The Office of Volunteer Programs & Service Learning

COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY

The Office of Volunteer Programs & Service Learning is dedicated to fulfilling the University’s mission.

“Sacred Heart University rooted in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and the liberal arts embraces a vision for social justice, educates students in mind, body, and spirit to prepare them personally and professionally to make a difference in the global community.”

CONTACT INFORMATION

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IMMERSION PROGRAMS

International
SHU’s commitment to service extends beyond the needs of our neighbors. Each winter and spring break students participate in international service programs. These programs allow students to travel to diverse communities around the world to work on meaningful projects and discover new cultures and traditions. All international programs aim to expose students to issues concerning poverty and social justice at the global level. The relationships between SHU and the host communities are strong, lasting, and mutually beneficial.

Domestic
Each year SHU delegations serve in various communities for hurricane relief efforts. Both domestic and international immersion programs provide powerful cultural exchange opportunities, as well as significant personal growth and reflection.
SERVICE - LEARNING

SERVICE - LEARNING AT SHU

- Is both a teaching strategy and philosophy used to develop students into citizens.
- Is integrated into curricula related to specific learning objectives.
- Participants and the community partners are equal in determining the service - learning experience.
- Integrates critical reflection.
- Is along the continuum of activities that includes volunteerism, community service, mission work, field education, and internships.

A SERVANT HEART

Service - Learning at Sacred Heart University is the incorporation of civic engagement into academic coursework.

Faculty from all fields and disciplines utilize service - learning as an instrument to achieve course objectives by integrating hands-on experiences with critical reflection.

The University embraces the tradition of Catholic social teaching as a means of developing students both intellectually and spiritually, with the ultimate goal of creating a more just society.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Incoming freshman are invited to apply for Community Connections (CC), a pre fall orientation program with a focus on community service. First-year participants live and work in the local Bridgeport community during the week before the start of fall classes. SHU faculty, staff, and CC facilitators serve as mentors and lead discussions on issues of urban poverty and social justice.

C.U.R.T.I.S. WEEK

“Community Understanding and Reflection through Inner City Service”

Curtis Week, named after the founder of SHU, Bishop Walter Curtis, is an urban immersion program with a focus on diversity, multiculturalism, and interfaith dialogue. The week before spring semester classes begin, students work and live in the local Bridgeport community, reflecting on the roles of immigration, racism, and economic systems in perpetuating urban poverty.

MENTORING PROGRAMS

Students can apply to serve as mentors in local K-12 schools, focusing on issues such as empowerment, academic success and engagement, social skills, and literacy. Typically, SHU students are engaged with the same K-12 students, often one-on-one, for a sustained period of time, allowing them to form relationships that last throughout the course of a student’s career at SHU.

COMMUNITY-BASED WORK STUDY

Students who are eligible for federal work-study funds as part of their financial assistance package can apply to work in local schools or nonprofit agencies. Students work off-campus in professional environments for local social service organizations.

FINANCIAL AWARDS

Need-based financial awards are available to students who are actively engaged in community service, especially in leadership roles. Recipients are required to complete 300 hours of community service per year.

OUR PARTNERS

Our strong partnerships in the Bridgeport community allow us to offer weekly student-led programs in the following agencies:

- Local Schools
- Soup Kitchens
- Food Pantries
- Afterschool Programs
- Elderly Care Facilities
- Daycares
- Clothing Drives
- Neighborhood Clean-Ups