A Resource of the
Wisconsin
Intergenerational
Network

*By Karen Dischler and
Bonnie Schmidt*

COLLABORATING WITH SCHOOLS:

A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to give community-based programs basic guidance for establishing successful collaborations with local schools. Many times we've heard "I'd love to do an intergenerational program with the local school but I don't know where to begin. Who do I contact? What's the best way to approach a school?"

While there are hundreds of school partnerships happening in communities throughout the country, we've tried to provide a general guide appropriate for most types of school collaborations. If you're new to school partnerships, you may find the step-by-step descriptions throughout this guide to be helpful. If you are already in a school partnership but are looking for ways to improve the collaboration, you may prefer to look at only specific topics. In either case we hope that you find this to be a helpful resource in developing a collaborative relationship with your local school.

Through our work with intergenerational programming and our involvement with WIN as a Board of Directors member and a staff person, we have collaborated to develop this tool. We hope you find it useful to your work.

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"Jam-packed with practical information, this handbook is a user-friendly guide to help community-based organizations connect to the schools. School staff will also find it valuable in connecting with community partners. The authors wrote from their wealth of experiences in working with the schools. Kudos to them on a great job."

Jane Grinde
Director, Community Learning and Partnerships Team
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Any part of this handbook may be reproduced, if this source is referenced and written notice is provided to the authors at the address on page 2.

WHAT IS COLLABORATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Collaboration is a process that provides opportunities for people to learn from each other and share resources. Through collaborative relationships organizations are able to work together to create programming that would be difficult or impossible to accomplish individually.

In successful school collaborations principals, teachers and staff are involved with the community-based organization in the planning and implementation of the program, participate in evaluating the program, and share the satisfaction in the successful outcomes of the program. Through these collaborations everyone benefits: the students benefit from their interactions with community volunteers, the school district benefits from having community members more invested in schools, and the volunteers benefit from knowing they are making a difference in students' lives. Successful school collaborations are developed with each partner involved in the process and with each partner benefiting from the relationship. It is through this process that a sense of commitment and responsibility is shared among the partners and within the community.

Nine Essential Steps in Developing Successful School and Community-Based Organization Collaborations:

> Understanding the School Environment
>
> Pre-Planning For Your Proposal
>
> Exploratory Meeting with A Key School Staff Member
>
> First Meeting with School Staff
>
> Implementing the Program
>
> Monitoring Progress
>
> Evaluating the Program
>
> Assessment, Revision, and Future Plans
>
> Celebrating Your Successes

UNDERSTANDING THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Before we, as community organizations, approach a school system to explore collaborative relationships, it's essential that we understand the school environment. Teachers spend most of their day with students and have little time for communicating with organizations and developing new programs. Even when teachers can use outside assistance, you may need to be patient in order to establish the relationship. We also need to be aware that planning within a school often occurs up to one year in advance and isn't likely to be adjusted easily.

The following commentary by Mark P. Batenburg, captures the essence of the "culture clash" between community agencies and schools:

> *"An underlying and unexamined problem in school/agency partnerships is that the two partners exist in radically different worlds….To an agency person, teachers seem to work in a very hierarchical and rigid world. Schools have chains of command, bell schedules, discipline procedures, bureaucracy, judging, grading, credentials, unions, and proper channels and procedures for everything. It looks like (and is) a highly bureaucratized system.*
>
> *"Agency people, by contrast, work in environments that are or were grassroots coalitions and community efforts. Things tend to be done by consensus rather than by fiat from above. Agencies tend to be democratic organizations. Action is taken only after lots of talking with everyone imaginable. Agencies love to find solutions to problems, so they tend to be highly flexible and creative. They tend to say "Yes" first and then figure out how later. Since most agencies are under-staffed and under-funded, there is not enough fat to produce a bureaucracy.*
>
> *"When a person from a relatively freewheeling problem-solving agency walks up to a school, s/he is entering an alien culture. Agency people don't know much about bureaucracies and proper channels. They don't know how to negotiate the structures erected by public education. They often give up in frustration.*

"Similarly, when a teacher walks into a social service agency, s/he may as well be walking on another planet. There may be no apparent order, and everyone may be doing six tasks simultaneously....In initial conversations there may be no clarity about who s/he should talk to; each staff member has several functions, and in some ways they are all interchangeable. The teacher may find that phone calls go unanswered and that the person whom s/he tried to call last week doesn't even work there this week. An agency can seem a chaotic and confusing place to work with (and it often is).

"The culture clash between school and agency is real. People from one side can easily be intimidated and frustrated when dealing with people from the other side."

("Community Agency and School Collaboration: Going In with Your Eyes Open", paper by Mark P. Batenburg presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco, California, 2000)

It's true that we, as community organizations, must adjust our expectations to assure that ample time exists for developing a successful collaboration. We must be mindful of the fact that school staff will have very little time and that we must be prepared to share our proposal in a timely and concise manner. In short, we must do some structured pre-planning.

PRE-PLANNING FOR YOUR PROPOSAL

Taking into account the time constraints for school staff, it is important that you define, in general terms, what your organization would like to propose to the school before approaching the staff. This general description should be viewed as a starting point for defining the program and the collaborative activities.

Once you have answered the following questions, you will have a good starting point for your first meeting with the school.

1. **What would you like to do? What do you hope to accomplish?**

2. **How will this help achieve existing educational goals?**

3. **Why is it important to you?**

4. **Why is it important to the school community?**

5. **What do you have to offer?**

6. **What do you need?**

We'll talk more about each of these questions.

1. What would you like to do? What do you hope to accomplish?

Before you can share your idea and get others enthused about your project, you need to be able to clearly define what you hope to do, and what you hope to accomplish. Some organizations have one specific goal in mind. Others simply know that they have a pool of volunteers who would like to work with schools and they are willing to explore many ways to do that.

If your organization falls into the latter description, you might want to consider these traditional program possibilities:

> Do you want to provide tutors for students who need literacy or math help so that those students show a greater level of improvement with the added support?

> Would you like to support an after-school homework club so that children who typically don't complete homework will have an environment where they can complete their daily assignments?

> Do you want to work with a classroom teacher in developing a senior buddy project so that students will reinforce their computer skills by teaching the seniors how to use a computer?

> Do you want to create a computer buddy program where seniors and students will email regularly and get to know each other while learning about each other's experiences on a variety of topics?

> Do you want to propose a one-day Career Fair so that students will have opportunities to talk to volunteers from many fields and begin considering what they hope to do as a career?

> And many more ideas can be found on the Wisconsin Intergenerational Network website at www.wi-win.org. To view program descriptions click on Programs.

2. How will this help achieve existing educational goals?

When you meet with representatives from the school, one of the first things they will want to know is how your proposed project supports the educational goals which have been set for students within their school or district. You will want to match your project to the goals established by the local school district or perhaps the school improvement goals set by an individual school. Look at your school district's website or contact a local school for a copy of their goals.

If the school has set a goal of improving their test scores, then you would want to describe how your after-school program will focus on homework help for 30 minutes of each day. If the school has set a goal of having all students involved in at least one community service activity during the year, then they will be glad to know that you would like to work with the students in a community garden project near their school.

3. Why is it important to you?

Be able to state clearly why this proposed program is important to your organization. There are a variety of reasons why a community organization would want to pursue a collaboration with their school including the following:

> One agency wants to expand the types of volunteer opportunities their organization provides.

> In another organization their board set new goals for the organization which included developing partnerships with schools.

> In some cases the community organization was working with students from the school in other settings like neighborhood centers, and also wanted to be involved in their school.

> Sometimes new grants emerge for school partnerships and the community organization wants to take advantage of those opportunities.

> For some, the program coordinator may have a strong desire to support schools and wants to involve himself/herself in developing a program.

Whatever your motivation, be sure to share it with the school staff.

4. Why is it important to the school community?

It's possible that you will be introducing a new concept to the school staff. They will need you to identify for them why this is important for their school. There are several known reasons why these projects are beneficial for the school community:

♦ It has been well established that when school districts have a large number of community volunteers involved in their schools, those volunteers get to see first-hand all the work that takes place in schools. They better understand the environment staff and students learn in each day. As a result the district often sees more consistent support for referendums and other initiatives that need broad community support.

♦ The volunteers in these types of programs provide positive and caring relationships for students that lead to improved skills for the students.

♦ Some school districts are requiring community service for high school graduation and collaborative service learning projects are effective ways to fulfill those requirements with the support of community volunteers.

♦ Many community-based organizations are eager to bring media attention to their initiatives. If media is introduced to the new school collaboration and its program, the school will most certainly benefit from the positive media coverage.

♦ The community supports collaborations and partnerships and sees them as necessary in avoiding duplication of programming and waste of resources. Therefore, these school partnerships demonstrate to the community a sense of fiscal responsibility.

These are just a few examples of why collaboration is important to the school community. Look for similar benefits within your own community.

5. What do you have to offer?

As identified earlier, collaborations work best when each partner shares their area of expertise for the benefit of the program. As the community-based organization in the partnership, you need to describe your area of expertise and what you have to offer. Here are some possible ways your organization may be able to share your resources:

As a community organization you may have a pool of volunteers who are ready to participate in the program.

A local business or service organization you work with may be interested in providing funding to support this initiative.

If you are an established volunteer agency you have volunteer application and screening practices (including criminal background check procedures) in place to assure that only appropriate volunteers will be working with students.

You may have staff that are able to commit significant amounts of time toward developing the program (meaning less time commitment for the busy school staff).

Perhaps you have some direct contacts with your local media and will invite them to cover the story of your partnership for their readers/viewers, thus showing positive news from the schools.

Whatever you have to offer, be sure to name it and tell why it is important.

> Describe for your school the advantages of working with your organization. Your list might look like this:
>
> You will handle the volunteer application and screening process.
>
> You'll provide the regular follow up with the volunteers
>
> You'll be available to assist volunteers who have questions or need help with problem solving strategies
>
> If a volunteer can no longer participate, you will recruit a volunteer to replace him/her.

6. What do you need?

As stated earlier, collaborations are all about partners sharing their expertise for the benefit of the program. While the community-based organization brings several strengths to the partnership, we rely on the following essential expertise from the school staff.

> You will undoubtedly need support from the school staff in orienting and training the volunteers. The volunteers benefit when the school staff provide the training, share strategies, and describe what is expected. Through these trainings the volunteers know that the staff support them and view their roles as important ones and that their work is in line with the student curriculum.

> You may also need physical space for meeting, access to a copier, and other practical accommodations.

> You will want to review test scores and other data to determine if there has been any improvement for students who participated in the program. While individual test scores and demographic data cannot be shared, school staff can share composite scores and demographics. (This information is also available to the public, often through district websites.) Work with school staff early in the process to determine the best ways to evaluate this program, identify the sources of information that you will need and how you can access needed information.

> Ask one person at the school to be responsible for assisting the volunteers with check-in each day. Sometimes this is the school secretary, or an after-school coordinator, or the school volunteer coordinator.

By identifying the areas of expertise for all the partners, the collaborators will readily see how the program is stronger because of the pooled resources.

More about Pre-Planning….

The next phase of pre-planning is gaining an understanding of the school or school district. Perhaps the most important step you take is to determine if the school district has a staff person who is responsible for developing community-based partnerships. If so, s/he can talk with you to learn about the program you would like to provide and assist in identifying a school and specific staff who might be interested in working with you. The partnership staff person is an invaluable resource in helping you understand their school district and how to effectively approach staff. If any project barriers are anticipated, s/he can offer suggestions for making changes to your program concept. This staff member can also help to arrange the first meeting between you and the school staff, and may even attend the meeting.

If the district does not have someone who works in this capacity, try to identify a staff person who is personally committed to volunteering or has done projects with students in the community. To find this individual you may need to ask parents at the school, talk with the school secretary or social worker, talk to staff you know at other schools, contact other community agencies etc. Once you find this individual, nurture the relationship because s/he will be your link in helping you make a connection with the school staff.

- Understand what goes on at the school

- Understand and be able to articulate the goals and teaching strategies of your program to teachers…know what level of involvement will be required of teachers.

- Understand how you will plan and conduct volunteer development activities…know how teachers and other staff may be involved in these activities.

- Develop a working knowledge of the school's curriculum.

- Develop a working knowledge of the formal methods by which you will be able to demonstrate evidence of student progress.

- Have a general knowledge of student learning styles.

- Have a general knowledge of school district policies.

Seniors for Schools Effective Practices Guidebook, April 2000

There are several other ways that you can and should get to know the school and school district:

1. If your project is grant-funded, or if your goal is to work in an area of great community need, then it will be imperative to study the demographics of the school or school district. We suggest you seek out the following information by studying the school district's website or, in Wisconsin, by referring to the Department of Public Instruction's data at http://data.dpi.state.wi.us/data/selschool.asp:

   o What are their test scores? Have there been significant changes over the past several years?

   o What percent of their student body qualifies for free/reduced meals (indicating the percent of students who are from low-income families)

   o What are the truancy rates? Rates of expulsions? Drop out rates?

> Tip: Be aware of the school district calendar, when the quarters and semesters end, when staff development days are scheduled, etc. You will want to avoid those peek times when deciding a time to contact the school.

2. Look for information about the school's or school district's programming priorities.

3. Know where the schools are located—one school's location may make it the perfect setting for the project you hope to create.

4. Try to determine if other community organizations have partnerships with the school or school district. It might be helpful to meet with individuals from that organization to talk about their program, what has worked well in their school partnership and the lessons they've learned, and receive any suggestions for your project.

> "Successfully fitting in is, in large part, a function of the nature of the school itself. School structure influences 'fit' in several ways: level of school openness, the existence of other outside programs, previous experiences of staff and administrators with other outside programs, willingness to facilitate a 'fit.'"
>
> *"Combining Paid Service and Volunteerism: Strategies for Effective Practice in School Settings", August, 1999*

Tips for working with teachers:

- Identify the specific people you will work with. Get to know them and their work style.

- Keep the principal informed. Involve him/her if possible.

- Ask each teacher when he/she has planning or "prep" time.

- Ask each teacher how he/she prefers to communicate: email, home email, phone, voice mail, notes in his/her office mailbox, home phone, etc.

- Find out how to contact teachers during summer and breaks.

- If some bit of educational jargon confuses you, ask for clarification.

- Remember that educators must always ask: "How will this help students?"

"Partner Power and Service-Learning: Manual for Community-Based Organizations to Work with Schools" by Rich Cairn

EXPLORATORY MEETING

Once you've determined who your school district or school contact is, set up a meeting to explore your program proposal. Set a meeting time that accommodates the school staff person, even if it means an evening or early morning meeting outside your normal work hours.

Here are some suggestions for your exploratory meeting:

1. Get to know the school district/staff person

2. Bring prepared materials describing your organization, the main concept of what you would like to do, what you hope to accomplish…but be brief.

3. Listen carefully – have they done something similar? Was it a success or did it fall short? Why?

4. Seek advice about how to proceed. Who else might need to be involved? Will he/she assist in making connections within the school?

5. Plan next steps and be specific about who will do what.

Other possible discussion questions for the exploratory meeting:

- Does the school have previous experience with, and a commitment to, working with outsiders?

- How much of a need does the program meet?

- How distinct is the program from the rest of the work being conducted at the school?

- Do teachers see how tutoring/mentoring can fit into their instructional plans?

- Can information be shared about student progress?

"Combining Paid Service and Volunteerism: Strategies for Effective Practice in School Settings", August, 1999

HOW TO BE A GOOD COLLABORATOR

New ideas without much structure have flourished and grown through energetic, interactive collaborative relationships. However it's also true that great ideas have failed because of negative collaborative relationships.

Let's review key elements of effective collaborations:

Establish trust. Demonstrate that you are committed to the task and that you will follow through on all your promises. Be known as a valued representative of your organization who is invested in this project.

Communicate well and often. Discuss effective means of communicating with your project partners and then do it often. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all partners and put it in writing. Assign note taking responsibilities for each of your meetings and then distribute the notes to all partners. Keep your partners informed about your assignments and all project developments.

Be responsible. Complete all your assignments by the date you promised. If there are delays, tell your partners and give them a reasonable date to expect completion of the tasks.

Discuss challenges and problems respectfully. Any challenges or problems need to be discussed openly and respectfully. At any point in the collaboration, one partner may be experiencing difficulties and it is important that they feel able to share their concerns or situation with the partners without fear of consequence. It is the task of the collaborators to work together toward solving these challenges.

Take interest in your partner. Take time to get to know your partners on a professional and personal level. Consider ways that you may support their work in other ways (serve on a school committee, volunteer at an open house, etc.) Be interested in hearing about their vacation, their child's graduation, a family illness, etc.

FIRST MEETING WITH SCHOOL STAFF

Your first meeting with the school staff should be collaborative and not too long. It's a good idea to be a little early for this meeting and be ready to wait a bit if necessary. Kids come first in the school setting and it's not unusual for a matter concerning a student to delay the staff.

You will likely assume the role of facilitator for the first meeting. As the facilitator of this first meeting, you will be setting the tone for your on-going, collaborative relationship with this school. Your role is to establish goodwill and clear ground rules between your organization and the school staff.

To help you get this new collaborative relationship off on the best possible footing we suggest your agenda look something like this:

> **Sample Agenda for First Meeting**
>
> I.   Introductions
> II.   Describe Your Organization
> III.   Explanation of Proposed Project
> IV.   Describe What You Have to Offer
> V.   Tell Them What you Need From Them
> VI.   Discuss Project Potential
> VII.   Wrap Up and Next Steps

Be sure to bring plenty of agendas and other handouts such as your organization's newsletters and brochure. Be an active listener and leave plenty of time for questions and answers.

I. Introductions

Set aside time in your agenda for introductions – you cannot underestimate the value of introductions. Begin by introducing yourself. This is your opportunity to say who you are and what your role is. Others will follow your example – be relaxed and confident.

Ask that the staff introduce themselves and tell you what their role is at school. If they're a teacher, have them tell what department they are in and what grade(s) they teach.

It's quite possible that this will be your only opportunity to meet face-to-face with some staff because they will be unable to attend additional meetings. In the future you will need to interact with them via the telephone, email, or notes left in school mailboxes. So for many reasons it's important to make a good first connection.

II. Describe your organization

Tell them about your organization and your role in it. Keep it brief. If you have a success story to tell about a positive student interaction with your organization, share it. Distribute the materials you've brought so that you don't need to take a great deal of time describing your organization.

III. Explain proposed program

Describe your program idea. Be enthusiastic yet make it clear that you want their feedback. They should understand that, together, through this collaboration, you'll develop the actual program based on the expertise that all partners provide.

IV. Describe what you have to offer

Share with them the specific resources you bring to this project. (Refer to the resources you identified in the pre-planning portion of your program development.) At the same time, it's important to not promise more than you can deliver.

Pause for questions. Do they have any questions, comments, reactions to what you have presented?

V. Tell what you need from them

Let the staff know how the school can support this project. Describe what your organization and volunteers will need for this partnership to be a success. (Refer to the needs you identified in the pre-planning portion of your program development.)

> Collaboration can be difficult, especially with entities that operate very differently. Schools tend to be structured with established policies and procedures, while many community agencies and businesses are more flexible. Collaboration forces people to view issues from a new perspective. Each partner must continually take the other into consideration and not merely "use" the partner to provide a funding source or to fulfill only one partner's objective. The partnership must be based on a "handshake, not a handout."
>
> *"Collaboration", California Dept. of Education, CalServe Initiative*

If you need more volunteers, you might also ask if there are other volunteers through the school who might want to participate, i.e. parents, students, service organizations, faith communities, businesses etc.

VI. Discuss project potential

Provide plenty of time for discussion and questions. Make sure everyone has had an opportunity to share their reactions and ask their questions. Discuss your common goals for this project. Talk about the expectations. Reach consensus on whether to continue with project.

VII. Wrap up and Next Steps

♦   Is there anything we didn't talk about at today's meeting that we should have?
♦   Are there other people who should be at the next meeting and if so, who will invite them?
♦   Are there others (principal, school superintendent, teachers' union, etc.) who should *be informed* of this project, and if so, who will contact them?
♦   What is the most effective way for the partners to communicate with one another?
♦   Are there assignments that need to be completed before the next meeting and who is responsible?
♦   Generate an agenda for your next meeting; set the date and time.

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

As you begin planning the management of a project, sit down with teachers, agency staff, and others involved in planning to clarify roles and responsibilities. Some tasks may be most appropriately handled by the school, while others are better handled by the agency. The following questions can be used to begin the discussion:

- What expectations does the agency have of the school? What expectations does the school have of the agency?

- Who is responsible for developing job descriptions?

- Who is responsible for supervision?

- What process will be used to evaluate results, and how will feedback be provided to the students?

- How will discipline and emergencies be handled?

- What role will the school and agency take in evaluation?

- How will concerns on the part of either the school or the agency be handled?

- What will be done to celebrate the successful completion of a project?

(adapted from resources developed by Youth and Family Outreach, Points of Light Foundation)

IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

This section provides essential elements for implementing a program involving an entire classroom and group of volunteers, but most of these elements would be important for successfully engaging a volunteer in an individual role, too.

Volunteer Orientation and Training

Plan a training for volunteers prior to the first day of the program. Ask school staff to provide the training to assure consistency with school curriculum and to establish a rapport between staff and volunteers. Be clear about volunteer expectations (see sample on pg. 34).   The training/orientation should provide guidance to the volunteers on effective strategies for working with students, how to handle behavior issues, understanding the program and school rules for students, etc.

When you partner with a school, you partner on many levels and with many individuals. Many of these individuals are not identified in your formal agreement. For example, most projects benefit from the assistance and support of teacher's aids, the lunchroom staff, the maintenance staff, parents, and students. You, your staff, and your volunteers should work each day to develop these informal partnerships. Reach out to all parties in the school.

Seniors for Schools Effective Practices Guidebook, April 2000

Introducing the Volunteers to the School

Give your volunteers clear directions about where to park, which entrance to use, and where to meet within the school building. Often it's best to meet at the school office so the volunteers can be shown the check-in procedures and be introduced to the office staff.

Take time to tour the school building, show the volunteers where to put their personal belongings, where the restrooms are, and other areas they will be using during the program. Provide an opportunity for volunteers to ask questions.

First visit to the classroom

This is another critical point where what happens in this first meeting can set the tone for the entire project.

>*Introduce the project* – The classroom teacher is responsible for the activities in their room. Therefore, it works best if the teacher introduces the project and the classroom visitors to his/her students.
>
>*Introductions* – Begin by introducing yourself, include the name of your organization. Either introduce the volunteers or ask them to introduce themselves and then ask the students to do the same.
>
>*Preview the day* – Briefly state what is going to happen during this first time together.
>
>*Get-to-know-you activity* – Work with the teacher to prepare a couple of easy, get-to-know-you activities that are friendly and engaging to everyone.
>
>*Food* – Bring a small snack to be shared in the last few minutes of the class, if the teacher approves.

Immediately following the first session

Meet with the volunteers and teacher, if possible, for a quick check-in. Do they have any questions? Does anything need clarifying? Provide a few quick comments on things that you noticed that went particularly well. Remind the volunteers of how they can reach you should something come up between now and the next session.

Quickly check-in with the teacher and ask if there is anything you need to address before the next session? This is an opportunity to share problems, concerns and positive feedback.

MONITORING PROGRESS

As with any other program you develop, you will want to plan opportunities for monitoring progress and getting feedback. Visit the program often and invite your project planners to do the same. Talk with the volunteers and students to get their feedback. Observe student and volunteer interactions. Then plan a meeting with the project planning team to share the various perspectives you heard and observed in these visits.

The process of monitoring your program provides an opportunity to strengthen the collaboration. Bring your original planning team together periodically to discuss the program, share success stories, and address challenges. Maintain an environment of openness and respect. Through this process the partners will also be building their relationship of trust, loyalty, and professionalism that will carry them through this and future collaborations.

EVALUATING THE PROGRAM

You will want to conduct an evaluation of the program at least annually. When you proposed the program you had specific goals in mind. At some point the partners may have adjusted those goals. In the evaluation process it will be important to gauge your program's effectiveness in meeting those goals. This may require assistance from school staff in compiling data about test scores, attendance, or other confidential information.

Another effective means of evaluation is a participant survey. The survey will provide specific feedback about the program, so that the partners will have a better idea of which areas need to be improved and where there are successes that can be duplicated.

Consider these tips for creating effective surveys:

> Know how you will want to report the findings and then create a survey tool to do that.

> Keep it short.

> Provide lots of check boxes instead of open-ended questions. It will be easier to tally the results and the people filling out the form will be more likely to respond.

> Provide different forms for each type of participant (staff, volunteer, student) so your questions can be very specific.

> Give respondents a specified time to return the form. Better yet, ask them to complete it one day at the program and turn it in before they leave.

> Provide an incentive…maybe a piece of candy attached to the form.

> *"It is not possible to have genuine collaboration if one or more of the partners perceive themselves to be a 'junior partner.'"*
>
> *Gary Hart*
> *California Secretary of Education*

ASSESSMENT, REVISION, AND FUTURE PLANS

Another way to assess if you are on target with your project is to hold a program wrap-up meeting, or program assessment meeting if the program is ongoing. Invite the "key players". Make sure that everyone is invited to share their thoughts at the meeting. Ask:

- What did we do well?

- What would we do differently?

- What didn't work?

As a group, make a decision if this program should be continued. Make sure that there is consensus among the program partners. If the program will continue, make plans for the future:

- Identify and assign tasks that can be done or need doing. For example, grant writing.

- Identify the timeline for the next session/project

- Set the next meeting date

- Identify who should be at the meeting

- Develop an agenda

Occasionally, even with our very best efforts, a project doesn't work out as planned. Ideally, the partners will be able to discuss their concerns openly and make a decision about altering the program or discontinuing it. If the decision is to discontinue the program, it's likely that the strong collaboration developed by the partners will later provide opportunities for other types of partnerships.

However, if you are the only partner that wants to discontinue the program, you will want to handle this situation delicately so that future collaborations will not be jeopardized. The decision should be discussed openly with your school partners. Be sure to let your school partners know that you would be open to other partnership activities in the future.

Similarly, if the school decides to discontinue the program, accept their decision graciously, ask for feedback regarding what might be done differently in the future (if appropriate), and express your appreciation for their time and support.

CELEBRATING YOUR SUCCESSES!

Plan opportunities for the collaborative partners to celebrate their successes. This can be done in a small setting with only the collaborative partners, or it may be a bigger reception event. This might be the occasion to invite other school staff to hear more about this project. The director or board members of the community organization may be invited to attend. Volunteers will appreciate being invited to celebrate the program they've been committed to, and may invite family members to join them.

NUTS AND BOLTS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

If you are new to working with schools, the following strategies and tips for volunteer management in school settings may be helpful for you. This section is followed by a collection of sample forms that may be useful to your program.

Volunteer Recruitment

Once you have developed your program plan, it's time for you to recruit the community volunteers. First, consider the characteristics you desire for volunteers in this program. Keep these qualities in mind as you make decisions about how and where to do your recruiting. Before you start recruiting, make sure you have materials ready to send to interested volunteers. They should include:

- application form and background check authorization with a return envelope (and approved by your school district)
- description of the program
- volunteer job description
- your contact information

Here are some ideas for recruiting volunteers:

- Contact your local media to see if they are interested in doing a story about the new program and your need for volunteers.
- Prepare a short paragraph about your program and distribute to area faith communities and neighborhood associations for publication in their newsletters.
- Provide an informational session or training for interested volunteers to attend.
- Put an article in the school newsletter and encourage parents to invite their neighbors to volunteer.
- Consider whether there are any businesses in the school neighborhood that might want to encourage their employees to volunteer at the school.
- Tell your current volunteers about this opportunity and ask them to invite their friends.
- Contact your local retired teachers' organization.
- Prepare a poster to put on community bulletin boards.

- Talk with other volunteers in the school to invite them to participate in your program.
- Check with area colleges and universities for programs requiring student volunteering or community service.
- Contact the volunteer clearinghouses in your area (e.g. RSVPs, Volunteer Centers, campus volunteer offices, etc.)

If you are interested in recruiting senior volunteers, refer to the "SaYES Tips for Recruiting Senior Volunteers on page 41.

Screening and Interviewing Volunteers

As you crafted your collaborative relationship, you have probably discussed the school district's policies on screening volunteers. You will want to make sure you understand those policies thoroughly and that you are prepared to carry out all aspects of their screening requirements.

All volunteers should be asked to complete an application form. This form should include contact information (name, address, home phone, work phone, cell phone, email) and personal reference information, as well as the volunteer's availability and preferences. If the district has a standard volunteer application, the organization should use their application form.

One of the benefits the school district receives in partnering with your community organization is your ability to take responsibility for collecting the paperwork and interviewing the volunteer. You can ensure that the applications and other forms are filled out completely.

How to Prepare for the Volunteer Interview

- Know the volunteer needs in your program
- Be prepared with standard questions to ask
- Think about the qualities you're looking for in a volunteer.
- Prepare packet of information for each volunteer:
  - ✓ job description
  - ✓ program overview
  - ✓ school handbook
  - ✓ school newsletter
  - ✓ upcoming training information

*Schools of Hope Literacy Project
AmeriCorps*VISTA Training*

Interview Questions

I personally prefer to incorporate these questions into a conversation so that I am able to get a better feel for the volunteer. With some volunteers it may be more difficult to have a conversation (maybe they're shy, etc.) and in that case it's helpful to have these questions on hand and to go through them one by one.

I begin the interview by making sure the volunteer is comfortable, being friendly, and describing our program.

Then I shift the conversation to getting to know a little bit about the volunteer and why he/she is interested in volunteering with our project and I ask the following questions:
- Why are you interested in becoming a literacy tutor?
- Do you have experience working with children? Working in schools?
- Have you volunteered with any organizations in the past?
- What else are you doing now (e.g. school, work, retired, etc.)

Once I have a general feel for the volunteer and what their motivation for participating in our program is, I get into more specific questions:
- What do you think are important skills for tutors to have when working with kids?
- What are your strengths in regard to working with children?
- What grades are you interested in working with?
- Would you be comfortable working with students who are of a different race, religion etc... than you?

Now that the basics are done, I talk with the volunteer about the typical tutoring session and go over some tutoring scenarios.
- How would you handle a student who was uncooperative or who was acting goofy and not focusing on the work at hand?
- What would you do if a student said something inappropriate to you?

Miscellaneous:
- What things about yourself and your interests would you like me to tell the teacher you will be working with?
- Are there any concerns, questions, or expectations you would like to share?

At this time I will talk with the volunteer about what is next: background check, reference check, orientation for volunteers, training, and when the volunteer can expect to hear from me. Finally, I thank the volunteer for their time and interest and may show them around the school (if it seems appropriate) as the volunteer leaves the building.

(prepared by Kate Kennedy, AmeriCorps*VISTA member, Schools of Hope Literacy Project, Madison, WI)

Once the forms are completed, the school district will usually perform the criminal background check for those volunteers.

We, as community organizations, understand our responsibility to place motivated, caring volunteers who will be appropriate with students, will be good role models, and will work effectively with the program staff. To ensure that we select appropriate volunteers for our program, it is important to interview the volunteers. School programs are not "any warm body will do" programs. We need to select only the individuals who have appropriate skills and motives for our program. Through the interview process you will be able to ascertain whether the volunteer should receive additional training or support. We've provided a suggested scenario for conducting the volunteer interview.

You will want to review your screening process with the appropriate school district staff before recruiting volunteers to make sure the process is complete and meets their requirements.

Training

It's likely that many of the volunteers you recruit have not been in a school in a very long time. They will have apprehensions about working with students, knowing the rules and what to do, etc. It is important that training be provided for them.

This is another opportunity for the collaborative partners to work together. New volunteers will benefit from the expertise of staff who provide training. However, the community organization staff have a role in the training, too. They know best the needs of the volunteers and can work with the school staff to make sure the training provides the very best direction possible.

It will be helpful to provide volunteers with a simple evaluation form at the end of the training. Their comments will help you to make improvements for the next training.

Placement

When your volunteers are ready to begin their work at the school, it is helpful if someone from the community organization is there to greet them, introduce them to school staff and students, assure that appropriate check-in procedures are introduced, show them the facility (where to put coats/personal belongings, restroom locations,

staff lounge, etc.) and provide directions. The school staff will be appreciative of your attention to these details on behalf of the volunteers. Some schools provide a placement form to provide contact information to everyone involved in the volunteer placement. A sample of this type of form is found on page 43.

Follow Up

It is important to check in with the school staff and the volunteers within the first few weeks of the program. Try to talk directly with these individuals so you can discuss their experiences and answer any questions they may have. If there are concerns, be sure to address them immediately. Once you have corrected any challenges, it is important that you communicate the changes to staff and volunteers.

Recognition

Soon after beginning your program, start planning your volunteer appreciation activities. Simple notes or drawings from students are a welcome gift for volunteers. Other suggestions are found in the "Ways To Show Appreciation to Tutors" handout, page 49.

We hope that this guide has been helpful to you in planning your school collaboration. We expect that, with your enthusiasm and drive, your collaboration will be an exciting, new endeavor that will be extremely successful. Best wishes!

SAMPLE FORMS

Madison Metro Schools and Madison Preschools
Volunteer Application
Please return completed form to:
Madison School Volunteer Programs, P.O. Box 5414, Madison, WI 53705-0414

Last Name First Name M.I.	Date
Address (Number and Street)	

City/State/Zip	E-Mail Address

Home Phone	Work Phone	Cell Phone

Occupation *(if retired, provide former occupation)*	Employer
If Student, Institution	Year and Area of Study

☐ I am a student with a current work study award and am eligible to receive payment for tutoring.

☐ I am at least 55 years old. I would like to be a member of RSVP and have my volunteer hours counted towards the total contributions older adults make to the education of children in Madison. RSVP is a partner in the Madison School Volunteer Programs and can provide additional resources for its volunteers.

I am available: ____entire school year   ____fall semester   ____spring semester   ____summer

I am available to start after this date: _____   I would like to volunteer about ____ hours per week.

I am available to volunteer at the following days/times: Day(s)   Time(s)

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Available transportation: ____walk/bike   ____bus   ____car
Accessibility needs: _____

VOLUNTEER PREFERENCES

I prefer working with students in the following grade level(s): *(check all that apply)*
☐ Preschool   ☐ Kindergarten-3rd   ☐ 4th-5th   ☐ 6th-8th   ☐ 9th-12th

I am comfortable using the following language(s): _____

I am comfortable working in the following skill area(s): *(check all that apply)*
____Literacy   ____Math   ____ESL (English as a Second Language)   ____Other: _____

I prefer these location(s): *(options will depend on school needs)*
____No preference   ____North   ____East   ____South   ____West

My experiences working with children/youth include: _____
_____
_____

PERSONAL REFERENCES

Please provide the following for two people (local if possible) who have known you for at least two years and will be able to provide a character reference. You may include your employer. Please do not list relatives.

Last Name	First Name	Relationship
Present Address (Name/Street)		Day Phone
City State Zip		Night Phone

Last Name	First Name	Relationship
Present Address (Name/Street)		Day Phone
City State Zip		Night Phone

Additional Information: Please list any additional skills, experiences, etc. you feel may be helpful in finding a position for you: _____
_____
_____

How did you learn about this opportunity? _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT

_____   _____   _____
Name   Phone Number   Relationship

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENTS

Consent to Share Confidential Information: I understand that the volunteer screening process includes both criminal background checks and reference checks. I give permission to have the results of these checks shared with placement sites considering my involvement as a volunteer.

Confidentiality Agreement: I understand that in providing my services as a volunteer with Madison Schools I will respect the confidential nature of the knowledge I will gain concerning the academic performance, behavior and personal information of the children with whom I work.   If a child tells me something or I notice something that may indicate his/her safety is at risk or he/she is in emotional distress, I will report that information to my supervising teacher or a support staff member (social worker, psychologist, nurse).

_____   _____
Signature   Date

MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
VOLUNTEER DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

IMPORTANTINFORMATION – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

After reading this form, if you are unsure of how to complete it, or if you would like any information clarified, please ask for assistance in Human Resources before filling it out.

The responsibility the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) has to its school children and community necessitates the following information from all volunteers regarding arrest and conviction records. A record of arrest of conviction does not automatically prohibit volunteering. In accordance with state law and local ordinance, convictions or pending charges will not be used or considered in making decisions whether to allow a person to volunteer unless the circumstances of the charge or conviction are substantially related to circumstances of the particular volunteer assignment. **However, failure to complete this form accurately and completely will disqualify a volunteer from consideration for volunteering or will be cause for removal from volunteer assignments.**

"Arrest record" includes, but is not limited to, information indicating that an individual has been questioned, apprehended, taken into custody or detention, held for investigation, arrested, charged with, indicted or tried for a felony, misdemeanor ordinance violation, or other offense, pursuant to any law enforcement or military authority.

"Conviction record" includes, but is not limited to, information indicating that an individual has been convicted of any felony, misdemeanor, ordinance violation, or other offense, has been less than honorably discharged, or has been placed on probation, fined, imprisoned or paroled pursuant to any law enforcement or military authority regardless of whether an appeal is pending or could be taken.

Often a plea of "No Contest" results in a conviction and finding of guilt. Keep in mind that participation in a deferred prosecution program (such as First Offenders) does not necessarily mean your record is clear. As stated above, failure to complete this form accurately and completely will mean disqualification from consideration for volunteering or constitute cause for removal from volunteer assignments.

To ensure prompt processing, please complete and return this form to the person who provided it to you **within three work days** so that it may be forwarded to the Department of Human Resources.

AUTHORIZATION

I authorize the investigation of all statements contained herein and understand that any document relevant to this information may be reviewed by the agents of the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD). I understand that I may not begin volunteering until the background investigation has been completed.

I certify that the answers given by me in this disclosure statement are complete, true, and correct without misrepresentations or omissions of any kind. I further understand that the making of any false or misleading statement or omission from or on this disclosure form, or any other document, will be used to deny me volunteer work, or if currently volunteering, used to terminate my volunteering for MMSD.

I understand that the District shall not be held liable in any respect if my volunteering is terminated because of false or incomplete statements, answers, or omissions made by me on the disclosure form or any other document. In consideration of the school district's review of the document, I hereby release the District, its Board, and its agents, as well as all providers of information from any liability and for any damage which may result from the furnishing and receiving of information. A copy of this authorization and release is as valid as the original and should be recognized as such.

Signature	Date

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Name: _____
       Last   First   Middle

Address: _____ # of Years at This Residence: _____
      Street   City   State   Zip

Social Security #: _____ Phone Number: _____

List **all** other names used: _____

Dates of Usage: _____

If you have not resided in WI for the past five years, list all other addresses for this period: _____

_____

Date of Birth: _____/_____/_____   Gender: □ Male □ Female
          month   day   year

Ethnicity (check one):
     □ African American/Black   □ Asian/Pacific Islander   □ Hispanic   □ Native American   □ White

Have you ever been convicted of any violations of law: felonies, misdemeanors, other than minor traffic violations? (In accordance with state law and local ordinance, convictions or pending charges will not be used or considered in making an employment decision unless the circumstances of the charge or conviction are substantially related to circumstances of the particular job.)   □ Yes   □ No

Do you presently have any pending violations of law: felonies, misdemeanors, other than minor traffic violations? (In accordance with state law and local ordinance, convictions or pending charges will not be used or considered in making an employment decision unless the circumstances of the charge or conviction are substantially related to circumstances of the particular job.)   □ Yes   □ No

(If yes to any of the above, please fill in the information below. If you have more than three convictions or pending charges or need any additional space, use a separate sheet.)

LIST CONVICTIONS AND PENDING CHARGES

1. CHARGE		DATE OF ARREST AND/OR CONVICTION	COURT OF CONVICTION
CITY	STATE	AMOUNT OF FINE	LENGTH OF JAIL TERM
COMMENTS		LENGTH AND TERMS OF PROBATION	
2. CHARGE		DATE OF ARREST AND/OR CONVICTION	COURT OF CONVICTION
CITY	STATE	AMOUNT OF FINE	LENGTH OF JAIL TERM
COMMENTS		LENGTH AND TERMS OF PROBATION	
3. CHARGE		DATE OF ARREST AND/OR CONVICTION	COURT OF CONVICTION
CITY	STATE	AMOUNT OF FINE	LENGTH OF JAIL TERM
COMMENTS		LENGTH AND TERMS OF PROBATION	

SCHOOLS OF HOPE LITERACY PROJECT
TUTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION TITLE: Volunteer Reading Tutor

SUPERVISOR: Volunteer Coordinator

SITE: Madison Elementary Schools and After-School Programs

OBJECTIVE:
- To assist children enrolled in preschool through the third grade in developing reading skills. The tutor will also act to enhance self-esteem and confidence in the child through patience and encouragement.
- To participate in a widespread community initiative collaborated by the United Way of Dane County, AmeriCorps*VISTA, Madison Metropolitan School District, RSVP of Dane County, and other partners.

RESPONSIBILITIES:
- Commit to a minimum of one hour a week for one academic semester or year of service.
- Assist children in reading, writing, and other literacy-based skills in cooperation with the teaching staff.
- Complete a tutoring log following each session.
- Direct any questions or concerns to the volunteer coordinator stationed at your school.
- Notify the volunteer coordinator in advance if you are expecting to be absent. In the event of an unexpected absence, call the volunteer coordinator as soon as possible so that a replacement tutor may be found. If a tutor consistently neglects his/her responsibilities, the volunteer coordinator will seek to make other arrangements with the tutor or to dismiss his/her services.

QUALIFICATIONS:
- Ability to read and write the English language.
- Interest in and comfort working with kindergarten through third grade students.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING:
- The volunteer coordinator will be available to discuss and to address any concerns.
- Supplemental handouts, manuals, and videos will be made available concerning reading skills and on dealing with children of varying ages and backgrounds.
- A citywide tutor training is held in the fall and spring of every school year.

BENEFITS:
- Volunteer tutors will be given the opportunity to develop a meaningful relationship with a child by assisting that child in developing an essential skill in today's society.
- Tutors will receive reading-specific training and materials to work with the children.
- Tutors will receive relevant experience for careers in education, childcare, and literacy related fields.
- To ensure the needs of the tutors are met, the volunteer coordinator will act as a tutor advocate.
- Tutors are invited to engage their creativity and innovation to facilitate learning literacy skills (i.e. via a puppet show, craft, game, play, etc.).
- Knowing that your time and energy are making a difference in a child's life.

For more information contact the VISTA Leader at (608) 441-7895, schoolsofhope@rsvpdane.org.

Expectations of Volunteers

Complete the required application paperwork and attend orientation and training sessions as needed.

Be prompt and dependable. Please call the school volunteer coordinator if you cannot come at your scheduled time.

Sign in and out upon arrival and departure.

Wear your nametag for identification.

Be confidential. A child's work and behavior in school is to be held in confidence. Discuss problems with the teacher or volunteer coordinator, not with other volunteers or parents.

Be a positive role model for children in attitude, behavior, language, and dress. Let your conversations demonstrate respect for others, and avoid language that may be perceived as discriminatory, sexist, or offensive.

Notify the teacher, principal, or social worker if a student confides about an abusive situation. Staff will do the necessary follow-up.

Support and supplement the programs of the classroom teacher and school staff. The volunteer's role is one of assistance.

Communicate. Ask questions, share ideas, get to know the staff and other volunteers. Don't hesitate to call, leave a note, or ask for a meeting to discuss any problems or concerns that may arise. Every problem is solvable with respectful, honest communication.

Protect privacy. Do not ask for a student's address or phone number, and do not share yours with the student(s).

Follow "safe touch" suggestions. Volunteers do not *initiate* touching a child (hand-holding, hugs, lap-sitting), but may respond to child's initiation of appropriate touch. Respecting a child's right to say "no," volunteers *can* ask a child if he/she would like a hug.

Be respectful of children's diversity of culture, religion, and background. Don't assume the child celebrates the same holidays (Christmas, Easter, Halloween, or even their birthday). Also don't assume the make-up of a child's "family" (size, race, or gender). Practice correct pronunciation of the children's names if they are unfamiliar. Show interest in the student(s) cultures learn more about those cultures.

Gifts for students are inappropriate. Don't bring gifts or food treats for *individual* children. With teacher approval, volunteers may bring snacks for the entire classroom (for the teacher to distribute when appropriate) or they may make a donation of books or supplies for the classroom.

Ensure positive closure. If you plan on ending your volunteer involvement before the end of the year, please notify your teacher and the volunteer coordinator. It is especially important if you are working with a child that the student is clear about your final date with him/her. The child needs to be left with the clear message that you have enjoyed working with him/her.

Schools of Hope Literacy Project

COMPUTER BUDDY
VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION

Duties: Develop a supportive relationship with a student through e-mail communication.

- ✓ Help student improve communication skills
- ✓ Play learning games
- ✓ Help bridge the generation gap
- ✓ Attend social events arranged by the school or volunteer organization

Qualifications: Interest in working with children. Willingness to work with children from different cultural backgrounds and/or different abilities. Age 55 or older. Patient and cooperative. Ability to accept direction and supervision from school staff.

Support: The classroom teacher, social worker or volunteer coordinator provides direct support, while the school principal and RSVP provide additional support.

Training: RSVP co-sponsors an annual fall training for school volunteers. In addition, smaller training and support groups are offered. Orientation and specific volunteer training is provided at the assigned school.

Time Commitment: Approximately 30 minutes per week, usually the same day and time. This is flexible and varies by the teacher's needs and student's schedule.

RSVP of Dane County

Preschool Volunteer
Position Description

Duties: Work (including educational "creative play") with 3- and 4-year-old children in an assigned classroom at a Head Start Center or other nonprofit preschool.

Qualifications: Interest in working with young preschool children from diverse multicultural backgrounds in both a teacher/helper role and a friend/playmate role, reading books and helping the children learn pre-literacy skills and social skills. Patience, cooperation, and a willingness to accept direction and supervision from the preschool teachers and staff.

Support: RSVP provides bags of preschool books, games and activities for volunteers to checkout and rotate with new materials periodically. The classroom teacher and aides provide on-site support, while the RSVP coordinator (and/or Schools of Hope volunteer coordinator) provides additional support.

Training: The RSVP coordinator provides one-on-one and small group trainings each semester (Fall, Spring and Summer) as needed for new volunteers. Also, RSVP co-sponsors annual trainings in the fall, spring and summer on topics related to working with preschool children.

Time Commitment: Between one and two hours each week during the school year (September through May), with some preschools also having summer volunteer opportunities.

RSVP of Dane County

SaYES* Tips for Recruiting Senior Volunteers

Why Involve Senior Volunteers?

Program coordinators who bring seniors and youth together know that the interactions created bring rich rewards for both generations. Children benefit from the individualized attention they receive and the seniors serve as role models for the students. Senior volunteers are fulfilled when they give back to their community and appreciate the satisfaction of helping tomorrow's adults. Those who have involved seniors in their programs name a variety of benefits beyond their meaningful interactions with students:

1. Senior volunteers are the most reliable volunteers you'll have. They arrive promptly (and probably early) and always notify staff if they won't be there.
2. They are ideal school volunteers because they have time available during the day.
3. They will make long-term commitments to the kids and the program, and they'll continue volunteering for years.
4. They will tell their friends about their volunteer experience and recruit others to join them.
5. They have great patience and care for each of the students they work with....and the students know it!

What Should You Consider Before Recruiting Senior Volunteers?

♦ Which skills are essential for volunteers to have?
♦ How much time is required each week?
♦ Is it possible for volunteers who need a flexible schedule to participate (so they can go to board meetings, medical appointments, major trips, etc.)
♦ Where will volunteers park? Can you reserve spaces for them close to the building on program days?
♦ Have you planned an orientation and training session for the volunteers?
♦ Can you accommodate a volunteer with physical limitations at your program site?
♦ Do you have a prepared job description to give the volunteers?

Who Can Help You Recruit Senior Volunteers?

There are several organizations that recruit and place senior volunteers. Consider contacting them, explain your program and your volunteer needs, and ask for their assistance in locating senior volunteers: Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP), Foster Grandparent Programs, SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), AARP, and volunteer centers.

*SaYES - Seniors Assisting Youth Engaged in Service

How Can You Recruit Senior Volunteers?

If you will be recruiting the seniors directly, first make a list of where seniors gather in your community. Think about where seniors live, where they attend events and meetings, and which businesses have special days for seniors. Those can be your primary recruitment locations.

- Senior Housing: Make several contacts, leave flyers about your program, find one key individual to talk with and describe your program, and then return a few more times to talk with the seniors. Host a coffee at the housing development for the residents and talk with them about your program.
- Senior Centers: Attend a lunch and announce your program, or provide a presentation for their participants. Ask Senior Center staff for help in identifying seniors who would be good volunteers in your program and get their help in contacting those seniors.
- Service Organizations and Organizations for Retired People: Provide an article or announcement for their newsletter. Offer to make a presentation to their group, and take one of your senior volunteers along to share his/her experiences, too. Try to meet one "leader" in the group and get his/her interest so he/she can talk about your program with others.
- Faith Communities: Provide a newsletter article and a poster to put on their community bulletin board. Ask if there is a senior group in the church that you could talk with personally. Again, bring a senior volunteer with you.
- Businesses with "Senior Days": (Some businesses offer discounted meals or discounts for merchandise purchased on "Senior Day".) Ask the manager if you can set up a small display on their Senior Day.
- Senior Expo or Senior Fairs: Set up a small display, provide flyers, talk with everyone who visits your table, and provide a treat or drawing for a prize. If there is a charge for having a display, explain your program and ask for a free booth or share a booth with another organization (like a retirement facility that you're already working with).
- Businesses: If there are major companies in your community, talk with their human resources department to learn if they have retirement planning meetings for their older staff. If so, ask if you could provide some information about your volunteer needs or come and talk with the group. Many seniors like to start their volunteering pre-retirement so they have an idea about what they would like to do after they retire.

Also consider these ideas:
- Run a commercial on your local school district cable channel or local access channel. They typically have a large senior audience.
- Talk with the local media and ask them to do a story about the seniors working with students. Showing the personal side of volunteering will motivate seniors to respond.
- Put information in your school newsletter and ask parents to invite their grandparents and senior neighbors to volunteer.
- Place ads or announcements in your local library. Many seniors go to the library at least weekly.

Volunteer Placement Form

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Name of Volunteer: _____Day of Birth: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Interests/Hobbies: _____

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Coordinator: _____

Phone Number: _____   Fax: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

TEACHER/STAFF INFORMATION

Teacher Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____   Best times to call: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

When and how is the best way for volunteer to contact teacher about questions/concerns:

_____

_____

Instructions for reporting volunteer's absence: _____

_____

PLACEMENT DETAILS

Placement Date: _____   Grade: _____

Schedule: Day(s)_____ Time: _____

Student(s) Volunteer Works With: _____

Form distribution: White to Volunteer Coordinator – Yellow to Volunteer – Pink to Teacher/Staff

TUTORING LOG

Volunteer's Name: _____

Schedule: _____

DATE	Student's Initials or # of students	ACTIVITY (Examples: Read 3 books, Wrote a story, etc.)	TIME (In minutes)

Schools of Hope Literacy Project

VOLUNTEER EVALUATION FORM 2004-2005
Thank you for volunteering!

Your input and experience is very important to the success of volunteering in the schools and community. Please answer the following questions based on your involvement with tutoring and return the evaluation by **May 30, 2005**.

School/Program where you tutored _____

Teacher _____

Number of students you tutored _____

1. Which category most closely describes you (check all that apply):
    ___ school parent
    ___ college student (UW-Madison, MATC, Edgewood)
    ___ work study student
    ___ high school student
    ___ community volunteer with RSVP
    ___ community volunteer
    ___ other (please specify): _____

2. About how long have you been volunteering in schools?
    ___ less than 6 months
    ___ 6 months – 1 year
    ___ 1-2 years
    ___ 3-4 years
    ___ 5 or more years

3. Please provide your estimate of the percentage of time you tutored in each category:
    _____ 1-on-1 or 1-on-2
    _____ Other (general literacy/rotate among students/center activity/etc.)

4. Please mark the most appropriate column for each question:

Question	Not At All	Very Little	Some-what	Very Much	No Answer
To what extent do you feel that your volunteering contributed to an improvement in the child(ren)'s <u>reading ability</u>?					
To what extent do you feel that your volunteering contributed to an improvement in the child(ren)'s <u>attitude toward reading</u>?					
To what extent did volunteering increase your understanding of student and/or school needs?					
To what degree were you oriented and made to feel comfortable at the school?					
If you had a question or concern, to what extent did you feel comfortable approaching someone in order to get assistance?					
Were teacher expectations for your volunteering communicated clearly?					

Comments regarding any of the previous questions:

5. What were some positive aspects of your volunteering experience?

6. What are some ways that your volunteering experience could have been improved?

7. How many tutor trainings did you attend this school year? _____

8. Please list any suggestions you have for topics to be presented at tutor trainings:

9. Are you planning to volunteer in the future?

    _____ Yes (If yes, please fill out attached form and return to your VISTA Coordinator)
    _____ No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation. Please return it to your VISTA Volunteer Coordinator at your school/program or mail it to:
SCHOOLS OF HOPE / PO BOX 5414/ MADISON, WI 53705

STAFF EVALUATION OF K-3 LITERACY TUTORING EFFORTS 2004-2005

Please answer the following questions based on your experience with volunteer tutors. Your input is very important to the Schools of Hope Literacy Project and will help improve volunteering efforts in the future. Please return the evaluation by **May 30, 2005**. Thank you!

Teacher/ Staff Name (optional) _____

School/ Program _____

4. Please provide the number of tutors who work with you in each category:
    _____ 1:1 or 1:2
    _____ Other (general literacy/rotate among students, center activity, etc.)

5. How would you rate the skill level of the tutors?
    ___ Skilled
    ___ Sufficiently skilled
    ___ Somewhat skilled, but needed additional training
    ___ Needed extensive training
    ___ N/A
Comments:

3. Please mark the most appropriate column for each question:

Question	Not at all	Very Little	Some-what	Very Much	N/A
Was there a positive change in student <u>attitude</u> during the time the volunteer(s) worked with the child(ren)?					
Was there a positive change in the student(s) <u>behavior</u> during the time the volunteer(s) worked with the child(ren)?					
To what extent did the volunteer(s) contribute to an increase in the student(s) skills or progress?					
How successful was the communication between you and the volunteers?					
How successful was the communication between you and the VISTA volunteer coordinator?					

Comments regarding the above questions:

4. Please list any suggestions you have for topics to be presented at tutor trainings:

5. What role did you play in selecting materials used in tutoring sessions?
  (Check all that apply)
  _____I selected materials
  _____Volunteer coordinator provided materials
  _____Tutors chose/provided materials for tutoring

6. Are there additional resources that would be helpful to you in your work with volunteers?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this evaluation. Please return it to your VISTA Volunteer Coordinator at your school/program or mail it to:
Schools of Hope / PO Box 5414/ Madison, WI 53705

Ways To Show Appreciation to Tutors
Tips for Teachers and Volunteer Coordinators

❖ Say "Thank you" regularly
❖ Have a student write a note to their tutor
❖ Send a birthday card
❖ Provide treats on the volunteer's birthday
❖ Plan regular times to visit with the tutor about the student(s) s/he works with, answer questions, help problem solve, etc.
❖ Give tutor the school newsletter each month so s/he knows more about what's happening
❖ Call the tutor if the student is absent, so the volunteer doesn't waste a trip to the school
❖ Give small gifts, especially student-created ones, at some holidays or special events
❖ Notify tutor when there are special situations (field trips, tests, etc.) which will alter tutoring schedule
❖ Invite tutor to all-school assemblies, concerts, plays, etc.
❖ Introduce the tutor to the principal and other key staff
❖ Be prepared for your tutor's arrival… have the work ready and waiting
❖ Greet the tutor enthusiastically each day
❖ Give tutor an opportunity to request more training… and then follow through
❖ Provide the tutor with a bag of materials which will be helpful with their tutoring; or used books that they can give to the child to keep
❖ Share information about special situations which affect the student (remember: the tutor has agreed to keep the information confidential)
❖ Have a school volunteer appreciation luncheon or tea
❖ Purchase a book for the school library and dedicate it to the tutor
❖ Tell the volunteer often how valuable their help is
❖ Nominate him/her for community volunteer awards
❖ Share information about student improvements with the tutor
❖ Treat the tutor as a "team player"
❖ Provide a safe place for tutor to keep his/her belongings (purse, coat, etc.)
❖ Invite the tutor to a staff in-service that relates to the tutor's work
❖ Send a note to his/her family expressing thanks for "sharing" him/her

Remember: volunteers who are appreciated make long-term commitments.

RESOURCES

Publications

Connecting Generations, Strengthening Communities: A Toolkit for Intergenerational Program Planners, by the Center for Intergenerational Learning, Temple University

Collaboration, California Department of Education – CalServe Initiative

Combining Paid Service and Volunteerism: Strategies for Effective Practice in School Settings, Kathryn Furano and Corina Chavez.

Community Agency and School Collaboration: Going In with Your Eyes Open, Mark P. Batenburg. Service Learning 2000 Center Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Partner Power and Service-Learning Manual for Community-Based Organizations to Work with Schools, Rich Cairn. Published by ServeMinnesota!

Seniors for Schools Effective Practices Guidebook, April 2000

On-Line Resources

Corporation for National and Community Service Effective Practices EpiCenter
http://nationalserviceresources.org/epicenter/index.php

LEARNS (provides training and technical assistance to Corporation-funded programs focused on education)
www.nwrel.org/learns

Web-Based Tutor Training (developed by LEARNS)
www.nwrel.org/learns/web-based

Generations United
www.gu.org

Penn State Intergenerational Programs and Aging
http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu