

09/10/19

Dear Dedicated and Patient Volunteer Youth Bridge Coaches,

Sorry about the delay in this update. We promised regular updates and meant to do it, but you know how that goes.

We actually did report when we had news. Truth is the summer camp at In Tempo was a great success even though it was a small group of kids. We learned a lot – all part of the process. We thought we had this perfect marketing in-road to get an advertisement in all of the school newsletters in our vicinity. It ended up being considerably more complicated than we ever thought and may not be an option at all.

If you remember our committee had a late start in the spring. Most of the programs for kids that we contacted had plans for their summer programs.

We have been reviewing various curriculum programs. ACBL has been a great support and is currently piloting a “learn bridge” program for elementary students in which we will participate. The materials should be arriving soon. They are looking forward to our feedback.

Our Youth Bridge program was accepted in the Paradise Valley School district in the spring and we have been working forward on it slowly but surely. The middle of September, we will be part of Campo Bello elementary school’s 21st Century Grant Program which funds after school literacy and STEM programs, called *After The Bell*. We will meet with a small group of moderately academically challenged 4th-grade students once a week for a little over an hour for nine classes. You can see why we haven’t had a major “Call for Volunteers!” Santhe Niedner and Linda Thieken retired from PVUSD. They will be leading a small cadre of coaches through this experience. Small cadre, because we don’t need more coaches than students, but also because the volunteer approval process depends on a fingerprint clearance card that can take 6-8 weeks. [Sept 5th update: This program has been delayed due to the low number of 4th graders signing up for math improvement class. Keep that in mind as you read on.]

The committee has taken a wise position in that we will focus our energy on getting this one program right. We will test our curriculum in this community of children, take careful notes on our successes and challenges and basically see how it goes. We have only been enlisted for first semester, which makes sense. If all goes well, the program could grow to second semester, in other grade levels, four other elementary schools in the district, the Boys & Girls Club and a few other programs we have been researching. Each organization has established their own volunteer approval process, so we will let you know what is required for each venue.

You may be surprised to hear that just your name in the data base and your willingness to help when we do get this program up and running is a massive comfort to all of us plugging away on it. Without all of you in the “wings”, what would be the point of continuing our work? It was always the cart before the horse dilemma. Please continue to be patient and let us know of any opportunities you might be aware of in your area. Once we have a successful curriculum, with learning materials for the teachers and the students we can forge ahead.

Sincerely,

Unit 354 Youth Bridge Committee