

Community Volunteer Opportunities

(Updated May 3, 2025)

The Mission and Social Justice Committee at First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe has compiled the following list of volunteer opportunities in our community.

Working Group for Santa Fe Public Schools (SFPS) engagement

SFPS has approximately 10,000 students, about 20% are bilingual and/or children of undocumented immigrants which have special needs. SFPS, and New Mexico Schools in general are nationally ranked poorly in terms of academic scores, reading levels, graduation rates and college attendance. Greater community involvement – through programs to assist bilingual students with tutoring and other support – as well as tutoring across the board and encouraging greater community involvement and teacher support would benefit all students and lead to improved outcomes. SFPS has just hired a new School Superintendent, and this presents a unique opportunity for greater community engagement and reform

The 4 Church Coalition is looking to create a working group to discuss the issue and how best to engage with other organizations such as Adelante, Communities in School, Gerard's House among others to provide tutors and other support to SFPS administration, teachers, students and immigrant students. If you are interested in being part of the working group please contact:

Bruce Goslin at: brgoslin@fastmail.fm

Lynn Bickley at: lbick09@gmail.com

Esperanza – Domestic Violence Shelter

Table Event Volunteer:

Activity: The volunteer, along with Esperanza Staff, will staff an information table at different community events to include charity sporting events, walk-a-thon fundraisers, Pride on the Plaza, business forums, educational events and so forth. The volunteer will answer questions, hand out literature and talk about Esperanza's mission and activities all

with the purpose of raising community awareness of Domestic Violence and Esperanza's services.

Commitment: Information table events are held throughout the year - usually no more than 2 to 3 times a month. The volunteer is asked to devote a minimum of 2 hours to each table event they are able to attend.

Requirements: Volunteers will need to complete a Victim Assistance Training - which is an online self study 16 hour course, as well as read Esperanza provided literature about their mission and services

Availability: Immediate and ongoing - multiple positions open

Contact: Patricia Varga, VP of Donor and Community Relations. 505-230-4305 office/626-403-7575 mobile. Email: development@esperanzashelter.org

Trees of Hope – a fund raiser for Esperanza

Activity: Trees of Hope is an Esperanza fund raising activity that asks different community organizations and businesses to purchase and decorate a Christmas Tree for auction. (Guidelines about the trees, sizes, lighting, etc are provided by Esperanza). The volunteer can help with different activities - from approaching organizations about the fund raiser, leading a team within their own organization to purchase a tree and decorate it, to staffing the auction site (DeVargas Mall) or supporting the Esperanza Staff managing the fund raiser

Commitment: The Trees of Hope campaign runs from September through the first week of December when the trees are delivered. The trees are usually auctioned just before Thanksgiving.

Requirements: None

Availability: Multiple Volunteers are needed between September to end of November.

Contact: Patricia Varga, VP of Donor and Community Relations. 505-230-4305 office/626-403-7575 mobile. Email: development@esperanzashelter.org

Santa Fe Dreamers

This organization provides a range of legal services to immigrants. They welcome volunteers who can assist them in delivering services to clients, helping at immigration clinics, as well as providing general office support, fund raising and other events.

Volunteers are asked to fill out a brief questionnaire, including the amount of time you are willing to volunteer and when, activities you would like to participate in and skills sets, such as language, legal knowledge and so forth.

To volunteer- click on [Santa Fe Dreamers Project](#) On the landing page click on Get Involved at the top of the page, then click on Volunteer, which will take you to the questionnaire.

Gerard's House

Gerard's House provides grief counseling and support to the larger Santa Fe Community, from those experiencing loss or family separation due to deportation and incarceration. Gerard's House is a resource for Adelante – a program within Santa Fe Public Schools – to work with immigrant children who experience a loss due to deportation of a parent or significant adult.

From their web page:

Gerard's House is here for everyone in our community who is grieving. Because so many families experience barriers when they need grief support, we energetically focus on making our services accessible. Services include 25 weekly peer grief support groups, a mobile unit, individual sessions, summer camps, teen movies nights, crisis response services and support for parents/caregivers, all free of charge and bilingual for youth ages 3 – 21 who have experienced life-changing loss. We also provide 7 weekly grief support groups for adults in English and Spanish, all free of charge.

When you give to Gerard's House, or volunteer, you join us in this spirit of justice, love, healing and partnership.

Gerard's House provides a range of different programs, each depends on volunteers who go through a training and orientation program and work with professional counselors and staff. Volunteers are able to choose which program to volunteer with, as each has different commitments and needs.

To volunteer, click on the following link: <https://gerardshouse.org>

At the landing page click on the Volunteer button which is on the top of the page. The volunteer button will further explain the program, outline their activities and where volunteers are needed, as well as the commitment and weekly time expected from the volunteer. Continue scrolling down to the application form, which can be filled out and submitted on line.

To become a volunteer there is a background check – which may require a fingerprint and criminal background check. Before beginning there is a required formal orientation and training session that must be completed before volunteers can start.

New Mexico Immigrant Law Center (NMILC)

This organization also provides legal services to the immigrant community, and welcome the help and support of volunteers and community organizations

From their web page:

Our mission is to advance justice and equity by empowering low-income immigrant communities through collaborative legal services, advocacy and education.

Volunteering with the NMILC.

The NMILC welcomes volunteers to assist them with a range of activities. To volunteer click on the NMILC link below:

www.nmilc.org

Once on the NMILC landing page, click on Get Involved along the top of the page. This will take you to their volunteer page. Several different volunteer opportunities are described in detail, including requirements and tasks expected for each position. Continue scrolling down to their application form which can be completed on-line.

Afghan Scout Relief Education Fund

Background: When US troops pulled out of Afghanistan on August 26th, 2021, the Taliban took over and implemented strict rules, especially brutal and oppressive to women. Girls were no longer allowed to attend school and were forced to stay home with no voice and no options.

Rescue: Each of these students had dreams of completing their education and starting careers in fields like medicine, accounting, and business. They are the lucky ones...connecting with an Afghan Evacuation organization that was able to bring them to the United States because of the danger they were in. High school students were matched with host families at Waldorf schools, and college students were placed in cooperating universities. Almost all are on partial scholarships that need to be supplemented. A four church coalition, First Presbyterian Church, Westminster Church, Open Circle and St John Methodist Church are in the process of reviving an Afghan Fund previously used for Afghan Refugees to help support continued education for these students.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Predeparture Contact and Tutoring Volunteers

1. The volunteer is paired with an Afghan student, usually still residing in Afghanistan, who is waiting for a scholarship, funding, and a visa interview to be arranged – which can take weeks or months. During regular video calls (one hour, two or three times per month) the volunteer assists the student with improving their English, reading and writing assignments, as well as orientation about living in the U.S.
2. Volunteers are also needed to work with students who have been accepted into a US school and moved from Afghanistan to a safe location – often in Pakistan as they wait for a Visa interview at the U.S. Embassy to be scheduled. Working with an individual student, the volunteer assists with increasing English language fluency, reading and writing skills and providing general orientation about living in the U.S. These students are usually within weeks of departing for the U.S. These are video calls – 1 hour in duration that are scheduled as needed.

Scholarship Research

The Volunteer will research supplementary scholarships (since most students are not on full scholarships), residency requirements for reduced tuition, and assist individual students with applications for obtaining scholarships, funding, study grants or financial assistance, as well as applications for transfer.

Student Assistance and Support Volunteer

The volunteer will work with a student or group of students who are in the U.S., attending classes at different Colleges and Universities, living in dormitory situations. The volunteer will provide regular check ins, guidance and assistance to students to navigate campus life, adjust to living in the U.S. and ensure that students are familiar with the Guide Book – which provides detailed information about their financial support, meeting Visa requirements, addressing medical needs and orienting them to on campus behavior and other social mores as they adjust to life on campus.

The volunteer will assist in finding host families for college students over summer breaks and holidays. The volunteer will also work to ensure that the student or students (there may be more than one Afghan at a particular school) has a community support group – be it a local organization or Church – to assist in their integration.

Note: The SAS volunteer will assist other experienced ASRF volunteers to fully develop and finalize the Guide Book that will be provided to each student upon arrival. The Guide Book is a “living document” and needs to be regularly updated.

Special Tutors for College Students

Volunteers with scientific and or medical backgrounds are needed to assist Afghan students in U.S. Colleges studying STEM subjects who may need help with the special vocabulary, terminology and definitions unique to STEM studies. The volunteer may be asked to provide one on one assistance for a limited period of time (which will be done long distance via Zoom) or provide a webinar training session to specific issues.

Volunteer for Social Media/Web Page

Volunteer with a background and knowledge of Social Media, Web Page design, and social media capture to develop a program for the ASRF Education Fund that will raise awareness, drive fundraising, develop a following, and create newsletters and compelling messaging.

For more information and details about the above volunteer positions please contact:

Donna Fleetwood

fleetwooddonna4@gmail.com

717-439-3459

Pete's Place—Interfaith Community Shelter

Pete's Place provides meals and overnight shelter for the homeless and hungry. Supported by the Interfaith Community and many local businesses and non-profits, Pete's Place depends on volunteer teams to source, cook and serve meals every night, 365 days a year.

First Presbyterian currently has two teams that each volunteer one day a month to prepare and serve dinner. Each team generally consists of 5 to 8 persons. The two teams are currently led by Mary Norris and Art Nuedek.

We would like to form a third team – if you are interested in serving please contact Mary or Art to “intern” on one of the existing teams as a step toward becoming a 3rd team leader.

VIDA—Volunteers for Immigrants in Detention Albuquerque

VIDA supports asylum seekers in detention throughout NM. Members, led by coordinator, Kelly McCloskey Romero, visit Torrance and Cibola Detention Centers on a monthly basis and participate in writing to detainees. The conditions in these facilities are abhorrent. The visits and letters give detainees a sense that they are not alone. VIDA listens to the stories of the detainees.

We also are in contact with New Mexico immigrant Law Center as well as staff of Congressional officials and we participate in political calls and rallies in support of ending detention in New Mexico.

For more information see the website abqvida.org. You may also call Jackie Neel , 918-699-5950 or Faith Yoman, 505-310-5712.