Our Mission

The Holleran Center strives to foster the University mission and improve the quality of life in our community and to develop in its students a lifelong commitment to service as engaged citizens.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”
-Mahatma Gandhi

Our Vision

To integrate Alvernia’s curriculum and co-curricular activities with the external community the Holleran Center will:

- Initiate strategic partnerships that enhance Alvernia’s mission, leverage campus and community expertise, address community needs and produce mutually beneficial results;
- Serve as the central resource for students, faculty, and staff to engage in community-based projects and as a catalyst for expanding community-based learning of all types-including internships, field experiences, and service-learning projects;
- Serve as the central point of access for the community to campus resources and serve as an incubator for projects to address community needs;
- Establish Alvernia as a leader in community-based learning and civic engagement-locally, regionally and eventually nationally.
As a volunteer with the South Reading Youth Initiative and the Holleran Center for Community Engagement:

- You are responsible for helping participants with their homework, mentoring them, encouraging appropriate behavior, participating in program activities, and assisting in set up and tear down.

- The South Reading Youth Initiative program will run on **Monday through Thursday from 2:00-5:30pm**, usually out of St. Peter’s Church, but also out of various locations in Reading. You will be informed in advance of any location or time changes.

- You are **responsible for your own transportation** to and from program sites. If necessary, arrangements for car pooling can be made with other volunteers or with the Holleran Center staff. Hours worked with the South Reading Youth Initiative can be used towards Alvernia’s community service hours or to fulfill a service-learning class requirement.
When I Arrive....

- **Sign In** on volunteer sign in sheet on kitchen counter.
- Help set up chairs and tables.
- Bring out items from back room:
  - Kids Café signs, rule boards, lost and found items, pencils, markers, paper, etc...
  - Walk to Saint Peter’s at 2:30 pm to pick up kids during dismissal.

When I Leave....

- Wipe down tables, stack chairs (stack tables on Thursdays only).
- Take out trash to red dumpster & put away trash cans.
- Put away homework tools.
- Sit with kids outside of church.
- Ask Rochelle if anything else needs finished.
- **Sign out!!!!**
Tips for Tutors

• Take time to **get to know** your student!
  - Ask questions that show a personal interest in him or her.
  - Use questions that cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no.”
  - The SRYI participants will also ask you questions so be prepared!

• Do not limit yourself to working with just one child at all times. Sometimes your help will be needed at another table. Each of our participants has a wonderful and unique personality...**get to know as many as you can!**

• Do not hesitate to **take leadership**.
  - You may answer non-homework related questions as you feel comfortable.
  - If a child is breaking a rule, please do your best to correct the behavior by giving a warning or issuing a behavior slip. Involve Rochelle if the problem persists.

• Do **not** make moralistic judgments about the student’s socioeconomic, ethnic or cultural background.

• **Do not judge** a child’s intelligence based on their verbal communication.
  - Many of our kids speak Spanish in their homes, and while they all can speak English, they may be a bit self-conscious.

• Be **flexible** and **patient**.

• Don’t just give the students answers for their homework, **help them figure it out** for themselves.

• Expect to **GAIN** as much from these students as you give!
  - Consider yourself a **co-learner**.

• **Try to get them to read!**

• **HAVE FUN!**

For more information, please contact (610)-568-1527.
Volunteer Policies

- Please **dress appropriately**. You will be working with kids, which sometimes involves sitting on the floor or doing arts and crafts projects!
- Some of the SRYI participants have social media accounts and/or cell phones. Please **do not** accept ‘friend requests’ or exchange cell phone numbers. It is important to maintain a **professional (but still friendly) relationship** with the students.
- Interactions with youth outside of programming hours is prohibited.
- We discourage the use of cell phones by our participants during SRYI programs. Please help set a good example by **refraining from using your cell phone during programming**. If you have to use your phone, please notify a staff member and step away from the activity.
- Avoid being completely alone with a single child. This does not mean that you can’t take a child aside for a brief confidential discussion about their behavior or some matter that they have asked to discuss with you. It does mean that such a meeting should take place in full view of other people, if even from a distance or in the presence of a second adult. In general, however, ensure that you are with another volunteer or with a group of participants.
- **Inappropriate actions include:**
  - Wrestling with youths
  - Tickling
  - Allowing a youth to physically hang or cling on to a volunteer
  - Any form of affection that is unwanted by the youth or the volunteer
- Do not take pictures of children for personal use. If you have or are provided with pictures of children do not distribute them on social networking sites.
- **Never come** to a SRYI-sponsored event **under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol**. It is against University Policy and we also need to set positive examples for our participants.
- All volunteers need to remain in good standing with both Alvernia and the local community. If an issue arises, the Holleran Center staff reserve the right to either place a volunteer’s status on hold, or revoke volunteer privileges with the SRYI after-school program.
- You have signed a liability waiver; this waiver applies to any program, event, or activity sponsored by the South Reading Youth Initiative, the Holleran Center for Community Engagement, and/or Alvernia University.

*If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies, please contact (610)-568-1527.*
All participants of the South Reading Youth Initiative are required to sign a behavior contract ensuring their knowledge of the rules of our programs. Below is a list of rules and regulations that will be presented to the SRYI participants during the first week of programming.

- Show respect for fellow students, teachers, supervisors, guest speakers, and all other university personnel at all times.
- Keep a positive attitude during the various parts of the program.
- The SRYI participants are not allowed to use their phones for texting or calling during the program. They also cannot listen to music or play games on their phones. They may make phone calls to their parents with your or my permission.
- Handheld games and mp3 players are not allowed during programming.
- Show willingness to cooperate and follow directions.
- No running inside!
- Use appropriate language (no name calling, swearing, etc)
- No harassment of another student, volunteers, or Alvernia staff.
- No fighting, hitting, punching, etc.
- No possession or use of drugs or alcohol.
- No possession of any weapons, pepper/mace sprays, etc.
- No stealing of property at any program location.
- No causing damage to university property (students will be held financially responsible for any damages).
- Do not leave campus/program location without permission/supervision.

Questions?
Please contact 610-568-1527.
Consequences for SRYI youth participants

If any SRYI youth is not following the rules that are in place, there are certain consequences that the Holleran Center has set up. While regular Alvernia volunteers are expected to enforce the rules and are able to impose consequences, if you are not comfortable disciplining the participants, please find a Holleran Center staff member and report the behavior.

1. Verbal Warning
   - Participants get 2 verbal warnings if they are misbehaving. At the time of the second warning, please be clear that it is their second and final warning.

2. Time Out
   - Time out lasts for 5 minutes. The time starts when the student is sitting in the chair facing away from the activities and is behaving. If the student gets up before his/her time out is over, talks to other students, or becomes disruptive, the time resets.

3. Call Parents
   - If the bad behavior continues, a Holleran Center staff member will take control of the situation (if they have not already). The child’s parents will be called to inform them of the behavior issues, and if possible the student will be sent home for the remainder of the program. If the student cannot be sent home, they will be removed from the rest of the day’s activities.

4. Formal Meeting
   - In extreme cases, a face-to-face meeting will be set up between the child’s parents and the Holleran Center staff to discuss the problem and potential solutions.
Bonus Bucks

Bonus Bucks can be handed out by Holleran Center staff members, work-study students or volunteers who have volunteered with the SRYI program in the past.

- Bonus Bucks are to be given out to reward exceptional behavior, making good decisions, being helpful/polite, or any other action that goes above and beyond the normal expectations of behavior.
  - Examples:
    - Helping set up chairs/tables
    - Helping other kids with homework questions
    - Helping to clean up
    - Holding the door for other students

- If you are unsure about whether something deserves to be rewarded, just ask a Holleran Center staff member!

- SRYI participants will be allowed to keep track of their own Bonus Bucks or they will have the option to put them in the SRYI “Bank” which tracks how many each student has earned.

- Bonus Bucks can be used to purchase items in the “Store” (little toys, books, supplies, etc) or “Donated” to a selected charity/organization.

For more information, please contact (610)-568-1527.
Important Information

Directions to St. Peter’s
322 South 5th Street, Reading PA 19602

Leave campus and head towards Rt 10 on Upland Avenue. At the Intersection of Rt 10 and Upland take a left. Be sure to be in the right lane at the traffic light. Turn right at the light (intersection of Lancaster Avenue and Rt 10) and continue across the bridge into downtown Reading. The road bears slightly right. You should be in the left lane to turn left at the first light (5th Street). Stay in the left lane after you turn and St. Peter’s Church is in the first block on your left. It’s a large gray stone church. To park, you’ll want to turn into the lot BEFORE the church. There is parking both on the side and in the rear of the church.

When you go to leave, exit through the rear of the parking lot. Take a left, then a right at the stop sign, and a left at the first light. That will bring you back across the bridge, take a left at the SECOND light to get back onto Route 10 to return to campus. Upland Avenue will be on your right across from Troopers.

Program Days
Monday-Thursday 2:30-5:00pm
Homework help (2:30-3:30 or until finished), hot meal (about 3:30-4:00 except on travel days), activity time (4:00-5:00).

Contact Information
Program Manager: Rochelle Oswald

Cell Phone: Ask if needed!
Office Phone: 610-568-1527
Email: rochelle.oswald@alvernia.edu
Volunteer Safety

- Be aware of your surroundings and **travel in pairs**.
- Always walk confidently, and appear as though you know where you are going.
- Do not leave personal belongings where others may be tempted to take them (it is best to put items in the trunk of your vehicle). Also be sure to lock your vehicle.
- **Do not report to a program under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.**
- Dress appropriately for the site and work you plan to do.
- Ensure that children participating in any program are directly supervised at all times, but make sure you are no alone with any single child at any time.
- Do not walk around the city by yourself, always work on the buddy system.
- Be sure that someone with you is carrying the number for Public Safety (610-796-8350) and the Program Manager in case of emergency.
- If you need to provide a phone number to someone you are working with, you may provide the Holleran Center for Community Engagement’s number (610-796-5509).
- If you are uncertain about how to perform a task, ask someone to help you.
- Do not overestimate your ability to deal with a difficult situation such as breaking up a fight. Injuries incurred by you can also be damaging to the South Reading Youth Initiative as well as the University. **Remember, you are a representative of Alvernia University.**
- Only administer First Aid to the level that you are comfortable.
  - A First Aid Kid is available at all events and programs.
- Please discuss any questions or concerns with the Program Manager.

Please contact (610-568-1527) with any questions or concerns.
ABOUT THE VOLUNTEER PROTECTION ACT
The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, signed into law on June 18th, 1997, was created to “provide certain protections to volunteers, nonprofit organizations and governmental entities in lawsuits based on the activities of volunteers.” The time of the bill coincided with the April Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future, calling for all Americans to get involved in community service and was aimed at removing potential volunteers’ fear of liability.

The Act provides liability protection for volunteers under the following conditions:

The volunteer was acting within the scope of the volunteer’s responsibilities in the non-profit organization or governmental entity at the time of the act of omission;

If appropriate or required, the volunteer was properly licensed, certified or authorized by the appropriate authorities for the activities or practice in the State in which the harm occurred, where the activities were or practice was undertaken within the scope of harm occurred, where the activities were or practice was undertaken within the scope of the volunteer’s responsibilities in the non-profit organization or governmental entity;

The harm was not caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless misconduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed by the volunteer;

The Act does not affect that “liability of any non-profit or governmental entity with respect to harm caused to any person,” nor does it affect a non-profit’s taking civil action against any volunteer or the non-profit. For more information, see US Public Law No: 105-19

(Summary provided by Campus Compact 2006)