



Dear Applicant,

Since 1999, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. (the NEEDS Centre) has made a difference in the lives of refugee and immigrant children, youth and families by providing accessible services and support. Our goal is to enhance their integration into Canadian society by providing youth with mentorship, employment, education and social recreation programs supported by psycho-social educators. Both our Agency and the youth we represent are appreciative of your interest in our organization and its goals, as we understand the significant impact your time will make on the life of a Mentee.

The youth who have participated in our various programs experience real and positive change. The **LINK** Mentorship Program offers high quality mentoring to youth and their families, giving them a chance to develop into confident and contributing Canadian citizens who will help shape our society. It is believed that linking refugee and immigrant youth to outside community resources via mentorship will successfully prevent them from becoming gang and criminally involved. This is why the simple act of friendship, through the mentoring relationship, is so important to N.E.E.D.S. Inc.

The foundation of these friendships is forged through the One-on-One Mentorship and Family Mentorship programs with a minimum time commitment of one year. It is our belief that mentoring makes a difference when it focuses on the needs of the individual, and in some cases the family, being mentored and the process of mutual growth. What is paramount when producing this growth is having FUN! There is no method more capable of making such an impact that is more enjoyable than being a Mentor.

In this package you will find information on our programming, the preliminary forms that you will need, as well as information about the organization, and the matching process. Please review the information that is provided, complete the application at your earliest convenience, and return it to the main office at **251-A Notre Dame Ave.** We hope to process your application as quickly as possible, and will call you when the application has been reviewed to discuss the next steps. If you have any questions concerning the process please contact us at 940-1278 or email [megan@needsinc.ca](mailto:megan@needsinc.ca).

Thank you in advance for trusting N.E.E.D.S. Inc. with your time and energy.

Sincerely,  
Megan Prydun, LINK Mentorship Facilitator, N.E.E.D.S. Inc.  
Phone: 940-1278  
Email: [megan@needsinc.ca](mailto:megan@needsinc.ca)

Welcome to N.E.E.D.S. Inc. and thank you once again for your interest in our organization. In this application package you will find the preliminary forms you will need to complete before moving on to the next step in the enrollment process. It will also introduce you to our primary mentorship programming and provide you with a brief overview of the matching process.

### **The One-on-One Mentoring Program:**

These are professionally developed one-to-one matches between a Mentor (a volunteer) and a Mentee (a refugee/immigrant youth between the ages of 12 and 18 years old). The volunteer's time commitment is three hours bi-weekly with their Mentee for a minimum of one year and an additional two hours per week to focus on preparation, updates, individual consultations and mandatory training/supervision sessions. The mentors will be provided with a bi-weekly budget of \$10.00 per youth for the first year only. This money is to cover admission costs, food and programming supplies. Bus tickets will also be provided for those mentors and youth who do not have access to a vehicle.

Mentors and their youth participants will not meet at a centralized location; mentors will be responsible for planning their own activities. However, an overall mentorship curriculum will be given to the mentor to help ensure the activities completed follow goals of the program.

The role of the mentor is to help the refugee and immigrant youth participants learn to build safe and trusting relationships with positive adults within their community. They are also responsible for making sure the youth are being introduced to appropriate community resources in their neighbourhood and being engaged in the Crime Prevention Workshops administered by **LINK** Staff.

Youth in this stream of mentoring have been assessed as being at lower risk (although they are still "at-risk") of becoming involved in gang related activity. It is also believed that linking refugee and immigrant youth to outside community resources via mentorship will successfully prevent them from becoming gang involved.

Volunteers can be from all ages, all types, and all different backgrounds. The one thing they all hold in common is that they believe every youth deserves the compassion and support of positive role models to help them transition and thrive in a new community.

### **The Family Mentoring Program:**

Isolation is often experienced by refugee families upon arriving to Canada and the program hopes to decrease this through familial mentorship. The program offers Canadian families the opportunity to mentor and support refugee families new to Canada. The intention is to pair refugee families with Canadian families whose members are of similar ages, including the parents. The Canadian family's time commitment is a total of eight hours per month for a minimum of one year.

Families will be responsible for arranging meeting times that best suit their schedules. The **LINK** program will organize monthly meetings for all the Canadian/Refugee family partnerships for an even larger opportunity for peer support and education. The NEEDS Centre will also work

with the parents of the refugee families to ensure they have the skills needed to help prevent their youth from gang involvement.

The families in this stream of mentoring have been assessed as being “higher risk” and will receive more intensive programming along with their mentoring. The goal is to provide support to the refugee families, while also providing them with opportunities to develop healthy, safe friendships. Having a Canadian family to look to for support and information during their first year(s) in Canada will be an invaluable resource for refugee families. It is our hope that improving the support refugee families receive during their transition will alleviate some of the stress they feel so that they will be better able to deal with challenging situations.

Canadian families will also be given the opportunity to learn about a different culture, build new relationships and serve the refugee community together as a family unit.

### **Process for the *LINK* Mentorship Program:**

The two programs listed above have a similar process and commitment. If you are interested in these programs, you may contact the office for more information or, you are welcome to fill out the application attached in this package and drop it off or mail it to the NEEDS Centre office. The *LINK* Mentorship Facilitator will be in touch with you to explain the enrollment process and procedures for the program you have chosen.

### **How does the Enrollment Process Work?**

Starting from the receipt of your application, we begin to collect information that is necessary in order for us to be able to match you, and match you most appropriately. Following the basic application form, the *LINK* Mentorship Facilitator will contact you to schedule an interview to get to know more about who you are, what interests and experiences you have had, and what type of young person/family would be a good fit for you. The interview is comprehensive and can be very personal at times; however, it is necessary to include an interview such as this to ensure our highest priority; child safety. Upon completion of the interview, the NEEDS Centre Volunteer Coordinator will contact you to complete a Criminal Record Check, Child Abuse Registry Check, and Reference Checks. Once the checks are processed, volunteers will enroll in a two part Youth Safety and Mentorship training session. Following the training, you will be ready to be matched to a youth/family!

### **What if I don't have experience?**

For the most part, being a Mentor is just about being a positive support and friend. However, we do provide you with initial/ongoing training and ongoing follow up throughout the course of your partnership.

### **How does the Matching Process Work?**

Approved Mentors will be contacted by the *LINK* Facilitator who will determine which Mentor/Canadian family and which Mentee/Refugee family will be best suited together and be the most potentially successful partnership. Matches will be based primarily on the geography and language of the Mentor/Canadian family and Mentee/Refugee family.

The Facilitator will then schedule an introduction evening for the refugee youth, their families and the mentors. For the Family Mentoring Program, the **LINK** Facilitator will schedule family to family introduction meetings between the Canadian family and the refugee family. This introduction meeting will be the official start to the mentoring partnerships, providing the matches time to get to know each other. The expectations and responsibilities of the match will also be reviewed. Contact information will be exchanged and important forms will be signed. It will be a fun and exciting night full of food, games and fun!

### **Is the information I provide confidential?**

Confidentiality is extremely important to N.E.E.D.S. Inc. All personal information will remain confidential unless there is a situation where we are required to report by law. Similarly, we ask that you keep the information about the youth, their families and the refugee families in our program confidential, and do not disclose identifiable information about the youth we serve unless needed for child welfare purposes.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ACCEPTANCE OF MENTOR CHILD CONTACT VOLUNTEERS**

The following criteria will be used to qualify or disqualify an applicant as a child-contact volunteer.

- 1. Age:** The volunteer must be eighteen (18) years of age or older. There is no upper limit.
- 2. Commitment:** The applicant must be willing to provide a minimum commitment of one year as indicated in the mentorship application. The Mentor volunteer commitment is three hours bi-weekly with their Mentee for a minimum of one year and an additional two hours per week to focus on preparation, updates, individual consultations and mandatory training/supervision sessions.
- 3. Employment:** Generally, the volunteer should be employed or going to school. Students, the employed, unemployed and pensioners are acceptable candidates.
- 4. Marital/Partner Status:** The volunteer may be single, married, separated, divorced or living common law. We will disqualify a volunteer who is prevented by court order from seeing their own children. We will disqualify an applicant if their partner is prevented by court order from seeing their own children. The volunteer is required to inform the **LINK** Facilitator immediately of any new members of the household and/or any change to marital or partner status.
- 5. Emotional/Physical/Mental Stability:** The volunteer must be emotionally, physically and mentally stable. Where the applicant is receiving counseling, a Request for Release of Information/Reference Form (signed by the applicant) is required from the counselor. A physician's Reference (signed by the applicant) is also required.
- 6. References:** The volunteer must provide the names, addresses and phone number of three (3) references, as specified on the application form. The 4<sup>th</sup> reference may be determined

after the interview in consultation with the **LINK** Facilitator. If an applicant is receiving counseling for personal reasons (i.e., bereavement, job related stress, career, marriage) a release of information must be signed so the Facilitator can contact the counselor involved requesting a letter of reference.

- 7. Police Offences:** The volunteer is required to obtain a police record check/police record print-out on themselves and their partner, if applicable, at their own expense. Re-screen of a volunteer (if applicable the partner) may be required at the discretion of the Facilitator. Depending on the nature of the volunteer's (partner's) offence and when the offence occurred, a volunteer may be qualified, disqualified, or temporarily disqualified. (Example: Sexual or violent offences (of volunteer and/or partner) will disqualify them as a child-contact volunteer.)
- 8. Child Abuse Registry:** If a volunteer or partner, if applicable, is listed on the Child Abuse Registry the volunteer will be disqualified as a child-contact volunteer. If a volunteer knowingly exposes the child to a sexual or violent offender during their volunteer commitment, this is reason for dismissal.
- 9. Use of Alcohol and other Substances:** An applicant, who, in our opinion, may have an alcohol-abuse or other substance abuse problem, would be disqualified temporarily until the applicant has been clean and sober for a minimum of two years. An applicant who has a past alcohol or substance abuse problem, must have successfully completed a recognized substance abuse treatment program, and this must be confirmed by a reference from the treatment program counselor and/or sponsor. The Agency does not condone the use of any illegal substances.
- 10. Confidentiality:** The applicant must adhere to the confidentiality agreement they are required to sign as part of the application process, which outlines that all information the volunteer receives as a result of their involvement with a youth and family, will remain confidential throughout and after the relationship has ended.
- 11. Driver's Abstract:** A driver's abstract may be required on any applicant (and/or partner) at the discretion of the Agency staff before an applicant's approval is considered.
- 12. Suitability:** Applicants (and partners) must be personally interviewed by a **LINK** staff member. Home environment may be a factor in acceptance. The volunteer's motivations must be appropriate.