



The Alternative School for Math and Science

Dear ASMS Parents and Students,

Community service is an integral part of student life at ASMS. Community service builds integrity and character, and helps students become responsible members of society.

The ASMS school policy is that **all students complete a minimum of 40 hours of community service each year**. Hours are tallied June 2011 through May 2012. Note that any community service hours students earned during the summer will count towards this year's requirement!

Students accumulate 21 hours during school hours by participating in all of the **ASMS Community Service Mornings**, which are scheduled for several mornings throughout the school year. The dates for this year are: **September 30 (kick-off event), October 21, December 1 (snow day Dec. 2), January 13, February 10, March 9, April 20**. On these days, morning classes are replaced with school-wide community service activities. Students group into assigned teams and participate in projects on behalf of one of the school's partner service organizations: Founder's Pavilion, Corning Food Pantry, Salvation Army, Southeast Steuben County Library and the American Red Cross. (Students also participate in an art enrichment program at 171 Cedar Arts Center on one of these mornings; this activity does not count as community service.)

Students must arrange to earn the remaining minimum required hours (19 hours) independently, outside of school hours. Therefore, parents must monitor their children's hours, and assist them in finding volunteer opportunities, if needed.

Examples of some of the many possible ways students can earn community service hours:

- participate in fundraising walks and runs (MS Walk, CROP Walk, Race for the Cure, etc.)
- volunteer to help with cultural or civic events (Wineglass Marathon, GlassFest, RiverFest, Pioneer Days, Diwali Festival, International Day, etc.)
- volunteer at a charity (Food Bank, Salvation Army, Red Cross, SPCA, etc.)
- complete service projects for a religious institution or a scouting organization
- volunteer at a library, museum, nature center, senior center, day care, etc.
- visit patients at a hospital or nursing home
- perform in a community band, chorus, or theater (free performances *only*; practice hours do not count.
- "commit random acts of kindness" to benefit the community. (These are unexpected or unsolicited activities students do *without pay*; i.e., rake an elderly neighbor's yard, walk a workaholic's dog, visit a shut-in, read to young children, pick up litter along a road or at a local park, etc.)

All of these activities count towards a student's community service requirement. The basic criterion for service is a gift of time or talent to the community. What does *not* count as service is an activity performed as a normal part of family life (chores, yard work, caring for siblings, etc.) or for compensation (money or otherwise).

Extra-curricular opportunities to volunteer will be periodically emailed to parents and students, and listed on the school website calendar. Some of these opportunities may be scheduled by the Community Service Committee (e.g., the Hunger Challenge at the Food Bank) or may be events that students or parents have requested to be included on the calendar (e.g., Junior Achievement Bowl-A-Thon). However, please note that all extra-curricular volunteer opportunities are not officially-sponsored ASMS events, and parents are ultimately responsible for their children.

Community service hours are recorded in a **Community Service Journal**, listing the particulars (what, where, for whom, how long), and are signed by a parent or guardian. **Journal forms are available to download from the school website, www.tasms.com** (in the *Community Service* or *Student Portal* links).

Students must complete a journal form for each volunteer activity he/she completes, and return the completed form to the Community Service folder located at the front desk. (The hours for the six Community Service Mornings will be automatically counted, and students do not need to fill out a journal form for these times.) A tally of each student's hours will be included with his or her quarterly school progress report. The journal forms are the official record of a student's community service hours. **If a student fails to meet the 40 hour community service commitment by the mid-May deadline, the student's parents will be charged \$5 for each hour the student is deficient.**

In June, students will be recognized for their volunteer service at an awards ceremony. Those students who go beyond the required minimum of 40 hours and achieve 50 or more documented hours will also receive the President's Volunteer Service Award (for more information on this program, visit www.presidentialserviceawards.gov).

Parents or students who have any questions regarding the community service program, or who need assistance finding a volunteer opportunity may contact the Community Service Coordinators, Theresa Ponader and Linda Anderson, at communityservice@tasm.com. In addition, if you know of an upcoming volunteer opportunity that students may be interested in, please email Theresa and Linda with the pertinent information for distribution.

Parents are invited to participate in the ASMS Community Service Mornings by supervising a community service team. This is a great way to meet the parent requirement of 25 hours of volunteer time to the school, interact with students, and benefit the community. (Please note that parent volunteers are not necessarily placed with their child's team.) If you are interested in participating on any (or all) of these days, please email Theresa and Linda as soon as possible with your request.

We are looking forward to a fun and rewarding year of community service!

Sincerely,

Linda Anderson & Theresa Ponader