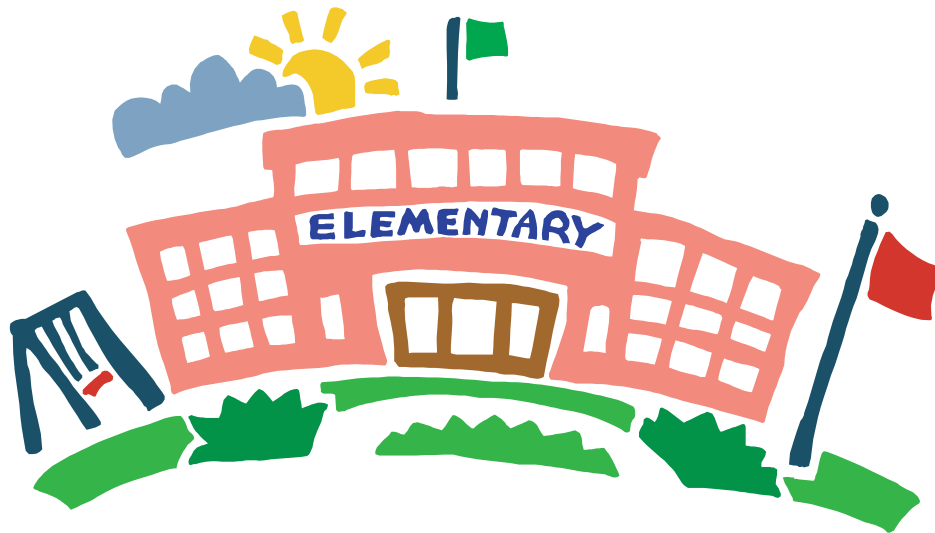


Adopt-A-School



Handbook

Faith Network of the East Bay, Inc.
2633 Telegraph Ave. #409
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 836-5100
www.faith-network.com

“Seek the shalom of the city...” - Jer. 29:7



Dear Community Leader,

Picture a city where every child feels safe and valued...every child has an opportunity to be educated...every child is surrounded by reliable adults who model positive values... every child can develop as a whole person...every child knows he or she is loved by God who said, “Let the children come to me, and let no one hinder them.”

But today’s children are being hindered: 25% of the children in Alameda County live in poverty; 70% of Oakland’s third graders are reading below benchmark standards; six out of ten children go to bed in homes where there is no biological father.

In July, 2001, Faith Network of the East Bay was founded to help build healthy children and families by rallying faith-based support for urban public schools. Through its Urban School Adoption Program, Faith Network is collaborating with churches, parachurch organizations and community groups to build long-term relationships with under-performing neighborhood schools.

Faith Network’s strategy is to start small, build a solid relationship with a given school, listen to what the priority concerns are and then go quietly about the business of finding appropriate resources to meet a wide range of needs, e.g., tutoring, playground monitors, library assistance, campus beautification, teacher appreciation events, chaperones, parent participation, school supplies, books, backpacks, etc.

Congregations affiliated with Faith Network are serving nine elementary schools and one continuation high school in Oakland: Burckhalter, Cox, Dewey, Emerson, Encompass Academy, Fruitvale, Laurel, Lockwood, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Webster Academy. The doors continue to open as principals are calling to request community support for their students. Opportunities abound to seek the shalom of the city.

If your congregation or faith-based organization would like to “adopt” a neighborhood school, or if you want to get involved as an individual, we’d love to hear from you. Faith Network will help with recruiting, screening, and training of volunteers. In addition, we provide organizational structure, liability coverage and complementary resources to help you make a positive impact on your school.

For the children,

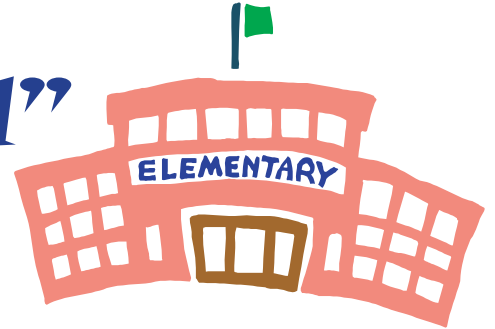
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Randy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Randy Roth

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What is an “Adopt-A-School” Program?



The purpose of the Faith Network School Adoption Program is to mobilize and coordinate resources within the faith community to meet the needs of public schools. The concept is simple: local congregations offer resources to public schools as an act of community service with “no strings attached”.

Understanding the primary importance of public education to the well-being of children, and to the community-at-large, and recognizing that the proper functioning of public schools is vital to the successful operation of constitutional government at all levels, it is therefore incumbent upon all citizens to support and strengthen the administrators, teachers, students and parents of the public school system in whatever ways possible. This initiative also affirms private schools, charter schools, and home-schooling as viable alternatives to public education.

It is understood that faith-based support will be offered without expectation of any reciprocity on the part of the schools involved. The integrity of the individual schools, administrators, teachers, students and parents will always be respected with regard to the legal, civil, ethical and moral issues involved. At no time will any on-campus assistance be given unless specifically requested by the proper authorities at a particular school. Investing in our at-risk children, not religious proselytizing, is our motive. Children are 25% of the population and 100% of the future.

The objective of Faith Network of the East Bay is threefold: 1) identify receptive schools, 2) identify collaborative partners, and 3) identify needs and array resources.

The ultimate goal of the school adoption program is healthy and whole students who have acquired the skills and attitudes that will maximize their full potential and enhance their participation as responsible members of society.

Because Faith Network is committed to offering to each school a holistic and coherent complement of services, each participating individual or group will function as a collaborative community partner. The responsibility of the adoptive congregation or service group is to recruit volunteers, mobilize available resources and, most importantly, nurture an ongoing relationship with their adopted school. The role of Faith Network is to develop and identify “best practice” programs, screen and train volunteers, coordinate resources and maintain quality and sustainability, while serving as the liaison between community partners and the school administration.



Who can participate?

- Individuals
- Congregations
- Faith-based Organizations
- Colleges and Universities



Why adopt a school?

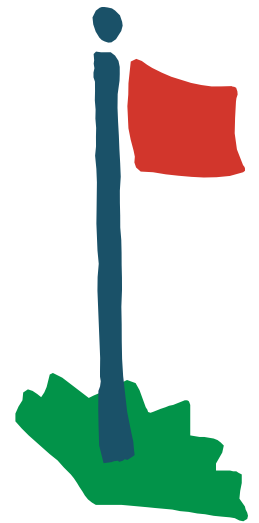
- To make a difference in a child's life.
- To support and empower families.
- To help schools meet the needs of their students.
- To support teachers and staff.
- To put faith in action.
- To share a skill.
- To get to know a community.
- Because you can make a difference in a child's life!

What questions should you ask yourself before adopting a school?

The success of your Adopt-A-School experience requires both your enjoyment of the service you give and adherence to the commitment you make. Ask yourself these questions before deciding to volunteer:

- How much time can we commit?
- Are we willing to participate in a training course or do we want to start volunteering immediately?
- What talents or skills would we like to offer?

How do you get started?



Once you have decided to adopt a school, where do you begin?

Here are some guidelines:

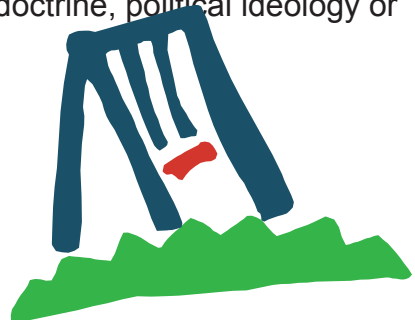
- 1. Identify school.** Identify an urban school in consultation with Faith Network.
- 2. Identify needs.** Communicate with the principal and staff at your school to assess their needs. Your goal is to listen to the needs expressed by your school and respond accordingly. Needs may range from services to resources.
- 3. Identify liaison.** If you are a congregation or community group, identify the person(s) responsible for managing your Adopt-A-School program. This person(s) will serve as the primary liaison between your organization and the school you select, to help assure a successful Adopt-A-School program. This liaison will work closely with Faith Network and school staff to ensure that the necessary elements of the program are in place before you begin.
- 4. Learn about school.** Learn as much as you can about the school you have chosen to serve. You will need to be familiar with and understand the school and its community in order to be effective. This will help you to tailor an Adopt-A-School program to its specific needs. Visit the school district's web site and identify existing community services directed at the school.
- 5. Plan of action.** Develop a plan of action with a calendar of events, activities, and programs. Let the principal and/or school contact review and approve your plan of action. Once approved, you may start implementing the Adopt-A-School program at your school!

How Are Volunteers Registered and Screened?

1. All volunteers must submit a registration form to Faith Network of the East Bay. Registration forms can be printed at www.faith-network.com or requested by calling (510) 836-5100.
2. Volunteers working directly with children are required to show proof of a negative TB test from their physician or clinic. TB tests are valid for one year and then they must be renewed.
3. Volunteers working directly with children are required to have their fingerprints scanned for a background check. LiveScan fingerprinting is now provided by Alameda County Office of Education. All fingerprinting fees are covered by Faith Network. The Fingerprinting Office, located at 313 West Winton Avenue, Hayward, Room 172, offers Walk-In and Scheduled appointment. Phone: (510) 670-7711. Please bring a Request for Live Scan Service form from Faith Network (call our office to request a form) and a valid federal, state or local government picture ID (Driver's license, passport, etc.) to your appointment.

Do's and Don'ts When Working With Schools

- Do have fun.
- Do set realistic boundaries on your time commitments and share them with the principal, teacher and students.
- Do develop an understanding and appreciation of the school culture. Remember that you're there to offer assistance, not run the school.
- Do ask questions whenever you are unclear about school policies and procedures.
- Do sign in at the school office each time you arrive at school, and before entering classrooms or school facilities.
- Don't donate or bring inappropriate materials to school. Check with the principal first.
- Don't proselytize to students regarding any religious doctrine, political ideology or philosophy.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Don't overextend yourself.



What Volunteer Opportunities Are Available?

Tutor - so that children become more motivated, fluent and confident in reading. English literacy training is provided.

After School Program - help children with homework, work on reading and math skills.

Teacher/Staff Appreciation Team - to provide periodic snacks, lunches and other tangible expressions of support for our teachers and staff who serve tirelessly in the trenches.

Chaperone - accompany students on occasional field trips during the school day.

Playground Monitor - to ensure campus safety, respect for self and others, and instill conflict resolution skills.

Campus Beautification - help with school gardens and art projects.

Librarian - help keep library organized and check out books for students.

Adopt-A-School Checklist



- Consider the skills or resources you would like to volunteer.
- Decide how much time you can spend volunteering and how often you can volunteer.
- Select a school where you would like to volunteer.
- Contact the school principal to arrange an introductory meeting to learn more about the school and volunteer opportunities, as well as any preliminary requirements.
- Complete any preliminary requirements, i.e. registration forms, TB certification, and fingerprinting.
- Attend any mandatory orientation or training sessions. Faith Network will provide periodic literacy training sessions and HEROES provides General Orientation and Literacy Training for volunteers.
- Encourage your colleagues, friends and families to Adopt-A-School, too!

Conclusion

The Adopt-A-School program offers wonderful opportunities for your community group, congregation, or organization to “give back” to the communities where they live, work, and worship. Each person can contribute uniquely when they give a little bit of time and a lot of heart. Not only will the children, families, and school staff benefit from your volunteering, but you will also see the rewards. Studies show that people who volunteer live longer, healthier and happier lives because volunteerism increases self esteem and reduces stress and depression. You will also realize that you can make a difference by helping a child.

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