

Community Advocate Network Volunteer Guidebook

Concordia Language Villages - May 2026

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Thank you for your willingness to be part of the CAN. We truly appreciate your time and efforts to help spread the word about Concordia Language Villages!

Mission

The mission of Concordia Language Villages (CLV) is to *inspire courageous global citizens*. Members of the Community Advocate Network (CAN) support this mission by spreading the word about CLV in their local communities and through their personal networks, helping us reach more individuals, groups, and families who want to *live the language*.

Overview

This guidebook has been developed to provide CLV's CAN with information to support their advocacy work. In it, we cover important policies for volunteering, share useful CAN resources, and answer commonly asked questions about how you can help. Advocates are expected to review this guidebook and adhere to the policies and procedures stated within any time they are representing CLV.

Policies

Volunteering Responsibly

It is important that community advocates accurately represent their affiliation with CLV. For this reason, we ask that all advocates who are not actively employed by CLV identify themselves as "volunteers." Volunteers play an important role in supporting our mission, but they are not authorized to make statements, commitments, or official positions on behalf of CLV. Using the term "volunteer" helps us ensure transparency with the public, avoid misunderstandings, and operate responsibly.

Getting Started - Approval Process

We know that many community advocates are excited to get started right away. However, before you start a new advocacy campaign or project, we ask that you reach out to us for approval. Projects that require approval include school presentations, tabling events, "cold" calling or emailing schools and businesses, fundraising, and other projects that involve an audience beyond your personal network. We can provide you with additional information, supplies, guidance, and support to make sure your work aligns with our mission and help make the project a success. Contact Elise Grabinger (egrabin1@cord.edu) to get started.

There are also a number of ways volunteers can advocate for CLV that do not require approval. These include putting up flyers, posting about us on social media or sharing our content, leaving a review, inviting people to parent information sessions, and generally sharing information with people in your network.

When in doubt about whether a project needs approval, reach out! One general rule is to ask yourself, “Who is the audience?” Generally, outreach that includes people already in your network does not require approval, but outreach beyond that audience should receive approval first. For example, emailing a teacher who you know about our programs does not require approval (and is encouraged!). However, if you are reaching out to the school, contact us first. We may have additional insights and resources to help you or may have an existing relationship with the school that needs to be considered first.

Information Privacy and Disclosure of Leads

When CLV attends an event, we invite people to opt in for more information and/or submit questions through a QR code to an online form. We discourage volunteers from collecting any personally identifiable or sensitive information. Please direct anyone who wants more information or has a question you are unable to answer to fill out the online form:

<https://concordiaclients.wufoo.com/forms/concordia-language-villages-information-request/>



If a person is not comfortable filling out the form, you can ask them if they want to share their contact information with you. Any contact information collected should be shared with Elise Grabinger (egrabin1@cord.edu) following the event. We ask that volunteers do not retain personal copies of contact information collected or take further action on that information.

Resources

CAN Toolkit

The CAN Toolkit is a collection of approved flyers and slides for public use. The Toolkit can be accessed at <https://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/can-deliverables>

Virtual Parent Information Sessions

Leading up to each summer, CLV offers virtual parent information sessions as an opportunity for families to meet with leadership staff, ask questions, and learn about what to expect that summer. These sessions are especially helpful to families who are considering our programs for the first time. The schedule of upcoming sessions can be found at <https://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/summer-youth-camps/youth-overnight>

Participants must register for the information session in order to receive the meeting link. A recording and transcript of the chat is shared with everyone who registers once the meeting concludes. Some Villages also hold their own information sessions.

Community advocates can support this initiative by encouraging people to sign up. Advocates are also welcome to sit in on the sessions. Many families have questions and concerns about sending their children to camp for the first time, and hearing from people who have experience with our programs can make a huge difference.

Social Media Posts

Social media is a powerful tool for reaching new audiences. We encourage members of the CAN to use their platforms to share their CLV stories and help us extend our reach! Below are a few sample prompts to help you get started.

Do you ever have a word that triggers a song from your past? Whenever I hear _____, I immediately start singing _____ that I learned from attending _____ at Concordia Language Villages. Even after _____ years, it feels like it was yesterday!

The other day I made _____ (food), because I was feeling nostalgic. I first had it when I was learning _____ at _____ (Village). It brought me right back to summer camp! The songs, the delicious food, the new friends! Those are precious memories.

To the parents making summer camp plans, I always like to recommend Concordia Language Villages. Not only did I get a good grasp on _____ (language) at the _____ Village, I learned _____. It's hard to fully explain the impact it made on me, but I'm happy to chat if you want to learn more!

You can find more prompts here: <https://concordia-www.s3.amazonaws.com/files/resources/prompts-for-social-emails.pdf>

Talking Points

The talking points below are meant to guide advocates as they share information about CLV programs. In addition to the facts stated here, we encourage you to share your own CLV stories and experiences.

Sample “elevator pitch” or introduction to CLV:

Concordia Language Villages is an immersive language and culture camp located in Minnesota’s North Woods, where we’ve been inspiring courageous global citizens since 1961. Every summer, thousands of kids join us for one, two, or four weeks to be immersed in one of fourteen different languages, listed here [point to flyer or sign]. While we are best known for our summer youth camps and high school credit options, we also offer programs for adults, families, school groups, and college students, as well as some virtual programming.

At CLV, we offer...

- 14 languages, or 15 if you include English for speakers of other languages
- 1, 2, and 4-week overnight camps (typically ages 7-18)
- Weeklong day camps (typically ages 6-11)
- 2 and 4-week high school credit programs
- Dual credit (earn a year of high school credit and a year of college credit at the same time, for rising juniors to graduating high school seniors)
- College credit and college programming
- Village Weekends for K-12 school groups and their teachers
- Family and adult weeks and weekends
- Virtual Spanish programs
- Customizable corporate and government programming
- Site rentals for weddings, retreats, and other occasions

Our Value:

- Our cost is average compared to other specialized summer programs
- Scholarships are available for most programs. Some combinations even cover up to 90% of the cost!

Benefits of CLV:

- The cognitive benefits of language learning (What the research shows: <https://www.actfl.org/research/research-briefs>)
- Language learning advocacy resources: <https://www.languagepolicy.org/advocacy-resources>
- The business advantage: <https://www.languageconnectsfoundation.org/making-languages-our-business-smart-investment>

The CLVWay reflects the Asian concept of 道 or the “way” to excellence through practice. It is framed by four precepts, each of which fosters key attributes of responsible global citizenship:

1. Grand Simulation
2. Community-based Learning
3. Lived Language and Culture
4. Outdoor Learning

More information on each precept of the CLVWay can be found at

<https://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/our-teaching-philosophy-the-clvway>

While volunteering, community advocates are likely to encounter questions that they don't know the answer to. When in doubt, ask the person to fill out our online information request form, and a member of our team will follow up with them. Before attending an event, it may also help to review our list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Contact Us

Elise Grabinger (egrabin1@cord.edu) is the program assistant responsible for working with our incredible network of volunteers. Please contact her for all CAN-related requests and questions.

Some on-site volunteer opportunities are also available. For more information, contact Kyle Chones at kchones@cord.edu.

If you have ideas about school partnerships, corporate initiatives, possible donors, grants, or fundraising opportunities, we'd love to hear about them! Contact Elise, and she can direct you to the appropriate person.

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some of the most asked questions we receive at events. For more FAQs, visit <https://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/frequently-asked-questions>

FINANCE:

Q: How much does it cost to attend?

A: Costs vary by the type and length of the program. 2025-2026 tuition rates are as follows:

Summer Youth:

Adventure Day Camp: \$415

1-week: \$1,425

2-week: \$2,830

4-week (non-credit): \$5,590

2-week HS Credit: \$3,265

4-week HS Credit: \$5,910

Dual Credit: \$6975

Adult Weekend: \$665

Adult Week: \$1,245

Family Weekend: \$435 per adult; \$235 per child

Family Week: \$955 per adult; \$775 per child

*A number of discounted categories and scholarships are available.

Q: What's included in youth overnight pricing?

A: Housing, meals, activities, and instruction are included in the program cost. Optional transportation services are offered for an additional fee.

Q: Are scholarships available?

A: Yes! Scholarships are available for all youth overnight camps, as well as select adult programs. We do not offer scholarship funding for Adventure Day Camp or family camps. Scholarship applications can be completed through your account after registration.

PROGRAMMING:

Q: What age range does CLV teach?

A: Youth overnight programming is offered to ages 7-18. Day camp is generally open to ages 6-11. We also offer adult programs for ages 18+ and family programs for all ages.

Q: How much of the language does my child need to know before going?

A: The Villages are designed to be fun and accessible to campers who have never studied the language, so there is no minimum amount your child needs to know to learn and have fun! Any language study your child can do before camp is wonderful and can be a leg up on the first day of camp. If this isn't possible, please know that we have been running

language immersion summer camps since 1961, and we've developed a lot of techniques to convey meaning even through a language barrier. We will be using props, gestures, signs, and other methods to convey meaning. Our health centers, however, operate in English, so we can be sure that campers know exactly what is going on concerning their health and safety.

Q: What does “language immersion” mean? Will my child be allowed to use English?

A: At Concordia Language Villages, our approach to language teaching, known as the [CLVWay](#), puts villagers into a grand simulation of a trip abroad and into a culturally authentic setting. Learners are not only immersed in the language of study, but also in the cultures that surround that language. Throughout the program, staff will always speak in the target language. Villagers are encouraged to use the language as much as they can (this is a huge part of their learning!), but they are not required to do so constantly. Staff will also switch to English in emergencies and in situations concerning health and safety.

Q: How does high school credit work?

A: Our credit programs take place during summer alongside our other youth overnight camps. The two-week credit programs offer a semester of language credit, and the four-week program offers an entire year's worth! A typical day includes 7.5 hours or more of direct instruction, comprehension skills, conversation, and a wide range of activities in the target language. Credit students carry what they learn into the other areas of Village life, where they are surrounded by opportunities to practice, apply, and extend their learning. At the end of the program, credit students receive a final transcript, and credit may be transferred to their schools. We highly recommend checking with your school in advance to ensure that they will accept transferred credit from CLV.

TRAVEL:

Q: Where are the Language Villages located?

A: The majority of our programs are held at our permanent sites on Turtle River Lake near Bemidji, MN. The only program currently held elsewhere is the second half of our Japanese summer program, which will be held at Camp Patmos near Hackensack, MN, in 2026. Both locations are a 3-to-4-hour drive from the Twin Cities area. The Dual Credit programs in French and Spanish in summer 2026 take place on the Concordia College campus in Moorhead, MN.

Q: Are transportation services available?

A: Transportation services are available for our summer youth programs. These include a bus between the Twin Cities and the Villages, as well as airport pick-up and drop-off services for villagers traveling from farther away. Adult and family participants are responsible for their own transportation, though we are able to offer limited, local transportation in the Bemidji area, such as a shuttle to and from the Bemidji airport. All transportation services

are provided for an additional fee. More information on transportation can be found at <https://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/transportation>

FAMILY CAMP:

Q: Do children and parents learn together or separately?

A: Language development sessions will be separate for children and adults; they are also divided by language ability. Activities like sports, crafts, nature hikes, swimming and cooking can be attended by both children and adults as a family or individually, depending on interest. Younger children may need a parent to accompany them throughout the day and that may affect the extent to which that parent can focus on their own language learning process.

Q: Where do families stay?

A: We typically house two to three families (or more, depending on the facility and the size of family units) together in a cabin; staff does not live with you. Our cabins house 12-14 people, depending on the site. Bathroom facilities are either directly in the housing unit or a short walk down the path. Within each cabin, families are accommodated in semi-private areas. We do our best to put similar families together, considering gender of participants and the ages of children.

EMPLOYMENT:

Q: What kinds of positions are available?

A: We have a variety of positions to choose from! From teachers and counselors to being behind the scenes cooking and baking international foods, we have a position for you at the Villages. Departments with regular openings include Programs (such as camp counselors and teachers), Culinary Arts (such as chefs, bakers, kitchen helpers, etc.), Health and Wellness (including nurses and health center assistants), and Operations (such as custodians and maintenance). Seasonal, part-time, and full-time roles are available. To view openings and apply, visit <https://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/employment>

Q: When can I apply for a summer position?

A: All summer positions are open by January 1st, so we encourage you to apply as early as possible to increase your chances of being hired. For international applicants, we recommend applying prior to May to ensure we can get your visa and documents in order for your first day. Based on Village needs, we may continue hiring until the program's start date. If you're applying for a seasonal culinary arts position, we can accept applications until mid-August.

Q: Can I volunteer at CLV?

A: Some of our programs do accept volunteers. The dean of the Village will be able to request a volunteer through human resources and their program director to ensure we are

meeting the federal standards of what a volunteer is and can do. If you do not have a connection to a Village and want to volunteer, please email clvhr@cord.edu for assistance.

ABOUT US:

Q: Is Concordia Language Villages affiliated with any other “Concordia’s”?

A: Concordia Languages Villages is a program of Concordia College. Located in Moorhead, Minn., Concordia College is a private liberal arts college and a recognized leader in global education. CLV and Concordia College are not part of the Concordia University System. To learn more about Concordia College, visit <https://www.concordiacollege.edu/>.