

Frontier College @ UofT Scarborough Retreat 2009 Minutes

Friday, August 28 – Sunday August 30

Actions:

- **Action Alicia:** contact Cecilia about training on October 2nd
- **Action Faisal:** email the coordinators of the departments, and DSAs to promote FC
 - Faisal can't book campus rooms until 2 weeks after school. Go ASAP to book them for orientation and training.
- **Action Faisal:** at last year's Kids' Event BLOSSA was unorganized and there was not enough room in the lab for the kids. Please raise these concerns with the BLOSSA team.
- **Action Adeel:** tell his partners that we are scaling back to one day a week.

Constitution:

- Everyone on the OT must have an understanding of their roles and responsibilities:
 - **Hridi's:** Moderator, calls meetings, 'general manager' of Frontier College. If anyone were to exit the FC OT, Hridi would take over their responsibilities.
 - **Conor:** Administrative coordinator, responsible for communications.
 - **Faisal:** Campus and Community Coordinator, books rooms, coordinates with other clubs, attends SCSU board meetings.
 - **Bonnie:** Financial coordinator, responsible for the financial records of FC@UofT Scarborough
 - **Nivethan:** Volunteer coordinator, responsible for the maintenance of the volunteer database and keeping track of volunteers' police checks etc.
 - The remaining OT members are programme managers responsible for programme delivery and on-site management of the programmes. It is also imperative that the PMs maintain the relationship with our community partners. PMs will also update the OT at bi-weekly meetings regarding how the programme is running.
- No OT member should profit from their work.

What is on your plate this year (in addition to FC):

- Yasmin: Finding IDS co-op placement
- Nivethan: Part time work at the Hospital in the mornings
- Conor: RLT, WUSC (diminished role), finding IDS co-op placement
- Brianna: Finding IDS co-op placement
- Mary: Finding IDS co-op placement, part time work at the Crocs store, band
- Bonnie: Part time work, first year experience programme (formerly SMP)
- Brigitte: Part-time work, ArtSideOut until Oct 1, AET for the remainder of the year, applying to Grad school, LSAT?, band, a potential Eco-literacy programme outside of FC
- Neha: Part-time work
- Betty: Part-time, erratic work
- Becky: Finding IDS co-op placement, looking for part-time work
- Hridi: RLT, running the IDSSA, Grad school applications, Research paper

The Lay of the Land:

- **Financial details:**
 - **Taxi slips:** are provided to the less-accessible locations. Drivers are not tipped. Date and amount must be clear on the taxi slip. You must submit the previous weeks pink-slips in order to receive new taxi slips.
 - **TTC tokens:** will be distributed during meetings or office hours.
 - **Reimbursements:** will be distributed during meetings or office hours. Submit receipts as soon as possible, within three weeks of original purchase. Cheques are issued for amounts of \$30 or more.
- **Certificates:** official Frontier College certificates will be issued at the end of the year only.
- **Office:** keep it clean, organized. Conor and Hridi are responsible for the office. Do not leave bottles on the desk, pick up any garbage, recycling et cetera from tables and floor.
- **Meeting food:** Budget last year was ~\$15-20 per meeting. This was too much. We will not be providing food at meetings anymore. We will use the money for an OT appreciation night.
- **Reference letters:** Hridi can write them for *good* volunteers

Relevant Dates:

- OT Meetings will take place biweekly on Wednesdays from 5-7.
- **First meeting, will be Friday September 18 from 3-5**
- On Site Orientations start the week: Week of October 5
- Program Start week: Week of October 12
- Volunteer Check-in should be week of November 16
- SGL plans to move to Wednesday afternoons
- Fall program end dates: Week of November 30.
- Winter dates for office hours, etc will be set in a end-of fall meeting.
- First Winter semester meeting TBA
- Orientation Tuesday, January 12 and 13 from 5-7
- Training is January 22 9:30-3:30
- Volunteer stats are due on February 15
- Check-ins will be due February 24
- Kids' Day is March 19
- Program end dates week of March 29

Clubs Week:

- Booth materials are in the office.
- Need to update the labels on the post cards (Bonnie), need sign up sheets, need to update the poster board with newer pictures.
- Hours for clubs week will be similar to office hours, however they will have two people at the table. Likely 4 hours a week. We also need class announcements. Niv will also email the signed-up students for a reminder.
- The 'Frontier College Message' form is good for info for recruitment, also mention 'the teaching component'.

Orientations:

- *Orientation 1*: Tuesday, September 22, 5-7 (Niv will arrive at 6pm)
 - (FAISAL NEEDS TO BOOK ROOMS)
 - Niv, Brianna, Yasmin, Neha, Becky, Faisal, Hridi, Brigitte(?)
 - Interview Pairs: Neha & Betty, Faisal & Yasmin, Niv (or Brigitte and maybe Conor) & Brianna, Becky & Hridi
 - Food: Becky and Brianna
- *Orientation 2*: Wednesday, September 23, 5-7
 - Niv, Brianna, Mary, Conor, Adeel, Bonnie, Betty, Alicia, Hridi
 - Interview Pairs: Betty & Neha, Brianna & Bonnie, Mary & Niv, Conor & Alicia, Adeel & Hridi
 - Brigitte: to be scheduled
 - Food: Conor and Adeel
- Interviewing is done in pairs so that we can have an unbiased opinion. Watch for red flags listed on the Do's and Don'ts page.
- Forms necessary for orientation:
 - Data sheet, Application form, Profile Form, Agreement Form, Site Leader Form, Interview Form, Reference Check Form
 - Interview form: Eco-literacy has a supplemental interview to test the environmental knowledge of the students.

Police Checks:

- Returnees need to only renew their back cheque form.
 - OT members: Conor, Mary, Betty, Bonnie, Alicia
- All volunteers must be checked. Minors with a record are a deal-breaker.
- Adults with a record will be given a summary of their record and can choose to show it to Sherry Campbell (FC President) to volunteer.
- Ken suggests going through Backcheck forms with volunteers at the orientation.
- We can use non-government photo ID only if it is with a birth certificate.
- Only one photocopied ID per sheet
- Health Cards and SIN cards are not allowed.
- *If somebody has another organization's police check they can copy that (given that it is less than 6 months old) and give it to us. Teacher candidates might have an OECD card, which is acceptable.*

References:

- Files will be organized by programme, until reference checks are completed. As of October 26th, everything will be filed by A-Z.
- We only need to do two reference checks, but there is space for a third in case one cannot be contacted. A professional reference is a non-relative, non-friend, preferably an employer, professor, teacher, supervisor, Residence Advisor. Residence Advisors should be used in conjunction with one of the more "professional" references. Discretion will be used.
- References must be done over the phone.
- No international references.
 - Only English International references will be called, but volunteers will be told to facilitate the call *from* the referee's country.

- One reference MUST be completed before the volunteer is on-site.

Training:

- Friday, October 2, 9-3 (at UTSC) this will be the bulk of the training
 - Conor, Hridi, Niv (for some of it), Neha, Yasmin
 - Food: Neha and Yasmin
- Students who do not want to participate in children's programmes need only attend the Adult ESL training at FC head office (Sat, Oct 3).
- Saturday, October 3 – Sunday October 4, 9-3 (at 35 Jackes Ave.)
- An alternate training will be facilitated by Hridi and Conor if required

Volunteer Database:

- Info will be added to an excel spreadsheet. Niv will begin auditing volunteer information after October 26th.
- There is a hard-copy of the data to be entered in the database called the data sheet.

Programs and Partnerships:

- Ken has circulated survey forms to the community partners who have responded which involved the fluidity of programming, areas for improvement, etc.
- Ken will be forwarding PMs the relevant survey form to highlight areas which the new PMs can improve upon over last-year's programming.
- e.g. MTPS in-school is looking for a *significant* expansion. Eco-lit will demand a more structured curriculum from last year. Most other programs will continue as last year, however minor changes will be made.
- **Q:** Brigitte: Eco-lit at MTPS needs a great deal more staff support. Our teacher was often late, stressed and frantic due to a large amount of other commitments. This was an issue last year, especially in terms of discipline for students participating in the programme. This year the ratio of students to tutors will be smaller. There will be teams, which work with students every week. Sometimes teachers at the site were unaware of their role in the programme. Communication was also an issue.
- PMs should approach community partners this fall and are encouraged to discuss the specifics of volunteers, ratios, students, communication etc. before the program starts up next month.
- A face-to-face meeting is preferable to email correspondence. Keep Ken in the loop by cc-ing him or by emailing him minutes of in-person meetings. Ken will to the best of his ability attend these meetings but if he is unable to her will contribute as best he can via email. Ken will provide an outline of what to consider with the partners.
- You can get specific information from teachers regarding the scheduling of curriculum to try and synchronize programme lessons with those lessons at school. This info might also be available on the boards' websites.
- **Q:** If students are misbehaving, and there is no teacher, what discipline can we apply? If a volunteer is uncomfortable, what is the procedure?
- It is usually the partner who is responsible for the (advanced) discipline of children. This can be discussed with the community partner. In this case the volunteer was left alone with the kids in the classroom – this should not have happened. Our volunteers are not student-teachers or educational assistants. They are in-class tutors for students who need help on homework or literacy based issues. Volunteers should be

in an environment matched to their skill sets.

- **Q:** There have been cases where no partner was present.
- Teachers should be a presence in the program and not just show up for farewells. We are all trying for the same goal, we need to remind partners of this sometimes and remind them of our expectations of them and vice-versa.
- **Q:** What about when non-programme students accompany learners?
- If they are not a distraction it is fine for them to stick around outside of the program, e.g. read a book in another part of the room. If they are distracting, ask the stranger to move from your space: they are not part of the programme you are running.

OT roles and Responsibilities for community partners:

- A handout provided by Ken
- Highlights certain points that may need to be discussed with partners.
- Make contact by phone or email with partner. Partner may be difficult to get a hold of. Be persistent. Talk about age-range, target number and grade range of students. Keep in mind that you and the agency are partners. Don't be afraid to mention this to them.
- See handout for overview of:
 - Target number of volunteers
 - Ratio of students to tutors
 - Space for programming
 - On-site orientations (who, what, where, when and learner-specific information)
 - Establish partner supervision
 - How will programme be structured, how will the curriculum look?
 - Key dates
 - Special events and activities (e.g. March Break Kids' day)
 - Communication plans
 - Conflict / Issue management
 - Learner and volunteer recognition and celebrations
 - Professionalism, appropriate language
 - *Check list – a summary of the above points*

Expectations of OT members

- Please review this handout.
- We collect statistics from campus programs twice a year (fall and winter)
- We track volunteer hours, number of volunteers, volunteer hours, number of learners (including those who dropped out and those who joined late).
- Hours do not include travel time.

Portfolio:

- Every campus programme is required to construct a portfolio for the end of the programme session. This includes stats, a description and testimonials from volunteers. You might be able to secure testimonials by simply asking your volunteers in person what they thought about the programme and making notes. The programme managers are required to submit a testimonial as well. These items are due at the end of April.
- We need the permission of the parents to have photos in the portfolio so they are

unlikely to be included.

On-Site Resources:

- On-site activity materials will be kept for the elementary school and shelter programs.
- Gardenview, for instance, has an excellent resource box with markers, crayons, scissors, etc.
- Boxes can include word games, the human alphabet, Boggle, Scrabble, basketball bingo, etc.
- Books are available for our programmes for free from Frontier College head office.
- There is a resource supplies budget of about \$400 available to us from FC proper.
- It is also a good idea to work on a term-long project such as creating a magazine etc.

Volunteer Management:

- There will be revisions posted very soon. Ken reviews notes:
 - There is the addition of a clause to deal with relationships between tutors and learners. There should be no exchange of phone numbers or emails between volunteers and students under 18.
 - Caveat: if the parent of the child knows and approves of the exchange in writing, then that is okay. Parents must be cc-ed for this communication to be validated. Volunteers will also be responsible for the signing of a boundary form. Communication between tutors and learners above 18 should be cc-ed to Ken or Hridi for security.
 - Regarding confidentiality: Tutors must not share personal details they learn about a student except in cases of abuse. This form will be available at the time of tutor training.
- New revised version will not be called "A Frontier College Guide" as it is not a 'guideline' but rather straight policy.

Safety:

- Leave as a group where possible.
- No volunteer should be on their own and leaving in the dark or dodgy neighbourhoods.
- The volunteer management book includes details for injury, crisis, theft etc. Document all such problems. Document inappropriate behaviour by learners or tutors. There are also details on dealing with child abuse.

Communications:

- CC or BCC Hridi on mails sent to your volunteers or partners.
- Send all OT emails to the Yahoo! Group. Always include a subject.

Volunteer dismissal:

- Let Hridi or Ken know your qualms.
- Have an interview with the volunteer and document it.
- If the behaviour continues, dismiss the volunteer.
- The last page is a quick reference as to what details need to be followed.

Member Zone:

- All FC members have access to the member zone.

- There will be a registration page.
- Staff access: lots of information, policies and procedure, volunteer directory, staff directory
- Volunteer access: alumni contributions, discussion board, volunteer management policies and procedures, compliance forms, etc.

Volunteer tracking sheets:

- You need to track your hours as well as your volunteers' hours
- Retreat counts, emails count, web site counts, etc.

Budget Information:

- Levy – Money from SCSU contribution
- FC – Money from FC proper (mostly for taxis and resources)
- Subtotal – Sum of sub section
- Grand Total – Sum of subtotals
- Drivers will be reimbursed 0.40/km
- Taxi drivers are not to be tipped
- Tentative number of volunteers (until community partner meetings):
 - Alicia – 8 total (2 for ESL, 3 per day for children)
 - Becky – 10
 - Adeel – 10
 - Yasmin – 10
 - Neha / Betty – 25
 - Brianna – 12
 - Brigitte – 12
 - Mary – 10
 - Plan total – 70-100 volunteers for the year
 - There is worry that this inflated number of volunteers (in an attempt to push down ratios) will lead to financial problems.
 - We could hold a referendum for an increased levy or even just request an increased levy from student affairs.
 - Could we also just put a lower ceiling on the number of learners in our programmes
 - Volunteer appreciation budget is also in the air
 - SGL and SMDP have huge discrepancies in their budget.
- Program and Working group discussions:
 - Dr. Roz spent more than \$100 over budget.
 - There needs to be a maximum number of parties a year and a LIMITED budget for them? If you go above total you pay the difference. Program updates must be MUCH more detailed.
 - Dr Roz has significant resources.
 - Garden view does not need more money for resources.
 - Juliette's Place has lots of resources.
 - Having both Christmas and Halloween parties is 'much' since it takes from tutoring times.

- One big appreciation at the end of the year is all that is needed.
- SGL was given \$200 and only spent \$37. There is no resource box there so one will need to be made. \$40-50 dollars will go towards supplies.
- Eco-lit at Woburn no more resources needed. There will be less snacks.
- Eco-lit at MTPS: Snack is still happening. They can't take the kids outside because they get bullied by older children. There will need to be a larger budget for environmental resources.
- MTPS just wants about \$100 for volunteer appreciation
- Swag and Banner have been added to the budget.
- There will be only one Scrabble event, especially because half of the OT is going to be preparing for placement in the spring. We are planning on making laminated tiles. \$250
- Literacy award is \$500
- AGM: \$200

Scrabble Scramble:

- Thursday, October 22, 2009 10am – 3:30pm
- Setup starts at 9:30
- We will need to make our own tiles ready for the start of October
- Shall we have tiles of 8.5*11, 8.5*14, 11*14 or 11*11
- We are likely going to have SQUARE tiles

Kids' Event

- Kids' Event is March 19.
- Eco-lit Kids' Event is not going to happen because Woburn JPS has the opportunity to attend our Kids' Event but choose not to. It is unfair of them to demand their own event in terms of our time and resources.
- Last year had a Harry Potter station, relay, experiments and a music station.
- BIOSSA was unorganized and there was not enough room in the lab for the kids. Faisal, please raise these concerns with the BIOSSA team.
- Theme suggestions:
- The Future / Space / Robots / Hi Tech / The Next Generation / Aliens

Misc:

- There is the opportunity of a new partnership with UofT through the concurrent Ed programme. They are interested in what we do and giving us some of their students to fulfill students placements. This would be a guaranteed and regular group of volunteers each term
- Please make sure that your notes are correct in terms of literacy.
- Be likable

Candidates who were executive members of the Frontier College at University of Toronto Scarborough in the previous year are ineligible to apply. Value: \$500. Background Frontier College, founded in 1899 by Alfred Fitzpatrick and a group of university students, is a Canada-wide, volunteer-based, literacy organization. Volunteers teach people to read and write in a nurturing environment favourable to lifelong learning. Frontier College believes in literacy as a right and they work to achieve literacy for all. AT UTSC, Frontier College works with several community partners to provide literacy pro See more of University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) on Facebook. Log In. or. Create New Account. See more of University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) on Facebook. Log In. Forgotten account?Â Campus building in Toronto, Ontario. Always open.