

WHAT IS THE MICHIGAN STUDENT SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM?

The Michigan Student Service Award (MSSA) Program is a way of recognizing high school graduates who volunteer a significant number of hours to benefit their community through service and volunteerism during the course of their high school careers.

Similar to other awards bestowed on graduating seniors of talent, commitment and perseverance in academics and athletics, the Student Service Award honors those special students who participate in activities outside of school that make their community a better place to live. The medallion rewards their commitment to helping other people and organizations in a significant way.

WHO SPONSORS THE AWARD PROGRAM?

This program was launched by the Volunteer Centers of Michigan and is sponsored by Char-Em United Way in partnership with high school counselors/teachers and students throughout the state. Char-Em United Way is the coordinator and contact point for all program activities, and will register students, assist them in finding volunteer opportunities, and make an official permanent record of their hours.

HOW DOES THE AWARD PROGRAM WORK?

Over the course of their four years in high school, students complete and document 400 hours of non-paid community service. These activities must meet a recognized community need, and be undertaken through nonprofit organizations, government programs, community groups, or schools.

The following types of activities (as well as many others) would qualify, and would be certified by the Char-Em United Way Volunteer Center:

- Direct Service, such as river clean up, tutoring, spending time with a nursing home resident
- Indirect Service, such as computer data entry, fundraising, food collection, board or committee work for a nonprofit
- Civic Engagement, advocacy or community organizing, such as beautification, mural painting, community surveys
- 75% of service hours must take place in the student's county of residence or local community-(the surrounding areas of Emmet and Charlevoix Counties)

Students obtain signatures from the agency staff who supervised each of the activities on the volunteer record sheet provided by Char-Em United Way. In January, May, and September these records are to be submitted to Char-Em United Way, which will maintain a permanent record of service hours.

Once a year, participating students will complete an evaluation form and reflective summary of their experiences by completing a survey.

RECOGNITION OF YOUR COMMITMENT

Recognition will take place at the annual honors award program before graduation, when the student will receive:

- A Medallion of Distinction to wear with the graduation cap and gown
- A Certificate of Distinction for Commitment to Service from Char-Em United Way
- Community-wide recognition from the Volunteer Center

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Students at participating high schools within Charlevoix and Emmet Counties.

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