

Mercy Ecospirituality Center
Service Immersion Handbook 2024



SALVE REGINA
UNIVERSITY

Center for Community Engagement and Service
Community.Services@Salve.edu (401)341-2440

[Facebook.com/SalveCommunityService](https://www.facebook.com/SalveCommunityService)

Instagram: @SalveService

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who participate with The Center for Community Engagement and Service program will:

- Develop leadership and communication skills and strengthen self-confidence
- Develop critical thinking about social issues
- Develop a life-long sense of civic responsibility
- Work and communicate effectively across differences
- Plan and implement community-based service activities or programs
- Integrate the values of service and social justice into career and life goals
- Use reflection as a means for learning and personal growth

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Center for Community Engagement and Service

Feinstein Enriching America Program

Location: Gerety 201,202, 203

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Service Immersion

August 26 – 30, 2024

Mission Statement Mercy Ecospirituality Center:

Mercy Ecospirituality Center of Mercy Ecology, Inc. is a sponsored work of the Sisters of Mercy. We are committed to reflection, education and living gently in mutual relationship with the Earth. We offer hospitality for those seeking solace and to refresh their spirit in the beauty of creation, as well as programs in ecospirituality.

The Benedictine monks of Elmira, NY gave the 39-acre property located in the rural beauty of Vermont to the Vermont Sisters of Mercy. Sisters Judy Fortune and Elaine Deasy directed it as Lumen Christi Retreat House for many years, but after Lumen Christi closed, a group of Sisters established it as an Ecospirituality Center, originally named Mercy Farm in 2010.

The new is always unfolding in our evolutionary universe. We strive to honor that as we welcome all to the sacred land of Mercy Ecospirituality Center.

Website for more details:

<https://mercyecology.org/>

Mercy Ecospirituality Center Service Immersion 2024 Timeline

- ✓ **Applications Due: Friday, April 26 at NOON online**
- ✓ **Applicant Reviews/Selection: Week of April 29**
- ✓ **Notification of Acceptance Offer to participants: May 1**
- ✓ **Special Forms Due: May 1 (participant agreement form and Service Immersion Code of Conduct Paper)**
- ✓ ***Notification from participants if they decline acceptance offer (told to us by): May 2***
- ✓ **One-on-one meetings with Director of Center for Community engagement and Service: May 3 & 6**
- ✓ **May 7 - First group meeting, Gerety 201 from 5-6pm (Topic: Immersion overview & team building)**
- ✓ **\$375 Immersion Fee Down-Payment: Due to the SRU Business Office before May 17**
- ✓ **May 22 – your second installment of estimated \$300 immersion fee payment is due to the SRU Business Office**
- ✓ **June 6 -2nd Zoom group meeting from Noon-1:00PM (Topic: donations and packing)**
- ✓ **June 19 – 3rd Zoom group meeting from 12-1:00PM pre immersion participant question survey online (Topic: Travel Details)**
- ✓ **August 7 – 4th Zoom group meeting from 12-1:00PM (Topic: Travel Details)**
- ✓ **August 21 – Final Zoom group meeting from 12-1:00PM (Topic: Final questions)**
- ✓ **Service Immersion: August 26-30, 2024**
- ✓ **Service Immersion Reunion: Fall 2024 TBD**

Money Matters

Financial Information: *Please note that the following figures are estimates only and are computed using the current exchange rate. We believe them to be reasonable estimates but reserve the right to change the fees should the flight rate change.*

****All students will pay a \$600 (estimated) before May 2024***

The Program fee of \$600 includes:

- Round-trip transportation from campus to Mercy Ecospirituality Center in Benson, VT.
- 4 nights lodging (All participants will be staying on site at Mercy Ecology Center. Each guest room is provided with bed linens and towels. If you prefer your own blankets, pillow, and towel please bring your own).
- Most meals on immersion (not including travel days in van). Three simple, nutritious meals are provided each day and are prepared to accommodate any special dietary needs. Mercy Ecospirituality Center uses produce grown in their own gardens and do their best to supplement with locally grown and/or organic ingredients.
- Project construction materials

Students outside anticipated cost:

- Food on travel days (August 26 & August 30)
- Personal Doctor vaccinations

Financial Assistance: Students can send a letter of request and are required to meet one-on-one to request financial assistance, with the Director of Center for Community Engagement and Service. Financial assistance will only be given on a case by case basis.

Refund policy: the \$600 deposit is not refundable under any circumstance..

**To be an eligible participant on this Service Immersion all students must adhere to the timeline application process, and have all required documents submitted on time. You will receive an electronic notification of all completed requirements to confirm your place on the Immersion.*

Packing List

WHAT TO PACK: A backpack or duffel bag is easiest to carry. Please do not over-pack. You may also want a separate (drawstring bag) to hold an extra shirt, water bottle, camera, etc. You will not have a place to lock up your belongings during the immersion, so it is suggested you limit what valuables you bring to those which can be carried in your day pack (a small drawstring backpack is fine).

CLOTHES: The weather during August can range from high 30s at night and up to 85s during the day. Shorts, jeans, lightweight shirts, and a jacket or sweatshirt for layering are best. You will need clothes and shoes which can get dirty at service projects. *Anything you pack, you can donate on the last day!!

- 2-3 outfits for service projects (these may get dirty).
- 1-2 Salve T-shirts (for group pictures)
- 1 long-sleeved shirt or sweatshirt
- 1-2 pairs of shorts
- 1 pair of closed-toe shoes for service projects/ropes course (sneakers) **Again, these may get dirty.**
- 1 pair of shower sandals
- 1 Rain Jacket or Poncho

TOILETRIES

- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Soap
- Shampoo/conditioner
- Medications
- Contacts/case/solutions
- 1 Roll of Toilet Paper

LINENS

All participants will be staying on site at Mercy Ecology Center. Each guest room is provided with bed linens and towels. (If you prefer your own blankets, pillow, and towel please bring your own).

GEAR: ESSENTIAL

- Sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher)
- Mosquito Repellent
- 2 Personal Water Bottles
- Sunglasses/hat

OPTIONAL

- Camera
- Cell phone (USE OF CELL PHONES WILL BE **VERY LIMITED**)
- 1 Flashlight

What to leave at home:

- Laptops, iPods, etc.

Pre-Immersion Meetings

*All participants are required to attend the pre-immersion meetings before going on the Service Immersion. No exceptions will be granted.

- ✓ **May 7** - First group meeting, Gerety 201 from 5-6pm (Topic: Immersion overview & team building)
- ✓ **June 6** -2nd group meeting via Zoom from Noon-1:00PM (Topic: Q&A travel details)
- ✓ **June 19** -3rd group meeting via Zoom from Noon-1:00PM (Topic: donations and packing)
- ✓ **August 7th** -4th group meeting via Zoom from Noon-1:00PM (Topic: Travel Details)
- ✓ **August 21** – Final zoom group meeting from Noon-1:00PM (Topic: Travel Details)
- ✓ **Service Immersion:** [August 26-30th 2024](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Service Immersion August 26-August 30th 2024

What are the requirements of being a Service Immersion Participant?

Salve students who are committed to social issues, direct service, making a difference and having fun are invited to apply. After, participants are expected to share their unique experience with others in the community.

How do I apply?

Applications open on a rolling basis. Click on following link for application:

Timeline:

April: Applications due online

May: Selection of participants

May - August: Group Meetings

August: Service Immersion

How much does Service Immersion cost?

The cost for the Service Immersion is \$600. It is non-refundable and payable to the SRU Business Office before May. Financial Assistance is available on a case by case basis.

How many spots are available?

This Service Immersion only has 11 spots available, due to the housing requirements.

Where will I be staying?

All participants will be staying on site at Mercy Ecology Center. Each guest room is provided with bed linens and towels. (If you prefer your own blankets, pillow, and towel please bring your own).

What will I be doing during the Service Immersion?

All participants will be getting dirty cleaning up the land and making space available for spring.

How am I transported during the Service Immersion?

Participants are transported to each site by a bus and will always have supervision.

What do I eat during the Service Immersion?

All food menus are planned in advance according to specific dietary restrictions and allergies. There is always plenty of food and water. However, breakfast usually consists of cereal & granola bars. Lunch consists of PB&J sandwiches, fruit, and various snacks. Dinner is adjusted according to the nightly volunteer schedule. All participants must bring their own water bottle, to keep consistent with being Ecofriendly! Please bring your own snacks that you prefer as well.

Center for Community Engagement and Service Website?

<https://salve.edu/center-for-community-engagement-and-service>

Anticipated Course Credit Option

*It is anticipated that in conjunction with the Service Immersion, students will have the opportunity to register for one or two offered courses. These two courses will expose students to social, cultural, religious, economic and political elements of today during a week-long service experience working with Mercy Ecospirituality Center. Students will provide manual labor each day on service projects as assigned.

More information about the service learning course option will be available soon.

Sample Schedule

Welcome Volunteers! ☺ <i>*please note that schedule can shift due to weather</i>						
Time	Saturday 3/11	Sunday 3/12	Monday 3/13	Tuesday 3/14	Wednesday 3/15	
7:00 AM		<i>Breakfast</i>				
8:00 AM			Barn Chores (5 Volunteers)	Barn Chores (4 Volunteers)		
9:00 AM		<i>Orientation with Kayla:</i> - Introduction to the Land through Walking Meditation - Journaling of Observations - Reflection Sharing and Simple Tea Ceremony	<i>Hospitality/House Projects</i> - Organize basement and seed station for tomorrow's activity - Deep clean guest entrances	<i>Activity with Kayla:</i> Food Security vs. Food Sovereignty	Gratitude Blessing and Final Reflection Pack, Clean and Prepare to Leave	
10:00 AM				<i>Activity with Sister Betty:</i> DVD & Reflection on Soil Health		
11:30 AM		Lunch Preparation	Lunch Preparation	Lunch Preparation	Pack Lunch	
12:00 PM		<i>Lunch</i>				<i>Safe Journey Home!</i>
1:00 PM			<i>Barn Work</i> - Organize ropes, hoses - Tighten tarps around hay - Clean out summer barn		<i>Activity with Kayla:</i> Build Newspaper Seed Pots	
2:00 PM		<i>Arrival!</i>				
3:00 PM		<i>Introductions</i> <i>Orientation with Sister Betty:</i> - History and Overview of Mercy Ecology & MEC - Community and Service	<i>Land Work</i> - Remove deer fencing - Clean fallen branches around willow trees - Tidy Cosmic Walk	<i>Hospitality/House Projects</i> - Pull rugs, sweep and vacuum - Organize dressers in guest rooms	<i>Seed Blessing</i> - Plant Onions - Plant Parsley - Plant Cabbage	
4:00 PM						
5:00 PM	Dinner Preparation	Dinner Preparation	Split Tasks - Dinner Preparation/Barn Chores	Split Tasks - Dinner Preparation/Barn Chores		
6:00 PM	<i>Dinner</i>					

Created by:

**Center for Community Engagement and Service
Feinstein “Enriching America” Program**

Location: Gerety 201,202, 203

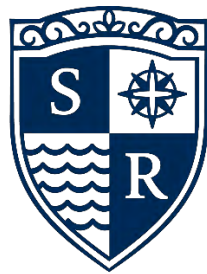
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