

## SUGGESTIONS FOR VOLUNTEER-TEACHERS

- Teaching sessions are scheduled for two hours. Informal class sessions are held weekdays and evenings. The schedule is as follows: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning from 10 to 12, Tuesday and Thursday afternoon from 1:30-3:30, and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 6:30-8:30. Formal classes are taught by professional teachers; volunteers are not required.
- If you speak your students' native language, use it minimally. Our students do not always have the opportunity to converse with English speakers and every American voice is unique.
- Take things slowly. Review prior lessons. It's always good to repeat, repeat, repeat. Be patient, supportive, and acknowledge progress. Give lots of positive feedback.
- Please follow our unique, student need-centered and teacher-created curriculum. We strive to keep the subject matter pertinent to the skills needed to navigate everyday life: telling time, money, a trip to the supermarket, a restaurant, a school classroom, filling out employment applications, giving and taking directions, etc. These are our students' needs. Be aware that any topics/issues may be of a sensitive nature, so be ready to change tact, if needed.
- Remember that every student also has a unique voice, with unique talents and experiences. Try to find ways to allow the students to share their experience. The absolute best "teaching" thing you can do is to have the student talk about their lives (families, experiences, etc.) using whatever you are trying to teach (topic, vocabulary, grammatical construct, concept, etc.). This is how an adult student learns best! (We understand this is easier said than done...)
- Don't over-explain. Guide students instead of giving answers. Don't be afraid to correct and do so gently. The time to correct is in context of a teaching-learning moment.
- For beginning students, use the "Checklist" found in the back of the student folders.
- Take time to familiarize yourself with all teaching materials. The more you know the available teaching materials, the easier it will be for you to teach. If you're not 100% on the material, don't be afraid to ask the teacher for help or tips or guidance.
- *Picture Dictionary*, *Word by Word*, *English in Action* and *Speak out in English* are useful textbooks for those with limited reading ability and for teaching vocabulary to mixed levels of education.
- Use Visuals, Games, and Activities (manipulatives and realia) to supplement, enhance, and change the pace of your teaching. "Hand-held" teaching items greatly increase a student's chance of gaining (and keeping) a skill.
- Never hesitate to bring your own creative talents to teaching.
- It is not advisable to use words like 'verb', 'noun', 'adjective', or 'subject'. Teach "grammar" in the context of the topic you are teaching. Save sentence structure for more complex skills. For grammar questions, refer to grammar resource texts.
- Try to incorporate conversation more than 80% of the time, keeping subject matter level appropriate. Use textbook series to determine appropriate number of words and the complexity of the sentence to us while teaching. Classroom language, in English, is as important as anything else they'll hear.
- Keep your teaching time focused. *Present* the skill you want to teach, give the student ample opportunities to *practice* what you have taught and then test them, verbally or written, to see if they can put it to *use*. This incorporates all the learning styles and gives the students the opportunity to experience their own progress.
- Homework is optional for the students. However, encourage the students to practice their English by sharing what they have learned with friends and family (in English!)
- After class, please fill out each student's folder noting the textbooks used, chapters or pages covered, and your comments and observations along with the date and your name.

The environment we wish to establish here is business casual. We ask, however, that you keep your approach with the students on a professional basis and do not give your telephone number or address to any student or ask for theirs. Our staff is always ready to be of assistance with any of your teaching needs. Just ask! Thank you for choosing to share your volunteer time with us at the Esperanza Center.