



Reading
Mentor
Handbook

With this program, everybody truly does win, especially the children. It is amazing to see the difference that one hour a week can make in a child's life.

Senator Tom Harkin, founder of Everybody Wins! Iowa and an Everybody Wins! D.C. mentor for over 10 years

With Our Program... Everybody Wins!

Students:

- Learn reading is fun and become more enthusiastic about books and learning.
- Are exposed to new places and ideas through the reading materials volunteers share with them.
- Learn to think more creatively.
- Improve their listening and vocabulary skills, which instills articulation and insightfulness.
- Are exposed to the world beyond school through their volunteers.
- Become more confident because they know their volunteers make time for them and enjoy reading with them.

Volunteers:

- Give to their communities and make a difference through a well-supported, convenient, user-friendly program.
- Form meaningful and rewarding relationships with young students.
- Create a link between the schools and the community.
- Become more confident, more optimistic about the future and more positive about the world around them.
- Learn more about their communities.

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Welcome to Everybody Wins! Iowa

A Message from the Executive Director

Thank you for volunteering to become a reading mentor! We are very excited to have you with us. Together, we look forward to instilling the love of reading in young children.

We hope you find this Reading Mentor Handbook helpful. Although much of this material was covered during your orientation session, we ask that you read through the entire handbook to gain a complete understanding of your role and responsibilities. You will find information about our program policies and good advice on reading aloud and working with children. If you have questions at any time, please don't hesitate to contact me or your site coordinator.

Thank you again for being a part of Everybody Wins! Iowa. Together, we will improve the lives of many children!

Karen Ligas, Executive Director
Everybody Wins! Iowa

Everybody Wins! Iowa Mission Statement

Everybody Wins! Iowa aims to increase children's success in school through reading and mentoring experiences with caring volunteers. Through our programming, we reach children while they are young to foster their interest in reading and learning, while encouraging them to believe that they can be successful.

Everybody Wins! History

The Everybody Wins! organization was founded by retired New York City textile industry executive Arthur Tannenbaum and his wife Phyllis in 1991 after reading a book review in The New York Times for Jim Trelease's *The Read-Aloud Handbook*. The Tannenbaum's started Everybody Wins! to ensure that New York City school - children would be able to discover the magic that comes from books. The program caught on in other cities and in 2002, Everybody Wins! Iowa was established. During its first year (2003), Everybody Wins! Iowa served 15 children in three Des Moines schools (Capitol View, Monroe, and Windsor).

You can learn more about us at everybodywinsiowa.org.

Why Read Aloud?

Reading aloud to children is fundamental to build a foundation for their learning, but many children do not receive enough read aloud time at home.

A new study found that “young children whose parents read them five books a day enter kindergarten having heard about 1.4 million more words than kids who were never read to.” According to the Kids & Family Reading Report, (Scholastic, 7th Edition,) the frequency of young children being read aloud to at home is on the rise, but it rapidly diminishes as children grow older. 58% of 3- to 5-year-olds are frequently read to at home, while only 45% of children aged 6-8 are frequently read aloud to at home. This rate drops to 21% of children aged 9-11, and 7% of children aged 12-14. Children in elementary school are being read to less, while it is still crucial for their development and future academic and life successes. We must fill this gap by providing more children with an opportunity to learn and grow from read aloud experiences.

If reading is a foundation for a child’s success, they need encouragement and motivation to read.

Reading role models are very important for children as they learn their interests and what they love to read. Studies show that frequent readers have more role models who enjoy reading (89%), versus infrequent readers, only 34% of whom report that they have people surrounding them who enjoy reading. Reading role models can instill in children a love of reading, introduce new genres, and help them find books they like. 89% of children say that “their favorite books are the ones that they have picked out themselves,” but, “4 in 10 kids agree that they have trouble finding books that they like.” It is crucial that children have positive reading role models in their life who will encourage them to find books they are interested in and inspire in them a love of reading. Students in Central Iowa are not receiving an ample amount of one-to-one reading experiences that play a part in their socio-emotional development and help prepare them for classroom learning.

Reading has benefits beyond academic success.

A study published by the American Academy of Pediatrics provides evidence that reading aloud to children shapes their social and emotional development and can have long-term effects on their behavior. Research also shows that reading for fun helps children develop empathy and their emotional intelligence. Reading aloud also presents books as sources of pleasant, valuable and exciting experiences. Children who value books are motivated to read on their own.

Program Description & Goals

Power Read is our signature program where students meet weekly with their mentor and use read aloud as an activity to bond and build a relationship together. During Power Read, the pair interacts in a one-to-one, informal, safe, and fun setting. They select books together that interest the student, do reading-related activities, or have informal conversations based on what they are reading.

Students are recommended for the program by their teachers if they fit into one of more of these three categories:

1. The student displays a need for a consistent mentor
2. The student is below their grade level in reading
3. The student is an English Language Learner

Our goals are to:

- Generate enthusiasm for books and reading.
- Increase children's self-esteem and school engagement through consistent weekly attention from their mentors.
- Provide flexible, convenient volunteer experiences for area professionals and community volunteers.
- Bring community support and resources into elementary schools and expose children to people of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Your Site Coordinator's Role

The site coordinator is a part-time Everybody Wins! Iowa staff member. He or she is responsible for the daily operation of the reading sessions at the school. The site coordinator is also responsible for enforcing all program policies and ensuring that volunteer mentors and students are satisfied with all the reading sessions.

Site coordinators:

- Support reading mentors and offer assistance when needed
- Monitor all reading sessions
- Ensure the comfort and safety of the reading mentors and students
- Notify reading mentors if their student is absent or if the program is canceled due to school field trips or weather-related school closings

Please bring any comments, ideas, problems, and suggestions to the attention of your site coordinator. However, you are also welcomed to contact the program manager, volunteer match manager, or executive director at any time. Your reading session should be enjoyable for both you and your student. Do not be afraid to ask for assistance; we will do whatever we can to resolve the situation!

Note: During each weekly reading session, the site coordinator may check in with reading pairs to ensure that sessions are running smoothly. Occasionally, the coordinator may have to interrupt to give pairs information. Coordinators will try to keep interruptions to a minimum. We appreciate your understanding when interruptions do occur.

The Reading Mentor's Role

The reading mentor meets for approximately 30-60 minutes a week with an elementary school student one-to-one. Reading mentors select books provided on-site or bring books to read while the student eats lunch. The reading mentor reports weekly to a site coordinator at the school site.

The reading mentor talks with and listens to the child, reads aloud to the child and encourages the child to share the volunteer's enthusiasm for books. The reading mentor is also a positive role model by providing consistent weekly attention.

Reading mentors:

- Build relationships by talking about shared interests, reading aloud to their students, talking about books and being positive and consistent.
- Make a commitment to volunteer for one school year, and attempt to continue reading with the same child in the subsequent years of elementary school.
- Receive support from Everybody Wins! Iowa, specifically from the site coordinator and other Everybody Wins! Iowa staff.
- Provide structure in the reading session by bringing or helping select reading material, keeping students engaged and encouraging questioning and conversation.
- Stay with the student and other reading pairs during each session, and (where applicable) escort them to their next destination at the end of their reading session.
- Attend the kick-off and end-of-year celebrations each school year.

Everybody Wins! Iowa Program Policies

- **Be reliable and maintain a regular schedule, committing to the same time frame and day every week through the end of the school year.**

Power Reading sessions build confidence and self-esteem. Students who are disappointed by inconsistent volunteers may have difficulty behaving or paying attention and will not benefit from the program. Please consider your ability to commit before you agree to volunteer.

- **Call your site coordinator if you must cancel your session.**

We understand that unexpected things happen, but a child will be counting on you. You must contact the site coordinator in advance of the scheduled time. If you permanently change your schedule, employment or need to resign, please notify your site coordinator immediately and schedule a goodbye session with your site coordinator and student.

- **Be considerate in the reading space.**

There may be many reading pairs sharing a small reading space, and we ask mentors to be conscious of their reading volume and any other action that might affect another pair's reading session. Please help return the space to the condition it was in before your session began.

- **Never be alone with your student.**

Please be sure you always share a room with another Everybody Wins! Iowa pairs. If you find yourself alone with your reading partner, please find your site coordinator, who will be able to help you find an appropriate reading space.

- **Refrain from giving special gifts or foods.**

As a reading mentor, you are sharing your gift of time and attention with your student. Material gifts can shift the focus from the interpersonal relationship to one based on material rewards. Sometimes a volunteer can provide items that a student's parents or guardians cannot, and this can lead to difficulties at home. When volunteers give students material gifts or treats, other students feel left out. Furthermore, volunteers who follow rules and do not give gifts feel uncomfortable when other volunteers break the rules. Notes, cards and letters are appropriate.

- **During the program, see your student only at the school (or organization).**

For the protection of both students and mentors, contact between mentors and students outside of scheduled program time is not permitted, including during summer break. Special activities sponsored by Everybody Wins! Iowa are exceptions.

- **Do not take photographs.**

For the safety and privacy of our students and their families, mentors are not permitted to photograph their students at any time. Throughout the year, Everybody Wins! Iowa staff and approved photographers may photograph reading pairs for publicity purposes.

Other Consideration... Physical Contact

Many of the young children we work with have a strong need and desire for positive physical contact with caring adults. You are encouraged to be a positive role model; however, your physical contact should be limited to holding a hand, "high-five" or fist bump, or sharing a child-initiated hug in full view of program staff. Remember that someone else may view what you see as simple, friendly affection as something entirely different.

Social Media Policy

Everybody Wins! Iowa recognizes many benefits of online communication platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

We believe that these information sharing tools can help us raise awareness about our organization and the importance of quality mentoring relationships. For these reasons, Everybody Wins! Iowa utilizes platforms including social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), news sharing sites (program and community blogs), photo and video sharing sites (Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, etc.), and other online communication platforms (website, webinars, podcasts, etc.) to communicate with our program participants, board members, community partners, and others.

While we recognize the inherent benefits of online communication platforms, we also understand that online communication can have negative, damaging or unintended effects when boundaries of public and private information sharing are blurred. For these reasons we have developed a social media policy to protect program participants and organizational integrity. This policy has been adapted from the Friends for Youth Mentoring Institute to fit the needs of this program.

Our program will rely on social media tools for marketing, outreach, event planning and networking; however, if a program board member, employee, volunteer, youth participant or affiliate selects to participate in social media platforms on their personal time, we hold that this is the choice and sole responsibility of the individual.

Everybody Wins! Iowa does not intend to control online interaction among program participants; however, to protect the healthy boundaries of youth and adult mentoring relationships, we request that participants, affiliates, and employees understand and adhere to the following Social Media CARE guidelines when interacting with the program or program participants through online communication platforms.

Community – Appropriate – Responsibility – Exercise Common Sense (CARE):

Community –Honor it!

Online communication platforms are an incredible resource for connecting and building community. Honoring community connection means using these mediums as ways to build support, positive interaction and shared understanding. Because people bring unique experiences, attitudes, and beliefs to the realm of online interaction just as they do in-person, some online dialogue may illustrate differences of opinion. When this happens, remember to articulate yourself clearly and responsibly by presenting information logically, not overreacting, and objectively clarifying misunderstandings or errors as necessary.

Appropriate – Be it!

If you choose to dialogue via an online communication platform on a personal level while “linked” or connected to your formal mentoring program and/or respective match mate, be considerate, fair, and appropriate with your posts. This means considering if the information you are sharing is something that you feel comfortable with your program, match-mate, potential employer and other individuals viewing BEFORE you post. Remember all information shared through online communication platforms becomes public domain the instant it is posted.

Responsibility – Use it!

You are responsible for the information you share through online communication platforms. Exercise responsibility for your communication by demonstrating, accuracy, honesty and integrity. When you make a mistake, acknowledge and correct it immediately. Think twice before posting. Always consider if you are comfortable with the information being connected back to you by anyone. Honor confidentiality and do not disclose an individual’s personal information. If you are expressing your personal opinion while referencing your mentoring program or respective match mate, be sure to indicate that you are expressing a personal belief, opinion, or attitude and not the expressed opinion of the organization, or individual with which you are affiliated.

Exercise Common Sense and Good Judgment –Show it!

If you're unsure if you should post information using online communication platforms, err on the side of caution and use discretion. Understand that if you choose to connect with your program and respective match mate via online communication platforms, you are expected to share this information with the program. Recognize Everybody Wins! Iowa will monitor social networking sites to protect program participants and organizational integrity. Failure to follow the program's Social Media CARE guidelines may be cause for dismissal from the program.

If a program participant, employee or affiliate is concerned about their ability to follow this social media policy and CARE guidelines, this program requires that they do not communicate electronically in a way that connects them to this program or to another participant. This policy is established to protect participants, the integrity of this organization, and to support healthy youth and adult mentoring relationships. Everybody Wins! Iowa will select one staff member to manage and represent all program information via online communication platforms. This individual is responsible for managing all login information, marketing, and adherence to above guidelines.

Confidentiality and Reporting

All information you are told about your student (by teachers, Everybody Wins! Iowa staff and other school staff) is confidential, and sharing that information might be against the law. Similarly, there may be information about your student's background and medical history that Everybody Wins! Iowa is unable to share with mentors due to student confidentiality.

The student is free to share information with you; however, there are certain things you are required to tell the site coordinator. These include the following:

- If a student confides that he or she is the victim of sexual, emotional or physical abuse, you **MUST** notify the site coordinator, who will inform the principal principal (or Organization Leader) and Everybody Wins! Iowa's Executive Director immediately. Make a note on your calendar on the date you received this information and when it was reported as well as who you reported it to. Remember, this information is extremely personal and capable of damaging lives. **DO NOT** share it with anyone except the appropriate authorities (i.e. your site coordinator).
- If the student tells you about their involvement in any illegal activity, you must tell the site coordinator immediately. Again, please note the date when the information was reported and to whom it was given.

If you have concerns about your student, please notify your site coordinator immediately.

Anti-Harassment and Anti-Discrimination Policy

Everybody Wins! Iowa will not tolerate harassment or discrimination of any kind in volunteer locations. All employees, program students and volunteers are entitled to an environment free from all forms of harassment based on gender, race, age, color, creed, religion, national origin, veteran or marital status, gender orientation or disability.

Diversity and Inclusion

At Everybody Wins! Iowa we respect, value and celebrate the unique attributes, characteristics and perspectives that make each person who they are. We also believe that diversity allows us to collectively and more effectively address the issues that face our communities. It is our aim, therefore, that our partners, strategies, approaches and practices reflect our beliefs.

At the heart of our efforts, we seek to inspire and nurture the human spirit, understanding that each person brings a distinct life experience to the table. Our partners are diverse not only in gender, race, ethnicity, sexual & gender orientation, disability, religion and age, but also in cultural backgrounds, life experiences, thoughts and ideas.

Embracing differences enhances our mission and embodies our philosophy that every person deserves an equal chance to succeed in life. It is the inclusion of our diverse experiences and perspectives that create our unique culture of empowerment, one that fosters personal development, creativity, positive self-expression and community engagement.

Inclusion and Diversity Policy

At Everybody Wins! Iowa we believe in equal opportunity for all. No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity available from Everybody Wins! Iowa on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, political belief, age, national origin, linguistic and language difference, sexual & gender orientation and identity, socio-economic status, height, weight, marital or familial status, or disability.

Everybody Wins! Iowa also does not and will not discriminate against any applicant, volunteer or employee with regard to hiring, retention, promotion, benefits or compensation because of race, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship, gender, age, marital status, creed, sexual & gender orientation and identity, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law and we are steadfastly committed to the promotion of diversity and inclusion in all of our endeavors and aspirations.

Involuntary Termination

A volunteer's service may be terminated for reasons including, but not limited to, the ones listed below.

- Violation of a policy
- Theft or misappropriation of property belonging to Everybody Wins! Iowa, the program site, an employee, a volunteer, a student or another person
- Misusing, destroying or defacing Everybody Wins! Iowa or program site property
- Refusing to perform duties of the volunteer reading mentor position
- Excessive lateness or unexcused absences
- Possessing illegal substances on program site property or reporting to the program under the influence of alcohol or other drugs
- Unprofessional behavior toward school staff, community partners, students or volunteers

How to Spend a Reading Session

When you arrive: Sign in, pick up your reading folder and greet your student with enthusiasm.



For 5 minutes: Conversation: Catch up on what has happened in school over the past week and review what you read in your previous session.



For 20 minutes: Read, discuss and ask questions about the book while your student eats lunch.



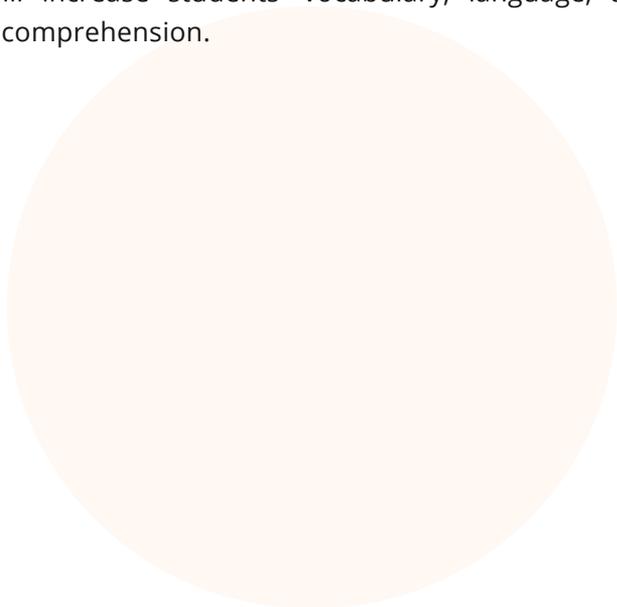
For 10 minutes: Write in the journal, complete the book log, complete activities from the reading folder, draw a picture related to the story or read another book or chapter.

Before you leave: Clean up any trash and your area; return books and reading folder. Say goodbye, emphasizing any plans for the next session.

Selecting Good Books

Once you get to know your student try picking out 5 or 6 books for your student to choose from. These books should be subject matters that you think would be interesting to your student and at the appropriate level. Then allow the student to choose between these books. This strategy allows the student to participate in the process and gives them a choice, but also ensures that you read the best books while being efficient with program time.

Choose books based on your student's listening level rather than on their reading level. Children can comprehend and pick up what they hear at a higher level than what they can read themselves. Exposure to these more sophisticated books will increase students' vocabulary, language, and listening comprehension.



Tips for Success

It's okay if your student just wants to talk.

It's important to note that Some students haven't had a chance to talk at all during the day, so if they are feeling particularly chatty, this is okay. Try to get some reading done, but don't feel like you need to force it.

Give structure to your reading session: Set goals.

You can discuss what you both want to achieve from your reading session. Write down your goals and keep referring to them.

Examples:

- "Let's try to read at least 10 books by Marc Brown this fall."
- "Let's learn about two new animals."
- "I'd like to find a new favorite author and learn more about him/her."

Find a topic, and then think beyond books. Use your imagination to bring in a wide range of reading material.

Example: If you and your student both like race cars, you can:

- Read non-fiction books about cars
- Read biographies of race car drivers
- Read official race programs
- Read articles in the newspaper sports section
- Write a letter to your favorite race car driver
- Read race car magazines
- Write a story about your student as a race car driver
- Label a diagram of a race car
- Write a review of a race you both saw
- Rewrite “The Tortoise & The Hare” with race cars

Build trust and confidence.

Build trust by being consistent. If you attend the reading sessions irregularly, you may find that the student is disappointed or uncooperative. If you must miss a session, call the site coordinator immediately, just as soon as you know you will be unable to attend. To build confidence, praise your student honestly and frequently. Remember, attentiveness and effort can be as important as performance.

Learn more about your student, and be respectful of their identity and preferences.

Understand your student in terms of his or her own background and values. Show interest in your student as a person. Listen carefully to what he or she says. Having a conversation meets the goals of helping the child articulate thoughts and exposing the child to new information. Ask questions about favorite activities, family members, friends, hopes and dreams. By your words and actions, let your student know you care.

Social and Emotion Learning (SEL), Mental Health and Trauma

Informed Care Tips and Tricks

Social Emotional Learning is away for students to connect with emotions and regulate them. This also allows them to make connections to the world outside of their immediate sphere and gives students a voice.

We give students a voice by letting the students choose books that portray emotions or different people from themselves. We also give students a voice by letting the students choose books that they have an interest in. Listening, talking and asking questions is another great way to give students a voice.

Trauma Informed Care

Remember- Students come to us from all walks of life, backgrounds and experiences. Be present and work with our students where they are at and meet them there. We want to listen to them and work with them where they are at. By doing this you will be amazed be the trust/ growth you will see in the students and the mentorship relationship that is formed.



Mental Health Tips

Students mental health improves by knowing there is an adult outside of their family that cares for them.

These tips are to get an understanding for where your student are on a singular individual day. You can let your site coordinator know if there is something you feel you should or want to share but not necessary unless you deem the student in danger. Reminder, your site coordinators like to hear good things as well as the troubling ones.

Due to the events that are happening in our society and world you might hear more concerning things from your students then prior to the pandemic. This is ok and totally normal... your students might want to talk. We are not asking you to be counselors and therapists, but to be a listening ear.

Sample Activities

For more activities and details, visit our website at **everybodywinsiowa.org** and navigate to our "Mentor Resources" page under the "Resources" tab.

5-1 Activity

How to: Talk about how things are going on a specific day. Rate how it is going on a scale of 5-1.

High/ Low

How to: The mentor and students share about a high and low for the week.

Ask Questions

This is by far the easiest way to get to know, build rapport and trust with your student.

For further information or questions consult with your site coordinator or Anna Sunstrom at asunstrom@everybodywinsiowa.org

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the best way to structure my reading session?

Reading mentors direct the reading time and have clear expectations. Reading sessions should be structured and predictable with an emphasis on the mentor reading aloud to the student. It's okay if the student chooses to read out loud, but should be by the students choice and not forced.

Whenever possible, the mentor guides the student in the book selection or may bring reading material. Conversation, questions about a book and a shared writing activity (utilizing Mentor Literacy Guides and Student Journal) can enhance the session.

Saying “no” is okay. Teachers repeatedly remind us that students respect and appreciate limits. Students may ask to go outside, walk around, play games or see their friends, but remember your goals. Advice and assistance are always available; please speak with your site coordinator about any concerns you may have regarding the program or with your student.

Why are gifts or special food not permitted?

Reading mentors give the gift of time and attention. Bringing gifts or special foods causes other students to feel hurt and confused and puts pressure on other volunteers. Students misunderstand the purpose of the program when reading mentors bring gifts. If you want to reward your student for an accomplishment or honor a birthday, we suggest that you give a book to Everybody Wins! Iowa inscribed with the child's name.

Why do mentors read aloud to students?

Reading mentors encourage children's interest in reading as they model reading for pleasure. No matter what a student's ability, reading aloud to the student and talking together will benefit the student academically and socially. As your student gains confidence, pairs may "buddy-read" to each other if the student is confident and wants to read. However, the mentor may do most of the reading aloud.

- When students are doing the reading, it is by nature necessary for them to select lower level books (they can listen at higher levels than they can read). Also, they are likely laboring through words and therefore getting exposure to fewer words and less background knowledge in a given session.
- Especially for those students who struggle with reading, reading sessions can be stressful which may be counterproductive to EWI's vision of developing an association of reading with pleasure among our students.
- We encourage volunteers to have discussions with students because we know that building a trusting relationship will provide students a model for the love of reading we are working to instill as well as the extra socio-emotional support our students often need. Discussing book content also helps students develop reading comprehension, background knowledge.

How are students chosen to participate?

Students are referred to our program by their classroom teachers for one or more of the following reasons:

- The student is behind in fundamental reading skills.
- The student is an English language learner.
- The student would benefit from one-to-one interaction with a caring adult.

Why are students and mentors not permitted to see each other outside of reading sessions?

For the protection of students, mentors, your organization, and Everybody Wins! Iowa, contact between mentors and students outside of scheduled reading sessions is not permitted. Special activities sponsored by Everybody Wins! Iowa is the only exception to this policy.

Other things you can do to help Everybody Wins! Iowa

- **Recruit other reading mentors.** Your friends and colleagues may be waiting for an invitation to join you as a reading mentor. Tell your colleagues, neighbors, alumni associations, churches and community organizations about the opportunity to read and mentor a student. Many students are waiting to participate because we currently do not have enough reading mentors to serve all the students who could benefit from the program.
- **Refer potential volunteer mentors to:**
Anna Sunstrom, Volunteer Outreach Manager
volunteer@everybodywinsiowa.org
(515) 242-8462
- **Tell us your ideas.** We are eager to hear from you. We want to ensure that the program is positive and successful for everyone involved.
- **Donate new books to Everybody Wins! Iowa.** If you wish, we will inscribe the first name of your student, as well as your name, into any new books you donate to our program.
- **More Ways to Give:** Visit our website at <https://everybodywinsiowa.org/more-ways-to-give/> to learn other ways to support our work!

Acknowledgement of Mentor Training and Receipt of Handbook

Signing this document in the space provided below indicates the following:

- I have received an electronic or physical copy of the Everybody Wins! Iowa Reading Mentor Handbook.
- I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read the handbook and familiarize myself with the contents.
- I have received training on the details of Power Read programming and understand the rules and regulations governing my participation.

Print Full Name: _____

Sign Full Name: _____

Date: ____/____/_____



Key Contacts

My Site Coordinator is: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

EWI Program Managers:

Amber Juffer

ajuffer@everybodywinsiowa.org

(515) 242-8463

Stacy Pearce

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EWI Executive Director:

Karen Ligas

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Thank you for volunteering!

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