Literacy Mentor

Writers’ Exchange Literacy Mentors are positive role models who help kids from inner-city neighbourhoods aged 6-13 boost their literacy skills and self-esteem during super fun reading and writing activities (kids even create professionally designed and published books!) If you are excited to learn how zombie scavenger hunts, yummy treats, and explosive science experiments can get kids excited about reading, writing, and their own potential, then this is the perfect role for you!

You don’t need to be a strong writer, or super outgoing and energetic to be an awesome Mentor, you just need to show up consistently to build a relationship with the kids while providing encouragement and support.

Mentors don’t need to plan the activities or worry about managing behaviour. A staff programmer will be there to support you 100% of the time, just show up ready to have fun and cheer on the kids.

Many of the kids we work with have low self-confidence when it comes to reading and writing, but when Mentors like you make the kids feel safe and supported, the kids get excited about literacy and build self-confidence to set them up for long-term success!

In operation since 2011, every year the Writers’ Exchange serves 600 kids with the help of 250 Literacy Mentors. Our programs operate in the highest-needs neighbourhoods in East and South Vancouver.

In-School Programs
• Working in Vancouver School Board inner-city schools, mentors work with 3 to 4 students to complete curriculum requirements in a super creative way
• At the end of the program, creations from the entire class are combined into a publication. Previous books include “Deez Dough Nuts” - filled with reviews from Vancouver’s favourite doughnut shops
• Commitment: 1.5 hours/week (programs usually run weekday mornings) for 5-6 weeks, on the same day/time each week
• Mentors MUST attend all sessions of an in-school project
• We run 3 to 4 in-school programs each term (our terms run from September - December, January - March, and April - June)

After-School Programs
• Mentors work one-on-one or with small groups of kids to help them complete fun writing projects, homework, awesome crafts, and a published book, like "Do not eat!"! Programs often include fun themes, like Magical Mondays, or FOMO Fridays.
• Program hours: 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.
• Commitment: at least one 1 full term (our terms run from September - December, January - March, April - June, and July - August), 2 hours/week on the same day, and with the same
program each week. Mentors are allowed to miss no more than 2 weeks of an after-school program per term to ensure that we provide the consistency the kids crave.

THE IMPACT OF YOUR TIME AND ENTHUSIASM:

KIDS BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS!
97% of kids in our programs say there's an adult at the Writers' Exchange who cares about them

KIDS HAVE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE!
96% of kids in our programs love coming to the Writers' Exchange

KIDS ARE MOTIVATED TO READ AND WRITE!
98% of kids in our programs are excited to do the activities

KIDS SUCCEED LONG-TERM BECAUSE OF A HUGE SELF-ESTEEM BOOST!

WHAT YOU’LL DO TO CHANGE LIVES:
• Be a consistent positive role model for the kids
• Bring your creativity, enthusiasm, and kindness to all shifts
• Demonstrate compassion for the communities in which the Writers’ Exchange is situated
• Become familiar with the Writers’ Exchange and our mission and culture
• Commit to constantly learning how you can best support the kids

WHAT MAKES A GREAT MENTOR:
• Possess most or all 15 of the following qualities: adaptable, committed, compassionate, consistent, flexible, friendly, fun, genuine, kind, loves to learn, open-minded, relaxed, team player, trustworthy, and understanding
• Thrives in a space that is loud, fun, energetic, and constantly changing
• Previous experience working with children is great but is not required. A genuine enthusiasm to connect with awesome kids over glue and glitter is more important
• Eager to participate in ongoing training activities

HOW TO JOIN THE TEAM:
• Fully commit to at least one in-school program (1.5 hours / week for 4-5 weeks) and/or after-school program for at least one full term (2 hours / week for 10-15 weeks). Our terms run from September - December, January - March, April - June, and July - August.
• Mentors MUST attend all sessions of an in-school program.
• Mentors are allowed to miss no more than 2 weeks of an after-school program per term to ensure that we provide the consistency the kids crave.
• We encourage Literacy Mentors to make an even longer-term commitment to cultivate close, supportive relationships with kids.
• Be at least 16 years old
• Provide two references
• Complete a BC Criminal Records Check (please note it can take up to 4 weeks to process a criminal record check, so please apply ASAP)

We encourage applications from people from diverse backgrounds, including LGBTTIQQ2SA folks, Indigenous peoples, people of all colours, immigrants and refugees, people with disabilities, or another equity-seeking group with which you identify.

WHY PEOPLE LOVE BEING A LITERACY MENTOR/BENEFITS:

This is an especially great volunteering opportunity if you’re thinking about becoming a teacher, social worker, education assistant, child psychologist or working with children or youth in any capacity and want to gain concrete skills, direct experience and hours working with kids.

Literacy Mentors have access to exclusive training opportunities, where you will learn about reconciliation, non-judgemental listening, and strategies for addressing challenging behaviours.

After three terms as a Literacy Mentor, you’ll receive a Writers’ Exchange tote bag!

Mentoring is also an energizing break from your daily routine (or a fun day-time activity if you are retired, a stay-at-home parent, or have free time during weekdays), a great way to make connections, cultivate a sense of belonging, and build community, and an enjoyable, meaningful opportunity to work with kids who need your support.

“Writers’ Exchange creates community through literacy, intergenerational interactions, and creative fun!” - Tara, Literacy Mentor

HOW TO APPLY:
Please visit http://vancouverwe.com/volunteerfall2019 for all the details and to fill out an application form by September 16th, 2019.

Orientation dates for New Literacy Mentors:

• Tuesday, September 17th, 6:00pm - 9:00pm or
• Saturday, September 21st, 11:00am - 2:00pm

“At Writers’ Exchange we can do anything our mind wants to imagine!” - Erin, age 11