



Springfield
School
Volunteers 

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SPRINGFIELDSCHOOLVOLUNTEERS.ORG

**SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES FOR
WORKING WITH YOUTH**



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LETTER FROM PRESIDENT AND CEO

Dear Prospective Volunteer,

By this time you have likely reviewed our Orientation manual and learned a little more about Springfield School Volunteers (SSV). The fact that you are now completing our Successful Approaches to Working With Youth training hopefully means that you are one step closer to joining the SSV family!

Since 1969, people like you have been supporting the students of the Springfield Public Schools through participation in SSV's programs. No matter which of our programs you have decided to participate in, this training will provide you with helpful insights and strategies to use as you begin working with students.

While young people have much available to them in the way of technology, we know that there is no device, App or software that can replace the positive benefits that come from supportive relationships. That is why much of this training is focused on just that - building and maintaining relationships.

Whether you will be supporting students academically, serving as a mentor or facilitating a Virtual Book Club, the relationships that you will develop with students *will* have a positive impact. With so many good causes in the community, we thank you for choosing SSV. It is only with the help of caring and generous individuals like you that we can continue to make a difference in the lives of young people, one student at a time!

With gratitude,

Denise N. Cogman

Denise N. Cogman

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

SSV is committed to providing volunteers with the information they need to carry out their assignments. However, the following are things we need from you to ensure success.

- Notify SSV if you are unable to make your assignment so that we can communicate with the school and/or the student/ family.
- Monitor news and weather reports for school closings, delays or other issues that might impact your ability to volunteer that day.
- Notify SSV if any of your personal information has changed. It is important that we have the most up-to-date, accurate contact information for communication purposes.
- Notify SSV of any changes in your ability to fulfill your assignment (new job, moving, schedule change, etc.)
- Check-in with us! We check in with volunteers for a variety of reasons:
 - Ensure you are able to meet with your student and have a suitable space to do so
 - See how your relationship is going and if there are any roadblocks we can assist you with
 - To get program feedback
 - To hear your positive experiences and success stories!

When you volunteer with SSV you become part of our community! We communicate with our community through our newsletters and our social media platforms. Be sure to check your Spam folder if you are not getting our newsletters and be sure to follow us on social media. We are on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

VOLUNTEER ROLES

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Our volunteer opportunities are now classified in two categories:

- **Capacity building:** These opportunities are for volunteers who are interested in working with SSV in roles that will expand our ability to benefit students and their families.
- **Direct Support:** These roles are for volunteers interested in one-to-one or small group engagement with students in ways that directly impact their academics, attendance, and their social and emotional standing, or development.

SSV AMBASSADOR

***Goal:** Utilize your unique strengths and skills to support SSV's operations in a variety of areas and roles.*

One of our newest volunteer roles, SSV Ambassador falls under the capacity building opportunity category. This role provides volunteers with the opportunity to support SSV's daily operations with their unique skills, strengths, and interests. SSV has identified the following areas where ambassadors can have the greatest impact with their skills:

- Planning – assist with the development or revision of program strategies.
- Training – assist with the development or revision of trainings, guide new or less experienced volunteers in similar roles.
- Outreach – assist with SSV's outreach efforts including sharing contacts and attending recruitment events.
- Technology/Communication – assist with SSV's marketing strategies.
- Tracking/Evaluation – assist with tracking and analysis of relevant data.

VOLUNTEER ROLES



MENTOR

Goal: participating students will demonstrate improved social emotional development and attitude toward school.

The mentor role supports academic & social/emotional development and helps to improve attitude towards school. Through a trusting relationship, mentors guide young people towards achieving their highest potential by:

- Facilitating discussions/activities
- Sharing experiences and knowledge
- Modeling communication
- Guiding and unlocking resources

ACADEMIC SUPPORT MENTOR

Goal: participating students will demonstrate improvement in identified academic area(s).

Academic Mentors share skills, knowledge and expertise either in a one-on-one setting or with a small group of students. They support student academics in the following ways:

- Provide subject specific instruction or review
- Offer tips for organization and studying
- Facilitate enrichment activities
- Share tools to unlock supportive resources

VOLUNTEER ROLES

BOOK CLUB FACILITATOR

The Virtual Book Club is the newest addition to our direct support opportunities. As a Virtual Book Club facilitator you will support improved reading fluency by:

- Facilitating engaging discussions and activities on pre-assigned books
- Encouraging students to take turns reading aloud and to follow along as other group members read
- Fostering active participation by all group members

Virtual Book Clubs can also promote a love for literature and a positive attitude towards reading. In addition, through the discussion and activities you will provide opportunities for students to:

- Broaden and deepen their vocabulary
- Improve their reading comprehension
- Improve their oral skills
- Increase their confidence for reading aloud

READ ALOUD VOLUNTEER

Our Read Aloud volunteers guide students through stories and help deepen the meaning of stories by:

- Discussing and explaining complex storylines and character emotions.
- Introducing and defining new vocabulary words from the stories.
- Sharing personal experiences.

They also model fluent, expressive reading and instill a love of reading in students by:

- Using different voices, utilizing props or even dressing up
- Encouraging students to explore the stories on their own

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

THE MAGIC OF MENTORING

"The Real Magic of Mentoring" is a TEDx Talk given by iMentor Chicago Executive Director Halleemah Nash. Though it is focused on mentoring, it provides powerful insights that will benefit anyone working with young people no matter what your specific volunteer role is.

Great mentors know that students don't need saving - they need tools to unlock their own power, support in unfamiliar systems and structures of privilege, and belief in their value and potential.

Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt-Gpov5YZA>



VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

OUR YOUTH COMMUNITY

The following charts compare the 2020-2021 race/ethnicity, language, abilities and socioeconomic status data for Springfield Public Schools students to the same data statewide. We share this information to provide you with an initial understanding of who our students are, and also to begin the discussion about what it means to enter into a relationship with a young person who may be different than you. Just like any community our students:

- Come from different racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Have different cultures and traditions
- Speak different languages
- Have different abilities
- Represent different socioeconomic backgrounds

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2020-21)		
Race	% of District	% of State
African American	18.6	9.3
Asian	2.1	7.2
Hispanic	67.9	22.3
Native American	0.2	0.2
White	9.1	56.7
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.0	0.1
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	2.1	4.1

Selected Populations 2020-2020		
Title	% of District	% of State
First Language not English	29.8	23.4
English Language Learner	16.3	10.5
Students With Disabilities	24.7	18.7
High Needs	86.5	51
Economically Disadvantaged	81.8	36.6

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

YOUR ROLE IN THE "WEB OF SUPPORT"

Young people grow, learn, and develop through relationships. Relationships provide connection and encourage identity development. Supportive relationships promote positive academic, behavioral, and social/emotional outcomes, while also providing a buffer against negative outcomes such as truancy and substance abuse. Every young person has a “web of support” a network of relationships with adults and peers that help young people advance in their development. It is important to remember this when building a relationship with a young person.

This ties in with Halleema’s message that being in a relationship with a young person is NOT about SAVING. Going into a relationship with that attitude grants a false sense of ownership for the young person’s success and does not take into consideration the support they receive from others within their web.



VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

UNLOCKING THE RESOURCES

In addition to helping a young person to believe in himself, as a volunteer you can also model how to find and access available tools and resources a student may need to reach their highest potential, while also teaching the young person how to find those tools and resources on their own. This is a great life skill for a young person to develop and can be used across many different areas of their lives. A few ways to do this effectively:

- **Talk about networking:** Help students brainstorm a list of people who can help them get what they need.
- **Research and discuss local organizations or businesses that can help.** In this way you can show the student that there are supports right in their local community.
- **Show them alternatives to the internet!** Looking at local newspapers, magazines or cork board postings, encourages young people not to rely solely on the internet.
- **Be sure to use authentic websites.** When students do use the internet to find help, encourage them to look for peer-review articles or to use websites with domain extensions such as .org, .gov, or .edu.

HELPFUL SEARCH ENGINES

- **Wolfram Alpha** - Useful for mathematics, science and technology, society and culture, and topics for everyday life (i.e. health, finances, etc.).
- **Google Scholar** - Students can search for peer-reviewed abstracts, books, papers, theses, and articles from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities and other scholarly organizations.
- **World Wide Science** - A partnership of more than 70 countries this site allows users to query databases from all over the world . Results display both English and translated results from related journals and academic resources.
- **Infotopia** - This academic search engine pulls from results that have been curated by librarians, teachers and other educational workers.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

You may be wondering what to expect as you and your student start getting to know each other. As with any relationship, you will experience ups and downs; but the rewards for your hard work will be great.

STAGE 1: GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Relationships begin with a "getting to know you" phase. This is when you and your student begin developing your relationship. It can be easy to rush this stage but it's important to remember that building trust takes time. This stage starts with the first meeting with your student and is also when important topics such as confidentiality, boundaries, culture and communication styles should be discussed and established.

The first time you meet your student, you may both be nervous. It is helpful, therefore, to use the first meeting to get to know each other and establish a level of comfort. The first step in getting to know someone is introducing yourself. Determine what you would like to be called and be sure to communicate your preference with your student so that he or she will know how to address you. You should also verify that you have the proper spelling of the student's name and know the correct pronunciation. You might also ask your student if there is a nickname that he or she prefers to be called.

In order to really start to get to know each other, you will need to have some potential conversation starters in mind. Below are a few suggestions:

- Talk a little bit about yourself and perhaps tell an anecdote from your life that might be interesting and relevant to a young person.
- Tell your student what you hope to get out of the experience and why you decided to be a volunteer.
- Ask your student what he/she hopes to get out of the experience.
- Ask your student about his or her likes, dislikes, and hobbies.
- Discuss what you will do at your next meeting

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is a critical component of successful relationship building because it helps to build trust. A trusting relationship allows for open discussions, which can help students progress toward achieving success.

Confidentiality allows the parties in the relationship to communicate with each other freely and without fear that information discussed might somehow become common knowledge. You should let your students know that your conversations are confidential but make it clear that there are exceptions.

Generally, the only time you would break that confidentiality is if students disclose that they plan to harm themselves or others or are being harmed by someone else. We will review the steps to take when this happens later.

BOUNDARIES

Boundaries define what behavior you will accept from others and what you will not. As a volunteer, you should be aware of the following three types of boundaries:

- **Physical boundaries** include one's body, personal space and privacy. Keep in mind that no contact should feel uncomfortable to any party involved. Be clear about your physical boundaries and aware of the student's and seek to maintain them.
- **Emotional boundaries** are personal limits we set in relationships that make it possible for us to separate our thoughts and feelings from those of others. For example, not taking responsibility for how someone else is feeling or blaming someone else for how you are feeling.
- **Cultural boundaries** may include language, behaviors, customs or beliefs that are acceptable to some, but not to others. It is important to set cultural boundaries without judging.

How to talk about boundaries:

- Define the boundary
- Communicate what you need
- Keep it simple - don't over explain

CULTURE

Culture refers to more than just race or ethnicity. It encompasses values, lifestyle and social norms, and includes different communication styles, ways of dressing, family structure, and response to authority. These differences may be associated with age, religion, ethnicity and socioeconomic background. A lack of understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity can result in being judgmental, which may prevent the development of a trusting relationship.

How to talk about it:

- Try to understand your student's culture from his or her perspective.
- Ask more questions and make NO assumptions.
- Do not assign values to differences such as, better or worse, right or wrong.
- Keep your student's comfort level in mind when asking questions. If the student is not comfortable, do not pressure him or her to keep sharing.
- Do research together and discuss your culture and your student's culture.
- Be yourself.
- Be careful not to over identify with your student. You may learn about the student's culture, lifestyle, or group but unless you were born into it, you will never be from that group. There is a difference between "I know exactly what you're feeling" and "I think I have a sense of what you are going through."

Youth Culture:

Many characteristics of adolescence are common developmental traits that consequently do not vary significantly from one generation to the next. However, it is important to remember that some things, particularly sociological trends, do change dramatically as a result of different experiences. Reflecting on what it was like for you when you were your student's age will help you understand what he or she might be experiencing.

There are two different types of communication: verbal and non-verbal. The following communication skills will help when trying to open up communication with your student and are also useful skills you can help your student develop:

ACTIVE LISTENING

Active listening is an attempt to truly understand the content and emotion of what the other person is saying by paying attention to verbal and non-verbal cues. To actively listen, you must focus, hear, respect, and communicate your desire to understand what the other person is saying. When practicing active listening you should not be planning a response or conveying how you feel.

Some skills to use during active listening:

- Maintain eye contact
- Pay attention to your body language (e.g. open and relaxed posture, forward lean, appropriate facial expressions, positive use of gestures etc.)
- Verbal cues such as, "Uh-huh," "Sure," "Oh," "Yes," etc.

Verbal and non-verbal cues to avoid:

- Body language - slouching, turning away, or pointing a finger
- Timing - speaking too fast or too slow
- Facial expressions - smiling, squirming, raising eyebrows, gritting teeth
- Tone of voice - shouting, whispering, sneering, whining
- Choice of words - sharp, accusative, pretentious, overly-emotional language

Be sure to understand what is acceptable in your mentee's culture. For instance, making eye contact may not be appropriate in some cultures. It is appropriate to respectfully discuss this with your mentee at the beginning of your relationship.

"I" MESSAGES

"I" messages keep the focus on you and explain your feelings in response to someone else's behavior. Because "I" messages don't accuse, point fingers, or place blame, they avoid judgement and keep communication open. Here's an example of an "I" message you might use if your student misses a scheduled meeting: "I was really sad when you didn't show up for our meeting last week. I look forward to our meetings and I was disappointed not to see you. In the future, I would appreciate if you would let someone know you won't be able to make it."

PARAPHRASING

Paraphrasing enables you to gather information (listen) and then report what you heard - the facts and the attitudes/feelings expressed - back to the speaker. Often the facts are clearly stated but a good listener will "listen between the lines" for the feelings. Paraphrasing is a good way to make sure you correctly heard/interpreted what your student said.

Phrases you can use to confirm you understood the facts:

- "So you're saying that..."
- "You believe that...."
- "The problem is...."

Phrases you can use to confirm you understood the feelings:

- "You feel that..."
- "Your reaction is..."
- " And that made you feel..."

Remember, paraphrasing is not an opportunity to respond by analyzing, evaluating, sympathizing, stating an opinion, offering advice, or questioning. You merely are stating what you heard and reporting it back for accuracy.

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions allow respondents to include more information such as feelings, attitudes and how they view a situation. They are extremely helpful when dealing with young people, who often answer questions with as few words as possible, because they cannot be answered with a yes, no , or a grunt.

Examples of open-ended questions you might use with your student:

- "How do you see this situation?"
- "Can you give me an example?"
- "How does this affect you?"
- "How did you decide that?"
- "What would you like to do about it?"
- "What else could you have done?"

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Certain styles tend to "close down" rather than "open up" communication. Following are examples of styles that can create barriers to communication:

Ordering, directing, or commanding

- "You have to meet me when I say so."
- "Tell your friend to stop talking to you like that!"
- "Stop complaining!"

Moralizing, preaching (using words like should and ought)

- "You shouldn't act like that."
- "You ought to do..."
- "Children are supposed to respect their elders."

Lecturing (trying to influence with facts, counter-arguments, logic, or your own opinion)

- "College can be the most wonderful experience you'll ever have."
- "Young people must learn to get along with one another."
- "Let's look at the facts about college graduates."
- "When I was your age, I had twice as much to do as you."

Judging, criticizing, disagreeing, blaming

- "You're not thinking clearly."
- "That's an immature point of view."
- "You're very wrong about that."
- "I couldn't disagree with you more."

Withdrawing, distracting, using sarcasm, humoring, diverting

- "Just forget it."
- "Let's not talk about it."
- "Come on, let's talk about something more pleasant."
- "We've been through this before."

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

STAGE2: DEEPENING THE RELATIONSHIP

The second stage of relationship building is when you and the student begin to get closer. This stage might include the disclosure of information that had not previously been shared and the discussion of delicate issues, which could result in the need to break confidentiality.

Like with any other relationship, a relationship with students will have ups and downs and you may see this during this second stage. Do not assume something is wrong with the relationship if rough periods occur occasionally. Maintain patience and consistency during these times. If a rough period persists, or if you do not feel you are reaching this stage in your relationship, do not hesitate to seek support from the school contact person or an SSV staff member. Keep in mind that sometimes two people—no matter how they look on paper—just don't "click."

DISCLOSURE

During the early stages of the relationship, students might be hesitant to share certain information with you. As you begin to get closer, students will become more comfortable, but they still might be confused about when and how to talk to you about difficult issues they are facing. On the other hand, they may share information with you that you were not expecting to hear. In either case, it is important that you demonstrate understanding and patience. Do not press your student(s) to share more than they are comfortable sharing. You can also help your student(s) decide when, how, why, and to whom to disclose certain information.

Disclosure also refers to any information you choose to disclose to the student. When disclosing information it is important to think about not only your comfort level, but the comfort level of the student. Only share information you are comfortable sharing and be careful not to share anything the student is not comfortable discussing.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

DELICATE ISSUES

Delicate issues can be defined as any situation that needs to be dealt with carefully and sensitively. Some topics include: world issues, sex/sexual orientation, pregnancy, religion, ethnicity, race, politics. If these topics come up in conversation, keep in mind some of the strategies from Stage 1:

- **Boundaries:** Understanding emotional boundaries allows you to separate your thoughts and feelings about the topic from the student- this allows you to listen to the student without judgement.
- **Communication:** Practicing helpful communication skills and avoiding communication barriers will help ensure that you clearly understand the topic from the student's perspective.

Helpful Tip: Use the Respond not React method- this will help you to respond carefully and thoughtfully to what the youth is saying. It also helps to avoid reactions that may create a barrier of trust. Here are the steps to effectively using the Respond not React method:

- **Actively Listen:** Let the student share all information and ask any questions they may have. Remember this is not a time to plan a response.
- **Clarify:** if needed take a moment to clarify any information
- **Respond:** take a moment and plan your response

The student has most likely chosen to speak about a delicate issue with you because you have developed a level of trust. However, if the topic presented is uncomfortable for you it is important to follow these steps:

- **Be Honest:** Tell the student that you are uncomfortable with the topic or not sure how to respond.
- **Provide Guidance:** Help the student to identify someone who might be better equipped to speak with them further about the issue.
- **Follow up:** Be sure to check-in with the student to see if they received assistance or need additional help seeking support.

BREAKING CONFIDENTIALITY

If a student discloses information that needs to be shared with someone else... here are some steps you can follow:

- Remind the student of your first conversation about confidentiality and let him know that what was shared falls into that exception category.
- Discuss options with the student (where s/he can get more assistance, who may be more appropriate to discuss it with) and guide him or her to additional resources.
- If the student identifies another person they would like to talk to you might offer to attend the meeting with the student if it will make him feel more comfortable.
- In the event the student discloses something you feel needs to be shared immediately, let the student know that you will be telling someone and then contact either a school staff member (guidance counselor, teacher, principal) or an SSV staff member, as soon as possible.).

If at any time you are unsure about how to proceed - Contact us!



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

STAGE 3: TIME TO SAY GOODBYE

Relationships end for a variety of reasons. The student may move away or may lose interest in continuing the relationship or your circumstances might change so that it is no longer possible for you to meet with the student. No matter the reason, care should be taken when a relationship ends. Some young people have had adults come and go in their lives without having the opportunity to say goodbye. Research suggests that failing to provide closure at the end of a relationship can be damaging for students who have been let down by other relationships with adults. Therefore, it is important to spend sufficient time helping the student understand the process of saying goodbye. Here are some things you can do:

- Help the student express their feelings by talking about the natural emotions associated with a relationship ending such as grief, denial and resentment.
- Provide opportunities for saying goodbye in a healthy, respectful, and affirming way.
- Do not wait for the very last meeting with your student to say goodbye. Let the student know a few weeks ahead of time when your last meeting will be, and spend some time discussing how it will feel for both of you.
- Perhaps do a special activity together during the last meeting: Give the student a small gift or exchange photographs.
- Talk about how enjoyable the relationship has been for you. Tell your student about his or her great qualities and how those qualities will help throughout his or her life.
- If the relationship is ending because your circumstances changed, encourage the student to talk to his/her parent or guardian or someone at their school if he or she wants to have a new volunteer.

REMOTE CONNECTIONS

ETIQUETTE

Keep in mind that while building and maintaining healthy relationships with young people might feel a little different in a virtual capacity, remote connections should be treated the same as in-person meetings. Below are a few helpful tips for successful remote connections:

- **Appearance:** dress appropriately and present a positive image.
- **Background:** be mindful of your surroundings and what is visible to students. Use SSV provided [background](#) if desired.
- **Lighting:** find a space with adequate lighting (front lighting is best) so that students are able to see you.
- **Camera angle:** You also want to pay attention to the angle of the camera. Keep the camera on your device as close to eye level as possible.
- **Limit distractions:** try to give students your undivided attention by keeping your phone on silent, your television off, etc.
- **Background noise:** try to find a quiet space; mute microphone if needed.

SAFETY & PRIVACY

- Do not share personal information such as your telephone number, email, home address, passwords or login information.
- If screen sharing, be mindful about what websites you are navigating and any open tabs, documents, etc. that may inadvertently reveal private information.
- To help maintain student confidentiality, avoid spaces where others can hear your sessions or use headphones if possible.
- No recording of sessions is allowed.

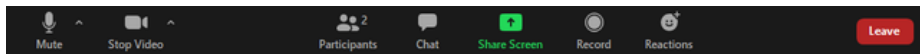
REMOTE CONNECTIONS

ZOOM TIPS

Below are some basic tips for navigating the Zoom platform. If you would like more information, video tutorials and live trainings are available on the Zoom website - <https://zoom.us/> - under the "Resources" tab.

Mute yourself when not speaking

Microphones can pick up even minor background noises. Keeping yourself muted until you need to speak will prevent any inadvertent distractions. You can mute and unmute your mic by clicking on the Mute button. While we're talking about audio controls, if you're having issues with your audio click on the little ^ next to Mute to show options to change the microphone/speaker Zoom is using.



Stop video if you don't want to be seen

As a rule, everyone should be on camera during the session. However, if you need to get up, talk to someone else or otherwise need to be off camera temporarily just click on Stop Video.

Raise hand and chat feature

If there are multiple students in the session, you may want to have them use the raise hand feature if they want to speak. To do this they will click on Reactions then the Raise Hand button. You will unmute and mute their mic when you call on them by clicking on Participants and mute/unmute next to their name. If you prefer, you can also have them send a message using the Chat feature. By default, messages in Chat go to all participants.

Rename your device

To rename yourself, click on Participants then More, select Rename and type the name you would like other participants to see.

MANDATORY REPORTING

Under Massachusetts' law, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency that receives all reports of suspected abuse and neglect of children under the age of 18. State law requires professionals whose work brings them in contact with children to notify DCF if they suspect that a child has been or is at risk of being abused or neglected. DCF depends on reports from professionals or other concerned individuals to learn about children who may need protection.

How Are Abuse and Neglect Defined by Law?

Abuse means: The non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker that causes or creates a substantial risk of physical or emotional injury or constitutes a sexual offense; or any sexual contact between a caretaker and a child under the care of the individual.

Neglect means: Failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence or inability, to take actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, emotional stability and growth or other essential care.

What does this mean for me as a volunteer?

It is the policy of SSV that you report any suspected physical or sexual abuse, neglect, emotional or cyber bullying of program participants to the school's guidance counselor, other school staff or SSV.

For more information on this topic you may contact the Massachusetts Child-at Risk Reporting Toll Free Number: (800) 792- 5200 or visit <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/family-services/child-abuse-neglect/>

DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

One in five Americans has a disability. You may interact every day with someone who has a disability and not even be aware of it. During the 2020 - 2021 school year, 24.7% of Springfield's public school students were characterized as students with disabilities. Here are some general tips to keep in mind:

- First and foremost, treat people with disabilities with dignity and respect.
- All people with disabilities do not have the same personalities or preferences.
- When you meet someone with a disability, it is appropriate to shake hands, even if that person has limited hand use or artificial limbs.
- Always ask before assisting someone with a disability and listen carefully to any instructions they provide.
- Do not interfere with anyone's full control over his/her assistive devices. All devices should be treated as an extension of personal space and should not be touched without the owner's permission (this includes animals!).
- Most people with disabilities enjoy assisting others and want to serve as well as be served.
- Do not ask personal questions of someone you do not know well. People with disabilities usually do not want to make the origin or details of their disability the first topic of conversation.
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to get some things done.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability rather than to a companion or interpreter.
- Do not be embarrassed to use common expressions such as "I've got to run," "See you later," or "Have you heard..." even if the person you are speaking to does not run, see, or hear well.
- Some terms that were once acceptable, such as "crippled," "deaf and dumb" and "wheelchair-bound" are no longer appropriate because of negative associations. Instead say person with a disability or disabled person.
- Many people have disabilities that are not apparent. Just because you don't see a disability doesn't mean it doesn't exist!

CONTACT INFORMATION

SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS CONTACT INFORMATION

Telephone: (413) 787-7100 Extension 55697

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Website: www.springfieldschoolvolunteers.org

REFERENCES

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