

# MDC SERVICE-LEARNING STUDENT HANDBOOK

*A guide to making the most out of your service-learning experience.*



**"I believe every student at MDC should participate in service-learning."**

Miami-Dade College Student



**"If you want to lift yourself  
up, lift up someone else."**



Booker T. Washington

## **Take a moment to consider the following:**

- 1. What is the best way to learn and remember something?**
  
- 2. How can you get the most out of this class and make a difference in the community at the same time?**
  
- 3. Are you interested in:**
  - ☞ **Exploring your intended major or career?**
  - ☞ **Gaining invaluable job experience?**
  - ☞ **Building your resume?**
  - ☞ **Helping make a difference in the community?**
  - ☞ **Learning things that will make you a more successful person?**
  
- 4. What does civic responsibility mean to you?**

***READ THIS HANDBOOK FOR ANSWERS TO ALL THESE QUESTIONS!***

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to service-learning at MDC. Service-learning is about helping you grow and develop, while at the same time helping meet important community needs. Although we realize that your service-learning project will require a great deal of effort, and even sacrifice on your part, we can almost guarantee that you are about to embark upon an experience that will make a major contribution to your learning and personal growth. You will be joining thousands of college and university students all over the United States who are involved in service projects designed to enhance classroom learning, foster civic responsibility, and meet community needs. On behalf of Miami-Dade College, the Center for Community Involvement, and the agencies you will be assisting, we extend our appreciation and gratitude.

Please be certain to review this Handbook carefully as it will guide you through the experience, as well as provide you with answers to frequently asked questions. It also includes all the forms you need to successfully complete your service-learning project.

## **INDEX**

PAGE	
1 .....	TAKE A MOMENT TO CONSIDER
2 .....	INTRODUCTION
3 .....	WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?
4 .....	HOW DO I GET STARTED?
5 .....	KEYS TO SUCCESS
6 .....	DID YOU KNOW? & BENEFITS OF SERVICE-LEARNING

(Instructor Assignments: Journal, Class Presentation, etc.\*, ..... \_\_\_\_\_)

**\*Ask your instructor for these deadlines**

*"I was taught that . . . service is the rent each of us pays for living--the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time or after you have reached your personal goals."*

-Marian Wright Edelman, Director, Children's Defense Fund

## WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning is defined as any program in which students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet real community needs.

### WHY USE SERVICE-LEARNING?

- ☞ **ACTIVE LEARNING** -- The best way to learn is through active participation.
- ☞ **PERSONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT** -- One of the best ways to help yourself, is to help someone else. Through service, you will gain skills that will help you for the rest of your life.
- ☞ **MEETING COMMUNITY NEEDS** -- Do you think we can rely on government to solve all our problems? Each one of us must do our part to help make our community better.
- ☞ **CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY** -- Our country was founded on an ethic of service. The health of our democracy depends on service and community involvement. Working toward the common good is something we must all practice.

### MDC Student Voices

*“I have never done any volunteer work before, but this experience was the most interesting and valuable of my life.”*

*“I’ve volunteered before, but this time I’ve been able to put into practice what I’ve learned in the classroom--making the classroom more interesting and fun.”*

*“Service-learning helped me in many ways to stay in college and meet my goals in life.”*

# HOW DO I GET STARTED?

## 1. TALK TO YOUR PROFESSOR

- ① What are the deadlines?
- ② How many hours are required?
- ③ What else is involved (journals, class presentations, class discussions, reading assignments, etc.)?
- ④ Which agencies are approved for this class (your service experience must be related to your class)?

## 2. CHOOSE A PLACEMENT FROM THE LIST OF APPROVED SERVICE-LEARNING SITES\*

- ① Review the list of service-learning sites given to you in class. Carefully read all the information about agencies you are interested in--including “minimum requirements” and “hours needed.”
- ② **Complete the “Service-Learning Application”--page 7 of this handbook.** (Turn this in to your instructor after you have confirmed your placement.)

(\*You must choose a placement from the MDC list of “approved sites.” Students are highly discouraged from choosing their own placements. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and must be approved, in advance, by your instructor and the Center for Community Involvement.)

## 3. CALL THE AGENCY CONTACT PERSON AND ARRANGE AN INTERVIEW AND ORIENTATION

- ① Identify yourself as an MDC service-learning student and clarify any questions you may have.
- ② Take the “Service-Learning Placement Confirmation Agreement”--page 8--with you to your interview/orientation and complete it with your supervisor.
- ③ **Turn in the Confirmation Agreement to your professor by the deadline in order to be eligible for service-learning credit!**
- ④ Start as soon as possible.

## 4. SHOW UP AT YOUR SCHEDULED TIMES, KEEP TRACK OF YOUR HOURS, AND COMMUNICATE REGULARLY WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

- ① Use the “Service-Learning Hour Report” (page 9 of the handbook) to keep track of your hours. Turn this in to your instructor by the deadline to be eligible for service-learning credit.
- ② Have your supervisor complete the “Agency Evaluation Of Student” on page 10 (back of hour form). Turn this in to your instructor.

# KEYS TO SUCCESS

## **BE PROACTIVE**

- ❑ Start your service early in the term to obtain the maximum benefit from your experience.
- ❑ Being proactive means taking charge of your own experience. By being responsible, you can make your experience one that is meaningful, positive, and allows you to learn and grow.
- ❑ If you are bored, feel like you aren't doing something worthwhile, or are in any way dissatisfied--**TALK TO YOUR SUPERVISOR OPENLY AND HONESTLY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM.**
- ❑ Feel free to call the Center for Community Involvement for assistance, however, 99% of the issues you might face can be solved by simply speaking with your supervisor.

## **RESPONSIBILITY & COMMITMENT**

- ☞ The Agency is counting on you...show them they can!
- ☞ Treat your service-learning assignment like a job:
  - ✓Be prompt for your interview/orientation
  - ✓Set up a schedule and stick to it
  - ✓Call your supervisor ahead of time if you can't attend--and arrange to make up the missed hours
- ☞ As a service-learning student you are representing:
  - ⇒ Yourself ⇒ Your instructor ⇒ MDC ⇒ The entire service-learning program
- ☞ Service-learners should dress neatly, conservatively, and be well groomed.
- ☞ Service-learners are expected to display a professional attitude and refrain from unprofessional remarks about colleagues, students, or clients; maintain confidentiality regarding students or clients; and be courteous and respectful at all times.
- ☞ Keep this in mind and do a great job!
- ☞ If you drop the class or stop your service for any reason, please inform both the agency and the Center for Community Involvement
- ☞ If at any time you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, immediately let your supervisor, instructor, or campus director know.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- The average American watches four hours of TV a day
- Americans are less likely to vote, serve on a PTA, or be involved with community groups than they were 30 years ago
- We tend to remember:
  - 10% of what we read
  - 20% of what we hear
  - 30% of what we see
  - ➔ **and 90% of what we both say and do!**
- **Over 150 agencies in Miami-Dade County want your help!**

## PROVEN BENEFITS OF SERVICE-LEARNING

- ◆ Explore majors and careers that interest you
- ◆ Build your resume and gain valuable work experience
- ◆ Learn new skills
- ◆ Gain a better understanding of what you are learning in the classroom
- ◆ Improve your chances of getting a job
- ◆ Learn things that you'll never forget and that will benefit you for the rest of your life
- ◆ Improve your self-esteem and sense of personal satisfaction
- ◆ Meet new people, make new friends and contacts
- ◆ Contribute to our community