

Trinity High School Immersion Program 2019-2020

What is an immersion experience? Immersion experiences are 5-10 day structured trips to domestic locations where students are exposed to issues of poverty and injustice while experiencing unique cultures and environments. Students engage in direct service activities, participate in experiential learning, and make educational site visits – while living in the very communities that they are serving. The Immersion Program is rooted in five pillars: education, service, social justice, community, and spirituality. Program participants are invited to grow in each of these areas during the experience preparation, the trip itself, and the post-trip reflection.

What are the expectations of an Immersion Participant?

1. Participate in all of the pre-trip preparation sessions. Your participation in these activities is necessary for your group to develop community and to be knowledgeable about your immersion location.
2. Refrain from the use of electronics. Demonstrate appropriate and respectful use of cell phones, digital cameras, video cameras, and other recording devices during the trip.
3. Participate in the post-trip reflection day and any other activities coordinated by the teacher coordinators.

Mandatory Informational Meeting Date(s) for both students and parents – Thursday October 10th at 7pm, Tuesday October 15th at 7pm OR Thursday October 24th at 5pm. Please attend one.

How to Apply:

1. Fill out an application online at www.ths.org/ministry/immersion_trips
2. Attend one of the informational meetings with a parent/guardian
3. Submit Essay requirement (Due Friday November 1st)

After Application:

4. Once application is approved, schedule an interview (Scheduled sometime before or after school between November 6th-22nd)
5. Turn in 2 Letters of Recommendation from Adults (one from a non-trinity affiliate; Due during scheduled interview)

All essays, interviews & recommendation letters must be turned in/scheduled with either Ms. Pagano (Cleveland Immersion) or Mrs. Collins (Appalachia Immersion)

How much do immersion experiences cost?

Each trip has a different price based on the travel, lodging and programming costs. In general, domestic experiences range from \$340 to \$550. Students are required to have medical insurance for the time of the trip. All experiences have been created to provide a safe, high-quality experience for each participant.

How can I pay for an immersion experience?

Our goal is for students to pay as little out-of-pocket as possible. However, ultimately the student is responsible for complete payment of their experience by the established deadlines. The Trinity immersion program provides fundraising training and materials. Many students fundraise the entire cost of their experience. Our most effective method has been for participants to ask those they have personal connections with (family, friends, former teachers, church/parish, etc.) for financial assistance through letter writing. Any money raised by individuals' above-and-beyond their costs can be applied to another participant who is in need. Money raised beyond the groups' needs will be donated to agencies the group will come in contact with during their experience.

Summer Immersion Payment Schedule

- 25% of TOTAL by Mon, December 20, 2019 OR stack of letters to be mailed out
- 50% of TOTAL by Mon, Feb 10, 2020
- 75% of TOTAL by Monday, April 6, 2020
- 100% of TOTAL by Tuesday, May 26, 2020

Fundraising deadlines:

The deadlines for receiving donations for your account are the same as the payment schedule. That means that you should send out your fundraising letters early enough so that your donations will come in before the dates that payments are expected. If your donations exceed the amount you owe, then no out-of-pocket payment is expected from you. There is an exception to this rule with the first payment date. In lieu of your first payment, you may give us a stack of fundraising letters to send out for you. We will accept these as your first payment.

Any cash/checks will be collected by a specific teacher depending on the immersion you are participating in. Checks can be made payable to Trinity High School.

**IMMERSION PROGRAM: APPALACHIA, WV. SUMMER 2020
(JUNE 6-12)**

Cost: \$340-400

Accepting: 8 Students

Our community partner for this immersion is the Appalachian Catholic Worker Farm outside Spencer, West Virginia, just north of Charleston. ACW describes the experience they offer students as being **one-third service, one-third education, and one-third reflection**. Students would be introduced to Appalachian culture and issues, Catholic social teaching, and have the time for bonding, group building, learning together and exploring their spirituality.

Service: The ACW Farm has a variety of community partners that immersion participants may serve. Though the service site will be determined upon arrival, participants can expect to participate in a variety of service projects that may include community outreach, physical service and farm work, and education about the local area.

MISSION: to provide spiritual space and hope in the mountains by addressing issues of poverty, in the context of all creation, through Education, Contemplation and Outreach.

VISION: to be a Catholic presence in Appalachia serving and advocating for all creation in need, and providing opportunities to engage in experiences that exemplify how we are all interconnected, to each other and Earth.

CORE VALUES: Voluntary Poverty, Simplicity, Service & Contemplative Prayer

Accommodations: Participants will stay in rustic, communal housing on the grounds of the ACW farm. Students will be separated male/female in sleeping arrangements. Meals will be simple and nourishing.

<https://acwfarm.com/>

Any questions please contact Mrs. Collins: Collinsp@ths.org

**IMMERSION PROGRAM: CLEVELAND, OH SUMMER 2020
(JUNE 8-12)**

Cost: \$225-250

Accepting: 8-9 Students

The Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH) is a Cleveland-based organization that seeks to organize and empower homeless and at risk men, women, and children, to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty through public education, advocacy, and the creation of nurturing environments. They do this in partnership with the homeless, through the publication of a street newspaper, staffing for service and outreach collaborations, coordination of the Homeless Congress, improving and expanding access to services, sponsorship of the Homeless Candlelight Vigil, protecting the right to vote by homeless people, publication of various Street Cards, and construction of a host of educational and advocacy activities.

Service: This immersion seeks to put a human face on statistics. Over the course of the week, participants will have the opportunity to visit local organizations to understand the interconnecting issues around poverty and homelessness. The group will volunteer in local service providers but also sit down and eat at a soup kitchen in order to better understand another's reality. Participants will build relationships with people who are experiencing homelessness and understand the deeply human and systemic reasons why people struggle with housing. The immersion group will rely exclusively on public transportation during the course of the week.

Accommodations: Simple floor space provided for sleeping bags, students will be separated male/female in sleeping arrangements. Simple meals provided. Some meals will be at meal sites in the community.

Any questions on please contact Ms. Pagano: paganod@ths.org

FAQ:

What are the living conditions like for each experience?

While conditions differ from immersion to immersion, in general students are asked to live simply during their experience. Participants are provided with a packing list prior to the trip to ensure that they have the proper items to live simply but comfortably.

Food – Depending on the location, groups may prepare their own meals or have food prepared for them. Participants will always have simple but sufficient meals. Any special dietary needs can usually be met. An emphasis is put on experiencing the local foods and culture of the immersion location.

Lodging – Groups will stay in retreat centers, volunteer houses, or churches, depending on the immersion. Participants will generally sleep in shared rooms or dorm style sleeping spaces, however separation of male and female participants will occur. Some experiences require students to bring a sleeping bag and floor mat. Group safety is always the primary concern; activities, lodging, meals, and other activities will always be planned with this in mind.

Travel – Transportation for each experience is dependent on each site. In general, groups will travel by Trinity vans.

Other – Students are required to submit a copy of their health insurance card and sign a waiver once they are accepted for the trip.