



Website Hints for Student Volunteers

Montgomery County Public Schools Student Service Learning - SSL

- Go to: www.MontgomeryServes.org
- Search the database for opportunities to volunteer. Click on “Find an Opportunity” or use the red “volunteer!” box to search.
- Opportunities preapproved for SSL will have the graduation cap icon 
- Find volunteer opportunities by using **Keywords**, City or Zip Code.
- Check out the **Calendar** for upcoming projects and date-specific opportunities.
- **Advanced Search** will give more search options including *evening only* opportunities and opportunities available to *Youth Under 14*.
- Click on **Organizations** to find specific agencies by keyword or zip code. Even if they don’t have current positions posted, you’ll see contact information and can call or email to find out if they have a position you can apply for.
- **Sign up for our e-newsletter**, *Montgomery Volunteer*, for monthly information and listings of the most up to date volunteer opportunities.
- **Login** and **Create a Volunteer Profile** so you can get personalized emails sent every time a new volunteer opportunity is posted that matches your interests.
- Click on **Student Service Learning** under the **For Volunteers** header to find more SSL information, including links to the MCPS site and SSL Forms. Or go directly to the MCPS site at www.mcpsssl.org

More Hints on Searching and Finding Volunteer Positions:

- Checking multiple boxes on the Advanced Search page will limit the results to opportunities that have ALL of those boxes checked. If you want to see opportunities that have ANY of those boxes checked, select the “Broaden Search” box right below zip code.
- When you find something you’re interested in, contact the agency directly to apply. You can use the database and click on “I’m interested in this opportunity”. You’ll see an email box pop up, edit the email to include your personal message and hit Send.
- If you find an agency with a mission that you care about, but they don’t have a volunteer job listed that interests you, contact them anyway to find out more about the organization. Maybe in talking with them you may find there are ways that you can volunteer.

Opportunities For Young Children

- Click on **Advanced Search** to select opportunities for “**Youth Under 14**”
- Look for opportunities to **serve as a family**. Age barrier can often be removed if parent volunteers with student. Friendly visiting at a nursing home and delivering food for Meals on Wheels are examples. Check out small group projects for family possibilities. You’ll see “**Small Group**” on the **Advanced Search** page under “I am interested in opportunities available to”
- Go to the **Calendar**. Depending on the time of year you will find many projects and events for the whole family.
- Work with a group to plan a volunteer activity that will benefit an organization. For example, collect toiletries for shelters and have the student volunteers decorate bags that they’ll be packed in. Plan a school event like a “Walk for Water” to raise funds for wells in West Africa. Click on “**Toolkits**” to find ideas. Also look at the **Group Volunteering** page under the “For Volunteers” link on the top toolbar.

More on MCPS SSL Policies

- Students need to complete 75 hours to graduate and can start earning SSL hours the summer after 5th grade. Some hours are earned through classes; others can be earned through school clubs or by volunteering with nonprofits in the community.
- Hours volunteering in the community have to be approved IN ADVANCE. All opportunities that are pre-approved for SSL are searchable on the Volunteer Center website. Look for the graduation cap icon: 
- If an organization or opportunity is not pre-approved you can submit a “Request for SSL Pre Approval Form” to the SSL coordinator at your school BEFORE you do the work.
- All SSL work must be supervised by an adult connected with the approved nonprofit. You can volunteer along with a faith organization like a church or synagogue as long as the work is “secular”, not religious, and it helps the community, not just your congregation. For example serving food at a soup kitchen or building schools in South America could count, but Sunday school teaching or working in the church office would not. You cannot earn SSL hours volunteering at your own home or any private home. You can’t go door to door to spread information or collect donations.