



## **Friendship Circle Volunteer Guide**

The goal of the 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. If you decide to add Friends at Home to your Friendship Circle commitment please consider your schedule and ensure you can make this dedication to creating this friendship. The visits are one hour long and follow the school calendar.

### **Before attending your first Friendship Circle (FC) Group or Friends at Home (FAH) Event:**

- 1) Complete and all forms including references
- 2) Attend orientation meeting with staff and at least one guardian
- 3) Attend Friendship Circle (FC) group training session
- 4) If participating in a FAH program, meet with staff prior to 1st FAH to find out what to expect during the hour and your weekly responsibilities.

### **How do you know what to do?**

In addition to Teen Kickoff and Mid Year Training, FC staff is available at all group events and for questions about Friends at Home. Teens are expected to arrive at each event 15 minutes prior to a group event to get an overview of the program and to learn about their partner. Be comfortable asking questions.

## **Communication is the Key to Success**

### **Communicate for Events**

Sign up Genius will be open about 2 weeks before each group event. Please RSVP for the events - sign up is requested to be completed 3 days prior to each event. Teen volunteers will receive notification that sign up genius is open via social media and email. Teens will also be informed about some events by the Teen Board. If you have signed up for an event and need to cancel please notify staff ASAP and if possible please find a replacement.

Friends at Home partners should confirm they will be attending their Sunday session by 12:00 pm each Friday. Your partner and family are expecting you to attend each session if you can not please try to connect with your partner via phone call, text message, video, facetime or reschedule visit. Confirm you have the phone number of your partner's parents.



### **Communication 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 your Friends at Home visit or not sure how to fill the hour? Did you find a strategy that worked with your partner? Is your partner looking for activities that are not present at group events? We would like to hear from you to support your concerns and celebrate your success!

Log your hours on the FC Connect App after each event or Friends at Home visit. Include feedback about your Friendship Circle time. Friendship Circle Staff will respond to communication from Sunday - Friday until sundown and after Shabbat on Saturday (except for Jewish holidays).

### **Making the Most of Your Friendship Circle Time**

Arrive at each group event 15 minutes early and/or prepare for Friends at Home visits- know what you are going to do before your partner arrives. When attending Friends at Home visits, bring materials provided by Friendship Circle staff.

Remember.... Friendships take time to feel natural.

During your time with your partner- be interactive, choose safe activities, join your partner in his/her world, talk at eye level and participate in activities side by side WITH your friend, always assume competence and talk UP with him/her.

No cell phones during Friendship Circle activities unless you're using them as an activity with your group.

A parent or individual 18 or older must be present when you are meeting outside group events. You are not professionally or medically trained and may need assistance.

During all activities- restroom supervision-if an individual needs the restroom walk him/her to the restroom, if additional help is needed ask a parent or guardian.

Teen volunteers are unable to drive participants to and from Friendship Circle activities.



### **Most of All**

Safety for all is our first priority! Friends at Home is set up as a 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 the attention of staff and it will be addressed in a confidential manner, Looking forward to a fantastic year of FRIENDSHIP!

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

- Download the app FC Connect
- Request to join FC Connect
- Once you receive email notification that you have been approved, start logging your hours after each event.
- Please include reflections about your Friendship Circle experience when you log your hours.

**THANK YOU!**