



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Friendship Circle family!

**Our belief is that we need every person to be a part of our community and every person needs a community to be a part of!**

We aim to create an accommodating and supportive community that gives your child and family the opportunity to form meaningful friendships and access our rich Jewish heritage in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Friendship, acceptance, and a chance to participate in bonding opportunities are critical to achieving the inclusive Jewish community we dream of.

All updates, program details and options to RSVP are sent out via email and posted on social media. Please be sure our emails are being sent to your inbox (not spam or promotion folder) so that you can be kept updated on all the fun!

Looking forward to discovering the many abilities of your child and a special year of friendships, together.

Rabbi Shaya and Shayna Gopin

**Friendship**  
Circle  
of Greater Hartford



# Friendship Circle

## *Friends at Home Teen Guide*

The goal of the Friends@Home program is to facilitate friendships between you and a child or teen in our community who could benefit from time spent with a good friend. Your goal is to have a great time, appreciate and be appreciated by your friend! Your friend is looking forward to getting together with you – make this commitment carefully. The visits are one hour long and follow the school calendar.

### **Before your first visit**

- Complete and sign all forms
- Be sure your reference letter has been received by FC staff
- Attend the mandatory Teen Kick Off and Orientation
- A call or text will be arranged by Tammy or Shayna between and your friend's family. Take the time to introduce yourself, find out preferred activities or perhaps some fears of your friend, what to expect in the beginning etc.

### **Question: How do I know what to do?**

In addition to Teen Kick Off, FC staff will accompany you on your first visit and will **always** be available after. Your friend's parents are excellent resources. Be comfortable to ask questions and get to know everyone!

### **Communication is the key to success:**

#### **Communicate to schedule visits**

- Working with FC staff, the day and time of the week for your weekly visit will be established at the start of the school year. However, you should text a few days before future visits to confirm, for ex if you meet on Sundays, text or call on Thursday to confirm. This helps establish mutual expectations and eliminates confusions over the timing and day of cancellations. You can also take a few minutes after each visit to discuss the next few weeks and upcoming schedules.
- What if you're late or you have to cancel? Simple – don't be late and don't cancel. Your friend and his/her family is counting on you. If something does come up - be sure your partner can go. If neither can, be sure to give at least 24-hour notice to FC staff/friend's family.

#### **Communicate with FC staff**

Talk to us about anything- really anything! Is there something going well? Is there something bothering you or making you uncomfortable? Are you struggling at a certain point in the visit or not sure how to fill the hour? We would like to hear from you to support your concerns and celebrate your success! Log your hours and communicate your questions early on. Note: FC staff will respond to communication from Sunday-Friday until sundown and after Shabbat on Saturday.



# Friendship Circle

## **Making the most of the visit**

- Take some time to think what you are going to do each week and see if you need to prepare or bring something along. At times FC staff will prepare a bag of activities for you to use.
- Shower your friend with attention and love
- Remember, all friendships take time to feel natural
- During a visit - be interactive, choose safe activities, join the child in his/ her world, talk at eye level and remember to do activities side by side WITH your friend, always assume competence and talk UP with him/her
- No cell phones during visits unless you're using them as an activity with your group
- A parent or adult over 18 must be home or where you are meeting up. You are not professionally or medically trained and may need assistance.
- Restroom supervision: if a child needs the bathroom, walk him/her to restroom, if additional help is needed ask a parent or other family member. There are no exceptions to this rule.
- We advise against driving your friend during the FC hour.

## **Most of all**

Safety for all is our first priority. Although an adult is always around, choose activities that are safe for your friend! FC is set up for a trio-group to hang out together, if you are the only teen at the visit, you should hang out in an open area.

FC Staff is available for your support and safety, if you are concerned or uncomfortable about anything please bring the issue to our attention and we will address it in a confidential manner.

Looking forward to a fantastic year of **friendship!**



## **How do I log my hours?**

<https://onedrive.live.com/edit.aspx?cid=b6724fa53bef284b&page=view&resid=B6724FA53BEF284B!13568&parId=B6724FA53BEF284B!13605&app=Word>