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Carla C. van de Sande* (carla.vandesande@asu.edu), School of Mathematical and Statistical Scienc, Arizona State University, PSA 633, P.O. Box 871804, Tempe, 85287, and **E. Hsu** (erichsu@math.sfsu.edu), San Francisco State University, Science Building 211, 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco, CA 94132. *The experience of newbie helpers in a mathematics, open, online, homework help forum: Becoming part of a community of helpers.*

Free, open, online, homework help forums are located on public websites and allow students anywhere in the world to post questions from their coursework and assignments and receive help asynchronously from anonymous volunteers. Such sites are especially popular for challenging, homework-intensive subject areas, like mathematics. The sites can adopt a participation structure that allows only select, vetted helpers who meet certain criteria to act as helpers (e.g., experts), or may allow any registered member to function in this role (called Spontaneous Online Help, or SOH sites). Some existing mathematics SOH sites exhibit a strong sense of community among the helpers, in the sense that the helpers correct one another, work collectively to help individual students, and engage in collegial banter. In such a context, helping others is transformed from a private, individual encounter into a public, communal activity. What does it look like for helpers to join such a community? We explored the enculturation process and experiences of five newbie (novice) helpers in a popular SOH forum that covers arithmetic through advanced mathematics. The participants spent eight consecutive weeks on the forum, participated in pre- and post interviews, and kept journals during their time as helpers. (Received September 22, 2010)