We're so happy you're embracing our **mission**: building positive relationships with homeless and transitional youth through education, art and recreation, while affirming personal worth to create more meaningful and healthier lives.

Please read this **volunteer welcome and training kit**. It will help you prepare for orientation and invite you share our **vision**: helping young people build a positive and greater sense of self, along with an enhanced capacity for growth, change and emotional maturity.

**Together we:**

**Provide an environment** where intellectual, emotional and physical skills flourish, a place where young people can reach their highest potential. We know that the basics—food, shelter, bathrooms and employment—can't fully sustain young people on or off the streets. We champion material and emotional self-sufficiency, modeling trust by trusting young people with materials, food and a safe space.

**Create a flexible, mentor-based program** that rebuilds bridges between youth and the community. p:ear offer opportunities for personal choices, providing the role models, guidance and support young people need to have meaningful lives and become healthy adults. Here, youth and community interact regularly, sparking shared understanding and renewed empathy.

**Help homeless and transitional youth** see themselves beyond homelessness. Here, young adults are students, artists, writers, musicians and athletes. We encourage self-perceptions that align with authentic identity. We believe that a life shackled by a restricted self-image lacks light, depth, inspiration and hope.

**Here’s where you come in...**

Please read this guide—either page-by-page by clicking the icons below or topic-by-topic using the color nav bar above, To sign up, click [here](#) and complete the application.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

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**hi. welcome to p:ear**

At first I was worried I didn’t have what it would take to work with these “kids.” I mean, young people from even the most stable backgrounds can be mystifying.

The second I walked through the door, I felt my reservations melt, my heart bloom. I had entered a kind of urban haven. a safe and peaceful place. It was almost magic.

That’s when I knew I wanted to be part of the great work p:ear does in our world.

Rick Barrett
friend of p:ear
all about p:ear: who we are

**p:ear** is a nonprofit program that builds positive relationships with homeless and transitional youth through education, art and recreation to affirm personal worth and achieve meaningful and healthier lives.

**p:ear** is founded on the belief that young people on the street often lack the vital tools that help develop a sense of value to the community. **p:ear** creates a unique climate of hope and optimism built on positive relationships between adults and other youth. We’re committed to the sustained nurturing, support and mentoring of these youth, while offering services that encourage growth and promote dignity in the least restrictive manner.

**p:ear** serves 15- to 25-year-olds who are homeless, pregnant or parenting, suspended from their home schools, or otherwise marginalized from traditional transitions into adulthood. **p:ear** emphasizes five areas: safe space, education, art and recreation, and **p:ear** works, our transition program.

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**running the numbers***

- 2,476 meals served
- 4,242 youth served since opening
- 1,508 youth actively enrolled
- 702 youth currently attending
- 128 volunteers participating at p:ear
- 52 daily average number of youth
- 3 community youth art shows

*For the period between July 2015 through April 2017.*
creatively mentoring
homeless youth

what we offer

p:ear's five staff members and 120+ volunteers provide 6 areas of service: safe space, education, art, recreation, and p:ear Works, our job training program.

Safe Space
Safe Space embodies intangibles that foster stability—from people you can count on to be there, to milk in the fridge and food in your belly. Last one year alone, a daily average of 43 homeless youth spent over 22,000 hours enjoying 12,000 meals, numerous bus tickets, haircuts, community networking opportunities, referral services for clothing, counseling and healthcare—both mental and physical.

Food
The p:ear Kitchen and Food Program provides young people with the opportunity to eat fresh, nourishing meals in a community setting. Homeless youth can learn to prepare meals and appreciate the cultural importance of food in our economic, social and individual lives.

Education
p:ear instills a curiosity that inspires lifelong learners. Our educational program provides individualized support, academic counseling and instruction toward GED completion and/or acquire basic academic and literacy skills. p:ear also helps youth wishing to continue their education explore financial aid and scholarship opportunities.

Art
Art is safe. Art builds bridges. Mindful mentoring helps them create, show and sell their work in the onsite gallery. With ten annual Art Shows here and another six in the community, p:ear youth reach over 2,500 art lovers each year! Tickets to local arts organizations (dance, music, theater) invite youth to join the next generation of arts makers and patrons in their own community.

Recreation
Experiences in the outdoor world such as cross-country skiing, climbing, kayaking, seasonal day trips and overnights, are life-changing for youth. Over 80 p:ear students experience our outdoor adventures per year. They experience what for them is rare: relaxation, play, nature without having to sleep in it.

p:ear Works
p:ear works creatively builds pathways for youth to end their homelessness and begin the climb out of poverty through:

- p:ear barista school espresso bar: an onsite walk-up window espresso bar serving as a paid internship for youth graduating from the barista program.
- bike mechanic school: a job training program, teaching youth the ins and outs of being a bike mechanic
- p:ear gallery: a venue to sell both youth art and the work of professional artists as well as an e-commerce site alongside a new web-site for sale of youth work
Eligibility

Eligible youth are between 15 and 25 years old. They are either homeless, accessing other youth agencies, pregnant and parenting, suspended from their home schools, or otherwise marginalized from traditional high school and the conventional transitions into adulthood. Youth must be enrolled before their 24th birthday to participate.

Enrollment

- Youth wishing to access p:ear services must enroll, provide all required information and sign our policies and procedures agreement.
- Youth will tour p:ear and discuss expectations while working in our space.
- Once enrolled, youth will be given opportunities to begin participating.
- Regular attendance is not required.

Verification

- Youth must verify age within three weeks of enrolling to continue participating.
- Youth must sign consent/release forms to allow staff to verify their age.
- If staff is unable to verify age, youth will be asked not to return until they can provide proof.
youth: rules + information

**p:ear is committed to creating a safe and respectful place** for all youth, staff, volunteers and community members without bias of race, color, religion, creed or sexual orientation. Volunteers help ensure a positive, safe and dignified environment for everyone at p:ear.

**RULES**

Respect is essential—for ourselves, each other, the staff, the program, community members and our space.

To keep p:ear a safe place for all, language, actions or symbols that are homophobic, racist, sexist or violent or in any way abusive to any individual or group will not be tolerated.

- No guns, gun replicas and/or firearms of any kind.
- Any other weapons must be checked and retrieved when the youth leaves.
- No alcohol, drugs or “street business” inside or within two blocks of p:ear.

Youth are expected to:

- Engage in constructive productive activities. No sleeping. Sleeping youth will be asked to leave for 24 hours after three verbal warnings.
- Keep the space clean and maintained by cleaning up after themselves and, when necessary, others.

- Maintain positive relationships with our neighbors and local businesses by not hanging out in front of the space.
- Meet with staff before reentering the program after being asked to leave p:ear for any period of time.

**INFORMATION**

- Breakfast and lunch are served everyday p:ear is open. Lunch begins around 12:00 p.m.
- Participation in cultural, educational and entertaining community events, as well as in our art and recreation field trips, are encouraged.
- For GED students, individual study and self-motivation are emphasized. Staff/volunteers will provide assistance.
- Bus tickets may be available to help youth get to and from important appointments. Youth must demonstrate legitimate need.
- Youth valuables should remain secure and removed on departure. Items left behind are discarded weekly.
- Questions, comments, or requests for clarification of expectations should be directed to staff.
youth: culture (part one)

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF STREET LIFE
Street life is a sub-culture. When working with homeless youth, you are working cross-culturally.
Addressing issues of personal worth as well as conceptual and perspective needs are critical when helping youth transition out of street life. Meeting merely basic physical needs isn’t enough to secure lasting transformation.

VALUES AND MORES
Survival
Survival is the primary goal of homeless youth. Most other values and accepted behaviors stem from this goal. Youth often face life-threatening situations and don’t judge their actions against the same moral/legal criteria that we might. Their standards are often based on the effect the behavior/activity has on survival.

Street youth:
- Equate personal value and credibility with survivability in a hostile urban environment.
- May feel more comfortable addressing a peer’s issues than confronting their own. This may or may not be “denial” in the clinical sense, but it can help them perceive themselves as having value.
- May adopt a street name given by a street family to forge a survival identity while protecting the original identity.

Loyalty
Youth have a strong cultural ethic not to “rat” or snitch on other youth. p:ear requirements may produce ethical conflict by positioning program/volunteer loyalty at odds with loyalties to other youth.
Street families are not biological but are as real and important to street youth as birth families are for most of us. While closely resembling extended families, a street family might identify members as brother, sister, mother, etc.

CONCEPTS OF PROPERTY AND OWNERSHIP
Many youth carry all their earthly possessions in a backpack. Respecting their possessions is critical.
Youth often “mark” their territory and expect their mark to be honored.

Click here for part two: culture
youth: culture (part two)

ATTITUDES

Tough
Aggressive, cocky behavior is a reaction to a perceived threat or intimidation and can be countered with respect and kindness.

Prejudiced
Most over-expressions of prejudice or beliefs are tools for coping with crises of self-esteem and can be mitigated by activities and experiences that build more authentic self-evaluation.

Violent
Street youth’s aggressive, hostile exterior is often a protective defense, a way of surviving in a violent culture. Do not directly confront a youth with a “shut-up-or-put-up” attitude—they will put up every time.

Guarded
Working with street youth is like walking through an emotional minefield—you don’t know what hurts. Hyperbole, dishonesty and street stories are Band-aids that mask emotional and psychological wounds.

POOR INTER-CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS
Street culture reflects the lack of options for young people in our society. (If traditional family/school don’t work, what’s left?) This mindset is reinforced by unhealthy adults, including child exploiters and juvenile prostitution customers.

A primary survival skill of street youth is the ability to size people up quickly and make snap judgements. Adults are generally seen as exploiters, authoritarians or do-gooders.

Street lifestyles that include prostitution, violence and drugs make for exciting media. Youth see how they are portrayed and may try to live up to the image. Adults may see such media and stereotype all homeless youth in light of the media portrayal.

Interaction between adult and youth cultures can be—or be seen as—exploitative or degrading to youth. When we pass judgements on them, we have to accept our responsibility for the situations they are reacting to.
**youth: personal boundaries**

**BALANCING INTIMACY WITH ASSERTIVENESS AND DECREASING REACTIVITY**

Based on an article by Bob Nelson, MS

“Boundaries” is a term regularly used in our culture. It can reference our response to others, express our needs, and explain the reactions of others. But what are boundaries? What can we do to change boundaries if they no longer serve their intended needs?

There are two categories of boundaries:

**Physical boundaries** define proximity to another person. Some are comfortable sharing close physical space with another, while others need more distance. Our physical boundaries usually change depending on the type of relationship we have with the other person.

**Psychological boundaries** frame our mental or emotional reactions. For example, if someone makes an upsetting comment, a psychological boundary has been crossed.

Boundaries are one way we’ve learned to protect ourselves during childhood. They “buffer” the outside world. They can be the membrane that allows some forms of contact in, while keeping others out. Patterns developed in childhood often become limiting patterns during our life, tying us to unconscious reactions to current situations and narrowing our experiences. Sometimes we need stronger, better boundaries, sometimes more relaxed ones.

Studying current patterns we can see how they affect our lives. We can identify automatic thoughts or feelings before reacting. It’s as if we witness our experience and can choose to respond differently. The more aware of our experience we are, the more likely we will be to respond positively instead of simply react. This takes time. Be patient.

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**at first sight...**

p:ear is a remarkable organization. With support from the community, other organizations and talented individuals, they do more than provide a safe space for street kids. They mentor young people with education, art and recreational opportunities in an incredibly dynamic and meaningful way. p:ear’s individualized approach empowers homeless youth to make positive choices and transforms lives.

Congressman Earl Blumenauer  
friend of p:ear
youth: relating (part one)

Adapted From Tips for Relating to Teens

1. Remember their names. It’s important that you be interested in them enough to know who they are and address them accordingly.
2. Before giving feedback to a youth, ask if they want to hear it. If so, make it as specific as possible and make sure the power stays with the youth.
3. Regardless of how much youth talk about how awful their parents, or siblings or friends are, never agree with them or make statements against the people closest to them. Remember that their bond is strong.
4. Don’t lecture or unload on youth. You’ll lose their attention and respect if you do.
5. Youth often operate as if they’re the center of the universe. This is typical. Gently help them see the world of others.
6. Use humor generously but appropriately.
7. Be honest. Street youth must make accurate judgments of people for survival. They’ll know in a second if you’re being inauthentic and you’ll lose their trust and respect.
8. Low self-esteem is a common problem among youth. Some ways to help:
   - Ask their opinion and really listen.
   - Show, by your attitudes, words and actions, that you believe in them.
10. Admit your own mistakes. Let youth see you as fully human, accountable and willing to change direction when you see your error.
11. Be quick to express your approval verbally and non-verbally.
12. Be especially aware of and engaged with the youth who have the least going for them. You will learn a lot about yourself.

click here for part two: relating
DE-ESCALATING AGITATION

Analyze the situation:
- What level of agitation is the youth experiencing?
- What is concerning the youth?
- Is there evidence of intoxication or mental illness?
- Are your co-workers near by?

LEVEL OF AGITATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Subjective and uncomfortable emotion as a result of perceived threat. Often accompanied by dread and helplessness.</td>
<td>To restore the youth's sense of equilibrium by providing emotional support and nurturing.</td>
<td>Face the youth squarely, adopting an open, relaxed posture. Allow the youth to vent. Offer encouragement, reassurance and hospitality. Demonstrate a caring attitude.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Defensiveness intended to neutralize the sense of helplessness, anxiety or dread.</td>
<td>Diffuse the anger momentum to prevent further escalation.</td>
<td>Face the youth squarely, adopting an open, relaxed posture. Diffuse the adversarial momentum by affirming the anger. Offer advice. Direct youth to follow your good plan. Provide choices. (Either A or B. Either A or not A).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>Anger focused on a recipient. May quickly escalate to violence. Aggression focused on destruction.</td>
<td>Gain control of the situation to prevent escalation to violence. Take precautions against violence.</td>
<td>Face youth at a 45 degree angle (to avoid kicks) and remain out of swinging distance. Maintain open posture with hands out of pockets. Do not communicate by touch. Do not stand between youth and a safety exit. Set limits. Clearly state the boundaries of behavior you will tolerate. Acknowledge the anger and focus. Provide directives. Clearly state what you want the youth to do. Offer a warning. Neutrally state the consequences of his/her behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>Aggression focused on destruction.</td>
<td>To protect yourself and others. To escape or allow the youth to escape. The goal is not to win.</td>
<td>Let your face drain of expression. Drop your shoulders. Don't make any sudden moves. Continue your verbal and nonverbal communication to indicate retreat. Withdraw to safety and instruct others to do likewise.</td>
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</table>
p:ear aims to build positive relationships with homeless and transitional youth through education, art and recreation to affirm personal worth and achieve meaningful and healthier lives. p:ear is committed to the ongoing support, nurturing and mentoring of these youth while offering services essential to human dignity in the least restrictive manner.

Staff/volunteers set clear and appropriate boundaries with the youth we serve in this relationship based program. It is vital to the integrity of relationships built with youth that staff/volunteers observe the following policies:

- Staff/volunteers of p:ear are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct while working with all youth that access the program.
- Staff/volunteers will strive to create a safe and nurturing environment for all youth to flourish while displaying respect, honesty and integrity.
- Staff/volunteers of p:ear will not engage in romantic or "dating" relationships with current or previous youth of p:ear. p:ear staff/volunteers will not engage in sexual relationships or sexual contact with current or previous youth of the p:ear program. There are no exceptions.

For the safety of staff/volunteers and liability concerns working with this population, physical intervention with the youth is not allowed. We do not have legal custody or authority to intervene with the youth served. If intervention is required, 911 must be called immediately. At no time can we place the program or ourselves at risk by attempting to physically break up fights or intervening to remove youth/adults from a conflict.

Personal loans to youth from staff/volunteers are not allowed. Gifts, meals and outings for current youth enrolled must be purchased from p:ear funds or donated for giving.

Due to the abuse issues of many of the youth we see, any form of physical contact with a youth (hugs, arm around shoulder, etc.) must be with permission from the youth. It is important to be aware of how physical contact is perceived by young people.
volunteers: policies (part two)

Due to the abuse issues of many of the youth we see, any form of physical contact with a youth (hugs, arm around shoulder, etc.) must with permission from the youth. It’s important to understand how physical contact is perceived by the youth.

- Contact with youth currently enrolled at p:ear on personal time is not acceptable. There may be exceptions to this. A Director must approve these exceptions in writing prior to the event.
- Staff/volunteers will not “fraternize” with currently enrolled youth at p:ear.
- While at p:ear, it may be appropriate to transport/accompany youth in crisis to court, medical appointments, etc. Transporting youth outside of work time is against policy. Staff/volunteers must notify at least one other staff member of the crisis and the plan of action. Detailed documentation of all off-site travel is required.
- Youth served at p:ear will not be in Staff/Volunteer homes. Staff/volunteers of p:ear will not share their home addresses to youth.
- No abuse of youth at will be tolerated. Any person suspected of psychological, physical or sexual abuse will be dismissed immediately without chance of reinstatement.
- If a youth falls asleep in the space, volunteers will notify staff who will follow appropriate procedures.
- Staff/volunteers will not engage in gossiping or discussions about or with other youth.
- All staff/volunteers will fully support p:ear confidentiality guidelines to ensure the safety and trust of all youth.
volunteers: levels (part one)

Volunteers are the cornerstone of p:ear. Volunteers provide the much needed support to the program as well as to the positive relationships that marginalized youth lack. All p:ear volunteers must be 25 or older, complete a volunteer application, training and paperwork for the level of training for which they are applying. p:ear offers a variety of volunteer opportunities:

**LEVEL 1**
Participate in activities as diverse as picking up meals to serving on a committee: marketing and development, food coordination, events planning, work parties, etc. Level 1 does not require completion of volunteer training. Interested? Email joy@pearmentor.org for more information.

**LEVEL 2**
Work on a specific project for a specified time. Examples: Artistic workshops, hosting and tour guides for a First Thursday exhibition, supporting staff on an off site cultural or recreation event. Interested? Please complete the volunteer application.

**LEVEL 3**
Mentor youth directly on a weekly basis, participate in daily activities and provide program support. For more information, please read the detailed description on the next page. Interested? Please complete the volunteer application.

click here for part two: levels
creatively mentoring homeless youth

volunteers: levels (part two)
level 3 description

PURPOSE
■ Be a positive role model in a group setting for p:ear youth accessing p:ear.
■ Contribute to the daily operations and routines of the program.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIP
■ Joy Carter, p:ear volunteer coordinator
ejoy@pearmentor.org
v 503.228.6677

TIME
■ Full time shifts:
  8:15 am to 2:30 pm Tuesday through Friday.
■ Half-time shifts:
  8:15 am to 11:00 am or 11:00 am to 2:30 pm.
■ Summer hours vary.
■ 6-month minimum commitment.
■ Please inform Joy of vacation or sick days via phone or email.

DUTIES
Create a safe, supportive, structured environment:
■ Abide by all policies and procedures.
■ Develop positive, respectful relationships with youth.
■ Maintain appropriate boundaries.
■ Inform staff of issues or concerns.

Be a team player
■ Participate in daily scheduled workshops or projects.
■ Provide child care to allow parents to focus on objectives.
■ Prepare space at beginning of day and clean at end of work day.

Assist with food service:
■ Help pick up lunch from designated restaurant or grocery store (may require vehicle and ability to lift and carry approximately 35 servings).
■ Help prepare meals.
■ Cleanup after meal.

Provide clerical support:
■ Answer phone, take messages, filing, copy materials, when requested.
■ Run errands.
■ Prepare mailings.

REQUIREMENTS
■ Minimum age 25.
■ Successful completion of all aspects of training.
■ Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with youth, staff/volunteers.

BENEFITS
■ Obtain experience working with youth.
■ Do something rewarding that makes a difference in a young person’s life.
volunteers: self care

MAKING YOUR PLAN

Because working with this population can be challenging, it’s a good idea to develop a personalized self-care plan for optimal emotional health and well-being.

- Utilize relaxation techniques to decrease body tension and to manage stress.
- Acquaint yourself with the social supports available to you. A reliable support system can offer relief, distraction and pleasure (not to mention being sanity saving).
- Start a journal. Instead of keeping thought and feelings inside, where they can build up, get them down on paper. A journal is useful for venting thoughts and feelings, clarifying issues and problem solving.
- Get adequate sleep and rest.
- Smile and have laughter in your life. Be spontaneous at times and playful.
- Feed your intellect, emotions and body. Participate in life, reflect, find what “refills the well” for you.
- Approach each day with a sense of openness.
- Avoid being self-critical. It just takes energy and leaves you depleted and discouraged. Be as kind and understanding of yourself as you would be of another person.
- Be sure to build into your schedule time for relationships and pleasurable activities.
- Take responsibility for your life by understanding yourself, your behaviors, thoughts and values.

Francesco Tripoli

p:ear volunteer

at first sight...

I’m still wearing that smile that cracked my face while at p:ear this morning.

Truly, it is a pleasure to be there.

What you and the p:ear family of comrades do is nothing short of exemplary, informative, and heart-filled awesome, standing as a beacon of insight into how we might heal wounds and grow connections.

Francesco Tripoli

p:ear volunteer
thank you. and welcome to p:ear.