



LEADERSHIP PROJECT

“Volunteering as a Family”

February - May 2008

One of the milestones of the St. James Academy's Eighth Grade experience is their Leadership Class. Led by the Head and School Counselor, plans are undertaken annually to provide responsive, intensive, and personal experiences for our graduates. Thus a Family Volunteer Service Project is incorporated into our course of studies in order to better prepare middle school students "for living a creative, humane, and compassionate life worthy of a child of God and a contributing member of society." The rationale and procedures for this project are summarized below.

**Raising Moral Children:
BECOME A VOLUNTEER ALONG WITH YOUR FAMILY**

Rushworth Kidder an author and authority on ethics, coined a concept called "Ethical Fitness". "It's like physical fitness: it's not running two miles once," he said. "It's constantly, regularly working out, establishing an ongoing standard. It's not an inoculation, it's a process." He established The Institute for Global Ethics in 1990 with the goal to discern whether the world shared any common foundation of values in order to build a culture of integrity. He was astounded by the results he found! From his ongoing research he discerned five key universally embraced values:

Honesty ❖ Responsibility ❖ Respect ❖ Fairness ❖ Compassion

The Project

Each leadership student will be responsible for a **Story Board or Power Point Presentation due May 6 or 7, 2008** to chronicle his/her

I. Research

Class time will be provided for each student to explore via Internet and/or telephone for meaningfulness of need.

Due: 2/19 or 2/20

II. Description of Decision-Making Process

Family discussions, etc.

Due: 2/26 or 2/27

III. Experience Log

Photos and logs are efficient communication tools.

Due: 5/6 or 5/7

Frequently Asked Questions

What do you gain by volunteering together as a family?

Elusive, but much sought after “quality time” is gained while doing something worthwhile for others. During the process of working toward common goals, demonstrating skills, and learning new ones, parents and students get to know and respect one another in new ways. It is especially valuable to debrief your children about new ideas and experiences as an opportunity to meaningfully demonstrate your own values!

How do we choose a family project?

As children grow into adolescents at SJA’s Middle School, the rationale for parent/child volunteering provides an opportunity to create a common experience. **Family volunteering can be done by the entire family, by one parent and child, or by one parent and teenagers from several families.** Your mix and match possibilities are a family decision.

Call a family meeting and take time to consider this new idea. Be sure that all participate in the discussion:

- List volunteering projects each member of the family does now. Consider whether any of these can become your family project. You may wish to begin with a one-time experience before committing to any long-term projects. Once committed please take it seriously!
- What causes interest and intrigues each member personally? Use SJC and/or your own church, library, yellow pages, and/or Volunteer Center as information resources. Possible areas include, but are not limited to; Animals, Art & Culture; Business; Children & Youth; Civic and Community; Consumer; Crime Prevention; Cultural Awareness; Disability Understanding; Disaster Relief; Education & Technology; Environmental Issues; Health Related; Homelessness; Housing; Hunger/Food; Literacy; Political Issues, i.e., Women’s Rights. A local web resource can be found at www.baltimorecountymd.gov
- Consider your individual and collective skills ... Make two lists: one for “Things We Know How to Do” and one for “Things We Would Like to Learn How to Do.” It may take several family meetings to decide on next steps. Enjoy the conversations!

What is the time commitment mandated?

Time commitment will vary dependent on topic and needs. There is no mandate other than full engagement in the spirit of the selected project.

**ST. JAMES ACADEMY
LEADERSHIP PROJECT FORM**

“Volunteering as a Family”

Below are the milestones of the Leadership Project, Volunteering as a Family”, and respective due dates. **Kindly review these with your student, indicate the desired topics, sign, and return the form via your student for his/her Leadership class on February 19th or 20th.**

I. Research topics of interest* : _____ **Due: 2/19 or 2/20**

Possible areas of interest may be: Animals, Art & Culture; Business; Children & Youth; Civic and Community; Consumer; Crime Prevention; Cultural Awareness; Disability Understanding; Disaster Relief; Education & Technology; Environmental Issues; Health Related; Homelessness; Housing; Hunger/Food; Literacy; Political Issues, i.e., Women’s Rights. A local web resource can be found at www.baltimorecounty.md.gov.

II. Decision-making – Details of Project Selection **Due: 2/26 or 2/27**

III. Experience Log **Due: 5/6 or 5/7**

Retain the top portion for your records and return the lower portion.

I have reviewed the information provided and the associated due dates of the Leadership Project, “Volunteering as a Family”, with my student _____.

Student’s Name (please print)

Parent’s Signature

Date

Student’s Signature