

# Family Transition Place Volunteer Handbook



**Safety. Support. Hope.**

Building healthier communities – one relationship at a time.



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## Welcome to Family Transition Place

We are very pleased with your decision to join our dynamic team. Volunteers and the contribution they make enhance the quality of life and community spirit in Dufferin County and the Town of Caledon. Volunteers are a valuable human resource requiring and warranting support and encouragement to maintain and develop their skills and to ensure their continued involvement in the delivery of services to those who access the programs provided by Family Transition Place (FTP).

This Volunteer Handbook was developed to provide you with important details of FTP's philosophies, policies and expectations. Please read the Volunteer Handbook thoroughly and keep it in a safe place for your future reference. Any questions or concerns you may have should be directed to the Events & Community Relations Coordinator.

From time to time, we may revise our policies and programs to reflect the changing needs of our employees, clients, volunteer, donors, communities and the general human services environment. While input and suggestions are encouraged, valued and appreciated, changes to Policies and Procedures will be made at the sole discretion of the Board and Management of FTP.

We are pleased with your decision to become a member of the FTP team and wish you success and satisfaction in your volunteer work. We are confident your time with FTP will be both personally and professionally rewarding.



## History of Family Transition Place

In 1983, a survey was conducted by the Children's Aid Society (CAS) in Orangeville. The survey revealed a total of 483 incidents of wife abuse over a 12 month period in the County of Dufferin and the Town of Caledon. CAS was experiencing problems with a number of children in homes that appeared to be functioning normally on the surface. When questions were put to some of these children on how their parents related to each other in conflict situations, it became sufficiently evident that domestic violence might be a cause for further investigation. At that time, there were large gaps in services available for victims of violent homes; mainly accommodation and counselling, as well as a lack of knowledge and coordination among the various agencies. A steering committee on family violence evolved from this survey.

In March, 1984 a non-profit organization called Family Transition Place, with a nine member Board of Directors, was formed. The residential program, previously named Hillside House, opened its doors in December 1985. The non-residential counselling program, Family Violence Treatment Centre, moved from the shelter to its own location in 1988. Additional services and programs were added in the following years – Second Stage Housing in 1989 and Sexual Assault Services 1990.

In 1997, following a successful Capital Campaign and significant funding from the Province of Ontario, all services relocated "under one roof" in a facility located at 20 Bredin Parkway in Orangeville. Individual program names were dropped at that time when emphasis was on a single point of access and consolidation of services.

Over the years, FTP has become known, not only for its core critical services, but for also being a leader in the field of healthy relationship education. The Transitions Training division of FTP offers corporate training for organizations on domestic violence and its impact on the workplace, and the extremely popular Youth Education programs in the schools are helping to build healthy communities.

FTP's programs and services have continued to function due to the stable funding and continued support from a wide variety of public sector funders. FTP also receives private sector contributions and grants from individuals and/or community groups and corporations from the Caledon and Dufferin communities and around the GTA.

The organization also actively networks with other agencies. These include other non-profit organizations, as well as health care, religious, educational, social service and employment groups.

# Vision, Mission and Values

## Vision

FTP primarily provides services to women and children who have experienced abuse. We know that abuse has wide ranging impact on peoples' lives in the community and society in general, so we aspire to:

A community free of abuse where all women, children and men are treated with respect and equality, and live in healthy relationships within their families.

## Mission

To be a leader in the work to eliminate woman abuse by supporting women, children, men, their families, and the community by:

- Providing a welcoming, safe shelter for women and their children;
- Counselling those who have experienced abuse and its associated impacts on a person's wellbeing;
- Educating to promote healthy relationships and end the cycle of abuse;
- Advocating for systemic change; and
- Providing responsible stewardship of our resources and our community's goodwill through accountable and transparent processes.

## Values

### Safety

- We value the safety of all individuals and recognize that women and children are most vulnerable in our society.

### Support

- We value the right of all persons to live free from violence and abuse.
- We value the right and ability of all women to be in control of their lives and make informed choices.
- We value the importance of respect and dignity throughout the healing process and life's journey.

### Hope

- We value education and prevention as tools to end abuse in our community.
- We value individuals, communities, organizations and governments who actively work towards healthy relationships free of violence.
- We value the elimination of systemic barriers to equality and independence.

# Programs and Services

## Emergency Shelter

- 24 hour crisis line
- Staff available 24 hours a day
- 12 bedrooms (including adjoining and accessible bedrooms)
  - FTP is funded for 16 women & children – can accommodate up to 24
- Fully accessible and secure building
- On-site food and nutrition specialist
- Information and referrals related to relationship issues
- Supportive counselling
- Services and support groups
- Access to childcare and transportation assistance (for appointments and court)
- Staff accompaniment to appointments and court
- Advocacy assistance (when dealing with child protection, income assistance, legal aid, immigration, court or other systems)
- Emergency transportation to shelter

## Counselling Services

- Community counselling (individual and group)
- Counselling for sexual assault/abuse survivors (women and men)
- Workshops for women, men and children
- Child Witness Program
- Community awareness

## Transitional, Legal and Housing Support Services

- Flexible services to women and their children as they establish violence free lives in the community
- Assist with development of safety and transitional plans
- Help identify, develop and contact other supports and agencies within the community (e.g., housing, legal, job training, immigration, etc.)
- Help identify long and short term goals
- Support and information to help improve a woman's self esteem

## Support Within Housing

- For women living with mental wellness issues
- Permanent, supportive, rent geared income (RGI) housing
- Drop in program available for immediate and practical support

## Second Stage Housing

- Supportive cooperative housing environment
- Three fully furnished homes
- Individual and family counselling available

## **Programs and Services (cont'd)**

### **Youth Education Programs**

Our Youth Education Programs are designed to teach kids what healthy relationships are all about and to help eliminate violence in our communities. The curriculum for each program (offered from Grades 5 through 12) meets the Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines, are interactive, and include various forms of media to address all learning styles and engage students' cognitive, behavioural and emotional learning processes.

Our programs also cover social and emotional learning strategies including the Healthy School framework, the Equity and Inclusive Education strategy, and the Safe School Strategy.

### **MENtors**

FTP has started to see the value in engaging men in the effort to end male violence against women. Through groups like MENtors (formally, the Headwaters White Ribbon Campaign), we are engaging men as allies and raising the awareness of men's roles in our work. MENtors is a volunteer committee made up of men from the Dufferin and Caledon communities that are committed to ending the cycle of violence against women.

### **Fundraising/Events**

FTP runs two major fundraising events annually – one in the spring and one in the fall. These events are important revenue generators to help us continue to offer the above mentioned programs and services. Third Party Events are also held in the community on behalf of FTP throughout the year.



## **Becoming a Volunteer**

A Volunteer is a member of our community, who gives their time and talents to further the Vision and Mission of FTP and who receives no monetary gain in return. Volunteers are seen as non-paid staff and are considered team members working along side paid staff.

### **Screening process and requirements for FTP volunteers:**

- Complete a Volunteer Application Form to be forwarded to the Events & Community Relations Coordinator.
- Must be 18 years of age or older to work in the Direct Service area of FTP. Exceptions may be made with approval of the Executive Director or her designate. Volunteers under the age of 18 may volunteer elsewhere within FTP provided they fulfill the other requirements of volunteering and there are appropriate volunteer roles available. Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 must submit written consent from their parent or guardian prior to volunteering.
- Successfully complete a Vulnerable Sector Criminal Records check.
- Complete an interview by the Events & Community Relations Coordinator. The purpose of the interview is to determine the experience, ability and suitability of the individual to perform work within FTP.
- Provide two references.
- Attend orientation or training with program manager/facilitator.
- Meet minimum time commitment requirements identified in relation to the chosen assignment or area of responsibility.
- Fulfill the requirements of the program needs in a timely, efficient and effective manner.

## **Recruitment and Eligibility**

- Volunteer recruitment efforts will target broad community involvement and representation. Volunteers will be recruited without regard to gender, disability, age, race or sexual orientation. Gender sensitivity will be considered depending on volunteer position.
- A person who has not received Residential, Counselling or Legal Support services from FTP within the last twelve months is eligible to become a Volunteer.
- Individuals who are required to serve hours of community service as part of their sentence conditions regarding conviction of a criminal act will not be accepted as Volunteers at FTP.
- FTP employees may not serve in a governing, policy-making or advisory role while employed by the agency or within one year of terminating their paid employment with the agency. They may, however, serve as Direct Service Volunteer in a program or service which is outside the scope of their paid work within the organization and which takes place outside of their usual working hours.
- Family members of FTP employees are allowed to volunteer with the agency, but they may not be placed under the direct supervision or within the same service as the employee.

## Volunteer Rights

- Be properly interviewed, selected and provided with a position description.
- Be provided with information on the organization's mission, policies, structures and funding.
- Be provided with an orientation and ongoing training.
- Be given support and supervision from a designated supervisor as required or appropriate for the position.
- Be treated as a non-paid staff member.
- Be involved in and updated on what is happening in the agency.
- Be trusted with needed confidential information.
- Be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses where possible and appropriate.
- Be covered by agency's insurance while performing volunteer duties.
- Be safe, heard and respected.
- Be given appropriate and timely recognition for services.

## Volunteer Responsibilities

- Be sincere in the offer of service.
- Only accept a position that meets with of your skills, interests and available times.
- Ensure you understand the organization's policies and mission.
- Prepare for work assignments, follow procedures and utilize time wisely.
- Recognize the need for making and fulfilling a commitment.
- Acknowledge the need for training and participate fully.
- Consult with the program manager/facilitator when unclear on policy, appropriate action or directions given.
- Provide feedback to improve effectiveness.
- Track your hours with program manager.
- Work as a team member, understanding the role of paid staff and stay within the bounds of the position description.
- Respect confidentiality as it is one of the fundamental rights of everyone.
- Interact with service users in ways that are helpful, courteous, non-judgmental and sensitive to the needs and circumstances of service users.

# Volunteer Opportunities

## Administration

- Position may include administrative functions (e.g., filing, assisting with event administration, etc.)
- May also be required to help with client scheduling, answering phones, accepting donations and other duties as required.
- The hours are flexible with variable time requirements.

## Board of Directors

- FTP is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of individuals who have a broad range of experience and a commitment to ending violence in our community. Applications for volunteer work on the Board of Directors are managed by FTP's Administrative Assistant and the Governance Committee.

## Direct Services Volunteers

- Volunteers who work directly with the clients of FTP in the residential program, counselling program, or legal/support services.
- Responsibilities may include answering the phone and door, accepting donations, childcare and attending to immediate inquiries.
- Training is provided.

## Fundraising/Event Volunteers

- Volunteers are often needed at our two major annual fundraising events – on both a committee level in developing logistics, and on-site participation.
- Third Party Events are also held on behalf of FTP – volunteers may be needed to support those events as well.
- Time commitments vary with each event.

## Youth Education Program Volunteers

- Our Youth Educators work with youth in and outside of the school environment throughout the Caledon and Dufferin communities. Occasional help may be needed in delivering and developing these programs.

**There may be additional opportunities that are not listed. Please contact us if you have an area of expertise that might help.**

## General Information

### Absences

Staff depends on your arrival at scheduled times. Please contact your program manager if you are going to be absent.

### Dress Code

FTP wants to convey a professional, respectful and service oriented image to clients and the community. Each and every employee and volunteer is expected to maintain a standard of dress and grooming appropriate for their position within FTP. You will be informed of any special requirements but if there are any questions as to what constitutes proper attire, please speak to your program manager.

### Emergency Procedures

Your program manager will inform you of first aid and fire procedures. If you are unsure, please ask.

### Fragrance

For the comfort and health of our clients, staff and volunteers, FTP supports a Fragrance-Free environment.

### Open Door Policy

FTP believes in an Open Door policy, and encourages you to talk directly with both management and with each other. You are encouraged to raise concerns or make recommendations to your program manager regarding your employment practices and procedures, health and safety concerns or any other matter related to your volunteer position without fear of reprisal.

### Privacy

Volunteers' home and/or business telephone numbers and addresses will not be disclosed to the general public or to clients.

### Recording Hours

FTP reports on contributed volunteer hours annually. Please keep track and submit your volunteer hours with your program manager regularly.

### Resignation

Prior to your last day as a Volunteer, you may be asked to participate in an Exit Interview. The purpose for this meeting is to obtain any suggestions or ideas you may have for continuously improving the work environment at FTP.

## General Information (cont'd)

### Right Fit

It is very important that the volunteer position you have committed to meets your expectations and is the right opportunity for you. If your volunteer experience is not what you expected, please speak with your program manager and it might just be a small change or clarification that is needed.

### Safety

The Health and Safety of our volunteers is of prime importance. As a Volunteer, you are responsible for working in a safe and healthy manner and reporting all sub-standard and/or unhealthy conditions.



### Smoking

Smoking will not be permitted in the workplace, including: stairwells, landings, foyers, storage areas, basements, offices, meeting rooms, washrooms, etc. without exception. Smoking is permitted in designated areas outside FTP buildings.

### Stay Connected

If you are volunteering off-site, please stay in touch. Staff appreciate being informed about issues or good news.

### Volunteer Appreciation

FTP strives to recognize its volunteers on an ongoing basis, but does hold one event annually. Please let the Events & Community Relations Coordinator know if you have any suggestions for this event.

### Training

Will be provided by your program manager.

## Conflict of Interest

Volunteers must take steps to avoid, minimize or declare any potential, perceived or real conflict of interest.

Volunteers will not:

- Enter into a contract, business transaction, financial arrangement or other matter with FTP in which they have any direct or indirect personal interest, gain or benefit;
- Benefit financially in a direct or observable manner as a result of their association with FTP;
- Use their association with FTP to promote or interfere with anyone's right to use the services and programs of FTP;
- Provide volunteer support to any FTP program or service when a client with whom they are personally acquainted is present;
- Compromise service boundaries with clients outside of FTP, especially with those clients with whom they have a prior relationship.

### Declaration of a Conflict of Interest

The disclosure of information to others will be balanced against the rights of those involved in the conflict versus the protection of personal and other confidential information. The information disclosed should be sufficient to determine a course of action.

Volunteers must declare a conflict of interest or their suspicion of a conflict of interest to:

- Events & Community Relations Coordinator
- Program Manager, or
- Chair of the committee

### Range of Remedies to Resolve the Conflict

Each declaration of a Conflict of Interest and exceptional circumstances (e.g., prior relationship between volunteer and client) will be dealt with and resolved on a 'case-by-case' basis. The substance of the conflict and the risk to the integrity of FTP will be taken into consideration also. All available resources, including legal advice where warranted, will be used to resolve the conflict.

## **Conflict of Interest (cont'd)**

Consequences/Penalties may include but are not limited to:

- Removal from direct service when a current client is someone with whom they are personally acquainted.
- Temporary withdrawal from Volunteer services.

### **Penalties for Breach of the Conflict of Interest Policy**

The penalty will reflect whether the breach of the policy was deliberate or negligent.

The Penalty may include, but is not limited to:

- Immediate dismissal for failure to declare a conflict of interest.
- Immediate dismissal for failure to comply with the agreed upon remedy to the conflict of interest.
- Legal action should the situation warrant.

## **Performance Appraisal**

The Program Manager will monitor all Volunteers' performance with regard to expectations and commitment. FTP believes that the evaluation process is a non-threatening, constructive, supportive and empowering experience. The process will be motivating and help to pinpoint how the Volunteer can achieve their goals.

Performance Appraisals will be conducted on an 'as needed' basis using input from all those involved in the Volunteer's placement (i.e., Volunteer, Events & Community Relations Coordinator, Program Manager, Staff). A copy of the evaluation will be put into each Volunteer's file.

Progressive Discipline: A Progressive Discipline process will be implemented with Volunteers who are experiencing problems in their Volunteer assignment / placement. The process will include: a review of the situation with individuals (staff and volunteers) involved, a verbal warning if warranted, written warning if necessary, disciplinary suspension, dismissal. Dismissal of volunteers will be a last resort, applied only when other available and appropriate approaches to resolving the problem have been attempted.

## Code of Conduct

All employees and volunteers are required to abide by the following Code of Conduct while engaged with FTP. The obligation to maintain confidentiality regarding FTP's current and former clients remains in effect in perpetuity.

Sign off on the Code of Conduct compliance declaration is required annually.

### POLICY:

FTP is dedicated to maintaining a professional relationship between staff, volunteers, clients and the community. These contacts must be characterized by respect, sensitivity, courtesy, and appropriate concern for the client and FTP. FTP's reputation relies upon the integrity and sense of responsibility of management, employees and volunteers, in whom we place great trust. The way in which that trust is utilized determines the success of FTP and the goodwill we have earned in the community.

When acting on behalf of FTP, no employee or volunteer shall at any time take any action which s/he knows, or reasonably should know, violates any regional, provincial or federal law or regulation. Specifically, no employee or volunteer will engage in any activity which may be deemed to be workplace violence or harassment as outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

FTP is responsible for protecting the public trust and confidence of its funders and donors. This is accomplished by implementing systems and procedures to prevent and detect fraud, breach of trust and other forms of wrongdoing.

All FTP employees and volunteers are responsible for immediately reporting suspected fraud, breach of trust and other forms of wrongdoing (including violations of FTP operational policies) to the Executive Director or Board of Directors if required. Appropriate protection for the confidentiality of such information will be taken. All suspected wrongdoing will be investigated fully, and all persons accused or suspected of wrongdoing will be treated fairly.

All persons engaged with FTP in the delivery of services on a paid or voluntary basis are expected to uphold the principles outlined above in all interactions with clients, each other, and the general public.

Employees and volunteers will regard the well-being of FTP clients as their primary obligation.

## Code of Conduct (cont'd)

**Client:** A woman, child or man participating in any FTP program or service.  
A person will be recognized as a client until 12 consecutive months have elapsed since the last service was provided.

### PROCEDURE:

Relationships with Clients (the following principles also apply to engagement with broader audiences in the community)

1. Employees and Volunteers who have a personal relationship with a person accessing FTP for services will:
  - Inform their Program Manager or the Executive Director
  - Withdraw from direct counselling with the client where feasible
  - Support the client while protecting professional boundaries
  - Maintain full confidentiality of circumstances

This will ensure that the:

- Relationship is declared
- Relationship is supported
- Intrusion upon the relationship is minimal

Consideration will be given as to how the employee or volunteer is going to interact with the client.

2. Employees and volunteers may find themselves in social situations with clients. In such instances, employees and volunteers will exercise good judgement in protecting professional boundaries (e.g. refrain from discussing FTP, redirect conversations to more appropriate topics, withdraw from the situation, and quietly inform the client of the potentially difficult situation). We expect all staff to be aware of their behaviour in such situations as to not adversely impact their own ability or the agency's ability to serve the client.
3. Employees and Volunteers will:
  - Act professionally in their relationships with the community and clients;
  - Avoid real and perceived conflicts of interest or undertake actions which would impede their ability to continue to provide services to FTP and FTP clients in a credible manner
  - Respect and maintain the privacy of all client information. Staff will only access the specific client information that is required for their job position.

## Code of Conduct (cont'd)

- Disclose Personal Information only when properly authorized or when legally or professionally obligated. This includes ensuring no client information is divulged in the course of general agency reports
  - Ensure that outside interests and personal values and feelings do not impair their professional judgement, independence or competence.
4. **Employees and Volunteers will not:**
- Engage in any behaviour that is abusive in any manner to the clients or general public. This includes verbal, physical, emotional and financial abuse.
  - Encourage physical or emotional dependency.
  - Enter into any intimate or otherwise non-professional relationship with a client or behave in a manner that is perceived to be sexual in nature.
  - Provide any personal contact information to clients or accept personal calls, home visits or social media contact by clients.
  - Make personal calls or visits to clients. All contact between staff and clients is to be through FTP.
  - Socialize with clients outside the workplace. Any exception to this requires pre-authorization from the Executive Director or her designate.
  - Personally accept gifts from clients of any value. Offers of token thank you (flowers, candy) should be given immediately to supervisor and be shared within FTP.

### Relationships with Children

- FTP recognizes a special responsibility for children in its care. This responsibility has both legal and ethical ramifications. Employees (and volunteers who have children in their care) are expected to be familiar with Section 72.3 of The Child and Family Services Act – the “Duty to Report” obligation. Employees will be disciplined up to and including dismissal for behaviours that are abusive in any manner to children. For some situations this may include reporting to the authorities.

### Fiduciary Responsibility

Employees and volunteers will not act in any way that compromises the integrity of FTP and its role in stewardship of the public trust, such as the misuse of FTP property and funds, including donations. Inappropriate use of agency resources (material goods, tools, copyrighted resources, paid time) for personal gain including entering into direct competition with FTP is not permitted.

## Code of Conduct (cont'd)

### 1. Financial

Employees and Volunteers will demonstrate due diligence and respect as it relates to the disbursement or expenditure of public and donor funds. To this end, it is expected that one will abide by all FTP policies and procedures regarding the disbursement or expenditure of FTP funds and ensure accurate recording of expenses and disbursements on behalf of FTP.

### 2. Protection of FTP's Goodwill in the Community

Employees and Volunteers will apply the principles outlined above to their use of personal social media or other communication mediums in accordance with this Code, the FTP Confidentiality Agreement, Information Technology policy and other applicable policies and laws. FTP encourages and supports addressing of issues and complaints through established Complaint policies and procedures. Postings which are deemed disparaging of FTP thereby creating damage or risk of damage to the reputation of the agency or our funders and donors, by employees and volunteers are strictly prohibited.

**Adherence to FTP Policies, Procedures and Protocols is expected at all times.**

*(A signature is required on the enclosed Volunteer Commitment to Privacy document to confirm that you have read and agree to conduct yourself in a manner consistent with the requirements of the above Code of Conduct.)*

## Contact Information

Family Transition Place  
20 Bredin Parkway  
Orangeville, ON L9W 4Z9  
*Serving the Dufferin and Caledon communities.*

**24 hour crisis/info line:**

519-941-4357 | 905-584-4357 (Caledon) | 1-800-265-9178 (toll free)

TTY: 519-942-1651

Fax: 519-942-8243

**[www.familytransitionplace.ca](http://www.familytransitionplace.ca)**

Executive Director  
Norah Kennedy  
519-942-4122, ext. 255

Manager of Development & Community Relations  
Stacey Tarrant  
519-942-4122, ext. 240

### Volunteer Enquiries

Kelly Lee  
Events & Community Relations Coordinator  
519-942-4122, ext. 243  
[kelly@familytransitionplace.ca](mailto:kelly@familytransitionplace.ca)

