

Jones Library ESL Center Conversation Partner Job Description

Purpose:

- To help adult newcomers in the Amherst community boost their oral English proficiency and gain confidence as English speakers.
- To help newcomers access the information and services they need to live safe and productive lives, and to participate actively in the community during the time they stay here.

Qualifications:

- Fluency in English
- Good listening skills
- Interest in other cultures and sensitivity to cultural differences
- Ability to speak at an easy pace and to articulate clearly
- Patience and flexibility

Duration of Volunteer Commitment: 9-month (or 2-semester) minimum

Start-up Responsibilities:

- Meet with coordinator to choose a student.
- Have an initial meeting with student to arrange weekly schedule, exchange contact info, and to get an idea of student's needs/interests.
- Reserve a weekly time slot on one of the tutoring room schedules (unless you will meet elsewhere).

Tutoring Schedule:

- Meet twice a week for 60-90 minutes in library or other mutually convenient location.
- Be clear and consistent in agreeing upon/communicating about tutoring schedule. (Make sure both you and your student have it in writing.)
- Meet regularly and punctually at agreed-upon meeting times. Contact student if you are unable to meet at regular time or if student does not show up (to find out why). *Contact ESL Coordinator if this happens more than twice in row or if student tells you he/she does not want to continue with tutoring sessions.*
- Reserve your time slot for the tutoring room each month when the new schedule is posted on the door.

Note: It's OK to miss a session because of a vacation, health problem, or other commitment, as long as you let the student know about this in advance, and you **clearly** indicate when you will resume the normal meeting schedule.

Ongoing Tutoring Responsibilities:

- Practice conversation (for ideas, consult the Conversation Partner Guide at <http://www.joneslibrary.org/DocumentCenter/View/305>)
- Answer questions about American culture and help student to navigate through systems and institutions that may be unfamiliar to him/her. (*But please do not conduct financial transactions or access confidential information such as account #s. Note:*

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you may assist a student in learning how to get a driver's permit, but please do not give driving lessons—instead refer the student to a driving school.)

- “Check in” with the ESL Coordinator (visit the office, call in, or leave a note) at least once per semester to update her and/or discuss any needs or problems that come up.
- Notify the ESL Coordinator if:
 - Your student is not attending regular sessions anymore.
 - There is something going on that you do not understand or that makes you uncomfortable.
 - You think you would be more effective in a different tutoring situation.
 - You would like to sign up for training to be an instructional tutor (with a beginning or intermediate-level student).
 - You need a reference.
 - You need to end your volunteer service.

Coordinator: Lynne Weintraub

Phone: 413 259-3093

Email: esl@joneslibrary.org

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 10-2