

INFORMATION SHEET FOR VOLUNTEERS

Thank you for your expression of interest in participating in Muscular Dystrophy South Australia's Buddy Up program. This letter contains some additional information about our program, so you can better understand what is involved and what the role of the volunteer entails.

If we have not answered any questions you have regarding the Buddy Up program in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Amber or Hoda here at Muscular Dystrophy SA.

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Buddy Up DETAILS:

Duration: The Buddy Up program has been designed to exist as an ongoing project. Volunteers are required to be an active part of the program for a minimum of 4 months, with a minimum commitment of one two hour Buddy Up session per month. Higher frequency than the minimum requirement of Buddy Up sessions is preferred but not essential.

Location: Metropolitan Adelaide

Who is eligible to participate in the Buddy Up program?

The Buddy Up program is designed to meet social needs of individuals of any age diagnosed with a neuromuscular condition, in a positive, encouraging environment. Volunteers who are willing to participate in social contact with our clients can also be any age, please refer to '*How is a person eligible to become a Volunteer for Buddy Up program*' for further details about how to become a volunteer. To be eligible for the program you must have a valid police clearance and Child Safe Environments Certificate.

What are neuromuscular conditions?

Neuromuscular conditions have certain features in common; most are genetic; most are progressive; and each condition causes muscle weakness and wasting. The conditions all vary in severity and the groups of muscles that are affected, but may cause significant physical impairment. Many of our participants use mobility aids such as motorised or manual wheelchairs, or walking frames.

Who is Muscular Dystrophy South Australia?

Muscular Dystrophy South Australia is a not for profit disability charity. Muscular Dystrophy SA is a whole of life service that provides a range of services and supports to individuals with a neuromuscular condition and their families/carers. Muscular Dystrophy SA services include Hydrotherapy, Counselling, Equipment Loans, Advocacy, Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy and recreational and social activities.

Why was Buddy Up designed?

This project is designed to establish a base program linking volunteers with individuals diagnosed with a neuromuscular condition. The Buddy Up program will provide a positive social support avenue for socially isolated individuals. Lack of social support and access to social support is a significant unmet need in the neuromuscular community.

What will happen at Buddy Up?

The Buddy Up program can be facilitated through one on one interaction between the volunteer and the buddy or attending social events as part of a group, alternatively buddies can arrange their own social events. These might include attending sporting games, cinemas, concerts, exhibitions and also spending time with buddies in their home. This will provide much needed social support for individuals diagnosed with a neuromuscular condition and a learning, educational, awareness and socially rewarding environment for volunteers. Buddy Up sessions will be organised through Buddy Up coordinators or with prior approval from Buddy Up coordinators, if sessions are arranged between the volunteer and buddy themselves. Should sessions be arranged by either volunteer or buddy without prior notification and approval from Buddy Up coordinators these sessions would not be included as part of the Buddy Up program and therefore at the risk of the volunteer and buddy involved.

What are some of the benefits of Volunteering with the Buddy Up program?

Volunteering with Muscular Dystrophy South Australia is an opportunity for personal and professional growth through assisting with the delivery of the Buddy Up program.

Supporting volunteers to develop social skills by interacting with people living with a neuromuscular condition and their family.

Provide volunteers' with hands on experience in supporting individuals diagnosed with a neuromuscular condition to participate in the community and other social events

Participating in fun activities with buddy's such as having lunch together, watching a movie or attending a sporting event

Provides a rewarding experience through enabling individuals diagnosed with a neuromuscular condition a social outcome

Providing training on neuromuscular conditions and Child Safe Environments

What is the volunteer buddy role?

Volunteers are to provide regular positive social support to their buddy's. Volunteers are to provide a positive and empowering role to their buddy's, increasing their self confidence and social outcomes. The exact nature of your role will be dependant on your client and it is important for you to only accept activities you feel comfortable with. Volunteers will be assigned to a buddy for the duration of their volunteering period. Depending on your availability and your buddy's availability, you may be assigned to more than one buddy (only one buddy per visit). You are not required to provide personal care for things like showering, dressing/un-dressing, cleaning, meal preparation (exceptions can be made here with prior approval from Client Services staff) gardening or providing medical assistance (excluding assistance with administering medication unless prior training has been undertaken, or first aid assistance). You may be required in some instances to provide toileting assistance or mealtime support (helping your buddy to eat or drink) specific details about what assistance your buddy may require will be provided upon assignment to a buddy.

Reimbursement:

Muscular Dystrophy SA does not provide travel assistance to volunteers. It is the volunteer's responsibility to arrange their own transport to attend buddy up sessions. Buddy Up coordinators will do their best to match up volunteers and buddy's so that minimal travel is required. Muscular Dystrophy SA is not able to provide meal allowances. Buddy Up coordinators may be able to provide assistance with sourcing tickets to events/activities or materials (such as art and craft items) to facilitate buddy up visits. Many buddies will have access to a Companion Card for both travel and various events. These Companion Cards allow a companion to travel on public transport or attend events at no cost with the buddy.

What are the volunteer's responsibilities?

- To maintain confidentiality and privacy
- Abide by Muscular Dystrophy SA's policies, standards and procedures where appropriate, including WHS, Code of Conduct and privacy policies.
- Undertake a two yearly police clearance and provide the original copy
- Respect others time, abilities, belongings and homes and respect and treat the buddy's, general public, staff, and fellow volunteers in a courteous manner.
- Give notice as soon as possible of any unavailability or cessation of a partnership
- Remain non-judgemental and refrain from imposing views and standards on others
- Report any injury or accident immediately or as soon as possible after the event
- Raise any issues of concern with the Buddy Up Coordinator, including asking for help if needed
- Wear appropriate attire
- Complete any necessary training sessions and evaluation or feedback forms
- Do not use illicit drugs, tobacco or consume alcohol while with buddy's
- Do not accept any gifts from buddy's

How is a person eligible to become a Volunteer for Buddy Up program?

Volunteers could have come from all different backgrounds and have different experiences and skills. To be eligible to volunteer at Buddy Up program you need to:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Have a valid Child Safe Environment Certificate (**this is NOT Compulsory but preferred**)
- Have either DCSI Screening or Child related Employment Screening
(Note: Due to new disability and child safe screening requirements, A National Police Clearance will only be accepted if dated before July 2014. However if you don't have A POLICE CLEARANCE , you need to apply for a Department of Communities & Social Inclusion Child Related Employment Screening and also for Disability Services Employment Screening at least ten working weeks prior to Camp Capacity. Please see information below for details on how to do this)
- Have good communication skills
- Be willing to provide some personal care, if necessary

We would welcome anyone who meets the requirements to volunteer for Buddy Up program. If you are unsure whether you meet the requirements, contact Amber or Hoda at Muscular Dystrophy SA for further clarification.

What about training?

To ensure that you are comfortable with the volunteer role and that you understand the needs of people with neuromuscular conditions, we will hold a Buddy Up Training Day and Manual Handling Training Session. We will aim to hold two sessions, numbers permitting, in the up coming months. Further details about the date, time and location to be advised.

The training includes basic manual handling and use of relevant equipment. You may not need to use any of the equipment seen in the training session however it is useful to be aware of what equipment support your buddy may require. During the training all participants will be given plenty of opportunity to use the equipment and ask any questions. We will also provide detailed information about neuromuscular conditions and further details about the Buddy Up program.

The training session is a really important part of the recruitment process as it enables us to get to know who the volunteers are and to determine your suitability as a volunteer for the program.

What happens now?

If you are still interested in volunteering at Buddy Up program, please fill in the attached Volunteer Registration Forms. It is required by law that Muscular Dystrophy South Australia obtains a Child Related Employment Screening and/or Disability Service Employment Screening for all volunteers who work with our clients. **IF YOU HAVE A POLICE CLEARANCE THAT IS DATED PRIOR TO JULY 2014 or A CHILD- RELATED EMPLOYMENT SCREENING, we will accept it. HOWEVER IF YOU DO NOT, YOU MUST OBTAIN A CHILD- RELATED EMPLOYMENT SCREENING** through the Department of Communities & Social Inclusion. Your application for these two screening checks needs to be lodged at least ten working weeks prior to your initial meeting with your buddy, as this can take some time to process. The cost for applying for each DCSI screening for Volunteer is \$55. However, if you lodge Child-Related Employment Screening and other type of DCSI Screening at the same time you only need to pay one amount of \$55, otherwise each application will cost \$55 for Volunteers. To obtain a Child-Related Employment Screening, please request both forms from us, we will send you a copy that has already been partially completed.

Please undertake the following steps after you receive a copy of the screening application forms from us:

- Tick “\$56.10 Volunteers” Box
- Fill and answer all questions in Section A and B in the application forms
- Sign and date the ‘Consent’ section
- For your application to be processed, your identity must have been verified using a 100 point identification check. Take your application along with two forms of ID (see ‘proof of identity’) and get an authorised verified officer to fill out the appropriate section. This is to say that they have sighted your identification.
- The form must be signed by the verifier and the section providing their details must be completed. For further details on who can verify, please check link below
http://www.dcsi.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/17369/EMPLOYMENT-SCREENING.pdf
- Once signed and all the necessary sections have been completed, take your application form to a post office to pay and they will lodge the form on your behalf. Child-related Employment take into account a much wider array of information and may take longer than other types of screening. If an applicant has no criminal history and no matches against any databases, the anticipated turnaround time for an application is approximately 20 business days. But may take up to 10 working weeks.
- Once you receive the Certificate, keep the original and then send us a copy to keep with our records.

What if I am unable to volunteer anymore?

If you are unable to continue volunteering within the Buddy Up program, please advise the Buddy Up Coordinator as soon as possible. A withdrawal form will be sent to you for completion. You must complete and return the form at least 1 week prior to your next scheduled buddy up session.

We hope this document has given you the information that you require. Please contact Hoda or Amber on either 8234 5266 or hoda@mdasa.org.au if you have any other queries or you require any further information.