

"I knew that coming to art group would mean a lot to the kids, but I just didn't realize how much!" – New DrawBridge Volunteer

Group Structure & Volunteer Duties

General Group Structure and Guidelines:

- Art groups occur weekly or bi-monthly for approximately 2 hours per session.
- Most groups are held on weeknights in the late afternoon or early evening.
- Art groups are neither art classes nor child therapy. They are a safe place for children to freely explore their creativity. A project or materials are made available, but children have the choice to participate as they wish.
- We offer children the opportunity to freely choose from a range of materials, helping them restore a sense of security and control over their surroundings.
- During the group, trained art group facilitators and volunteers are responsive to the requests of children in order to give them the sense of having their needs met. Keep in mind that they often have to worry about issues of safety and survival, and they need to have a safe place that is just for them.
- In order to maintain a safe and non-judgmental space, we discourage outsiders from participating or commenting on the children's artwork.
- Children are not expected to clean up after art group. Messes, within reason, are allowed and encouraged.
- Art Group is for the children. We allow them to direct their experience as much as possible, without imposing our ideas about how things should go.

Volunteer Duties:

- Show up weekly or bimonthly for the groups. Communicate with your Art Facilitator, if you need to miss a group.
- Arrive at the site on time.
- Provide individual attention and loving guidance to children in art groups.
- Spend a minimum of six months in one group.
- Help the Art Facilitator set up and clean up after group.

How To Be a Great Volunteer:

- A DrawBridge volunteer is compassionate to the issues of and related to children and homelessness, respectful of the physical and psychological

- space of others, responsible with time commitments, and loves and respects children.
- Consistently being present for art group is a fundamental principle of the DrawBridge philosophy. For children already experiencing chaotic lives and numerous losses, having adults who show up faithfully each week is of paramount importance. We as human beings want to be committed. It is our very human nature to want to build lasting relationships and to stay with them as they grow and change. Giving the gift of commitment to the children of DrawBridge and building positive relationships with them is as important as the expressive arts component of our program.

How To Be Present:

- Listen, witness and offer loving encouragement. Meet the children where they are and just be present with them.