
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

5373 S. Arville St.
Las Vegas, Nevada 89118
P: 702.564.7809
E: info@spreadthewordnevada.org
www.SpreadtheWordNevada.org



WELCOME



Thank you for your willingness to volunteer at Spread the Word Nevada! You will make a direct impact on our organization and in the lives of the children we serve.

We are delighted you have chosen to volunteer your time as we understand time is precious. Each and every day our agency depends on volunteers like you to ensure our programs run efficiently and successfully. Volunteers at Spread the Word Nevada assist in all aspects of the organization – mentoring our kids in schools, helping in the warehouse, preparing books for distribution, attending tabling events, and more.

This handbook will serve as a guide during your time with us. In it you'll find answers to many of the questions you may have about the volunteer programs we offer. You are responsible for reading and understanding the terms outlined in this handbook and adhering to Spread the Word Nevada's policies and procedures.

Please know that the time you spend here is so appreciated and the contributions you make are enormous. On behalf of the entire Spread the Word Nevada staff, and our students and their families, thank you for being here and welcome to our community!

Sincerely,

Lisa Habighorst
Co-Founder & CEO

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ABOUT SPREAD THE WORD NEVADA

Mission

Spread the Word Nevada (STWN) is dedicated to advancing childhood literacy within our communities by changing lives one book at a time.

Core Values

Integrity - We are honest in our interactions with each other and those we serve.

Commitment - We do what we say, and we are fully engaged.

Teamwork - We value each other's voice & we help each other meet our common goals.

Respect - We treat each other the way we want to be treated.

History

STWN began in July 2001 by Founder Laurie Hartig and Co-Founder Lisa Habighorst, two Clark County School District teachers who realized the impact that ownership of books made in the lives of their students.

Laurie was a Librarian who was heartbroken whenever students who were eager to read and learn, couldn't afford to buy books at the school's annual book fairs. They would come up to her with pennies hoping to buy a book. To support her students and spread the magic of reading, she began a small program within her library where she brought books to give to her students to cherish and keep with them for life.

Lisa was a math teacher and an avid reader who cared deeply about her students' education. She came on board to help Laurie and became the driving force behind STWN's growth. Thanks to her leadership, STWN was able to grow the organization and expand its programs throughout Clark County, Washoe County, Elko County and many other rural counties across the state of Nevada.

In 2012, STWN became an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit and since then has been recognized for its organizational achievements receiving the Clark County Commissioners' Proclamation - 2017; the Josh Stevens Foundation Kindness MVP Award - 2017; the Best of Las Vegas Proclamation - 2015, a designated Spread the Word Nevada Day - March 3, 2009; the Green Chips Sustainable Community Award - 2016; the Clark County School District School-Community Partnership Program Recognition - 2015 and 2016; and the Seven Magazine's "Best of Las Vegas" Nonprofit Award in 2013.

Over the years STWN has proudly placed hundreds of thousands of books in the hands of children across the state of Nevada. Its literacy programs, designed to enhance the reading abilities of students during the formative stages in their education, can be found in many elementary schools and community centers throughout Nevada.

SPREAD THE WORD NEVADA PROGRAMS



Literacy is the foundation for all future learning. Every child deserves to own their own books, become confident readers and gain fundamental skills to achieve their highest potential.

To empower children to succeed both inside and outside of the classroom, STWN produces programs that:

Provide children with access to books

Each month during the school year, STWN delivers "forever" books to schools for every student. Students are empowered to select their books to build their own personal libraries.

Book ownership for young people is critical for literacy engagement and mental well-being. Research shows books at home increases reading scores and adds enjoyment of reading for children.

Promote the joy of reading

Boosting a child's reading confidence is a team effort. Family literacy programs, individual mentoring sessions, trainings and resources for our youngest readers and book distributions at all events is how STWN continues to support the community in instilling a lifelong love of reading in children.



SPREAD THE WORD NEVADA PROGRAMS

Frequently Asked Questions

Where do you get your books?

Many of our books come from individual donations and book drives hosted by community partners. We also buy new and gently used books in bulk for a reasonable price.

Why do you serve only elementary schools?

Third grade is commonly known as the “make-or-break” benchmark by education professionals. Research has shown that when students do not have the skills they need during this critical stage of literacy development, they end up falling behind in school and the chances for dropping out of school increases. By focusing on these early developmental phases, we hope to instill a strong foundation of reading skills and techniques for students to advance and succeed in their schooling.

Do you serve middle and high school, too?

We primarily serve elementary school students. When books are available, we will work with middle and high schools to get the books distributed.

Do you offer resources for teachers?

Yes, any Educator in the state of Nevada is welcome to participate in our Teacher Resource program to build classroom libraries.

Do you work with other organizations?

STWN believes in working with partners to support and serve communities in need. In addition to our own programs, we also provide books to numerous local charity organizations, schools, nonprofits and causes promoting literacy. Organizations who are interested in our services or would like to partner can send an inquiry to: stwnprograms@spreadthewordnevada.org.

VOLUNTEER PHILOSOPHY AND EXPECTATIONS

Volunteers are vital to our mission. People like you, who give their time, energy and talents to provide help and inspire hope are essential to our ability to deliver quality services. We would be unable to meet our program goals if volunteers were not part of our story. We are committed to creating opportunities for the community to be involved in our work. By engaging volunteers in direct and indirect service activities, we can expand the efforts of our programs in the community

Below is what you can expect when you volunteer with us. A more detailed outline can be found in our Policies & Procedures section.

What you can expect from STWN:

- An inclusive, welcoming culture
- Gratitude for your time and commitment
- Ongoing support from everyone at STWN
- Be part of a purpose-driven team
- Recognition for your work
- A safe and inviting environment

What STWN expects from our volunteers:

- Honor your commitment to volunteer
- Positively support our mission, our organization and its work
- Be prompt and reliable
- Notify us in a timely manner of any changes to your commitment as a volunteer
- Cooperate with STWN staff and volunteers
- Keep all communication that may be shared about our partners confidential
- Maintain a respectful relationship with partners, staff and volunteers
- Adhere to STWN's policies and procedures

Definition of Volunteer

A volunteer is anyone who without compensation or expectation of compensation performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of STWN. An individual must submit an application and gain approval from STWN staff before volunteering. Volunteers are not employees of STWN.

VOLUNTEER ROLES

STWN Bookstore

Volunteer Title: Book Appraisers

Volunteer Reports to: Warehouse Manager

Role & Responsibilities: Book Appraisers maintain STWN's online book sales by scanning books the organization cannot use for its programs; determining the value of each book; and, if warranted, listing and organizing titles on the website.

Purpose: Through managing the store, Book Appraisers greatly contribute to STWN's mission by generating proceeds to obtain books that will be placed in the hands of children which, in turn, expands the organization's reach.

Benefits: Be part of a purpose-driven team committed to serving our community's youth. Develop sales and data entry skills as well as gain experience operating an online store.

Qualifications:

- Basic computer skills
- Must be dependable and punctual
- Be self-directed, willing to take initiative and detail-oriented

Training: Individuals must attend an orientation and training conducted by a Warehouse Associate on the following items –

- Scanning books and determining their value
- How to list books on Amazon
- Managing the Amazon store

Time Commitment: Varied

Location:

STWN Main Office –
5373 S. Arville St., Las Vegas, Nevada 89118

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Books & Buddies (Clark County Only)

Volunteer Title: Mentor

Volunteer Reports to: STWN Program Facilitator

Role & Responsibilities: A mentor's major role is to serve as a positive role model for children and help develop the reading skills they will need for a successful academic pathway. Mentors support youth by growing their literacy skills, building their confidence and inspire the love of reading.

Purpose: The B&B Mentor program is a one-on-one mentoring model that empowers youth and advances their literacy skills through quality mentoring relationships.

Benefits: Gain personal fulfillment through contributing to the development of young individuals and helping them mature, progress and achieve their goals. Acquire mentoring and communication skills needed in personal and professional environments.

Qualifications:

- Must be at least 16 years old
- Must have transportation
- Must pass a background check
- Must maintain the confidentiality of clients and information
- Must obtain Clark County School District Volunteer Badge

Training: Mentors must complete a mandatory training conducted by the Volunteer Engagement Manager and Program Manager which will cover:

- Bookies & Buddies' purpose and mission
- How mentors impact children's academic and personal lives
- Working with children from disadvantaged areas
- The tools needed to advance reading proficiencies

Time Commitment: Minimum once a week for one hour. Schedules may vary depending on the program site and mentor.

Location: Assigned program site in Clark County, Nevada

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Book Prep

Volunteer Title: Book Conservator

Volunteer Reports to:

Las Vegas – Volunteer Experience Specialist

Reno – Program Manager

Role & Responsibilities: Book Conservators beautify and prep books before they are distributed through STWN programs by examining books for wear and tear, removing unwanted stickers, cleaning the front and back of the book and, when needed, placing stickers in books.

Purpose: Every child should feel special when they receive their books. Book Conservators ensure that each book is in good condition so that children are more inclined to read them and foster a greater love for reading.

Benefits: Make a difference in the lives of thousands of children by providing them with an essential resource needed for their success inside and outside of the classroom. This opportunity is great as a team-building exercise or for individuals who want to be part of a passionate community of people dedicated to making the world a better place for kids.

Qualifications:

- Must be dependable and punctual
- Have a detail-orientated mindset
- Be a team player

Training: Individuals are given an orientation and instructions at the beginning of each session by a STWN team member to guide them on the process of cleaning books.

Time Commitment: Two hours. Book Preps are scheduled multiple times a week on various days and times. Check our website for current days and times.

Location:

STWN Main Office –

5373 S. Arville St., Las Vegas, Nevada 89118

STWN Reno Office –

290 Gentry Way, Suite 6, Reno, NV 89502

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Events Volunteer

Volunteer Reports to:

Las Vegas – Outreach Manager

Reno – Program Manager

Role & Responsibility: Event Volunteers help STWN staff plan, prepare for, set up and run activities at different events held throughout the year.

Purpose: Whether it is our fundraising gala, a school adoption ceremony or a distribution event, the successful execution of events by volunteers enables STWN to expand its mission and reach more students in need of the organization's services.

Benefits: Volunteers can partake in networking opportunities, build their communication skills and meet others in the community while serving the community.

Qualifications:

- Have transportation
- Must be dependable and reliable
- Display a friendly and enthusiastic attitude
- Enjoy working in a dynamic, high-energy environment
- Be flexible and willing to learn
- Be able to communicate and work well with others

Training: An orientation will be provided either before the event or at the beginning of the shift on the day of by the STWN staff which will cover the goal of the event, schedule, tasks and responsibilities.

Time Commitment: Will vary depending on the event

Location: Will vary depending on the event

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Warehouse Helpers

Volunteer Reports to:

Las Vegas – Warehouse Manager

Reno – Program Manager

Description: Warehouse Helpers are responsible for performing an array of duties including sorting books, boxing books, packing supplies and aiding in special projects.

Purpose: Warehouse Helpers are vital to the successful operations of STWN's programs to make certain that books and other resources are distributed efficiently and reach the homes of thousands of children in need.

Benefits: Join a team of dedicated individuals who know how to have fun while serving the greater good. Gain relevant skills such as communication, team building, project management and warehouse experience.

Requirements:

- Must be dependable and reliable
- Be a team player
- Be able to stand for long periods of time, bend and lift heavy objects
- Have good listening and communication skills
- Have a willingness to learn
- Be flexible and detail oriented

Training: Volunteers will be provided an orientation by the Warehouse Manager or Warehouse Associates during the beginning of their shift. The orientation will cover general safety guidelines in the warehouse and provide volunteers with tasks for that day.

Time Commitment: Varied

Location:

STWN Main Office –

5373 S. Arville St., Las Vegas, Nevada, 89118

STWN Reno Office –

290 Gentry Way, Suite 6, Reno, NV 89502

CODE OF CONDUCT

Spread the Word Nevada holds its organization to the highest standard of quality there is. Our goal is to work with the best, most loyal and committed people to serve our mission and represent our brand in the community.

Before becoming a volunteer, please review STWN's Code of Conduct which details expectations of character and integrity for our volunteers.

1. Maintain the highest standards of personal and professional integrity, honesty, and fortitude in all public activities to inspire and promote public confidence and trust in STWN.
2. Respect personal differences of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, national origin, religion, political affiliation, social status, and other personal characteristics because society is enriched and strengthened by diversity.
3. Be thorough and objective in the use of facts and information.
4. Strive continuously to grow in knowledge and skills; be alert and receptive to new ideas; share knowledge with and contribute to the professional growth of colleagues; and commit to the advancement of the human service profession.
5. Ensure that undue personal gain is not made from the performance of official duties and that personal acts do not conflict with the conduct of professional duties.
6. Approach organizational and operational duties with a positive attitude and compassion, and foster open communication, creativity and dedication to the STWN mission.
7. Serve the public with respect, courtesy, concern and responsiveness, recognizing that service to the public is a greater good than service to oneself.

Application, Screening & Interviewing

Before volunteering with STWN, all volunteers must complete an online application and gain approval. An interview may be conducted at the discretion of STWN for certain volunteer positions. The application, screening and interview processes are essential to maintaining the integrity of the organization and to ensure the safety of clients, staff and volunteers. These processes provide an opportunity for discussion of volunteer interests and abilities, as well as the needs of STWN, to identify particular roles that will meet the volunteer's needs and provide them with a degree of satisfaction.

While volunteers may express a preference, Spread the Word Nevada reserves the right to determine the specific assignment for each volunteer. No volunteer shall begin the performance of any position until they have been officially accepted for a position and all necessary paperwork is completed.

Non-Discrimination

No one shall be denied volunteer opportunities on the grounds of race, ethnic group, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, age, disability, gender, physical handicap, medical condition or any other classification protected under applicable federal, state or local discrimination law.

All employees and volunteers are expected to show respect and sensitivity toward all other employees and volunteers and to demonstrate a commitment to STWN's equal opportunity objectives. When a violation of this policy is observed, it should be reported immediately to the appropriate staff or the next person in authority.

Group Volunteer Partnerships

Organizations and/or groups seeking long-term recurring volunteer commitments will need to sign a Letter of Agreement which defines roles, expectations and responsibilities of the group and STWN.

Minimum Age Requirements

Generally, volunteers must be at least 7 years old to participate in STWN volunteer activities. However, it is at the discretion of each department to determine minimum age requirements for volunteer roles and whether or not a parent/guardian is required.

Onboarding

Individuals who are volunteering for more than eight hours a week and/or on a long- term regular basis will need to take part in STWN's volunteer onboarding process which involves orientation and paperwork. STWN will contact and notify volunteers if they must complete the onboarding process before volunteering.

Orientation & Training

Upon their initial start date, volunteers will receive an orientation to familiarize them with STWN and its programs, policies and procedures. Training may be conducted in conjunction with or separately from orientation to provide individuals with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment.

Personal Records

Volunteer records provide a resource for documenting service history and training. STWN maintains confidential files for each volunteer in a secured area and keeps current records concerning the volunteer's screening, background checks, training and work records. Volunteers and appropriate staff shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records. The file may be used only for legitimate purposes relating to the work of the volunteer at STWN. Any information regarding volunteers may not be released for use outside of the organization.

Continuing Education

STWN recognizes that the skills and knowledge of its volunteers are critical to its success. Training and educational opportunities are offered periodically within each program that will include additional information on the performance of their current volunteer assignment. Volunteers will be informed of these opportunities at the program level.

SAFETY & HEALTH PRACTICES

General Safety

STWN believes that the majority of accidents are preventable. However even under the best circumstances, an accident may occur. All volunteers are expected to follow basic safe work practices, and volunteers who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations or who fail to report such situations may be subject to termination.

Anti-Harassment

STWN strives to provide a volunteer environment that is pleasant, healthy, comfortable and free from intimidation, hostility or other offenses which might interfere with volunteer performance. Harassment can take many forms. It may be but is not limited to words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, physical contact or violence. Harassment of any sort, whether verbal, physical or visual will not be tolerated.

STWN will not tolerate any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal or physical contacts of a sexual nature.

Drug-Free & Smoke-Free Workplace

STWN is dedicated to providing volunteers and employees with a workplace free of drugs and alcohol. Smoking of tobacco or any other substance is not permitted in STWN facilities. STWN will not tolerate any abuse of drugs or alcohol that impairs the health or well-being of its staff or the population it serves, threatens its operation, or compromises the safety of its services. While on STWN property or performing STWN duties on- premises, volunteers are prohibited from unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, sale or dispensation of illegal drugs or alcohol.

Emergency Response

STWN staff will provide instruction in the event of an emergency. If an evacuation is necessary, move as quickly and orderly as possible and proceed to the designated meeting area. Staff will also advise of the location of first aid kits and AED in case of a medical emergency. Call 911 if necessary.

First Aid

First aid supplies and emergency equipment are located in both the Henderson and Reno offices. Always request the assistance of STWN staff, if basic first aid is necessary. In the event of a medical emergency, call 911.

Incident Reporting

Any volunteer involved in an incident during their activity must report it to a STWN staff person as soon as possible. Each volunteer must also report any unsafe working conditions, equipment or practices as soon as possible. An incident may be defined as something noteworthy or out of the ordinary that resulted in (or could potentially result in) injury and/or property damage.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Absences & Lateness

Volunteers are essential to STWN's mission and when volunteers do not show up during their scheduled time it significantly impacts our operations, programs and logistics.

We understand life happens and things come up that are out of our control. In the event you cannot make your volunteer shift for whatever reason please notify our staff as soon as possible before your scheduled commitment begins. Consistent absences or tardiness may be subject to a reevaluation of a volunteer's commitment.

Attendance

Checking in during your scheduled activity helps us keep track of your hours. There will be designated areas where volunteers can check in either manually, through a sign-in sheet, and/or digitally via a device provided by STWN staff for their program activity.

Confidential Information

All data, materials, knowledge, and proprietary information generated through, originating from or having to do with the Volunteer Program or persons associated with its activities, including contractors is to be considered Confidential Information and is not to be disclosed to any outside party. This includes, but is not limited to, documents, information, designs, printed matter, policies, procedures, conversations, messages (received or transmitted), resources, contacts, e-mail lists and e-mail messages, whether internally between staff or outside the Volunteer Program is confidential and the sole property of STWN.

Agency information, including all file information, is not to be disclosed to any third party under any circumstances without the written consent of STWN. Any disclosure, misuse, copying or transmitting of any material, data or information, whether intentional or unintentional, will subject the volunteer to disciplinary action, prosecution and/or monetary damages according to the procedures set by STWN and any applicable laws.

Disciplinary Practices

The following guidelines may be used in some instances at the sole discretion of STWN:

Step 1: Verbal warning

Step 2: A written warning to individual and copy to their volunteer file

Step 3: Second written warning with retraining and possible suspension

Step 4: Termination

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Disciplinary Practices (cont.)

These guidelines are based on cumulative infractions, regardless of whether the infraction is of the same general nature as a previous warning. The use of these disciplinary practices in no way alters the fact that volunteering at STWN is "at-will."

Dress Code

Volunteers should maintain dress in accordance with the position held. Appropriate attire involves good judgment and should project an image reflecting a professional environment. Specific standards may be required by departments or sections. Volunteers must maintain good grooming and personal hygiene practices.

Ending Volunteer Service

Volunteers may resign from STWN at any time. STWN respectfully asks volunteers to notify their supervisor or Outreach Manager of their departure at least two weeks prior and complete the Exit Interview process.

Equal Opportunity

STWN provides equal volunteering opportunities for everyone regardless of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, or disability that does not prohibit the performance of essential job functions.

All matters relating to volunteering are based upon the ability to perform the job, as well as dependability and reliability.

Exit Interviews

In instances where a volunteer voluntarily leaves, STWN would like to discuss their reasons for leaving and any other feedback the volunteer may have about the organization. We hope that the interview will help us provide insight into possible improvements. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will in no way affect any references that STWN may provide to another agency.

Tracking Hours

STWN does track volunteer hours of service through DonorView. It is the responsibility of the volunteer and their supervisor to update and manage all volunteer hours in the system.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Termination Policy

STWN is an at-will agency and has the right to terminate a volunteer without cause. Dismissal of a volunteer is a serious consideration. Before a volunteer is terminated, attempts to reconcile the solution will take place. In general, failure to adhere to policies of STWN is cause for immediate release.

Grounds for immediate dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Reporting for a volunteer assignment under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Theft of property or misuse of agency funds, equipment or materials
- Falsifying statements on the volunteer application or during the interview process
- Illegal, violent or unsafe acts
- Abuse or mistreatment of clients, volunteers or staff
- Releasing confidential information
- Failure to adhere to safety policies
- Unwillingness to support and further the mission of the organization