**Seeking: Blind Mentors for 2023 LIFE Program**

Are you ready to be an agent of change for blind and vision impaired youth of Virginia?

The Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) is seeking blind college students or young professionals to be peer mentors for our 2023 Learning Independence, Feeling Empowered (LIFE) Program. LIFE is a four-week residential summer program for high school-aged blind and vision impaired youth who want to learn and build confidence in the skills of blindness. LIFE program students participate in daily classes, including cane travel, Braille, cooking skills, cleaning, access technology, computer skills, and job readiness. During the last two weeks of the program, students aged 16-18 will have the opportunity to participate in a community based two-week work experience. In addition to classes and the work experience, students participate in evening and weekend confidence building activities where the mentors work closely with the students. As mentor, you and your students will challenge the misconceptions of blindness by participating in events like rock climbing, white-water rafting, improv, swimming, and much more!

If you are enthusiastic about giving back to the next generation of blind and vision impaired youth and you want to have fun while working, then being a mentor in the 2023 LIFE Program is the place for you. Mentors must be available June 11, 2023 through August 4, 2023. The 2023 LIFE Program will take place on the campus of VRCBVI in Richmond, Virginia.

Please see the job description below for further details.

**Mentoring candidates will:**

* Possess excellent blindness skills, specifically the ability to travel independently using a long white cane or dog guide while communicating with and monitoring a group of high school age students
* Be available from June 11, 2023, to August 4, 2023. (Mentors will have the week of July 2 off)
* Be able to work 40 hours a week, including evenings and weekends
* Be able to communicate effectively with co-workers and supervisor
* Possess maturity, patience, and the ability to work as part of a team
* Be able to maintain professional boundaries
* Enjoy teaching and have an enthusiastic sense of adventure
* Reside in the dorm apartments on the VRCBVI campus
* Pass a background check

Rate of pay: $15.00 an hour plus room and board at VRCBVI.

To apply to be a 2023 LIFE Peer Mentor:

Send the following to william.sutton@dbvi.virginia.gov

* Cover Letter
* Resume
* Three professional references (provide name and best phone number to contact)
* 500-word essay explaining why you would be the best candidate for the position and the role mentoring has played in your success

If you have any questions, please call William A. Sutton, Jr. at 804-371-3204

**The deadline to apply is April 15, 2023.**

PEER MENTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

**KSAs and/or Competencies required to successfully perform the work:**

* Knowledge of and demonstrated proficiency in blindness skills used in academic, social and employment settings.
* Knowledge of basic acceptable behavior as it relates to youths.
* Ability to secure the confidence, respect, and cooperation of youths and exercise tact, initiative, and good judgment in dealing with them.
* Ability to perceive, observe, and address problems as they arise.
* Ability to participate in and provide guidance to students in planned confidence-building activities.
* Ability to show a high level of initiative, effort, attention to detail and commitment by completing assignments efficiently with minimal supervision.
* Ability to use web browsers and Microsoft Office Suite including Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint proficiently
* Ability to communicate effectively in both oral and in written format

**Education, Experience, Licensure, Certification required for entry into position:**

* Prefer applicant with a college degree; currently enrolled in college and in good standing or equivalent combination of training and experience.

**Core Responsibilities:**

**85% Mentoring/Instruction:**

* Applies knowledge of program rules and practices and blindness skills while providing instruction to students and modeling blindness skills and problem-solving skills as related to independent living and academic success.
* Fosters independence by providing supportive encouragement (mentoring) and instruction in self-advocacy to youths in a one-on-one or small group situation and gives instruction, advice, and assistance.
* Plans and leads evening and weekend confidence-building activities; exercises situational judgment and discretion while providing supervision during group trips and social functions.
* Confers with supervisor, case manager, or instructional staff regarding student issues; attends staff meetings.
* Plans, implements, and leads group activities such as Conversations About Blindness classes to teach advocacy skills and problem solving.
* Collects, records, and reports student data; maintains logbooks via computer and prepares incident reports and/or related institutional forms.
* Participates in and provides instruction during selected aspects of the LIFE Programs, including confidence-building activities, ACE Academy, Mock Interviews, Conversations About Blindness, and other aspects of program as assigned.
* Provides guidance and direction to blind transition age students.
* Provides initial on-the-job guidance for students in their community-based work experience.
* Substitute teaches as needed.

**10% Evaluation:**

* Informally evaluates students on their preparedness for living independently, employment readiness, and academic success through observations during class time and during evening activities.
* Communicates findings and recommendations both orally and in written format, as they relate to students’ goals.

**5% Communication**:

* Reports to supervisor and center counselor observations regarding students existing skills, present needs, and any instructional recommendations and strategies.
* Provides accurate written documentation such as journal entries, final reports, incident reports, etc.
* Participates in all assigned student staffing’s to discuss observations and recommendations for promoting independence, academic skills and employment-readiness activities.
* Other duties as assigned.