What Is Service Learning?

Service Learning is defined by the American Association for Higher Education as “a method under which students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service that is connected in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience.”

- Learn to Grow: Service Learning helps students grow, both intellectually and socially. Students enrolled in Service Learning courses develop a better understanding of course content while also connecting course material to the world around them.
- Understand Strengths: Service Learning helps students develop clear career goals. Students who participate in Service Learning gain real world experience that often helps them clarify their career choices and goals.
- Integrate Self: Service Learning helps students become part of their communities.

Why Service Learning Is Important

- Service Learning is a model of experiential learning, and by spending time in the community working with an organization, project or specific task, students are able to apply abstract concepts and theories from class to actual service in the community.
- Service Learning goes beyond readings, lectures and notes. Service in the community allows students to interact with real people and address real issues, while keeping within the learning objectives of the course.
- Service Learning provides an opportunity for students to form connections and relationships with people outside of the Alfred University campus. They learn how to navigate the professional world, find their sense of place, and gain the experience of going out into their surroundings, identifying a need, and helping to meet it using the skills they possess.
- Service Learning is reciprocal: student service work benefits the community and the community provides the student with experiential learning opportunities and life experiences.

The mission of the Gary Horowitz Service Learning Program is to assist in the development of meaningful service learning opportunities for Alfred University students. These opportunities will foster a sense of civic responsibility, provide workforce applicable experiences and skills, and develop an extended sense of mutually beneficial community among students, faculty, and community partners.