2011

Leelanau County Probate and Family Court

Volunteer Handbook

Hon. Larry J. Nelson

Dear Leelanau County Citizen:

The Leelanau County Probate and Family Court has the serious responsibility of providing appropriate services for the most vulnerable citizens of our County - its children, its elderly, and its infirm.

Many of the issues that we address require formal court hearings or the intervention of professional services such as counseling or placement, however, there are many everyday problems that can be resolved with the assistance of a volunteer. Our volunteer services include such things as providing transportation, tutoring, mentoring, sitting with a child who is in detention, or monitoring a juvenile who is receiving probation services.

Leelanau County is blessed with so many talented individuals who are willing to share their time to assist other individuals who are in need. If you have an interest in serving as a volunteer for our Court, we would certainly like to hear from you. Any assistance you are able to provide will have a positive impact on our community.

Larry J. Nelson

Probate/Family Court Judge

Volunteering with the Leelanau County Family Court

The Leelanau County Family and Probate Court utilizes volunteers in a variety of ways. Youth on probation are considered “at risk youth” and often will benefit from contact with a stable and caring adult. Volunteers work under the supervision of a volunteer coordinator and directly with Juvenile staff.

The become a volunteer with the Family and Probate court a potential volunteer must fill out an application and submit to a criminal records check. Volunteer employment is also subject to employment criteria as established by the State of Michigan. For some roles specific training is required and provided by the State Regional Detention Support Services (RDSS).

There are many different opportunities for volunteering with the Leelanau County Family Court. A volunteer may well like one job and not another. An interview with the volunteer coordinator may help to clarify what is involved with becoming a volunteer and help point you toward the right role for you.

Volunteer Opportunities

Mentor

Mentors are requested for a youth a by their probation officer (PO) in a situation where a PO feels that a stable adult role model would be an asset to a youth. The specific parameters of this assignment are determined on a case by case basis.

Tutor

Tutors work with youth on probation who have fallen behind in their studies. Youth on probation are required to have passing grades. Probation officers will request tutors based on the specific subject area needs of an individual youth. Tutors are not required to be experts in all subject areas or trained as teachers; they do need to be organized and help a youth focus on their work.

Transporters

The Family Court utilizes transporters to take youth to and from placements, counseling appointments and other trips as needed and requested by the court. For many transports a team of two volunteers are required.

Hold over attendant

These volunteers supervise youth in the non-secure juvenile holdover site, located in the Leelanau County Sheriff's department. Typically volunteers work in teams of two, while youth are housed in the hold over.

Out of school suspension attendant

Youth on probation who are suspended from school, are obligated to spend their suspension days in the non-secure holdover room at the jail. They are supervised by a volunteer who may assist them with school work while monitoring their behavior.

Home Detention Supervision

Youth who are on home detention are monitored by a volunteer who conducts a daily home visit with the youth and will also make calls at random to the youths house to ensure that they are in compliance with their court order.

Electronic Monitoring attendant

Visits youth at their home daily during the first week of electronic monitoring contract. The volunteer oversees that the conditions of the contract are met. The volunteer will check in with the youth's probation officer as needed.

Garden Volunteer

Volunteers are recruited to work in the Family Court garden at the request of the garden coordinator. Volunteers supervise youth in the gardens, who raise produce for local food pantries.

Community Living Support

Probation staff, at times, will request a volunteer to work with a youth and their family in their home, in an intensive manner as a Community Living Support, (CLS). This is a creative collaboration between the courts and the family to try and provide for unmet needs and to, ultimately, facilitate a youth becoming successful in their probation.

A CLS is compensated according to current DHS guidelines or court payment schedule according to the status of the youth in the Court system.

Volunteer Training

The state of Michigan offers rural counties training for volunteers through Regional **Detention Support Services (RDSS)** this two day training is offered twice a year in various locations. Volunteers receive training in safety, transportation, family dynamics, home detention, hold over supervision and a comprehensive introduction to working with at risk youth. The Family court will offer other training opportunities as they become available.

Volunteer Compensation

Volunteers may be compensated for some roles with the court. Compensation for volunteers' time expenses and mileage are covered based on the rates set by RDSS or the Court.

Volunteering Reporting Requirements

Volunteers who work with youth under the supervision of the court may hear things from youth that could be of a disturbing nature. Volunteers are not therapists or counselors, and, in fact, have a duty to report anything of significance to a youth's probation officer (PO). Michigan law requires that certain persons report any case of suspected child abuse or neglect. If a volunteer hears or suspects anything considered abuse or neglect of a youth, they must report it to the Department of Human Services (DHS). They may choose to do this with the assistance of the PO or directly via www.michigan.gov/dhs, website, under DHS-3200 form. Regardless of how abuse and neglect is reported, it is wise to discuss it with the PO first. Reporters of abuse and neglect are anonymous and you should fear no repercussion.

Youth will often feel comfortable in talking to a volunteer, but it is the PO's responsibility, along with other trained professionals, to sort out the issues that are affecting a youth. It is the volunteer's position to support that process. There is never the assumption of a confidential relationship between the youth and volunteer.

CONFIDENTIAL APPLICATION

LEELANAU COUNTY FAMILY COURT
VOLUNTEER SERVICES
(231) 256-9803

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Dear Prospective Volunteer:

Please complete this application in full. To complete the process, an interview with the volunteer coordinator and an orientation to court procedures will follow.

Full name (last, first, middle) _____

Date of Birth: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Complete address: _____

_____

Number of years at current address: _____

Number of years as a county resident: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____Cell phone_____

Social Security No.: _____

If you are a college student, please give home address, home phone

_____

Occupation: _____

Employer's name, address, phone: _____

Education and related experience: _____

Are you available to transport juveniles? _____YES _____NO

Driver's license No. _____

Are you available for assignments out of the county? (i.e. transporting juveniles to another county) ____ YES _____ NO

Are you available for overnight assignments? ____ YES _____ NO

Are you currently on any medications? ____ YES _____ NO

If yes, please explain: _____

Have you had any serious illness, mental or physical, in the last five (5) years?

____ YES _____ NO

If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever been confined in any mental or correctional facility?

____ YES _____ NO

If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever been charged with a criminal offense? ____ YES _____ NO

If yes, please explain: _____

Have you ever been convicted for a criminal offense? ____ YES _____ NO

If yes, please explain: _____

How did you become informed about the Volunteer Program? _____

_____

Why are you interested in becoming a court volunteer? _____

_____

Have you had any previous court experience? _____

_____

Have you had any contacts with law enforcement agencies? ____ YES _____ NO

If yes, please explain: _____

List any special interests, hobbies, and activities you enjoy:

_____

_____

_____

REFERENCES

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	TITLE

I declare the above statements are true to the best of my information, knowledge and belief.

_____ _____

Date Signature

STATE OF MICHIGAN

LEELANAU COUNTY FAMILY DIVISION - THIRTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT

BETSY L. FISHER
Family Court Administrator

JOSEPH P. POVOLO
Probation Officer

LARRY J. NELSON, Family Court Judge
8527 E. Government Center Dr., Suite 203
Suttons Bay, Michigan 49682
(231) 256-9803 FAX (231) 256-9845

THOMAS J. MAYHEW
Diversion Counselor
Volunteer Coordination

JOSEPHINE M. LINGAUR
Juvenile Register

PERMISSION FOR CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK

I, (print name), _____ give the Leelanau County Probate and Family Court permission to check my criminal history with State and local police as well as with other jurisdictions in other states where I have lived.

_____ _____

Date Signature