

# FACT SHEET / Finnish Red Cross

## Friend activities

<https://www.redcross.fi/>

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Hellin Särkijärvi is telling Milla Sulkakoski about her career as a skier. (Mikko Lehtimäki)

### Let's see one another.

Loneliness can touch anyone regardless of age, gender, ethnic background or wealth. Loneliness is also related to social exclusion. Social interaction affects individual's health and wellbeing. One of the main objectives of the Finnish Red Cross during 2018-2020 is to strengthen sense of community and promote wellbeing and safety in our society. To be able to reach this objective we need more friend volunteers and diverse ways to volunteer within the friend activities.

### The objectives of the friend activities

- To mitigate loneliness and reduce social exclusion
- To strengthen individual's wellbeing in the community
- To offer possibilities of communication and social support especially to those who are at risk of being isolated and who need a connection with others
- To bring hope and joy to lonely elderly, youth, immigrants, family carers, disabled, people living in institutions, prisoners and people recovering from mental disorders in different parts of Finland
- To encourage people to notice one another
- Volunteers are part of the aid preparedness of the Finnish Red Cross

### Forms of activities

The friend activities are based on local needs. It can be one to one, in groups, long-term or short-term. The activities vary from going for a coffee to talking a walk or visiting a theatre. It might be accompanying someone to the doctor etc. Friend volunteers can also start groups such as a group for young people or recreation activities for the elderly. Through the friend activities, different generations can meet each other. To become a friend volunteer, the Finnish Red Cross organizes trainings in different parts of Finland.

### Around 25 000

**PERSONS RECEIVED SUPPORT THROUGH THE FINNISH RED CROSS FRIEND ACTIVITIES IN 2018.**

### Around 8 200

**PERSONS ACTED AS A FINNISH RED CROSS FRIEND VOLUNTEER IN 2018.**

### THE RED CROSS FRIEND VOLUNTEERS DURING 2009-2018

Year	Number of friend volunteers
2009	7580
2010	7740
2011	6860
2012	7510
2013	8080
2014	8220
2015	8930
2016	8990
2017	8200
2018	8140