



FAITH NETWORK OF THE EAST BAY, INC.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP HANDBOOK



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“SEEK THE SHALOM OF THE CITY...”
- JEREMIAH 29:7



Dear Community Leader,

Picture a city where every child feels safe and valued...every child has an opportunity to learn and grow...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:

- 72% of Oakland public school 3rd graders are below proficient in reading
- 5 out of 10 freshmen earn a high school diploma on time
- 1 in 4 high school graduates are accepted into state colleges or universities
- A student’s reading proficiency at 3rd grade is a reliable indicator of whether she will earn a high school diploma
- A high school dropout is at least three times more likely to be arrested than a high school graduate
- 3 out of 4 state prison inmates in the U.S. are dropouts.

Faith Network of the East Bay was founded in July 2001 to foster the development of healthy children and families by rallying community support for urban public schools. Through **Project Urban School Adoption**, Faith Network collaborates with churches, service organizations and community groups to build long-term relationships with under-performing neighborhood schools.

Faith Network’s strategy is to start small, building a solid relationship with a given school. We listen for the priority concerns and then go quietly about the business of finding appropriate resources to address the concerns expressed, e.g., tutors, mentors, playground monitors / lunch buddies, library helpers, campus beautification, teacher appreciation events, chaperones, parent support, school supplies, books, backpacks, summer enrichment opportunities, etc.

Faith Network has developed three targeted programs to serve under-resourced public school children and youth:

- **Health4Kids** provides food bags to children of low-income families on the weekends. In addition to delivering food to kids, the program promotes healthy lifestyles for children and their families by way of parent education on nutrition, health and exercise, cooking and meal preparation classes, and information on health care and health insurance resources. We also help develop and sustain school garden programs.
- **Succeeding by Reading**, a multi-faceted literacy program, opens up the world of reading to at-risk children. This program includes Excel Reading Clinics, parent partnership, school library support, distribution of books and a year-end reading recital.
- **Science Horizons** offers students a hands-on science experience that fosters positive student relationships, sparks student interest in the natural sciences, and promotes good stewardship of the environment. This program provides a classroom science curriculum for 5th graders in preparation for a 3-day outdoor science camp in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Thanks to our many congregational and community partners and dedicated volunteers, Faith Network now serves 27 schools in Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda and Richmond. The doors continue to open as principals call to request community support for their students. Opportunities abound to *seek the shalom of the city*.

If your congregation or organization would like to partner with a neighborhood school, or if you want to get involved as an individual, we'd love to hear from you. Faith Network can assist with recruiting, screening, and training of volunteers. In addition, we provide organizational structure, liability coverage and complementary resources to help you develop a beneficial partnership with your school.

For the children,



Randy Roth

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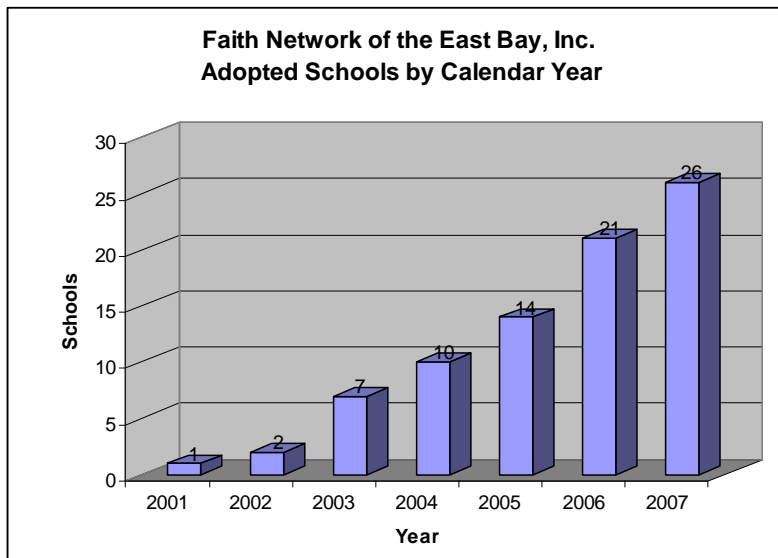
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ABOUT FAITH NETWORK

Our mission is to give hope to disadvantaged children by showing them unconditional love and guiding them into becoming whole persons – physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

We seek to equip disadvantaged students with basic learning tools that will allow them to break through the long-term devastation of low literacy and poor academic performance. We are committed to helping children reach their full potential and to strengthening the institutions that serve them.

Over the past seven years Faith Network has grown steadily to include dozens of congregational and community partners serving 27 schools in Oakland, Berkeley, Alameda, and Richmond.



Faith Network Collaborative Partners

Congregations		Community Organizations
Acts Full Gospel	First Presbyterian Church, Berkeley	Alameda County Community Food Bank
All Nations Presbyterian Church	First Presbyterian Church, Oakland	Bishop O'Dowd High School
Bay Area Christian Connection	Havenscourt Church	Four Season Concerts
Bay Farm Community Church	Kaleo Christian Fellowship	Hillcrest Elementary PTA
Calvary Temple	Mills Grove Christian Church	Kaiser Education Theater
Christ Church, Berkeley	Morning Star C.O.G.I.C	Mission Springs Conference Center
Christ Church, Rockridge	New Hope Covenant Church	National Charity League
Church Without Walls	Oakland Worship Center	Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
Community Alliance Church, Richmond	Piedmont Community Church	Patten University
Creekside Community Church	Progressive Missionary Baptist Church	Today's Youth Matter
Evangelical Free Church of Oakland	Regeneration	Windermere Properties of the East Bay
Faith Presbyterian Church	Sequoyah Community Church	Young Life
First Baptist Church, Alameda	Shiloh Christian Fellowship	
First Covenant Church, Oakland	South Bay Community Church	

WHAT IS A SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP?

Faith Network School Partnerships mobilize and coordinate community resources to meet the needs of public schools. The concept is simple: local congregations and community groups offering support to public schools as an act of community service—with no strings attached.

As a result of these school partnerships, we envision healthy and whole students who have developed skills and attitudes for learning that will maximize their full potential and enhance their participation as responsible members of society. Children are 25% of the population and 100% of the future.

Public education promotes the development and well-being of children, as well as the community-at-large. When the educational system works effectively, it plays a vital role in preparing individuals to contribute to the successful operation of constitutional government at all levels. Therefore, supporting and strengthening the administrators, teachers, students and parents of the public school system in whatever ways possible becomes a citizenship responsibility.

Faith Network volunteers offer support to schools without expectation of any reciprocation. We respect the integrity of the individual schools, administrators, teachers, students and parents with regard to the legal, civil, ethical and moral issues involved. Our volunteers may invest in our at-promise children out of deep convictions of faith or simple good will. Whatever the motivation, we lay aside religious and political agendas so as to remain non-partisan as we serve. At no time will any on-campus assistance be given unless specifically requested by the proper authorities at a particular school.

Faith Network's School Partnerships unfold in three steps: 1) identify collaborative partners; 2) link partners with receptive schools; and 3) prioritize needs and mobilize resources. Because Faith Network desires to offer 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 partnering group involves recruiting volunteers, mobilizing available resources and, most importantly, nurturing an ongoing relationship with their partner school. Faith Network serves as a liaison between community partners and the school administration, developing and identifying “best practice” programs, screening and training volunteers, coordinating resources and maintaining program quality and sustainability.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

- Individuals
- Congregations
- Community Organizations
- Service Clubs
- Colleges and Universities
- Businesses



WHY PARTNER WITH A SCHOOL?

- To invest in a child's future.
- To encourage and empower families.
- To help schools meet the needs of their students.
- To address the equity gap common to urban public schools.
- 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!

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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

1. What talents or skills would we like to offer?
2. What days and times are we available?
3. Are we willing to participate in a training course or do we want to start volunteering immediately?

GETTING STARTED

Once you have decided to develop a school partnership, where do you begin?
Here are some guidelines:

1. **Identify a school.** In consultation with Faith Network, identify an urban school.
2. **Learn about the school.** Learn as much as you can about the school you have chosen to serve. The understanding you develop for the school and its context will help you plan effectively. Visit the school district's web site and identify existing community services directed at the school.
3. **Assess strengths and needs.** Communicate with the school principal and staff to assess the areas of strength as well as the places of need. Your goal is to listen to the priorities expressed by the school, which may involve needed services, encouragement, and/or resources.
4. **Identify a liaison.** If you are a congregation or community group, identify the person(s) responsible for managing your partnership. This person(s) will serve as the primary liaison between your organization and the school you select, to help assure a successful partnership. 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.
5. **Plan for action.** Develop a plan that responds to the prioritized needs you have identified. This may involve 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 begin implementing the plan at your partner school!

VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION AND SCREENING

1. All volunteers must complete the Faith Network volunteer registration process. Registration forms can be printed from our website by visiting www.faith-network.com or requested by phone 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 four years and then they must be renewed.
3. Volunteers working directly with children are required to have a fingerprint scan background check. Volunteers will receive current information on how to obtain a LiveScan along with their registration form. Faith Network covers the LiveScan cost for volunteers.

VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

DO:

- Sign in at the school office each time you arrive at school, before entering classrooms or school facilities.
- Follow school and classroom rules and policies.
- Dress appropriately according to the school dress code policy and school culture.
- Spend scheduled time with the students doing site-assigned and/or approved activities.
- Notify your supervisor if you will be late or absent.
- Have fun!

DON'T:

- Don't use electronic devices such as cell phones, music players, etc. while in the school or working with children.
- Don't discipline a child. All disciplinary action should be taken by school staff according to the standards set forth by the schools.
- Don't engage in political or religious activities when volunteering.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Reading Tutor – so that children become more motivated, fluent and confident in reading. Literacy training is provided.

Math Tutor – help a child reinforce math skills during the school day.

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

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

Classroom Assistant – support the teacher in the classroom.

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

Food Bagging – bagging teams place nutritious food items into approximately 800 bags for distribution to disadvantaged school children.

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

Writer Coach – help students gain confidence, improve writing skills and complete assignments.

Campus Beautification - help with school gardens and art projects.

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

Garden Projects – help children learn about composting, growing flowers and vegetables, nutritional values of produce.



Internships – Provide students exposure and actual work experience in the workplace.

SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP 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.
- Identify an area or neighborhood where you would like to serve.
- Contact Faith Network about arranging an exploratory meeting with a school in that area to learn more about the school and volunteer opportunities, as well as any preliminary requirements.
- Complete registration requirements, i.e. registration forms, TB certification, and fingerprinting.
- Attend any mandatory orientation or training sessions. Faith Network will provide periodic literacy training sessions.
- Encourage your colleagues, friends and families to participate, too!

CONCLUSION

Faith Network School Partnerships offer 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.

Advisory: As you volunteer, you may expect to change a child's life, but the life that's changed may be your own!



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