



Destination: College **FROM ATHLETE TO STUDENT ATHLETE** **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

~ Author Margaret Mead

*Words cannot express how grateful we are for all of your effort
in helping our son achieve his goal. A million thanks.
Thank you for making a real difference in the lives of youngsters.*

~ A Destination: College parent, 2009



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WELCOME

Thank you very much for joining the Destination: College team. We appreciate your willingness to give your time and energy to our organization, and we look forward to working with you.

We have created this handbook to provide you with an overview of our organization and help you understand what it means to be a volunteer. We appreciate your taking the time to read this handbook carefully. Feel free to contact our Executive Director should you have any questions.

Volunteers work in all of our Programs, and we believe working directly with our student-athletes can be a wonderful and satisfying experience. We feel strongly that we receive just as much, if not more, from the students we work with. Your time and effort is a valuable and empowering resource for our students. We have one story after another that celebrates that moment when a student connects to the opportunity that Destination: College offers. We sincerely hope that you, too, will have one of these stories to share.

OUR HISTORY AND MISSION

Destination: College was originally incorporated as a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization under the name Aid for Children of Tomorrow in 1994. That same year and continuing to date, it has had the status of a tax exempt nonprofit corporation. The name was changed to more accurately reflect its mission in 2010. The mission of Destination: College began in earnest in 2006. Ten volunteers working with a group of 25 boys on the Mount Vernon boys varsity basketball team, at the request of the head coach, met weekly for a “Reading Program” to bolster the boys’ academic performance. From that small cadre of volunteers, working with one team, Destination: College has grown today to involve more than 50 volunteers working with 8 sports teams at three high schools in Westchester County. Our academic enrichment programs reach over 150 students each year.

Our mission is to take the drive, dedication and ambition exhibited by high school athletes, and channel these qualities into academic achievement. Destination: College recognizes that many talented athletes are unable to fulfill their dreams of participating in sports at the college level because of academic deficiencies combined with low SAT or ACT scores. Through our network of local volunteers, Destination: College provides academic support and college application assistance to many high school students. We do work only with athletes and through their coaches. But even if one of our students does not have the ability to play their sport at the college level, Destination: College still provides academic support and assistance with the college application process.

GOALS AND IMPACT

Although the school districts serving the villages, towns and cities of Westchester are geographically close, there are vast economic and cultural differences among the students who attend them. The students who participate in the programs offered by Destination: College may come from homes where English is not spoken as the primary language or may not be understood by all members of the family; where “making ends meet” requires the participation of all family members resulting in little or no time to attend to and support the rigorous process of preparing for college. Many of our students come from families where higher education is not a “given” and these students will be the first in their families to attend college. But all of our students share one thing. They are committed to the athletic programs offered by their high schools. Destination: College believes that participation in these sports programs can serve a major role in enabling these students to participate in higher education and broaden the choices available to them as adults. The goal of Destination: College is to ensure that ALL of our students, regardless of athletic skill, can be accepted to a college of their choice or a college well suited to their strengths and interests, and that ALL of our students qualify for those NCAA scholarships for which they may be considered. Each year, Destination: College is able to send a new group of students off to college, thanks to the efforts of the volunteers who serve each of our participating teams. While building academic skills for our students is our main priority, an added benefit is the undeniable relationship between students and tutors that builds from our commitment to their success. Our dedicated volunteers give students the individual attention that overworked high school teachers and guidance offices simply cannot.

Since 2007, our students have been accepted to colleges throughout the country, including Hamilton College, Morehouse College, Rutgers University, West Point and many of the colleges and universities in the SUNY system, including Westchester Community College. Given the prohibitive cost of college today, we frequently encourage our students to look at the SUNY or CUNY schools. In addition, many of our students find the best fit for them, initially, is a junior college setting.

OVERVIEW OF OUR PROGRAMS

Who We Serve

Destination: College serves three area high schools in Mount Vernon, Yonkers and Hartsdale, NY. We work with eight athletic teams under the supervision of our Program Heads and the teams' coaches. Each year, we work with approximately 150 students from:

Mount Vernon High School 100 California Road Mount Vernon, NY 10552	Gorton High School 100 Shonnard Place Yonkers, NY 10703	Woodlands High School 475 West Hartsdale Avenue Hartsdale, NY 10530
Baseball Basketball – Boys Basketball – Girls Cheerleading Football Soccer – Boys	Football	Football

THE PROGRAMS OFFERED

Destination: College offers four academic programs - Small Group Reading, Regents Prep, a dedicated SAT/ACT Prep course and Homework Help. In addition, we provide assistance to rising seniors with the college application process. By doing so we seek to increase the likelihood of each of our students getting accepted into a college of his or her choice.

Small Group Reading – September through June

Reading is our cornerstone program. During the academic year we conduct weekly, one-hour, reading sessions for each of the sports teams we work with. At a typical session, reading tutors (all volunteers) are each assigned a group of two to four students. Each reading group is provided with several articles that may highlight a current event, op-ed, sports article or information pertaining to an academic subject. Each student in the reading group takes a turn reading and the tutor will monitor for comprehension. Vocabulary is introduced at either the beginning or end of an article. We strive to maintain the continuity of reading groups throughout the year.

Regents Prep

The NYS Department of Education mandates that all public school students pass (with a score of 65) five Core Regents exams as a graduation requirement. Tests required are: Global History and Geography (10th grade), US History (11th grade), English (11th grade), one math and one science.

During the 2014–2015 academic year, we piloted a program to help twenty students at Mount Vernon High School prepare for Regents exams in US History, Global History, Algebra, Geometry, Living Environment, Chemistry, and Earth Science. Our volunteers provided weekly one-on-one assistance that supplemented the Regents prep given by the high school. Algebra, Geometry, Living Environment and Chemistry tutors worked throughout the year in some cases. Tutors worked with students on Global History and US History predominantly in the spring.

We continue to offer this program ad hoc based on identifying students needing help and matching them with available tutors. If you are interested in tutoring for Regents Prep, contact our Executive Director or Program Head.

A variety of free online resources are available for Regents Prep in individual subject areas. If you would like to access these resources, please check with our Executive Director or your Program Head.

THE PROGRAMS OFFERED

SAT/ACT Prep: It Matters

Each spring, qualified juniors and (on occasion) strong academic sophomores at all three high schools are invited to participate in our spring SAT/ACT Prep courses. These courses are provided by Bespoke Education, a highly regarded test prep company. Bespoke instructors conduct on-site courses at each high school. A course runs 30 hours over an 8-week period and includes one or two mock tests to assess a student's progress and build test-taking skills. Students typically take the May and/or June SAT/ACT tests. Many students are eligible for testing fee waivers based on family income. Juniors and seniors who are eligible for a fee waiver may receive one SAT and one ACT fee waiver during their junior year and then again for their senior year.

When working with students that are recruitable athletes at the Division I or Division II level, a good SAT or ACT score can be critical to their NCAA eligibility, making this portion of our program of particular importance to those students.

THE PROGRAMS OFFERED

College Advisory

College Advisor volunteers work closely with our rising seniors to facilitate their college application process. Tasks typically include: identifying appropriate colleges with the coach's help, introduction to the Common Application, essay writing and editing, completing financial aid/scholarship applications and general support, including occasional communication with college coaching staffs. Advisors typically commit 2-3 hours a week to work with students. This work is generally done during the same time our reading programs meet.

Homework Help - Presently available only at Mount Vernon HS

Some volunteers at Mount Vernon High School provide homework assistance in math (Algebra I & II and Geometry), history (Global and US), science (Living Environment, Earth Science and Chemistry) and English. Individualized help is usually provided during our assigned weekly reading sessions. Volunteers interested in providing homework assistance should discuss this with your Program Head or DC's Executive Director.

Summer Program - Mount Vernon only

We provide a summer reading and enrichment program in connection with a basketball camp run by Mount Vernon High School boys varsity coach Bob Cimmino. The goals of this program are to build reading comprehension, vocabulary skills and cultural awareness. The curriculum is varied and has included expert speakers on gang prevention; organized tours of the Westchester District Attorney's Office to spark career interest; tours of The New York Botanical Garden and the Museum of Natural History; and Broadway plays such as Rocky and Hamilton. This program typically includes 25-30 students and meets twice a week during the month of July. In the summer of 2015, Destination: College added a summer program for the Mount Vernon Cheerleading Team. This program met once a week during the month of July.

: STRUCTURE OF OUR PROGRAMS

Why Volunteer?

Volunteers are the backbone of our organization and bring a wide variety of interests and skills to our students. Volunteers can work in our reading program, act as tutors for homework help and Regents prep, or assist students in our college advisory program. Working with young adolescents is extremely rewarding. As one of our coaches said of our volunteers several years ago, “these young people know when someone is just showing up or when they truly care. The volunteers from Destination: College really care and my players know that.” Once a volunteer has established a base of trust with a group of students, it’s gratifying to be able to share your own background and hard-won life experience assisting a young person on the brink of adulthood. “Yes, you should consider taking that math class senior year! Yes, this would be a good time to register for the SATs. Let’s look up what the SATs are all about.” This is the kind of thing our volunteers do on a weekly basis. They are the other adults in our students’ lives who care about them and cheer them on in the game of life.

How Are Volunteers Assigned?

Volunteers are assigned to specific schools and teams based on current need. Should a volunteer have an interest in working with a particular sports team or school, or concentrating on tutoring in a specific academic subject, the volunteer should contact our Executive Director or the appropriate Program Head. While most volunteers commit to one hour weekly sessions with an assigned group of athletes on a specific team, many volunteers work with more than one team.

Program Structure

Each sports team is assigned a Program Head who works directly with the individual team coach. The Program Head is responsible for general organization and supervision of the program, including setting the overall meetings schedule, organizing volunteers and students, communicating with volunteers and handling any required logistics, such as meeting locations. Program Heads typically send out weekly emails to gauge tutor availability, snack reminder, volunteer assignments and other pertinent information. Your Program Head is the “go to” person if you have a question, issue or concern.

: STRUCTURE OF OUR PROGRAMS

Volunteer Commitment

We ask that each volunteer commit a minimum of one (1) hour per week during the school year. This may vary when a team is in season and meeting schedules may vary. We fully understand a tutor's need for flexibility and strive to accommodate everyone's schedule. All programs meet weekly for one hour in a pre-determined classroom. Program Heads are responsible for notifying volunteers of the assigned classroom and location.

Our students feel valued with your consistent involvement and we strongly encourage you to attend their sporting events when convenient. Our students notice when you are there to cheer them on. Volunteers provide a snack for students at the beginning of each session to give them the necessary fuel to keep their attention during the session. It is the responsibility of the Program Head to coordinate snacks, and he or she may ask for help from the volunteers each week.

At the end of the session, Destination: College provides pizza before the students head to practice or training.

All volunteers are asked to attend a Volunteer Orientation held in early September of each year. We typically meet on a weekday morning from 9-10:30am. Guidelines, best practices and group discussion are the headline topics on our agenda.

Coach's Commitment

At least one coach is required to be on-site during tutoring sessions to ensure student attendance and proper behavior. When a team is using multiple rooms, classroom doors are to be left open so a coach can periodically check on each room. It is important that doors be open for assurance of safety and integrity of the student-tutor pairing, especially in instances where there may be only one pair in a room.

: FEEDBACK

Observations and feedback are a welcome part of the success and growth of our programs and organization. We value your opinion and hope you will feel comfortable sharing your ideas, challenges and program-related needs with your Program Head, Executive Director or Board Chair.

If a situation arises where you do not feel comfortable, immediately notify your Program Head, Executive Director or Board Chair.

THE DESTINATION: COLLEGE/VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIP

Volunteer Status

The relationship between volunteer and Destination: College is “at will,” which means that either volunteer or Destination: College can terminate volunteer’s service at any time, for any reason whatsoever, with or without cause. Volunteers are not employees and are not entitled to compensation or any form of employee benefit.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES & CODE OF CONDUCT

Insurance

Destination: College does not maintain health, medical or disability insurance coverage for its volunteers. Also, since you are not a Destination: College employee, you are not covered by any workers’ compensation insurance for any injuries you may sustain while volunteering with Destination: College.

Expectations of a Volunteer

A volunteer is expected to:

Report on time on the days you volunteer

Notify your Program Head in a timely fashion if you are unable to volunteer on the days or at the times you have been assigned

Be careful, prudent and avoid any careless and reckless behavior while performing assignments

Be dependable and prompt

Be able to relate well to a variety of people

Have good listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills

Be flexible, friendly, patient, and optimistic; and have a good sense of humor

Keep confidential all information about Destination: College, its staff, the school staff, the students and its other volunteers, that you may learn as a volunteer

Treat all Destination: College staff, school staff, students and other volunteers, with respect and courtesy without regard to age, creed, color, disability, familial status, gender identity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by applicable law

Not facilitate or engage in any form of harassment

Agree to a background screening, which is required of all Destination: College volunteers (to be paid for by Destination: College) and sign the enclosed release

:VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES & CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of Conduct

To provide the best possible tutoring environment, Destination: College expects volunteers to conduct themselves in a way that will protect the safety of all students and volunteers, and the interests of the organization. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Fighting or threatening violence

Boisterous or disruptive behavior

Sexual or other unlawful harassment

Confidentiality

Destination: College recognizes that student academic information is private. Should a student, coach or school employee share academic information with our Program Heads or volunteers, this information must not be shared outside this relationship to protect a student's privacy and dignity.

Boundaries

Boundaries set the parameters of what is and is not acceptable behavior by staff and volunteers in the Destination: College programs. These clear boundaries help to develop trusting relationships and will help to set student expectations as it relates to volunteers. It is our role to provide academic skill building in a safe environment for both volunteers and students. It is very important that our volunteers maintain proper boundaries with our students.

Some students may ask for additional tutoring outside the Destination: College established sessions. A Program Head can facilitate additional time and locations and should be aware if a tutor coordinates additional time. A school location is strongly encouraged with a public library or other public space (restaurant, coffee shop, etc.) being an acceptable alternative. The door of any classroom used within the school should always remain open during sessions if a coach or staff member is not available to be in the vicinity.

Never tutor at a student's home or in your own home

Never provide transportation to a student

Please refrain from giving any student money unless for team fundraising efforts under the supervision of a coach. Donating to a team cause is entirely up to a volunteer and is in no way mandated by Destination: College

Texting is an acceptable form of communicating with students, and is known to help students by giving them a source of encouragement. Please exercise appropriate language and monitor how a teenager or parent-guardian can interpret conversations. Do not use any terms of endearment or language (including emojis) that cross a professional line

Dismissal Policy

Any volunteer violating the Destination: College Code of Conduct will be subject to immediate dismissal.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email Address: destinationcollegeny@gmail.com

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Mailing Address: Destination: College
81 Pondfield Road, # 290
Bronxville, New York, 10708

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Website Address: www.destinationcollegeny.org

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Facebook: DestinationCollegeNY

VOLUNTEER RELEASE

In exchange for the value and benefit of services received, including the opportunity to serve as a volunteer with Destination: College, a New York not-for-profit corporation having an address of 81 Pondfield Road, Bronxville, New York 10708 (the “Organization”), I have read, understand, and willingly sign this release (The “Release”).

As a volunteer with the Organization, I may participate in certain “Volunteer Activities,” defined herein as providing one or more students, introduced to me by the Organization (“Participating Students”), with tutoring, homework assistance, or assistance with the college application process (collectively, the “Volunteer Activities”). I understand that Volunteer Activities may only take place in “Approved Locations”, defined as restaurants, coffee shops, libraries, shopping malls, and the following schools:

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Mount Vernon High School 100 California Road Mount Vernon, NY 10552		Gorton High School 100 Shonnard Place Yonkers, NY 10703		Woodlands High School 475 West Hartsdale Avenue Hartsdale, NY 10530
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I acknowledge that my participation in the Volunteer Activities has certain inherent risks, which risks I voluntarily assume. These risks include, but are not limited to, the risk of economic loss and/or physical injury, resulting from: (1) travel, by vehicle or otherwise, arising from my participation in the Volunteer Activities; (2) the acts and/or omissions of Participating Students; (3) the acts and/or omissions of other third parties to this agreement, who may be present at the Approved Locations; and (4) physical, environmental, and/or other hazards present at the Approved Locations.

I agree to follow any instructions given or rules established by the Organization or its employees or agents with regard to my participation in the Volunteer Activities. I acknowledge that the Volunteer Activities do not include: (1) providing transportation to any Participating Student or (2) tutoring any Participating Student other than at Approved Locations (items (1) and (2) collectively, “Prohibited Conduct”). I agree to refrain from any Prohibited Activity.

I hereby indemnify, release, hold harmless and forever discharge the Organization and its agents, employees, officers, directors, affiliates, successors and assigns (collectively, the “Released Parties”), of and from any and all claims, demands, debts, contracts, expenses, causes of action, lawsuits, damages or liabilities, of any kind or nature, whether known or unknown, in law or in equity, that I ever had or may have, arising from or in any way related to my participation in the Volunteer Activities. Notwithstanding the foregoing sentence, this Release does not limit the liability of the Released Parties with respect to any acts of gross negligence, or intentional, willful or wanton misconduct on their part.

Additionally, I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties of and from any and all claims, demands, debts, contracts, expenses, causes of action, lawsuits, damages or liabilities, of any kind or nature, whether known or unknown, in law or in equity, that any third party ever had or may have, arising from or in any way related to my having engaged in Prohibited Conduct. Such indemnification shall include, but not be limited to, the reimbursement of all costs, expenses, reasonable attorney’s fees,

and judgments, incurred by or assessed against any of the Related Parties, arising from my having engaged in Prohibited Conduct.

Release will continue in full force and effect even after the termination of my affiliation with the Organization, whether such termination occurs by agreement, by operation of law, or otherwise.

This Release is governed by the laws of the State of New York and is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by that law. If any provision of this Release is held invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions will continue to be fully effective.

This Release contains the entire agreement between the undersigned parties regarding the subject matter of this Release, and supersedes any prior written or oral agreements between them concerning the subject matter hereof. The provisions of this Release may not be altered, in whole or in part, except by means of a writing bearing the signatures of the parties hereto. Any claim or controversy that arises out of or relates to this Release or the subject matter hereof shall be brought and heard exclusively in a court of competent jurisdiction located in the County of Westchester in the State of New York.

I am of lawful age and legally competent to sign this document. I understand the terms herein, and I have signed this document as my own free act and deed.

[Name] _____

[Address] _____

Accepted and Agreed to this _____ day of _____, 20____:

Destination: College

By:

[Name] _____

[Title] _____



Destination: College

FROM ATHLETE TO STUDENT ATHLETE

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