

TAPS Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Teen and Parent Service Society (TAPS)?

The purpose of TAPS, as a private, non-profit organization, is to provide high school girls with a variety of community service opportunities. Teens and parents volunteer in a variety of support areas including social welfare, civic, environmental, health, and animal rescue therapy. Throughout a teen's high school years, TAPS teens develop valuable leadership, organization, and teamwork skills. TAPS parents support this learning process and work alongside them in volunteer activities. TAPS' purpose is exclusively educational, service-oriented, and charitable. TAPS strives for members to work directly with those in need and does not fundraise.

How did TAPS begin? How large is the organization today?

TAPS was organized to address the unmet need for service opportunities in the greater Walnut Creek and Diablo Valley communities. In 2002, Melanie Knoth English, along with Christy Deibert, Rhonda Montgomery and Cindy Sakai, founded the Teen and Parent Service Society (TAPS). Today, TAPS is a group of close to 175 teens and parents dedicated to helping others in our community.

What are the TAPS community service projects?

TAPS' signature volunteer projects are working with groups such as White Pony Express, Food Bank of Contra Costa, Trinity Center, Bay Area Crisis Nursery, Ruth Bancroft Gardens and Love-A-Child Missions Homeless Recovery Shelter. Examples of past projects include partnering with a local swim club to provide summer pool time for children that live at Love-a-Child, working with community organizations to refurbish gardens or maintain grounds, working at food banks or thrift stores, sponsoring drives

and partnering with elementary schools or community organizations to distribute collected goods.

What are the benefits of joining TAPS?

The most significant benefit is the personal satisfaction of making a positive contribution in our community. TAPS teens and parents develop leadership skills, work directly with other local leaders, and build relationships with diverse, dedicated and talented people in the community. Members learn about the Walnut Creek and Diablo Valley communities and how to work with other organizations to achieve a common goal.

What is the cost to belong to TAPS?

Active teen/parent dues are \$175 per year, payable in August. New members also pay a \$50 registration fee to cover the costs of the TAPS orientation binder, and a TAPS volunteer shirt for teen and mother.

Where do my TAPS dues go?

Member dues fund TAPS programs; TAPS does not fundraise for our own organization or other non-profits. In recent years, nearly 75% of our budget has been directly allocated to TAPS community service programs and to All TAPS service events. Dues also pay the administrative costs of the TAPS website, insurance, recruitment, and taxes.

What is the time commitment for teen TAPS members?

TAPS teens commit to accumulate at least 20 TAPS service hours per year throughout high school. These hours are accumulated through several TAPS activities:

- Grade Level Meetings and Service Projects: Each Class holds monthly meetings to plan and organize service events, but classes are also

encouraged to coordinate additional projects together.

- ALL TAPS Service Meetings: Twice a year the entire TAPS community meets, at the Holiday Giving Event (December) and Service Celebration (May). These gatherings give teens and moms across all TAPS classes the opportunity to work together on a service project and celebrate their successful service projects.
- All TAPS Activities: TAPS offers all teens the opportunity to work at designated TAPS events throughout the year. These service projects are available for teens/moms to sign up individually on the TAPS website and are in addition to class projects (noted above).
- Random Acts of Kindness and TAPS Service Coupons: Teens are challenged to think of new ways to help their neighbors in need and others in our community. Our ultimate goal is for teens to become service-minded in high school and after graduation.

What specific leadership involvement is expected of parents?

For teens to maximize their TAPS experience, all parents assume volunteer roles throughout their teen's high school years. Parents fill positions as committee members, committee chairs and TAPS Board members. Parents are encouraged to serve on the TAPS Board of Directors during at least one year of membership.

What happens if I am unable to attend a TAPS meeting?

While we depend on TAPS members to accomplish our organization's goals, we understand that conflicts sometimes arise. Teens are expected to attend 75% of class meetings, but we strive to offer flexible options to assist in fulfilling membership obligations.

How does the membership process work?

TAPS welcomes all girls entering 9th grade (current 8th graders) and their parents to apply for membership. We are seeking prospective members who want to make a difference in our community. A strong applicant should be committed to volunteering in TAPS activities for at least twenty

hours per year throughout their high school years.

Each applicant completes a New Teen and Parent Application. The form is submitted during the membership drive period (January through March) for the Membership Committee's review. Accepted applicants are notified in early April. Updated January 2022