

## Volunteers

There is a rich history of Volunteers contributing to the care of young people linked to FAN's services which stems back to the early 1980s. At that time, Community Placement Caregivers were recruited from the community to provide safe, stable and secure home-based accommodation for young people; as well as Support Team Volunteers offering mentoring to young people living in independent shared housing.

Today volunteers continue to play an integral part at FAN in value adding to the programs offered by supporting the needs of young people and contributing in one of the following ways:

### Mentors/Role Models:

Young people often express an interest in either learning new skills or sharing their experiences; volunteers are linked with clients who share common hobbies, interests and/or goals. This can be something as simple as going for a walk or hanging out at the movies and having a coffee together. Volunteers either studying or working can often be great sounding boards for pregnant / parenting clients and other young people who may share similar dreams and goals. Clients have often reported that it is encouraging to have a consistent person in their life who is genuinely concerned about them, and to have a positive role model in their life to offer friendship, companionship and guidance.

### Volunteer Support Team:

The Support Team comprises of several volunteers who are designated to a specific transitional house and meeting with clients there on a weekly basis. The team offer to the young people an acceptance by the local community, modelling in relations to neighbourliness and good citizenship, an ever growing network of contacts and the time to sit and listen and to share in the little things in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere. This offers young people the chance to take pride in their home, budgeting skills, home management and help to resolve conflict and disputes that may arise.

### Lead Tenants:

As is the case within the wider community, when a group of young people live together in a shared house experience, there is a level of role modelling required. The lead tenant replicates this experience by residing with several clients with the aim of assisting young people to develop share house living skills, in order to maximise their capacity towards independent living.

### Child Play Supervisors:

In most cases clients are simply unable to afford childcare and more often than not have limited support bases of family and friends available to look after their children. The volunteers support the role of the Children's Worker by focussing on the needs of the children, thereby making it easier for their parents to either attend workshops attached to the Life Skills Program or to attend appointments with Support Workers, minimising also the child's exposure to parent's stress or disclosures.

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