

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



## Resource Center

*Helping the world's children in our own backyard*

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Welcome to the Glen Ellyn Children's Resource Center (GECRC). On behalf of the staff and board, I want thank you for your desire to support the GECRC students.

GECRC is making a significant difference in the lives of our students and families. Our objectives are to assist low income children who are at risk of academic failure attain competencies in core literacy and life skills and to assist them in achieving cultural literacy skills as well as helping them to adapt to life in our community. We have accomplished these objectives with the help and dedication of volunteers like you.

Over the last few years, volunteers have been providing one on one tutoring to students, which has been instrumental in GECRC students advancing socially and academically. During the summer we switch to a classroom setting but it is one in which volunteers are still providing one on one assistance which helps students go into the new school year. That means that year round GECRC students are the beneficiaries of phenomenal volunteer help. We are fortunate to have you working with the GECRC students and we deeply appreciate you.

We ask that you take the time to read this information carefully as it provides important information and is a great reference. It will also answer many questions that you may have about our policies and procedures. Please know that I am always available to help provide any assistance you may need.

Sincerely,  
*Monica K. Lightner*

Glen Ellyn Children's Resource Center  
Director of Program and Volunteers

volunteer@gecrc.org  
630-479-9919  
www.gecrc.org

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to help children from low income families acquire the necessary skills in academics and social interaction to move successfully through grades K-12 and into adulthood.

## **How we accomplish this ...**

We do this by providing after school and summer programs which emphasize literacy and community involvement and use the talents of teachers, volunteer tutors, adult caregivers and a variety of local support services.

## **History**

The Glen Ellyn Children's Resource Center began as The Glen Ellyn Community Resource Center in April of 2002 with the support of the county run DuPage Prevention Partnership and initially served the residents of the Parkside Apartment Complex.

In the fall of 2003, the Resource Center moved to the classroom space offered by the Faith Lutheran Church of Glen Ellyn. During this time, the GECRC began its continuing development into a non-profit cooperation in order to better serve the greater Glen Ellyn Community.

In 2006, we moved to Abraham Lincoln Elementary School and have been there ever since. In 2013-2014 school year, we began serving students directly out of Hadley Junior High. We expanded to our newest location Churchill Elementary in September of 2016.

We have also been among the area's most active non-profits serving a growing number of immigrant and refugee residents. We are proud to play an important role in integrating our community's newest members.

## **The service we provide**

The GECRC provides cost free academic support to low income children in Glen Ellyn. Participation is open to all students who attend Districts 41 or 89 schools and meet low income and academic risk guidelines. Students are referred by teachers, social workers, school administrators, or social service agencies. Annually our program serves over 80 immigrant, refugee, and American born students from many different countries and people groups.

## **Program Goals**

**Balanced Literacy and Math Support:** GECRC hopes to foster a love of reading, writing, and math in all students and their families so that they will continue to explore, to discover, and to learn as independent and confident readers, writers, and mathematicians for a lifetime. We do this by providing students strategic reading, writing, and math instruction that supports their current curricula and focuses on their strengths and needs as well as interests.

**Opportunities for Homework Assistance:** Youths need opportunities to practice their developing skills so that they remain sharp and current in their traditional school day practices.

**Activities that Promote Critical Thinking:** Youths need opportunities to develop their analytical and problem solving skills as the work to become independent learners.

**Family Engagement:** To provide literacy information to families in order to develop a stronger home and school connection.

**Time to Socialize with Peers:** Youths need opportunities to experience positive relationships with people outside of their families. These relationships can provide support and security as they experience new ideas, feelings, and values.

**Opportunities to Make Connections to their Culture and Lives Outside of the Program:** Youths need opportunities to explore who they are becoming and how they relate to the world around them as a member of their sex, family, culture, and community.

**Opportunities for them to Demonstrate their Knowledge of New Ideas:** It is common for children to feel self-conscious and unsure of their abilities. They need opportunities to demonstrate to themselves and others that they can do something well. Further, the chance to share their new knowledge facilitates the imprinting of the material.

**Opportunities to Exercise Choice:** Youths need opportunities for autonomy and to pursue personal tastes.

**Outdoor and Physical Activities:** Youths need to exercise and develop their growing bodies.

**Arts Activities:** Youths need opportunities for creative expression and exposure to a variety of disciplines.

## **GECRC OFFICE**

346 Taft Avenue  
Suite 205  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

## **GECRC Elementary Program Location's**

### **Abraham Lincoln Elementary School (ENTER THROUGH Door Located on Newton Ave)**

380 Greenfield Ave  
Glen Ellyn IL, 60137

### **Churchill Elementary School (ENTER THROUGH Door # 4)**

240 Geneva Rd  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

## **Hours of Operation**

- Monday- Friday
- Program begins at 3:30
- Program ends at 5:30 pm
- We follow District 41 school calendar. If school is in session then we are as well
- On half days, the program does not run and/or if school is cancelled due to inclement weather, we are not in session either.
  - If in doubt about if program is in session due to inclement weather check the district 41 website <http://www.d41.org/> (In addition, you will receive an email as soon we are notified of a school closing).

## **Schedule**

- 3:30-4:20 Snack and Free Choice Time
- 4:30-5:30 Tutoring (Monday- Thursday)
- 3:30-4:30 Enrichment Activity Day (Friday)

## **Reporting Absence**

- Email [volunteer@gecrc.com](mailto:volunteer@gecrc.com) or text or call 630-479-9919 for **Churchill**
- Email [bburke@gecrc.com](mailto:bburke@gecrc.com) or text or call 630-899-9919 for **Lincoln**
- Email [lcomerford@gecrc.com](mailto:lcomerford@gecrc.com) for **Hadley**
- Please give as much notice as possible.
- Please provide advance notice for an extended absence (more than two weeks in a row).

## **Logging Hours**

It is **essential** that all volunteer sign in and out on the sign in sheet every time they volunteer. If you forget, we have no records of your participation.

**ATTENTION: Tutoring volunteers are essential to the academic and social progress of the students. It is crucial that we receive advance notice if you need to discontinue volunteering. It can be detrimental to student progress if you leave without notice.**

**Barring emergencies or unforeseen circumstances please provide at least two week's notice in the event that this occurs.**

Please keep in mind that for the majority of these students this is the **ONLY EXTRA HELP** they are receiving after school. Therefore, to reiterate what is stated above you play an essential role to the academic and social progress of the students.

## **Policies**

### **Cell Phones**

All personal cell phones should be off during GECRC hours. Texting, calling, taking photos or videos, etc. are not allowed. This also includes not allowing children to play on your phone during academic or free time.

### **Dress Code**

We are working with children. Volunteers must wear appropriate clothing. Clothes must not be tight or revealing or contain suggestive sayings. If you reach up in the air or bend over or sit down and skin shows, this outfit is not appropriate. If you are unclear about the appropriate attire, ask GECRC staff. If a volunteer arrives dressed inappropriately, they may be asked to go home and change.

### **Photos and Videos of Children**

Photos and videos of the GECRC children may not be posted on any form of social media or used for any purpose without the express written consent of the GECRC. With that said, we ask that you **refrain from taking any photos or videos of the children unless you have permission.**

### **Weapons**

Weapons of any kind including look alike weapons are prohibited from being at the GECRC or any GECRC function.

### **Alcohol and Illegal Drugs**

The possession, sale, or use of illegal drugs or alcohol while volunteering, shall be a violation of safe volunteer and staff practices and will be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal. This includes coming to volunteer with any illegal drugs or alcohol in your system.

### **Gifts**

Volunteers are not allowed to give gifts to students. If a student states that they are in need of something such as a winter coat or shoes, please report their need to the staff and we will let the school social worker know of their need.

We understand that small treats such as candy and stickers are great motivators for students. However, we would like these treats to come from a universal treat container. This avoids putting pressure on volunteers to supply these treats. We welcome donations toward containers but volunteers are under no obligation to contribute. Containers are accessible to all volunteers for use during tutoring session.

## **Confidentiality**

Any information learned about a student in the context of GECRC is not allowed to be shared outside of our program.

## **Volunteer Requirements**

- Ability to develop a positive rapport with children ages 6-14.
- Provide a nonjudgmental encouraging presence.
- Provide a caring and consistent relationship.
- Give the student undivided attention. This means being present and engaged.

## **Volunteer Conduct**

- Provide a mentor relationship.
- Use and model appropriate behavior.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Keep students focused on tasks.

## **Respecting School Policies**

- Please supervise children at all times. If the student needs something, please go with them to get it.
- If a student needs to go back to their classroom, you must accompany them and go into the classroom with them.
- A student should **never** be in a classroom alone.
- We do not have access to supplies in a teacher's classroom. You are only to use GECRC supplies.

**Program Objective:** To provide structured, safe, and fun learning environment for GECRC students.

### **Program Goals**

- Academic Support
- Character Building
- Social Skills Development
- Foster a love of learning and a sense of pride

### **Volunteer Guidelines**

- It is essential that we never violate the trust and respect between student and teacher.
- It is also critical that we never violate the trust and respect between the student's parents or guardians. It is prohibited to question a parent's advice or behavior. However, if any concerns related to issues in or outside of GECRC need to be addressed, please speak with GECRC staff.
- Break tasks up so that they are more manageable which can be done by starting with small goals.
- Recognize that your student has their own special talents even if they are struggling with academics. Finding a child's strengths and interest is essential. Utilizing both of these will make a huge difference in how you work with your student.
- Understand that everyone learns differently and at a different pace.
- Match expectation with student's abilities.
- Students love our attention and they look forward to the time you spend with them. Please give them your undivided attention.
- Demonstrate your passion for learning.

### **Setting the Stage for Positive Behavior**

- It is imperative that you set boundaries from day one with your student as this will set the tone for your time with your student.
- Model good behavior as it is often more important than what you say. Students so often strive to emulate adults and by showing them that you are following the rules they will tend to follow the rules as well. If you break the rules, they will think it's okay to break the rules.
- Addressing misbehavior as soon as it occurs is crucial. If this is not done the moment becomes lost. It is important that positive reinforcement be utilized. Students need to know that they misbehaved and the most effective way to do this is with care and understanding. Sometimes it takes extra time to get to the root of the misbehavior but that extra time can make the difference between a successful outcome or continued misbehavior.
- Refocus on what the student is capable of rather than the negative behavior that they are expressing in the moment.
- Be firm and consistent with your student.

### **Arriving for tutoring:**

- Sign in
- Pick a pencil and any other supplies your student may need

### **Getting Acquainted and Beyond**

It is crucial to build a caring and sustained relationship. This will help your student build a sense of trust that will show the student that you are going to be there for them. Once they know this, they will more likely share their feelings both positive and negative. This will in turn lead to more productive tutoring sessions. It is also important to be a nonjudgmental encouraging presence.

- Introduce yourself and let your student know that you are excited that you are going to be working together.
- In order to get to know your student and build a two way relationship it is important that you are willing to share a little about yourself with them. This is especially important for shy students who may be reluctant to share about themselves.
- Write your name on a piece of paper that the student can keep and have them write their name too.
- Each time you work with your student greet them by name and with a smile.
- Help student feeling comfortable working with you by establishing a routine. At the beginning of each day, discuss what your time together will look like. You may even write down your schedule if that seems to be something that helps your student stay focused.
- Spend a few minutes at the beginning of every tutoring session checking in with your student and seeing how their day went.
- If they were absent at your last session or you were absent let them know that you missed them.

## **Contact Information**

### **STAFF**

For questions regarding GECRC Organization, contact  
Joyce Hothan, Executive Director

[jhothan@gecrc.org](mailto:jhothan@gecrc.org)

630-479-9920

For questions about the elementary and junior high after school program, contact  
Monica K. Lightner Director Program and Volunteers

[volunteer@gecrc.org](mailto:volunteer@gecrc.org)

630-479-9919

### **GECRC ON THE WEB**

[www.gecrc.org](http://www.gecrc.org)

<http://gecrc.blogspot.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/gecrc>

<https://twitter.com/GlenEllynCRC>