



## **PEACE Afterschool Program Volunteer Handbook**

*Note: This handbook was designed specifically as a guide and introduction for those interested in volunteering at the PEACE Program as tutors and reading buddies. Interested in supporting us in a different way? You can...*

- *Work with us and your service organization to put together a food, books, or supplies drive.*
- *Work with us and your service organization to put on a special event, like a book fair.*
- *Scholarship a child at PEACE for \$30/month, individually or with a group.*
- *Donate any amount online at [peacekv.org/donate](http://peacekv.org/donate).*
- *Email us—[info@peacekv.org](mailto:info@peacekv.org)--with your idea!*

### **History & Mission**

The PEACE Program was founded in 2010 as a way to serve the families living in and near Devlin Place, a low-income housing community in Kirksville. Located at #20 Devlin Place, the afterschool program is held 3:30-5:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday during the school year and 12:00-2:00 p.m. in the summer. PEACE is a volunteer-fueled 501(c)(3) non-profit organization overseen by a Board of Directors. Within the program, volunteers help provide homework assistance, reading intervention, nutritious snacks, fun games, and positive mentorship to kids, ages 5-14, who may not otherwise have anywhere to go after school. On a given day, we serve anywhere between 15 and 30 children, and in its years of operation, PEACE has touched over 300 kids and their families.

The acronym “PEACE” does stand for “Proactive Educational Assistance in a Caring Environment,” but it also expresses our desire to create a peaceful afterschool haven in the lives of the kids we are blessed to serve. Here is our mission statement:

Through the Peace Program, we want to stimulate a love for learning and excellence in academics by providing Christian-based education assistance in a safe environment that promotes self-worth, respect, and responsibility. Our mission is to help young people foster bright dreams for their futures and to develop the skills necessary to become caring and respectful citizens able to better serve their community.

The idea that we are “Christian-based” means that the coordinators of the program are of the Christian faith, and our motivation for running the program is the love we have received from Jesus Christ. PEACE is not a church or a Bible study, but we are open about our beliefs with the children and their families. We pray together as a team before and after the program each day, as well as with the kids before snack time; participation is entirely voluntary. We do not require that all volunteers be Christians, and people of many religious and nonreligious backgrounds are encouraged to apply to serve.

In addition to the Board of Directors who help run our non-profit, we have a team of coordinators led by a program director who are on-the-ground support for the program. The director heads up this team, helps communicate with our board, and keeps things at PEACE running smoothly. The coordinators are seasoned PEACE volunteers who help with the day-to-day operations of the program and with fundraising, as well as being program mentors for the newer volunteers who join us. They have extra training and experience with some of the more complicated issues that might come up during the program. If you ever have any questions during your time at PEACE, these coordinators are the place to go.

## **Structure & Schedule**

The afterschool program is open 3:30-5:30, Monday-Thursday, during the school year. The program is canceled whenever Kirksville R-3 dismisses early or cancels. Volunteers are advised by the director of start and end dates, cancellations, and breaks.

For the sake of both the students and our volunteers, we ask that volunteers choose a day that they can be at PEACE for the entire span of a semester. As a volunteer, you are an integral part of our day-to-day team. We put thought into who will work where and plan activities according to whom we will have each day. We understand though that sick days and family emergencies happen. If you are unable to make it for your scheduled time, please notify the coordinator for your day as soon as possible.

For a volunteer, a day at PEACE consists of the following schedule:

- 3:15... Volunteers arrive at facility to prepare snacks and brief on plans for the day.
- 3:30... Children arrive from school, doors open.
- 3:30-4:30... Homework Time
- 4:30-5:00... Snack
- 5:00-5:30... Activity Time
- 5:30-6:00... Dismissal. Walk children home, clean up, and debrief.

### **Homework Time**

During homework time, the program is divided into groups of children across the different rooms. Where a child is placed depends on age and whether or not he or she has homework. It is important to note that the children do not decide for themselves what room they work in. In confusing or special cases, check with a coordinator to ensure the students are placed appropriately and consistently. In order to come to the program, all students must bring their backpacks from school, and volunteers check folders for

homework. In order to offer the best support to our kids, each piece of homework gets checked by a volunteer, and each child who completes their assignments earns a sticker for their hard work.

There are many different ways to help students with homework, but at PEACE we adhere to the Minimalist Tutoring Philosophy. This approach is different from what you might think of as tutoring but is designed to empower the students to do the work. The key idea is that the child is in charge of his/her own homework. Your job as a tutor is to ask questions first and save your explaining as a last resort. The intent is to guide students by encouraging them to access what they already know and build from there. Our goal is to support the learning that is taking place in the classroom, so we stay away from new “tricks” or methods that are different from the approach the student has already learned.

Because we want to remind our kids that they have ownership of their homework, we have a “no pencil” policy for our volunteers. You should not do any of the writing. Let the kid take it and guide her or him with helpful questions. To make this successful, the homework paper should be positioned in front of the student while you take a side role. Often a student might just need help refocusing on the problem or quick encouragement to keep going, so try these first before you launch into a lengthy explanation. We choose this tutoring philosophy because our goal is not just to help a student complete a piece of homework, but for each student to feel empowered and able to do on their own whatever academic task was included in that homework in the settings where the Peace tutor is not going to be around to help. We have worked over the years to integrate as much academic research as possible into homework time and other areas of the program to create the most successful environment for the students we serve. If you have a question about the methods we use, feel free to ask.

### **Snack Time**

Halfway through the program, we take time to sit around a table with our kids and talk while they get to eat a healthy snack. During snack time, you as a volunteer get a chance to connect with the kids at your table. This is a focusing time where students are divided into smaller groups and are (for the most part) sitting still. Feel free to help guide the conversation somewhere positive. Sometimes it is helpful to ask questions, tell a story, read a picture book, or play a verbal game. One volunteer will be assigned to pass out food/drinks. If that’s not you, pull up a chair next to some kids in the room you are assigned. There will be one refillable item each day designated by the menu maker, so be sure to ask before guaranteeing more of something we don’t have. Be sure to help the kids you are around clean up their space before they leave. This is an awesome opportunity to be an actively positive role model for the students.

### **Activity Time**

After snack, we have activity time.. Activity time might look very different depending on the day at PEACE. This time may consist of playing outside in the grassy area near our building or at P.C. Mills park, playing board games, doing crafts or other learning activities. Any students who have not finished homework get to keep working on it during this time. Your main job as a volunteer during this time is to join in the activity with the kids and help keep an atmosphere of fun and order. This is also an opportunity where the gifts and talents of our amazing volunteer team get to shine. If you have a passion for a topic, we would love to hear your ideas for activities to do with the kids during this time. We’ve had activities about art, music, sports, chess, nutrition, history and so much more, and we are interested to hear what

you might want to bring to the table.

### **Table Time and Cleaning**

After the kids are dismissed at 5:30, we as volunteers we clean the building and gather for what we call “table time” to debrief and share any questions or comments about the day. We consider these connection times valuable in helping us maintain a family atmosphere among our volunteers.

We are open to your insight. If you have ideas about crafts, games, prizes, activities etc. feel free share them during these times. Your creativity and inspiration is greatly valued. This is also a key time to ask questions and learn from the experiences of other volunteers.

## **Volunteer Application Process**

Before you can be eligible to volunteer at PEACE, you must complete a volunteer application, located on the PEACE KV website, as well as a background check with the Missouri registry (for ages 18+), a physical by a doctor or nurse, and a TB skin test. (Forms and more information about these are available on the PEACE KV website volunteer page). After an interview with one of our coordinators and a review of your background check information and possible reference checks, we will contact you regarding our volunteer needs. While we try to place every applicant, we reserve the right to place volunteers according to our needs and criteria. We are not able to place any volunteers under the age of 15.

If you are placed to volunteer, you will need to complete an informational form, a confidentiality agreement, and other paperwork. In addition to all-staff meetings and trainings, in your first semester of volunteering you will get to participate in PEACE tutor training as well as working with a mentor within the program who has had volunteering experience within PEACE for a year or longer to help make your volunteering experience as successful as possible. The PEACE coordinator team will also conduct semesterly volunteer reviews, to celebrate strengths and help identify areas of growth for all of our team members.

## **Volunteer Benefits**

At PEACE we understand that our volunteers are an essential part of carrying out our mission and we aim to create a positive environment for everyone on our team to thrive. We offer these benefits to all of our volunteers:

- To be treated as a co-worker, not as free help
- To engage in a suitable assignment, with consideration for personal preference, temperament, experience, and education
- To freely be able to ask questions about the organization, its policies, its people, and its purpose
- To obtain appropriate training and support
- To be heard, to have a part in planning, and to feel free to make suggestions

- To be recognized and appreciated as a valued contributor to the program and its mission

## **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

Because we take our position as community role models very seriously at PEACE, we expect our volunteers to exemplify a positive standard of behavior that reflects an understanding of their influence on the children we are blessed to serve.

### **Attendance**

As a volunteer at PEACE, you are not just a wallflower; you are crucial to our team. We rely on every member of the team that is scheduled to help the program run smoothly. If you are not going to be able to make it to your committed day, you need to contact the coordinator that leads your day as soon as possible. By state guidelines we must keep a certain staff to child ratio, so we may need to find a replacement.

### **Personal Appearance**

All volunteers at PEACE are expected to dress appropriately with an understanding of the message their attire is communicating. No clothing containing offensive language, sexual innuendo, gang messages, or advertisements for alcohol or tobacco will be permitted. Shirts should cover the midriff and chest, and shorts, skirts, or pants should cover the undergarments and upper thigh. Shoes must be worn by volunteers at all times as well. We also ask that volunteers not wear clothing or accessories that demonstrate an ostentatious display of wealth that might function as a distraction or barrier during the program.

As you are dressing for PEACE, remember that throughout the program time you might be running outside playing freeze tag, supervising little kids holding markers or peanut butter, and sitting, squatting, bending to help with homework, and it works best to wear clothing that would accommodate this level of activity.

### **Harassment Free Environment**

The Peace Program will not tolerate any form of sexual harassment by any member of its team directed toward any other member of the volunteer team, children in the program, or community members associated with the program. Sexual harassment includes requests for sexual favors, unwanted physical touching, sexual comments or jokes, nonverbal sexual conduct or gestures, display of sexual pictures or objects, and any other sexually-based unwelcome conduct. Any volunteer noting any harassment should promptly report the behavior to the program director, and if the program director is the offending party, to the Board Chair. All reports of sexual harassment will be promptly investigated and appropriately handled. Any member of the PEACE team who is found to have engaged in sexually harassing conduct will be immediately dismissed from the program.

## **Use of Illegal Drugs and Alcohol**

The PEACE Program recognizes that illegal drug use and alcohol abuse is not only dangerous behavior but also negative example setting, therefore no such abuse will be tolerated in the program. Possession, storage, or consumption of illegal drugs or alcohol on center premises is grounds for immediate termination. Any volunteer who arrives at the program under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol will also be subject to immediate release. Any member of the PEACE team who is convicted of a felonious drug charge or alcohol-related offense will be subject to release, without regard to the whether or not the offenses were committed on program premises.

## **Personal Conduct**

Because our goal as the PEACE team is to provide our students with the best afterschool experience, we encourage all volunteers to be engaged with the kids, involved in whatever activity is going on, whether playing tag, helping with homework, doing a craft, etc. To this end, we request that you do not bring personal laptops/tablets or activities such as your own homework, books to read, etc. You may bring your cell phone, purse, or backpack into the program but we recommend placing them in a safe area out of the way of activities. Please also limit texting and phone calls while you are with the kids to emergencies or program-related instances only.

We expect all volunteers to set an atmosphere of positivity by your respect for the students, other workers and themselves. To foster the “caring environment” that we talk about in our name, we ask kids and workers alike to avoid put-downs, even in jest. Please never call the kids or another worker a name or make fun of a personal characteristic even if you are joking. Also, please limit complaining or insulting talk about others, especially about school, teachers, etc. Comments like “I *hate* math” or “School is awful” do not model the positivity we want to inspire in the kids and can work contrary to our message. We also ask that you do not say even “mild” cuss words like “stupid” or “retarded” or “sucks” because we ask the kids not to say these types of words. Kids may try to tell an inappropriate joke or story but your reaction can discourage these topics and motivate more positive conversation. At PEACE we understand that our words have power, and we want to use these to lift up each other and the students we are blessed to serve.

## **Consistency**

To create the strongest team environment within our program, workers are expected to know the classroom rules and to hold the kids to a standard of behavior. Communication is key to this consistency, so if you are not sure about a certain situation please ask another worker or a coordinator what our decided approach is to this situation. Also, be careful not to undermine expectations or consequences already set in place by another volunteer, especially in front of the kids. It is appropriate to pull a worker aside later to ask about the situation if needed.

Each day the volunteers gather at the end of the program to discuss how the day went at table time. This is

a crucial piece of our cohesiveness as a team, so we expect volunteers to stay for this time. Other times such as prayer times, all-staff meetings and trainings help the entire team stay on the same page and expand our skills. Your attendance at these is crucial to the cohesiveness of the team.

### **Staff Safety**

We are committed to providing a safe environment within the program and expect all volunteers to follow good safety practices. No volunteer should be expected to perform any duty or responsibility that may expose her or him to an unreasonable risk of bodily harm. Any volunteer aware of any unsafe conditions should report them to a member of the coordinator team immediately. The willful violation of safety rules, the failure to report unsafe conditions, or incidents involving volunteer injury are considered serious offenses. Any observation of behavior posing danger to volunteers or students should be immediately reported.

PEACE strictly prohibits any form of violence within the program by any member of the volunteer team, including verbal threats, non-verbal threats, or any violent actions. Volunteers should promptly report any incidences of violence they observe to the program director, who will take prompt action. Any criminal misconduct will be immediately reported to appropriate authorities. Any volunteer who engages in such behavior will be dismissed immediately.

### **Child Safety**

For safety and accountability, we keep the doors to all occupied rooms within the program open and unlocked, except for bathrooms while in use. Only one individual is allowed in each bathroom at a time. It is never acceptable for a volunteer to be behind closed doors or in a secluded area alone with a kid. If a child must be escorted home, it must be done by more than one member of the PEACE team approved by the director to go. Physical contact between volunteers and kids is strictly limited to appropriate professional contact, meaning no lapsitting, piggyback rides, carrying off children, etc. Any inappropriate contact by a volunteer may result in dismissal, and will be reported to the proper authorities as necessary.

As a child care facility, we are mandated reporters of child abuse. If you suspect any physical or sexual abuse of any child, you should report your concerns to the program director promptly.

### **Program Property**

All volunteers are expected to have respect for program property and should not operate equipment without permission and training. Please notify a coordinator if you are struggling with any equipment or activity. PEACE is not responsible for the destruction of any personal property items that occurs at the program. Falsification of program records and/or copying or removing program records without permission is not permitted and would result in dismissal.

### **Conflict Resolution**

All of the members of the PEACE team, including volunteers, coordinators, and board members, are encouraged to seek prompt resolution of any disputes that may arise. If the conflict is with another member of the team, the first attempt should be to lovingly seek resolution one-on-one with the person involved. If the problem still remains, the matter should be referred to a member of the coordinator team or the program director. If the matter still persists, a written complaint may be submitted to the Board Chair and the complaint will be reviewed by members of the Board to help bring restoration.

### **Media Contact**

Any media (newspaper, television, radio, social media, etc.) phone call or inquiry should be referred directly to the Program Director. Other members of the volunteer PEACE team should not speak to any media representative or in any media outlet on PEACE's behalf without direct approval from the director. No photos, videos, audio recordings, or other media of PEACE students by any volunteer may be distributed or posted for any reason other than promotion for the program with a proper photo release and must be approved by the Program Director.

### **Making a Difference**

All of our policies are designed to create an atmosphere of peace and respect within the program. As a volunteer, you have the opportunity to be part of creating this culture of self-worth for every student that walks through our doors. You get to inspire a love for learning and to help students foster bright dreams for their futures. We understand at PEACE that our volunteers make a difference and we are so grateful that you want to join us!

*This document will be updated on a regular basis to include the recommendations of the board and administration of PEACE.*

*Revised January 2016.*