

Panorama ISD

"Gold Cord" Community Service Award Program

What is the NISD "Gold Cord" Community Service Award Program?

The "Gold Cord" Community Service Award Program is an initiative designed to help high school students gain a sense of community service, pride, and ownership. The program is a way to encourage 9-12 grade students to contribute **at least 100 hours of approved community service per school year**. Those students meeting these requirements will be recognized as Gold Cord award recipients in each high school year they complete 100 or more hours.

·Students can be recognized all four years.

·Students meeting and/or exceeding requirements for community service (100 hours/year) will be awarded a Gold Cord certificate or patch for each year of participation.

·During the senior year, graduates will have the option to purchase a "Gold Cord" for each year of achievement (100 hours/year) to wear during the high school graduation ceremony.

Who should participate in the program?

This program is for any student who wants to complete community service hours for personal satisfaction, community service recognition, and to enhance their college admissions and scholarship opportunities. Any student who wants recognition for completing 100 or more community service hours per year should participate in the "Gold Cord" program.

Why volunteer in your community? A Letter from the Superintendent

Dear Students:

High school is a formative period in a student's life, filled with academic challenges, personal growth, and the exploration of future paths. While academics play a crucial role, particularly in Panorama ISD, it is equally important for high school students to engage in activities that foster personal development, empathy, and a sense of social responsibility. One such avenue that can profoundly impact their lives is community service. In this blog post, we will delve into the reasons why high school students should actively participate in community service.

From personal growth and skill development to fostering a sense of compassion and empathy, community service offers a multitude of benefits that can shape students into well-rounded individuals.

1. Personal Growth and Skill Development:

Community service provides an exceptional opportunity for high school students to develop valuable life skills. Engaging in volunteer work allows them to step out of their comfort zones, face new challenges, and develop resilience. Through service projects, students can enhance their problem-solving abilities, leadership skills, and effective communication. Additionally, they can cultivate time management, organization, and teamwork skills, which are vital for success in both personal and professional spheres. By actively participating in community

service, high school students can acquire and hone these essential skills, preparing them for future endeavors.

2. Fostering Compassion and Empathy:

Community service cultivates a sense of compassion and empathy in high school students. By actively engaging with individuals and communities facing various challenges, students gain a deeper understanding of the world beyond their immediate surroundings. They learn to appreciate diversity, respect differences, and develop a genuine concern for the welfare of others. This firsthand experience of witnessing the impact of their actions can be transformative, shaping their perspective and fostering a lifelong commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of others.

3. Building Stronger Communities:

High school students play a pivotal role in building stronger, more cohesive communities through their involvement in community service. By dedicating their time and effort to service projects, students contribute to the betterment of their neighborhoods, schools, and local organizations. Whether it is volunteering at a local food bank, participating in environmental cleanups, or assisting with community events, their contributions have a tangible and lasting impact. Community service helps foster a sense of ownership and pride in their community, promoting civic engagement and creating a foundation for positive social change.

4. Exploring Career Paths and Building Networks:

Engaging in community service during high school exposes students to a wide range of industries, organizations, and social issues. Through these experiences, students can explore potential career paths, discover their passions, and develop a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by various sectors. Moreover, community service often provides opportunities to connect with professionals, mentors, and like-minded individuals who share a commitment to making a difference. These connections can be invaluable in terms of future career opportunities, mentorship, and building a network of individuals who share similar values.

Community service offers high school students a unique opportunity to grow personally, develop essential life skills, and foster compassion and empathy. Through their involvement, students contribute to building stronger communities while gaining a deeper understanding of societal challenges. Engaging in community service not only benefits those in need but also empowers students to become compassionate, socially responsible individuals who actively work towards creating positive change in the world. By embracing community service during their high school years, students lay the foundation for a lifetime of giving back, personal growth, and meaningful connections with others.

How does the process work?

1. Apply for **enrollment** into the Gold Cord program by submitting an enrollment form to the sponsor before **October 15**, 2015. Once the enrollment form is received by the sponsor, the sponsor will either approve or deny the request.
2. Once you are admitted to the program, pick up a Gold Cord community service log form (printed on Gold paper) in the Counseling Center or download the form from the Eaton Counseling website.
3. Consult the list of approved non-profit organizations (also known as 501(c) 3 organizations) and make contact to introduce yourself and arrange for an interview/orientation, if required. (If you do not know if the organization is approved, contact the Gold Cord sponsor BEFORE you volunteer).

REMEMBER: Volunteer work is just like a paid job. Dress appropriately and be on time.

4. Make sure you ask your adult supervisor to sign your form each time you volunteer; one signature for different dates is unacceptable. Parents cannot sign as a sponsor signature.
5. Make a copy of your completed form for your records. Return the original copy of the completed form to the Gold Cord sponsor. Use the front and back of the form, pick up another form, if needed. Fill out the form completely (dates, sponsor signature, description of work performed).
6. The Gold Cord sponsor will review and log your hours. If there is a question about your hours after they are reviewed, the sponsor will contact you. If you do not respond in a timely manner, those hours will be forfeited.
7. Students may begin accruing community service hours the summer after their 8th grade as long as their enrollment form has already been submitted to their high school Gold Cord sponsor.
8. Students who earn 100+ community service hours during a school year will receive a Gold Cord patch for his/her letter jacket. A new patch can be earned each school year, allowing each student to earn up to four Gold Cord patches during their high school education.
9. A Gold Cord can be earned and worn at the graduation ceremony by any student who has completed 100+ community service hours in at least one of the four years of high school. Special mention will be made in the graduation program for students who complete the Gold Cord program all four years of high school.

What types of service will qualify as community service?

Only those hours performed by a student without compensation will qualify for community service approval. Any community service hours performed as a part of a court order, or similar judgment, will not be counted toward the student's Gold Cord hours. There is an almost endless list of volunteer opportunities for students. For a list of examples that could be approved community service activities, please refer to the chart on page 3 of this document.

Transfer Students

A transfer student may participate in the “Gold Cord” program. The 100 required community service hours may include approved hours earned while attending the previous high school. It is the student’s responsibility to provide adequate documentation of the approved hours.

Submitting Hours

- Keep track of your hours on a Gold Cord community service log form (printed on Gold paper) available in the Counseling Center and on the Eaton Counseling website under the Gold Cord tab.
- Each time a volunteer activity is completed, an adult supervisor must sign the log form; one signature for different dates is unacceptable. Parents cannot sign as a sponsor signature.
- The signed, verification sheet must also be turned in for final approval.
- Make a copy of your completed form for your records. Return the original copy of the completed form to the Gold Cord sponsor. Use the front and back of the form, pick up another form, if needed. Fill out the form completely (dates, sponsor signature, description of work performed).
- The Gold Cord sponsor will review and log your hours. If there is a question about your hours after they are reviewed, the sponsor will contact you. If you do not respond in a timely manner, those hours will be forfeited. Remember that students are responsible to clear up questions and check their hours, not parents.

When do the 100 hours of community service need to be completed?

To be counted toward the annual “Gold Cord” award, hours must be turned in by April 15 of each academic year. **Hours can be earned from June 1 – April 14.**

Do activities need to be pre-approved?

Established 501(c) 3 organizations need no pre-approval. However, if the student doesn’t know whether or not the intended organization has a 501(c) 3 status, he/she should check with the Gold Cord sponsor prior to volunteering to guarantee approval. Questions can be addressed by e-mail or in writing. If the organization has not been pre-approved, a student may count hours only if and after the organization receives approval as a community service site from the Gold Cord sponsor.

It is recommended that students consult the list of pre-approved community service opportunities, which is made available through the Gold Cord sponsor. This ensures that the volunteer organization/activity is acceptable. In any volunteer situation, it is important to adopt certain safety practices. Never allow yourself to be left alone or placed in compromising situations. If you feel your safety may be compromised at any time, excuse yourself from the volunteer activity and report the occurrence to your sponsor. If there is an immediate emergency, call 911.

Examples of Community Service (what is/not acceptable toward hours)

Acceptable:

- All non-profit organizations, some church activities that do not involve worship or religious instruction, helping at a campus other than their own, local hospitals, etc.
- Hours earned the summer after 8th grade; and turned in on time
- Hour-for-hour volunteer time
- Church support related activities – (mission trips, singing with choir at nursing homes, etc.).
- Volunteering outside the student’s scheduled school day, hours done after senior release (seniors must attach copy of schedule to verify).
- Teen Court – youth volunteer, not serving as a resolution for a ticket and consequence.
- Hours that are properly documented (that include the date, description of activity, organization name, contact name and information) submitted by the **April 15 deadline.**

Unacceptable:

- Individual fund-raising, babysitting your neighbor’s child for free, working as an intern without pay, working at church that involves religious instruction.
- Hours earned K-8th grades; hours turned in after the April 15 deadline
- Double hours promised by sponsor
- Teaching religion, singing or playing an instrument in the church choir during worship, instruction, VBS or mission trips.
- Helping a teacher during class; volunteer time that is part of the course requirement, work done during the school day (9 a.m. – 4:10 p.m.)
- Teen Court – time served for breaking the law.
- Hours with incomplete information that cannot be verified, or that were submitted after the **April 15 deadline.**

What is expected of you as a volunteer by the organization?

- To be reliable to your commitment
- To work within the guidelines and standards of the agency
- To accept and follow directions of the agency staff
- To make sure you understand the directions given to you and seek clarification, if needed.
- To actively perform tasks to the best of your ability
- To provide feedback to the agency staff
- To report any problems to the agency staff
- To represent the school and yourself in an exemplary manner

What should you expect from the organization as a volunteer?

- To be advised of the agency’s standards, guidelines, and expectations
- To be given meaningful assignments
- To be given a clear statement of tasks to be performed

- To be informed of organizational policies and procedures
- To be given effective supervision
- To be recognized for work performed

Approved Community Organizations

Agape/Slab - Soup kitchens, shelters, blanket drives

American Cancer Society

Beam Foundation

Cancer Prevention Organizations

Christmas is for Children

Church Activities - Non-religious in nature, e.g. building churches or homes, blankets for homeless shelters, general office work, etc.

Community Storehouse

Food pantries - Roanoke Food Pantry, N. Texas Food Bank, Tarrant Area Food Bank

G.R.A.C.E. - Sorting clothes, canned food drives

Habitat for Humanity - Carpentry, repair of houses

Health Organizations - American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, etc.

Hospitals - Youth volunteer programs such as candy strippers

Libraries - Shelving, check out books, summer reading programs for children

Local City Departments - Parks & Recreation, general office work, festivals, visitors center

Meals on Wheels - Delivering meals, volunteering at fundraisers

Political Campaign (excluding relatives) - Stuffing envelopes, phone banks, distributing signs

PTA - Project Graduation, registration

Schools (must be done outside of school day) - Moving furniture and supplies, manning booths for open house, assisting teachers, tutoring, etc.

Scouting - Eagle Scout programs, assisting pack leaders, helping at camps

Teen Court (excluding mandated service) - Juror, Bailiff, Attorney

Women's Clubs and Community Organizations

Ronald McDonald House

To receive credit for other community service activities not mentioned above, students may seek written approval from the Gold Cord sponsor.

Gold Cord Guidelines

- Fill out Gold Cord log form completely (date, adult supervisor signature, description of work performed and your contact information, including e-mail address)
- No more than 10 hours can be completed at your campus (unless there are extenuating circumstances)

- Do not turn in old hours (hours can only be accepted for current school year)
- Hours MUST be turned in by **April 15 (no exceptions)**
- Parents cannot sign as sponsor signature
- Community Service must be for a non-profit group (group must have 501c3 status)
- Hour for hour service (no double hours as promised by teacher or sponsor)
- Leadership Training does not count
- Students are responsible to clear up questions, not parents
- If it is found that you have falsified any part of your form/service, you will be dismissed from the program
- Students are responsible to check their hours and report any problems at that time