



Springfield
School
Volunteers 

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SPRINGFIELDSCHOOLVOLUNTEERS.ORG

SCHOOL GUIDE

ABOUT US

Springfield School Volunteers (SSV) is a non-profit organization that has been matching the resources of the community with the needs of the Springfield Public Schools (SPS) since 1969. SSV is governed by a board of directors, managed by a small staff, and supported by many committed, caring, and skilled volunteers.

In 1979, First Lady Rosalynn Carter selected SSV as a model of the spirit of volunteerism, the first of many honors for SSV. We have proudly carried that torch ever since, and have remained a strong supporter of SPS by developing and implementing volunteer programs and services in response to the diverse needs of the district.

SSV's primary focus is to help students reach their highest potential. We do this by supporting positive youth-adult relationships between volunteers and students. These relationships encourage academic excellence, foster social and emotional growth, and promote regular school attendance. SSV also supports the district by screening all individuals interested in serving the schools in a volunteer capacity, as well as by using our nonprofit status to help access and manage funds on the district's behalf.

We look forward to supporting your school through our various programs and services, described in more detail on the following pages.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

SSV matches students in grades K-12 with volunteers who serve as caring friends and guides. To support these positive youth-adult relationships, we provide training, resources, and ongoing support to volunteers. We also work collaboratively and communicate regularly with the school and the volunteers to ensure the relationship is having the desired impact. Volunteers providing social and emotional support are expected to meet one-on-one or in small groups with students for at least 30 minutes once a week.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

SSV works collaboratively with classroom teachers and/or school counselors to match students in grades K-5 with volunteers who can provide remedial or subject-specific assistance. Support can be provided to individual students, small groups of students with similar academic challenges, or to entire classrooms as directed by the classroom teacher.

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

READ ALOUD

SSV's citywide Read Aloud Program was designed to model fluent reading, promote a love of reading, and help add books to classroom libraries. The program is available to a limited number of preschool through fifth-grade classrooms in participating schools each year and takes place once a month from October through February.

SSV works with a volunteer advisory committee to review and select titles for the program and to develop supporting resources provided to the volunteers. We work with participating schools to set a schedule and to determine the number of participating classrooms by grade level. Based on the information provided, we purchase and distribute the books to participating schools at least two weeks before their first Read Aloud day.

On scheduled dates, volunteers gather at their assigned school, pick up the book selected for that month and wait for their student escorts to bring them to their assigned classroom. Ideally, volunteers will read aloud each month to the same participating classroom(s). After reading, they leave the book with the teacher to be added to the classroom library.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

SCREENING & ORIENTATION

SSV is responsible for the screening of all individuals interested in providing service in the Springfield Public Schools. This includes anyone interested in chaperoning a field trip, volunteering for field day, or serving on the PTO. College students completing a practicum or pre-practicum must be processed through the SPS Human Resources Department.

Our thorough screening process consists of a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check, a sex offender registry check, and a reference check. In accordance with the SPS CORI policy, SSV completes a new background check every three years or sooner if there is a break in service.

SSV also offers a volunteer orientation for new and returning volunteers, which provides an overview of policies, procedures, and best practices for volunteering within the Springfield Public Schools.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

SSV utilizes its nonprofit 501 (c)(3) status to access funding on behalf of schools or programs that benefit our students or the district as a whole. Schools or programs can apply for grant funding only available to a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit using SSV as a fiscal sponsor. They can also establish a restricted account with funds they have already received or will solicit using SSV as a fiscal sponsor. This will enable donors to receive an acknowledgment of their tax-deductible contribution.

SSV also manages existing funds intended to provide resources to students in need. See page 9 - Forms for more information about these funds/this service.

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS

Following are a few guidelines to ensure that students and volunteers have the best possible experience while meeting together.

REFERRING STUDENTS

To refer a student(s) for social and emotional and/or academic support, the student packet (*see page 8 - Forms*) should be filled out completely and submitted to SSV. Referrals will be fulfilled as soon as appropriate matches become available. If we are having difficulty finding a volunteer to match with the referred student(s), we will let you know.

When referring a young person for volunteer services, please keep in mind the following:

- Students must be willing and able to meet with a volunteer for 30 to 60 minutes a week.
- Students who benefit most from working with volunteers are those who have the ability to consistently show up and be engaged in the relationship.
- Students must be able to be present enough (physically and socially) to benefit from the relationship with the volunteer.
- If a student consistently misses meetings, we will contact you to determine whether it is feasible for the relationship to continue.

PRE-MATCH MEETING

Prior to the first meeting between students and volunteers, SSV will host a brief pre-match meeting to provide an opportunity for all parties to meet and prepare for the match to begin. During the meeting, generally held virtually, an SSV staff member will review roles and expectations and address any questions or concerns. Ideally, the volunteer, parent/guardian, and an SPS staff member with an understanding of the student's needs will be present at this meeting.

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS

MEETING LOGISTICS

Once a volunteer is identified, SSV will contact your school to confirm the match details (day, time, start date, contact person, etc.). The day and time should be consistent each week. An appropriate place where the volunteer and the student(s) can meet – for example back of the classroom, library, cafeteria, counselor's office, or another quiet space in your building - will also need to be identified.

**** Please note:** *Massachusetts law prohibits volunteers from being left in charge of a class or group of children alone. Volunteers must be within sight or sound of an employee of the school at all times.*

BEST PRACTICES

- Please have space ready and available for when the volunteer arrives.
- If applicable, please ensure that any materials the volunteer may need are available.
- If a student is unavailable to meet with a volunteer due to absence, testing, field trip, etc., please contact the volunteer or SSV.
- If the student is present, please ensure she or he is ready to meet the volunteer (arrange for hallway passes if needed).
- Volunteers are visitors to your school, so they may need assistance with knowing where to park, checking in, finding their meeting space, locating the restrooms, knowing emergency or testing procedures, etc.

FORMS

The following forms should be used for screening individuals interested in volunteering at your school or referring students for social and emotional or academic support. Please help us to expedite the processing of forms by ensuring that all packets are complete. Incomplete packets will be returned.

Volunteer Packet - *for individuals interested in volunteering at your school*

Prior to forwarding to SSV please ensure that:

- Both sides of both the Application and the CORI form are completed.
- The applicant has included the last 6 digits of his/her social security number on the CORI form.
- Forms are legible and have been signed by the applicant.
- The applicant has included a copy of a valid government-issued photo ID (driver's license, passport, veteran's ID, or state-issued ID).

When a CORI clears, SSV will notify both the applicant and the person the principal has designated to receive CORI notification via email. Schools can also search the Background Check system for CORI clearance via MySPS, Applications.

*** Please note, If there is a problem with a background check, Safety & Security will contact the applicant directly. SSV is not notified.*

Student Registration Packet - *to refer students for volunteer support*

Prior to forwarding to SSV please ensure that:

- Both the Student Registration form and the Parent/Guardian Consent form are completed and signed. *(forms are in English and Spanish)*
- Additional information about why a volunteer is being requested is included to assist us with making an appropriate match.

FORMS

The following forms should be used to access existing funds or when seeking to establish a fund or seek contributions through SSV's Fiscal Sponsorship service.

Mary F. Picknelly Children's Emergency Fund - Established to help meet the immediate needs of individual SPS students which, because of emergency circumstances or the unavailability of other resources, are not being met, and which are preventing them from leading a healthy life or being successful in school.

** Requests must be submitted by the principal or with the principal's approval to Dr. Yolanda Johnson, Chief of Student Services, along with receipts or cost estimates. Approved requests will be sent to SSV for payment. Thank you notes for the Picknelly family are appreciated and can be forwarded to SSV.

Pay It Forward Fund - Established to assist with purchasing school uniforms for SPS families who because of emergency circumstances or the unavailability of other resources are unable to purchase them.

** Requests must be submitted to Denise N. Cogman along with cost estimates, receipts, or order forms. Resources are limited so requests may not be approved.

Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement - A customized form that outlines the agreement to establish an account including the agreed-upon administrative fee.

Agreement to Administer Restricted Funds - Describes the purpose of the fund and designates the Responsible Party and any other authorized signers if applicable.

Application for Payment - Used to request funds to be disbursed; must be signed by an authorized signer and submitted along with proper documentation.

CONTACT US

STAY IN TOUCH:

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SOCIAL MEDIA:

