

Greetings,

Welcome to the New School Institute (INE) of Puerto Rico. We thank you for choosing us as your community service alternative. Your interest, time and commitment are essential to achieve our goal of transforming the public education system in Puerto Rico through the Montessori philosophy.

Transforming the public education system of our country is a work of many, and that is why we celebrate our volunteers, as well as the values that motivate their actions. By participating as a volunteer of the INE, you participate directly in the construction of healthy school communities that serve your students, their families and their community. You join and contribute to the development of optimal environments for learning and cultivating peace. Your work as a volunteer is important and full of satisfactions.

This Volunteer Manual will guide your work and participation, present our organization: its mission, philosophy and goals, let alone its code of healthy coexistence, structure, rules and policies. We invite you to read it!

From the bottom of our hearts, THANK YOU! We're here to serve you!

Sincerely,

Anelis Torres Rivera  
Community Service Coordinator  
New School Institute (INE)

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**About us?**

The New School Institute (INE) is an independent non-profit organization (501c3). The INE is dedicated to transforming the public education system in Puerto Rico using the Montessori philosophy and methodology.

*Our mission*

Accompany, train and serve communities in Puerto Rico through the Montessori public school system and shared governance methodology. Also, to collaborate with the development of beings that contribute to the common good.

*Our Vision: For 2020*

- Expand from 49 to 100 Montessori schools
- To train 1,500 teachers
- Reach 25,000 students and their families

With education, we reduce: crime and violence. Promoting values and civilized coexistence.

*Values*

The mission and vision of the New School Institute (INE) is guided by the following values. These values will govern the conduct of our staff, volunteers, collaborators, and beneficiaries.

- Justice
- Peace
- Union
- Respect
- Happiness

*Our Creed of Healthy Coexistence*

- Always working to "look" at the welfare of the children and youth of the project. Answer the questions that guide us with our actions. We ask ourselves: What is better for the project? What is better for the students?
- We are all equal and we have the same responsibility before the collective. We are all responsible for the evolution of the project: to bring ideas, to develop them and carry them out fully and to create an atmosphere of peace and work for the benefit of the project and the students.
- We all have to give 100%.
- Dialogue is our main tool of construction. We must discuss ideas, differences and meeting points always in a framework of mutual respect.
- We have to listen to everyone's ideas. All ideas are equally important and all opinions are important.

- Present points of disagreement with respect and deep love for each other.
- Respect others deeply. That means when we are together and not together. We shall not talk about another person or their work in a negative way without them being present.
- Support each other.
- Have deep faith in the other; trust each other
- Take collective decisions in consensus and 100% support the decision of the group even if it is not our own.
- Knowledge and good ideas belong to everyone. Share ideas that come up, share alternatives and solutions. We are all responsible for the whole.

### **What makes our organization unique?**

- The New School Institute is accredited by the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) and affiliated with the American Montessori Society [amshq.org](http://amshq.org) (AMS) to train teachers in the Montessori pedagogy at the Infants and Readers levels, Children's Home, Workshop I, Workshop II, and Secondary
- Is committed to the excellence and achievements of each of the schools participating in the project.
- Is committed to the optimal development of each child and to the social transformation of the community it serves.

### **Our promise**

Achieve social transformation and peace in the communities with schools that offers all students an optimal learning environment, an education of excellence where they experience success and find their passion. We strive to ensure that all children and young people are treated with respect, love and dignity. A school where there is no desertion, failure or violence.

### **Institute's Projects**

- *Academic:* prepares school staff (teachers, assistants, directors, counselors) in the Montessori philosophy and methodology. With the goal of having 100 schools with Montessori projects that serve children and young people from 0 to 18 years old.
- *School Transformation:* The main purpose is to work and collaborate with the educational transformation of Puerto Rico with the strengthening of public education. We work to ensure that the school communities we serve to comply with the highest educational standards and good academic achievement, efficiently address diversity and achieve the involvement of families. To achieve this transformation, we work on the implementation of the Montessori philosophy and methodology as an educational method of teaching in the schools we serve.

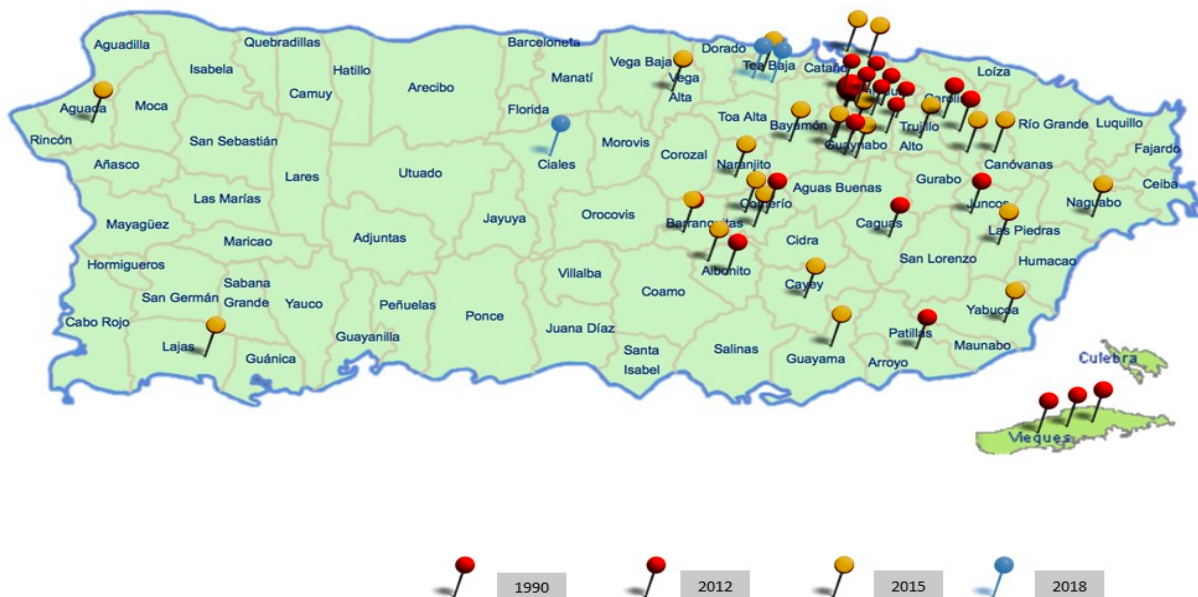
- *Sowing We Are Sating*: A project created to accompany schools in the development of school gardens and the reforestation of schools with native trees. Through this initiative seeks to create connection with nature and encourage planting as a form of self-management and self-sufficiency.
- *Renace*: A program that is offered during extended hours to the regular school curriculum at the school. The program is intended to serve the population of students, their families and school staff who have been impacted by weather events. The project facilitates the participants to develop strategies for the proper management of emotions, stress and anxiety.

Participants have the opportunity to address their situation through activities related to:

- Art
- Music
- Yoga

In addition, it offers tutorials to complete the academic year with satisfactory academic performance. Currently the program is offered in 20 schools located in communities affected by Hurricane Maria in 20 municipalities around the island.

- *Schools for Peace* is a program of the New School Institute that uses the Casa Familiar strategy to serve children and youth who have been impacted by violence. Casa Familiar is a space of peace and serenity in which all human pain becomes a plan for happiness



and growth. There are currently 45 Montessori public schools in 26 municipalities of Puerto Rico, with around 14,200 students served through the different projects.

### **What is the Volunteer Program?**

The Volunteer Program of the New School Institute is based on the deep faith that we believe in the capacity of the citizens. Thus, together, they can deal with crises and major social problems. We believe in the goodness of the human being and in the ability to work for the common good and for a greater project.

Its protocol is maintained in the Voluntary Act of Puerto Rico, **Act No. 261 of September 8, 2004**. It establishes conceptual, methodological and procedural foundations for all activities involving volunteer work in the organization. Through the program we offer logistical and operational support for voluntary work.

The purpose of this volunteer program is to increase the number of people that work to improve education in Puerto Rico, to put at the service of children and young diverse talents present in our community. We aim to provide volunteers with a rich experience, through which they feel part of our project and part of the "solution". Therefore, our goal is to strengthen the volunteer culture of our organization and the schools we serve.

### **Voluntary Act of Puerto Rico**

**Act No. 261 of September 8, 2004:** Recognizes, protects and facilitates the joint and non-profit action of individuals, appointed as volunteers for the common welfare of the country. This law applies to volunteers who provide their services (unpaid) in programs that serve social activities and community interests directed by nonprofit entities.

### **Recruitment of the volunteer**

The recruitment of the volunteers is a continuous process, and we do it through invitations in the social networks and bulletins at schools. The population we serve diffuses our mission and the opportunity to help.

### **What does a volunteer do?**

A volunteer can serve in a variety of ways depending on their interests, availability, and the needs of each program. The volunteer of the INE can serve in the central offices of the organization (academic program, administration, management of the office, attention to visitors and calls, among others), can help from home in different tasks, from writing documents, edition, calls, to even social media. They can work from schools and its various projects: academic project and direct service to the child, administrative matters of the school, physical and ornamental plants, planting, fund raising activities, among others.

**How can you become a volunteer?**

Becoming a volunteer is very simple, you only need to have motivation, commitment and desire to help. To take that first step you must complete the following documents and processes:

- 1- Volunteer Application Form.
- 2- Volunteer's Agreement.
- 3- Relief of Liability and Confidentiality.
- 4- Participate in the interview process and evaluation of candidacy

If selected as an Active Volunteer, please process and deliver the following documents before beginning:

- License with photo or any identification card
- Certificate of good health
- Criminal record
- Certificate of Law 300

Before starting the service, you will receive an orientation about the organization, its creed of healthy coexistence, its methodology of collective work and specifically the project in which you will work. The participation, responsibilities and tasks will be explained in detail. You will meet the person who will be in charge of the work and who you report to.

**Opportunities for the volunteer***Active Volunteer:*

The active volunteer participates regularly in the different projects and / or activities of the organization. The work of this volunteer will support specific tasks of the program. For example, student volunteers who, as part of their school curriculum, require community service hours.

*Special Event Volunteer:*

The volunteer of special events will participate at least once a year in any event and / or activity of the organization. This volunteer can commit to the organization annually to offer their community service hours. For example, this type of volunteer can collect items from the Wish List to cover specific program needs. Also, the volunteer could participate in fundraising activities for the benefit of the organization. In addition, they can implement or direct an event for one of the programs.

*Corporate Volunteer:*

The corporate volunteering is ideal for public and private companies that are willing to develop social responsibility. This type of volunteer work can support a specific area related to the needs of the program. For example: Reforestation project, painting projects, cleaning events, festive celebration, collection of Montessori materials, fundraising etc.

**Volunteer guidelines and expectations**

- The volunteer is expected to follow the code of healthy coexistence and creed of the organization.
- To be genuinely committed to the common good, respect, and care for the interests of the other.
- Volunteers are expected to meet the established days that have good attendance and punctuality.
- Volunteers are expected to be responsible.
- To maintain the confidentiality that requires working within a school context or nonprofit organization such as ours.
- Volunteers must always work according to the rules of the school as defined by the school government.

**Dress code and appearance**

The INE expects the volunteers to dress in a clean and neat, casual-professional manner, suitable for the responsibilities and the area where they collaborate. Remember, you are a role model for our students. Be prudent and judicious. (example: tight pants should not be worn, skirts no more than 3 inches above the knee, no pronounced necklines, no caps, no glasses, no shirts.)

**Voluntary collaboration schedules**

The hours vary according to the type of volunteer, events and program they select. The Volunteer Coordinator will inform the schedule according to the availability of the volunteer and the needs of the New School Institute (INE). It is the responsibility of the volunteer to sign hours of assistance provided, record their collaboration hours, and that they are signed as staff of the INE.

**Volunteer training**

The New School Institute does not have a formal training process for its volunteers. However, during the community service there will be an INE staff guiding it.