



MENTOR VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION (for a friendship program)

PURPOSE

Many children are presently living with single-parent families or in families where parents and family members cannot completely meet their needs. These children (both male and female between the ages of 5 and 17) need social/recreational development, emotional support and the companionship of an adult to supplement the work of parents, teachers, counselors, social workers and other social services and education professionals.

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

The mentor will be assigned to a child and will be responsible for meeting the child on a weekly basis, four hours a week. A one-year commitment is the minimum accepted. The volunteer may be asked to work on certain aspects of the child's development. He or she will work closely with agency staff through phone contact, personal conferences and group meetings to better understand the child and his/her family and to facilitate activities to help the child. The volunteer will serve as an example/role model to demonstrate that adults can give, and should receive, respect (and will make an occasional mistake). Self-realization and improved self-esteem for the child are important goals of the relationship.

It should be emphasized that the volunteer in no way replaces the parent or the family's social worker. Rather, he or she provides interested, compassionate friendship.

REQUIREMENTS/QUALIFICATIONS

Persons interested in becoming a mentor must have an automobile. Experience in teaching, human services or related fields would be helpful. Experience as a parent or extensive experience with children is also helpful.

The volunteer should have the ability to accept and relate to children who may not share the volunteer's lifestyle and values. The volunteer should respect the client's right to self-determination and independence. This respect is an essential element in the relationship. The volunteer should exhibit a great deal of common sense, intelligence, friendliness, maturity, sensitivity and responsibility.

TIME COMMITMENT

The average volunteer will put in approximately 16-18 hours each month in services to the child and family. This four-hour-per-week commitment may come in larger or smaller doses, but the volunteer must be consistent. While many volunteers serve longer than one year, the minimum expectation of any volunteer mentor will be one year, unless otherwise stated by the client or social worker.

LOCATION

Boys and girls throughout the community need the companionship of a mentor volunteer. The project seeks to place volunteers as close to their own homes as possible. During the course of interviewing and placement, volunteers will have the opportunity to state any preferences, and the agency will comply with these preferences as nearly as possible. Before making any match, project staff will consider location, interests, skills, background, knowledge and temperament of both the child and the volunteer.

BENEFITS

- ❖ Volunteers can be reimbursed for mileage expenses, if requested.
- ❖ Training sessions are offered on a regular basis for the volunteer's personal growth and development.
- ❖ Volunteers may assume that their skills in working with children will increase and that their work may lead to more challenging volunteer assignments.
- ❖ Volunteers receive ongoing support and recognition. A staff person will be assigned to work with them and they will receive a volunteer newsletter.

Upon completion of his or her assignment, the volunteer may request a written performance appraisal from the social worker. If for some reason the social worker is unable to supply this, the volunteer may request the same of the volunteer office.