

Kids Count in Alachua  
County, Inc.

P.O. Box 358272



Location: Faith United  
Methodist Church

3701 NE 15<sup>th</sup> St. Gaines-  
ville, FL 32609

## **Volunteer Handbook**

**2011-2012**

### **Why Kids Count?**

Fewer than 50% of Alachua County low-income students who entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade four years ago will graduate this year.

Read that statement again and let it sink in.

Now couple that statistic with the reality that Rawlings Elementary, the present target school of Kids Count After School Program,

is one of five Alachua County elementary schools with over 85% of students coming from low-income families, and you'll realize why we at Kids Count do what we do. You'll also understand why your generous spirit to volunteer with our Kids Count children is so important. You can make a difference.

Research has shown that if a child falls behind in reading as early as first grade, without intervention, there is little chance he will ever catch up to his peers. Children who don't succeed in school face huge challenges to succeed in life. Some southern U.S. states use standardized test scores of third grade students to predict future prison population needs. However, we at Kids Count believe there is a hope and a future for all students—even those who fall behind. We commit to work passionately to provide the intervention needed to help our students succeed. We all lose when children don't grow and develop into all they can be.

The Kids Count at Faith UMC After School Program is research based. After a comprehensive review of the impact of out of school programs, a recent study concluded that "Out-of-School-Time programs that provide one-on-one tutoring for at-risk students have positive effects on student achievement in reading" (Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow & Martin, 20006, p. 308). And not only does the Kids Count After School Program provide students one-on-one literacy tutoring with trained tutors, we also work to inspire a love of life and learning in our students through character development education and special enrichment activities.

We at Kids Count believe in all children. Their natural potential combined with research-based intervention and you, the volunteer's, extra support, is sure to yield positive results. Thank you for looking beyond discouraging statistics, seeing the need, and joining us as we endeavor to make a difference in the lives of local children.

## **The Kids Count Vision**

The Vision of Kids Count in Alachua County, Inc., a nonprofit organization, is that all elementary children in the community who need extra support to succeed in school and life will have that opportunity. In pursuit of this vision, Kids Count partners with schools, churches and other organizations to offer highly effective programs that inspire hope, enhance learning, improve confidence and build life skills. Kids Count provides funding, volunteers and expertise for the programs it supports.

## **A Message from the President**

“Our dream for our students is the same dream we have for our

own children, to be recognized for their strengths, to learn from their

weaknesses, and to be seen as a person of infinite potential.”

*Sarah Brown Wessling, a high school English teacher in Johnston, Iowa & winner of*

*the 2010 National Teacher of the Year Award*

This is our dream, too, within Kids Count in Alachua County. Whether we’re supporting an after school program such as Kids Count at Faith UMC, collaborating with others to launch a new garden at Rawlings Elementary, or building relationships in the community to help support and improve our schools, our focus is always on Ms. Wessling’s dream. Our mission, helping children reach their full potential, provides the motivation we need to work very hard to build and support highly effective programs for the elementary students we serve. The Kids Count board is thankful for all the committed volunteers and donors who make our programs possible. Please remember - we can’t serve the children without folks like you giving their time, talent, and treasure.

*Ward Simonton, Ph.D.*

*President*

*Board of Directors*

## **Board of Directors**

Ward Simonton, Ph.D., Board President

Kathy Vance, MA, Vice President

Dorene Ross, Ed.D., Secretary

Carole Kassi, Treasurer

Chris Brown, Director

Joel Houston, Director

Rev. Tony Perryman, Sr., Director

Kim Beach, MBA, Ex-Officio

## **Staff**

Elizabeth Jacobbe, MA, Executive Director

Jairus Foster, BA, Program Assistant

## **Program Structure**

Kids Count at Faith United Methodist Church is the signature program of the Kids Count organization. This program com-

bines research-based, effective literacy tutoring, social skill building through character development, and hands-on, engaging, and fun enrichment activities. In this way, Kids Count fulfills its mission of meeting the needs of the whole child. There are three distinct components of the Kids Count after school program:

**Literacy tutoring:**

Children in the Kids Count program receive one-on-one tutoring from the University of Florida College of Education students two days per week. Key features of the tutoring component include the use of a successful tutoring structure, ongoing progress monitoring of student performance and achievement, lessons designed to meet the needs of each student, and hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities. Tutors are trained in effective tutoring methods, and are fully supported by the Executive Director and Program Assistant.

**Character Development:**

All children in the Kids Count program participate in activities designed to help develop positive character traits. The Executive Director, Program Assistant, and volunteers facilitate this learning through engaging activities that encourage student participation and generalization of key character traits.

**Enrichment:**

Enrichment activities provide opportunities for children to see that learning can be fun! These activities will enable children in Kids Count to experience aspects of learning in which they traditionally had little access. Enrichment activities generally will occur on Fridays, and will be facilitated by various community and student groups.

Children can expect to be immersed in art projects, science experiments and investigations, historical explorations, technology-focused projects, and much more!

When these components are combined, the result is a successful and effective community-based after school program. However, a large part of the program's success is you, the volunteer. Your time, energy, and passion for children continue to make Kids Count a place where kids want to be!

## Volunteer Opportunities

Community volunteers are the heart of the Kids Count after school program. You, our volunteers, create an atmosphere conducive to learning and enrichment through your tireless efforts; you positively impact the lives of children and their families.

There are several ways that you can volunteer and share in the many exciting activities of the program. Currently, the following volunteer opportunities are available:

- **Lead volunteers:** In this role, volunteers provide support to the Program Assistant and assume leadership responsibilities in her absence. The volunteers help the Executive Director ensure that the program runs smoothly each day.
- **Literacy studios facilitator:** In this role, volunteers lead children in activities that allow them to experience reading in real world contexts. Studios occur every Tuesday and Thursday before or after literacy tutoring and feature activities such as gardening, home economics, scrapbooking, technology, constructing, art, drama and dance. Studios vary depending on volunteer interest.
- **Character development activities helper:** In this role, volunteers work with the Executive Director and Program Assistant to carry out lessons and activities designed to help children develop positive character traits and social skills.
- **Tutoring helper:** In this role, volunteers provide support to the literacy tutors during tutoring sessions. They ensure that tutors have the necessary materials needed for each session, answer questions, and communicate concerns or comments to the Executive Director or Program Assistant.
- **Homework helpers:** In this role, volunteers provide encouraging one-on-one or small group assistance to students completing homework assignments. If students have no homework, these volunteers engage children in math or reading enrichment activities.
- **Extra Hands volunteers:** In this role, volunteers provide general assistance with a variety of program

tasks such as snack preparation, walking with students, assisting with transitions between rotations, etc...

- **Librarians:** In this role, volunteers assist students in selecting books from the Kids Count library that they can read at home. These volunteers read with and to children on a consistent basis and keep the library organized and efficient.
- **Alternate tutors:** In this role, volunteers serve as substitute tutors in the event a regular tutor is absent. These volunteers must attend tutor training.
- **Family Resource Center attendant:** In this role, volunteers work to create and maintain a positive relationship with the families of children in the Kids Count program. These volunteers help parents make literacy games to take home, check out books to read with their children, keep parents abreast of program happenings, offer tips and suggestions, and provide information about other community programs.
- **Friday Enrichment Volunteer:** In this role, volunteers assist with enrichment activities on Fridays. Depending on the activity scheduled, this could include set-up and clean up, assisting with special activities, facilitating other activities such as structured outside games, character development, and more.

## Guidelines and Information

### Qualities of a successful Volunteer

Promptness \* Courtesy \* Dependability \* Positive-attitude \* Enthusiasm \* Creativity \* Initiative \* Support \* Flexibility \* Tact \* Patience \* Non-disruptive influence \* Discretion \* Cooperative \* Concern for children \* Sensitivity \* Ability to have fun

### Volunteer Application

Volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application EVERY school year. Statements found to be false will be immediate cause for dismissal. Kids Count reserves the right to refuse volunteer placement to individuals with disqualifying criminal convictions. All volunteers are screened through the FDLE Sexual Predator website and through the Alachua County Sheriff's Department.

### Safety and Discipline

Please refer any safety and or disciplinary issues to the Executive Director or Program Assistant immediately.

### Signing In-Out/Name Badges

All volunteers must sign-in and sign-out each time they arrive at Kids Count. Records are maintained for security purposes as well as documentation of community involvement hours which may be used for recognition and data for grant proposals. We recommend that you keep track of your hours in a personal log for future reference.

All volunteers are required to wear a name badge while at Kids Count.

## **Guidelines and Information**

**Continued**

### **Confidentiality**

Work with students is always confidential. We don't mind you sharing your experiences with others, but it is very important not to use full names of students outside of Kids Count. A misplaced comment can be devastating to a student, a family, and the volunteer program. If you have questions or concerns, please discuss them with the Executive Director.

### **Reporting**

Any volunteer who believes bullying or harassment has occurred, or suspects child abuse, should immediately report it to the Executive Director.

### **Attendance/Punctuality**

It is imperative that you be prompt, dependable and regular in attendance. Reliability is expected because the staff plans for volunteer assistance. If you know you will be absent, please let the Executive Director know in advance. If an emergency arises on your scheduled day, please call Elizabeth Jacobbe at (352) 215-5439 by 10 AM or as soon as possible.

### **Conduct/Dress Code**

As a volunteer, you are a role model. Please make sure your conduct and attire is not a distraction to the students. If you have any questions about appropriate dress, please ask the Executive Director. Cell phones should be put on vibrate or left in your car during your volunteer work. Texting is prohibited while working with students. Never take pictures of students with your cell phone without express permission from the Executive Director.

### **Emergencies**

In case of emergency or if you have concerns for students' safety, please report the concern immediately to the Executive Director or Program Assistant.

### **If you need help**

If you need more instruction in order to perform a task or wish to change your assignment, please discuss it with the Executive Director.

## Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a volunteer, you will be asked to sign the following Volunteer Code of Conduct and agree to abide by the Code or risk being dismissed from your volunteer placement.

1. I will complete and submit a new Volunteer Application every school year.
2. I will sign-in and out each time I volunteer.
3. I will wear a volunteer name badge when volunteering.
4. I agree never to be alone with individual students who are not under the supervision of Kids Count staff.
5. I will maintain confidentiality of all student information.
6. I will share with the Executive Director any concerns I have related to student welfare and safety.
7. I will report any discipline concerns to the Executive Director while implementing the rules, procedures, and discipline policy of Kids Count.
8. I will support the educational plans of the Kids Count program and will make any

suggestions for changes to the Executive Director.

9. As a role model for the students, I will dress and act appropriately including silencing

phones and not texting while working with students.

10. I agree only to do what is in the best interest of every child with whom I come into contact.

## Suggestions for working with children

Be enthusiastic! Have fun! If you enjoy yourself, your joy will be contagious.

It will communicate a love of learning to our children.

- ✓ Introduce yourself and tell the student why you are here and when you'll be volunteering. Learn the student's name and how to pronounce and spell it. It's a good idea to exchange names in writing. Get acquainted. Find out what interests the student has; tell him some things about you. Try to establish rapport, but be patient. It may take time for you both to feel comfortable. By your words and actions, let the student know that you care.
- ✓ Be dependable. You are modeling responsible behavior for the student.

If you know you will be absent, please let the Executive Director know as far in advance as possible. If an emergency arises, call Elizabeth Jacobbe at (352) 215-5439 by 10:00 AM or as soon as possible. While students may be disappointed, they will be reassured that you are all right and that you cared enough to call.

- ✓ Build the student's self-confidence. Praise your student honestly and frequently. Attentiveness and effort can be as important as performance. Accentuate the positive; minimize the negative. Everyone makes mistakes. Let the student know that making mistakes is a normal part of learning. Don't be afraid of making mistakes yourself. We are all here to learn.
- ✓ Students love to tell stories and get off task. Listen attentively, but also keep the student focused.
- ✓ Help the student set specific goals that s/he can achieve. Break down long-range goals into achievable increments.
- ✓ Keep your directions and explanations short and very explicit. Try to be very specific and tell the students what you want them to do (rather than what not to do).
- ✓ Rather than giving a student the answer automatically, direct his/her thinking so s/he can discover the answer on his/her own.

✓ Do not get discouraged if you do not see immediate, significant changes in the student's attitude or academic achievement. His present situation has probably been building over time, and it will take time to change it. Believe that you ARE making a difference, even though you may not even be around to see the positive results.

✓ Volunteers must always work under the supervision of Kids Count staff members. Make sure you are working in an open, visible area and do not allow yourself to be in a situation where your actions might be misconstrued.

## Words of Encouragement

**The 7 to 1 rule suggests that it takes 7 specific positive, encouraging and affirming statements to offset each 1 redirection or reprimand of a child.**

Praise goes a long way. Children need more than the traditional “Good,” “Very Good,” and “Fine” if encouragement is the ultimate purpose. We have found great success when praise is specific, for example, “I like how you read that story,” rather than general, such as, “good job.” For ideas of how to start, see this helpful list:

Your handwriting is really nice.

This kind of work shows how focused you are.

Thank you very much.

Now you’ve figured it out.

Wow!

Congratulations!

Way to solve that problem & not give up.

I’m proud of the progress you’ve made.

I’m impressed with the way you’re working.

I’m impressed with the way you’re thinking.

I’m very proud of the way you worked

(are working) today.

That’s a good point.

Everyone’s working so hard.

You must be proud of your work.

That’s quite an improvement.

You are a super speller.

Why don’t you show the class?

Much better.

Thank you for (sitting down, being quiet, getting right to work, etc.).

Keep up the good work.

You make it look easy.

You’re on the right track now.

That looks like it’s going to be a great report.

What neat work.

My goodness, how impressive!

You really outdid yourself today.

I’m impressed with the way you are working together.

(Name) got right down to work.

Terrific voice inflections!

It looks like you put a lot of work into this.

Beautiful artwork!

That’s an interesting way of looking at it.

Excellent pauses at periods.

It’s a pleasure to teach when you work like this.

I knew you could do it!

That’s the right answer.

I appreciate your help.

Now you’ve got the hang of it.

Marvelous!

That's a very good observation.  
 That's coming along nicely.  
 That's one way of looking at it.  
 That's an interesting point of view.  
 Super, you remembered to (blank)!  
 Thank you for raising your hand.  
 (name) what is it?  
 Nice going on regrouping.  
 (Name) is really going to town.  
 I see the way (name) or (the  
 class) has settled down.  
 (Name) is paying attention.  
 That's clever.  
 That's a very creative story in your journal.  
 That's right! (Name) has it!

By: Edward S. Kubany

## 2011-2012 IMPORTANT DATES

Kids Count meets every **Tuesday** and **Thursday** from **2:30-5:30** and **Friday** from **12:30-4:00**. We start Tuesday, August 23

and end Friday, June 1. We will follow the Alachua County Public School Schedule and will not meet on the following days:

Monday, September  
 5 ..... Holiday -  
 Labor Day  
 Friday, October  
 28..... Pupil  
 Holiday/Teacher Workday  
 Friday, November  
 4 ..... Holiday -  
 UF Homecoming  
 Friday, November  
 11 ..... Holiday -  
 Veterans' Day  
 \*Wednesday, November  
 23 ..... Pupil Holiday/  
 Teacher Holiday  
 Thursday, Nov 24 - Friday, Nov  
 25 ..... Thanksgiving Holidays  
 Monday, Dec 19 - Friday, Dec  
 30 ..... Winter Holidays (10  
 weekdays)  
 Monday, January  
 2 ..... Pupil  
 Holiday/Teacher Holiday  
 Monday, January  
 16 ..... Holiday -  
 ML King Day  
 \* Friday, January  
 20..... Pupil  
 Holiday/Teacher Workday  
 Monday, February  
 20..... Holiday -  
 Presidents' Day  
 \* Friday, March  
 30..... Pupil  
 Holiday/Teacher Workday  
 Monday, April 2 – Friday, April  
 6..... Spring Holidays (5  
 weekdays)  
 Monday, May  
 28 ..... Holi-  
 day - Memorial Day

*\* These days MAY be used to make up days cancelled due to hurricanes or other emergen-*

*cies. For the 2011-12 calendar, they will be used in the following order:*

*(1) March 30, (2) January 20, (3) November 23*

Please note the following:

- Volunteers will receive reminder emails regarding the above dates as they approach, however it is strongly recommended that you mark your calendars as soon as you have signed up for a volunteer shift day.
- UF & SFCC Faculty, Staff and Students: We know your holiday and break dates and will automatically know that you may be out of town during those times. If you will be in town and are able to volunteer, then we would love to have you!



Kids Count acknowledges and thanks the School Board of Alachua County School

Volunteer Program from whose volunteer handbook we have borrowed.