

TO: OLLI Fall 2021 Student
FROM: Dr. Amelia Barili

Welcome to my “Meditation, Volunteering, and Neuroplasticity” class. I have been teaching this class since 2013 and have seen how much students benefit from the volunteer experience as a learning opportunity with people from other cultures, contribute to the community, and increase positive neuroplasticity. Here are reflections from two previous OLLI students who have continued to volunteer with the same agency since taking my class:

I started volunteering with Refugee & Immigrant Transitions (RIT) through this class in 2015. Since March of 2020, it has been on Zoom. I find the students to be as engaged as they were in person and as determined to better themselves and their English. They are so appreciative and their smiles come through even when I can't see their faces. I continue to say that I receive much more than I give working with this population and with RIT. This is an agency that is appreciative of and supportive to their volunteers!

Ann Whalley

Amelia Barili's class was a life changing transition from retirement to finding meaningful volunteer work in the community while learning about and practicing neuroplasticity. The support and encouragement in classroom discussions with other volunteers was an important element in making the experience successful. Since I took Amelia's class in 2014, I have continued to volunteer with RIT assisting in the classroom or on Zoom with adults from diverse countries around the world. In addition to learning about their cultures, our potluck celebrations are a special culinary treat. Volunteering provides purpose and community.

Milly Alvarez

These are descriptions of the 3 organizations we have partnered to volunteer with, their requirements, and the contact person. These written instructions complement the video “Meeting the Volunteer Coordinators”. Please watch it. It is in our OLLI course’s website. **Please select one of these volunteer opportunities and send me your choice by August 25, 2021.**

SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

TOM LAURSEN Senior Coordinator, Volunteer Engagement, San Francisco Education Fund.

email: tlaursen@sfedfund.org

A message from Tom to you:

Thank you so much for your interest in becoming a school volunteer! The San Francisco Education Fund gives community members the opportunity to help their local schools by providing one-on-one tutoring, general classroom assistance or non-academic mentoring.

San Francisco Education Fund is a non-profit organization that has been working with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) in this capacity for over 55 years.

The following link will take you to the volunteer page of the San Francisco Education Fund’s website: <https://sfedfund.org/become-a-volunteer>. There you’ll find a detailed explanation of the programs they offer and the commitment you would be asked to make should you decide to volunteer.

INFORMATION and REQUIREMENTS for SFUSD: Although the SFUSD application asks volunteers to commit to tutor for an academic year, or to mentor for a calendar year. Our “Meditation, Volunteering and Positive Neuroplasticity” course has a special arrangement for volunteering **online** with 2 Options.

- **Option 1.** To volunteer in the **Tutors in Classroom** you will need to commit to volunteer **online** 1 hour a week, **from Sep 22 to the third week of Dec 2021**, with teachers that want help until that date.

SFUSD gets various requests from teachers, some for classroom assistants and some for 1:1 tutors. **Classroom assistants** basically do whatever the teacher asks of them during the hour they're volunteering. As a **1:1 Tutor** you will work with the same student every week. Both of these jobs **will be done in breakout rooms online** under the direction of the teacher. Volunteers typically self-select for the subject area and grade level they're comfortable with.

Please, after you fill the SFUSD application remind Tom Laursen, Volunteer Coordinator, that you are from this course and that you will only be volunteering through the Fall instead of the full school year. Tom recommends that you answer YES to Question # 3 about the length of your commitment (so that the system doesn't boot you out) and then contact him by email to remind him of your special arrangement, so he can place you accordingly.

When you talk to Tom please also specify if you prefer to be a **classroom assistant** or a **1:1 tutor**.

Please feel free to write to Tom with any questions you might have about any part of the process (from the application to the fingerprinting).

- **Option 2.** To volunteer in the **Non-academic Mentoring Program** you will need to commit to volunteer online 1 hour a week **for a whole calendar year**. This mentoring program is at every level from kindergarten to 12 grade. You will be matched with a student with similar interests to you and at the grade level you pick. You would meet **online** and would play games, do activities, talk, whatever you both enjoyed and whatever helped create a bond between both of you. It is simply being an additional caring adult in a child's life, like the Big Brother/Big Sister program except that the meetings traditionally take place in the school. And this calendar year, because of the pandemic, they will take place online. You will be arranging

with your mentee what date/time works better for both of you for those 1- hour-a-week online meetings.

- 1) Although in the general SFUSD application it says: “Volunteers can begin any time between late August and early March”, participants in the “Meditation, Volunteering and Positive Neuroplasticity” course, need to complete the SFUSD application and online orientation by mid or late August. Please make sure you take one of these orientations if you want to volunteer with SFUSD. **The online orientations are on the following dates:**

8/11/2021	Wednesday	1-3 pm for Tutors 1-4 pm for Mentors
8/26/2021	Thursday	5:30 -7:30 pm for Tutors and Mentors

If you decide to volunteer with SFUSD, you need to

- complete the online application, <https://sfedfund.org/volunteer-interest-form/>
- select a training date
- provide two references
- pass a background check (Live Scan)
- provide proof that you have tested negative for TB (done on line with SFUSD nurse during the orientation in most cases).
- evidence of COVID vaccination

The cost for Live Scan fingerprinting and TB is approximately \$80. If the cost of this is a hindrance to you, please contact Tom for partial assistance on the cost.

- 2) Once you’ve fulfilled these six requirements, write to Tom Laursen, Senior Coordinator, Volunteer Engagement, San Francisco

Education Fund at tlaursen@sfedfund.org and let him know that you are applying to volunteer and that you are in Dr. Barili's course at OLLI. Tom will then begin the proceedings to find you a placement in the program you chose from either of those 2 options.

- 3) SFUSD will call you and work together on securing a classroom placement or student match. **Remember. Classroom assistants and tutors** are asked to commit to volunteering a minimum of one hour a week, as per our special arrangement, from September to the 3rd week of December. **Volunteers in the Non-academic Mentoring Program** are asked to meet with their mentees one hour a week for a whole academic year.

If you have any questions about the volunteer process, please email Tom Laursen at tlaursen@sfedfund.org.

REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT TRANSITIONS (RIT)
GRACE LAU, Volunteer Coordinator at San Francisco RIT
email: grace@reftrans.org

A message from Grace to you.

You will find it very rewarding to tutor and mentor a newcomer who needs a helping hand to navigate the new system in our shared community. We look forward to hearing from you. I will be happy to answer any of your questions.

INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS FOR RIT

Refugee & Immigrant Transitions (RIT), formerly Refugee Transitions, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit operating in the San Francisco Bay Area. RIT provides free education, family engagement, and community leadership

programs. Their students have sought refuge due to war, violence, persecution, or economic duress. To learn more about this NGO please visit their website: <https://www.reftrans.org/>. **Please be aware that RIT requires a minimum commitment of 6 months to work with adult students and 9 months to work with youth students.** RIT students are at various literacy levels. Students need help to improve their English, literacy, and other skills on their pathways to schooling, employment, and citizenship. **RIT has a high need of volunteers who can speak Spanish, Amharic, Arabic, Cantonese, Pashto, Mam, Mandarin, and Tigrinya.**

During the pandemic, RIT's volunteer programs are virtual. A volunteer and a student will meet weekly via zoom for a minimum of 2 hours every week. As mentioned before, to tutor adults you need to commit 6-months (9 months if you tutor youth). Please remember that an hour of tutoring session per week is not enough. Two hours are required. You can meet twice a week for one hour per session. The tutoring session can happen on weekends too. Based on the volunteer and student schedules.

You can start anytime registering with RIT and volunteering. But, **if you are volunteering with RIT and taking this course, please submit the RIT online application to RIT and take the online orientation at the latest by August 25th.** The whole process of registering takes about one month. The RIT volunteer coordinators will do their best to match our OLLI volunteers who register early. As RIT facilitators they want to make sure they are able to give out great experiences for both volunteers and students. Both volunteers and students need to be mutually learning throughout the process.

STEP BY STEP REGISTRATION WITH RIT. (Please remember they are mainly looking for volunteers who has a workable knowledge of Amharic, Arabic, Cantonese, Pashto, Mam, Mandarin, **Spanish**, and Tigrinya)

- 1) Fill Online Application [HERE](#). After filling the application, please email Grace and let her know that you are with Dr. Barili's class.

- 2) Do a Self-Guided Online Orientation (~2 hours of videos and answer some questions). This orientation will help you familiarize yourself with RIT as an organization, its mission, vision, volunteer programs, and students. The orientation also includes information about a volunteer's role and commitment, and other useful resources.
- 3) Take an INTERVIEW with a RIT representative to see if you will be a good fit for RIT (1/2 hour)
- 4) After the interview you will be invited to participate in an ONLINE Virtual TRAINING SESSION (2-3 hours) and will be given the Date for that Training Session. How to use various aspects of zoom as Share Screen, Whiteboard, Annotations, etc, and how to approach newcomers to establish a solid foundation for learning together. Also what to plan for your lesson plan, etc. (RIT will share folders and educational resources with our OLLI volunteers)
- 5) Live Scan fingerprinting (it can take two to four weeks to get the results)

CASA MAGDALENA MORA

Chicanx Latinx Student Development Office

EVELYN ROJO, M.A. Assistant Director

e-mail: erojo@berkeley.edu

A message from Evelyn to you.

Casa Mora is a UCB academic live-in-theme program that assists Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x students in the transition into Cal. Casa Mora focuses on creating a *familia* and *comunidad* that will engage and empower the students to survive and thrive at UC Berkeley as scholars and leaders of the various Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x communities on and off campus. Students in Casa Mora gain exposure of what it means to be a Chicana/o/x and

Latina/o/x student in higher education, while becoming successful scholars and acquiring leadership and professional skills. CASA provides opportunities for students to build community not only with one another, but within the Berkeley Chicana/o/x and Latina/o/x communities through campus events, volunteer work, and community service that help create a sense of familia.

Please notify Evelyn Rojo erojo@berkeley.edu (and Milly) if you choose to volunteer with Casa Mora.

Meeting to dialogue with students from Casa Mora you will enjoy the fulfillment that comes from providing a first-generation Latino/a/x university student with the invaluable skill and the unique opportunity to enter in intergenerational dialogue with an older adult about the learning journey of each of you in your courses and areas of interest. Both first generation Latina/o/x students and volunteers alike form a special relationship based on mutual respect and learning.

This volunteering opportunity does not require speaking Spanish. It only lasts for the 8 weeks of our course. You would meet with your Casa Mora Cal student once a week for approximately one hour. It is, as the other volunteering opportunities, 1:1 online. It does not require TB test, Live Scan Fingerprinting, nor vaccination proof. Due to the continuously changing Covid 19 protocols on campus, check the UCB Coronavirus web page (<https://coronavirus.berkeley.edu>) for updated campus policy mandates.

Milly Alvarez is going to assist me with keeping track of who is enrolled in which of our 3 community groups. Please let her know

about your choice and your completion of the process of enrollment and training.

Here is Milly's email: platetec@berkeley.edu

If you need to communicate with me with any questions, please use this email: ameliab@berkeley.edu

Looking forward to meeting you in September