



Pioneer High School

Service Learning

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NON-PROFITS, STUDENTS MAKE THE PERFECT MATCH **More than 50 community agencies to recruit volunteers at service-learning forum**

SAN JOSE, Calif., September 16, 2008 — Pioneer High School will host more than 50 public and private sector community agencies at the annual kickoff of its nationally recognized service-learning program on Wednesday, September 17. The Pioneer Community Outreach Fair, which runs from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m. on the school's Blossom Hill Road campus, is designed to match local non-profits with the 1,500 student volunteers who donate more than 15,000 hours each year in co-curricular service activities.

Many schools require students to complete volunteer hours, but Pioneer's unique program uses community service to integrate real-world experience and classroom study of issues such as hunger, poverty, substance abuse, smoking prevention, environmental pollution, public health, and education. Students develop leadership experience and a deeper, personal understanding of the issues on which they work. Teachers gain a way to make their lessons more practical. Non-profits, in return, get access to a large group of dedicated, experienced volunteers, some of whom are ready to assume management roles on service projects.

All Pioneer sophomores, for example, complete an interdisciplinary project that combines work for a local non-profit with an academic study of the community problem the agency is trying to remedy. Over the course of the year-long project, students are required to use skills they have acquired in multiple classes: statistical literacy from math, academic research and writing from social studies, and reflective writing—even poetry—from English class. In the past, students have studied issues including political corruption, teen pregnancy, illiteracy, child abuse, nuclear non-proliferation, and water pollution. In each case, students completed at least 30 hours of service with a relevant agency, many of which they found at the Outreach Fair.

This year's community organizations include YMCA South Valley, Tech Museum of Innovation, Support Network for Battered Women, Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, National Alliance on the Mentally Ill, City of San Jose, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Second Harvest Food Bank, and Santa Clara Valley Water District.

About Pioneer High School

Pioneer High School is a three-time California Distinguished School in the San José Unified School District. In April 2008 the California Department of Education named Pioneer one of only three Service Learning Leader Schools in the state, recognizing the variety of community service opportunities available to students, its extensive partnerships with public and private sector community agencies, and the integrated, interdisciplinary way in which service is used to teach core curriculum. Pioneer students and teachers routinely present aspects of its program at regional and national conferences. Please direct inquiries to Mr. Mike Burrell at (408) 535-6310.

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