**What is Service Learning?**

Service Learning (SL) is a specially designed learning experience in which students combine reflection with structured participation in community-based projects to achieve specified learning outcomes as part of an academic course and/or program requirement. By participating in academic community partnerships at the local, national or international level, students gain a richer mastery of course content, enhance their sense of civic responsibility, and ultimately develop a more integrated approach to understanding the relationship between theory, practice, ideas, values, and community.

Service learning is...

- Different from volunteer efforts or community service. When students do community service they help to meet community needs through volunteering. In service learning, students go beyond this by using the service experience as a foundation to examine themselves, their society, and their futures.

- Based on a reciprocal relationship in which the service reinforces and strengthens the learning of the course and the learning reinforces and strengthens the service.

- Integrated into the academic curriculum such that students have structured opportunities to reflect critically on their experiences. This reflection takes place through a combination of writing, reading, speaking, listening, and group discussions.

- An opportunity for students to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities.

- When students earn academic credit for demonstrating that they have learned through service rather than simply putting in the hours.

Service learning fosters a sense of caring for others and a commitment to civic responsibility.