

Charter Oak Boxing Academy (COBA) <http://www.cobaboxing.net>

Job Descriptions for Volunteers

**To volunteer at Charter Oak Boxing Academy, please contact:
Coach Direct: (860) - 918 - 2844 or johnnycallas@cobaboxing.net**

About COBA

Established in 1988, Charter Oak Boxing Academy (COBA) is a small, grassroots non-profit organization that strives to ensure at-risk Hartford youth ages 8-24 are gang and drug-free, stay in school and out of crime--and keep alive. Utilizing boxing as the central vehicle to engage boys and girls, COBA offers youth the opportunity to become great athletes and "champions in the ring" as well as "champions of life" outside the ring. Young people learn skills for life, such as self-discipline, responsibility, teamwork and empathy. They also learn problem-solving skills, conflict resolution, a strong work ethic and how to think critically and with reason so as to avoid violence. In that boxing culture permeates Puerto Rico, the Caribbean and America's urban centers, kids are naturally attracted to COBA.

COBA has three main programs: USA Olympic Boxing, Body & Soul Fitness and the Youth Franchise. The first provides rigorous training in amateur boxing by professional coach-mentors, where metaphors are continuously drawn between boxing and life. The second offers physical fitness training, nutrition education and healthy living skills; and the third provides entrepreneurial training for youth interested in running a small business. A new initiative offers girls empowerment groups to build confidence and leadership. While youth are encouraged to participate in each program, those not interested in boxing are guided toward fitness training, entrepreneurial training and girls' leadership programs. In this way, every COBA youth feels included.

These programs are strengthened by mentoring, tutoring, life skills, gang/pregnancy/STI prevention education, career exposure, campus visits, case management and linkage to treatment, health care, and legal/housing assistance. Moreover, they are embedded in a positive-reinforcement approach known as PRIDE, so as to reinforce healthy attitudinal and behavioral changes. Participants earn points for achievements at school, in the community and at home. After 100 points, they receive a piece of team apparel. Youth also benefit from mentoring and tutoring by Trinity College and University of Hartford students. Parents are integrally involved, and supportive counseling is offered for the entire family to address school, family and other problems affecting youth participants.

COBA is situated in 4,200 sq. ft of space in Hartford's Parkville neighborhood, with two boxing rings, a fitness/training space, a state-of-the-art educational center, locker rooms, bathrooms, and a city park across the street for fitness training and recreation. Each year, COBA serves 125+ youth and their families. About 85% of youth served by COBA are Puerto Rican, 5% of whom arrived in the wake of the hurricane. The remainder are mixed race, Black, Asian and Caucasian. COBA's annual operating budget is less than \$100,000, which comes from contributions from individuals, foundations, corporations, the City and the State.

Other information

-COBA is an all-volunteer organization. We cannot do our work without the help of an outstanding volunteer coaching staff, a team of dedicated parents and friends, and committed professionals who want to make a difference.

-COBA is licensed by USA Boxing, Inc., the national governing body of amateur boxing. As such, all coaches and competitive youth boxers are registered, certified and insured with USA Boxing. Inc.

-COBA is also registered with the Ct. Dept. of Public Safety, which makes site visits twice/year to oversee safety measures, ethical standards and other procedures. COBA's Executive Director maintains close contact with the Commissioner of the Ct. Dept. of Public Safety and his staff.

Gardening Volunteers

We need 4-5 individuals willing to assist in the creation of a vegetable garden at COBA, which is designed to educate urban youth about good nutrition and about how to cultivate and maintain a home garden. Responsibilities include: clearing debris, turning over soil, fertilizing, composting and mulching soil, planting vegetable seeds and seedlings, weeding and watering. Requires weekly maintenance throughout spring, summer and fall, including preparing the garden for winter. Time entailed is flexible, depending volunteers' schedules. Start date: April 15, 2019.

Tutoring Volunteers

We need 5-6 volunteers to tutor boys and girls ages 8-15 after school, and assist them with their homework. Subjects include: math, science, language arts, history and social science. Hours needed are: 4:30 – 7:30 pm Mondays-Thursdays. Tutoring would be one-on-one. Scheduling is flexible. If volunteers can only come for an hour or two a week, this would be fine. Tutors needed throughout the 2018-19 school year, as well as during summertime. Start date: Sept. 1, 2018. One of the aims is to provide continuity for children, so we would prefer a minimum of a semester-long commitment and ideally a full school-year commitment.

“Champions of Life” Speakers

a. Personal stories:

We need 12-15 individuals to volunteer on a one-time basis to tell the story of their lives and pathways to their careers. Of special interest is sharing stories of personal and other adversity, including mention of people who may have provided mentoring and/or inspiration. The aim is to expose youth to a variety of careers and pathways to success – whether in the business world, teaching school, social work, computer sciences, medicine, etc. We want to give youth the message that *they too can do it, despite the odds!* This would be an hour-long talk given in the evening any weekday during the 2018-19 school year. Ideally, we would like to schedule 1-2 talks each month.

b. Life Skills:

We need additional volunteers to give talks and/or workshops on a variety of topics so as to build young people's life skills. Topics include:

- nutrition and health prevention
- pregnancy prevention
- gang/drug prevention
- conflict resolution
- financial literacy (ie, basic savings, how to maintain a checkbook, budgeting, planning for future, etc.)
- filling out FAFSA forms, applying to attend college, writing an essay
- resume preparation
- how to look for a job
- job etiquette
- yoga and/or meditation
- time management

Other topics welcome!!!

Mentoring Volunteers

We need 6-8 volunteers, male and female, to serve as caring, adult mentors for youth ages 8-17. Each volunteer would be paired with a boy or girl. We would like mentors would make weekly visits to COBA to watch their mentees box, work out, and/or engage in fitness training. Or, just hang out! It would also entail attending boxing competitions in which their respective mentees are participating. Additionally, we would like mentors to invite mentees to go out to a movie, go out for a meal, participate in a family picnic, go to a performance, etc. The aim is to strengthen our kids'

support systems, in that many come from broken families and live in highly unstable circumstances. We want mentors to build a strong relationship with their mentees, and ideally stay by their sides for as long as possible.

Volunteer Orientation:

COBA will do an orientation for all volunteers, so that they become familiar with the organization and with the responsibilities of the position. We take volunteers very seriously because we rely on them to do our work with youth!

