

FRIEND ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



Handbook for Friend Activities for young people

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Handbook for Friend Activities for young people

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I. Young people and loneliness

THE significance of friends is huge for young people, because they allow young people to reflect on their personal growth and independence process, but also develop their self-esteem. Friendships help young people to practice social skills, which will be needed later on in life in relationships and at work, for example.

LONELINESS should not be confused with spending time alone, something that every one of us needs once in a while. Loneliness means the feeling that you have nobody to share your personal or even your everyday matters with. Loneliness is related to a sense of being an outsider and not fitting in.

ROUGHLY ten percent of young people experience emotional loneliness year after year, situation after situation. Emotionally lonely people have no close friends with whom to share things that are important to them. According to the School Health Promotion study in 2013, 8 percent of 8th and 9th graders in comprehensive school feel emotionally lonely. Of the 1st and 2nd year students in upper secondary school and vocational school, 7 percent do not have a close friend. Boys suffered from emotional loneliness more often than girls in all grades.

THERE are many reasons for loneliness among young people. Loneliness may sometimes be related to shyness, social anxiety or a change in the situation in life, for example. Diminishing social networks when moving to a new place to live is a typical situation where a young person can experience loneliness. Physical impairments or, e.g., mental health problems can isolate young people from their peers. In the world of young people, loneliness is also strongly associated with bullying, because shutting someone out of the group is a common form of bullying.



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THE experience of loneliness has severe consequences, because loneliness is linked to anxiety, depression and even self-harming, among other things.

HOWEVER, helping lonely young people is not impossible. Even one good friendship can carry the young person through life. Although friendships cannot be forced, it is possible to provide various opportunities for friendships to develop. Friend Activities are based on this idea.

2. Friend Activities for young people

Friend Activities for young people refer to activities where both the friend client and the volunteer friend are young people or young adults under the age of 29.

Friend Activities for young people have been given different names in different localities. For instance, in Oulu the activities are known as "Lähekkönää messii?", in Joensuu as "Tulisitsie miun kaa?" and in Parainen as "Kompisgruppen". In Kuopio, the activities go by the name "Kaveriksi!" and in Rovaniemi by "Nuorten Kaveritoiminta". In Helsinki, the activities are known as Nunu Friend Activities (Nuori nuorelle).

BRANCHES and districts can decide the name of the activities themselves. Some pilot localities have noticed that the word "kaveri" works better in marketing than the word "ystävä".

Volunteers and friend clients of Friend Activities

VOLUNTEER friends involved in Friend Activities are expected to complete a basic and/or introductory course on friend activities. The branch/district may also organize a friend activities course explicitly for young people.

MOST localities have set a minimum age limit of 18 years for volunteers, because friend activities can be a fairly demanding form of voluntary activity. In addition, the voluntary nature of friend activities requires maturity so that the person is capable of understanding the importance of, for instance, the obligation of secrecy and commitment. Volunteers under the age of 18 may still join the activities, depending



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on the case. Young people can also join the activities as volunteers in friend group activities.

FRIEND clients can be no younger than 13 years old. It has been noted that in one-on-one friend activities, the age difference between the pair should not be too big. Those starting Friend Activities for young people can set their own age limits for participants according to the needs of their locality.

THE reasons for the loneliness of the friend clients who took part in the pilots of the Finnish Red Cross Friend Activities varied greatly. Some underlying factors were mentioned in all localities, such as difficulties in social interaction, bullying at school, depression and moving to new places to live. The activities have also been joined by young people with an immigrant background who may not suffer from loneliness, but whose motive is to learn Finnish.

2.1 Equality, secrecy and examining the criminal background of volunteers

Equality

IN addition to the seven principles of the Red Cross, it is crucial to also observe equality in friend activities for young people. Equality is achieved when nobody is discriminated against due to their ethnic or national origin, nationality, skin colour, language, religion, belief, opinion, state of health, disability, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics.

THOSE organizing friend activities for young people may inadvertently and accidentally plan and organize activities so that they discriminate against some people. The achievement of equality should be observed especially when recruiting volunteers and friend clients and when planning the activities. Examples of equality pitfalls:

- When marketing the activities, you can easily resort to means and information channels that are familiar to you and fail to reach people outside your own social community. When planning recruitment, you should think creatively and systematically: Where will I reach immigrants? Students / Working people / Unemployed? Girls/boys?
- If you advertise the activities only in Finnish, non-Finnish speakers who are lonely or hope to become volunteers will automatically be left out.

Tips for multicultural volunteer recruitment can be found in RedNet at: <http://rednet.punainenristi.fi/node/24051>

- Persons in charge may inadvertently plan the programme of friend group activities for young people so that it limits the participation of individuals who have physical or sensory disabilities, for example. If the friend group sessions always involve, e.g., physical activities or watching a movie, a physically or visually impaired friend or friend client may feel that the activities are not for them and decide to drop out. You should also try to take accessibility into account when choosing facilities.

ACHIEVING equality requires the persons in charge of Friend Activities to adopt a conscious way of thinking about equality. All activities can be adapted to all kinds of people, and an immigrant can easily take on the role of either an active volunteer or a person in need of help.

Secrecy

AS with other friend activities, the friends in Friend Activities for young people are bound to secrecy. Friends may not disclose the information of the friend client to outsiders without the friend client's permission.

HOWEVER, if a problem occurs, the volunteer has the right and obligation to discuss the issue with the intermediary or, as a last resort, the social services planner or other person in charge of friend activities at the district office. A friend does not need to nor should they have to bear the burden of any concerns that friend activities may cause.

ANY challenging situations can also be discussed and resolved together in confidence in the friend clubs of volunteer friends, without revealing the friend client's identity.

Examining the criminal background

AN Act (148/2014) has been enacted on examining the criminal background of volunteers working with children. Its aim is to safeguard the personal integrity of children in volunteer activities and to protect the growth, development and wellbeing of children.

IN friend activities for young people organized by the FRC, the criminal background will always be examined in the case of:

- volunteers over the age of 18 who work as one-on-one friends of underage adolescents
- volunteers over the age of 18 who regularly work alone as group instructors in friend groups for underage adolescents.

THE organizer of the activities will order a criminal records extract, decide whether the volunteer may work in the position and send the extract to the Headquarters where an entry will be made in the volunteer's personal data. If the extract contains certain crimes, the person cannot volunteer for the Finnish Red Cross in any positions involving work with children.

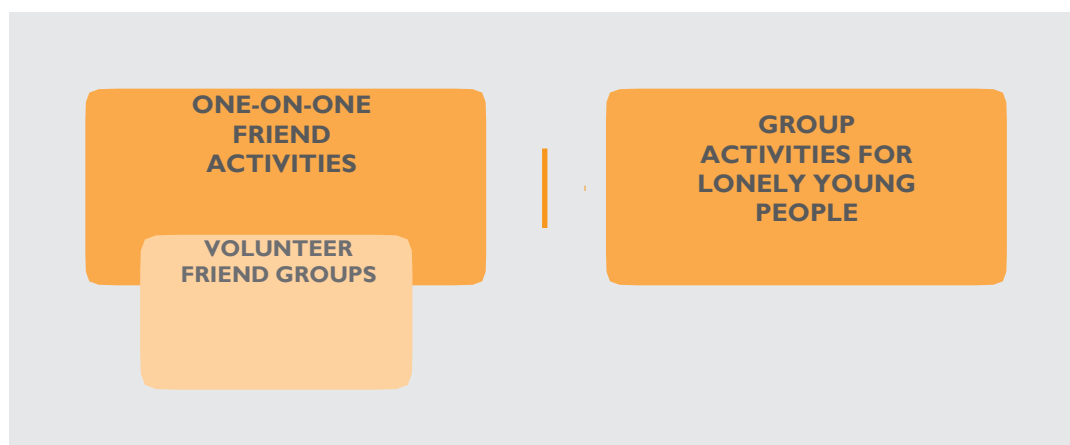
The instructions and forms for branches and districts can be found in the Branch Office of RedNet at:

► rednet.punainenristi.fi/osastotoimisto

2.2 Forms of activities

TWO types of Friend Activities for young people have been developed: one-on-one and group activities. Each form of activity has its place, and those hoping

to start activities should consider the local needs when choosing the form of activity.



GROUP activities consist of friend groups for providing recreation and peer support to volunteers and open, low-threshold group activities for young people who need a friend. The groups can meet in the facilities of the branch or in another, preferably free, venue.

MANY pilot localities have found it effective to provide both one-on-one and group activities. The benefits of combining both forms of activities include:

- A trained volunteer friend will stick to the activities through group activities, even when there is no one-on-one friend client immediately available for them.
- Volunteer friends get to know one another, receive peer support from each other and form a tight-knit group, which is beneficial to the continuation of the activities and support.
- Shy friend clients who need support in social situations may have the courage to take part in group meetings with their friend, gaining experience and feelings of success in group settings. The friend serves as a kind of guide, ushering the friend to try out group activities.
- Friend clients taking part in both one-on-one and group activities are not left stranded if their friend decides to leave the volunteer position.

2.2.1 One-on-one friend activities

IN one-on-one friend activities for young people, two young people, a volunteer and a person who needs a friend, meet regularly, say, once or twice a month. The pair of friends agree how often they will meet and what they will do when they get together. The two are matched by an intermediary working with young people or other friend activities or another person in charge of the activities.

Rules of one-on-one friend activities

- The friend client and volunteer are offered the chance to meet for the first time so that an intermediary or another person in charge is present.
- At first, the pair meets no more than every other week and the duration of the meeting is agreed in advance, e.g., 1–2 hours.
- The pair meets at least three times before they decide whether they click.
- During the first meeting and if either the volunteer or the friend client so wishes, the pair can agree on a specific period during which the volunteer agrees to regularly meet the friend client (e.g., one school year). Meetings can continue if both parties agree to it.
- We recommend that you only exchange e-mail addresses at first. The pair can exchange, e.g., phone numbers and Facebook details when they both want to do so.
- Try to arrange the first few meetings in public places, not in either of your homes.
- What you do during the meetings is always decided together. The friend cannot provide a professional service or care, such as clean or administer medication to the friend client.
- Minor expenses from doing things that have been agreed together, such as going to a café, are usually paid separately. If the friend client wants the friend to take part in something that will incur expenses, such as a concert, the friend client must also cover the friend's expenses.
- The volunteer must not transport the client in their own car, but any travel should be done using either public transportation or a regular/disabled taxi.

2.1.1 Group friend activities

THERE are two types of group activities under Friend Activities for young people: friend clubs for volunteer friends and group activities for lonely young clients.

Open, low-threshold activities for young people who need company and support in social situations

GROUP friend activities offer lonely young people a chance to get to know other young people and do things together as a group.

Group Friend Activities have been specifically designed to have a low threshold, meaning that they are easy to join. The primary goal of the group activities is to help lonely young people get to know other young people in safe, organized settings. Group meetings can be held, e.g., once a month or more often.

Friend groups for volunteers: peer support and recreation

THERE is also a need for friend clubs for volunteers, especially ones who involved in one-on-one friend activities. Friend clubs provide the volunteers of Friend Activities a chance to get to know one another while doing something fun together. They can also discuss any problems in friend activities and plan and develop the activities together with the volunteers in charge of Friend Activities, i.e., the Friend Activities team.

Example

The Joensuu branch regularly organizes friend clubs for its volunteer friends. When they get together, the members plan activities together and enjoy peer support and recreation. Friend club members have gone canoeing and hiking together, among other activities.

Example

Group activities for lonely young people have been organized, e.g., in the district of Turunmaa, the Parainen branch, under the name "Kompisgruppen". Individual young people in Parainen who went from small village schools to secondary school in the city centre had experienced difficulties making friends and becoming part of a group. Group activities have been organized in Parainen every week, and the participants have, e.g., cooked food, gone bowling and sometimes just chatted. The young people were reached through school staff.

2.1 Partners

PARTNERS are an important part of Friend Activities for young people. Partnerships should be established based on the need and the circumstances.

Educational institutions

SECONDARY schools, upper secondary schools, vocational schools and higher education institutions are the most important partners where you can reach both people who need a friend and potential volunteers. You should especially focus on vocational colleges that provide preparatory and rehabilitative education (such as Luovi Vocational College).

YOU can spread information through staff and students and recruit them, but you can also plan more extensive institutional collaboration with the educational institution so that students who take part in the activities as volunteers would obtain, e.g., credits from the activities.

Municipal youth and social services

ESTABLISHING good cooperation relationships with municipal youth and social services has proven fruitful in the pilots of the Friend Activities for young people, especially in terms of communication and guiding people to the activities.

ACTIVITIES can also be organized in cooperation with the public sector.

Example

Friend group activities for young people have been organized in the Youth Shelter of Espoo for immigrant boys in cooperation with the City of Espoo Social Services.

Other organizations, societies and parishes

OTHER organizations, societies and parishes doing youth work in the locality should at least be notified of the activities, so that they can refer young people suffering from loneliness and potential volunteers to the activities, if needed. For instance, various disability organizations, Girls' and Boys' Houses, the Scouts and sports clubs are worth considering.

YOU can also work in cooperation with others doing youth work when organizing activities. For instance, the Red Cross and a partner organization can take turns organizing and leading group meetings.

IT is a good idea to look for partnerships also within the Finnish Red Cross. You can find motivated friend clients and volunteers through the youth activities and the Youth Shelters, for example. The support activities for informal carers, on the other hand, are a good place to reach lonely young people who have an informal carer due to an illness or disability.

Example

The district of Helsinki and Uusimaa and Nyyti ry have shared the responsibility for organizing Hang-out Evenings for students and others the same age in Helsinki. Nyyti ry and the district take turns organizing the Hang-out Evenings in their facilities. Planning and marketing is also done together.

2.2 Funding the activities

RUNNING Friend Activities for young people does not incur major expenses. Necessary costs come mainly from the call charges of the Friend Activities teams' voluntary friend service staff, materials (copying brochures) and possible facility rents and refreshments for group activities and the friend courses with an emphasis on Friend Activities.

YOUNG people and students usually have a small income, so if the financial situation allows it, the activities can also provide funding for the meetings between pairs of friends, such as café and movie ticket costs.

Friend Activities for young people are primarily funded through the budget of the home branch. An annual action plan and budget are prepared for the activities in cooperation with the contact person for friend or youth activities in the branch. The plan is presented to the board of the branch for approval, and a report is prepared at the end of the year on the activities and their costs.

AFTER this, you can apply for a small "Hyväpäivä" grant through the district. It is granted by the central office for the purpose of launching and diversifying Friend Activities.

YOU can also recruit sponsors for Friend Activities from local businesses, partners or, e.g., the municipality or sports clubs. When looking for small-scale corporate aid, keep in mind that the current main partners of FRC are S Group and LähiTapiola.

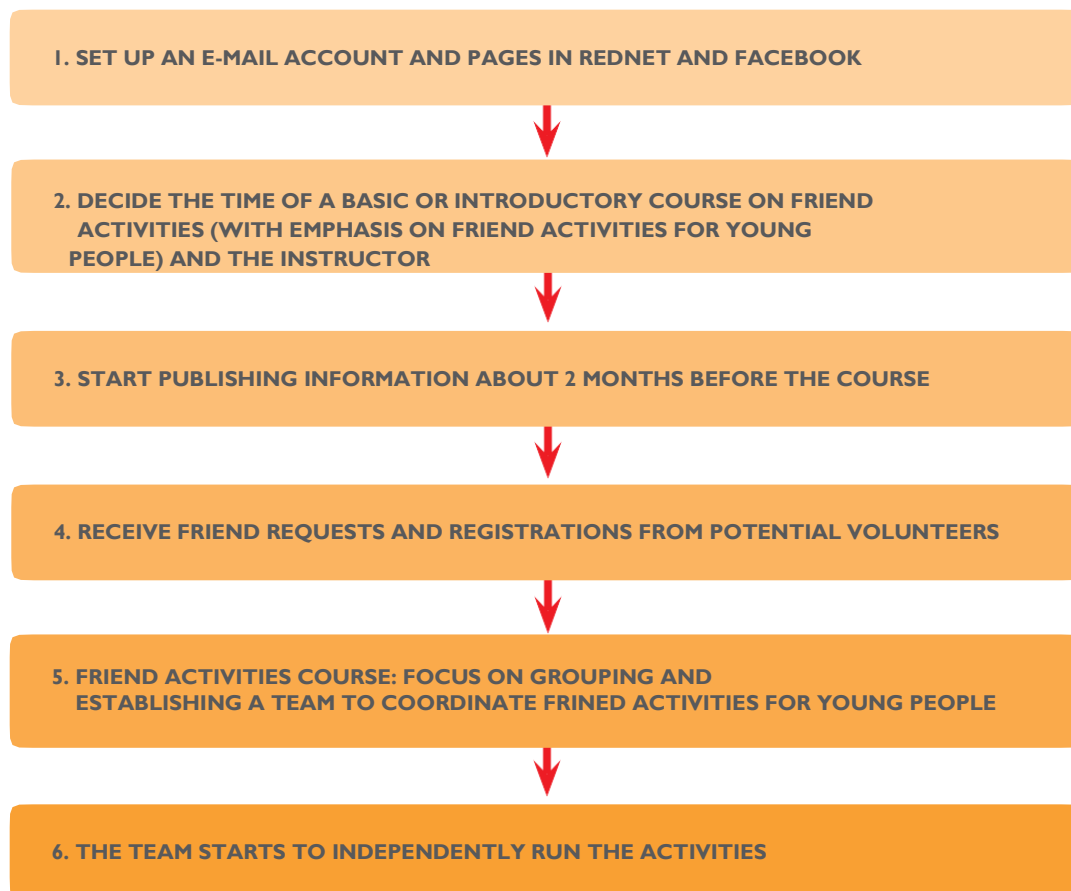
THE support may be financial aid, free or discounted tickets or, e.g., the opportunity to use the partner's facilities for free. In Rovaniemi, a partner provided training facilities for organizing the course on Friend Activities for young people.

WHEN engaging in corporate cooperation, the branch should look into the graphic and communication guidelines of the Finnish Red Cross. The donator, such as a local business, does not have the right to, e.g., use the Red Cross logo, but it can mention its support to the Friend Activities of the Finnish Red Cross in its communication materials.

More information

about the instructions is available from the district office.

3. How do I launch Friend Activities for young people?



1. Set up an e-mail account and pages in RedNet and Facebook

LAUNCHING Friend Activities for young people in a branch starts with assessing the need. Are there many lonely young people in the locality and should activities be launched alone or together with a nearby branch? What would be a good, descriptive name for the activities, or should we let the young volunteers decide? When launching

activities, you need to contact the person in charge of friend activities at the branch, the social services planner of the district and the person in charge of friend activities at the district office.

FIRST, you set up an e-mail account and pages in RedNet and Facebook for your Friend Activities for young people. Information about the activities and the contact details should be found on the internet. Ask for more information on how to set up an e-mail account from your branch or the district office.

2. Decide the time of a basic course on friend activities (with emphasis on Friend Activities for young people) and the instructor

ACTIVITIES should preferably begin with a basic or introductory course on friend activities with an emphasis on Friend Activities for young people, because the course is a great way to form a group of volunteer friends for Friend Activities for young people and a team to run the Friend Activities for young people.

THE recruitment of volunteers to complete a regular course on friend activities is also possible, if you feel that not enough volunteers will attend a special course. In such cases, you should arrange a separate meeting for the young volunteers after the course for the sake of grouping and to set up a team for Friend Activities for young people.

YOU should schedule the Friend Activities course no sooner than two months away, and choose an instructor who is youthful or otherwise has a natural approach to educating and inspiring young people.

3. Start publishing information about 2 months before the course

YOU cannot advertise the activities too much when launching them! Start recruiting volunteers and friend clients by sending an e-mail letter roughly 6–8 weeks before the course.

THE letter should be sent to the mailing lists of subject associations or student organizations of higher education institutions, the staff of educational institutions and the municipal social and youth services. Remember to also advertise the course on the Facebook and RedNet pages and the Events calendar in RedNet.

FRIEND clients and volunteers can be recruited using the same recruitment letter; a template can be found at the end of chapter 4. The letter should outline the various volunteer positions to make it easier to set up a team to coordinate Friend Activities for Young people.

ROUGHLY 2 weeks before the course, you should contact a local newspaper and suggest an article about starting Friend Activities for young people in your locality. You can also publish a notice in the personal ads section of newspapers.

ROUGHLY 1–2 weeks before the course, you can send another group e-mail message to the same recipients as when you launched the marketing activities. Many interested volunteers may have

registered after receiving the first message, but potential volunteers need to be reminded slightly before the registration deadline.

4. Receive friend requests and registrations from potential volunteers

YOU should answer volunteer registrations and friend requests from friend clients without delay. Volunteers are invited to join the basic course on friend activities, and you can already start collecting information about the friend clients.

5. Friend Activities course: focus on grouping and establishing a team to coordinate Friend Activities for young people

THE Friend Activities for young people course is similar to the traditional basic and introductory courses on friend activities, but it pays more attention on grouping exercises, assignments done in pairs and groups and examples that resonate with young people. You should also go through the rules of the activities in more detail with the young people. The instructor can organize suitable grouping exercises for young people and provide examples using the Friend Activities for young people supplements of the basic course on Friend Activities. The supplements can be found in the “Ystäväkouluttajat” group of RedNet. The instructor should frequently refer to the positions of the team coordinating Friend Activities for Young people and the need for volunteers so that the course participants can get used to the idea of becoming members of the team.

6. The team coordinating the Friend Activities for young people starts to independently run the activities

THE aim of the course is that at least three, but preferably more, volunteers will be recruited to work in the team in various positions. It is essential for the activities that a volunteer in charge at least acts as an intermediary (if the team has decided to launch one-on-one friend activities) or a group instructor (if the team will organize friend group activities for young people). In both cases, you also need a communications officer.

YOU should carefully go through the positions with the team and, especially in the beginning, be available and support the team as it launches the activities.

4. Persons in charge and responsibilities

IN the branch, the person in charge of Friend Activities for young people can be, for instance, the contact person for Friend, Youth or School Cooperation Activities. Contact persons can also share the responsibility for the activities. The job description of the contact person can be found in RedNet on the page *Osaston luottamushenkilöt ja avainvapaat*.

YOU should set up a team of at least three people to manage the practicalities of running Friend Activities for young people and take responsibility for coordinating the activities. The contact person for Friend or Youth Activities in the branch or the team should be in contact with the person in charge of friend activities in the district.

THE team coordinating the Friend Activities for young people meets regularly, e.g., once a month. The team can distribute positions among the members or do everything together. In an ideal situation, more than one person takes care of each responsibility to avoid putting too much strain on a single volunteer.

THE situations of young people typically change frequently and rapidly: people can move to another locality or country due to studies, exchange programmes and work. Young people may therefore find it hard to make a long-term commitment to volunteer activities. Those in charge of friend activities for young people in the branch should be aware of this and always assign critical tasks to more than one person so that the



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activities do not end entirely if individual people drop out of the volunteer activities.

RESPONSIBILITIES of the persons in charge of Friend Activities for young people:

- **Intermediators of friend pairs (1–3 people):**

- **Receive friend requests and inquiries** from friend clients and new volunteers who are interested in the activities and reply to them within a week.
- **Interview friend clients and volunteer friends**, asking about their needs and wishes, and arrange and take part in the first meeting between a new pair of friends.
- **Support volunteers and friend clients** in difficult situations.
- **Training:** basic course on friend activities and optional further training, social services promotion course or a separate Friend Intermediator course. “Toimiva ystävävylyty” guidebook as the induction material. Inquiries concerning the guidebook should be sent to the social services planner at the district office.

- **Instructors of group meetings (2–3 people):**

- **Organize friend clubs for volunteers**, e.g., once a month, where volunteers can plan activities together and enjoy peer support and recreation. Plan the course of the meeting and deal with the arrangements related to the venue and refreshments.
- **Organize joint, low-threshold meetings for friend clients (and volunteer friends)**, e.g., once a month, where the friends can do various things together. Plan the course of the meetings and deal with the arrangements related to the venue and refreshments.

- **Training:** Basic course on friend activities and optional further training. Social services promotion course or a separate Client Group Instructor course (Asiakasryhmien ohjaajakoulutus). “Ryhmätoiminnan ideapiste” on the “Ystävätoiminnan materiaalit” subpage of the “SPR Ystävätoiminta” page in RedNet as the induction material.

- **Communications officers (1–2 people):**

- Actively advertise the activities, e.g., on a page set up on Facebook, the RedNet pages for volunteers of the Finnish Red Cross, the personal ads sections of newspapers etc.
- Offer to visit and also visit educational institutions and various events to introduce the activities.
- Regularly send out newsletters and/or e-mails and form networks with, e.g., municipal social services and educational institutions.
- **Training:** Basic course on friend activities and optional further training. Communication courses organized by districts. Independently studying the communication, RedNet and social media instructions available at: <http://rednet.punainenristi.fi/viestinta>.

YOU should recruit volunteers to be in charge of the team from existing friends for young people or the youth workers of the branch or separately through, e.g., the mailing lists of subject associations or student organizations in higher education institutions. In the recruitment letter, you should describe the responsibilities of the volunteers in charge so that anyone interested will understand what the position involves as well as possible.

Example of a recruitment letter:



COME AND JOIN FRIEND ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE!

Do you wish you had a friend or a group of friends to enjoy hobbies with or just hang out together?

Are you looking for meaningful activities that will make you feel good and cheer up a young person in need of a friend? Would you like to gain experience of coordinating volunteer work?

Welcome to join the Friend Activities of the Finnish Red Cross! We

are looking for:

- *13–29-year-olds who **need a friend***
- *And 18–29-year-old volunteers:*
 - ***Friends** for young people who need a friend*
 - *You will regularly meet the young person. The two of you can decide what activities you will do together.*
 - *The position is suitable for you if you want to commit to spending a few hours doing humane volunteer activities once or twice a month for at least one school year at a time.*
 - ***Friend intermediators** (1–3) to match volunteers with young people who need a friend*
 - *You will receive friend requests and inquiries from volunteers who are interested.*
 - *You will interview those who need a friend and volunteers regarding their wishes and take part in the first meeting between each new pair of friends.*
 - *You will support the volunteers and the friend clients in difficult situations.*
 - *The position is suitable for you if you can commit to coordinating Friend Activities at least one evening a week.*



- **Group instructors** to organize low-threshold group activities for young people suffering from loneliness and peer support and recreational get-togethers for the volunteers involved in friend activities for young people (2–3)
 - You will plan the course of the group meeting and deal with the arrangements related to the venue and refreshments.
 - The position is suitable for you if you can commit to the activities 2–3 evenings a month.
- **Communications officers** to plan and execute communication and marketing of Friend Activities for young people (1–3)
 - You will advertise the activities on the internet and locally.
 - You will visit educational institutions and events to introduce the activities.
 - The position is suitable for you if you want to volunteer whenever it suits you best (but at least 2–3 times a month).

The volunteer positions of Friend Activities are suitable for anyone who is interested in them and you do not need any special skills for them. They are voluntary positions without pay.

Are you interested? *More information is available from example@example.fi. When sending us a message, please state whether you need a friend or are interested in volunteering.*

A basic course on friend activities will be organized for volunteers on 1 Oct. in the branch of the Finnish Red Cross at Example Road 1. Register for the course at example@example.fi.

5. Monitoring and compiling statistics on Friend Activities

ONE of the key tasks of the team is to monitor and compile statistics on the activities. This may sound like hard work, but it is extremely important for developing the activities of the Finnish Red Cross as a whole.

THE voluntary friend service of the branch collects the required information about the friend activities, such as the annual statistics, and sends them to the board of the branch. Required information includes the number of voluntary friends, clients, completed service assistance tasks (individual jobs), pending friend requests and meetings of a friend group or other groups, in addition to financial matters. The statistics concerning Friend Activities should also be included in this information.

THE intermediators go through and update the friend client and volunteer register at least once a year. The intermediators also contact any volunteers who have not stayed in contact with the friend service. Pending friend requests should be examined regularly, and the people who requested a friend should be contacted at regular intervals.

UNNECESSARY and obsolete client and volunteer cards should be destroyed carefully (e.g., by burning or using a shredder) and a personal data file that is not necessary for the operations must be destroyed (Sections 9, 29 and 34 of the Personal Data Act 523/1999).



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6. Problems and support

EXAMPLES of difficult situations encountered in Friend Activities for young people:

Friend clients' difficult situations

- Sometimes the intermediators have noticed during the initial interviews that the friend client's situation is so difficult that the intermediary is concerned about how the volunteer friend will cope. For instance, acute mental health problems may be cause for such concern. In such cases, the intermediary can match the friend client with

two mature voluntary friends who can support each other and not be overwhelmed. But sometimes it is better to advise the friend client to seek professional help.

Not enough friend clients for trained friends

- Many pilot localities have come across a situation where there are not enough friend clients for all the friends. It is still extremely important to encourage those waiting for a friend to continue the activities, and there are several ways to do this. You could offer the



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friends a position in the team, which does not have a maximum number of members. Or you could offer friend clients a second friend so that one friend client could have meetings with two voluntary friends. The volunteers could meet the friend either separately or together.

A volunteer friend wants to leave the volunteer position

- Leaving your position as a volunteer friend can be tough for both the volunteer and the friend client. How should you tell the client that you no longer want to meet? In these situations, the differences between friend activities and organic friendships become most clear.
- First of all, the volunteer should contact the intermediators and ask whether it is possible to find a new friend for the friend client. The volunteer should openly talk about the issue with the friend client well in advance and explain that their situation in life no longer allows them to continue doing volunteer activities. If a new friend can be found for the friend client, the old and the new volunteer can meet the client a few times either together or by taking turns.
- You can also participate in group activities, if available, with the friend client a few times so that they would have the courage to take part in them in the future.
- To make these situations easier, the friend client and the volunteer should decide already in the beginning of the friendship on the period over which they agree to meet regularly. This period can be, e.g., a school year, after which the two can agree separately on how they want to continue.

A friend client contacts the volunteer and wants to meet more often than they agreed

- One of the typical problems is that the friend client is in constant contact with the volunteer friend, hoping to meet. In these situations, the volunteer friend should refer to the rules of the Friend Activities, which have been discussed together with the intermediary during the first meeting.

A volunteer is unsuitable for the position

- There have been cases in the pilots where the intermediary has suspected that a person who wants to be a volunteer is not suitable for the position. Volunteers in friend activities are, after all, required to have a stable situation in their own life.
- In many cases, young people who themselves have challenges with social interaction and who need a friend have wanted to become volunteer friends. The line between those who need a friend and volunteer friends does not have to be clear-cut in Friend Activities for young people. But if the intermediary suspects that a friend is unsuitable for one-on-one friend activities, they can, e.g., suggest running group activities as one of the instructors.

