

Title: **Befriender**

Purpose: The most important sign that ASTT has successfully helped a client is when that client begins to regain a sense of connectedness with the world around her/him. Befrienders have a special opportunity to help bring this about by being present to that client, by listening and talking to her/him.

Description of Duties: A Befriender enters into a long-term relationship (usually a minimum of 6 months) with a client. Activities depend upon the needs of the client, the interests of the two people, and the time available. *Presence* is the keystone of the role. The client and volunteer spend time together, listening and talking. Some suggested activities are: accompanying the client to social service agencies, food shelves, free stores, health care appointments, a housing office, a job interview, etc. The client and volunteer enjoy social activities together – walking, museums, concerts, plays, dinner at the volunteer’s home, etc. The emphasis is on free or low cost activities.

Families are welcome to volunteer as a unit.

Qualifications: Volunteers must be able to maintain confidentiality; be able to cope with emotional stress if the client should relate incidents from her/his past; be very respectful of clients; be willing to have fun and learn from a person of considerable life experience.

Time Requirements: Varies depending on mutual availability of the client and volunteer. In general, volunteers should spend several hours with clients every two weeks – one month.

Orientation/ Training: Volunteers receive a general orientation to ASTT at the time of interview; instruction by ASTT’s clinical director before volunteer service; and have on-going support meetings/ conversations with the supervising therapist and/or case manager every month.

Benefits: Helping to reconnect a survivor of torture to the world around her/him, practicing language skills (if applicable), learning about other cultures and befriending a fascinating and experienced person.

Supervision/ Evaluation Procedures: Volunteer Befrienders are supervised jointly by the Volunteer Coordinator (who is responsible for administrative supervision) and the therapists/case managers with whom they work (who are responsible for all other supervision).

Volunteers receive evaluative feedback by therapists and/or case managers during ongoing support meetings/conversations.

Reporting Procedures: Reporting regular volunteer hours and activities is the responsibility of the volunteer. The Volunteer Coordinator contacts Befrienders once a month to remind them to report hours of volunteering.