



West High School

Silver Cord Society

A Service-Based Student Organization



Advisor: Mrs. Cleveland

Administrative Advisor: Mrs. Tidwell

Who is Eligible?

All West High students who would like to help the community and others.

How do I qualify to receive the Silver Cord for Graduation? Students must complete a minimum of forty hours of committee-approved community service in their sophomore, junior, and senior years at West High. **You cannot average 40 hours over the three-year span; forty hours must be completed within each school year.** Our goal is to instill the idea of community service as a life-long pursuit. If students successfully complete the amount of hours necessary, they will receive a silver cord to wear at commencement similar to the gold cords worn by academic award winners.

Important Details:

Documentation: Students **MUST** document all service activities on the Silver Cord Award Form provided by West High – **one form for each site or project**, signed by a supervisor at the site. (*A note confirming the students' service signed by the supervisor at the project is also acceptable, but it must be attached to the Silver Cord Form*). Submit forms to Mrs. Cleveland at West High at any time during the year. For freshman who earn hours during the summer before their sophomore year, you may submit them the following fall and get credit toward your sophomore hours. For sophomores and juniors: if you do not turn in forms by the end of the school year, you may submit them at any time during the following fall. There is no specific deadline for underclassmen to submit forms, although it is best to turn them in as soon as they are completed. **Seniors should submit all Silver Cord forms by May 1 of senior year.** Pick up forms in the Freshman Office or print them from our school website, under Our School.

Summer Service:

Service hours earned during the summer, after the academic year, may be applied toward EITHER the prior or the following school year – student's choice. (For example, the summer after the sophomore year can apply toward either the sophomore or junior 40-hour requirement or divided between the two as needed). ***It is recommended that all summer projects be pre-approved in writing by Mrs. Tidwell to make sure they are acceptable.*** Pre-approval forms are available in the Freshman Office (or on the West High website- under Our School) and should be submitted two weeks before final exams. Summer service that complies with the Silver Cord criteria will be accepted, even if students were not able to submit pre-approval forms. Students should pick up blank Silver Cord Award Forms before the end of school to use for documenting summer service. Please keep completed forms until you return to West High in the fall. The Silver Cord Advisor will be responsible for keeping students' Silver Cord files.

Important details regarding the Silver Cord Award:

Acceptable Service Activities: Silver Cord hours must be for providing a SERVICE or meeting a clear NEED for a non-profit agency, church, school, park, charity program, fundraiser or community event. The service should be “above and beyond” one’s usual scope of involvement and could be part of required service for a program such as Scouts or religious education. While some organizations meet during the school day, only hours outside of school time could be applied to Silver Cord service. For example, Student Council is a West High group that meets, at times, during the school day. Those hours would not be eligible, but any work done outside the normal school day could be applied. If there are any questions about whether a specific volunteer experience meets the criteria of “providing a service” or “meeting a need,” students should get prior approval from the Silver Cord Committee by submitting a pre-approval form. The Silver Cord Review Committee makes final determinations regarding service.

Approved Organizations/Activities:

- American Heart Association • Art Splash • Best Buddies • Beyond the Bell
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters • Blood Bank/Blood Drives • Camp Goodwill • Food Bank
- Friendship Connections • Goodwill • Gospel Mission • Habitat for Humanity • Head Start
- Her Health Women’s Center • Humane Society • Junior League
- LaunchPAD Children’s Museum • Local Church Activities • Local Medical Centers
- Mid Steps Services • Peer Tutoring/Extended Day • Ragbrai • Red Cross
- Retirement Homes • Ronald McDonald House • S.T.A.R.S. • Salvation Army • Santa House
- Siouxland Dive Team • Siouxland Soup Kitchen • Special Olympics
- The Evelyn Larson Theatre • United Way • Watchful Eye Foundation • YMCA

Important details regarding the Silver Cord Award:

Silver Cord hours CANNOT be for a relative, or for pay or compensation of any kind. Other activities that would not be acceptable: WHS sports team managing, training or event timing or administration; most WHS music program events; concession stand or fundraising events in which proceeds benefit a WHS program; serving as a camp counselor *while receiving free room and board* (some exceptions made for camps for children with disabilities); performing in a musical, dance, or theater group unless related to a social cause or charity benefit; participation on committees in which the focus is on one’s own leadership development and does not include outreach to larger community. Court ordered community service hours are not eligible.