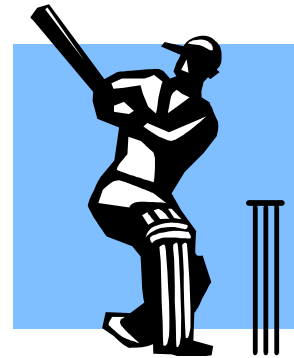
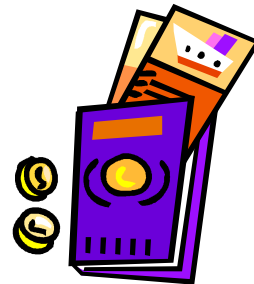


Volunteer Friends Program



Participants Handbook



Community Accessibility Inc.
www.communityaccessability.com.au

Volunteer Friends Program

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VOLUNTEER FRIENDS PROGRAM

PARTICIPANTS HANDBOOK

June 2011

OUR VISION

*Excellence in the delivery of
accessible support services within the community.*

OUR MISSION

*Community Accessibility works in partnership
with clients, carers and other professionals
providing high quality and flexible services.*

*Through leadership and
a dedicated team of staff and volunteers,
we promote social wellbeing and independence.*

CONTENTS

Volunteer Friends Program

Being a participant

Eligibility

Referrals

Funding

Our Volunteers

Committee

Newsletter

What does VFP offer?

Making a booking

Transport

Medication

Money Management

Participant Rights and Responsibilities

Confidentiality

Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions

Exiting the Program

VOLUNTEER FRIENDS PROGRAM

Every day, opportunities arise for most of us to make friends.

This is not always the case if you are a person with a disability.

Entering any new friendship is an exciting experience – having volunteer friends is no different.

There are often a few barriers to be broken down and new things to learn but the rewards can be great.

Having volunteer friends gives you the opportunity to share your experiences with other people.

BEING A PARTICIPANT

As a participant with the Volunteer Friends Program, you are helped to access trips and activities in the community. The program offers:

- A variety of leisure/social activities.
- The choice of different activities.
- Friendship.
- Independence and self-esteem.
- Your individual needs supported.
- Community participation/integration.

ELIGIBILITY

The Volunteer Friends Program is a respite program offering opportunities for people over 18 years of age who have a disability to enjoy social gatherings, holidays and outings. It is available to people who live in the local government areas of Wodonga, Indigo, Alpine, Wangaratta, Benalla and Albury who have an intellectual disability, an acquired brain injury, a physical or sensory disability and who live with family or independently with support.

REFERRALS

Requests to join the Volunteer Friends Program can be made directly by letter, phone or visiting the staff at the office. Appointments need to be made to complete the registration forms. Participants who register with the Volunteer Friends Program will have their names and addresses added to the Volunteer Friends Program database and will be sent a regular newsletter.

FUNDING

The Volunteer Friends Program (VFP) is a part of Community Accessibility Inc. and receives funding from the Department of Human Services Victoria. This funding covers staff wages, administrative costs, staff and volunteer training and reimbursement of costs. Participants pay for holidays and activities.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

The Volunteer Friends Program could not exist without the support of community volunteers to run our activities, holidays and outings. Volunteers are 18 years of age or older and undergo a Police Check as well as providing a Working with Children Check. Where possible, participants are supported by volunteers of the same gender.

COMMITTEE

The Volunteer Friends Program is governed by the Community Accessibility Inc. Management Committee. Members of this Management Committee are drawn from the general community.

NEWSLETTER

The newsletter is sent out to keep you informed about VFP activities, holidays, outings and other items of interest. The newsletter can be posted to you, picked up from the VFP office, emailed or accessed via our website:

www.communityaccessability.com.au

WHAT DOES THE VFP OFFER?

1. GROUP ACTIVITIES

Participants of the VFP can join regular group activities such as ten pin bowling, indoor cricket and football at Wodonga and pub/pool nights, ten pin bowling and country music/dance club at Wangaratta.

2. OUTINGS

Day outings are planned to local festivals and events as well as social activities such as movies, meals and the theatre.

3. HOLIDAYS

Holidays cater for groups of up to 8 participants. Past destinations have included the Gold Coast, Great Ocean Road, Tamworth and Dubbo.

The Volunteer Friends Program welcomes suggestions from participants for future activities, outings and holidays.

MAKING A BOOKING

Upcoming events are advertised in the newsletter. It is important that you book yourself into these activities and pay on time to secure your place.

To make sure that everyone has a fair chance of booking a place, we start by making a list of names of people who would like to go on the outing or holiday. After the booking date, we look at the list of names and allocate places. Amongst other things, we will look at whether you have been on a holiday with us recently, whether the new holiday or activity is suitable to your mobility and, if applicable, a balance of gender to best suit accommodation.

As soon as we have set the group, we let you know if you have been allocated a place. Then we ask you to pay a deposit to secure that place. There will be a cut-off date for paying the deposit. Once you have paid your deposit, you have secured your place on the outing or holiday and you will be sent a contract setting out your responsibilities for the holiday. The other names will stay on the list to fill spots if they become available.

TRANSPORT

Trips away from the local area in which your service operates, such as holidays, football trips and weekend breaks will leave from the VFP office in that location (Wodonga or Wangaratta) unless otherwise stated. Transport is provided and included in the cost of the activity or holiday.

For activities that occur locally participants meet at the start time and venue stated in the newsletter. Transport is not provided for these local activities.

MEDICATION

Medication for participants must be provided in a Webster pack and handed to the VFP co-ordinator prior to departure.

The VFP co-ordinator keeps a written record of all medication received and supervises taking of medication in accordance with instructions provided on Webster pack.

Participants who are able to manage their own medication are encouraged to do so, provided it can be stored securely.

VFP staff and volunteers do not administer medicine or dress wounds.

MONEY MANAGEMENT

Prior to departure, it is recommended that money to be managed on behalf of a participant is placed in sealed envelopes, and given to the VFP Co-ordinator.

The VFP co-ordinator keeps a written record of monies received and distributed to participants.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Participants have the right to:

- Information about the agency and its policies
- Access VFP for holidays and activities
- Have their needs met
- Be given appropriate support
- Be involved in decisions about events/activities
- Choose whether to participate.
- Privacy, dignity and confidentiality in all activities undertaken
- Develop skills and participate in and be valued in the community
- Be independent in tending to their own needs where possible
- Be safe from abuse and neglect
- Ask for support when it is needed
- Know who to turn to if problems arise
- Have complaints and disputes about VFP resolved

Participants have the responsibility to:

- Conduct themselves in a socially acceptable manner
- Treat VFP staff, volunteers and participants with respect

CONFIDENTIALITY

All written information collected about you by the VFP is stored in locked filing cabinets and available for you to see on request. All data stored in VFP computers about you is password protected.

SUGGESTIONS, COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS

Community Accessibility VFP welcomes suggestions, compliments and complaints. There is an area in the office foyer where these can be posted, or make them directly to VFP staff or to a Community Accessibility Manager.

If you have any issues regarding an activity, holiday, participant or volunteer please speak to a VFP staff member. If you have any issues with VFP staff, please speak to a Manager at Community Accessibility.

EXITING THE PROGRAM

If for any reason you choose to discontinue the program, contact a VFP staff member who will talk to you about your reasons for leaving, for our records.