

Community Club TUTOR HANDBOOK 2020-2021



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Community Club is an all-volunteer mission of
The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church
1313 New York Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
www.communityclub.org

NYAPC welcomes all people to community, worship, service, and leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Community Club, one of the oldest tutoring programs in Washington, D.C., has operated continuously since February 1962. Each Thursday evening during the school year, up to 120 students and their tutors meet one-on-one to do schoolwork and connect at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, 1313 New York Avenue, NW, near Metro Center. **For 2020-21, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will be meeting virtually until further notice.**

Students come to Study Hall from public and charter high schools and junior high schools throughout the city. They arrive by public transportation, on foot, and by car. They come on their own or after hearing about Community Club from relatives, friends, or school staff.

Tutors, who come from all faiths and backgrounds, become role models for their students. They are sources of stability in adolescents' frequently chaotic lives. They take an active interest in how their students are doing in school and in life, which may involve visits with teachers or counselors. They praise, reward, and encourage their students to do well.

The student/tutor relationship often extends beyond Thursday evenings to special outings to movies or restaurants, visits to each other's homes and attendance at school events (**obviously, these get-togethers will be curtailed during the pandemic**). Many tutors get to know their students' families. Together, student and tutor decide what shape the mentoring relationship will take. However much tutors give, they generally feel they receive far more from their students. A student/tutor partnership typically lasts from two to six years, but many tutors and their students stay in touch long after graduation.

In addition to tutoring sessions, Community Club offers:

- ❖ Scholarships for high school students with good attendance at Study Hall and a 2.5 GPA
- ❖ A weekend camp at Prince William Forest in northern Virginia (**on hold until at least spring 2021**)
- ❖ Guidance on college selection and careers, and SAT prep work.
- ❖ Substitute tutors who step in when a tutor is ill or out of town
- ❖ Training sessions for tutors, including a workshop each winter
- ❖ Medals for the most improved grades and top grades in each class from one grading period to the next
- ❖ End-of-year awards ceremony
- ❖ Partial scholarships and support meetings for Community Club alumni and alumnae in college (over \$1.2 million in scholarships since 2000)The Decision to Tutor

Need

Volunteers are needed to serve as one-on-one mentors, primarily to 7th through 12th graders in D.C. public and charter schools and develop a relationship with a student while working on academic and social skills.

Tutor Skills

- ❖ Help with academic subjects, though not as experts
- ❖ Spot and help to remedy academic deficiencies
- ❖ Listen, talk, and develop friendships with their student
- ❖ Show they care about their student and his/her progress in school

Training

Attend an Orientation (held virtually at 6:15 p.m. any Thursday night when school is session). Read this Tutor Handbook. Attend the winter Tutor Workshop, where you'll learn basic and specialized teaching skills.

Commitment

- ❖ Attend the 90 minutes of Study Hall each Thursday for a full school year (September through May). Join online at 6:45 p.m.—ready to work at 7 p.m. Stay until 8:15 p.m. when announcements end.
- ❖ If your schedule does not permit regular Thursday night attendance, consider serving as a substitute tutor on the nights you can be there.
- ❖ Try to attend Camp, the winter Tutor Workshop, and the May Awards Ceremony (again, the pandemic may affect whether such events are held)..

COMMUNITY CLUB BASICS

Getting Started

During your orientation session, we'll introduce you to what we do and ask you to decide if you can make the commitment that is required. Next you'll complete an application, provide references of three people who have known you at least five years, and read this Handbook. During the week, we will check your references, and do a basic criminal background check..

After that, we will match you with a student if one is available. We can't predict when new students may arrive, so sometimes this takes more than a week. If it does, we may ask you to be a substitute tutor until we can match you. When you are paired with a student, he/she will have completed a registration form. Make note of the addresses, parent names, phone numbers and other important family and school information, or ask your Class Leader to make a copy of the form for you. It will help you find discussion topics—family members, hobbies, and which subjects need more work during the first weeks. You and your student will sign the Student/Tutor Pledge, which embodies the commitments you make to one another. You will also exchange contact cards that will enable you to contact one other and key people in Community Club. Your Class Leader will give your student a permission slip to take home and return, signed by the parent or guardian, the next week. Before you leave the first night, give the student registration form and weekly report form to your Class Leader.

During Study Hall

If your student did not bring schoolwork, find other academic work to do, such as drilling fundamentals with flash cards (we are compiling on-line resources for tutors to use).

Absences

Insist that your student contact you in advance, and explain why, if he/she is unable to attend Study Hall on a particular Thursday. This is a common courtesy many teenagers need to be taught. Of course, tutors owe students the same courtesy if they are unable to attend.

If you are unable to attend: Contact your student in advance and encourage him/her to attend without you. Tell him/her to join on time, check in with the Class Leader, and let the class leader know that you won't be able to attend that night Zone for a substitute tutor for the evening. Students' absences reduce the amount of their Stay-in-School scholarship checks, regardless of tutor attendance.

If your student did not contact you in advance and does not arrive at Study Hall by 7:10 p.m.: Call his/her parents.. If you determine that your student is not coming that night, let your class leader know and we will see if there is an unpaired student you can work with.

Contacting Community Club

On Thursday nights, you can reach Study Hall at (202) 320-0555 (call or text), or email directors@communityclub.org.

For general information about Community Club, email directors@communityclub.org.

Role of Class Leader

Each Class Leader is an experienced tutor who can help you handle problems that arise. Class Leaders also keep track of attendance and student grades. Talk with your Class Leader regularly. The more your Class Leader knows about you and your student, the more he/she can help.

Contacting Your Student

Like other teenagers, almost all of our students have cell phones. However, it is not appropriate for an adult (you) to contact a teenager without the knowledge and permission of his/her parents. Call the parents to receive permission to contact their child directly. Some parents may prefer that you contact their child through them. All parents will appreciate your courtesy and your recognition that they deserve to know when other adults are involved in their child's life.

Working with Families

You'll learn a great deal about the best way to work with your student's parents by being open to the family, as well as being open about yourself. Building these relationships is a gradual process. Some parents like to handle all school interactions by themselves; some like to partner with you; some are unable to do much but are very happy to support your visits to the school; and a few may seem indifferent. This is another instance where consulting with other tutors and leaders will help you determine the best approach.

Outside Activities

(NB: This applies once Community Club has cleared in-person meetings of tutors and students). Do not plan an outside activity, meet outside Study Hall, or give your student a ride until you have received permission to do so from your student's parent or guardian. Then, find out what interests your student and choose an appropriate destination. While most students have spent their whole lives in D.C., they may not have had opportunities to visit the wealth of sites for which it is famous. Even mastering a new part of the Metro system may be a fun challenge. Sometimes you don't need to go anywhere. You can cook, play games, watch videos, bake, play cards, do schoolwork, or talk with your families.

Working with Teachers

On your Community Club calendar, you'll see dates for mid-quarter progress reports, report cards, and parent-teacher conferences. These are the times when you can check what you think you and your student are accomplishing against what the school is seeing. Again, working through the parents, we urge you to join parent-teacher conferences or find another way to meet virtually with teachers. Teachers are likely to be more invested in a student who has active adult support.

Working with Your Student

Teach inductively. Let your student do the thinking (for example, figuring out why the main character acted that way). Ask questions and check often to see if the reading or writing is understood. Sometimes students are reluctant to do work in the areas in which they have the greatest challenges. Therefore, be particularly alert to indicators of academic problems, through review of report cards, occasional pointed questions, and suggestions to do something different. Encourage self-expression in speaking and writing. Encourage students to talk about themselves, their friends, their pastimes, their favorite TV shows; but try not to pry. If there seems to be a serious problem with school, ask the student for the school counselor's name and ask your Class Leader for help.

Building Relationships

Making academic progress is important, but it's inseparable from getting to know your student. Don't be preoccupied with doing for your student; giving help is often easier than taking it. We need to be sensitive, responsive, and honest at all times.

If You Must Leave Us

If you run into unanticipated work or family needs and must leave Community Club, tell your Class Leader in person. We will arrange a transition—with a new tutor if we can—so your student doesn't feel lost. Tell your student in person if you must stop tutoring. When you tell your student, help him/her to understand what you had to think about to make your decision. This helps young people learn how adults must make decisions and reduces the risk that they will feel rejected or bereft because of the loss.

COMMUNITY CLUB POLICIES

We ask that every adult model the following behaviors and help us encourage and enforce them in the students.

1. **Decorum.** We are respectful at all times. Disruptive, rude, and/or disrespectful behaviors are not permitted, and can be cause for discipline, including loss of scholarship, and/or program dismissal. Fighting is not tolerated and can be grounds for dismissal. Parents/Guardians are required to meet with Community Club leaders if any of the above behaviors are exhibited.
2. Unless given permission to leave by their tutor, or a community club class leader or director; ALL students must remain in the meeting until dismissal..
3. **Punctuality.** Login to join my class meeting ready to begin work by 7:00 pm and stay until my class is dismissed. Students joining after 7:20 pm will be considered absent for the purpose of stay-in-school scholarships.
4. After 7:00 pm, students may only use mobile/computing devices for school related purposes, unless they receive permission from their tutor, or a community club class leader or director. Tutors should only use such devices for similar purposes, or for urgent work-related matters
5. **Photocopies.** There is a dedicated copier for Community Club in the library. Students and tutors can request Community Club leaders to copy documents required for Community Club or related to schoolwork.

COMMUNITY CLUB LEADERSHIP

Community Club is a mission program of the Church, with oversight by the Church's Board of Deacons. Community Club is led by a Core Council of long-time Club volunteers, both church members and non-members. The organization charter outlines the governance, leadership structure and procedures for Community Club. For the 2012–2013 school year, the Council includes the following members:

Directors: Tom Karr and Shamika Bradley
Student Registrar: Brendolyn McCarty-Jones
K through 6th Grade Class Leader: Stephanie Price
7th – 8th Grade Class Leaders: Susie Campbell
9th Grade Class Leader: Michael Coe
10th Grade Class Leader: Christina Brummitt
11th -12th Grade Class Leader: Molly Smith
College Adviser: Mariatu Tejan
College Student Coordinator: Laura Krapsho
New Tutor Orientation Coordinator: Phil Telfeyan
Substitute Tutor Coordinator: Rotating
Math Zone: David Balan
Library: Mary Cousins & Karen Dunlap

ADDITIONAL EVENTS (NB: ALL ON HOLD UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE)

Weekend Outing

Community Club students and tutors go on a joint weekend outing. In past years, this has been a camp outing in early Fall to Prince William Forest National Park in northern Virginia. This outing is a great opportunity to get to know and appreciate the different gifts of your student, other students, and fellow tutors.

Thanksgiving Tutor Turkey Party

This annual tutors-only party is held the Sunday before Thanksgiving and is a purely social, optional occasion. It's a great opportunity to get to know other tutors and make new friends.

Tutor Workshop

Each year, tutors get better acquainted; learn how to be better tutors; find out about available teaching and mentoring resources; learn how to work effectively with the expanding variety of schools; gain insights about how to grow with our students and plan new ways to help our students and each other. We often decide on program improvements and launch new activities based on what we learn from each other at the Workshop.

Awards Ceremony

On the last Thursday in May, our year ends when students, tutors, parents, alumni, and college students come together for the Awards Ceremony. We celebrate achievements and recognize elementary, middle, junior, and senior high school graduates. Seniors and their tutors give special talks. We award scholarships and academic trophies. For recipients, it's a chance to be celebrated. For all students, there are reminders of awards and accomplishments to strive for. We also honor a Tutor of the Year.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

Stay-in-School Scholarships are a unique feature of Community Club's Study Hall program. The monthly stipends offer an incentive for students to stay in school until graduation, maintain at least a 2.5 grade point average, carry a full course load and minimize hours in after-school employment. The program is open to students in grades 9 through 12 who have participated in Community Club for a minimum of two advisory periods. Tutors and students should understand that the Stay-in-School Scholarship award can be lost through poor academic performance and excessive absenteeism. That choices have consequences is one of the primary rationales for this program.

Stay-in-School Scholarship Rules

Each recipient must:

- ❖ Be enrolled in a D.C. public high school, grades 9 through 12.
- ❖ Participate in Community Club for two full advisory periods.
- ❖ Maintain a grade point average in academic classes of at least 2.5 or higher for two consecutive advisory periods. If a student's GPA falls below 2.5 for one advisory period, the student remains on scholarship. But if the GPA then falls below 2.5 for two consecutive advisories, the student loses the scholarship, which will not be restored until the student attains GPA of 2.5 or better for two consecutive advisory periods.
- ❖ Take at least four academic courses per semester or the equivalent (to be determined by the club directors).
- ❖ Attend Study Hall regularly, come on time, work on homework each week, give advance notice to his/her tutor and class leader of absences, and follow all Community Club policies.
- ❖ Participate in Club activities. Community Club expects students (and tutors) to help make the club a valuable experience shared by all.
- ❖ Turn in her/his report card promptly to the Class Leader.

Academic Achievement Awards

Academic achievement awards are awarded each advisory period to the student in each class with the most improved grades and the highest grades, respectively.

Community Club College Scholarships

Graduates of Community Club are eligible for college scholarships (usually a modest cash stipend) each semester. Recipients must attend two meetings each year, usually on the Saturdays just after Christmas and after the May Awards Ceremony. Participants are asked to share college experiences with one another, their former tutors, and new graduates of Community Club. The exchange of practical advice among current college students has proven valuable to all attendees.

Competitive College Scholarship Opportunities

Students also have special college scholarship opportunities:

Andrew Charles Dornan Memorial Scholarship

New Futures Scholarship (by nomination) (Note: This scholarship provides scholarships for Community College or Post-Secondary Certificate Programs)

Kathryn Heath Scholarship for Women

Marty Jennings Scholarship

SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES

Ice Breakers for the First Night

- ❖ Tell each other why you've come to Community Club.
- ❖ Encourage your student to ask you questions.
- ❖ Share registration paperwork; discuss the Student/Tutor Pledge.
- ❖ Read relevant parts of the Tutor Handbook to learn more about Community Club together—especially the sections on Camp and Stay-in-School Scholarships.
- ❖ Ask the student to read to you, and then discuss what has been read.
- ❖ Visit the Library.
- ❖ Visit the Math Zone.

Math and Science

Work together to solve problems. You don't need to know the answer to say, "Let's figure it out," then work on it. Encourage the student to tell you what the classroom teacher said about the subject. Have the student explain the problem to you. Help the student find a known reference point from which to start solving the problem. Work with what your student knows. Use the Math Zone's talented help.

Foreign Languages

Flashcards are a favorite fallback and provide useful drills. Use the library's or make some together.

Reading

Reading poetry aloud to each other offers opportunities to engage the student through rhythm, sound, emotion, and thought. Have the student read for the beat of the meter, the sound of the words, the emotional effect of the poetry. Plays that are assigned in class to be read can be brought to life through readings or through watching videos. In short, strive to encourage the student to become actively involved in what is read and to avoid the passivity that leads to non-comprehension.

Writing

Have the student dictate to you. Then read the dictation back aloud. Is this what the student wanted to say? Discuss with the student differences between speaking and writing. Have your student keep a diary and share excerpts from it.

Other Skills and Interests

There is more to academic life than the “three R’s.” Discover your student’s interests and skills, including such non-academic interests as video games, computers, music, art, church, and community.

COLLEGE PREPARATION

Helping prepare our students for life after high school is an important goal for Community Club. To ease the transition from high school to college, students should be encouraged to take the following steps:

Freshman Year

- ❖ Get to know your school counselor.
- ❖ Get involved in school and community activities you enjoy.
- ❖ Earn the best grades possible and take the most challenging (but appropriate) courses.
- ❖ Read on a regular basis, even if you have no school assignments.
- ❖ Do something constructive with your summer vacation.

Sophomore Year

- ❖ Stay in touch with your school counselor.
- ❖ If your school offers them, take the PSAT or PLAN in the fall.
- ❖ Earn the best grades you can and continue to take the most challenging courses you can.
- ❖ Depending on your course schedule, you might consider an SAT II: Subject Test in the spring.
- ❖ Look at the list of senior college acceptances; talk to them about their choices.
- ❖ Take advantage of college visits if your family is near a college.
- ❖ Use your free time in the summer productively.

Junior Year

- ❖ This is the most important year academically: do your best and challenge yourself.
- ❖ Continue to remain involved in activities; try positions of responsibility or leadership.
- ❖ Take the PSAT and/or PLAN in the fall.
- ❖ Follow your school’s guidelines for meeting with your counselor about the college process.
- ❖ In the winter, think of how you will prepare for your first SAT and/or ACT.
- ❖ Review the standardized testing schedule from your college coordinator/guidance counselor.
- ❖ When you select your courses for senior year, get advice and choose wisely.
- ❖ With your tutor and counselor, develop an initial list of colleges during the spring.
- ❖ Take advantage of college representative visits to your school and college fairs.
- ❖ Research colleges; collect information.
- ❖ Use your summer vacation time productively; visit colleges during the summer.

Senior Year

- ❖ Don’t forget how important your grades are: the first semester/trimester is critical.
- ❖ Make sure you have completed your 100 hours of community service.
- ❖ Stay involved in activities that you enjoy; take leadership positions and add responsibility.
- ❖ Continue to add or subtract colleges from your list as you learn more about schools.
- ❖ If you apply early, remember that deadlines are just a few weeks after school begins.
- ❖ Ask your teachers, tutors, and others for recommendations well in advance of application deadlines.
- ❖ By Thanksgiving, your list of colleges should be final. Six to eight schools are a good number.
- ❖ Meet deadlines for admissions/scholarships. Allow lots of time for applications and essays.
- ❖ Know what financial aid forms are required and submit them on time.
- ❖ Take advantage of interviews when given the opportunity.
- ❖ Continue to work hard: senior slump can have disastrous consequences.
- ❖ Consider participating in the open house/accepted student programs hosted by colleges.
- ❖ Have your one deposit at the school you will attend by May 1.
- ❖ If you are on a waiting list, get advice from your school counselor or tutor.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL CHALLENGES

Helping a Student with Learning Disabilities

There are at least 12 prevailing definitions and multiple disciplines (audiology, neurology, etc.) involved. The commonly accepted factors are:

- ❖ Difficulties with academic achievement and progress
- ❖ Discrepancies between learning potential and what one actually learns
- ❖ Uneven patterns of language, physical growth, and academic development

Early Warning Signs

Problems with schoolwork can involve delays, disorders, and deviations in listening and speaking; difficulty with reading, writing, and spelling; difficulty in organizing thoughts (reasoning); difficulty in remembering information and instructions; difficulty in performing arithmetic. Some symptoms commonly tied to learning disabilities are:

- ❖ Distorted body image
- ❖ Reversals in writing and reading
- ❖ Poor visual-motor coordination
- ❖ Hyperactivity and impulsivity
- ❖ Difficulty copying models accurately
- ❖ Poor organizational skills
- ❖ Disorganized thinking
- ❖ Frequent confusion over instructions
- ❖ Low tolerance for frustration
- ❖ Difficulty with abstract reasoning
- ❖ Difficulty with concepts of time
- ❖ Difficulty discriminating size/shapes
- ❖ Poor peer relationships
- ❖ Frequent obsession with one topic
- ❖ Over-excitability during group play
- ❖ Poor short- or long-term memory
- ❖ Poor social judgment
- ❖ Behavior inappropriate for situation
- ❖ Difficulty making decisions
- ❖ Lack of preference for right or left hand
- ❖ Poor adjustment to environment
- ❖ Excessive variation in mood
- ❖ Distractibility; difficulty concentrating
- ❖ Lags in developmental milestones
- ❖ Gullibility; easily led by peers
- ❖ Failure to see consequences of actions
- ❖ Inappropriate displays of affection

Behaviors That May Indicate Your Student Has a Learning Disability

- ❖ Demonstrates marked difficulty in reading, spelling, or using numerical concepts.
- ❖ Has poorly formed handwriting. Has difficulty with certain letters. Spaces words unevenly.
- ❖ Has trouble listening to a lecture and taking notes at the same time.
- ❖ Is easily distracted by background noise or visual stimulation.
- ❖ Has trouble following directions; may need instructions repeated.
- ❖ Exhibits severe difficulty in sticking to simple schedules; repeatedly forgets or loses things.
- ❖ Omits or adds words when reading aloud.
- ❖ Seems disorganized in space. Confuses up and down, right and left; gets lost in buildings.
- ❖ Seems disoriented in time. Is often late or unable to finish assignments in the standard time.
- ❖ Shows excessive anxiety, anger, or depression because of the difficulty in coping.

Does my Student Have to Just Suffer with his/her Learning Disability?

Absolutely not! There are many strategies that can help students with these needs. Once you have more detailed information, we can help you find resources to help. Your student may profit from anything from glasses to a special school to graph paper.

Helping a Student Living with or Left by a Chemically Dependent Parent.

- ❖ Help the student know he/she is not alone.
- ❖ Help your student develop a healthy personal outlook, and deal with his/her feelings.
- ❖ Teach him/her to recognize options when problems arise.
- ❖ Provide alternative ways to respond to life in chemically dependent families.
- ❖ Teach your student to recognize his/her powerlessness over other people's behavior.
- ❖ Teach decision-making skills so he/she recognizes options for coping with stress.
- ❖ Help build self-esteem and increase personal awareness.
- ❖ Build a sense of trust in adults by being a consistent role model.
- ❖ Encourage your student to go to Al-Anon or Alateen—a safe place to share with others in similar situations.

LEARNING STYLES

You may have already learned that your student gains and retains information more successfully in some ways than others. Those ways can be used to the student's advantage. Some of these tips will seem obvious to you. That's because you have incorporated them into your own learning style. Many students haven't reached that point.

Visual Learners

- ❖ Make mind pictures using your ability to see and imagine.
- ❖ Write down words and make short outlines of topics to study.
- ❖ Make lists, write notes, and write down assignments. Have a notepad and pencil with you.

Auditory Learners

- ❖ Listen carefully to oral instructions and information.
- ❖ Sit near the front of the room so others won't distract you.
- ❖ Keep your eyes on the teacher.
- ❖ Clear your desk of all books and papers if you tend to tune out and play with things.
- ❖ Repeat important information silently to yourself.
- ❖ Make up rhyming jingles to remember important information.

Kinesthetic-Tactile Learners

- ❖ Manipulate and handle materials.
- ❖ Remember to wait until directions are given before you start a project.
- ❖ Try to work in different areas of a classroom.
- ❖ Volunteer for class activities that involve movement and activity.

OUR HISTORY

Community Club is one of the longest-lived tutoring and mentoring programs in Washington D.C. The Club began in the early 1940s as a gathering place in the Church for soldiers stationed in the nation's capital and the young women who came from around the country to fill government posts vacated by men who had joined the military.

Many of those wartime arrivals stayed in Washington for careers with the government. Some joined the church and became involved in outreach to neighborhood children. By the 1950s Community Club had evolved into a program for children who met in the basement for friendship and recreation. With expansion of the business district and demolition of nearby homes, however, the number of neighborhood youngsters dwindled.

The church began to focus on meeting the needs of adolescents, as youth gangs became a problem in the city. By 1959, nearly 100 teenagers were participating in activities at the church on weekday afternoons. In 1962, the church opened its basement to gangs of teenagers who came to the neutral territory to play basketball and other games, and a study hall program was added as a requirement for the teenagers to participate in the recreational activities. The study hall program that sprang from the recreational ministry became what we know today as Community Club.

The first Community Club student graduated from high school in 1968—six years after Study Hall began. The program celebrated its first college graduate in 1973. Today nearly all Community Club students graduate from high school, and over 200 have earned college degrees.

Community Club continues to evolve in response to changing needs and trends. The Library has become a hub of Study Hall activity with the help of an expanded collection and two librarians. Meanwhile, the corps of tutors has grown in leadership capacity as well as in number. Tutors now plan the fall Camp weekend and the winter Tutor Workshop. In 1983, a Tutor-of-the-Year program was instituted in which an honored tutor speaks at the Awards Ceremony each spring.