



My Friend's House Board Recruitment Introduction and Expectations

Thank you for your interest in My Friend's House. A decision to join a board is an important one. You want to be well informed about any organization before you commit to serve on a board. Before you decide to apply, please allow us to provide an initial introduction to My Friend's House Board of Directors.

My Friend's House mission is to provide shelter and crisis support and to advocate for equity for women and children in the South Georgian Bay area who are experiencing gender-based violence and abuse.

Since opening our doors in 1991, our organization has helped thousands of women get the effective safety and supports they need to rebuild their lives and that of their children.

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We serve an average of 600 women and their children each year – 200 through our Shelter Program and the balance through our Therapeutic, Transition and Children's Programs.

Services are provided without charge and are available to all women and their children across Southern Georgian Bay – from Wasaga Beach and Collingwood to Creemore and Meaford and all parts in between.

Board Recruitment

My Friend’s House is seeking dynamic forward-thinking leaders who will champion our vision of “Empowered women. Transformed communities.” and contribute to the implementation of our Strategic Plan, “Meeting Every Woman Where She Stands: Transforming Ourselves, Reflecting Our Communities”.

You will be part of a dedicated and engaged team.

As a member of our skill-based Board of Directors, you will enjoy a culture of shared responsibility and an opportunity to add to the perspectives of other highly committed and qualified volunteers. Together with the support of our Executive Director, you will participate in the development and execution of our strategic plan, monitor our performance, quality of services and enterprise risk and ensure sustainability of operations. You will be expected to participate in proactive discussions and contribute to making strategic decisions that will maintain My Friend’s House as a leader in the Southern Georgian Bay social service system. You will contribute your time in a meaningful and rewarding way and together with your colleagues, make a measurable difference to My Friend’s House and the team we serve.

You will share our values and philosophical framework.

Board of Directors are responsible for acting in the best interests of My Friend’s House. Those actions are informed by a set of values as well as a philosophical framework that ensures the needs of the communities we serve are met.

Values

- Fearlessness** We are courageous and do not give fear the power to silence or stop us.
- Respect** We acknowledge the dignity, significance, and humanity of each other.
- Integrity** We conduct ourselves ethically and with a high level of accountability and transparency.
- Excellence** We commit to a high standard of service, with women and children’s safety at the forefront.
- Non-judgment** We value, support, and respect the individual choices made by informed and empowered women.

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Diversity

We see and celebrate the value in ourselves and others.

Service

We have empathy and compassion for those we serve, coupled with the desire to meet their needs.

Philosophical Framework

My Friend's House, in keeping with its Vision, Mission and Values is committed to using an intersectional feminist framework to inform and guide all aspects of the agency's operations and service delivery.

Intersectional feminist framework describes overlapping or intersecting social identities such as gender, race, social class, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, age, mental disability, physical disability, mental illness and physical illness as well as other forms of identity as they relate to systems of oppression, domination or discrimination. Intersectionality is the idea that multiple factors contribute to the creation of the whole person and or societal system. Without understanding the synergy (the whole is greater than the sum of its parts) of the identities, one cannot understand the person.

Gender-based violence is understood as a continuum that includes, but is not necessarily limited to verbal, emotional, psychological, physical and sexual abuse. The experience of abuse is unique to every woman. Our intention as an organization is to ensure our service delivery model sees and acknowledges the whole woman and to understand how structures of power and systems may affect her depending on where she is located. It is also our responsibility to understand how individual women may experience the programs and services at My Friend's House and to work to address any barriers individual women may face. Every woman has the right to be in control of her own life as well as the *right to determine the services*

Furthermore, in acknowledging My Friend's House position and influence within the community, it is committed to groups whose rights, freedoms and access to resources and social power is infringed upon. This is done through:

- encouraging those within the organization and externally to recognize their own biases, and how those biases have helped in creating barriers and oppression.
- showing support for or being a part of initiatives lead by oppressed groups both within the organization and in the community.
- honouring difference and always remembering one's experience and options is informed by their own identity.
- continually assessing organizational structures, systems and practices to ensure there is full and equal access for all.

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- being accountable as an organization when actions have contributed to oppression.

Contribution

We are seeking individuals, preferably with previous non-profit Board experience, who are comfortable with oversight governance as distinct from a management role. We are looking for individuals who understand the nature, complexity and needs of a non-profit social service and the needs of our clients. We are seeking individuals with diverse life experiences and an interest in giving back to their communities. Our skill-based Board looks for leadership level experience in one or more of the following areas:

Health/Social Services/Public Housing
Governance
Financial Expertise/Literacy/Investment
Strategic Planning
Legal
HR/Labour Relations
Real Estate/Leasing/Development
Communications
Fundraising/Capital Campaigns
Government Relations/Advocacy
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility

You will be an advocate

Board members are uniquely poised to spread the news about My Friend's House, our mission, planned events and case for support. Each member has strong personal and business networks, and you are asked to champion My Friend's House among your networks.

You will contribute financially to My Friend's House

Board members are asked to contribute financially to My Friend's House as a show of commitment and support. The level of donation is determined solely by the Board member based on their ability.

You will contribute time and skills

Not all contributions are monetary. Board members with specific skills sets ranging from accounting to marketing and graphic design can provide invaluable assistance and advice in their key areas. Board members that can join committees, work with staff and give broad guidance can allow My Friend's House to benefit from Board expertise.

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You will assist with fundraising

Board members are asked to assist with fundraising initiatives and big events. This is done by inviting others to contribute and sharing My Friend's House events and needs on social media and within your own circle. This type of assistance can significantly boost fundraising efforts.

You will make connections

When possible, Board members are asked to help open doors for My Friend's House, make key introductions and forge connections. It is the establishment of personal connections that creates sustainable revenue for the organization.

You will assist in communications with donors

Not every board member feels comfortable talking about development with potential donors. Luckily, the cycle of philanthropy has room for other strengths. Some board members might excel more at maintaining relationships with donors after the initial donation. From time to time you will be called upon to simply say thank you.

You will commit time

Each member of the Board is asked to make at least a two (2) year commitment, renewable to a maximum of four (4) consecutive terms for a maximum of eight (8) years. It is expected that the Board members participate in at least one of the Board committees (Finance, Governance, Strategic Planning, Risk Management) and all scheduled Board meetings. Regular Board meetings are held monthly, September to June. Special Board and committee meetings may be called in July and August, if necessary. It is expected that no member will be absent for more than two consecutive Board or two consecutive committee meetings, without acceptable explanation provided to the Chair or Committee Chair. Remote access for video conferencing is made available on occasions when Board members are unable to attend, however in person attendance is encouraged.

Excellence in Governance

My Friend's House Board of Directors will actively seek out, attract and meaningfully engage qualified and committed volunteers who can contribute their unique competencies in service to My Friend's House vision and mission.

Our "Style" of Governance

The Board aspires to achieve and sustain a governance system and Board "style" that is characterized by the following:

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Oversight (versus Management)

The Board is charged with overseeing the compliance and performance of My Friend's House. It will do so through the establishment of and adherence to sound governance principles, policies and practices. Operational accountability will be delegated to the Executive Director.

Strategic Leadership

The Board will work together and in close relationship with the Executive Director to establish the highest-level strategic direction, priorities, outcomes and resources for the corporation.

Competency (versus Representation)

The Board will be composed of individuals who first demonstrate the requisite skills, experience and expertise necessary to perform the Board's strategic leadership and oversight responsibilities.

Size

For the Board to be effective in carrying out its responsibilities every Board member is expected to actively engage and contribute to Board discussions and decisions. Good governance practice suggests 9-12 members, plus other ex-officio members, is sufficient to ensure full participation of every Board member, allowing enough directors to populate committees and plan for succession and sustainability.

Sustainability

The Board will ensure strong and sustainable governance through proactive and regular recruitment, qualification and development of Board members and Board candidates. Succession of Board members and of Board Leadership (chairs) will be thoughtful and rigorous to ensure the ongoing strength and strategic leadership of My Friend's House.

Evolving Context

As organizational and contextual circumstances evolve and change, the Board composition practices will remain flexible enough to adapt to the evolving conditions.

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Board Recruitment Screening Process

All board candidates are required to participate in the following screening processes:

1. Complete the **Board Membership Expression of Interest Form** provided at myfriendshouse.ca and submit it along with a resume to the Chair of Governance via email at selection@myfriendshouse.ca.
2. The Governance Committee will review all applications and extend invitations to interview to selected candidates. The interview with members of our Governance Committee will take 30-45 minutes and will give us a chance to get to know you by asking some standardized questions; this meeting will also give you an opportunity to ask anything you might like to know about the Board or My Friends House. Following the interview, you may be asked to provide three (3) personal or work-related references, including names, nature of your relationship, and contact information.
3. All candidates must successfully complete a **criminal reference check** before they may join the Board of Directors. We also verify education/accreditations. More detailed information about this process will be provided at the interview.

After the selection process has been completed, successful candidates are approved to become full members of the Board of Directors either by appointment of the current Board or by election at our annual general meeting.

New board members will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement and a Conflict-of-Interest Agreement prior to assuming their position as a board member. Within the first few months of joining the Board, new members will attend a formal board orientation session. As soon as practicable, you will be assigned a current Board member as a mentor. This Board member will ensure any questions you may have are answered. You will also be given access to My Friend's House Board on-line board file management system which includes information such as governance and operational policies and procedures, audited financial statements, meeting minutes, monthly financial documents, strategic plans and annual reports. There will be an opportunity to meet with the Executive Director to learn more about the programs and if appropriate, a tour of the shelter may be arranged.

Regularly scheduled board meetings are held monthly, from September to June, on the second

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Tuesday of each month and at such other times, as may necessary. Board members are expected to attend all regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Directors throughout their two (2) year term of office and to serve on a least one committee. Additionally, Board members are expected to actively support various fundraising and awareness initiatives throughout the year.

My Friend's House cannot operate without the support of caring and concerned community members like you. Should you have any questions about this document or the application process, you are welcome to contact the Chair of Governance, by email selection@myfriendshouse.ca.

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