

# Scottsdale **Volunteers** PUBLIC LIBRARY

## **VOLUNTEERS WANTED: English as a Second Language (ESL)**

Four\* Scottsdale Public Library locations offer free, weekly classes in **English as a Second Language (ESL)**. Anyone can drop-in for only one session, a few sessions, or every session. There are no limitations on the age, gender, residency or US visa status... no requirements at all. Students' first language can be ones with non-Arabic fonts such as Hindi, Chinese or Russian, or Middle Eastern languages such as Arabic or Hebrew. European language speakers including Bulgarians and French, or those who speak Latin American languages can share the class with Indonesians and Filipinos. The level of a student's English proficiency is also not important. Anyone from anywhere can take ESL classes to be helped with American idioms and pronunciation to modify accents. ESL will improve comprehension of spoken American English, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar... and familiarity with American social norms.

Each instructor leads the class in his/her unique way but all instructors **welcome the help of volunteers** and value guest speakers. The students enrich every class with aspects of their native languages and cultures.

In 2015, nearly 800 people from 8 different Asian countries, 8 European countries, 5 Latin American countries and 4 Middle Eastern countries took ESL classes. Most were adults between the ages of 20 and 80. All students have in common the challenges of adjusting to America which makes every class an opportunity to make friends.



*...ESL class is a way to learn more about the American people because of the great teachers; it is also a window to the world. It is a unique occasion to meet people from other countries to discover how they were living in their [home] countries. ESL class is also a way to have friends who are living and feeling the same things as you [so that] you feel not alone and less homesick. You meet other women, where-ever they come from, who have the same questions about life and you can share your experiences.*  
-- a student from France

*... last day of school... I'm sad because I will miss you and happy because it was a wonderful experience to share with you, these five months, learning English and knowing you as classmates and friends...* -- a student from Colombia

Later this year, a pilot program of citizenship classes will be offered at the Civic Center Library. They should help attendees with the test for US Citizenship. ESL classes can deepen students' understanding of the citizenship class. Both classes can help each other.

*\*Library locations offering ESL classes: Appaloosa, Arabian, Civic Center and Mustang.*

## **2016 Summer Reading Program: On Your Mark, Get Set, READ!**

The theme of this year's Summer Reading Program is exercise and fitness, a fun topic for the 180 teenage volunteers who will run the program at each of the 5 Library locations. Every volunteer has registered for the program, aiming to earn 1,000 points between June 1 and August 1. Points are given for reading all forms of media (printed, digital, audio, video), attending events and in many other ways. Prizes are awarded to recognize several levels of achievement. There is no penalty for partial

completion. Prizes can be toys, craft items, accessories, discount coupons from business sponsors and web-based games sponsored by Maricopa County. When 1,000 points are earned, a special prize is a free book. An email that certifies that the participant has fully completed the program can be shared with teachers to ask for extra credit, to be granted at each teacher's discretion.

All members of the community, from newborns to seniors, are encouraged to join! How do newborns and babies participate in reading? They benefit from being around people who read, by being read to, and by playing with toys with letters and words. Parents can learn about and borrow books and other media. Parents meet other parents and children at Library programs so can organize play dates outside of the Library's programs. The Reading Program stimulates adult participants by suggesting different authors or genres or subjects, or materials in other than print media.

The Summer Reading Program does not coordinate with other reading-oriented programs but the Library also hosts clubs to discuss books and writing. Younger children, especially, can also attend programs that give one-on-one reading assistance, or the **Reading Buddies** program at the Arabian and Civic Center Libraries.



**Noelle Melton** has been the Mustang Library's teen coordinator since 2015. She recruited all the teen volunteers, gave them orientation sessions and will replenish supplies (such as prizes). This process gives teen volunteers opportunities to gain experience in using online tools by logging their points into the reading program's website and to develop and practice leadership skills by working in teams. They plan, run and attend events and must take responsible for meeting goals. Noelle received many comments from 'graduated' volunteers, teens who have continuously worked for the program from ages 14-17:

- *Volunteering for the Summer Reading Program helped me to successfully apply to the US Naval Academy.*
- *My work at the Library made my 'community service' stand out on my college applications.*
- *Volunteering for the reading program was so much fun that my brother will also volunteer for the program.*

Educators for all levels would agree that reading is an essential skill to become well-educated. Being able to read well can make anyone more competent to deal well with the complexities of a sophisticated society. Starting to read when very young, continuing to read throughout life, are critical ways to retain an agile mind. Reading facilitates learning new ideas and the ability to evaluate information in order to make informed decisions. Best of all, reading can be a great pleasure!

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*Our goal is to build a friendly, vibrant, service-oriented library team. Please join us. Give feedback to [RMcKirchy@scottsdaleaz.gov](mailto:RMcKirchy@scottsdaleaz.gov)  
| Managing Editor, Richard McKirchy | Volunteer Contributing Editor, Maria Tseng |*

