in the first half of the year)

December 14-22: Presentation Week

8th Grade Service Project 2016-2017

Schedule:

- September 20th - Project Introduction
 - October 6th - Theme and Parent Signature
 - November 9th - Presentation Format chosen and Saint selected
 - December 14th - Projects due
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- December 14th - 22nd - Presentation Week

Great sites for general ideas:

- St. Francis Parish Bulletin - specifically the Family Ministry listings and the All Parish Service Day
- The LeaderShop - go to www.leadershop.org for ideas

Environment:

- Collect batteries, computers, cell phones, etc. from neighbors and take them to Best Buy or Whole Foods for recycling
- Contact a Forest Preserve to help thin out invasive species

Older Friends:

- Contact a local nursing home and ask about volunteer opportunities
- Make a few no-sew fleece lap blankets and donate them to a nursing home. Directions for fleece lap blankets can be found online.
- Call a local nursing home to see if it would be okay to donate craft projects. If so, create holiday-themed table toppers or door hangers and deliver them in person.

Education:

- Collect books from neighbors and donate them to your local library so they can sell them for a small profit
- Volunteer at a Big Shoulders Give Back day
Big Shoulders is a Catholic organization that does many things, among them clean and renovate Catholic schools. See the Big Shoulders website to RSVP and for more information.
- Volunteer at a local your library

Poverty:

- Go to www.bedspluscare.org to see if there is something you can do for BEDS. Contact them for other opportunities besides what was on the service sign up sheet.
- Go to the Community Nurse Association website at www.communitynurse.org/volunteer/ to see what opportunities are available to help out. One time shifts at the Carousel and Corner Shops are available, as well as helping with the Christmas program.

Hunger:

- Go to www.bedspluscare.org to see if there is something you can do for BEDS. Contact them for other opportunities besides what was on the service sign up sheet.
- Serve lunch on Saturday at the First Congregational Church of LG
Their Saturday Meal Program runs every Saturday from 11-1:30. Go to www.fcclg.org to register. They will take 4 students (must also have one adult accompany & stay) at a time. Sessions book quickly!

- Volunteer at Feed My Starving Children or Greater Chicago Food Depository
- Serve dinner at Franciscan Outreach (1645 W. LeMoyné)
Dinner is served here from 4:30-7. To reserve a date to work at Franciscan Outreach, go to www.franoutreach.org and go to Short Shift Volunteer Program
- Participate in this year's CROP Hunger Walk, which is held in the fall. Watch the SFX bulletin for details.

Veterans

- Contact a VFW or American Legion for volunteer opportunities or to help out with Veterans' Day events
- Contact Hines VA Hospital to see if they have volunteer needs
- Make care packages for veterans in the hospital
- Send care packages to veterans overseas
- Welcome Honor Flight veterans home at Midway Airport after their trip to DC.
- Make a few new-sew fleece lap blankets using patriotic-themed fleece and deliver them to Hines VA Hospital.

Ability Awareness

- Contact Aspire at www.aspireofillinois.org for volunteer opportunities
- Contact SEASPAR at www.seaspar.org for volunteer opportunities. More opportunities will also be communicated to students after 6th grade SEASPAR sign ups are complete.
- Volunteer with Helping Hand at one of their events.
- Contact SPRED at St. Francis Parish and see if you can help them out in any way.
- Help with Challenger Baseball

8th Grade Service Project Q & A

Where can I get ideas for where to complete my service?

A list of ideas is attached and you can also take part in the SFX Parish Service Day. These are just a starting point – feel free to find additional organizations to partner with if you'd like.

What types of service experiences "count" towards this project?

This should be decided between you and your parents, based on which service theme you'd like to focus on. It should be something meaningful to you that will lend itself to creating a project and presentation based on the experience you have.

How long do I have to volunteer for an organization in order for it to count towards my project?

There is no minimum or maximum amount of time you have to spend volunteering – every experience will be different. Focus instead on having a meaningful experience and making the most of your time helping others.

Can I conduct a collection for an organization?

Students are encouraged to DO something rather than collect something; however, if you are compelled to collect items for an organization as part of your service experience, that is allowed. Please note: NO ITEMS can be collected through school or stored at school. In addition, you will not be allowed to sell items at school to collect money for an organization.

Can I complete my service experience with friends?

Yes. If a group of classmates chooses the same theme and wants to do the same activity that is fine. However, each student will do his / her own project and presentation next fall.

8th Grade Service Project 2016 – 2017 School Year

Name: _____ Homeroom: _____

Below is a listing of the service themes for each grade

- PS4 & Kindergarten: Care for God's Creation
- 1st Grade: Elderly
- 2nd Grade: Rights and Responsibilities (formerly Education)
- 3rd Grade: Poverty
- 4th Grade: Hunger
- 5th Grade: Veterans and active duty
- 6th Grade: Ability Awareness
- 7th Grade: Human and Civil Rights
- 8th Grade: Social Justice

I have chosen _____ as the service theme I would like to focus on this year for my service project.

In the space below, briefly describe your plan to carry out your service in relation to the theme you have selected. For example, what organization do you plan to work with and what are some ways you can provide service to that organization?

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Teacher Signature: _____

Please return this form to Ms. Miller on or before Friday, October 6th.

8th Grade Service Project

Project Approval Form

Name: _____

Homeroom: _____

Service Theme: _____

Briefly describe the type of project you would like to create as a reflection of your service theme and the service you have done (or will do) on behalf of that theme. Please include enough details so that the teacher has a good idea of what your project will entail. If possible, please let us know if you plan to do a slideshow or movie to present your project or if you plan to use other methods (such as a tri-fold) for your presentation.

In addition, please list the Saint that you plan to link your project to.

Teacher Initial for Approval:

Please submit this form to Ms. Miller on or before Friday, November 9th.

Project is due December 14th

*****Presentations will be done in the classroom the week of December 14th.***

