**What is Silver Cord:**

The Silver Cord Award is a distinguished volunteer service award available to Union High School students who earn a minimum 50 hours of community service/volunteering during their years of high school, for a total of at least 200 hours by the end of their senior year. Students can start the program at any time while in high school and can receive yearly recognition for a minimum of 50 documented hours (awards are listed below). Special consideration will be given to students who move in late in their high school career. Upon completion of hours, participants will receive a Silver Cord to wear on their robes at graduation in recognition of their achievement.

If you are interested in the program, we recommend that you enroll by completing an **enrollment form** and submitting it to Mrs. Kriz (either in the guidance office or email it). Enrolling in the program will put you on the email list for updates on potential volunteer opportunities.

After enrolling, students can begin volunteering. If your volunteer work is only a single time event, students should take a **verification/reflection form** with them the day of the event to have the supervisor complete. If the volunteer work will span several days, we encourage students to use the back of the verification form (documentation of hours) to keep track of volunteer hours. At the end of their volunteering, students should take their form to their supervisor and have the supervisor complete the community member portion of the verification/reflection form. Students cannot complete volunteer hours for family members/relatives. Once forms are completed, students should submit to Mrs. Kriz in the guidance office throughout the year but no later than Monday, April 29, 2019.

Questions can be directed toward **Amy Kriz**, Union High School Counselor.

**Documentation:**
Students MUST document all service activities on the Silver Cord Verification Form - one form for each site or project. In order to validate the student's hours, the Silver Cord Verification Form must be signed once by the supervisor at the completion of service. Time for breaks, lunch, or travel cannot count toward service hours. For purposes of documenting hours, students should round hours to the nearest .25 hour (.25 hours = 15 minutes). Forms should be submitted to Mrs. Kriz in the guidance office throughout the year but no later than Monday, April 29, 2019. Seniors must submit all Silver Cord Verification forms/documentation by this date to receive their cord for graduation and all underclassmen should submit by this date to receive recognition and their letter/bar/pin at the Awards Day. Award forms for service completed by underclassmen during the month of May can be put towards next year’s hours. As part of the Silver Cord Verification Form, there is also a student reflection portion that the student must complete as part of the process. NOTE: Hours will NOT be credited to students until the student reflection form has also been completed.

**Summer Service:**
Service hours earned during the summer after the academic year may be applied toward the following school year, as early as the summer before freshman year. However, students must be using the correct high school verification/documentation forms for the upcoming year (i.e. if it’s summer 2019, students must use the high school’s 2019-20 forms, not 2018-19).

Students should email Mrs. Kriz at a\_kriz@union.k12.ia.us if they have questions during the summer. She will attempt to respond within a week, but please allow extra time.

**Acceptable/Non-acceptable Service Activities:**
Silver Cord hours must be providing a SERVICE or meeting a clear NEED for a non-profit agency, church, school, park, charity program or fundraiser, community event, or political campaign. The service should be "above and beyond" one's usual scope of involvement. Some examples of activities that would NOT be considered acceptable service are: ushering at church, "good deeds" (i.e. watching a friend's dog while they're on vacation, etc...), orientation/training, work done for family, and anything one receives compensation for. If you can make a strong case for why a non-acceptable service *should* be counted, you must discuss with Mrs. Kriz and/or Mrs. Wittenburg for final approval.

**Religious Service:**
In order to be applicable to a student's Silver Cord hours, an activity may NOT be directly involved with the rituals, services, or ceremonies of any specific religion or fundraising to support a specific religion or religious institution. Examples of invalid activities include, but are not limited to: candle lighting, reading from religious texts, altar service, etc... The activity needs to be "above and beyond" being a good member of the church. Acceptable church related activities would be youth groups serving a meal at a homeless shelter, teaching Sunday School, being a Youth Group Leader, mission trips, singing in the choir, or other group activities that benefit the community.

**How to earn credit for your hours:**