

Families Set Free Program Outline



Bob Xavier, Director

Set Free Youth & Family Ministries

8113 – 18th Avenue East • Palmetto Florida 34221

(941)761-9115

- **Mission**
 - Volunteer groups encourage and support families of inmates
- **Program**
 - Volunteer groups trained to assist families and to educate them about services and coping skills
- **Philosophy**
 - Volunteer groups assisting families have advantages over individual volunteers:
 - Group members can support each other in tasks
 - Challenges can be distributed
 - Group commitment may lead to personal relationships and long-term one on one sustaining mentoring
 - This assumes a Three phase Strategy:
 - Phase 1: Volunteer group assisting family group
 - Phase 2: Volunteer group assisting family individuals
 - Phase 3: Volunteer individual assisting family individual
- **Challenges**
 - Families
 - Ninety per cent of male inmates come from single parent families
 - Inmates' expectations can produce impoverished financial and emotional climates
 - Visits to facilities are demanded; Work schedules are interrupted; Low income; Disrupted family contributes to juvenile crime
 - Penal system
 - Families are often treated as nuisances and not seen as integral to rehabilitation
 - Some volunteer groups are hindered in ongoing relationships
 - Overwhelming case loads are a norm
 - State's financial demands after the inmate is released becomes a debt and can cripple a family's income
 - Volunteers
 - Mentoring programs relying solely on individual volunteers have failure rates due to lack of commitment or lack of understanding of the value of a sustaining relationship
 - Disrupted mentoring may produce more serious problems

➤ Training Goals

- Train volunteer groups to assist families in resources, transportation, child care, chores and activities
- Train families in resource availability, communication, relational skills and crisis management

➤ Benchmarks

- Program clarification
 - Mission; goals; program; operational procedures
 - Organization; job descriptions
 - Marketing; recruiting; qualifications; screening; orientation
 - Safety and liability
 - Training
 - Matching groups and families
 - Identifying existing assistance programs
 - Scheduling and record keeping
- Steering committee
- Needs assessment and family identification; intake procedures
- Monitoring and supervision; tracking and follow-up; closure procedure
- Recognition
- Evaluation

Elements of Effective Practice

- An established organization for oversight
- A well-defined mission and established operating policy
- Initial goals and benchmarks
- Long range plans
- Written administrative and program procedures
- Volunteer qualifications, responsibilities and obligations
- Written job descriptions
- Use of personnel requirements that are based on:
 - Organization's purpose and goals
 - Needs of volunteers and the families
 - Community resources
- Orientation and access to training and technical assistance
- Safety and liability standards
- Written eligibility requirements for program participants
- Intake procedures for families
- An appreciation of diversity and nondiscrimination
- Risk management and confidentiality policies
- Program evaluation and ongoing assessment



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Initial Volunteer Orientation

Introduction:

- Have participants reflect on constructive and positive people in their lives
- Share experiences; introduce themselves and relate why they are interested in the program

Program Overview:

□ Problem:

[See the first paragraph of the introductory letter]

□ Goals

- Identify prison families and their needs and participate in helping with these needs
- Develop ongoing relationships that may lead to more structured support
- Research and apply community resources

□ Define volunteer role

□ Define characteristics of families of prisoners

□ Issues

- Schedules – establishing boundaries and support
- Disabilities – understanding the characteristics of certain disabilities
- Cultural sensitivity
- Child abuse – legal issues
- Confidentiality

□ Activities

1. Encouraging phone calls
2. Acknowledgement of special days
3. Transportation help
4. Simple chores
5. Child care

Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- Take what you hear seriously
- Be friendly
- Be warm and open
- Be consistent in your words and actions
- Keep everything said or heard confidential

Only your Families Set Free team should know about issues

Don'ts

- Overact when something offensive is said
- Make promises you can't keep
- Have excessive physical contact

The general rule is that contact below the shoulders is forbidden
Although a very small percentage of our volunteers (less than 1%) actively face these issues,
children have experienced abuse.

- Share specifics about your family

Nine Signs of Success

Success as a volunteer is not based on how well the family does. It is marked by your faithfulness and love.

Here are some ways that you can measure your success as a group volunteer.

1. We make the best attempt to meet regularly with the family
2. We stick to the role of building friendships
3. We plan activities based on the family's needs and interests
4. We listen intently
5. We encourage the family and remain non-judgmental
6. We always show respect
7. We communicate with the Families Set Free team
8. We pray daily for our family
9. We attempt to reflect Jesus Christ in this relationship



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Volunteer Application

Date: _____ Organization: _____

Last: _____ First: _____ MI: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

How long have you lived at your present address? _____ If less than two years, please give your address for the last two years:

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Social Security #: _____ - _____ - _____ Driver's license # _____ State: _____

Email Address: _____ Date of Birth: _____ State: _____

What is your race? _____ Do you have any disabilities? _____ Describe, if yes:

Education, highest level: _____

Marital status? Single ___ Married ___ Divorced ___ Widowed ___ Other _____

Employer: _____ Position: _____

Length of Employment: _____ Supervisor's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Two year employment history: _____

Do you have transportation? _____ Auto Insurance Carrier: _____
Insurance Policy#: _____ Make: _____ Model: _____
Moving violations? _____ If yes, how many in the last two years? _____
Stopped for DUI? _____ If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever been charged with or convicted of a crime? _____ If yes, please explain:

Can we run a background check on you? _____ Would you submit to a drug test? _____
Have you ever been arrested or charged with child molestation or child abuse or any other
crime related to children or youth? _____ If yes, please explain: _____

Has anyone in your house been convicted of any of the mentioned charges? _____ If yes,
please explain: _____

Have you or anyone in your house used drugs or any other kind of illegal substance: _____

Are you now or have you ever had to have psychiatric/psychological care? _____ If yes,
please explain: _____

List four references:

Pastor _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Neighbor _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Coworker _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Friend _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

By signing below, you attest to the truthfulness of all information listed on this application.

Signature _____ Date _____



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Volunteer Interview Form

Name _____

Date: _____

1. Why do you want to be a volunteer: _____

2. What are your strengths? _____

3. What are your weaknesses? _____

4. Describe your childhood: _____

5. Describe your volunteer work: _____

6. What times can you work as a volunteer? _____

7. What activities are you comfortable with? _____

8. What are your hobbies and interests? _____

9. What languages do you speak? _____



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Volunteer Evaluation:

Appearance: _____ First Impression: _____

Understanding of volunteering: _____

Response to questions from application (drugs; convictions; child abuse concerns:

Overall conclusions:

Interviewer: _____

Approval (yes/no): _____

Reasons:

Recommendations:

Additional comments;



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Volunteer Reference Check Worksheet

Name of reference: _____

_____ (Volunteer) has listed you as a reference. Please answer the following questions in the best of your ability. The information will not be shared with the volunteer. The information will be used along with screen devices to determine whether the applicant would be a good volunteer or staff personnel to work with our families.

1. How long and in what capacity have you known the applicant?

2. How does the applicant relate to people in general?

3. How would you describe the applicant??

4. Do you feel that the applicant would be a good volunteer for a family? _____

5. To your knowledge, has the applicant been convicted of a crime? _____ If yes, explain:

6. Do you know of any problem which would effect the applicant's ability to work with children

7. Please relate any use of drugs or illegal substances or any crime convictions of which you are aware

8. Any additional comments?

Signature _____ Date _____ Work Phone _____ Home _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____



Family Information

Date: _____

Last: _____

First: _____ MI: ____ Adult Female

First: _____ MI: ____ Adult Male

First: _____ MI: ____ Child Age ____ School _____

First: _____ MI: ____ Child Age ____ School _____

First: _____ MI: ____ Child Age ____ School _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Languages: _____

Disabilities: _____

Special Issues: _____

Agencies currently assisting the family:

Family Needs that may be provided by volunteers:

Comments: _____



Families Set Free Activity Report

Family Name _____ Volunteer Name _____

Date _____ Time (Start) _____ (End) _____ Location _____

Activity _____

Topics Discussed _____

Areas of Concern _____

General Observations _____

Follow-up Actions _____

Family _____

Recommendations _____

Progress of relationship

Poor ___ Average ___ Good ___ Excellent ___

Explain: _____

Date, Place and Plan for Next Meeting: _____

Additional Comments:



Criminal History

- Adopt a policy requiring criminal history record checks.
- Identify positions which require applicants to be screened using criminal history record checks.
- Check with state agencies to determine if there are any requirements for criminal history record checks.
- Develop a list of disqualifying offenses and mitigating circumstances to be taken into account.
- Contact the state criminal history record repository for information concerning how to obtain criminal history record checks.
- Arrange the necessary funding to pay for criminal history record checks.
- Review and revise application forms to reflect the requirements for performing criminal history record checks.
- Formulate an appeals process for applicants who feel that the information received by the grantee is incorrect.
- Implement your screening process using criminal history record checks.
- Document the records check in the individual's personnel file.

Sample Consent Form

I, _____ (applicant's name), hereby authorize Families Set Free to obtain information pertaining to any charges and/or convictions I may have had for violation of municipal, county, state or federal laws. This information will include, but not be limited to, allegations regarding and convictions for crimes committed upon minors and will be gathered from any law enforcement agency of this state or any state or federal government, or from third-party providers of information originally obtained from law enforcement or court records.

I understand that I will be given an opportunity to challenge the accuracy of any information received that appears to implicate me in criminal activities. To facilitate this challenge, I will be told the nature of the information and the agency from which it was obtained.

As an applicant as a Set Families Free volunteer, I hereby attest to the truthfulness of the representations I have made. Except as I have disclosed, I have not been found guilty of, or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to any offense similar to those listed on the application. Further, other than for the offenses I have disclosed, I have not had a finding of delinquency or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to a petition of delinquency under the juvenile laws of this state or of any other state for any acts similar in nature to those listed on the application.

I further attest that I have not been judicially determined to have committed abuse or neglect of a child; nor do I have a confirmed report of child abuse or neglect or exploitation which has been uncontested or upheld administratively under the laws of this or any other state.

I understand that I must be truthful and, if any statement I have made is found to be false, I will be denied a volunteer position with Families Set Free.

_____ (Signature of the Applicant) _____ (Date)

Full Name of the Applicant: _____ Driver's License. No: _____

_____ State of Issuance: _____

D.O.B.: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____ Date of Expiration: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Families Set Free Resources



Available Training Modules

Volunteer Training

- Adult Learning
- Roles and Expectations
- Volunteer Guidelines
- Family Characteristics
- Listening Skills
- Communication Skills
- Respecting Differences
- Building Trust
- Setting Boundaries
- Conflict Resolution
- Measuring Outcomes
- Community Partners

Family Training

- Family characteristics
- Setting boundaries
- Listening skills

Web resources

Mentoring:

- <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jump/pubs.html>

Families of Prisoners:

- http://www.e-ccip.org/about_us.html
- <http://www.liyouthguidance.com/mission/mission.htm>
- http://ssw.unc.edu/fcrp/Cspn/vol7_no1.htm
- http://www.osborneny.org/youth_family_services.htm

Access Data Base

This data base tracks volunteer and family information providing reports for the progress and the evaluation of the program

To order Training Modules and Access™ Data Base:

- Gary Bannister
- Families Set Free
- Editor
- 11306B 8th PI W
- Everett, WA 98204
- (425) 438-8543
- gary.bannister@verizon.net

Questions about program?

- Bob Xavier
- Set Free Ministries
- (941) 726-5056
- xavierfl@aol.com