



## ***St. Maria Goretti Catholic High School Catholic Service-Learning Program***

### **PURPOSE:**

The St. Maria Goretti Service-Learning Program will help students to complete the following objectives: 1) learn about Catholic Social Teachings; 2) identify a need in the community; and 3) perform a service for a non-profit organization that addresses the need.

### **PHILOSOPHY:**

St. Maria Goretti's philosophy states, "Through the integration of worship, academics, extracurricular activities, and community service, students are prepared to assume the role of responsible leaders." From Christ's own example, we learn that those in leadership positions must be willing to serve others. The Catechism states, "It is incumbent on those who exercise authority to strengthen the values that inspire the confidence of members of the group and encourage them to put themselves at the service of others" (CCC# 1917). We take seriously our commitment to educate students to be responsible citizens and active participants in the faith.

### **THE PROCESS:**

- 1) Religion teachers will use a minimum of one class per month to dedicate to service-learning hours planning.
- 2) The student will identify a need in the community.
- 3) Through direct service, the student will:
  - a) deepen his/her faith and understanding of Catholic Social Teachings;
  - b) become a responsible servant leader; and
  - c) develop an understanding of his/her role in the world community.
- 4) Upon completion of the service project, the student will have his/her parent and service supervisor sign the Service-Learning Form.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

- A. The Catholic Service-Learning Program requires that students complete 25 hours of service per year with a non-profit organization. Students must complete a minimum of 100 hours of service in order to graduate. If a student transfers to Goretti, they are responsible for completing 25 hours for each year they are a student at Goretti.
- B. Hours may be earned during the school year or during the previous summer. Hours are due by the first week of June, before departing for summer vacation. Failure to turn in 25 service hours will result in ineligibility for extracurricular activities, until the service hours are submitted to the Campus Ministry office.

## **OVERVIEW OF SERVICE-LEARNING HOURS:**

### **What Counts?**

- 1) Service-learning activities that address human needs such as faith formation, education, health, housing, or the environment.
- 2) Service-learning activities that embody Jesus' command to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, provide welcome to the stranger, and care for the ill (Mt. 6: 31-46) are all excellent projects. Projects could include: a soup kitchen, a food pantry, a homeless shelter, a nursing home, a hospital, a senior center, a library, or being a tutor. The seventh theme of Catholic Social Teaching, as well as Pope Benedict XVI, have called on us to remember that we are stewards of God's creation. Thus, environmental projects could be helping at a recycling center, designing a wetland, cleaning up litter, etc.

### **What Does Not Count?**

- 1) Activities for family and neighbors, such as babysitting, mowing lawns, yard work, and walking dogs, while commendable, do not meet the criteria for service. Both service-learning projects and service hours should be service done for the greater community, and not for the benefit of a specific individual.
- 2) Activities in which students receive compensation through money or other goods will not be counted.
- 3) Activities in which the student's service took place at a for-profit organization, where the organization's primary mission is to increase profit for itself and/or its shareholders, will not be counted. For example:
  - a. Volunteering as an unpaid intern at a bank will not be counted. This is because a bank's primary mission is to create revenue from its daily business transactions.
  - b. Volunteering at a hospital or nursing home is an exception. While such an organization may not be classified as a non-profit, the mission of the medical practice is to care for the sick and dying, and these themes are also faith-based themes.

### **C. The 200 Club**

- 1) The Service Award – Any student who completes more than 200 hours of service during his/her high school career will receive the Service Award during the Senior Awards Ceremony. He/she will also wear a special cord during the graduation ceremony.

If you have any questions regarding the Catholic Service-Learning Program at St. Maria Goretti Catholic High School, please contact Mrs. Nees in the Campus Ministry office at 301-739-4266, or [hnees@goretti.org](mailto:hnees@goretti.org).