

Projects

What is the Senior Class Project?

Each year, the senior class organizes a project that serves the community, with an intent of enriching as many lives as possible. The goal of the senior project is to give students an experience in applying education to a real-world problem or need by fostering the need to ask critical questions, a desire to seek alternatives and a sense of civic responsibility.

Through this project we hope to practice the servant leadership principles we have learned to transform our community and world. In the process we model servant leadership by helping the needy, equipping others and changing our community for the better.

Past Projects

Class of 2023 - "Educate. Connect. Rebuild."

The Class of 2023 summed up its goals for its Senior Project project with the slogan "Educate. Connect. Rebuild." This slogan means that the seniors worked to increase opportunities for education, nutrition, and safety for those served by Hope Harbour, Open Door Community House, and SafeHouse Ministries. They also raised awareness about the needs of these three organizations at their Hunger Banquet, which took place on February 27, 2023. Ultimately, the Class of 2023 committed to being part of a team of organizations working to rebuild the lives of some of the most underserved communities in Columbus.

Class of 2022 - The Highland Community

The Class of 2022 chose to work with the Highland Community. To extend the reach of their impact, the Seniors partnered with several agencies in the area, including The Food Mill, MercyMed of Columbus, and Truth Spring Academy. For some, involvement looked like pulling weeds and planting vegetables at MercyMed's urban farm. Others helped physicians facilitate sessions at MercyMed's Wellness Center, and some students assisted with the prep for The Food Mill's medically-tailored meal program. The Seniors also served the students and families of Truth Spring Academy by participating in a Trunk-or-Treat event in the fall and hosting a "Spring Fling" event in April.

Class of 2021 – The Highland Community

The 2021 senior class of the Servant Leadership Program at Columbus State University selected to work with the Highland Community for its senior project. The Highland Community is the area of Columbus along the 2nd Avenue corridor and includes all areas of the Mill District, which includes the neighborhoods of Anderson Village, Bibb Village, City Village, and North Highland.

The Class of 2021 focused on the areas of need in the Highland Community and to assist with the efforts of many organizations working to address the issues surrounding education, health care, housing, nutrition, and transportation. To extend the reach of their impact, the senior class worked in partnership with several agencies in the Highland Community area including Truth Spring Academy, Fox Elementary, and MercyMed. The seniors were thankful to get to be a part of the team that is working to build a stronger community in the Mill District area.

Class of 2020 - Valley Rescue Mission Women and Children's Center

The 2020 CSU Servant Leadership Program senior class selected the Valley Rescue Mission Women and Children's Center as its senior project beneficiary. The VRM Women and Children's Center is an Emergency Shelter providing temporary relief from physical trauma. This may be from a fire, eviction, or escape from domestic violence. Relief is provided by meeting the physical, spiritual, and material needs of the resident and offering a support system to individuals coming into the facility for temporary shelter.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the seniors were able to support several local families and organizations in need of supplies. Also, seniors donated a significant amount of the money they raised to the United Way Stuff the Bus Campaign, which fills backpacks with school supplies for children in need.

Class of 2019 - Twin Cedars: Anne Elizabeth Shepherd Home

The 2019 CSU Servant Leadership Program senior class selected the Twin Cedars, specifically the Anne Elizabeth Shepard home, as its senior project beneficiary.

The Anne Elizabeth Shepherd Home (AESH) provides residential care for females ages 7-18 who are severely disturbed emotionally and/or behaviorally. Residents live in a safe, staff-secured environment. The program specializes in working with females who have been victims of sexual trauma. During their time working with the residents at AESH, the seniors engaged with the residents through creative mentoring activities and refurbishing the outdoor activity areas for the residents.

Class of 2018 - Warrior Outreach

The 2018 CSU Servant Leadership Program senior class selected Warrior Outreach as its senior project beneficiary. Warrior Outreach exists to help veterans from all of United States' wars cope with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and overcome suicidal thoughts with the use of resilience methods, such as horseback riding. Warrior Outreach has several different programs to help veterans and their families. In 2017, they served approximately 18,629 people through the various services and programs they provide, including horsemanship, home repairs and feeding veterans in need.

Throughout the year, the Servant Leadership Program seniors gave back to Warrior Outreach by helping service members of the past, present, and future and their families by expanding trails at the ranch, providing helping hands in their many different programs within the agency, and assisting with expansion and maintenance at the facility and along the property.

Class of 2017 - SafeHouse Ministries

The 2017 CSU Servant Leadership Program senior class selected SafeHouse Ministries as its senior project beneficiary. SafeHouse Ministries exists to serve and equip people in transition from homelessness, substance abuse, or incarceration. SafeHouse Ministries has several different programs to help those in need. They annually serve over 100,000 meals, provide housing for over 300 men, women, and children, and provide meals, clothes, referrals, and assistance to over 2,500 people. The 2017 seniors connected with the men and women at the two different shelters through various events. They also helped renovate their upstairs space to create a substance abuse counseling center.

Class of 2016 - Truth Spring Academy

The 2016 seniors chose to work with Truth Spring Academy to help the children in the Highland area. They established a reading library and a mentoring program with these students at the academy along with taking these students on numerous field trips and providing for the needs of this program. The senior Servant Leaders raised the funds to support Truth Spring Academy throughout the scholastic year. This class founded the Uptown Tree Trail in order to do so. The Uptown Tree Trail is a live display of brightly decorated Christmas trees throughout the heart of Uptown Columbus.

Class of 2015 - SL Conference for High School Students

The class of 2015 hosted a regional conference as their Senior Project. The intention was to spread the four-year program to teens from the surrounding areas within a day. They orchestrated the day so that each teen would attend each session once. Each session was aimed around one of the courses that the Servant Leadership Program provides during the 4-year program. Students heard a keynote address by Jason Mackenzie, owner of Ride on Bikes and participated in a non-profit fair. This showed them all the types of organizations that they are able to get involved in as high school students. They had a wonderful attendance and the feedback was satisfying.

Class of 2014 - Literacy Alliance

The Class of 2014 partnered with the Literacy Alliance to make an impact on literacy in our community. The Seniors volunteered with the Literacy Alliance and their various programs, renovated the organization's office and classroom space, and purchased much-needed resources.

Class of 2013 - Legacy

Since this year was the 10-year reunion for the Servant Leadership program, the class of 2013 seniors decided to make their Legacy by revisiting the past ten projects. They evaluated each past project to make sure that the Servant Leadership Legacy lived on through the project.

Class of 2012 - Patches

The class of 2012 seniors created a project to address the needs of the poverty stricken and homeless in the Columbus community. They focused on the Highland community by providing resources and opportunities that they would otherwise not have. Second Chance Resource Center was the resource within this community that they used as a central location to host events, provide outside resources, and to promote togetherness within the community. They decided to brand this project P.A.T.C.H.E.S., which stands for Positive and Trusting Communities Help Everyone Succeed. The goal was to ultimately patch up the area to make it a thriving community. They had events known as "Big Events Saturdays" within the community and ultimately helped this community thrive.

Class of 2011 - Playground

The senior classes of 2010 and 2011 collaborated on their senior projects in an effort to build a destination playground for the Columbus community. This playground was designed to engage students of all abilities but specifically to offer elements of play for children with disabilities. Beyond engaging students of all abilities and disabilities, this playground is designed to get children actively involved and exercising. The electronic play elements provide a unique type of play where children are playing games that require them to run or wheel from place to place to win the game. This playground sought to change the way children play and to transform pieces of their educational experience.

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Class of 2009 - Azalea Trace Nursing Home

The seniors chose to work with Azalea Trace Nursing home to enhance the living conditions of the residents and to learn as much from the residents as possible. First, the students painted ceiling tiles for those residents who are bedridden. Additionally, the students landscaped the back living area to have beautiful flowers, scents and greenery. Finally, the students took the oral histories of the residents and published them in a book.

Class of 2008 - Wesley Heights Elementary School

The seniors worked with Wesley Heights Elementary School to improve the educational experience of these students as their project this year. They completed three separate projects to achieve success at Wesley Heights including: creation of a giant mural based on their character education curriculum to cover walls of their new gymnasium; construction of an outdoor classroom that will enable teachers to conduct class outside in one of the school's courtyards; and enhancement

of the media center (library) to improve students' desire to read, with the donation of books, school supplies and a \$1,000 check.

Class of 2007 - Homeless Resource Network Makeover

The senior class of 2007 chose to address the issues of hunger and homelessness for their senior project. A hunger banquet and a makeover for a local homeless service agency were their two signature events in 2007.

Class of 2006 - Girls Inc. Greenhouse

Once again, a senior class was touched by the smiles and hugs of the girls at the Baker Girls Inc. center. This time, students decided that they wanted to add to the educational programming at Girls Inc. With the help of SL staff, seniors wrote and received three grants to purchase a greenhouse kit, all necessary planting supplies, tables, and educational materials. Seniors developed lesson plans, built the greenhouse, and taught classes to the girls on the plant life cycle, butterflies, worm composting, and much more!

Class of 2005 - CSU Habitat House

Perhaps the most ambitious and demanding project to date has been the building of the CSU Habitat House. Seniors led the program and campus in raising \$25,000 to fund the house, and coordinated volunteers for nine Saturdays during the Spring of 2005 to build the house. To raise the money, students sold quilt squares for \$250 each, painted and embroidered the squares, and sewed them together to make the CSU Habitat Quilt, which is currently displayed in the Lumpkin Center.

Class of 2004 - Tree Planting at Baker Middle School

Through a partnership with Trees Columbus, the 2004 graduating class organized a beautification project for the Baker Middle School campus. Led by students who completed most of their service work at the Baker Girls Inc. center, this project was conceived to give something back to the girls who have come to mean so much to the Servant Leadership Program and its volunteers.

Class of 2003 - SL Conference for High School Seniors

During the fall of 2002, the 2003 graduating class of servant leaders planned and facilitated a 2-day work shop, inviting current high school seniors from the Columbus and surrounding area to participate in hands-on leadership activities and community service through House of Heroes.