

VOLUNTEER SERVICES & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

CHAPTER 6

Philosophy & Mission

The Texas Youth Commission believes that, through volunteers, the community has the ability to enhance lives of youth by providing meaningful activities and resources that promote pro-social, educational, emotional, and spiritual growth, and healthy family relationships; thus, expanding services provided by staff. The mission of the TYC Community Relations Department is to maximize community resources and mobilize volunteers in providing opportunities that enable youth to become responsible and productive citizens. Our philosophy and mission were reaffirmed by the agency's community relations coordinators in September 2009.

The importance of community volunteers was emphasized in an agreement approved by the federal courts when a class action suit, **Morales vs. Turman**, was settled in 1984. That agreement states that: "The Agency shall take steps to expand the use of volunteers in TYC institutions and facilities. Volunteers shall be utilized to expand students' opportunities for educational and recreational experiences, to provide students with increased social interactions and to assist students, as appropriate, in successfully completing the treatment program." Volunteer involvement is further mandated by the **American Correctional Association** (ACA 4-JCF-6G: Community Relations).

The TYC Volunteer Services Department produced the following results during FY 2010:

- **1,645 community volunteers enrolled** in the program. Demographics of the volunteer population consist of:
 - Gender: 50% female, 50% male
 - Ethnicity: 65% Caucasian, 20% Hispanic, 14% African-American
 - Marital Status: 70% married
 - Tenure: Average 2.5 years, Maximum 34 years
- **103,120 hours of service contributed by volunteers, valued at \$2,088,118** based upon the average hourly earnings of all production and nonsupervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls (as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics), plus 12 percent to estimate for fringe benefits.*
- **\$75,139 in cash donations and fundraising revenue** earned by the 20 local community resource councils affiliated with TYC.

- **\$2,393,970 in cash and in-kind contributions** benefitting TYC youth, including the value of volunteer hours.
- **49,418 community service hours performed by TYC youth** on parole, and in halfway houses and institutions.
- **7,360 community citizens educated** through facility tours, volunteer training sessions, and public awareness and prevention speaking engagements.
- **299 new mentor matches** made, **22 new tutors** enrolled, **78 new interns** enrolled, **32 new council members**, and **246 new chaplaincy volunteers** enrolled.

Primary Program Initiatives

Mentoring

Matching a mature adult volunteer to an individual youth in TYC. Purpose of building a trusting relationship with the youth through role modeling, leadership, guidance, and support. Since 1997, the volunteer services program coordinators have matched an adult mentor to 2,448 TYC youth. During FY 2010, 12.5% of youth in institutions, 6.4% of youth in halfway houses, and 1.2% of youth on parole received mentoring services.

The agency's Research Department has maintained an effective tracking system to measure the impact that mentoring has on the recidivism rate of youth offenders. Youth who were mentored while in TYC were more likely to be reading at grade level upon their release than were non-mentored youth. Only 17.4% of the non-mentored youth released from TYC were reading at grade level, compared to 20.7% of the youth who were mentored for six months or more. Only 41% of non-mentored youth obtain their GED or high school diploma within 90 days of release from a secure facility, compared to 49.2% of youth who were mentored for six months or more.

Overall, 50.5% of non-mentored youth are rearrested within 1 year of release from a secure facility, compared to 43.6% of youth who were mentored for 181 days or more. In 2010, 52.3% of the non-mentored youth were rearrested within 1 year of release, while only 43% of the youth who were mentored for 181 days or more were rearrested. In 2009, 50.6% of the non-mentored youth were rearrested within 1 year of release, while 37.4% of the youth who were mentored for 181 days or more were rearrested. Overall, 44.2% of the non-mentored youth are reincarcerated within 3 years while only 34.9% of the youth who were mentored for 181 days or more were reincarcerated.

There are many powerful anecdotal examples of how mentoring impacts youth in TYC. Here are some of the most moving stories:

Joshua, a youth at the Corsicana facility, was interviewed about his experiences working with his mentors, Kenneth and Linda Williams. Joshua said that he really enjoyed having them as his mentors. They encourage him to do what is right in TYC and when he leaves TYC. They both visit with Joshua every Sunday. He smiled as he said they had never missed a Sunday. He really looks forward to their visit on the weekend and just knowing that they are coming.

Mr. Williams visits on Thursday night each week also. He comes to the dorm every Thursday night. He helps Joshua with his reading. When they have finished reading, they play a game of dominoes or battleship before Mr. Williams leaves. Joshua admitted that he would be very disappointed if Mr. Williams did not come on Thursday. Both the Williams talk with Joshua about his plans for the future once he leaves TYC. They are taking an interest in where he is going and trying to help provide a new safe environment for him once he is released from TYC. Mr. and Mrs. Williams often ask if they can donate games or bring treats for the entire dorm that Joshua is assigned to. They attempt to help his whole dorm. According to Joshua, "They are very nice people and go church every Sunday before they come out to visit me." Joshua says he very seldom gets into trouble now because he is afraid that he would lose them as mentors or they would be upset with him. Mentors often have this effect on our youth. *(Interview conducted by Sandra Willard, Corsicana's community relations coordinator)*

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"Mentoring is a gift of the heart. It starts out with a scary, "I'm not too sure about this." Others tell you that you can do it even if they've never done it themselves. So, here you are sitting across the table from a young cadet that you barely know or maybe have never seen and you are supposed to encourage him. I have my list of questions including, "Tell me about your family," and "Where are you from?" Lots of questions and direct answers. It is kind of awkward!

Then, the first few visits are behind you - and you're just not sure how it happened or when it happened, but you discover you've made a break through, a bridge, a bond with this



wonderful young person. The awkward times are gone; there is real heart-felt sharing going on now! The hour no longer creeps by, it flies by and you are connecting!

The cadet is now sharing prayer requests and you find yourself asking for their prayers as well. When family comes to visit, they want you to meet them. Somehow, your family just got bigger. When you mentor, you feel proud of your youth's accomplishments. You love to spend time with them. You pray for them, encourage them, love them, and are concerned for them when they leave. Mentoring is a two-way blessing, for in time, the cadet becomes proud of you, he loves to spend time with you, he prays for you, and he cares what happens in your life! Mentoring = Blessings! Would I recommend it? You bet I would!" ~Janie Leggett, Faith-Based Mentor at Victory Field

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"Dear Ms. Doughty,

On behalf of Turman House youth and especially from Adam and Nick, we want to thank you for being a great inspiration, leader, provider, listener, and supporter. You are also a mother figure to us as well.

Ms. Doughty you have taught us many things in life that my family never could make time for. By being a great role model for us and a wonderful supporter we have been able to learn different skills. Some of the things we have learned are comparison shopping, different cultures, and managing our money. During the time we have gone off campus you have exposed us to different leisure time activities, such as bowling and the movies, and allowed us to tour the University of Texas campus.

You also provide spiritual guidance for us by taking us to church and also allowing us to explore different religious beliefs. You made sure we didn't go without during the holidays by asking if we had plenty of food or needed funding for activities or gifts for all the youth at Turman House.

There have been times when we have felt like giving up on ourselves but you never let us. You just won't stand for it. The lessons we have learned from you is that money is not needed to make us happy or successful but just having a support system and good friends makes us rich in so many ways. Your continued kindness has allowed us to open up to others about our thoughts and feelings and this was something that we were not able to do before TYC.



Even though our time is nearing an end at Turman House, we hope that we can still come to you for advice and guidance when we face our biggest challenge of going back into the community.” ~ Sincerely,
Adam and Nick

In short, mentoring works! But volunteers must make a 6-month commitment when becoming a new mentor and are expected to meet consistently with their mentee for 4-8 hours each month.

Tutoring Program

Teachers and caseworkers may refer TYC youth for tutoring services through the volunteer services department. Tutors are carefully screened, selected and trained, then assigned to an individual youth for weekly visits in the classroom. The tutoring assignment focuses on an educational goal identified by the student's teacher. Tutors usually work with students for six to nine weeks at a time. The Community Relations Coordinator supervises tutors. They receive additional guidance and training from educational staff.

Chaplaincy Services

TYC facilities often rely upon the involvement of community volunteers to provide religious training and pastoral counseling services to youth. Hundreds of faithful volunteers visit our institutions and halfway houses each week to direct religious training classes and worship services, as requested by our students. The Community Relations Coordinator supervises religious volunteers. They receive additional guidance and training from the Chaplains.

Community Resource Councils

Community resource councils promote citizen involvement at each TYC facility and program, and are private charitable, tax-exempt corporations established and dedicated for the sole benefit of the youth receiving services from the state agency. The Texas Youth Commission supports and assists the councils in recruiting members from diverse sectors of the local communities who are concerned citizens or represent primary community resources, such as social services, law enforcement/judicial, education, business, churches/clergy, and media. Prior to their acceptance as a council member, prospective members are required to complete all TYC screening, processing, and training requirements for registered volunteers. The organizational By-Laws outline the process by which members and officers are elected.

These groups of volunteers act upon requests from the state agency for community assistance; supplement the rehabilitation services for adjudicated youth by securing donations and facilitating activities and projects, refer needs to known resources; and help inform the community of the TYC facilities' and programs' goals, accomplishments, needs and problems. Councils generally meet once a month and are expected to conduct at least ten meetings annually. There are no dues or fees attached to membership. The typical size of these

councils ranges from ten to fifty members. The Community Relations Coordinator employed by the local TYC facility or program is the primary liaison between the community resource council and the state agency. The Coordinator, a non-voting ex-officio member of the council, provides administrative support to the nonprofit organization and serves as its executive secretary.

Local councils solicit contributions for special projects or for general use from businesses, service organizations, corporations, foundations, and individuals. Funds are also raised through various types of fund-raising projects, including but not limited to car washes, garage sales, bake sales, dinners, food booths, golf tournaments, chili cook offs, and annual solicitation campaigns through the mail. Council members decide how these funds are raised and spent by developing an annual budget and fundraising plan.

During FY 2010, the network of 20 community resource councils affiliated with TYC **provided support and assistance to 1,759 families** through Family Day activities, incentive events, graduation ceremonies, clothing and food, visitation activities, photographs, and financial assistance for traveling to TYC facilities. These councils gave **\$33,104 in financial support** to TYC families. Family involvement is a high priority for the affiliated council network and this has been emphasized during State Council meetings and publications, and the annual conference.

The employee survey identified the following priorities for community resource councils, based upon the needs of the youth:

- Sponsoring and participating in family activities (families of TYC youth) such as therapeutic family days and traveling expenses to visit sons and daughters,
- Clothes, duffle bags, ID cards, school supplies, and other immediate necessities for successful re-entry,
- Providing incentives for educational accomplishments, treatment progression, and pro-social behavior,
- Information about local social service agencies and organizations that provide services to TYC youth,
- Recruiting more volunteers and providing resources needed by volunteers in their jobs,
- Interaction with families of TYC youth, photo-taking during visitation days,
- Recreational activities both in the facilities and in the community,
- Getting to know the TYC youth through interactions and involvement in activities,
- Speakers from the local community regarding career exploration, job readiness, community resources, and rehabilitation.

Other Volunteer Roles

Additionally, community volunteers may participate in internships, skills groups, leisure activities, cultural/arts/music activities, holiday celebrations, etc.

Screening Process for Volunteers

A full-time Community Relations Coordinator at each TYC facility screens prospective volunteers and carefully matches selected individuals to a suitable assignment. A volunteer assignment is contingent upon satisfactory completion of:

- Volunteer application
- Criminal and driving record check
- Fingerprinting
- Personal character references
- Face-to-face interview
- Agreement of confidentiality, release of liability
- Comprehensive orientation and job-specific training

Liability Coverage

Liability Coverage of TYC volunteers was instituted by the 75th Legislature on September 1, 1997. This Bill states that (HB1756)(b), **a volunteer is not liable for damages arising from an act or omission that results in personal injury, death, or property damage** if the act or omission is:

- (1) In the course and scope of the volunteer's duties as a volunteer; and
- (2) Not intentional or grossly negligent.

A volunteer **IS liable** for personal injury, death or property damage caused by an act or omission **related to the operation or use of any motor-driven equipment** to the extent of the greater of:

- (1) The amount of financial responsibility required for the motor-driven equipment, if any, under Chapter 601, Transportation Code; or
- (2) The amount of any liability insurance coverage that applies to the act or omission.

Workplace Conduct for Volunteers

The Texas Youth Commission (TYC) establishes standards of workplace conduct for volunteers. The standards are minimum requirements and are not all-inclusive. The absence of a specific rule covering any act tending to discredit a volunteer or the agency does not mean that the act is condoned, is permissible, or would not call for disciplinary action.

Volunteers are expected to exercise reason and judgment consistent with their assignments and training. Youth rights must be observed at all times. Volunteers are expected to be courteous and professional in dealing with youth and to be cooperative and compatible in their dealings with employees. Concerns regarding staff or fellow volunteers should be expressed properly through the community relations coordinator.

Volunteers are subject to all applicable rules, regulations, policies and procedures of TYC and the facility/program where they volunteer. Although TYC makes applicable policies and policy revisions available to volunteers, each volunteer shares responsibility in remaining aware of agency policies.

Volunteer/Youth Relationships

- A. A volunteer is expected to maintain constructive two-way communication, using concern, empathy, respect and fairness when dealing with youth and youth issues. A volunteer must not taunt, provoke, yell, scream, intimidate, curse, or use any improper language in front of youth.
- B. A volunteer must maintain an appropriate adult/youth relationship at all times, and know and respect the youth's rights.
- C. A volunteer must maintain professional and appropriate boundaries with youth. Personal information is not to be shared by the volunteer except in situations where it is necessary to carry out the volunteer assignment.
- D. A volunteer must not pursue a relationship with a youth beyond the scope and limitations of the volunteer assignment, including, but not limited to, offering to foster or house a youth.
- E. Sexual contact with youth under TYC jurisdiction is strictly forbidden. If an allegation of sexual misconduct is substantiated, disciplinary action will be taken up to and including termination. All allegations of sexual misconduct will be referred to law enforcement for investigation and possible prosecution.

Reporting Youth Mistreatment, Fraud, and Illegal Activities

- A. When a volunteer has cause to believe that a youth has been or may be adversely affected by abuse, neglect, or exploitation by an employee, volunteer or contractor in programs or facilities under TYC jurisdiction, he/she must report the matter within 24 hours to the TYC Office of Inspector General Incident Reporting Center (IRC).
- B. A volunteer is required to report suspected incidents of fraud, and other job-related illegal activities to the IRC. Fraud includes any intentional deception, misrepresentation or omission of important facts.

Cooperation with Investigation

- A. In criminal investigations conducted by the Office of Inspector General, a volunteer accused of committing a criminal offense has a constitutional right to remain silent, and invoking the right to remain silent will not be used against the volunteer, either criminally or for continued enrollment purposes.
- B. A volunteer who is not accused of committing a criminal offense has a duty, as a condition of enrollment, to cooperate fully in all investigations conducted by the agency, whether criminal or administrative in nature, and whether conducted by the Office of Inspector General, a supervisor, or by other authorized personnel. This duty of cooperation requires that the volunteer answer all assignment-related questions fully and truthfully. Failure to cooperate fully can result in discharge from the volunteer program.

Confidentiality

- A. Pursuant to GAP . 81 . 41, a volunteer is expected to maintain confidentiality of all agency records and information pertaining to youth, and all personnel-related records and information pertaining to employees and volunteers, except as ordered by the courts, specifically permitted by law, or administratively approved.
- B. The discussion of such information, even between employees and/or volunteers, should be in the line of service, impersonal and discreet.
- C. Breach of confidentiality will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Money and Gifts

- A. A volunteer may not exchange money or goods, regardless of value, with a youth unless authorized by the community relations coordinator.
- B. Religious items intended for youth must be approved by the correctional facility chaplain or the manager of chaplaincy services.

Sexual Conduct

- A. All inappropriate sexual conduct is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Inappropriate sexual conduct is conduct of a sexual nature that is detrimental to morale, interferes with job performance, or has a negative impact on a safe, professional and pleasant work environment.
- B. A volunteer who feels that he/she has been subject to inappropriate sexual conduct or learns about such conduct directed toward another individual must report it immediately in accordance with PRS . 35 . 09.

Searches

All Texas Youth Commission (TYC) volunteers, their personal possessions, their vehicles parked in certain locations, and their work

areas or agency property assigned to them are subject to search as necessary to maintain safe, rehabilitative environments in TYC facilities or to investigate misconduct. A volunteer who refuses consent to be searched or refuses consent to search his/her personal property, including his/her personal vehicle parked in a secure TYC parking lot, his/her work area will be subject to immediate removal from the facility and disciplinary action, up to and including termination of volunteer enrollment, and local law enforcement may be notified.

Reporting Criminal Charges

- A. Each volunteer has a duty to notify TYC if he/she is arrested or notified of criminal charges, or if there is a change in the status of criminal proceedings against the volunteer. **Within two (2) work days**, a volunteer must provide notice either by telephone or in writing to the community relations coordinator after any of the following:
 - 1. an arrest for any offense;
 - 2. an indictment;
 - 3. other official notification that the volunteer has been charged with a crime; or
 - 4. any change in the status of any criminal charge against the volunteer (e.g., dismissal, conviction, the initiation or termination of proceedings to revoke probation, etc.).
- B. The action to be taken by the community relations coordinator on the basis of a pending criminal charge will depend on the nature of the arrest, charge or indictment, its bearing on the volunteer's duties, and the interests of the agency.

Political Activity/Political Influence

- A. Political campaigning of any kind must take place outside of working hours and outside the TYC office or facility.
- B. No state funds or property shall be used to influence the outcome of any election or passage or defeat of any legislative measure.

Use of State Property, Facilities, or Equipment

- A. It is a violation of state statute to use state property, facilities or equipment for purposes other than official business.
- B. A volunteer may use state property, such as computers, office supplies and equipment, and office space, only when authorized for a specific assignment or community resource council activity. To obtain computer system access for a volunteer, the community relations coordinator must request it through the manager of volunteer services.
- C. A volunteer may not use the official TYC letterhead or pre-printed facility envelopes. However, community resource councils may use

blank envelopes and postage provided by TYC for official correspondence.

- D. A volunteer will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination for misuse of state property.
- E. If assigned or issued state property is lost, stolen, or damaged, a volunteer must immediately notify his/her supervisor and the community relations coordinator.

Use of Insignia or State Identification

Identification cards and other insignia of authority indicating a TYC volunteer's official identification must not be used in the following ways:

1. to exert influence;
2. to obtain either directly or indirectly, privileges, favors, or rewards for the volunteer or others; or
3. to improperly enhance the volunteer's own prestige.

Integrity of TYC Records

- A. A volunteer may not remove, alter, or destroy TYC records without prior authorization. Reports, logs, and other records required of the volunteer must be truthful and accurate.
- B. Any material misrepresentation of information in an application for volunteer enrollment submitted to the agency will be grounds for rejecting the candidacy of the person, or for discharge of the person from volunteer activity if discovered during enrollment.

Access to TYC Computer Systems

- A. A volunteer with access to TYC information resources should not, under any circumstances, share his/her user ID and/or password with anyone.
- B. A volunteer should not allow anyone other than agency computer support staff to use a computer logged in with his/her user ID and/or password under any circumstances.
- C. A volunteer is prohibited from allowing TYC youth access to any TYC computer system except those systems specifically provided for educational purposes.
- D. A volunteer is prohibited from using TYC computers to access, distribute, print, view, or receive pornographic material.

Prohibited Items in the Workplace

- A. A volunteer may not have a weapon in his/her possession while on duty, whether or not the volunteer is licensed to carry a concealed handgun. A volunteer may not possess a weapon in a state vehicle or TYC building, office, facility or facility ground, program (including contract programs), or on any land owned or leased by TYC.
- B. A volunteer may not possess illegal drug paraphernalia, as defined in § 481-485 of Texas Controlled Substances Act, on TYC premises.

- C. Accessing, distributing, printing, viewing, or receiving pornographic material on TYC premises is grounds for immediate dismissal.

Intoxicants or Drugs

Consuming, possessing, using, or being under the effects of alcohol, drugs or any mood-altering substance while volunteering on TYC premises and/or working with TYC youth is prohibited. Exceptions will be made for prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications that do not significantly interfere with the performance of volunteer duties. A volunteer who is taking a prescription drug or over-the-counter medication which may impair mental or physical capabilities must notify his/her supervisor prior to commencing a volunteer activity. It is the supervisor's responsibility to determine, in consultation with the community relations coordinator, whether the volunteer can safely and effectively perform assigned duties while taking the drug or medication. If the supervisor determines the volunteer cannot safely or effectively perform his/her assigned duties while taking the drug or medication, the volunteer must leave the TYC premises.

Betting or Gambling

State law prohibits betting or gambling while on state property.

Smoking

TYC prohibits smoking in all TYC offices and facilities. Smoking may be allowed outdoors on TYC premises in locations designated as smoking areas.

Personal Appearance and Dress

- A. A volunteer is expected to exercise good judgment in maintaining personal appearance and dress that is consistent with assigned duties and providing a positive model for youth.
- B. A volunteer may wear attire that is appropriate for the assignment, including jeans and athletic shoes. Other athletic clothing may be approved if the function of an assignment requires it.
- C. Attire that is suggestive or contains suggestive, offensive, or derogatory slogans is prohibited. Suggestive, offensive, or derogatory body art must be covered at all times.



Vehicles

- A. Volunteers are expected to obey all traffic laws while conducting TYC

business.

- B. A volunteer whose job description includes transportation of youth must have a valid driver's license issued from the state in which they reside and an acceptable driving record. Authorized drivers may be subject to a periodic driving records check. A volunteer's driving record is evaluated according to Texas Education Agency and Department of Public Safety standards. An authorized driver whose driving record has ten (10) or more penalty points or exceeds the number of moving violations is ineligible to transport youth. An authorized driver must supply a current copy of his/her insurance declarations page demonstrating minimal coverage as required by Texas law.
- C. The state is liable only to the extent stipulated by law when an authorized driver is involved in a motor vehicle accident while conducting TYC business.
- D. **Within two workdays**, a volunteer whose job description includes transportation of youth must provide notice either by telephone or in writing to the community relations coordinator of any change in his/her driving record or an accident that occurs while on duty.

Work Behavior

- A. A volunteer is expected to maintain cooperative, helpful attitudes toward fellow volunteers, supervisors, employees, youth, and the general public.
- B. Volunteer must not use profane, derogatory, or offensive language regarding race or gender.
- C. While on duty, volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which neither disrupts nor causes others to disrupt the usual routine of business.
- D. A volunteer does not have unrestricted access to TYC facilities. A volunteer should report to the assigned location without delay, and depart after the assignment/shift has ended.

Personal Items

The agency has the authority to limit and regulate the entry of personal property items in TYC facilities and on state property; however, the volunteer is expected to take full responsibility for any personal item brought to work.

Updating Personal Data

Volunteers are expected to maintain a current telephone number, address, name and emergency contact on file with the community relations coordinator.

Safety

- A. Volunteers are expected to perform their assignments safely and to remain alert.
- B. Each volunteer is responsible for initiating preventive safety measures to control hazardous conditions and reporting any hazardous condition to the community relations coordinator.

Supervision of Youth

- A. In high restriction facilities, a volunteer must remain under direct visual supervision by TYC staff while interacting with youth.
- B. A volunteer may not participate in a physical restraint of youth. If a disruption arises among youth, a volunteer should immediately move to a safe location and notify staff.

Participation in Physical Activity

Volunteers on duty shall not participate with youth in recreation, physical education, large muscle exercise or physical training unless such participation is specifically a part of the volunteer's job description.

Rights of the TYC Volunteer

- To be assigned a job that is challenging and worthwhile, with freedom to use existing skills or develop new ones.
- To be trusted with confidential information that will help him to carry out an assignment.
- To be kept informed about developments in the agency.
- To be issued a TYC Volunteer Training Manual and an official Identification Card.
- To be provided orientation, ongoing training and supervision for the job accepted.
- To expect that his/her time will not be wasted by lack of planning, coordination, and cooperation with the agency.
- To know whether his/her work is effective and how it can be improved; to have a chance to increase understanding of self, others or the community.
- To declare allowable non-reimbursed out-of-pocket costs for Federal Income Tax purposes.
- To expect valid recognition from his/her supervisor so he/she can move to another job, paid or unpaid.
- To be given appropriate recognition.
- To ask for another assignment within the agency.

General Volunteer Guidelines

No matter what role you serve as a volunteer, there are several general guidelines to keep in mind. As a “rule of thumb”, warmth and respect is the keystone in working with a juvenile offender. The ultimate goal of the volunteer is to build a trusting, nurturing relationship with a young man or woman. The youth, however, will never be open to effective support until he respects and trusts the volunteer as a person. Many of these youth have never had to face a situation they could not manipulate. You must be different, you must be honest. Never make a promise that you cannot keep. When the youth realizes that the relationship is “for real”, the volunteer will begin to make some progress. Within this general frame work, here are some guidelines:

Do's

- Do** clearly understand your role before beginning your assignment.
- Do** get to know the youth's opinions, ideas, interests, problems and troubles.
- Do** respect confidentiality.
- Do** keep in contact with the youth on a consistent basis. Let him/her know when you are unable to visit as scheduled.
- Do** give unconditional attention and support.
- Do** be prepared to listen and to understand what the youth says. Youth do not respond favorably to “preaching” or lecturing.
- Do** report all violations. You will lose all respect by letting the youth get away with wrong-doing.
- Do** report all concerns regarding a youth's safety and security of a TYC facility. Report to the community relations coordinator any suspicions that a youth may harm himself or another person, attempt to escape a secure facility, cause or have knowledge of a facility disruption or riot, be involved in gang-related activity, or destroy state property.
- Do** leave personal belongings, money, keys, purse, etc. in a locker at the gatehouse or leave them in your vehicle.
- Do** be a good role-model with your dress, language and behavior. Dress should always be comfortable and conservative. Learn the dress code at your program.
- Do** consult with the community relations coordinator whenever in doubt, concerned or curious. Your feedback is always welcomed and appreciated.
- Do** keep abreast of current issues and events.
- Do** carry your volunteer ID badge at all times.

Don'ts

- Don't** expand your role until you consult with the supervising staff person.
- Don't** give the youth money, gifts or any other item (even candy) without the permission of the supervising staff.

Don't expect overnight miracles. Don't vent your frustrations and anger on the youth.

Don't assume that physical affection is o.k. with the youth. Generally, handshakes and pats on the back are acceptable but only after a connection is made between you and the youth.

Don't expect thanks and gratitude from the youth. Expressing these feelings is often difficult.

Don't rush the relationship with youth. Trusting can be very difficult.

Don't confront correctional officers regarding differences in opinion or approach. Contact the community relations coordinator with your concerns right away.

Don't agree to mail or deliver letters for youth, and do not agree to make phone calls on behalf of youth.

Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteers

The role of the community relations coordinator, supervising staff and volunteers are as follows:

When should the community relations coordinator be contacted?

- When supervising staff/volunteer relationship is not satisfactory.
- The need to change a youth's program.
- When supervising staff is having difficulty in contacting volunteer.
- Supervising staff should keep community relations coordinator informed during the period the volunteer is under supervision.

Responsibilities of Supervising Staff

- Complete request for volunteer hours or funds after assessing the youth's needs.
- Explain in clear detail to all concerned the role the volunteer will be taking.
- Describe the youth to the volunteer: reason for commitment to TYC, family and living situation, attitude, etc.
- Introduce volunteer to the youth.
- Advise volunteer and youth that discussions between youth and volunteer are confidential with the exception of a youth informing a volunteer of a law he/she violated or intends to violate, or intention to harm self, others or property.
- Maintain consistent contact with the volunteer as determined by the youth's individualized program.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

- Mandatory orientation and regular training.

- Be able to follow through with commitment or particular job description. Always notify the supervising staff if unable to keep commitment or appointment with student.
- Volunteer/youth relationship is an important one. Both are obligated to work towards a successful relationship. However, if either party “wants out” of this relationship there is an obligation to advise each other and supervising staff.
- Maintain accurate time sheet and report hours by signing in at the gatehouse or reception area, by documenting your assignment, time in/out and your volunteer ID number.
- Attend volunteer meetings and training sessions. These meetings are a vital part of the training process for volunteers.
- Function under same set of agency policies as paid staff.

Productive Volunteer/Staff Partnerships

Productive volunteer/staff partnerships are characterized by:

- Two-way communication to inform both staff and volunteers about “who’s doing what, when, and how”.
- Respecting each other’s time and following schedule of activities.
- Team building that involves volunteers in all levels of the organization’s planning and decision making to increase the ownership of its goals by everyone.
- Addressing one another by last names, particularly in the presence of youth.
- Observing the authority vested in TYC staff and never challenging that authority, particularly in the presence of youth.
- A clear understanding by volunteers of all institutional roles including their own.
- Open and honest evaluation of volunteer activities by both staff and volunteers.
- Public and private recognition of the accomplishments of volunteers and their staff partners.

Volunteer Benefits

The TYC recognizes volunteers and provides certain benefits as recognition of their contributions. Benefits include: meaningful work experience; adequate training; information regarding tax benefits, gas mileage, out-of-pocket expenses and tax deductible donations; free meals; awards and letters of appreciation and recognition; and references when requested.

Time-Keeping

All volunteer service hours are carefully documented and logged into individual volunteer files. Each institutional and regional volunteer services office completes a monthly report of all service hours, cash and in-kind donations. Accurate reporting of all donations is vital to the program. Therefore, volunteers are asked to assist by signing in and out each time they perform a volunteer task. At many institutions, you are able to sign in/out using a computer kiosk call *Volunteer Tracker*. If you are mistakenly given a visitor's log, ask the Juvenile Correctional Officer (JCO) for the Volunteer Time Record. By presenting your Volunteer ID Badge upon arrival, the staff will clearly identify you and give you the correct time record.

Evaluation of Community Relations Program

It is our goal to provide a quality opportunity for service to others, while positively impacting the treatment program of the youth we serve. Please help us make the TYC community relations program the best it can be by providing your comments on the annual evaluations and at any other time by contacting the Volunteer Services Office. Honest and complete feedback and suggestions are vital to maintain an effective and comprehensive community relations program.