

2013-2014

TUTORING HANDBOOK



Transitional Housing Corporation (THC)
5101 16th St. NW, Washington, DC, 20011
202-291-5535 Thcdc.org [@thcdc](https://twitter.com/thcdc)

Transitional Housing Corporation (THC) is a non-profit organization that provides housing and support services to homeless and at-risk families to help them make transformational changes in their lives. Through a variety of housing options we work to end family homelessness by finding permanent housing and, where possible, sustainable employment for our client families. With our supportive services (case management, employment services, life skills, mental health counseling, youth services and enrichment) we are able to meet our clients where they are at both as individuals and as a family to assist them in meeting their goals.

WHY TUTORING?

THC believes in meeting clients where they are to support them in transforming their own lives. In 2012, Resident Services staff at Faircliff Plaza East, Fort View and Webster Gardens surveyed families at each location about what they wanted in the way of enrichment programs. At all locations there was a resounding appeal for a program to support their children in meeting their academic goals. In response to this, THC Resident Services staff started a tutoring program in November 2012.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY

THC works to end homelessness in a variety of ways through upstream (preventive) and downstream approaches. You can see this in the types of housing we offer, in the tailoring of case management to fit the needs of each family, and now in the youth programming we provide. For example with our tutoring we hope to improve student academic achievement so that our children are successful in school. We do this because we know that a high school education increases the likelihood that a person will have job stability, a higher quality of life and easier access to the resources needed to live.¹

Colin Powell talks about “the gift of a good start.” THC works to support families in giving this gift to their children, hoping to break the cycle of poverty.

¹ <http://www.urban.org/publications/412659.html>

OVERVIEW OF THC'S TUTORING PROGRAM

THC's Tutoring Program is designed to meet the challenges of youth (Grades K-12) academically by providing onsite homework assistance and by developing their writing, reading comprehension and mathematical skills. The tutoring program will target grade school youth (K-12) at Faircliff Plaza East, Webster Gardens and Ft. View Apartments.

Weekly Tutoring Schedule

Faircliff Plaza East: Weeknight TBD 6-8pm, Saturdays 10-12pm

Webster Gardens: Tuesdays 6-8pm, Thursdays 6-8pm

Ft. View: Mondays 6-8pm, Wednesdays 6-8pm

*Tutoring may be reduced by 30 min occasionally at Webster Gardens and Ft. View due to other planned programming held that day.

2013 - 2014 Tentative Tutoring Schedule

August 26: Tutoring Kick-Off!

September 9 & 10: Tutoring Begins at all locations

December 20 – January 6: Winter Break

April 14 – April 21: Spring Break

June : End of Year Celebration

What Methods Do We Use?

THC's Tutoring Program uses three primary methods to encourage youth in meeting their learning goals.

- Homework Support
- Activity Folder: Each student will have a folder of activity sheets set to their learning level to help them in reaching their learning goals. This extra work will enrich their tutoring experience and reinforce skills they are working on through their course work, and home work.
- Break Out Activities: To encourage additional learning, every two weeks we will rotate through new topics. This will give students the opportunity to learn more about topics they might not have explored yet, or to deepen their knowledge of skills they have used in the past. This is a time when all students (regardless of age) will be working on a specific topic with activities tailored to their age group.

Day-of-Tutoring Schedule

6-7pm Homework or Activity Sheets

7-7:15pm Snack time

7:15-8pm Break Out Activities

Measuring impact

1. Standardized Test Scores: Coordinators will seek standardized test scores from parents/teachers throughout the school year to assess individual student's performance.
2. Report Cards/Progress Reports: Coordinators will request report cards/progress reports from the parents and youth to evaluate their challenges and progress through the academic year.
3. Reading Comprehension Level: For children enrolled into D.C Public Schools, each child is assigned a letter (A-Z) pertaining to their current reading level. Coordinators will obtain reading level of each child and will identify a listing of books that he/she can read. Each child will be responsible for completing a book report for each book. Resident Service staff will contact teachers quarterly to see if there are any improvements in reading level.
4. Learning Goals: Each child will be assigned an individualized learning goal document that will be completed by each parent. Outlined goals will be evaluated on a monthly basis.

How Do You Help Us Measure Impact?

Every youth in THC's program has a log of their completed tasks. At the end of every tutoring session, you will write down what the youth has completed and any thoughts on their progress. You can reference this information when working with a new youth for the first time, so you know what skills the youth should focus on.

Incentives

THC believes that youth are motivated to learn and participate when incentives are provided. Coordinators will provide a *max* of 2 stickers to each child for 1) attendance and 2) good behavior. Coordinators will keep a log of each child's stickers on an incentive chart, which the child can trade them in for an incentive. Each incentive will be marked by their worth of stickers, which is determined by the Coordinator. Coordinators will keep inventory of each incentive. 15 min towards the end of each tutoring session, Coordinators will present the youth the incentive items in which the participants will have the option of purchasing the incentive or continue to save their stickers. Additional incentives will be provided as follows:

- 3 stickers for submitting report cards each quarter
- 3 stickers for reading 10 books *and* completing book reports for those books
- 3 stickers for scoring proficient or better on standardized test

Behavior Agreement

Prior to each child participating, each child will need to agree to the behavior rules of the program. Rules that are currently in place, but not limited are:

1. Respect one another
2. Listen to volunteer tutors and Resident Services Staff
3. Stay on task
4. Hands to self
5. Respect your time

Resident Services will follow a "three strikes rule" per session in which 2 verbal warnings will be given followed by removing the child from the session. The removal of a child will consequently result in no stickers given to that child for the session. If a child continues to not follow the rules in future sessions, the Coordinator will discuss with the parent/guardian to determine if onsite tutoring is deemed appropriate for the child.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A TUTOR

1. Volunteer enters community room and sign their names on the attendance sheet.
2. Volunteers are paired with youth to assist in their homework or personal practice folders. This pairing is based on the needs of the youth, so the student you work with one week might not be the same one the next week, though often times you will end up tutoring the same age group from week to week.
 - a. Practice folders are created based on the learning level of the tutee and support them in reaching their learning goals. Youth in elementary school will primarily work on journal topics, while those in middle and high school will work directly on their pre-determined learning goals. These goals are identified by their parent(s)/guardian and teachers. General goals will address reading, writing and math through various methods such as computer educational games, worksheets, flash cards, etc. Each goal will be addressed by the youth through a 30-40 minute rotational process. For example, a child will spend 30 minutes on reading and then rotate to work on a math goal. Youth that have an extensive challenge in a particular goal will spend more time on that goal.
3. One hour into tutoring there is a brief snack time for youth. Once break is over, youth will continue their work.
4. The last 15 minutes of tutoring will be used to clean up, assign stickers to the incentive chart and have youth purchase incentives. During this time, volunteers will write in the volunteer log stating the activity their assigned youth(s) have completed.

Expectations of Tutors

Background Check: All THC Volunteers are required to undergo a background check prior to becoming a regular volunteer with the organization. Our number one priority is to ensure the safety of each child in our care. This means that none of our volunteers can have a history of crimes against children or charges that would prevent them from providing the highest quality services to the children and families at THC. THC incurs the costs for these background checks.

Commitment: The time commitment for THC Tutors is once a week for the duration of the tutoring program (September-June). Consistency and trust is incredibly important in building relationships with youth, particularly with those that have experienced homelessness. This helps the youth know that they can rely on you and that you will be coming back. It is also important to maintain a solid ratio of adults to youth for safety, supervision and providing a high quality tutoring program. By making the commitment of becoming a tutor, **you have committed to the duration of the school year** and the expectation is that you will be at the site unless communicated otherwise. If you cannot make a weekly commitment, please talk to the Volunteer Coordinator (Kate Stritzinger).

Communication: Kate will send volunteers an email at the start of each month with the calendar for the month. Volunteers are asked to keep an eye out for this email and respond immediately if conflicts arrive. The expectation is that by committing to be a tutor you will present on the agreed-upon day of the week for the duration of the year (excluding holidays, breaks, etc...). Let Kate know if pre-scheduled trips, emergencies, or if you are no longer able to volunteer.

Confidentiality and Contact: We ask that volunteers not engage in any informal contact with children outside of specified volunteer hours. No phone calls, letters, internet contact or special individual trips. Do not give your personal information to children or parents you meet through THC. If you run into a family outside of THC, wait for them to recognize and acknowledge you first before you approach them. Please respect their privacy. We ask that you not give personal gifts or money to individual children/parents. As an organization, we can give birthday gifts or parting gifts. This is a way to avoid favoritism and show that as a volunteer you are there to support all of the youth, not just an individual.

Dress Code & Security: Dress is casual. Be aware of where you leave your purse, jacket and other belongings or keep them in the glove compartment in a car so they do not get lost or stolen. THC will not be responsible for stolen items.

New Volunteers: If a volunteer recruits a friend to join the organization, please contact Volunteer Coordinator (Kate Stritzinger) in advance to ensure that volunteers are needed at a particular site. The new volunteer should follow the volunteer engagement process and fill out a volunteer application and background check consent form prior to serving. They should then attend the next available new volunteer training. Additionally, if you are interested in recruiting friends or people within your network to volunteer, feel free to contact Kate for recruitment materials.

Reporting Concerns: As “mandatory reporters”, THC can never promise a child that we will keep a secret. **You are required to report suspicion of abuse and neglect** to the staff member on site immediately. The staff member will then speak with the child and/or decide how to proceed. **It is your responsibility to discuss any suspicions or concerns with staff immediately.** Do not wait until you get home or the next day! If a child discloses an allegation of abuse or neglect to you or if you see something that concerns you, you have an obligation to report your concern immediately. You do not have a choice about this one. Report on *any* concerns or things that you noticed with children during volunteering or afterward so that we can follow up with parents and other THC staff to get them the help they need.

Volunteer Logs: Be sure to sign our Volunteer Log. This is important for several reasons; THC must know who is on-site for liability reasons, THC needs to track in-kind hours for foundation reports and grant applications, and signing in is the **ONLY** way to get credit for class or volunteer recognition.

Guidelines for Volunteers

1. Never be alone with a child. Always be within sight of other children and volunteers.
2. Never hit, push, shove, retrain, yank or spank a child.
3. Do not yell unless in the case of a life-threatening emergency.
4. Get help: if you need help dealing with a difficult situation, get the attention of another volunteer or consult the staff member on site. We are all a team so we must help each other out!
5. Carefully supervise the children in our care and anticipate potential conflict. Prevent fights through facilitated conflict resolution. Be proactive about preventing injuries. Keep children in your eyesight as often as allowed.
6. Enforce the rules and schedule to uphold the structure that keeps the program running smoothly.
7. Do not take pictures of children without facilitating permission with the staff on site. Always consult the staff on site about such questions.
8. Pay attention to your language and maintain professional boundaries. We are role models for the children first and foremost! Do not talk on your cell phone or talk about your personal life. Wear appropriate clothing, etc...
9. Touching should be initiated by the child or youth; not based on adult’s emotional need. Children’s bodies that are ordinarily covered by a bathing suit are not to be touched by volunteers. Hugging is ok! But no chest squishing hugs and side arm hugs are best. Children should not sit in volunteer laps. They can sit next to you instead.
10. Do not allow children to take or touch your things, your hair, or jump on your back without asking.

CONTACT				
STAFF	LOCATION	TITLE	EMAIL	PHONE
Kate Stritzinger	Headquarters	Volunteer Coordinator	kstritzinger@thcdc.org	202-291-5535 x414, 413-329-7833 (Cell)
Nkem Offor	Webster Gardens/Fort View	Residential Services Coordinator	noffer@thcdc.org	202-494-3409
Cynthia Dumas	Faircliff Plaza East	Residential Services Assistant	residentservices@thcdc.org	301-613-3727
Entoria Nicely	Webster Gardens/Fort View	Resident Services Assistant	enicely@thcdc.org	202-621-6496 WG, 202-450-3517 FV

Resources & Inspiration

DC Schools Make Biggest Test Improvements Since 2008

http://dcist.com/2013/07/dc_schools_make_biggest_test_improv.php

In Nation's First Black Public High School, A Blueprint For Reform

http://www.npr.org/blogs/codeswitch/2013/07/31/206622688/the-legacy-of-dunbar-high-school?utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=20130801&utm_source=books

Homeless Education 101: Facts and Resources

<http://naehcy.org/educational-resources/learn-more>

Understanding Adulthood: A Key to Developing Positive Youth-Adult Relationships by John Bell

<http://www.freechild.org/bell.htm>

Kids Need Structure TedTalk by Colin Powell: He speaks to the idea of the "gift of a good start."

http://www.ted.com/talks/colin_powell_kids_need_structure.html

Kids to Take Charge TedTalk by Kiran Bir Sethi

http://www.ted.com/talks/kiran_bir_sethi_teaches_kids_to_take_charge.html

The Mysterious Workings for the Adolescent Brain TedTalk by Sarah Jayne Blakemore

http://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_jayne_blakemore_the_mysterious_workings_of_the_adolescent_brain.html