



KIDS CARE & THE STERLING ESTATES OF WEST COBB

Intergenerational Pen Pal Program Guidelines

Mission: Our goal is to cultivate meaningful relationships between youth and senior citizens through a pen pal program that fosters the development of new friendships. By providing a platform for youth, adults and seniors to exchange life experiences, we seek to cultivate a deeper sense of belonging and connection across different age groups. Additionally, this program can serve as a valuable tool for social and emotional learning, contributing to the enhancement of mental health for all participants.

Program Overview:

- The program pairs youth participants from KIDS CARE nonprofit with senior citizens from Sterling Estates of West Cobb. Additional adult volunteers from KIDS CARE are welcome to register & participate as well.
- Pen pals will exchange handwritten letters, sharing personal stories, experiences, and interests. Additional correspondences can include art work, poems, puzzles, pictures, etc, however, at least one handwritten letter is expected to be mailed every month.

Participant Criteria:

- Youth participants shall be committed to writing monthly letters and respectful of the elderly.
- Senior participants should have an interest in building connections with younger generations, writing letters that can strike up conversations and build confidence in the youth.

Matching Process:

- Pairs will be carefully matched based on shared interests, hobbies, or life experiences when possible.

Communication Guidelines:

- Participants will be mindful of & practice appropriate and respectful communications.
- Participants shall be open-minded and understanding of generational differences.

Frequency of Communication:

- Participants are encouraged to exchange letters at least once a month.
- The program coordinator may periodically provide prompts or discussion topics.

Privacy and Security:

- Participants shall agree to respect & protect each other's privacy.
- Participants shall keep personal contact information of pen pals private.

Facilitator Involvement:

- A program coordinator will oversee the matching process and be a point of contact for participants.
- Parents of KIDS CARE volunteers shall monitor communication to ensure a positive and safe experience for everyone.

In-Person Event:

- At the end of six months a group event will be scheduled, allowing pen pals to meet in person (if comfortable and feasible).
- This event will be held at Sterling Estates of West Cobb and may include group activities, outings, or community service projects.

Feedback and Evaluation:

- Participants will be encouraged to provide feedback on their experience periodically.
- The program coordinator will use feedback to make improvements and address concerns.

Celebrating Milestones:

- Acknowledge and celebrate birthdays, holidays, or special occasions by encouraging thoughtful gestures or small gifts.

Program Duration:

- The pen pal program will run for six months. Participants may choose to continue their correspondence beyond the program's official timeline.

Conclusion and Reflection:

- Participants will be provided with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and express interest in continuing the pen pal relationship.

By adhering to these guidelines, we aim to create a nurturing and supportive pen pal program that fosters intergenerational connections and mutual Joy between the participants. This program will also further the community relationship between KIDS CARE and the Sterling Estates of West Cobb.

*KIDS CARE volunteers will be requested to fill out the following google form to register as a participant: <https://forms.gle/QULwZqWpEA5aJz2SA>

KIDS CARE Pen Pal Program Coordinator:

Amie Burke: volunteer@kids-care2018.org

www.kids-care2018.org

Sterling Estates of West Cobb Pen Pal Program Coordinator:

Jill Hughes: jhughes@sterlingestates.com

<https://www.sterlingestates.com/west-cobb-ga/>