

Our Mission:

To strengthen the literacy skills of Philadelphia's youngest and neediest school children by providing mentors and resources to in-school, after school and summer programs.

History



When the President's Summit for America's Promise met in Philadelphia in 1997, educators, legislators, and other community leaders discussed ways to help build the character and competence of America's youth. As part of America's Promise, PHILADELPHIA READS was formed to enhance the literacy experience of Philadelphia's students in

kindergarten through third grade. The goal was to provide programs and resources to ensure that Philadelphia's school students would be able to read well and independently by the fourth grade.

Together with individuals, schools, communities, and faith-based organizations and businesses, PHILADELPHIA READS provides mentors, resources, and advocacy for in-school, after school, and summer programs.

PHILADELPHIA READS is an initiative of the Office of the Managing Director and an independent, nonprofit* affiliate of the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition.

Volunteer Opportunities

PHILADELPHIA READS works with various community organizations and individuals to advocate, develop literacy incentives, increase literacy awareness and enhance children's motivation to read.

In pursuit of this mission, PHILADELPHIA READS provides year-round volunteer opportunities to a wide range of individuals including: adults, college and university students, high school students, senior citizens, families, work-study students, and summer youth. Our most important requirement is that volunteers are dedicated and consistent. Whether it's coaching a child in reading or coordinating a book drive, enthusiasm and commitment are paramount to a volunteer project's success. With the dedication and support of volunteers, we will make Philadelphia a *city of readers!*

* A copy of the official registration and financial information of GPUAC/PHILADELPHIA READS may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.



Volunteer Opportunities

Reading Coach Program

The Reading Coach Program is a volunteer program that recruits, trains, and places literacy volunteers in schools, after-school programs, and community and faith based organizations, to work with struggling readers at least once a week for a minimum of one semester during the school year.

PHILADELPHIA READS provides all reading coaches with extensive training prior to site placement. This helps ensure that all reading coaches are equipped with the skills, techniques, and understanding necessary to be a successful literacy mentor.

Reading coaches are provided for school classroom, after-school programs, and Saturday enrichment programs. Reading coaches work one-on-one with a child on a weekly basis to build his or her literacy skills.

Time Commitment: One hour a week for a minimum of one term.

Training: Reading Coaches attend three-hour training in the fall or winter. Reading coaches trained in the fall volunteer until winter break, while those trained in the winter volunteer until the end of the school year.

Children's Book Bank

The PHILADELPHIA READS Children's Book Bank houses new and gently used children's books for preschoolers through young adults. This free resource is available throughout the school year for school teachers and community partners running educational programs. There are many ways you can help PHILADELPHIA READS at the Book Bank:

1. Organize a Book Drive

Books are provided for the book bank through community book drives. During the 2008-2009 school year, PHILADELPHIA READS distributed over 65,000 books to local teachers and child-care providers.

This project involves generating participation, developing and posting flyers, sorting books, securing appropriate book collection site(s), setting up book collection bin(s), sorting through books to ensure they are in good condition & appropriate, and coordinating with PHILADELPHIA READS at the end of the drive for book delivery/pick-up. PHILADELPHIA READS will provide the "book bins" if needed.

2. Be a Book Sorter.

The Book Bank is in need of a few detail-oriented people to volunteer each Tuesday or Wednesday at the book bank.

3. Be a Data Entry Volunteer,

Volunteers are needed to help input key research data about teachers who utilize the PHILADELPHIA READS Book Bank.

Time Commitment: 2-4 hours per week.

Training: One half-day training will be provided for book sorters and data entry volunteers.

Reading Olympics

The Philadelphia Reading Olympics is a city-wide collaborative reading competition coordinated by PHILADELPHIA READS, the Free Library of Philadelphia, the School District of Philadelphia, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and the City of Philadelphia. The goals of the Reading Olympics are to promote reading for enjoyment and to teach students teamwork skills. The Reading Olympics engages fourth through eighth graders from Philadelphia's public, parochial, charter, independent and after school programs in a collaborative reading competition. Teams of up to 12 students collectively read the books on the Philadelphia Reading Olympics booklist, and practice working together as a team to answer questions about the books.

The teams come together in May at an assigned college campus location to answer questions about the books. The teams accumulate points for every correct answer during three rounds of competition earning each team member a blue, red, or green ribbon based on the number of points their team has earned. Volunteers from area businesses join with members of the community to ask questions and keep score.

Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks before during and after the event. The tasks include counting out materials in preparation for the competitions, soliciting donations of food for volunteers at the event, reading and writing questions to be used in the competition, serving as moderator or scorekeeper at the event, and inputting survey information into our database after the event in May.

Time Commitment: Varies depending on task.

Training: One half-hour training will be provided.

Books on Tape

PHILADELPHIA READS recruits volunteers to record picture books onto tape. The book and tape packets go to our Book Bank where teachers and community partners can take them for their classroom libraries and listening centers. Books on tape are a powerful tool for building literacy skills because they encourage fluency, motivation, and interest in reading.

The Books on Tape project can be done by an individual or a group. It can also be incorporated into a larger volunteer project such as a book drive.

Time Commitment: This project can be completed at your leisure. There is no specific time commitment. You can record one book or 100 books, it's your call!

Training: Not provided.

Volunteer Intake Form

Once you have selected volunteer opportunities that you would like to complete, please submit a Volunteer Intake Form to the Volunteer Office at PHILADELPHIA READS. This can be sent, via email, philadelphiareads@gpuac.org, fax, (215) 851-1953 or mail, Attn.: Lindsey Vance, PHILADELPHIA READS, 1207 Chestnut St., Philadelphia PA 19107.

The appropriate contact person will be in touch with you following receipt of your intake form.

Questions?

Contact: Lindsey Vance
PHILADELPHIA READS
(215) 851-1754
lvance@gpuac.org