

## House Sitter/Mentor Volunteer Description

### Core Responsibilities

1. Supervise home and families when director/staff are not present
2. Engage and maintain effective supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in a way which empowers parents and families (DO WITH, NOT FOR)
3. Ensure that families are working within Cornerstone of Grace Guideline (see posted house rules)
4. Work effectively with parents to help them improve parenting skills (see posted guidelines)
5. Document basic interactions during volunteer hours

### Desirable knowledge and skills:

1. Demonstrate competence in working with families in difficult circumstances
2. Strong in empathy and sensitive interpersonal skills, tac and discretion
3. Knowledge and experience of good practice in relation to children and families, in particular with regard to achieving positive outcomes and promoting their welfare
4. Team player
5. Able to drive and with own transport
6. Excellent problem-solving and communication skills
7. Flexibility to respond to a changing environment

### Screenings

1. Pass a criminal background check
2. Informal tour/interview with volunteer coordinator

### What does a House Sitter/Mentor do?

A house sitter has several general roles.

- 1) Provides a presence in the home in the absence of staff
- 2) Monitors the coming and goings of the families
- 3) Is available to support families as needed (meal prep, organization, social outlet, etc)
- 4) Facilitates the relationship between parents and their children and between program participants
- 5) Serves as a mentor/role model to our moms
- 6) Provide hope. We have an opportunity to communicate hope. By giving a parent a moment to breathe and alleviate the immediate crisis, we begin the process of giving the partner hope that their situation can be better and there are people who care and are willing to help. Our interactions with parents should be filled with hope. Hope brings energy, and skills necessary to get things back on track.
- 7) Be positive: Our women have many relationships that are negative. They hear messages from themselves or others that they are a failure. Our job is to inspire, motivate, instruct, and encourage. Good coaches build on the athlete's strength and bring in others that can help improve the athlete's performance. While our women have to do most of the work, we can motivate, encourage,, and instruct and inspire them. We must learn how to help be positive in the midst of multiple problems and negativity. We help parents break down tasks into manageable activities, providing the necessary support to help them get on their feet.
- 8) Be willing to talk to women about their spiritual condition and how to improve it

## **Important Things to Remember**

1. We are attempting to build an army of community around our women and children.
2. The body of Christ in relationship with others is an effective life changing intervention
3. We are called to love our neighbor sacrificially with the posture of a servant (1 Cor. 13)
4. Many of our participants are pulled down by all of the dysfunctional voices which surround their lives, wearing them down, but when they talk to you and spend time in relationship with them, your voices lift them up.

## **Supporting our Families**

1. When you go upstairs, please knock before entering and let them know your name.
2. When you arrive, share a little about yourself and get to know them.
3. Reiterate the success they've already had when appropriate
4. Observe any potential dangers that need to be addressed
5. Befriending, accepting, listening, and encouraging are the best ways to support our moms

There are a number of reasons why our women might not have a solid support network:

- They may lack the necessary social skills to develop and maintain relationships
- Their mental health may stand in the way of developing healthy relationships. (Depression, ect). They often have accompanying relational difficulties
- Some parents have never learned or don't feel they have anything to give (low self-esteem, self-centeredness) so they only take.
- Many women have burned out relationships with family or friends because of past unhealthy behaviors.

Wherever the reason, most parents need caring people who are willing to befriend them. It's these relationships that have a powerful opportunity to prevent crises in the future. As Christians, we believe we are called to love our neighbors and care for the least of these. This is best done surrounded by community.

Encourage ongoing communication between the family and the director/staff of Cornerstone of Grace.

Always consider "doing with" vs "doing for"

Please read the Participant Manual to familiarize yourself with the "rules" of the house

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Vs2RoFJzvgicj7L63KIGsIT6rEOM7nER9c2vnM1gRXU/edit?usp=sharing>

If you have any questions or concerns about things in the home, please reach out to Nancy or Michele.