



## ***A Student Success Leader's Resource***

# **Homework Clubs: How to Set Them Up How to Run Them**

**FRONTIER COLLEGE**

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As part of the Ontario Homework Club Institutes project, Frontier College has also developed the following resources to support Ontario's student success strategy:

- A Tutor's Guide for Supporting Ontario's Student Success Strategy: Reading and Writing with Youth
- Working with Teens to Build Student Success
- How to Train Homework Club Volunteers to Support Ontario's Student Success Strategy
- Final Research Report – The Keys to Success for Setting Up an Effective Homework Club

Frontier College was commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Education to develop these resources.

### **A Student Success Leader's Resource – Homework Clubs: How to Set Them Up/ How to Run Them**

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# How to use this Workbook

This workbook has been written to help Student Success Leaders and teachers in Ontario schools plan and make decisions in order to set up a volunteer-based homework club. The resources and suggestions in this guide have come from the collective knowledge and experience of Frontier College staff as well as teachers, literacy workers and community centre staff who have participated in our conferences and workshops. We hope you find this information helpful.

At the end of each section, there is space for your team to make notes about your decisions. If you have any questions about these materials or any ideas or resources to add, please let us know.

The Appendices contain samples of forms, letters, agendas, contracts and other organizational paperwork. Feel free to adapt these forms to suit the needs of your program.

## **Key Factors for Success**

- Select students who want to participate.
- Start small and build on your successes. Start with realistic goals.
- Match students and tutors. Development of relationships is the key!
- Provide regular support to students and tutors.



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## What is a homework club?

The term “Homework Club” refers to many different kinds of volunteer-based, outside-the-classroom homework support for students. Some examples of successful Homework Club programs:

- Every Tuesday right after school, 20 high school volunteers tutor 25 grade 7/8 students in the school library.
- Tutors from the university work one-to-one with high school students from the basic skills English class. They meet in the school library at various times during the school day.
- Tutors from grade 11 and 12 meet one-to-one with students in grade 9 twice a week during lunch hour.
- Grade 7/8 students travel to the public library to meet with their tutors right after school. The tutors are high school and university students as well as volunteers who have been recruited from the community.
- A community centre operates a “study hour” twice a week for high school students. The students help one another with their work. The same students are also involved as tutors for a homework club serving children in grades 4 – 8.

### When We Say “Homework Club”...

In a **homework club**, all the tutors and students meet as a group. They get together every week at the same time and in the same place.

In a **tutoring program**, each tutor-student pair meets once a week at a consistent time that is convenient for both people.

**Homework clubs** and **tutoring programs** can take place during the school day, after school, in the evening or on the weekend. In both situations, the focus can be homework or reading.

### Notes

## Who will be on your organizing team?

Your organizing team is very important. Without a good one, no club will last for very long. Three or four is a good number of people for a team: responsibilities can be shared yet the size of the team is not cumbersome.

- Think about who you would like to involve. Which other teachers at the school may be interested? Would the school librarian be interested? Would the parent leaders in your school be interested?
- There are a number of roles that people can have on your organizing team. Some people may only have an advisory role, while others will help with training or supporting your programs.
- A representative from each “stakeholder” organization must be involved in the decision-making for your program. For example, in addition to the lead program organizer(s), you may need a parent, a teacher and a staff member from the community centre.
- To ensure your team works well together, everyone needs a clear idea of their roles.

Look for enthusiastic, community-minded people who like to get things done!

### Notes

## What will the goal of your homework club be?

Decide who your program will help. What do you want to achieve? Do not try to be all things to all people.

- Concentrate on a certain age group (grades 7 – 8 or 9 – 10 or 9 – 12) with a specific focus (homework completion, reading support, math help, or helping students to prepare for the grade 10 literacy test).
- Later, if you have the resources, you can expand your program.

Select a name for your program. You may wish to ask your students and tutors to give the club an original name. Some possibilities are:

- Homework Club
- After School Tutoring Program
- Study Group
- Power Hour

What will the philosophy of your club be?

- Frontier College follows a “student-centred” approach to learning.
- Other organizations may follow a curriculum-based approach.

### **“Community Assets” Assessment**

Look at the community where you would like to set up your homework club. Take stock of the resources that can support your club. Are there other homework clubs or after-school programs in the community? Which local businesses are supportive of community activities? Where are the recreation centres, libraries and schools located? Is there a college or university campus nearby?

Find out about the needs, interests and resources that the students will bring to your program. This will help you to figure out how to best work with the students from your school,. Talk with students, their parents and your colleagues to gather ideas about what type of program they would like to participate in. You may be surprised by what you hear!

### **Notes**

## Where will your homework club be located?

Select a location. Possibilities could be:

- Your school
- The local community centre
- A common room of a housing complex
- The library

Ensure that the location

- Is accessible to both students and tutors
- Is welcoming and comfortable
- Has ample room
- Can easily be set up with tables and chairs
- Is easy to supervise. Onsite supervision helps to develop a quality program and ensures the safety of tutors and students
- Has few distractions
- Has easy access to other resources (books, computers, chalk boards, etc.)
- Has washrooms available
- Is safe for student and tutors to travel to and from the club
- Is safe when students and tutors meet

### Notes

## What time will you hold your homework club?

The time you pick for your program will depend on the availability of students and tutors:

- Programs with older high school students or university students as tutors are often scheduled during the school day or right after school.
- Programs with adult tutors usually take place in the early evening so that tutors may come directly after work.
- Often the hardest to reach students – older high school students who are struggling readers – will participate only in a program that runs during the school day.
- English as a Second Language students may be more willing to meet with tutors after school.

Decide how many times a week your tutors and students will meet – once a week, twice a week or even daily. The schedule depends on:

- How much support you can give the program
- The commitment and ability to meet of the students and tutors

Develop a routine for your homework club. For example, if your tutors and students meet for 85 minutes, each session should include:

- Snack (10 minutes)
- Homework help (55 minutes)
- A group activity (20 minutes)

Plan some group activities for your club.

- Organize a launch. This will help everyone feel they are part of something important and provide momentum for your program. (See Appendix 15 for a sample launch agenda and group activity.)
- Hold games nights, group enrichment activities and/or organizing field trips. These activities will enrich everyone's experience and help with motivation and commitment.
- Organize a final celebration where tutors and students receive certificates that acknowledge everyone's hard work.

For new programs, start with a 10 week program involving 10 students and 10 tutors. Let everyone know that you are running a pilot project. Tell everyone that you want to learn from your experiences and build on your successes!

### Notes

## How will you reach out to and register your students?

Develop a set of criteria to help you select your students. It is important that your organizing team agrees on the criteria before you begin outreach to students. Criteria may include:

- First come, first registered
- Learning needs
- Commitment

When you are setting up a new homework club, the desire to reach students with the greatest needs must be balanced by the practicality of including students who are able to commit to the program.

Especially in the beginning, it is important to select students who will attend the program regularly. As the club becomes more established, you can tinker with the mix.

Start small. Recruit 10 students who really *want* to be part of the homework club and who can make a commitment to the entire time of the program. Recruit students by:

- Asking for referrals from colleagues and then inviting these students to join the homework club. Be sure to select only willing participants
- Talking with parents and then inviting the students to participate
- Posting flyers in the school and around the neighbourhood
- Giving presentations in classes to explain the benefits of participating in the club. Tutors are often the best spokespeople for these presentations

If you have more than 10 students keen to participate, start a waiting list. Let the students who are registered know that you have a list of students who wish to join the club.

Obtain a commitment from your students. The older the student, the more important this is! Parents can encourage senior elementary students to participate in a homework club, but high school students need to decide for themselves whether they will participate.

When speaking with your students, ask them why they want to join the homework club. Get a commitment from them to:

- Be punctual and attend consistently
- Bring homework
- Work hard
- Learn (and have fun!!)

Include these responsibilities on the student registration form. (See Appendices 8 and 9 for sample forms.)

You will need parental permission for students to participate in your program. This applies whether the club takes place after school or during school hours. Asking parents to fill in a registration form for their child will also help to get a commitment from the parents to help their child attend consistently and punctually.

When you send the form to parents, include a letter that describes the structure of your program (time, place, start date, end date, etc.) and provides an on-site contact number in case of emergency.

For any after-school homework club, it is important to send a note home to the parents to inform them of the final celebration. This important letter serves two purposes. First, it ensures that the parents know that this is the last time the students and tutors will be meeting. Second, it invites parents to come to the celebration to acknowledge all the hard work of the students and tutors. (See Appendix 10 for a sample letter to parents.)

### **Notes**

## How will you recruit your tutors?

Start by recruiting 10 tutors who are keen and who can commit to the program for the duration. Once you decide on the goal, time and location of the homework club, this will help you to determine the type of volunteers you will want to recruit. You will find below a description of 5 types of volunteers, and the advantages, challenges and recruitment methods for each group.

<b><i>High school students</i></b>	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They have a lot of energy.</li> <li>• They can be great role models.</li> <li>• They can be keen to tutor younger students to gain experience, to fulfill their community service requirements and to add to their resumes.</li> <li>• An added benefit of matching high school students with younger students is that the skills of <i>both</i> sets of students improve.</li> <li>• Homework clubs that take place in a senior elementary school at the end of the school day work well for high school tutors. The teenagers can travel together, volunteer together and leave together.</li> </ul>
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They need to work in a structured homework club where onsite adult support is available.</li> <li>• You must get parental permission for volunteers under the age of 18. (See Appendix 11 for sample parental permission letter and form.)</li> <li>• Timing. Evening programs may not work well for high school volunteers.</li> </ul>
How to recruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask experienced tutors (or those who have volunteered in a similar program) to help find more volunteers. Vice principals, guidance counsellors or co-op teachers can also be helpful.</li> <li>• Give classroom presentations to high school classes.</li> </ul>

<b><i>University and college students</i></b>	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are more mature than high school students and therefore need less onsite supervision.</li> <li>• They have a lot of energy.</li> <li>• They are great role models.</li> <li>• They are keen to tutor in order to build their resumes, gain experience and obtain references.</li> <li>• They are often flexible about the times during the day that they are able to tutor. (See Appendix 2 for a form to determine availability of volunteers.)</li> </ul>
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are only available from September to early April.</li> </ul>
How to recruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post flyers on campus, use the campus website or participate in the “clubs day” and the career and volunteer fairs held on campus.</li> <li>• Approach the faculty members and heads of college or university. Talk to faculties such as education, social work and journalism. But don’t exclude other faculties such as medicine or law, especially if you have contacts.</li> <li>• The most effective method is to ask students you recruit to invite their friends to participate!</li> </ul>

<b><i>Community volunteers</i></b>	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They fit well with homework clubs in the early evening or on weekends.</li> <li>• They are available throughout the school year.</li> <li>• They often volunteer for several years.</li> </ul>
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlike students, who can be recruited as a group, community volunteers are recruited one at a time.</li> </ul>
How to recruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use posters, advertisements in local media, notices at volunteer centres, service clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.) or seniors' centres, announcements at local religious places or through personal networks.</li> </ul>

<b><i>Parents (and older siblings)</i></b>	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They can have a strong commitment to a homework club. Often, they continue to tutor even after their child/sibling is no longer involved.</li> <li>• Parents can reinforce literacy skills throughout the week with their children.</li> </ul>
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parent/child dynamic can get in the way of successful tutoring.</li> </ul>
How to recruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you are recruiting and selecting students for a homework club, ask parents or older siblings if they would be willing to volunteer or support the program.</li> </ul>

<b><i>Employees of local businesses</i></b>	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They can be ideal role models for students.</li> <li>• They are an untapped resource. These professionals would otherwise not volunteer because of time constraints. However, because the club is held in the workplace, they can be excellent and committed tutors.</li> <li>• They can meet with their students throughout the school year.</li> </ul>
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding a business that is within walking distance (or within a short transit distance) from a school.</li> <li>• Negotiations to set up a club in a workplace can take a long time.</li> </ul>
How to recruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the human resources person or a contact in the workplace.</li> </ul>

### **Manulife Homework Club**

For the past seven years, a homework club has run in the downtown Toronto office of Manulife Financial, a Canadian-based financial services company. Manulife employees tutor grade 7/8 school students one afternoon a week from 4:00 to 5:30 pm.

Manulife encourages its employees to volunteer their time (they often return to work after the club has finished) and provides a space for tutoring. Manulife supplies snacks and allows access to its resources (computers, internet, photocopier and library). More importantly, Manulife provides an enriching environment for students and tutors alike.

Remember to think about other roles – besides tutoring – that volunteers can fill in your club. These include:

- Providing snacks
- Doing outreach
- Holding fund raisers
- Being storytellers
- Taking photographs
- Supervising field trips
- Running enrichment activities
- Assisting with group activities

### **Notes**

## How will you orient, interview and screen your tutors?

Develop a volunteer orientation guide for your tutors, which describes your program and summarizes the responsibilities of tutors, students and parents. (See Appendix 4 for an overview of topics that you may wish to include in your Volunteer Orientation Guide.)

You may wish to have a group orientation or speak with your prospective tutors one-to-one over the phone or in person. This orientation should include:

- Information about why the program is needed
- The logistics of the program
- The roles and responsibilities of the tutors

Interview each prospective tutor. (See Appendix 3 for a sample list of tutor interview questions.) An interview will help you learn about the strengths and interests of your tutors, which will assist in matching them with students. It will also help you support the tutors. An interview will also ensure that the tutors:

- Are able to make a commitment to your program
- Have the values necessary for your program
- Understand the goals
- Are aware of the program's logistics (location, requirements, etc.)
- Understand their responsibilities

As well, to ensure that your tutors understand and can commit to their role, list their responsibilities on your volunteer form. (See Appendix 5 for a sample Tutor Registration form.)

### Screening Volunteers

Because your tutors will be working with children and youth, it is important to screen them. Your screening process should include:

- An orientation
- A one-to-one interview
- Two character reference checks
- A police check

The process for police records checks varies throughout the province. Your local police force and school administration should be able to help you with this process. Frontier College does not conduct police checks on individuals under the age of 18. For more information about police records checks please visit <http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/PRCBrochureEng.pdf>

(See Appendices 12 and 13 for forms, questions and letters used to screen volunteers.)

**Notes**

## How will you train your tutors?

The quality of your program will depend a lot upon the orientation and training that your tutors receive.

The amount of training needed will vary.

- If you are able to meet regularly with your tutors after they have been matched with your students, then the initial training can only be 1½ to 2 hours long.
- If you see your tutors only occasionally, then the initial training needs to cover more material and should be as long as 4 hours.
- If your tutors are high school students, the initial training session needs to be short and should focus on a few key tutoring techniques. You will also need to provide a lot of on-going support and on-site supervision.
- If your tutors are university students or professionals from the community, it may make sense to have a longer initial training session to allow for in-depth discussion. You may not need to provide as much on-site supervision and follow up support.

Most programs train their tutors after the interview and before they are matched with the students. However, in some programs, the tutors are trained after they have met with the students for a few weeks. The major benefit of this approach is that tutors have specific questions about their students and have a context for the discussion. However more time should then be spent in the interview to prepare tutors for the first time they meet with their students.

Hold a training session focussing on the specific learning needs of the students of your homework club. (See Appendix 14 for a sample training agenda.) The key topics to cover in any training are:

- Introductions
- Program structure and logistics (times, location, etc.)
- Volunteer commitment, roles and responsibilities
- Tutoring strategies
- Scenarios (“what if ...?”)

### Notes

## How will you match your tutors and students?

A tutor can be matched with one, two or three students. If a tutor is working with two or more students, it is important that the students have similar learning needs and that they can work well together rather than competing for the attention of the tutor. (See Appendices 1 and 2 for forms to keep track of student and tutor matches.)

There is no magic formula for finding the best match between tutors and students. The guidelines that you use need to be consistent and should be agreed upon by the members of your organizing team. You can match your tutors and students based on:

- Interests (for example, sports or music)
- Needs (for example, place high-needs students with experienced tutors)
- Role models (for example, match male tutors with male students)

### Matching vs. Drop-in Programs

It is much better to match tutors with specific students rather than having a drop-in program.

Matching helps to ensure a commitment from both tutors and students. It also supports the development of the all-important learning relationship between student and tutor.

Drop-in programs tend to succeed only when the students are already a highly cohesive group and they are highly motivated to learn before they become part of a homework club.

### Notes

## How will you support and engage your students?

It's about relationships! Make sure you get to know your students so that you can provide encouragement and advice. Speak with students who are not attending to find out why they have stopped coming.

Involve the students in decision making and supporting the club.

- Ask for their feedback on group activities.
- Invite them to design and implement group activities.
- Think about ways that they can share their talents and strengths with the other students and the tutors.

Give rewards, such as certificates, membership cards or formal letters that acknowledge their participation. Give 'on-track' rewards to students who are working hard or attending consistently. But be very cautious when setting up a reward system so that it is seen to be fair.

Plan special group activities, such as:

- Parties/celebrations
- Board game days
- Watching movies based on books
- Field trips
- Enrichment activities

Provide snacks for students (and tutors). Healthy snacks ensure that everyone has the energy to have fun and learn.

Emphasize confidentiality. No learning can take place unless the relationship between tutor and student is based on mutual respect, which includes the right to privacy. If your volunteers are high school students who tutor their peers, it is extremely important that you discuss the importance of confidentiality and respect. Because tutors and students share the same hallways, it is important everything that transpires in the program remains private. (See Appendix 16 for a sample student-tutor contract. This contract can help facilitate discussions between your tutors and students about their roles and responsibilities.)

Develop a set of rules for the club. Ask tutors and students what they believe the rules for behaviour in the club should be. Post these rules in a prominent place. Some examples:

- Respect – respect other students, tutors and the location
- Come to learn
- Have fun
- Be on time
- Bring homework
- Do not disrupt others

Homework clubs can break down if students are disruptive or behave inappropriately. When you are organizing your homework club, establish a process for dealing with disruptive students. Some clubs use a system involving a verbal warning, a written warning and then expulsion from the club. Others use a “three strikes and you’re out” approach.

**Notes**

## How will you support your tutors?

Support is the key to keeping a homework club running smoothly. Half of the work involved in ensuring a successful homework club takes place after the club is launched.

### Have organizers onsite

They can help to:

- Supervise the club
- Solve problems as they occur
- Encourage and assist tutors (and students)

### Provide ongoing support for tutors

It's about relationships! Make sure you get to know your tutors. Talk with volunteers regularly about their tutoring experience. This can be done by telephone, by email and/or in person. Ask tutors:

- What they are doing with their students
- Whether they have any questions
- Whether they need resources
- Whether they are having difficulties meeting with their students
- (For tutors who are not attending the program) Why they have stopped coming

Hold regular group meetings with tutors. These meetings can either be quick “check-ins” after the homework club meets every week or more formal meetings held once a month at a convenient time (lunch hours work well for high school/university students and workplace volunteers). At these meetings, help tutors to:

- Discuss what is working and what is not working
- Brainstorm solutions to any problems
- Share resources
- Generate new ideas for the club
- Become involved in the decision making for the club

Hold additional training sessions for tutors if appropriate.

Hold a volunteer appreciation party to give tutors positive feedback. Hand out certificates and provide letters of reference for tutors.

Occasionally, some people may not be appropriate volunteers for your program (for example, if they are disruptive or behave inappropriately). These volunteers should be asked to leave your program. Be proactive in managing your volunteers. If you would like more information (or training) about volunteer management, contact the nearest volunteer centre.

**Notes**

## How will you evaluate your program?

There are many reasons why evaluating a homework club is important:

- To determine if you have met your goals
- To celebrate successes (which will ensure continuity)
- To find out how the club can be improved
- To engage students and tutors in the club
- To show funders the benefits of the club
- To share knowledge with other groups who would like to start similar clubs

During the homework club, talk with tutors, students, other teachers and parents to obtain their feedback. Listen to what they have to say. Try not to be defensive.

Keep a record of stories. Anecdotal evidence is useful for funders and other supporters. Take photographs (after you receive parental permission).

Ask tutors and students to keep samples of the work they do together.

Keep an attendance record. This is the first indication of success. (See Appendices 6 and 7 for sample sign-in sheets or weekly attendance forms.)

Do an assessment of the students' homework and study skills at the beginning and the end of the club.

Contact tutors or students who have left the program to ask why they stopped coming.

At the end of the program, distribute questionnaires or hold discussion groups with students, tutors, parents and other teachers to obtain their feedback. You will receive more feedback from interviews but the feedback may be more honest if people can fill in questionnaires anonymously. (See Appendices 17, 18 and 19 for sample evaluation questionnaires.) Ask questions about:

- How to improve the program
- What the participants (students, tutors, parents, teachers) learned during the club

### Notes



# Appendices

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## Appendix 1: Tutor-Student Contact List

*This is a contact list for a homework club based in a senior elementary school. In this example, the tutors are from a high school and the students are in grade 7. For student safety, this list should be shared only among the program coordinators.*

### Sunrise Homework Club Contact List as of *DATE*

<b>Sunset High School</b>	<b>Sunrise Senior Elementary School</b>
Name of teacher contact	Name of teacher
Telephone number	Telephone number
Email address	Email address
Fax number	Fax number
Street address	Street address

<b>Tutor</b>	<b>Student</b>
Tutor's name, telephone number and email	Student's name, grade and teacher
Tutor's name, telephone number and email	Student's name, grade and teacher
Tutor's name, telephone number and email	Student's name, grade and teacher
Tutor's name, telephone number and email	Student's name, grade and teacher
Tutor's name, telephone number and email	Student's name, grade and teacher
Tutor's name, telephone number and email	Student's name, grade and teacher
Tutor's name, telephone number and email	Student's name, grade and teacher
Tutor's name, telephone number and email	Student's name, grade and teacher

## Appendix 2: Tutor Availability Form

*This form is used with university student volunteers who tutor senior elementary school or high school students during the school day. It gathers information about tutors' availability. This form is given to tutors along with the Tutor Registration Form (Appendix 5) and the Character Reference Form (Appendix 12).*

### Sunrise School Tutoring Time Slots – 2006

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any preferences about which grade you will tutor?

No       Yes – Describe:

Is there anything we should know when we match you with a student?

Please tell us when you are available. Mark your preferences 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, etc.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:50 – 9:50 am					
9:40 – 10:30 am					
10:30 – 11:30 am					
1:00 – 1:50 pm					
1:50 – 2:40 pm					
2:40 – 3:30 pm					

Thank you!

## Appendix 3: Tutor Interview Questions

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### Program Information

Explain your program, describe the community and the needs of the students and outline the volunteer responsibilities.

### Logistics

1. Are you able to volunteer for the entire length of the program?
2. Will you be able to attend regularly?
3. Are you able to attend the training session?
4. Do have any questions about the program or your responsibilities?
5. Do you have any questions about our screening process (police records check, character reference checks, etc.)?
6. Do you have any questions about the logistics of this program?

### Getting to Know your Volunteers

1. Why do you want to be a tutor with our program?
2. What work, volunteer or personal experiences have you had that would enable you to be an effective tutor?
3. If we were to call one of your friends and ask them what kind of a person you are, what would they say?
4. What challenges do you think you might encounter as a tutor?
5. How would you make sure that you always take into account the needs of your student?

## Appendix 4: Volunteer Orientation Guide

*Your volunteer orientation guide may include these topics. It should only be 3 - 4 pages long. This guide should supplement – not replace – a one-to-one or group orientation for tutors.*

---

### Goal of your homework club

- Describe the purpose of your club (for example, to provide a safe learning place for students in grades 7 – 8 living in the Sunrise community)
- Articulate the philosophy of your club. What is important to you? (for example, building community, developing students' self-esteem, students' academic improvement, helping students complete homework)

### Overall description of your homework club

- Summarize the structure and schedule of the club
- Describe how students are selected and registered; how tutors are recruited; and how students and tutors are matched.

### Benefits of your homework club

- Describe why your homework club benefits this particular group of students (for example, poor school testing results or the lack of support when children in the community have learning difficulties)

### Homework club schedule

- List important dates for the homework club including:
  - Launch date
  - Dates for group activities
  - Holidays
  - Final celebrations

### Roles and responsibilities of students

- Describe the responsibilities of the students (to be punctual, to attend regularly, to bring homework, to not disturb others)
- Describe how you ensure student safety (tutors meet with students only during club hours, no exchange of personal contact information without parent permission, policy of “no closed doors”)

### Roles and responsibilities of tutors

- Describe the qualifications and time commitment required.
- Describe the role of the tutors.
- Describe the limitations on meetings/communication between tutors and students (for safety reasons)

### Roles and responsibilities of your organizing team

- Describe your role in setting up and supporting the homework club.

**Roles and responsibilities of other partners**

- Describe the roles of other community partners (parents, library, other schools, etc.) who are supporting your homework club.

**Successes and challenges of your homework club**

- Describe the successes of the club (for example, anecdotal information about how students have benefited)
- You may also wish to describe some of the challenges of the club (for example, attendance, behaviour problems or lack of motivation)

## Appendix 5: Tutor Registration Form

*This two-page form gathers contact information and matching information from tutors. It also summarizes the expectations of tutors. This form is given to tutors along with the Tutor Availability Form (Appendix 2) and the Character Reference Form (Appendix 12).*

### Sunset Collegiate Institute Volunteer Information – 2006

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Languages (spoken and written) \_\_\_\_\_

I volunteered in the Sunrise Homework Club

last year       two years ago       this will be my first time

I will

- Attend the volunteer training on Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> from 3:30 to 5:00 pm at Sunset High School
- Attend the launch of the homework club on Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 to 5:00 pm at Sunrise School
- Sign in the record book before each session
- Meet with my student every Thursday from October 3<sup>rd</sup> to December 5<sup>th</sup> from 3:50 to 4:50 pm
- Inform NAME OF VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR (and, if possible, my student) if I am not able to attend
- Keep in touch regularly with NAME OF VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date







## Appendix 8: Student Registration Form for an “In-school” Program

*This two-page form is designed for a homework club that runs in a school during school hours. The letter describes the program and obtains permission from parents. The form (see next page) should be filled in by students.*

---

October 2006

Dear Parent,

I would like to match your son/daughter with a tutor to help your son/daughter improve his/her writing ability.

Your son/daughter will meet with a tutor once a week during school hours in the library at our school. There will be approximately 10 students from our school who will participate in the program. The tutors come from Sunset University. Together, tutors and students will read books, write stories and work on homework to help the students improve their reading and writing skills.

Tutors will start coming to our school during the week of October 21<sup>st</sup>. The program will run until the end of March (except during exams and holidays).

If you would like your son/daughter to participate in this program, please sign the bottom part of this form and return it to TEACHER’S NAME. If you have any questions, please call me at 393-0000.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME  
YOUR SCHOOL

\* \* \* \* \*

October 2006

I give permission for my son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ to meet with a tutor at SCHOOL.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix 8 continued

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### Sunset High School Student Registration Form October 2006

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Home Room Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ [ ] male [ ] female

Languages spoken: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies or medical conditions: [ ] No [ ] Yes – Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

Why would you like to be part of this program?

What are your favourite subjects in school?

What would you like help with?

To be part of this program, it is important that you:

- Arrive on time and meet with your tutor every week
- Bring materials to work on with your tutor
- Learn and have fun!

I understand and agree to my responsibilities in this program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix 9: Student Registration Form for an After-school Program

*This two-page form is designed for an after-school homework club for students in grade 7 and 8. This homework club is based in a business. The letter describes the program and invites parents to the launch. The form (see next page), which registers students and obtains parental permission, should be filled in by parents.*

---

October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Dear Parent,

Your child has been selected to participate in the Working World Homework Club. Please sign the form on the next page to allow your son/daughter to participate in this club.

There will be approximately 25 grade 7/8 students from Sunrise School who will participate in the program. Students will meet one-to-one with volunteer tutors. Together, students and tutors will read books, write stories, work on homework, review class work, study for tests and do other kinds of language-based activities to prepare students for high school.

The club will be launched on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006, and will continue until May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Students and tutors will meet every Tuesday from 4:15 to 5:30 p.m. (except during exams and holidays). They will meet at Working World, which is located at 1 Bay Street East.

Each week, your child will walk from his/her school bus stop to Working World. Teachers will not accompany students as they walk to Working World. Your child will be responsible for walking unsupervised to Working World and for arriving by 4:15 p.m. When the students arrive at Working World each week, they will receive a snack.

The tutors and teachers will not accompany students as they leave the homework club at 5:30 p.m. It is your responsibility to ensure your child travels home safely from Working World. Either your child can walk home unsupervised or you can pick your child up at Working World.

I hope that you can come to the launch of this homework club to meet your child's tutor. The launch will take place on Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> from 4:15 to 5:15 p.m. If you have any questions, please call me at 999-0000.

Sincerely,

Don Fantastic  
Principal, Sunrise School

## Appendix 9 continued

---

### Sunrise School Working World Homework Club Parental Permission Form - October 2006

I give permission for my son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in the Working World Homework Club.

I understand that my child will walk to Working World unsupervised from his/her school bus stop every Tuesday from November 5<sup>th</sup>, until May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2007. My child is responsible for arriving at Working World by 4:15 p.m. each Tuesday.

The Working World Homework Club will finish each Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. At the end of each homework club session:

- I allow my child to walk to home from Working World unsupervised  
OR  
 I will arrange for someone to pick up my child from Working World.

From time to time, members of the homework club may be filmed, taped or photographed.

- I allow my child to be filmed, taped or photographed  
OR  
 I do not allow my child to be filmed, taped or photographed.

In case of emergency, I can be reached at this phone number \_\_\_\_\_ on Tuesdays from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

I plan on attending the launch of the homework club.

My child has allergies or medical conditions:

- No     Yes – Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

## Appendix 10: Invitation for Parents to Final Celebration

*This letter invites parents to the final celebration of a homework club so they can recognize their child's efforts. It also informs them of the final date that their child will be meeting with a tutor.*

---

May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007

Dear Parent,

You and your family are invited to the final celebration for the Working World Homework Club.

Date: Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>

Time: 4:15 – 5:30 p.m.

Location: Working World – 1 Bay Street East

This celebration marks the end of Working World Homework Club and is the last time this year that your child will visit with his or her tutor.

All the students and tutors will receive certificates to acknowledge the work that they have done together over the year. There will be pizza and refreshments as well as a demonstration from Mad Science.

Please let me know if you are able to go to this final celebration so we can order enough pizza. I can be reached at 999-0000.

Thank you for your support of the Working World Homework Club this year. I hope to see you on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,

Don Fantastic  
Principal, Sunrise School

## Appendix 11: Parental Permission for Tutors

*This two-page letter is designed for an after-school homework club involving tutors younger than 18. The letter describes the program. The form (see next page) obtains parental permission the tutors to participate.*

---

September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Dear Parent,

Please sign the form on the next page to give your son/daughter permission to volunteer at Sunrise School this fall.

A homework club for grade 8 students at Sunrise School will start on Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> and will operate every Thursday from 3:50 to 5:00 p.m. until December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006. This homework club is supported by your school.

Your son/daughter will receive a letter of recommendation from your school as well as a certificate for his/her participation as a volunteer in this club.

In case of emergency, you can reach your son/daughter until 4:30 p.m. at Sunrise School by calling (416) 444-0000. When you call, please ask to be transferred to the library. For your information, Sunrise School is located at 4 Sunrise Square, on Sunrise Road.

If you have any questions about this program, please contact me at abc@email.ca or at (416) 999-0000.

Sincerely,

COORDINATOR  
Sunrise Homework Club

## Appendix 11 continued

---

### Sunrise Homework Club Permission Form – September 2006

I give permission for my son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ to volunteer as a tutor at Sunrise School.

I understand that the homework club will start on October 10<sup>th</sup> and will continue until December 5<sup>th</sup>. The homework club will run from 3:50 to 5:00 p.m. each Thursday during that time.

I understand that I am responsible for the safe travel of my child to and from this homework club.

From time to time, members of the homework club may be filmed, taped or photographed.

I allow my child to be filmed, taped or photographed.

OR

I do not allow my child to be filmed, taped or photographed.

In case of emergency, I can be reached at this phone number \_\_\_\_\_ on Thursdays from 3:50 to 5:00 p.m.

My child has allergies or medical conditions:

No     Yes – Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

## Appendix 12: Character Reference Form

*This form collects names and contact information for character references. It is given to tutors along with the Tutor Registration Form (Appendix 5) and the Tutor Availability Form (Appendix 2).*

### Sunrise Homework Club Character References

To ensure student safety, we check tutors' character references. Please give us the names of two people you would like to use as character references. We will call each reference by telephone before you are matched with your student. Please tell your references that you have given us their names and that they should expect a call from us.

Character references can be teachers or employers who have known you for more than two years. Family members cannot be character references.

#### Reference 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Reference 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) \_\_\_\_\_

I allow the Sunrise Homework Club to contact these people to do a reference check on me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

## Appendix 13: Questions for Character References

*These are the questions to ask character references. Before asking these questions, give references some information about the homework club.*

---

### Sunrise Homework Club – Character Reference

Name of volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you known this person?
  
2. What is your relationship to him/her?
  
3. Does he/she have the time, patience and reliability to work with children or teenagers  
 Yes                       No
  
4. What strengths does he/she have that would help in this position?
  
5. Is he/she reliable and punctual?                       Yes                       No
  
6. Has he/she ever worked one-to-one with another person in the course of your relationship?  
 No                       Yes – describe:
  
7. Is there anything you feel we should be aware of before placing this person with a student? Do you have any concerns about him/her working with a student?  
 No                       Yes – describe:
  
8. Please make any additional comments that you feel may be helpful.

Reference Taken By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 14: Training Agenda

*Adapt this agenda to reflect the strengths and needs of your students and tutors. For more information on training tutors, please see How to Train Homework Club Volunteers to Support Ontario's Student Success Strategy. This guide is available on the Ministry of Education website.*

---

### Your School Homework Club Training November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006

#### Agenda

- Introductions
- Program Description and Volunteer Responsibilities
- Tutoring Techniques

*Choose the techniques that best meet  
the needs of your students!*

#### Learning to Read

- Language Experience
- Word Attack Skills
- Reading Aloud Together
- Homework Strategies

#### Reading to Learn

- 4 R's of Reading
- The Writing Process
- Homework Strategies

- Scenarios
- Other Learning Activities
- Evaluation and Next Steps

## Appendix 15: Agenda for Launch

*Adapt this agenda to meet the needs of your homework club. A quiz (see next page) or other fun, non-competitive activity helps tutors and students to get to know each other. When tutors and students are finished, take the activity up as a group.*

---

### **Your School Launch of Sunrise Homework Club November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

#### **Agenda**

- Welcome
- Matching of tutors and students
- Pizza
- A few words from:
  - The organizing committee
  - Other partner organizations
- Group activity (fun quiz)
- Tour of building (if the club is located outside of the school)
- Group photo
- Next week....

## Appendix 15 continued

*Adapt the questions in this quiz to the needs and interests of your students.*

---

### Sunrise Homework Club Quiz

Welcome to the launch of the Sunrise Homework Club. We hope you and your tutor have fun completing this quiz. We will take the answers up later as a group.

1. What's the world's largest island and smallest continent?
2. How many degrees is half a turn?
3. What city is home to the Eiffel Tower?
4. What city would you visit to see Buckingham Palace?
5. What country opened the first public library?
6. Where will you float better, in salt water or fresh water?
7. Does water expand, contract or remain the same when it freezes?
8. Which of these letters have a line of symmetry? G, A, O, F, L
9. Is a cello a stringed instrument or a wind instrument?
10. What would you like to be when you grow up?

---

Answers (to be taken up with the group)

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. Australia   | 6. Saltwater |
| 2. 180 degrees | 7. Expand    |
| 3. Paris       | 8. A, O      |
| 4. London      | 9. Stringed  |
| 5. Scotland    | 10. ...      |

## Appendix 16: Student-Tutor Contract

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### Sunrise Homework Club Student-Tutor Contract - October 2006 to May 2007

#### Student Declaration

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
have joined this Homework Club because:

---



---



---

As a member of this Homework Club, my  
goals are to:

---



---



---

#### Tutor Declaration

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have  
joined this Homework Club because:

---



---



---

As a member of this Homework Club, my  
goals are to:

---



---



---

To help us to reach our goals, we will:

- **Be punctual.** We will meet 4:00 pm every Tuesday.
- **Be prepared.** We will bring homework and other materials to work on together every week.
- **Be quiet and courteous to others.** We understand that we meet in an office building where people work.
- **Be committed and work hard.** We are here to learn together about school and the world.
- **Have fun together while we learn.** Learning is an important part of life – everyone learns every day.

#### AGREED TO IN THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 17: Evaluation Questionnaire for Students

---

### Sunrise Homework Club Feedback from Students – May 2007

1. What did you learn in this club?
2. What did you like best about meeting with your tutor?
3. What did you dislike about meeting with your tutor?
4. How did this homework club help you with your schoolwork?
5. How would you improve this program for next year?
6. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the club?



## Appendix 18 continued

### Section B – Your relationship with your student

1. How many times (approximately) did you meet with your student?
2. Did you meet with your student regularly? Why or why not?
3. What did you work on most often with your student?
4. What was the biggest success you had with your student?
5. What was the biggest challenge with your student?
6. Did your student benefit from your tutoring? How do you know?
7. Did you benefit from this experience? If so, how?



## Appendix 20: About Frontier College

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### **Frontier College** **Literacy. Learning for Life.**

Frontier College is Canada's original literacy organization. Founded in 1899 by a small group of university students, Frontier College began by sending student volunteers to the frontiers of Canada: logging camps, mining towns and rail gangs. They laboured alongside workers during the day and taught in the evenings and on weekends.

Today, we work with Canadians who have little or no access to other educational opportunities or who need extra learning support to reach their goals. Our volunteers serve on Canada's "new frontiers" – inner-city schools and streets, public housing sites, farms, prisons and reserves.

Low literacy skills are directly linked to poverty, poor health and high unemployment. Literacy is more than just the ability to read and write. It's the ability to understand the printed word and to put it to use. It's about strengthening culture, achieving goals, gaining knowledge and recognizing potential. It's about succeeding in today's world.

Forty-two percent of adult Canadians have trouble with everyday tasks that involve reading. That's millions of Canadians who are not reaching their potential.

Literacy is an essential skill in today's world. At Frontier College, we believe it's a fundamental right. Frontier College provides access to this right by reaching out to people across Canada, responding to their learning needs and encouraging lifelong learning. We achieve our mission for literacy through:

#### **What We Do**

- Volunteer mobilization
- Youth leadership development
- Community capacity building

#### **Homework Club Institutes Project**

In April 2005, the Ontario Ministry of Education provided funding to Frontier College to set up the Homework Club Institutes project. Through this project, Frontier College established demonstration Homework Clubs; conducted research on how Homework Clubs benefit students; organized training workshops for community organizations; and developed resources for tutors and homework club organizers.

## Appendix 21: Testimonials

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June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006

I think this resource manual is great. It is appropriate in length and explains all aspects needed to set up the homework support. I particularly like the suggestion of a target group and a fixed period of time. Starting small is key to launching any new program opportunity. The appendices lend themselves to changes that make them fit each school or board. I have had many requests for homework clubs and even more so for materials to use within them to support skill-building and learning strategies with at risk students.

Domenica Leone  
Vice-Principal of Programs - Student Success Leader  
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board  
Hamilton

March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006

The Organizer's Workbook is a gem for all those who are interested in a foolproof and easy-to-implement way of setting up and running a homework club. The workbook guides you through the step-by-step process from getting the right people on board to recruiting, training, and encouraging volunteer tutors. What I like the most about it is the organization of the resources; each step in the guide creates the backbone for the next. Before you know it, you have a fully operational homework club!

The workbook is truly designed with the tutor and student in mind and provides the organizer with tools and suggestions on volunteer/student management. For example, at the back of the workbook, the organizer can find a myriad of useful and easily reproduced forms and resources that save time and lead the organizer to the next stage of the program – longevity.

Neda Skific-Lee  
Program Manager, Children, Youth, Adults  
Harbourfront Community Centre  
Toronto

February 27th, 2006

The Working Women Community Centre is incredibly grateful to Frontier College and their fabulous Homework Club Guide! Working Women's *On Your Mark* Tutoring Program serves over 100 students a year. [We have] over 80 tutors [in] an incredibly busy program with which the guide has helped immensely. The guide is easy to follow and provides many useful forms and letters which I was able to revise to fit my program. Most important in running a homework club, and expertly covered in the guide, is volunteer management, from ensuring that the volunteers get the best experience to ensuring that the program has proper screening of tutors. In our fifth year of running the program I still refer to the guide as to how I can improve all aspects of running a homework club!

Sonia Neves  
Project Coordinator - *On Your Mark* Tutoring Program  
Working Women Community Centre  
Toronto