



# CHIARAVALLE ACADEMY

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## APPLIED CONCEPT TERM

*“Instruction becomes a living thing. Instead of being illustrated, it is brought to life. In a word, the outing is a new key for the intensification of instruction ordinarily given in the school.”*

– Dr. Maria Montessori

What is ACT?

ACT is an acronym for *Applied Concept Term*. At Chiaravalle Academy, our hope is that ACT provides experiential opportunities for our students out in the greater community which in turn will facilitate deeper study.

The Chiaravalle Adolescent Community offers lessons across the curriculum with practical applications. The often-asked questions of the adolescents are: “What will I use this for?” “Why do I need to learn this?” as they determine how to use knowledge to do something in the world. Projects such as taking care of the chickens, building and maintaining a garden, baking bread or making soup are real world opportunities for many lessons in science, language arts, and practical life skills. Students also work as a group to find ways of making money (fundraising) to fund projects of their choosing, their first direct experiences of the economic connections in a society.

ACT was designed to provide all Chiaravalle students a specific time in the year to plan a ‘Going Out’ that would be meaningful to them. This may seem exciting to some, daunting to others and a combination of the above to most.

ACT trips can be used as field research to complement various studies, as opportunities to investigate a field of interest or to make improvements in their communities by developing community service projects.

When students return from these trips, they share their experiences with the rest of the class thus changing the culture of the classroom. New experiences breath fresh life into the group and inspire others; new levels of independence have arisen; and new appreciation for the larger world has been brought to the group. Clearly, ACT or “going out” is not just an extended walk or a field trip. “Going out” is a process of fanning the spark of imagination, allowing students to develop leadership skills and make meaningful contributions to the community.

### **Where can we find applied learning opportunities?**

- Local
  - Businesses
  - Museums
  - Geographical and historical landmarks.
  - Applied science lessons in horticulture and animal husbandry
- Further afield
  - Universities: Yale, UConn, UMass
  - Cities: New York, Boston



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### Student Responsibility for ACT:

- Make a list of 5 to 7 areas you are interested in. Dream big. This is your opportunity.
  - Show this list to your parents
- Look at each of these areas and see what opportunities might be offered in these areas.
  - Make lists
- Make a list of contacts you would like to reach out to. These would be your ACT sponsors.
  - Names
  - Email addresses
  - Phone Numbers
- Compose an email/letter to use. Do this with your parents.
  - See the example below
- Send out the letter to at least two places.
- Look closely at the Applied Concept Activity Form.
  - Will you be able to answer the questions?
- Arrange the dates and time with your ACT sponsor.
- Show up as arranged, dressed appropriately, and with your best manners.
- Have a Thank You letter prepared and present it on the last day. This is very important as you are an ambassador of our school.

### Parent Responsibility for ACT:

- Start the conversation with your student.
- Be involved in all list making.
- Be realistic about transportation/chaperone logistics and share these with your child.
- Check ACT dates.
- Help your child to choose some opportunities and compose a letter.
  - There is some sample verbiage on the next page.
- Sign off on the ACT Activity Form
- Remind your child that they are a guest, are there to learn.

If any parent knows of any ACT opportunities, please let Mrs. Russell or Mrs. Quinby know. This process can be challenging for our students but the benefits are profound.



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SAMPLE LETTER THAT CAN BE ADAPTED.

Dear

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a seventh/eighth-grade student at Chiaravalle Academy in Enfield, CT. Our school encourages us to engage with real-life activities in the community. I am particularly interested in \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_.

My school has set aside the following dates \_\_\_\_\_ and I am wondering if you could help me learn more about \_\_\_\_\_ by allowing me to shadow or help out on these dates.

I assure you that I am well-mannered, will arrive on time, and will be respectful to all if you can help me with this opportunity.

Part of my assignment will be to prepare a short presentation for my classmates who are also engaging in community experiences during this time.

Sincerely,

Name

Email address

Phone (this should probably be a parent's phone # unless you know the person well)