

**St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic High School Service Hour
Program 2024-2025**

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I. Introduction:

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School strives to continue to represent the Dominican traditions it was founded upon: prayer, community, study, and **SERVICE**, and so our school has established a program to introduce a culture of service and community in a special way for our students based on the Works of Mercy and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities.” (CCC 2447) The Spiritual Works of Mercy include things like instructing, advising, consoling, comforting, forgiving, and bearing wrongs patiently. On the other hand, the Corporal Works of Mercy are more hands-on: feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching are a summation of the writings of the Church Magisterium in the modern age that tell us how we, as Christians, should live morally in our society-- with care for the dignity of the human person at all stages of life and of any background or circumstance. These teachings tell us to put the poor and vulnerable first, to care for God’s creation and be good stewards, to care for the dignity of all workers, to promote family values, and to recognize our obligation and responsibility to care for our community not from a distance but as brothers and sisters in Christ. These are all ways we are called to be a reflection of who God is and serve others as Christians in today’s world.

II. Requirements:

| Year in School | Total Hours |
|----------------|-------------|
| 8th Grade | 10 |
| Freshman | 10 |
| Sophomore | 15 |
| Junior | 20 |
| Senior | 25 |

III. Acceptable Service Hours

- Direct service to those who are disabled, poor, elderly, or disadvantaged or service to the environment and local community. (example: nursing homes, Special Olympics, community gardens, etc.)
- Serving neighbors will count for a maximum of 3 hours. (example: yard work, babysitting, etc.)
- Participate with your church. (example: serve at Mass, assist with vacation bible school, etc.)
- Volunteering with a Non Profit Organization
 - Suggested Non Profit Organizations (not limited to these)
 - CASA
 - Catholic Daughters
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - Kiwanis Club
 - Knight of Columbus
 - Options
 - Relay for Life
 - Restoration House
 - St. Vincent de Paul Society
 - Tangi Humane Society
 - TARC
 - Volunteers of America
- Attendance at the March for Life in Washington DC with STA Campus Ministry will count for 10 hours.
- Attendance at the March for Life in Louisiana (Baton Rouge) will count for 3 Hours.
- Attendance at a Pro Life Rally with the Knights of Columbus will count for 1 hour for each time attended. (Rallies are held the 1st Wednesday of each month).
- Summer Mission Trips. These hours require **mandatory** verification by the theology teacher.
- Serving as an Athletic Team Manager will count for 10 hours.

IV. Unacceptable Service Hours

- You may NOT receive compensation for your service for it to count as service.
- May NOT be hours of service performed for family members.
 - While we encourage you to love and serve your family as much as you can, there is no concrete way for us to verify this.
- You may not complete the service hours during school.
- May NOT be hours related to political campaigning.
- Services performed when you are required to be present as a part of your sports team. (example: retrieving balls, line judges, setting up water coolers, etc.)

V. Documentation:

- **AFTER SERVICE:** Letterhead documentation with description of service and number of hours from the organization where the service was performed.
 - The service will not be accepted if it is not turned in within **a WEEK** of the time of service with the exception of summer service hours. **All summer service hours are due August 23, 2024.**
 - Only hard copies of service hour forms will be accepted. (Documents can be printed from the STA website or will be available from your theology teacher)
 - Documentation **MAY NOT** be signed by **family members!**

VI. Deadlines:

- For **Seniors**, the last day to turn in service hours to your Theology Teacher is Tuesday, April 29, 2025.
- For **all other students**, the last day to turn in service hours to your Theology Teacher is Friday, May 2, 2025.

VII. Consequences:

- Students who have not met the requirements by May 2, 2025 (or April 29, 2025 for Seniors) will have their fourth quarter Theology grade lowered by up to ONE letter grade (1% per each day the hours are turned in late-- up to 10%)

VIII. Recognition/Service Awards:

- **All Grade Levels:**
 - **Bronze Service Award--** 10 hours ABOVE service requirement
 - **Silver Service Award--** 25 hours ABOVE service requirement
 - **Golden Service Award--** 50 hours ABOVE service requirement
 - **Falcon Servant Leadership Award--** Awarded to the student with the most service hours in each grade level for that year.
- **Seniors:**
 - All Awards Above
 - **St. Teresa of Calcutta Award--** Awarded to the student with the most service hours from all 4 years of High School
- See Ms. Bates, Mrs. Greco, and Mr. Nick Wylie for more ideas or help in figuring out what you might want to do-- students should feel free to contact by email michelle.bates@stafalcons.org, nick.wylie@stafalcons.org, or susan.greco@stafalcons.org to set up a time to discuss or drop by Rm 301/302/303 before or after school

Please detach the lower half of this page (DO NOT send in the full page).

I have read the Service Program Manual in its entirety for the 2024-2025 school year and I understand the requirements that I (the student)/My Child (the parent) will be responsible for completing and the consequences that will be issued for not completing the service program by the deadlines.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Grade: _____ Student's Theology Teacher: _____

