

AZ Giving: Your Experience Counts To Train Classroom Volunteers

Written by Editorial

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Mesa schools have expressed a great need for classroom volunteers for the 2017-2018 school year. "We have a shortage of at least 20 classroom volunteers to meet the needs of students and teachers in the Mesa Public Schools," says Mike Beardslee, program director for Your Experience Counts (YEC). YEC provided 39 volunteers to support nine Mesa elementary schools last year, but "principals have requested nearly 20 more for 2017-2018."

YEC, a program of HandsOn Greater Phoenix, is in its 12th year of training and placing volunteers in classrooms in five Phoenix area school districts – Mesa, Banz, Osborn, Washington and Dysart. Last year, nearly 100 volunteers served 3,100 students in 23 schools.

The typical role and background of volunteers have shifted in recent years. "Typically, our volunteers have been retirees from business, military and education," Beardslee says. "However, we have recently welcomed stay-at-home moms (like Scottsdale's Monika Patel, pictured), college students and winter visitors to provide support for underserved schools." The program volunteers initially supported reading interventions for students. Because of large class sizes, standardized testing and curriculum needs, teachers may ask volunteers to help students with math, writing, science and most recently with STEM activities.

YEC volunteers serve in grades third through sixth and receive extensive training and orientation in curriculum, instruction and classroom management before starting their assignments. They receive additional training throughout the school year. Training for Mesa volunteers is scheduled for Sept. 26-27.

To apply as a volunteer for the 2017-2018 school year, or for more information, call 623.223.9248 or visit <http://handsonphoenix.org/YEC>.