

Volunteering Information Overview

All prospective volunteers have completed a comprehensive application process with PTFM. They will have agreed to a criminal records check upon acceptance as a mentor as well there may or may not be an application process for each institution in which we volunteer. Volunteers are asked to participate in a one-to-one orientation session with a PTFM staff Coordinator. All volunteers will complete a complete training session with other mentors. These training sessions will be held a minimum of once per year and are mandatory each year to maintain volunteer status with PTFM. The purpose of the training sessions is to provide general information about the PTFM program, the prison system within which you will be volunteering. It will also give you the opportunity to explore and discuss your personal involvement. Asking questions and meeting with other volunteers builds unity, harmony and sense of purpose. As well, as this organization grows and we have more mentors, we believe that training will become peer to peer, as experience within the justice system grows. PTFM will ensure that volunteers are prepared to meet with their matched friends the very first time and we are here to support the transition of them into this new relationship. The first meeting between mentor and friend will be attended by a PTFM coordinator.

Additional meetings and training sessions will be held periodically throughout the year to train volunteers on specific topics and as an inspirational sharing experience. PTFM staff are always available for consultation. Volunteers are encouraged to take initiative in consulting the staff, volunteer co-coordinators, and board of PTFM at any time. When in doubt, please contact PTFM.

Prisoners who are matched with a PTFM volunteer must want to be in the program. They must have shown an interest in our Christ-based faith and have been recommended by the chaplain, parole officer or some other member of their **Case Management Team**. They must submit an application to PTFM and all prisoners who apply are interviewed by PTFM before being matched.

Volunteers for PTFM are recruited from the Christian community primarily through church presentations, one-on-one contacts and referrals from other volunteers. Volunteers must also submit an "Application for Volunteering" and be interviewed by PTFM.

It is the responsibility of a PTFM staff member or volunteer coordinator to match a volunteer mentor to a friend. A number of factors form the basis upon which PTFM makes this decision, such as information on the application forms themselves, impressions the coordinator has gained through personal conversations with the mentor and prisoner applicants, length of time the prisoner has waited for a volunteer, and general assessment regarding the compatibility of a specific volunteer and a prisoner. The selection process is obviously limited so it is always hoped that the volunteer's love and grace toward the prisoner will help overcome differences that will arise. There will be no mentoring or matching of inmates with family, friends or close associates.

You, as a volunteer, need to make a very real commitment in terms of personal concern, time and involvement. Many people in prison have no one else on the outside who cares and so the volunteer may be the only friend that the prisoner has from the community. The person may have a few other friends or relations that may or may not visit. Either way, your commitment to friendship is a considerable responsibility which should not be entered into without careful thought and prayer.