

# Special Friend Program

**Purpose:** to support the needs of a young person receiving service in the community.

Volunteers will;

- Increase the well-being of a young person
- Enhance social support to a young person
- Enhance social and personal opportunities available to a young person

**Position Summary:** Volunteers generally engage in weekly visits with a young person. Visits are approximately 2-3 hours on evenings and/or weekends for a minimum of 1-year.

Activities include;

- Developing a long-term relationship with a young person
- Acting as a reliable adult support and role model
- Supporting goal-setting, life skills development, and problem-solving skills
- Preparing for transition to independence and adulthood
- Working as a volunteer member on a professional service team
- Planning/attending social, creative, recreational, educational activities with young person
- Participating in social activities with other special friends and tutors

Special Friends promote well-being, reduce risk and increase permanency for a young person by establishing a committed supportive relationship.

## **Competencies:**

- Good social skills, independent work skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, personal resiliency, life stability, emotional maturity
- Knowledge of child welfare, systematic impact of poverty, racism and family dynamics, reflexivity, mental health, trauma and mediation/clinical communication skills
- Understanding of child welfare context and child welfare practice an asset
- Good report writing and communication skills
- Able to foster relationships under challenging circumstances
- Experience with diverse experiences, lifestyles and perspectives
- Understanding of child development and relationship building
- Acts in the interests of the young person and planning activities to meet their needs
- Ensuring safety and appropriateness of activities with worker and caregiver
- Determined, positive, responsible, supportive, respectful, productive, and patient
- Willing to travel around or outside of the GTA for visits
- Ability to maintain relationship if child moves to another residential location'
- Understanding of attachment issues and impact of moves on development