

The Lab - Writing Mentor

To apply, contact Mary Tinucci at mary.tinucci@spps.org - (651) 744-1005

Description: Encourage urban junior and senior high school students to articulate their voices and life histories by volunteering as a writing mentor through The Lab. Operating in twelve different sites within the St. Paul Public School District, The Lab is built on the philosophy that writing and the creative arts hold transformative possibility for at-risk youth. Our writing circles and poetry lab is just one facet of the creative, therapeutic and experiential learning opportunities offered through The Lab. As a volunteer, you have the opportunity to lead small group experiences, support students in journaling their thoughts and provide one-on-one mentorship.

Population: The Lab serves junior and senior high school students who struggle with behavioral issues. They have the educational label of Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD), and do not perform to their full potential in the “mainstream” public school classroom setting. These students attend school in small, self-contained programs. These programs offer learning environments with an emphasis on behavior management and the development of social and emotional health skills. Please specify any interest in working with a particular site on your application.

Qualifications:

- Interest and experience with writing, journaling and poetry
- Desire to perform your own work/encourage students to perform their own
- Knowledge of hip hop and spoken word artists
- Experience in creative arts therapy a plus
- Interest in working with urban at-risk youth
- Excellent leadership and people skills, ability to work as part of a team
- Strong verbal communication skills and frequent access to email

Responsibilities:

- Fill out Volunteer Application
- Schedule interview with program assistant
- Complete a Minnesota state background check (cost: \$12.50)
- Learn about the mission, values and vision of The Lab, by attending Volunteer Orientation and Training (dates flexible), and reading appropriate materials
- Show up on time for classroom sessions
- Communicate with classroom staff (social worker, members of The Lab team) to create and implement projects and curriculum
- Lead special projects and/or work one-on-one with students
- Be available for monthly volunteer check-ins
- Fill out occasional forms, documenting your volunteer experience

Time Commitment: Currently, we are searching for both short-term (one to two sessions) and ongoing volunteers (three sessions plus). After training, volunteers will spend one to three hours in a classroom setting per week, during school hours. Please specify your desired time commitment on your application.

Training and Supervision:

- During Volunteer Orientation, you will learn about The Lab, meet staff, formulate your project curriculum plan with site staff and have the opportunity to ask plenty of questions!
- The staff of The Lab will be at your assistance at all times—helping with the formation of your project, working with you in the classroom, and providing guidance.
- Writing mentors will be supported and supervised by Program Assistant.

Benefits: Make a difference with at-risk youth; work in a creative, collaborative environment; and gain teaching experience!