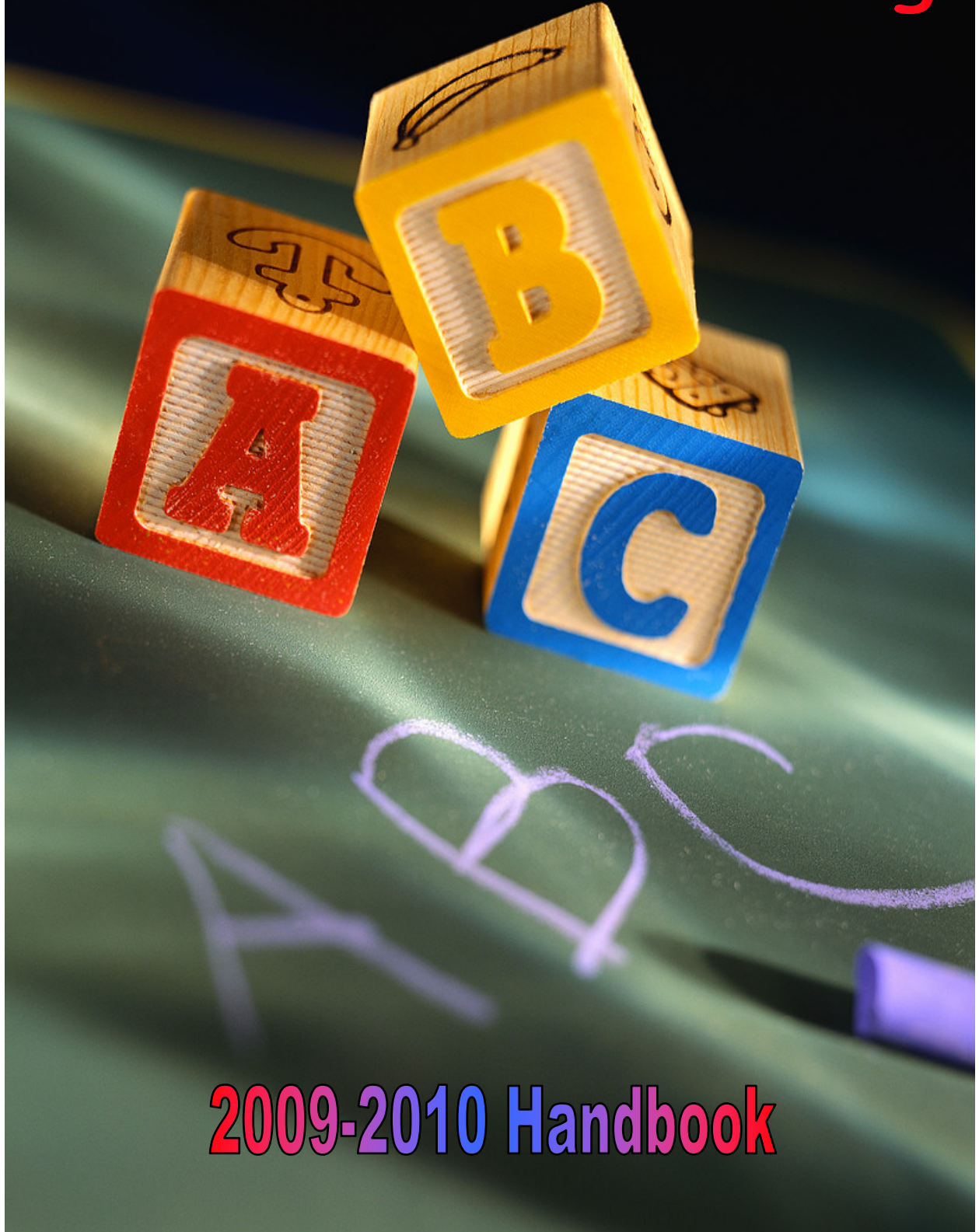


# Partners for Learning



2009-2010 Handbook

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## **Handbook Overview**

This handbook is intended as a reference guide to give a specific account of the Partners for Learning (PFL) program. As a partner, you are encouraged to use this handbook when questions concerning the topics included arise. Above all, it is important to remember that all Supervisors and Site Coordinators are available to assist you with answering your questions.

## **Program Mission**

The Partners for Learning Program is a tutoring and mentoring program that seeks to engage Nazareth students in partnerships with children, teachers, and staff of seven urban education sites. These partnerships are designed to help raise the academic performance and educational aspirations of children while heightening the social awareness and sharpening the professional skills of Nazareth students.

## **Goals of the Partners for Learning Program**

PFL aims to encourage Nazareth College Students (Partners) in their partnership and camaraderie with the students, teachers, and staff of the Rochester City Schools. Partners are welcomed into schools #34, #36, #4, #2, Hope Hall, SWAN, and the YMCA at Lewis Street. Within these communities, Partners embody the roles of teacher's aide, mentor, and tutor. Our partnerships are designed to help raise the academic performance and educational aspirations of the students. On a professional level, Partners are able to heighten their social and cultural awareness as well as sharpen career based skills. The relationships built because of PFL develop beyond mere connections into lifelong memories, experiences, and lessons.

## **Number One Expectation**

We care deeply about the students and teachers in our Partners community. We also care about you as a Partner! If the program is not going well for you, please discuss any problems with the Program Coordinator, the Student Coordinators, and/or your Site Coordinator. If it is a matter of personality conflicts, time conflicts, or overwork, we can adjust your schedule to alleviate any problems. If this is not what you expected and you wish to resign, please consider sticking with it until the end of the semester. Your

position does affect others and therefore we ask that you consider fulfilling your position for the remainder of the semester. The one semester is not a requirement, but it does give teachers and children a good impression concerning the dependability of the Partners for Learning program and the people who participate in it.

## **How Do I Become a Partner?**

All Nazareth students interested in becoming a Partner must fill out an application, obtain a letter of recommendation, and be interviewed prior to acceptance into the program. Applications can be picked up in the Partners Office (Room 155) in the Golisano Academic Center or online. Once all information is completed, applications should be returned to the Partners for Learning Coordinator, Adam Lewandowski, who will schedule an interview. Participation is open to all students no matter what their major, concentrations, or year in school. Priority is given to those students eligible for college work-study. Placements are limited because of the college's ability to provide transportation, accommodate student schedules, and the need for assistance at the sites. Partners who choose to continue in the program after one or more semesters are guaranteed placement the following semester if they continue to meet the requirements of the program.

## **The Sites**

### **In School Sites**

***Hope Hall-*** Hope Hall is an alternative education school. Partners are assigned to a specific classroom at the beginning of the semester and they serve as teacher's assistants.

***School #36-*** School #36 is an inner city school. Partners are assigned to a specific classroom at the beginning of the semester and they serve as teacher's assistants.

***School #4-*** School #4 is also an inner city school. Partners are assigned to a specific classroom at the beginning of the semester and they serve as teachers assistants.

## **After School Sites**

**School #2 SPCC-** School #2 is an after school site. Nazareth partners serve as tutors to the students. When the students are done receiving any extra help or tutoring, Nazareth partners provide the students with homework help.

**School #34 Quad A-** School #34 is an after school program which is focused on youth development. Nazareth partners participate in a variety of activities including homework help, academic support activities that are “fun with a purpose,” and mentoring.

**SWAN-** SWAN stands for **Southwest Area Neighborhood Association**. Partners provide homework help and tutoring to the students at SWAN.

**YMCA at Lewis St.-** The YMCA at Lewis Street is a classroom based site where Nazareth partners are placed directly in a classroom to provide after school tutoring and homework help.

## **Assignments and Introductions**

Prior to your first visit to the site, you will be assigned to either a teacher or an after-school site. Assignments are based on your availability, demand, and available transportation. We try our best to honor veteran Partners’ specific teacher requests, but it is not always possible. We ask that veteran Partners help familiarize new Partners with their site on the first day. Feel free to ask veteran Partners for assistance at any time during your assignment. Orientations taking place at the beginning of each semester provide ample opportunity to ask any questions or address any concerns.

## **The Partners Council**

The Partners Council is all about Partners helping Partners. This group includes approximately eighteen veteran Partners who serve as Site Coordinators and the Program Coordinators. Site Coordinators have various roles within the program. If you have any concerns or problems regarding your placement or anything within the program, you should contact one of your two site coordinators immediately.

Site Coordinators have many roles in addition to the work they do while on site. They track attendance, periodically review goals of the program, meet as a council regularly, promote camaraderie, serve as liaison among the Partners, teachers, and administrators, and help plan workshops and reflection groups.

The Transportation Coordinator takes care of the Community Service vans, which serve as the source of transportation for PFL. Whenever there is a mechanical problem or the vans are simply low on fuel, the Transportation Coordinator or the Program Coordinator should be contacted. The Transportation Coordinator is also responsible for monitoring van cleanliness. However, we ask that all partners please be respectful and remember that they are obligated to remove their own property when leaving the van.

The Assessment Coordinator ensures that the program is meeting stated goals and objectives by developing, distributing, and analyzing assessment tools. The Assessment Coordinator is responsible for developing/updating assessments for programs, generating reports including a year-end program summary, advising other council members based on the results of assessments, and promoting assessment as a positive tool for personal and programmatic growth.

The Program Coordinator has absolute authority over all matters concerning the Partners Program. All major questions should be directed to the Program Coordinator. Assisting the Program Coordinator are the Student Coordinators. The two Student Coordinators are there to answer questions when the Program Coordinator is unavailable. It is also their job to handle payroll and assist in much of the planning for the extra events that take place in addition to classroom duties.

### **Your Opinions Count!**

We give Partners the opportunity to evaluate the program, the coordinators, and the curricular components at the end of your experience, as well as provide any additional input. All information is seriously considered and changes within the program are made on the basis of consistent responses. We ask that everyone will take some time to help us formulate improvements within the program.

## **Workshops and Site Meetings**

Workshops and Site Meetings give Partners an opportunity to reflect about their site experiences, to share them with each other, and to create a community between Partners. Workshops allow us to periodically deal with new issues, concerns, and questions that have arisen.

It is easy to lose touch with other Partners and the Partners Council as the business of the academic year takes its course. For this reason, and because these programs allow us to learn from each other as well as receive various types of training throughout the year, attendance is MANDATORY.

**Note:** Since these are mandatory work hours, you will be compensated for your time. It is important to notify the Program Coordinator in order to be excused from attending certain workshops. Others are optional. In all, you must have a total of SIX combined workshop or site meeting hours for each semester.

## **Keys to Payment**

### **Daily Attendance Policy**

Partners are expected to be at the site during scheduled times. For Partners riding in the Community Service vans, it is important to meet with your Site Members one half hour early to make departure time. Partners are expected to manage their time appropriately and attend the hours they have obligated themselves to work. They may not take time off for academic assignments. Partners have an obligation to their students, teachers, and school. Absences are permitted for health issues, emergencies, and other serious circumstances. Hours must be entered electronically on students' NazNet account under Staff. The process of completing your time card will be explained in depth during the Partners orientation at the beginning of the semester. Program Coordinators and Site Coordinators will orient you to the process. **IF YOU DO NOT SUBMIT YOUR TIME CARD BY THE DATE IT IS DUE, YOU DO NOT GET PAID!**

## **The Paper Work**

The authorization form (I-9, W-4, and NYS IT-2104) are essential in receiving payment for your tutoring hours. All of these forms will be available at orientation and can also be obtained from the Payroll Office located in the basement in Smyth. All Partners are required to complete an authorization form. This requires the Program Coordinator's signature.

If you filled out an I-9 last year, you do not need to fill out another one this year. If you filled out a W-4 and NYS IT-2104 last year, it is not necessary to fill them out again unless your enrollment status has changed (for example: full time student to part time student) or you would like to change your tax withholding. If you have not filled out a W-4 and NYS IT-2104, fill them out and return them to Payroll along with two forms of identification (such as driver's license, passport, NY identification card, or a social security card).

## **When You Are Absent**

**Please take the following steps:**

1. If applicable, call your site to inform them that you will be absent.
2. Let the people in your vehicle know that you will not be coming. This can be done by calling your site coordinator, leaving a message in the Site Folder, calling the PFL office, or by personally contacting another passenger in your vehicle.
3. Contact your Site Coordinator and the Program Coordinator to let them know you will be absent.

→ ALL PHONE CALLS MUST BE MADE IN A TIMELY MANNER.

COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE COMPLETED TWO HOURS PRIOR TO THE DEPARTURE OF YOUR VAN. THE MAIN PRIORITY IS TO HAVE SOMEONE NOTIFIED BEFORE THE START OF YOUR SHIFT.

Note: Students and teachers at the schools depend on your participation and EVERY EFFORT should be made to fulfill your commitment. An unexcused absence is defined as failure to be present without prior notification, as stated above.

## **Communication and E-Mail**

Communication among Partners is mainly conducted through e-mail. For this reason it is important for all partners to be responsible for being familiar with e-mail and must check it regularly. Pay information, time cards on NazNet, snow day closings, and workshop notices are just a few examples of the important pieces of information that you will find out about through e-mail or online services.

## **Dress Code, Attire**

Each site may have particular difference in what is considered appropriate dress. The best rule of thumb is to follow the lead of your Site Coordinator and the staff at your sites. Coordinators have the authority to determine what attire is and is not appropriate and to require Partners to change clothes (if needed) before leaving for the sites. Examples of inappropriate clothing include but are not limited to: ripped jeans, low cut shirts, spaghetti strap shirts, shirts that do not cover the back and/or belly, shirts with inappropriate language/prints (including references to alcohol, drugs, sex, etc.), short skirts, shorts, any tight or revealing clothing, flip-flops, and hats (unless utilized for cultural or religious purposes).

## **Cell Phone Policy**

A major goal of PFL is to provide children with mentors who give them their undivided attention. When Partners use their cell phones at site, it not only takes away from this necessary attention, but it distracts the students as well, becoming harmful to their learning environment. Therefore, it is rarely appropriate for Partners to use cell phones when working. Any personal cell phone use, INCLUDING TEXTING, must wait until after Partners return to campus. Cell phone use is only permitted at site in limited circumstances when it relates to PFL or in an emergency situation.

## **Transportation Community Service Vehicles**

The Partners Program uses six Nazareth vehicles to transport Partners to and from the sites. This does not mean you have to use this transportation. It is simply an option to all Partners, regardless of whether or not you have your own automobile.

Before each shift, Partners need to gather outside the PFL office in the Golisano Academic Center (Room 155). All drivers must have a current driver's license on file in the office and have taken both the Defensive Driving Course and the on-road training session. The driver will need to go to the Campus Safety Office to pick up the keys for the vehicle and sign them out.

Note: THE TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING THE VEHICLES, BUT PARTNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR DISCARDING ANYTHING THEY BRING INTO THE VAN.

### **Rules for Vehicle Usage**

- Always return and sign the keys into the security office once you are back at Nazareth College.
- If a reserved space is blocked, let Campus Safety know where you have parked the van.
- Always remove any garbage (food, wrappers, napkins, bottles, cans, etc.) that you have brought into the van with you.
- Do not bring valuables with you and do not leave any backpacks, bags, or coats in the vans when you go into the school. PFL is not responsible for any lost, stolen, or damaged items.
- Always lock the doors while you are driving to work and while you are at work.
- Put the hazard lights on if you are waiting in the loading zone behind the Golisano Academic Center.
- If you are not going to your site, remember to notify somebody in your van promptly.

### **Vehicle Problems**

In the case that the vehicle breaks down away from campus, there are AAA and roadside emergency cards located in the glove compartment of each vehicle, along with a listing of necessary phone numbers. Please call the Program Coordinator at x2307, Center for Spirituality Secretary at x2303, or Campus Safety at x2850.

## Learning to Interact as a Tutor

Tutoring is a rewarding job but requires certain skills in order to have a successful experience. As a tutor, your main objective is to communicate and to listen carefully in order to help your learners achieve success. These are the necessary skills you will need in order to be a successful tutor.

You can achieve your goal by getting to know your students and by building a trusting relationship with the people you work with. Trust is built on mutual respect and friendship, so do not be afraid to spend a little time establishing friendly working relationships.

Another significant aspect in the interaction between tutors and students is that teachers and tutors sometimes have a tendency to talk too much or to over-explain. Because students are accustomed to this situation they tend to “tune-out”. To avoid this, you must engage the students in true discussion. Find out what they need to know and then ask questions that they can answer. The objective of the questions you are asking is to trigger ideas that will engage the students in independent problem solving. Creativity in teaching methods is also encouraged.

Finally, it is important to give your students “wait-time,” which is enough time to answer the questions. “Wait-time” helps encourage students to participate in the discussion. Helping students to think independently is a necessary component to independent learning. Here are some helpful “tricks of the trade.”

- Ask the student what they already know about the questions, and then listen to their responses.
- Discuss with them the problem/question/task at hand.
- Use terms of the subject.
- Engage the student verbally.

Remember: Listening to your students talk about their education will help you gain information about them, their knowledge, and how they best approach problems.

Aside from encouraging independent learning, it is necessary to focus on the learning process. Give your students a chance to guess or predict answers to problems. Doing this allows students to focus their attention on the process of learning rather than on the answers to the problems/questions. While there is some risk involved, making predictions is necessary for the development of useful skills. If you have a trusting relationship you may be able to help you students begin to take appropriate risks, particularly if you listen to their reasoning and feedback.<sup>1</sup>

### **Important! Classroom Management**

It is the responsibility of the teacher in charge to handle **classroom management**, to dismiss the children, and to assist the Partners with assignments. Partners **should not be left alone** with any amount of students at any time. While you may feel comfortable performing these tasks it is NOT your obligation, nor is it your duty to do so.

### **How to Motivate a Child**

Many times motivating a child is as simple as sharing your own history and feelings about education. Perhaps the most helpful experience to share with an unmotivated student would be your own similar negative experience and how your feelings changed into a more positive outlook. Often times knowing that the student is not the first person to experience negative feelings towards a particular subject, allows the student to feel better about their education and about themselves.

It is important to be involved in what the students are learning. Generally, few students approach homework with a happy attitude. Having a tutor work together with them to assist in the process often makes it not only fun, but also less intimidating.

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<sup>1</sup> Learning to Interact as a Tutor has been adapted from The Volunteer Tutor's Toolbox, edited by Beth Ann Herrmann.

## **Help for Any Student**

The most significant tool a tutor can give any student is encouragement. Students experiencing a low self-esteem problem may feel as if they cannot do the work at hand. In most cases the child is more than capable of doing their work. However, a feeling of failure may scare and intimidate them. Helping a student overcome these feelings will be essential to the betterment of the student. Tell them that you know they can do it!

Becoming involved in the students' work is also important. Working directly with them will help to lessen the overwhelming nature of their work. A little bit of help and a lot of encouragement will work wonders for a student.

Drills are another useful way to aid a struggling student. Drills are repetitive exercises geared towards the area in which the child has demonstrated weakness. Along with the drills, include some kind of a reward for good effort and correct answers. Stickers, games, and other fun activities usually do the trick.

Finally, it is important to have a conference with the grade level teachers in order to discover the students' weak area, as well as where their abilities need to be by the end of the school year. This will give you direction so that planning drills and emphasizing certain subjects can be done with a degree of certainty and effectiveness.<sup>2</sup>

## **Help for the Child Struggling With Literacy**

Literacy and reading comprehension tends to be challenging at the elementary level. Pre and post reading instruction, along with instruction during reading is necessary in order to boost both literacy and comprehension levels.

**The following charts will assist you in tutoring students during all three of these stages.**

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<sup>2</sup> Special thanks to Daphne Keys, former Latchkey #33 teacher, who helped supply the information for the above two segments.

## Reading Instruction

### Before:

- Build on background information of text.
- Provide experience/opportunities for meaningful uses of words (vocabulary and concepts).
- Move from concrete notions to abstract notions.
- Activate student's prior knowledge.

### During:

- Integrate new and unknown information with the text.
- Ask thought provoking or deeper meaning questions.
- Reciprocal teaching – prediction, question generating, clarifying.
- Question the Author.
- Story map – A map of what happens and when it happens.
- Graphic Organizers – brainstorming about an event in the book, i.e. – how it related to an event similar to one of your own, t-chart, clustering.
- Retellings.

### After:

- Comprehension Questions – along with it's application
- Story Map
- Graphic Organizers

## **Of the Highest Importance is Our Commitment to All Children Multicultural World/Multicultural Education**

As Partners we work in an incredibly diverse community. For some of you, this may be the first time you work closely with members of our community who are of a different race, ethnicity, and culture. You will definitely meet people from different cultures with different traditions and values other than your own. Our goal as Partners is to work effectively with all members of the community, to value and celebrate diversity and to help children find success by being caring, patient, and understanding of their unique needs. **This takes some hard work!** For Partners, Multicultural Education<sup>3</sup> means:

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<sup>3</sup> Multicultural Education Definition taken from <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/initial.html>, by Paul C. Gorski.

- Every student must have an equal opportunity to achieve to her or his full potential.
- Every student must be prepared to competently participate in an increasingly intercultural society.
- Teachers must be prepared to effectively facilitate learning for every individual student, no matter how culturally similar or different from her- or himself.
- Schools must be active participants in ending oppression of all types, first by ending oppression within their own walls, then by producing socially and critically active and aware students.
- Education must become more fully student-centered and inclusive of the voices and experiences of the students.
- Educators, activists, and others must take a more active role in reexamining all educational practices and how they affect the learning of all students: testing methods, teaching approaches, evaluation and assessment, school psychology and counseling, educational materials and textbooks, etc.

**As Partners we also have a responsibility to look at our own biases, preconceptions, and prejudices about race, culture, and values. We believe:**

“As an educator, I have a dual responsibility to engage in a critical and continual process to examine how my prejudices, biases, and assumptions inform my teaching and thus affect the educational experiences of my students. I have a responsibility to myself to study and understand the lenses through which I understand the people and happenings around me. Only when I have a sense for how my own perceptions are developed in relation to my life experiences can I truly understand the world around me and effectively navigate my relationships with colleagues. I also have a responsibility to my students to work toward eliminating my prejudices, examining who is (and is not) being reached by my teaching style, and relearning how my own identity affects their learning experiences. To be an effective multicultural educator, and indeed an effective educator, I must be in a constant process of self-examination and transformation.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Multicultural Education Definition taken from <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/initial.html>, by Paul C. Gorski.

If you have any questions or concerns about how this may affect you or your work as a Partner, please contact your Site Coordinator, Student Coordinators, or Program Coordinator, Adam Lewandowski. Partners for Learning offers several workshops specifically addressing Multiculturalism each semester. Attending these workshops is a great way to increase your knowledge, understanding, and skills.

## A Closing Letter to Partners

*Dear Partners,*

*It is important to remember that you will learn many lessons throughout the course of the time in which you are employed by Partners for Learning. Sometimes your days may seem long and you may feel like you are not making a difference. However, your presence alone is enough to make a lasting impression on the children's lives. Your help and friendship are both invaluable to them. You are an asset to the teacher, and a gift to the classroom. The students look up to you not only because you teach them, but because you are a friend to them. You are helping to build a brighter future. In turn, this program affects many lives, including your own.*

*Best Wishes,  
Partners for Learning*