

## **Thayer Academy Senior Projects**

### **Information for Prospective Site Supervisors**

As their final requirement for graduation, Thayer Academy Seniors spend four weeks in May completing an independent project. They are encouraged to pursue an area of interest in depth during this time. With the guidance of their senior advisors, parents, teachers, and other contacts, Thayer students search for sites where they can gain valuable, practical experience, volunteer their time, and make meaningful contributions. The goal for Thayer Academy is to provide Seniors with the opportunity to design and take charge of a significant step in their own educational experience before moving on to college.

The Senior Project program gives students a chance to investigate potential careers, to do research in a special area of interest, or to offer a service to the community. In the past our Seniors have volunteered at hospitals, the Red Cross, law firms, courthouses, the New England Aquarium, veterinary practices, museums, and homeless shelters. While most students choose a local site and return to campus in the afternoon for sports, each year Thayer offers a number of international travel opportunities as well. Students have studied Marine Biology in the Galapagos Islands, hiked among the hills of Peru and visited our French Sister School, Stanislas, in Cannes.

These projects will ideally result in field placements that offer real opportunities for mutual benefit. We would like our Seniors to find placements in which they can be of real service and make active contributions to their host setting, while at the same time receiving valuable exposure, instruction, and opportunity for their own challenge and enrichment. Students should be of valuable service at their settings, and agencies should be able to provide them with significant responsibilities and real opportunities for learning.

There is an Academic Component to the Project. Seniors are required to read the equivalent of one relevant book to prepare them for the field experience. In some cases, site supervisors may want to specify suitable articles, journals, or textbook chapters in lieu of a single book. The project will culminate with a Final Reflection which draws on the students' site experiences and reading and summarizes what they have gained and contributed through this project.

**The Project runs from Monday, May 8 through Friday, June 2.** Seniors are required to spend 20- 25 hours per week at their site. How and when these hours are apportioned will vary from site to site. Students will be returning to the Thayer campus for two Fridays during the project. These dates have yet to be determined. Seniors are

not permitted to receive payment for their volunteer service. If there is a circumstance in which a student is paid then they will be asked to donate their wages.

The Senior Projects will be graded pass/fail. Students will be in touch with their Thayer academic advisors on a regular basis. These Thayer faculty members will also keep in touch with site supervisors regularly to make sure any questions or concerns are addressed. To help us determine the success of the projects both for the supervisors and the students, we will ask that supervisors complete an Evaluation Report with a brief checklist and a few comments at the conclusion of the four weeks.

Thank you for taking the time to host a Thayer Academy Senior. We appreciate the opportunities you will be providing for them. We hope the experiences they take away from the time spent at their sites will give them tools to use in their futures as they head off to college.

Sincerely,

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