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Volunteer Handbook

The Columbus Adult Education Center & Youth Programs is a volunteer center providing educational services to adults and youth who desire to acquire English skills and become self-reliant, productive citizens.

Services are provided at no cost to our students.

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Columbus Adult Education Center & Youth Programs is to help adults and youth obtain the English and educational skills necessary to prepare them for high school or other educational programs, employment or training leading to self-reliance and become contributing members of the community.

Vision Statement

Our aim is to become a highly successful adult school, recognized for diversity and excellence in teaching and learning.

Goals

- Create a community of learners
- Encourage respectful relationships that honor individual and cultural differences
- Support and encourage successful learning
- Implement Best practices for instruction
- Provide a positive experience for both students and volunteers



History

The Columbus Adult Education Center & Youth Programs (CAEC&YP) began as the Columbus Branch Adult School and was originally created to meet the needs of a small congregation within The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The school originally consisted of Karen and Karenni speaking families. Now it serves all adults and youth who want to improve their English skills.

Recognizing that the acquisition of English skills would be essential for non-English speakers to get good jobs, earn GEDs or high school diplomas, and have the opportunity for higher education, local church members were determined to help.

In March 2016, the Columbus Branch Adult School was conceived by inner-city missionaries, Jeffrey and Sonia Henkel. With the support of David Bruschi, the Branch President, and Sean Marchant, Stake President, the school was started. Matthew Peterson, the successive Branch President, also gave his full support to the school.

Faculty

John and Muriel Lilly are the Directors of the school. KayJean Koehler is the Education Director and Kathy Baumann is Assistant Education Director. There are many dedicated volunteers who teach and serve at the school.

School Calendar 2022-2023

Classes begin: Tuesday, September 6, 2022

Classes resume: Tuesday, January 3, 2023 (after Christmas Break)

Classes end: Wednesday, May 24, 2023

Dates classes will not be held:

Thanksgiving Break – November 22 & 24, 2022

Christmas Break – December 20 & 21, December 27 & 28, 2022

(Last day of classes before Christmas, Wednesday, December 14, 2022)

Parties

Christmas – Thursday, December 15, 2022 – 7:00 PM

Spring – Thursday, May 25, 2023 – 7:00 PM

Weekly Schedule:

Classes are held Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.

AM classes: 9:30 AM – 12:00 noon

PM classes: 6:00 – 8:30 PM

Students



Throughout the world, and even in our community, misperceptions surround those who are beginning new lives in the United States. Because we strive to be a caring community of learning, we want every member of our school community to provide a respite from misunderstanding and judgment for our students. The following is a summary of the varied and complicated processes that have brought many of our students to the U.S.

Refugees

The first thing to know about refugees in the U.S. is that this term is very specifically defined by law. So much confusion and misunderstanding occur when people mistake the general and oft-used noun “refugee” with the legally-defined and proven designation of a person as a “refugee.” Since passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, all individuals arriving in the United States as a refugee must meet the following requirements:

1. Leave their country, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion;
2. Be unable to return to their home country because of such fear (in 2016 alone, the number of people in this situation was 65.6 million);

3. Prove their identity AND the basis of their fear to the satisfaction of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which runs refugee camps throughout the world (in 2016, 22.5 million people were proven refugees);
4. Qualify for third-country resettlement through the United Nations. This status is reserved for only the most vulnerable of the world's refugees. These are among the most vulnerable group of humans in the world (in 2016, 189,300 individuals qualified for third-country resettlement out of 22.5 million refugees).

Refugees are only now qualified to BEGIN the processes required by potential resettlement countries throughout the world. The process to settle in the United States takes a minimum of 2 years and, since 1980, has included repeated and rigorous personal interviews, biometric and other security screenings, medical checks, and much more.

Though every individual case differs, from the time refugees flee from their homes to the time they arrive in the United States is typically 15-25 years. There has never been a single act of terrorism committed by a refugee admitted to the U.S.

Asylees or Asylum Seekers

An asylum seeker is someone who is seeking international protection but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined. In other words, the difference between "refugee" and "asylee" is one of location: the "asylee" must prove their need for asylum when they arrive in what they hope to be their new country; refugees arrive, having already proven their need. The same standard applies to asylees and refugees.

They must prove a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.

Immigrants

The definition of immigrant is straightforward: someone who leaves their home country and seeks residence in a new country. The circumstances of individual immigrants and the myriad of laws surrounding them are anything but straightforward.

For example, “immigrant” applies to both the top-recruited engineer from Britain who has been hired by a big U.S. company to the most destitute single mother from Central America whose family has been killed by gangs, but who cannot give legally-binding proof of her story. Even for lawyers, immigration law is so complicated and thorny it takes years of specializing to be competent in the area.

PLEASE REMEMBER: CAEC & YP is honored to provide services to any adult who desires to learn English. Unless brought up by the student, volunteers should not ask about the circumstances that brought them to the U.S. or about their resident status here.

Culture Shock

The term "culture shock" describes the feelings of frustration and anxiety that often afflict people when they enter a different culture for a period of time. The following factors compound the experience of culture shock for many refugees and immigrants:

- Since many have fled persecution and come to the U.S. to start a new life, most of them will not see their homeland again or at least for a long time.
- Limited or no English speaking ability.
- Life in the United States is very different from the lives to which they were accustomed before their arrival. • American value systems, rules, and mindset may be surprising or even distasteful.
- Refugees and immigrants may miss their past, yearn for their country and miss the familiarity of their past daily life.
- Many live with the tremendous loss of family and friends. When people live through such trauma, they often move into a survival mode during the times when they are fleeing and living without a permanent home. They "turn off" all of their emotions and then face great emotional pain many years after their initial trauma. This psychological phenomenon is called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and it affects many once they are in an environment that is relatively safe. This emotional stage can deeply affect an individual's ability to cope in a new country.

Similar to the stages of grief, refugees and immigrants go through a process of dealing with their loss and moving toward cultural integration. Many must go through the cycle several times as they experience multiple losses and make several transitions to their new home.

How can you, as a volunteer, help refugees and immigrants get through this period of cultural shock and grief? As a friend, you cannot speed up the process or cushion

the sadness, but you can help by listening to the stories they need to tell. Concern and care are the basic principles to follow when helping people through the grief process. Remember that friendship is recognized across cultures: kindness, trust, patience, reciprocity. Apply the principles of friendship to your relationship with our new neighbors. Sincere friendship can be understood across language and cultural divides.

The ESL (English as a Second Language) student, also known as an ELL (English Language Learner) is often someone who has been placed in a language environment that they did not choose nor are prepared for. They are often timid and reluctant to face the challenge of developing skill in a non-mother tongue. It is vital that they feel comfortable, accepted, and have a positive and safe environment in class.

ESL Guidelines and Tips

The following guidelines may help in working with ELL students by breaking through any misunderstanding allowing you to communicate more easily.

Pay Attention:

- Try to clear your mind so you can listen and HEAR what is being said.
- Greet the students with a smile. Everyone smiles in the same language.
- Allow time for the student to become familiar with the sounds and tones of English.
- Listen for what is meant.
- Look for facial expressions and gestures as clues for understanding.
- Paraphrase what you think is meant in clear and simple English.
- Consider the context.
- Paraphrase what you think is meant.
- Ask for verification.
- Model correct English and model corrections by repeating it correctly.
- Don't force or pressure them into a response.
- Be patient and excited when there is an attempted reply meant.

Simplify Your English As Much as Possible:

- Doing things like *speaking slowly and clearly, NOT loudly!
- Using simple sentences.
- Avoiding contractions or difficult vocabulary.
- Being aware of idioms and multi-meaning words.
- Emphasizing pronunciation.

Be Complete and Explicit:

- Speaking intentionally. Think about what they might best understand.
- Repeat yourself in the same terms. Repeat often.
- Speak naturally.
- Using gestures, drawings, pictures, a phone image, real objects, acting to help make meaning. Always try to attach meaning to what you say.
- Accepting every attempt to communicate with joy.

Try asking a student to teach you some words or phrases of their language. This always makes them feel accepted and respected. And it's fun. Always be positive and encouraging and be sensitive to cultural differences.

Policies and Precautions

Resident Status: Do not ask students why they are in the United States or what their citizenship or resident status is.

Physical Interaction: Norms for physical interaction are vastly different across cultures. It is best to follow the student's lead as to what type of physical interaction is comfortable for them. Some examples of "normal" interactions in the U.S. that may be inappropriate in other cultures include things such as shaking hands, hugging, or touching hands or arms at all. Our students will learn to accept these types of interactions in time. However, we want to find the most welcoming balance between modeling typical American habits and respecting long-held cultural practices. Be sensitive. Maintain appropriate distance and personal space.

Labels: Avoid using the word "refugee", even when it may be accurate. Please refer to them as students. We want to encourage our new neighbors in the next chapter in their life: that of American resident. We want their lives now to be filled with stability, hope and learning. Using the term refugee often reminds them of fear and uncertainty.

Physical Characteristics: Make no comment of skin color or other physical characteristics.

Transportation: Columbus School does not carry the insurance necessary to safely provide rides to students or volunteers. Be aware that any ridesharing between students and volunteers is a private matter.

Volunteer Age: Volunteers under 18 years old (ages 12-17) are accepted only to help with supervised childcare. While they serve, there must always be an approved adult present.

Safety: please keep classroom doors open and have at least two instructors, including a volunteer, in the room with students at all times.

Time commitment: Please make every effort to complete your time commitment to these students. Teachers and students rely on you. Your involvement is essential for their success.

Absenteeism: If you are unable to attend on your assigned day or date, please notify Marnie by email. It is preferred that you find a sub among our other volunteers to fill your assignment. You might consider sharing your contact info for this purpose.

Volunteer Opportunities

English Connect: Students participate in oral lessons on a variety of life skills. Volunteers sit with and converse with students on these subjects to promote oral language development.

Reading Class/Computers: Students read passages from the Reading Horizons Library. The teacher uses a variety of activities to increase comprehension and fluency. Volunteers assist and support students while using the computer and help with supplemental workbook skills.

Reading Horizons: Students receive direct instruction using the Reading Horizons program. "Reading Horizons products and trainings are powered by a research-based method that clearly explains the structures and patterns of the English language." (Reading Horizons website.)

Child Care: We provide childcare services during class hours so that parents are free to attend class. Volunteers help supervise children of all ages and may be asked to help with projects.

Session administrative aide: Assist with any clerical or administrative duties assigned by the administrator. Must arrive 10 min. before classes begins.

Excursions Committee: These volunteers help plan and execute field trips away from the center on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Point Store Committee: Members of this committee help to gather donated items and present them for trade on assigned dates.

Fund Raising committee: Members meet, plan and execute fund-raising events as assigned.

Social Committee: Members plan a Christmas party and End-of-Year Summer party for all students, staff, and guests.

If there is any other skill or way in which you feel a desire to serve, please let us know. The options are endless and we are happy to have the help.

Volunteer Agreement and Policy

Following is the agreement that all volunteers sign before working at Columbus Adult Education Center:

1. I consent to allow CAEC&YP to verify the statements in this Agreement, and to conduct a background check on me which will be renewed annually at my own cost.
2. I agree to perform my duties as specified by my supervisor, and to perform only those duties for which I am qualified, licensed or otherwise authorized to perform.
3. I agree to treat students, volunteers and staff with dignity and respect, and report any mistreatment or abuse.
4. I understand that as a volunteer I am expected to help and assist the teacher or administrator only as directed.
5. I agree to keep confidential all information I obtain about students and others while I serve as a volunteer for CAEC & YP.
6. I agree that CAEC & YP has permission to use pictures, statements and other representations of me in print, electronic media and other forms of information that is provided to the public.
7. I understand and agree that as a volunteer, I will not receive remuneration or payment for the time and service I provide for CAEC & YP, nor does my volunteer work imply future employment.
8. I understand and agree that CAEC& YP is not liable for any unforeseen accidents or events that I may experience during my association with CAEC & YP, nor are they responsible for damages or expenses resulting from such events—other than claims arising from the willful misconduct of CAEC&YP.
9. I agree that any ride-sharing is between the driver and rider and is arranged privately, as described in the Policies and Precautions, CAEC &YP is not responsible.

10. I recognize and agree that my service as a volunteer is contingent upon compliance with this agreement.

11. I agree that the information in my profile is accurate and complete and that violation of the terms of this agreement could result in termination of my service.

Please sign and return the following agreement to Marnie Thorpe:

I hereby agree to abide by the policies and agreements stated in the Columbus Adult Education Center & Youth Program handbook.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Photo Use and Release Form

I hereby grant and authorize Columbus Adult Education Center & Youth Program the right to take, edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish, distribute, and make use of any or all pictures or video of me by Columbus Adult Education Center & Youth Program to be used in and/or for legally promotional materials including, but not limited to newsletters, flyers, posters, brochures, advertisements, fundraising letters, annual reports, press kits and submissions to journalists, websites, social networking sites, and other print and digital communications, without payment or any other consideration. The authorization shall continue indefinitely, unless I otherwise revoke said authorization in writing.

I understand and agree that these materials shall become the property of Columbus Adult Education Center & Youth Program and will not be returned.

I hereby hold harmless, and release Columbus Adult Education Center & Youth Program from all liability, petitions, and causes of action which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other persons may make while acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate.

I warrant that I am of the age of consent (18 years or older) and that I am competent to contract in my own name. I have read this release before signing below and I fully understand the contents, meaning, and impact of this release.

Please sign and return the following agreement to Marnie Thorpe:

I hereby agree to abide by the Photo Use and Release Form stated in the Columbus Adult Education Center & Youth Programs handbook.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Thank You!

We are so happy to have you join our team. The students need you. Be happy to be here! These are delightful people to work with and they so appreciate all you do. This is an opportunity to develop meaningful relationships that will propel them to a good life in a new place.