

Stevenson College recruiting volunteers

Stevenson College Edinburgh is recruiting volunteer tutors to teach English to students in and around Edinburgh. They will be holding information sessions today 28 January 2011, at Duncan Place Resource Centre in Leith.

The CBESOL (Community Based English for Speakers of Other Languages) department at Stevenson College Edinburgh has been running the volunteer tutor scheme for over 10 years now with great success. Each year, Stevenson has up to 100 students who wish to learn English, but due to family, work or health issues are unable to attend classes regularly. The volunteer tutor scheme was introduced to address this surging need and works to improve the quality of life for these students. Each student has their own reason for wanting to learn English – whether it be to help them with everyday tasks such as going to the doctor's, helping their children with homework, or to help them find a job – and they are all highly committed to learning English.

Volunteer tutoring is a highly rewarding experience which can make a real difference to a person's life. Tutors receive full training and support and also gain valuable experience in teaching and formal references. Many tutors also build lasting friendships with their students and gain valuable insights the countries and cultures they come from.

Students are taught on a one to one basis in their own home at a time that suits them and their tutor. Ruth McNamara, a current volunteer tutor, explains her experience:

"I have been volunteering now for more than ten years and have found it to be one of the most rewarding things I do. I have tutored students from countries from all over the world,

sometimes for a few months and sometimes for a few years.

“One of my most memorable students was a Thai lady who came to Scotland with her toddler. She spoke very little English and over a period of eighteen months she had learnt enough to shop, travel through the city and make appointments – small but important things. A few years later she wanted to learn more English to help her child with her homework and we worked together for another couple of years. Then later, we began to work together again as her children were both at school and she was now able to think about getting a qualification, but needed to improve her English further.”

Ruth continues:

“Being able to help my students reach their goals, however small or large, has given me a great deal of pleasure. The scheme benefits the students, the tutors and the whole community in a wide range of ways. I have met many lovely people, learned a lot about places I have never visited and eaten a fantastic selection of dishes. I would urge anyone with a little time to spare to give it a go.”

If you would like to find out more about becoming a volunteer tutor, you can book a place on the next Information Session on Friday 21 or 28 January 2011. Email [Caroline Battes](#) or phone 0131 535 4630. Training commences in February.