

Fontbonne believes that relationship is at the heart of mission. The Service Program is faith-based and designed to give students an opportunity to actively engage in community outreach while exploring its connection to their faith and the Gospel call to serve the dear neighbor. It is an integration of action and reflection. Students are asked to complete a minimum of **100 hours** of volunteer community service (unpaid) to the dear neighbor by the time they graduate. Students are expected to complete at least 25 hours per year starting in grade 9. (Registered incoming 9th graders may start their service hours during the summer before they enter).*

The 100-hour service requirement may be reduced by 25 hours for each year a transfer student does not attend Fontbonne Academy. For example, a student entering Fontbonne in her sophomore year would have to complete 75 hours before she graduates.*

It is our hope that as students experience service, the emphasis on the requirement becomes less important as they develop a greater awareness for the value of building relationships and having a positive impact on another's life. Students may complete more than 25 hours per year. Hours submitted in addition to the 25 hours will be carried forward as service hours for the following year. Many students establish relationships in the community and reach the required 100 hours before their senior year and continue to serve because of its own value.

What does this program offer?

This program allows you to:

1. Live your faith by the way you give of yourself to others.
2. Learn about other people's life experiences.
3. Come to recognize and alleviate some of the injustices and suffering in the world.
4. Come to discover God in all people and creation.
5. Demonstrate our connectedness to others as one human family.
6. Further discover your own unique gifts, talents, and abilities.
7. Share your gifts, talents, and compassion to make the world a better place.

What can I do for service?

Volunteer opportunities can be found in a variety of places. Before beginning a service activity, students are asked to verify their placement with the Office of Mission & Ministry. Examples of service may include work with the elderly, children, animals, the homeless, special needs, or the infirm. Placement sites might include hospitals, hospices, after school programs, parishes, libraries, community centers, food pantries, shelters, etc. Students may also fulfill some service hours within the Fontbonne community. Teaming up with friends or relatives is a great way to become involved in the greater community and may also help with transportation and support. Periodically throughout the academic year, the Office of Mission & Ministry will offer opportunities for outside service in addition to on campus service experiences where an outreach activity is held on campus to benefit others for an hour of service.

What is not acceptable service?

Inherent to membership in a family and school community is the expectation and hope that students will participate with a sense of responsibility and generosity. A community service activity is meant to be outside the scope of these natural commitments, outside our comfort zone, where others are underserved. Therefore, students' service cannot be work for pay, assistance at a family business, a co-curricular activity (unless designated to be a service opportunity), or home chores including babysitting younger siblings. It is recommended that students have their volunteer activities approved before they begin their volunteer work to avoid the possibility of the service being deemed unacceptable.

What else are students responsible for?

Students are responsible for identifying a supervisor at their service site. The supervisor must be at least 21 years old and will confirm, if contacted, that the student did volunteer at their site. Each student must fill out their service hours as instructed by the Director of Mission & Ministry. Please refer to the service forms provided. At the 9th grade retreat in October, the Service Program will be explained to each student and they will have an opportunity to sign a contract stating their commitment to complete their service hours. Students are asked to reflect on their call to serve the dear neighbor and on their service experiences through reflections in their Theology class.

How are the service hours reported?

At the end of each academic year, the Office of Mission & Ministry will send parents a letter indicating the number of service hours the student submitted by the deadline and whether the student has fulfilled that year's requirement. At least 25 hours by the end of 9th grade; at least 50 hours by the end of 10th grade; at least 75 hours by the end of 11th grade, and at least 100 hours by the end of 12th grade. A senior may not take part in graduation exercises or receive their diploma until the 100 hours of service are completed. The total required hours will be different for transfer students as previously indicated. This difference will be noted in their letter.*

What is the service requirement for international students?

International students are not required to complete 25 hours of service a year. At the end of each academic year, the letter will indicate the number of service hours submitted by the deadline and the designation that they have fulfilled that year's requirement. Instead international students have until their senior year to complete the 100-hour service requirement. All Fontbonne students are required to fulfill 100 hours of service in order to graduate.*

*Please note that the 100-hour service requirement has been waived for the last three years because of the pandemic. The Director of Mission & Ministry is continuing to monitor the situation as Covid restrictions are lifted and more students are vaccinated. As of June 2022, Fontbonne students will be required to complete a minimum of 10 hours of service for the 2022-23 academic year. Therefore, there is no pressure for students to complete service hours over the summer, especially if anyone continues to feel nervous about the coronavirus or if the cost of fuel limits transportation options for any of our families. Service opportunities will be made available throughout the upcoming academic year with the support of the Fontbonne community to ensure all students will be able to fulfill this service requirement. The Office of Mission & Ministry is open over the summer months. Please contact the Office of Mission & Ministry with any questions you may have about the service requirement or if you are interested in finding a service opportunity.