The Volunteer Action Center

The Volunteer Action Center is a student led volunteer coordination board that is dedicated to active service in the community. Each year VAC provides meaningful service opportunities through events and ongoing projects that engage the university and Northwest Arkansas communities. Through VAC events sponsored in the 2011-2012 academic year, over 6,500 students experienced 23,000 hours of service which made an economic impact of $501,000 in Northwest Arkansas.

What is the goal of the VAC Literacy Program?

The goal of the VAC Literacy Program is to foster a love of reading and to improve literacy among grade school students. University of Arkansas volunteers commit to one semester of reading with a student for one hour a week. The program takes place at several local elementary schools’ after school programs as a part of the Boys and Girls Club of Fayetteville School Kids Connections program.

University volunteers meet once a week during the semester to mentor a student at from 3:30-4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

The program encourages developing literacy skills and offers a strong value of commitment from U of A students to the local elementary school children.

This academic year, by checking out the event calendar and logging their hours on volunteer.uark.edu, thousands of students are expected to become “VAC Volunteers” who make a difference each day while also earning opportunities for community recognition.

The fall 2012 program will end on December 6, 2012.

This semester we had a total of 125 volunteers participate at Asbell Elementary, Holcomb Elementary, Leverett Elementary, Owl Creek and Washington Elementary.
Attention Volunteers!

Volunteers have all been doing a great job!! Here are just some more reminders and hints to make sure the program runs smoothly. Make sure that if you have to miss a date for any reason, email your lead mentor and the Literacy Intern (Kemmian Johnson) at vaclit. uark.edu. Also, make sure that you are keeping positive attitudes about reading and really establishing a relationship between you and the child you are reading to! If there are any behavioral issues, an SKC staff member is at every school and can take care of the issue. Remember to only use the books that the VAC has provided and try to keep them as nice as possible! If the child has a hard time staying focused or doesn’t want to read, make it game! Use funny voices or give them some incentive to read such as being able to color afterwards. If there are any problems at all or something isn’t going the way they should, contact a VAC Literacy Program staff member and let us know.

Reading Tools and Resources

As we have reached the middle of the semester you should recall Professor Smith’s resources from training. By going to http://www.flashcardmachine.com/drfys-instant-words1100.html you can find Dr. Fry’s words already on flashcards that are easy to print out and you can get started with your reading partner this week. Try to remember to ask questions before starting each book and after finishing to help your reader gain comprehension about the stories you read with them. For more information go to readingrockets.org.

It’s a great resource for help forming appropriate questions.

Finally, we would like to give you all an update on the Literacy Program Make A Difference Day project. As we’ve gotten the cards and game sheets laminated we will deliver the tubs to the school one-by-one. Be on the lookout for them. Also, as a final resource for literacy, we have homework kits available in the Volunteer Action Center to assist volunteers in helping the elementary children. The office is open 8am-5pm am Monday-Friday.

Grant Recipients

The VAC Literacy Program is proud to announce that we have been awarded a grant from the University of Arkansas’s Women’s Giving Circle for the Literacy Program for $9728. The grant will be used to implement the R.E.A.L Scholastic program that will provide a book a month for our elementary children to keep and start their own personal home libraries. The grant will also expand resources for volunteers. This program will roll out in Spring 2013.

Earlier this semester we also received Dollar General Literacy Foundation Grant. The Dollar General Grant was awarded in the amount of $3,900 to be used to purchase a new office computer, a laminator, volunteer training resources, and more books for our mobile libraries.
Log Your Volunteer Hours

It is very important that volunteers keep track of the amount of hours you serve. As it pertains to the VAC Literacy Program, logging volunteer hours is an easy process. Visit volunteer.uark.edu, click login or create an account username and password if you are new to the site. Once you sign in, click on the icon that reads “Log your hours” and begin inputting your volunteer information. This is a great way to keep a record of all of your service events and it is very beneficial. Benefits of logging your volunteer hours include: Nominations for President’s Volunteer Service Award (100 volunteer hours per year), enhanced resume experience and a guaranteed way to monitor your involvement in the community. You can also find many other volunteer opportunities on campus and in Northwest Arkansas.

Top 10 Things You Should Know About Reading

- Too many American children cannot read well
- An achievement gap exists
- Learning to read is complex
- Teachers should teach with the end goal in mind
- Kids who struggle usually have problems sounding out words
- What happens before school matters a lot
- Learning to read is closely tied to learning to talk and listen
- Without help, struggling readers continue to struggle
- With help, struggling readers can succeed.
- Debi Smith, Clinical Instructor of Childhood Education

The VAC Literacy program has expanded this year in big ways, and now we are available on Facebook! On Facebook we share important news about the program, along with interesting things going on around the Northwest Arkansas community! Once you like our page you will be kept in the loop about all things VAC Literacy, including access to pictures, updates, and deadlines. So if you have a Facebook, log in and look us up as "VAC Literacy Program"! It is important you like our page you can stay connected with this growing program and share your own experiences with other volunteers.
Meet The VAC Literacy Team

Autumn Lewis: VAC Literacy, Chair
aml009ua@gmail.com

Chair

Duties: Oversee committee meetings and support members in their roles. Oversee volunteer orientation. Conduct research and assessment of children at program locations. Maintain communication with the Boys and Girls Club and principals at program locations.

Kemmian Johnson: VAC Literacy, Intern
kdj008@uark.edu

Intern

Duties: Hold regular office hours. Manage application process and location assignments. Communicate with volunteers, monthly newsletter, conduct weekly site visits, build a relationship with SKC Staff at program locations, support committee chair with program initiatives and assist chair with program branding and conducting volunteer orientation.

Kristin Wylie: VAC Literacy, Recruitment
kwylie@uark.edu

Recruitment

Duties: Recruit volunteers for the Fall and Spring semesters and conduct volunteer appreciation

Cicely Shannon: VAC Literacy, Curriculum
cashanno@uark.edu

Curriculum

Duties: Implement training that covers literacy practices homework help and addressing conduct issues in orientation. Create and maintain communication with a literacy advisory team of graduate students and professors.

Amanda Finch: Program Coordinator
acfinch@uark.edu

Program Coordinator

Oversee Literacy Program and advise the Literacy team regularly.

If you are interested in getting involved with VAC Literacy Program, applications will be opening in the Spring and more info will be provided in the next newsletter.