

# LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICE





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## A MESSAGE FROM INTERIM COORDINATOR OF LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Office of Local Community Service within the Agapé Center plays a unique role in fulfilling Messiah’s mission of preparing students for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation. We offer opportunities for students to actively explore these principles in the context of the local community through three service “plunge” days: regular Outreach Teams, the Service for Chapel Credit program and the residential S.A.L.T. program at the Harrisburg Institute. These different service experiences allow students to engage the community in a variety of ways and to develop their own understanding of what a lifestyle dedicated to these values can look like.

- Whether they are plunged into a one-day service experience or commit to a regular Outreach Team, students are learning what thoughtful, intentional service looks like, serving according to best practices so that projects benefit both students and the community; understanding the context of the organization and dynamics in the surrounding neighborhood; and seeing why service is necessary and how they can effectively be involved.
- As many of our students take on leadership roles in facilitating these service experiences, they are learning what it means to be servant leaders. These positions stretch them to gracefully and to humbly interact with Community Partners; to really understand the needs of the community while also recognizing the assets; and to effectively engage fellow students in a commitment to service.
- As many of our students serve in places where they encounter barriers of race, class, culture and language, we strive to instill a deep understanding of what it means to be reconcilers. Through building relationships, students begin to break down barriers at an individual level. We strive to incorporate training that equips them with an understanding of the dynamics of oppression and discrimination and create space for discussion and reflection around these issues.

Through all of this, experiences with service in the local community are profoundly shaping the vocational journeys of the students who participate. As students put their faith into action and experience serving God in a variety of ways, passions are awakened or confirmed; skills are developed; and connections are made that guide what they choose to pursue vocationally. Students’ experiences with service significantly impact choices of majors, interest in internships, careers and, ultimately, the direction of lives. What may be a short-term commitment for students during their time at Messiah profoundly shapes the choices that they make afterwards, embracing lifestyles of service in so many ways.

### MISSION

The Agapé Center cultivates experiences with community partners to prepare individuals for lifelong service.

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Agapé Center for Service and Learning develops, administers, resources and coordinates programs of service-learning, community service and mission, contributing to the mission of Messiah College to “educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society.”

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## CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH THE COMMUNITY

The Office of Local Community Service offers a variety of programs to connect students with the local community. These programs are primarily in Harrisburg, but also in Steelton, Grantville, Chambersburg, Mechanicsburg and Dillsburg. Opportunities to serve are offered through a variety of programs facilitated by the Agapé Center:

- Outreach Teams provide ongoing support to more than 30 partnering agencies in the community.
- Three Service Plunge Days give students a one-day orientation in local service as they step out into the community and serve through Into the Streets, Dr. King Community Engagement Day and Service Day.
- Service for Chapel Credit is a program that enables activists to express worship through serving in place of regular chapel attendance.
- The S.A.L.T. (Serving And Living Together) program is held at the Harrisburg Institute on Derry Street. House members live in an intentional community that is committed to serving one another as well as their city community.

With increased involvement and interest, the Agapé Center hopes to continually refine how accessible and meaningful service can be conducted in the local community by:

- Increasing volunteer enrichment and training opportunities, focusing on personal and professional development;
- Developing a sustainable attendance tracking system for volunteers;
- Collaborating with offices and organizations across campus to provide a well-rounded, holistic approach to service.

“It’s so **refreshing** to hear about their experiences and to **remember** what it’s like to not be a college student.”

—Kinley Z. ‘11



*Each year, students participate in Service Plunge Days, which give them a one-day experience of stepping out into the community and serving.*



*Plunge Days are short-term service projects aimed to cultivate long-term foundations in community service.*

## OUTREACH TEAMS: A MESSAGE FROM OUTREACH TEAMS DIRECTOR

“Outreach Teams provide a broad array of volunteer opportunities for students in the Harrisburg community and is intended to facilitate mutually beneficial relationships for both students and community partners. Promoting personal growth and a greater understanding of the challenges in our community, we believe service is not only an expression of commitment to the community around us, but an opportunity to apply classroom and devotional discussion in a real environment. In this respect, service is an enriching context to explore personal understanding of the many issues facing urban and rural societies alike and is often an experience that redefines one’s worldview. Every student comes away with new insights that will continue to serve God’s Kingdom and the greater good of others.”

—Vanessa B. '10, Outreach Director

“On campus, my activities are generally focused on MY learning, on MY productivity and on meeting MY deadlines, so getting off campus redirects my perspective to include others, specifically Allison Hill.”

—Kira W. '12



Messiah Outreach Teams visit residents of Bethany Village.

## OUTREACH TEAMS AT A GLANCE

### Outreach Service in the Community:

	Fall	Spring	
Companionship Ministries	62	+ 39	= 101 students
Creative Arts Ministries	71	+ 63	= 134 students
Health and Special Needs	51	+ 40	= 91 students
Hunger and Homelessness	64	+ 70	= 134 students
Latino and Migrant Partnerships	52	+ 49	= 101 students
Sustainable Agriculture	40	+ 54	= 94 students
Tutoring and Literacy	58	+ 58	= 116 students
Youth Mentoring	69	+ 75	= 144 students
Youth Ministries	70	+ 57	= 127 students
<b>Total students</b>			<b>= 1,042 students</b>

### Outreach Service through On-Campus Events:

Fall Migrant Education Retreat	49 Total participants
Project Angel Tree	100+ gift recipients 94 Messiah student volunteers
Hip-Hop Outreach Show	120 children and staff 46 Messiah student performers and volunteers
Spring Migrant Education Retreat	31 Child participants 26 Messiah student hosts

## OUTREACH TEAMS: PURPOSE AND ACTIVITIES

The purpose of Outreach Teams is to encourage the expression of faith through action by partnering with local community organizations, assisting them in fulfilling their needs and facilitating student learning and growth. In addition, Outreach Teams seek to:

- Help meet the needs in the local community by organizing teams of volunteers.
- Enhance the learning experience of service by offering educational opportunities.
- Shape student growth through a process of orientation, reflection and evaluation.
- Nurture volunteers in embracing a lifelong commitment to service.
- Break down barriers by creating transformative relationships between volunteers and the community.
- Develop the leadership capacity of students within Outreach Teams.



*'Best Buddies' share a meal and Christmas carols on campus.*

In addition to several chapels, several events were designed to bring volunteers and community members together to foster transformative relationships, such as:

- Residents from Messiah Village came to campus to enjoy Thanksgiving dinner with volunteers. Messiah College men continued the tradition of hosting Messiah Village women for a special Valentine's Day dinner—and were promptly invited by the ladies for lunch over at “their place!”
- “Best Buddies” from Paxton Ministries Home enjoyed special events each month to connect with their Messiah College “buddies”—from Christmas dinner and carols to ending with an outdoor picnic at a local park.



*Student outreach coordinators work hard all year to connect teams of volunteers with different community partners in Harrisburg and the surrounding area.*

## OUTREACH TEAMS: COMMUNITY PARTNERS

### Companionship Ministries:

- Bethany Village (14+ years)
- Messiah Village (32 years)
- Maplewood (3 years)
- Promise Place (12 years)

### Creative Arts Ministries:

- Da Blazin' Footprintz (5 years)
- God's Kingdom Steppers (4 years)
- Spirit Force (19+ years)
- Klowns for the Kingdom (19+ years)
- Puppets Praise (19+ years)

### Health and Special Needs:

- Capital Area Therapeutic Riding Association (15 years)
- Morningstar Pregnancy Center (5 years)
- Paxton Ministries (29 years)

### Hunger and Homelessness:

- Bethesda Mission (96 years)
  - *Mobile Mission*
  - *Men's Shelter*
  - *Women and Children's Shelter*
- Habitat for Humanity (15 years)
- Silence of Mary Home (6 years)
- Tabitha's (5 years)

### Latino and Migrant Partnerships:

- Center for Education, Employment, and Entrepreneurial Development (3.5 years)
- Danzante (8 years)
- Lincoln Intermediate Unit Migrant Education Program—Chambersburg (10 years)

### Sustainable Agriculture:

- Catholic Worker House (10 years)
- Grantham Community Garden (4 years)
- Joshua Farm (4 years)

### Tutoring and Literacy:

- Allison Hill Community Ministries (18 years)
- Center for Champions (6 years)
- St. Barnabas Center for Ministry (5 years)

### Youth Mentoring:

- Bethesda Mission (96 years)
  - *Bethesda Youth Center*
- Big Brothers Big Sisters (14+ years)
- Boys and Girls Club (11 years)
- Salvation Army (3.5 years)

### Youth Ministries:

- Abba's Place (18 years)
- Angel Tree (4 years)
- New Hope Ministries (14 years)
  - *Dillsburg*
  - *Dover*
  - *Mechanicsburg*
- Schaffner Youth Detention Center (12 years)
- Young Life Cumberland County (13+ years)

**Community Partners Total: 34**



Emily L. '13 engages in conversation with her "buddy" at Paxton Ministries.



Messiah students volunteer with Joshua Farm through the Sustainable Agriculture Outreach Teams.

“It was **challenging** and also rewarding to hear their stories and **understand** that they are not some distant, different, “other,” but they are just like me, just as undeserving of **God's love** but just as blessed by it.”

—Messiah student volunteer, Fall 2009

## SERVICE PLUNGE DAYS: INTO THE STREETS

College is the beginning of a brand new adventure for hundreds of incoming Messiah students. In the midst of orientations, placement exams and settling into dorm rooms, the second day of orientation week is set aside to expose first-year students to life beyond the Messiah College campus. Before the first textbook is opened or the first lecture attended, students have the opportunity to build relationships with their peers while learning about the surrounding community and serving those in need.

Into the Streets is a nationally recognized program. While students spend time building relationships with their peers, the purpose of this day is to inspire students to continue investing their time and talents into their community. As students serve others in need, they also learn from those in the community. The hope for this day is that the experience is reciprocal. Students are served as they are serving, and it sparks a desire to make service a priority during their college career and beyond.

“Into the Streets is the first **encounter** that new students have of Messiah College’s commitment to **service**. It is a great **opportunity** for them to experience their new community and learn what it means to put Christ’s **love into action**. It’s so exciting to hear about the experiences and **impact** that this day has. It was a privilege to organize this event, understanding its importance and significance and excited about what is **accomplished** through this day.”

—Miriam E '10, *Into the Streets* Coordinator



*Into the Streets* takes place during first-year orientation, introducing students to service opportunities at Messiah.

## INTO THE STREETS AT A GLANCE:

**First-Year Students:** 564

**Community Partner Participants:** 32

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Allison Hill Community Ministry
- American Red Cross of the Susquehanna Valley
- Bethesda Mission
- Boys and Girls Club of Central PA
- Brethren Housing Association
- Capital Area Pregnancy Center
- Carroll Citizens for Sensible Growth
- Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program
- Center for Champions
- Community Action Commission
- Cross, Inc.—Cumberland Vista
- Cumberland County
- Cumberland Valley Relief Center
- Faith Chapel
- Habitat for Humanity of the Greater Harrisburg Region
- Hands and Feet Ministry
- Helen O. Krause Animal Foundation
- Joshua Farm
- Keystone Math and Science Academy, Inc.
- King's Kids' Camp
- Messiah Village
- Neighborhood Center of the United Methodist Church
- New Cumberland First Church of God
- Paxton Ministries
- Pine Grove Furnace State Park
- Project SHARE
- Safe Harbour
- Salvation Army
- The Arc of Dauphin and Lebanon Counties
- The Silence of Mary Home
- Volunteers of America
- West Shore Evangelical Free Church

## SERVICE PLUNGE DAYS: DR. KING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DAY

In 1994, the King Holiday and Service Act was passed by Congress, designating it as a national day of volunteer service. The purpose of the holiday is to encourage Americans of all backgrounds and ages to celebrate the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by turning community concerns into action. In order to celebrate the life and legacy of King, students, faculty and staff at Messiah College join others throughout the nation as they participate in a day of service.

With help from the College Centennial Committee and a grant from PA Campus Compact this year, MLK Day activities began with a cultural tour of Harrisburg, followed by a discussion panel on the top of disability with community partners, and then a luncheon provided by Arepa City. The afternoon was spent participating in a number of service projects, such as helping patients who have multiple sclerosis with household tasks.



Students participated in a number of service projects with local community partners during Dr. King Community Engagement Day.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Paxton Ministries is a Christian, non-profit community home serving adults who may be challenged with social, mental or emotional needs.
- Bethesda Mission houses single women and their children while also providing support groups and classes on parenting, nutrition and budgeting. Students help prepare food for the shelter as well as work to organize the food pantry.
- Allison Hill Community Center offers services to low-income families in the Allison Hill neighborhood including a food bank, health resource center, computer literacy classes, and an after-school program. Students worked cleaning and organizing the food pantry.
- Catholic Worker House is a group of individuals who work to meet needs in the local community through food and clothing distribution, short-term housing, hosting community events, urban gardening and community art initiatives. Volunteers assisted with food and clothing distribution.
- Silence of Mary Home is a safe haven for people from the Allison Hill neighborhood to live in a caring family atmosphere when they have nowhere else to go.
- The National MS Society supports and advocates for persons with multiple sclerosis across the country. In the local chapter's program, "What a Difference a Day Makes," students assisted in the homes of clients to help with their individual needs.



Dr. King Community Engagement Day included a cultural tour of Harrisburg.

## MLK DAY AT A GLANCE

<b>Students</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Employees/Admin</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Community partners</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Speakers and Guests</b>	<b>14</b>

## PANEL SPEAKERS

- Chris Book is executive director of Paxton Ministries, a home for persons with disabilities that provides a supportive and caring Christian environment. Book, an alumnus of Messiah College, spoke about his work and the long-lasting partnership between Paxton and Messiah College.
- Brian Funk, area director for Joni & Friends (in eastern Pennsylvania), shared about his work in educating faith communities in our area to support and advocate for persons with disabilities in their communities.
- Edward Butler, executive director of the Governor's Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities, spoke about the government's role in his work to advocate for persons with disabilities at the policy level across the state.
- Kay Straw, director of Area M Special Olympics, discussed the work of the Special Olympics and the partnership with Messiah on Service Day every year.

## SERVICE PLUNGE DAYS: SERVICE DAY

Service Day was officially founded in 2000 as a result of the strong student support of the Area M Special Olympics games held on campus each year. Because so many students requested to be excused from class that day to help out, it just made sense to take the day off as an institution to give everyone the opportunity to serve. Today, students, faculty and employees are also given the option to serve off-campus on various projects with local churches and organizations.

This year was a tremendous success, as more than 3,000 individuals participated in Service Day on campus and throughout the region. In all, more than 1,000 Special Olympians came to Messiah to enjoy a day of athletic games, joined by Messiah students, faculty and staff along with community volunteers. At the same time, many students left campus to serve in the local community, working on a variety of alternate service projects.



### Service Day at a Glance

#### SPECIAL OLYMPICS

#### SERVICE DAY PARTICIPANTS

Messiah student and employee buddies	770
Messiah Employees	34
Messiah total	804
Olympians	1140
Other Off-Campus Community Partner Sites	88

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abraxas Youth and Family Services  
 Allison Hill Community Ministry  
 Area residents (Development office)  
 Blue Mountain Outfitters  
 Caitlin Smiles  
 Camp Eder  
 Capital Area Pregnancy Centers  
 Carlisle Parks and Recreation  
 Carlisle YMCA  
 Carroll Citizens for Sensible Growth  
 CATRA  
 Center for Champions  
 Collaboratory-Biodiesel Project  
 Collaboratory-Burkina Summer Enrichment Program  
 Collaboratory-Filtration and Purification Alternatives  
 Collaboratory-KWHR Meter Project  
 Collaboratory-Light Sport Aircraft Project  
 Collaboratory-Mali Water and Disabilities Study  
 Collaboratory-Mobility Project  
 Collaboratory-Solar Commuting Vehicle  
 Collaboratory-Solar Scholars  
 Collaboratory-VWOS  
 Collaboratory-WERC  
 Cumberland Crossings  
 Cumberland Valley Relief Center  
 Cumberland Vista  
 Deer Valley YMCA Camp  
 Derry Presbyterian Church  
 Faith United Lutheran Parish  
 Freedom Valley Worship Center  
 Friendship Center  
 Good News Free Methodist Church  
 Grantham Community Garden  
 Habitat for Humanity of the Greater Harrisburg Area  
 Hampden Elementary Green Team  
 Hans Herr House and Museum  
 Harmony Bethel Church of God  
 Harrisburg Christian School  
 Herb & Charlotte Moyer  
 Joshua Farm  
 Keystone Area Boy Scouts  
 Klowns for the Kingdom  
 Mechanicsburg Borough  
 Messiah College Early Learning Center  
 Messiah College-Painting Brubaker  
 Morning Star Pregnancy Services  
 Nativity School of Harrisburg  
 New Cumberland First Church of God  
 Northern York County Historical and Preservation Society  
 On Campus Encouragement  
 Operation Wildcat  
 Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic Church  
 Outdoors Club-Simpson Park  
 Paxton Ministries  
 Reconciliation House  
 Ronald McDonald House Project  
 Safe Harbour  
 Schaffner Detention Center  
 Shalom House  
 Silence of Mary  
 Silence of Mary Home  
 Slate Hill Mennonite  
 Ten Thousand Villages  
 The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society-Central PA  
 Theatre Harrisburg  
 Tri-County OIC  
 Trinity Lutheran Church  
 Visiting Nurse Association of Central PA  
 Volunteers of America (Harrisburg)  
 Volunteers of America (Mechanicsburg)



More than 3,000 individuals participated in Service Day on campus and throughout the region.

## SERVICE FOR CHAPEL CREDIT

One opportunity for sophomore, junior and senior students to serve locally is through the Service for Chapel Credit program in partnership with the College Ministries Office on campus. In place of attending chapel services, students serve the local community through Outreach Teams, read articles relevant to community development and faith development and write reflections from their experiences.

This opportunity intends to:

- Offer an alternative worship option to fulfill chapel credit.
- Provide opportunities to serve in the community.
- Engage in spiritual formation through action and reflection.
- Enhance students' self-awareness and their development of a world view.
- Encourage service as a lifestyle during college and beyond.



Many of the service opportunities for Service for Chapel Credit are organized through Outreach Teams.



Cjloe V. (right) coordinates Health & Special Needs Outreach Teams in addition to volunteering at Paxton Ministries.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abba's Place	Danzante
Allison Hill	Grantham Garden
Community Ministry	Messiah Village
Bethesda Youth Center	Morning Star Pregnancy Clinic
Big Brothers, Big Sisters	New Hope Ministries
Catholic Worker House	Paxton Ministries
CEEED/ESL	Promise Place
Center for Champions	Spirit Force
Central PA Literacy Council	West Shore "A-Team"
	Young Life

“Service builds **community** by bringing everyone together, striving to solve issues that need to be solved, **giving love** to those who feel unloved and bringing **happiness** and **Christ's love** to all.”

—Student feedback from student participating in Service for Chapel Credit

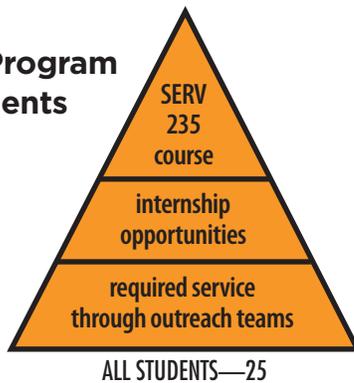
## S.A.L.T. PROGRAM 2009–2010 (SERVING AND LIVING TOGETHER)

Currently home to the S.A.L.T. program (Serving and Living Together), the Harrisburg Institute is now witness to 25 socially conscious and servant-minded students seeking to engage with their community through outreach teams.

The service-time and energy required of each participant is significant. Each week, house members spend a large amount of time in house activities, informal discussion and fellowship that significantly impact their faith and lifestyle. House members engage in activities such as potluck dinners to join together in food, friendship and fellowship. Students are also encouraged to take the SERV Engaging the City course. In addition, First Fridays are art shows held on the first Friday of every month hosting the work of local community artists. The mission of the S.A.L.T. Program is to cooperatively work toward a holistic vision and lifestyle that integrate service into every area of life. Through the S.A.L.T. program, students are able to design and take ownership of their living-learning experience in Harrisburg. All S.A.L.T. members spend time volunteering with outreach teams working alongside community partners in the city.

In addition, all S.A.L.T. members gather for weekly meals and discussions that impact their faith and lifestyle. Further, S.A.L.T. members also have the opportunity of connecting their course of study with internship and applied learning experiences. And lastly, students living in Harrisburg also have the opportunity to take an experiential service-learning course.

### S.A.L.T Program Components



“Living at the S.A.L.T. House, I am constantly **replenished**. My personal passions are kindled by the complementary passions of the **wonderful people** with whom I live. It seems so right to senselessly giggle and gravely discuss with the same people, and there is something immensely **comforting** about sitting down to dinner with those with whom I have served earlier that day. In other words, I’ve found that the S.A.L.T. **community**, in which we both live and **serve alongside each other**, provides me with the support I find so vital to **nurturing** passion, concern and hope.”

—S.A.L.T member reflection

“This space is still Messiah College. The Institute is a Messiah ‘footprint’ in the city of Harrisburg.”

—Craig Dalen, S.A.L.T. Program Director



Harrisburg Institute is located on Dewberry Street in Harrisburg.



Craig Dalen, S.A.L.T. Program Director, talks to attendees at the Mentoring on the Move event in Strawberry Square in downtown Harrisburg.



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SERVICE AND LEARNING

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