

SUGGESTIONS FOR VCU STUDENTS COMPLETING COURT-MANDATED OR UNIVERSITY-MANDATED COMMUNITY SERVICE

To make this a successful and positive experience for all, please adhere to the following guidelines. Remember, the nonprofit organization that has agreed to work with you is doing you a large favor. Please maintain a positive image for all VCU students, and conduct yourself as if you are an employee of the organization. If you have any questions, ask the agency.

- *Do not procrastinate. Allow time to contact the correct person for scheduling and time afterwards for receiving documentation. You may need to volunteer at more than one agency.
- *During your first contact with the organization, be honest and tell them why you are interested in volunteering with them. Be ready to tell them your offense, and explain what you will need from them, e.g. documentation confirming your service.
- *Follow the agency's dress code, and adhere to all of their policies and procedures.
- *Arrange your schedule around theirs.
- *Once you have agreed upon a schedule, follow through on your commitment and be on time.

After your community service:

- 1) Regarding documentation of your service, if your service is court mandated, abide by the court's requirements, or in lieu of direction from the courts, follow your lawyer's suggestions. If you have no guidelines from the judge or your lawyer, ask the organization to provide you with written documentation of your service on their letterhead. A letter should include your name, the date(s) of service, the number of hours completed, the agency contact information, and a signature from the appropriate person at the agency. If your service is mandated by a VCU office or department, follow the requirements as directed by that office.
- 2) Thank the organization or your supervisor for accommodating you. This can be verbal, in a written note, or through an e-mail.
- 3) If taking part in a community service project sponsored by VCU's Volunteer Services Office, you will need to contact Beth Ward, Volunteer Services Coordinator, to arrange to pick up a letter confirming your service from her office.

Please know that you will have made a positive impact on the nonprofit agency and the individuals they serve.



Below are some Richmond area nonprofit organizations that have agreed to work with VCU students. Most are within walking distance of VCU or are on the bus line. If you need information on bus schedules, contact GRTC at 358-GRTC or visit www.ridegrtc.com.

***Hospital Hospitality House – (HHH) 612 East Marshall Street**

The organization – Located beside the MCV Campus, HHH provides lodging for families of patients being treated at local hospitals without regard to their ability to pay. The families may need a place to stay for weeks or months, and they find a welcoming setting in this converted hotel.

Volunteer opportunities - HHH needs help to maintain this home-like atmosphere with volunteers who perform clerical duties, help with cleaning, support special events, and more. *Note* – if the agreement calls for students to clean, HHH often brings in their staff to provide supervision, so do show up and be on time.

Contact information - 804-828-6901, Betty Daffron, Volunteer Coordinator, www.hhhrichmond.org.

***Richmond Metropolitan Habitat for Humanity**

The organization – Habitat builds decent affordable housing for deserving families, and depends on volunteers to carry out their mission.

Volunteer opportunities –

- 1) Home builders – No skills or tools are needed, but the monthly safety orientation is strongly suggested. You must wear sturdy closed-toed shoes and long pants, and no tank tops are allowed. Pull back long hair, and do not wear contacts due to the dust. All tools are provided, but you may want to bring your own work gloves and hand tools. Mark everything, and no personal power tools are allowed. Bring your lunch, and water, and port-a-johns are provided. Complete Habitat's waiver ahead of time. So that construction can stay on schedule, you must be on time to attend the daily mandatory safety review, and you must stay the entire day. For more details, including the schedule and the waiver, visit Habitat's web site, www.richmondhabitat.org.
- 2) Retail store help – Enough items are donated for resale to fill a warehouse, and much help is needed here. Proceeds from Habitat's retail store are used to fund home building projects.

Contact information - 804-232-7001, April Wilson, Volunteer Coordinator. www.richmondhabitat.org, The Richmond retail store is located at 1901 Roane Street, less than a mile north of the Monroe Park Campus. Hanover County's Habitat for Humanity also operates a retail store about 10 minutes north of the Monroe Park Campus at 8177 Mechanicsville Tnpk., 804-569-6226.

***The Cathedral of the Sacred Heart – 823 Park Avenue**

Volunteer opportunities – Located beside the Monroe Park Campus, one of the Cathedral's programs is to provide a monthly luncheon for dozens of area senior citizens. Help is needed 9:30 am to 12:30 pm to help set up and serve and at 12:30 pm to clean up. Lunch is provided for the volunteers.

Contact information – Dave Woods at poppywoova@aol.com or Martha Harper at harperma@vcu.edu.

***Grace and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church** – 8 North Laurel Street

Volunteer opportunities – Numerous opportunities are available at this church, also located beside the Monroe Park Campus.

Contact information – The volunteer coordinator at the church requires that students with mandated community service first speak with the Volunteer Services Office at VCU.

***VCU's Libraries** – The James Branch Cabell Library on the Monroe Park Campus and the Thompkins-McCaw Library on the MCV Campus.

Volunteer opportunities – Numerous opportunities are available. *Note* – The supervising library staff can oversee a limited number of students at a time. You must call first to be sure you can be accommodated and to schedule a training session.

Contact information –

James Branch Cabell Library – Mr. Ed Blease 827-3570, edblease@vcu.edu

Thompkins McCaw Library – Mr. James Merifield, 828-3244, jmerifield@vcu.edu

***St. Joseph's Villa** – 8000 Brook Road, about 7 miles or 12 minutes north of the Monroe Park Campus.

The organization - “The Villa’s programs provide special, alternative, and non-traditional education and care for children ages six weeks through high school; on-campus living and education for homeless children and their mothers; day and respite care services for children with disabilities; residential emergency shelter and education for children in crisis; and, independent living for adults with disabilities.”

Volunteer opportunities - The Villa needs GED instructors, children’s activities instructors, recreation instructors, administrative support, help with gardening, and more.

Contact information – Tiffany Royall, Volunteer Manager 804-553-3200, Monday – Friday, 8am to 4pm, troyall@sjvmail.net, www.neverstopbelieving.org.

***National Student Partnership, (NSP)** – 201 West Broad Street, at the Richmond Career Advancement Center.

The organization - NSP is “the nation’s only year-round student-led volunteer service organization, that links people in need with the resources and opportunities necessary to become self-sufficient.”

Volunteer opportunities – NSP needs students to work one-on-one with low income individuals as well as administrative support.

Contact information – Amanda Bate, abate@nspnet.org, 780-4146, ext. 120, www.nspnet.org.

There are numerous other community service options available locally or in your home town. You may know of a nonprofit agency, or you may find one on your own that addresses an issue of interest to you. In addition, you can research the following web sites for one-time or ongoing opportunities. Many nonprofit organizations conduct special events and fundraisers throughout the year that are very labor intensive. They offer a chance to complete many hours of service at one time. Contact the potential agency directly, and follow the guidelines above.

www.volunteermatch.org - A nation-wide database of volunteer opportunities.

www.richmond.com - Click on "Calendar of Events" for a listing of many upcoming special events.

www.nbc12.com/abouttown - Listed are more one-time events sponsored by nonprofit organizations.

If you need assistance or more suggestions, contact Volunteer Services at 828-3648 or e-mail Beth Ward, Volunteer Services Coordinator at bhward@vcu.edu.