



Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition

FOR EVERY CHILD... A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Volunteer Opportunities with Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition

1. **Foster Friends – ongoing volunteer opportunity**

Our Foster Friends are the Coalition's premier group of volunteers who enrich the lives of children in foster care by hosting fun, safe events and activities for them. Foster Friends are also invited to mentor high school seniors in foster care who are interested in attending college. This volunteer group also receives exclusive opportunities to support foster children waiting to be adopted.

All Foster Friends must be 21 years or older and submit to an annual criminal background screening through the Family Care Safety Registry. There is a fee to join the group, which is used to fund Foster Friends events.

2. **Little Wishes Elves – ongoing December volunteer opportunity**

In the fall, the Coalition receives thousands of holiday wish requests from foster and adoptive children. In December, our Little Wishes Elves help process these granted wishes. Volunteers must have significant Internet shopping experience and be available to volunteer on weekdays. A criminal background screening through the Family Care Safety Registry is required.

3. **Little Wishes Shopping Day volunteer – one-time volunteer opportunity on a Saturday in Dec.**

On the first Saturday in December, shoppers are invited to grant a holiday Little Wish for a foster/adoptive child at a centrally-located store or mall. Little Wishes Shopping Day volunteers help shoppers choose which Little Wish to grant, or help in our processing area with the after-purchase paperwork and shipping.

4. **Office Support – one-time or ongoing volunteer opportunity on an as-needed basis**

Occasionally, the Coalition needs volunteers to help with a special data entry or clerical project. Most of these projects take 3-8 hours to complete. Office Support volunteers should be available to help in the Coalition's downtown office on weekdays.

5. **Financial Education Presenters – ongoing volunteer opportunity 2-4 times per year on Sat. mornings**

Our Financial Education Presenters make a 60 minute age-appropriate financial education presentation to foster/adoptive children at our Saturday Training Extravaganza events. The financial education curriculum and lesson is provided by the Coalition. No financial background or training is required – just an interest in interacting with and helping foster children.

6. **Lifebook volunteer – ongoing volunteer opportunity 1-2 times per year on a Saturday**

Volunteer photographers are professional or amateur photographers who donate their time and equipment to take pictures of foster/adoptive children during the morning of a Saturday Training Extravaganza. *Scrapbook volunteers* help foster/adoptive children create Lifebooks to display their photos and childhood memories in the afternoon of these Saturday Training Extravaganza events.

7. **School Supplies Sorter – one-time volunteer opportunity on a Saturday morning in August**

These volunteers sort donated school supplies into individual plastic bags and stuff them into backpacks, to be distributed to foster/adoptive families. Adults, high schoolers, and parents and their children can all participate.

8. Training Extravaganza volunteer – one-time volunteer opportunity

These individuals or groups coordinate an activity for foster/adoptive children to take place at one of the Coalition's Saturday Training Extravaganza events, such as jewelry making or an Easter egg hunt. These volunteers must be 21 years or older.

9. Birthday Buddy – one-time or ongoing volunteer opportunity

Birthday Buddies make a foster child's birthday wishes come true by donating birthday presents to the child. Donating children often request that their guests bring a present for a foster child in lieu of a birthday gift for him/her. Adults, school groups, scout troops, and company groups are also welcome to adopt Birthday Buddy through this program as well. This is a one-time volunteer opportunity for most, but some choose to adopt a Birthday Buddy on a monthly basis.

10. Girl Power Trivia event organizer – one-time volunteer opportunity

These volunteers host a trivia event for elementary and/or middle school aged children and collect donations for the Coalition at the event. All trivia materials are provided by the Coalition.

11. KidStore volunteer – one-time or ongoing volunteer opportunity

KidStore volunteers sift through clothing donations to ensure that only good-quality fashionable children's clothing is stocked at our KidStore. KidStore volunteers also might assist foster/adoptive families select clothing for the children in their care, check out clothing to be purchased, and maintain the appearance of the store. KidStore volunteers must 14 years or older (volunteers between 14-16 years must be accompanied by an adult).

12. KidStore cashier – ongoing volunteer opportunity

KidStore cashiers are long-term KidStore volunteers who have taken the primary responsibility for managing the KidStore one morning each month. The cashier opens and closes the KidStore, maintains the appearance of the store, handles cash, verifies foster parent status of shoppers, fills out sales receipts, fills out the Daily Financial Report, accepts clothing donations, and helps train volunteers as needed.

13. KidStore season switchover volunteers – one-time volunteer opportunity on a Saturday afternoon

Season switchover volunteers pull off-season clothing off the clothing racks, bag it up, and hang season-appropriate clothing onto the racks at our KidStore. Season switchovers are done twice each year at the KidStore on a Saturday afternoon, generally in April and October.

14. Clothing Drive Organizer – one-time volunteer opportunity

These Organizers plan a children's clothing drive in their school, church, company, or neighborhood to donate to the KidStore. Clothing drives can be done year-round, as the KidStore is always in need of fashionable, good-quality, season-appropriate clothing.

15. School Supplies Drive Organizer – one-time volunteer opportunity

These Organizers plan a school supplies and backpack drive to benefit foster/adoptive children. The Coalition gives out the collected school supplies and backpacks to the children at its August Training Extravaganza. School supplies and backpacks are also provided to foster/adoptive parents at the KidStore.

16. Old Bags™ volunteer – ongoing volunteer opportunity

Old Bags is the Coalition's annual fundraiser, where attendees enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres while bidding on hundreds of new and like-new designer handbags, including Gucci, Chanel, Coach, and more. Volunteers can join the Old Bags™ committee to help plan the event, or volunteers can help at the event, which is held on the fourth Tuesday in April.

Volunteer Opportunities through FosterServe

1. **Mentor – ongoing volunteer opportunity**

Mentors meet one-on-one with a foster child once every 1-2 weeks, being a positive role model and friend to the mentee. Mentors will usually be matched with a teenager in foster care, and plan fun activities and outings with their mentee. Volunteer mentors must be 21 years or older, go through a background screening process, and be willing to make a 12 month minimum volunteer commitment.

2. **Tutor – ongoing volunteer opportunity**

Tutors are matched one-on-one with a foster/adoptive child who is a struggling reader. The tutor meets with the learner at a public library for one hour twice each week to help the learner improve his/her reading skills. Volunteer tutors must be 16 years or older, go through a background screening, and be willing to make a 12 month minimum volunteer commitment.

Tutors can also provide homework or classroom help to youth in foster care living at residential facilities. These tutors must be 21 years or older, and go through a background screening.

3. **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) – ongoing volunteer opportunity**

Volunteer advocates help a foster child move through the system – assessing what's best for the foster child's future and making recommendations to the judge at court hearings. The advocate meets with the foster child on a regular basis, and gathers information and reports from other individuals involved in the foster child's case. Volunteer advocates must complete 33 hours of training and typically spend 10-15 hours each month on their assigned case. Volunteer advocates must be 21 years or older, go through a background screening, and be willing to make an 18 month minimum volunteer commitment.

4. **Child Care – one-time or ongoing volunteer opportunity**

Volunteers provide child care for children staying at an emergency shelter. An experienced staff member is always present while volunteers rock babies, play with the children, and help get the kids ready for naps and bedtime. This is a flexible volunteer opportunity with no minimum or maximum volunteer commitment. Volunteers must be 14 years or older and go through a background screening.

5. **Prepare Meals for a Foster Family – one-time or ongoing volunteer opportunity**

Volunteers prepare and drop off a meal for a foster family to enjoy. The meal can be a main dish or a five course feast. Volunteers can drop off a meal on one occasion or as frequently as they'd like.

6. **Birthday Party Sponsor – one-time volunteer opportunity**

Volunteers sponsor and coordinate a foster child's birthday party, by communicating with the foster family to help choose the theme for the party, plan party activities, and provide treats, a cake, and a present for the child.

For further information on any of the above opportunities, please contact Shelley Thomas-Benke, Director of FosterServe Volunteers, at 314.367.8373 x29 or shelleythomasbenke@foster-adopt.org.