Diocese of Salisbury Mothers' Union: AFIA 'Holiday Leader' Job Description

Background

Each year the Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Salisbury supports an *AFIA* (Away from It All) holiday for around 20 families, made up of 25-30 adults and 40-45 children. The families are referred by a number of organisations (churches, MU branches, social services, schools, CAP etc) and for many it is the first holiday or the first for many years. The families have typically suffered from family breakdown, severe illness, redundancy, child related issues. Apart from paying a deposit of £20 per person, all costs of the holiday are covered from the 'holiday fund' which results from donations, contribution by MU branches, grants from trusts etc.

In recent years, the week-long holiday has taken place during August at the Sidholme Hotel in Sidmouth. The hotel has extensive grounds, an excellent indoor swimming pool, comfortable rooms and offers excellent food – for many attendees, the holiday of a life time. A programme of activities is organised for the families. Typically, each morning is free time for the parents or careers, with the children joining age-related activity groups. Afternoons focus on the beach, trips or family activities in the hotel grounds. In the evenings, there are games or entertainment in the hotel. All these activities are optional – each family is encouraged to use the week away as best suits their needs. During the week, strong relationships are built up by the families which tend to continue beyond the holiday. Furthermore, a reunion is normally held in the following Easter

The holiday is run by a team of volunteers (typically 12), with the Team Leader responsible for organising the holiday. The key tasks of this role are described below.

Preparation for the holiday

Families
- Updating referral and application forms; send out and receive the same.
- Review applications and allocate places. Collection of family deposits.
- Engage with families on travel arrangements, answering any concerns and offering encouragement.

Hotel
- Agree tentative meal & programme arrangements with the hotel.
- Allocate rooms for families and volunteers room allocation
- Agree room rates

Programme
- Develop programme for the week based around a theme. Agree activities for each children's group, afternoon and evening programme.
- Establish the resources required for the week – craft materials etc. (MU branches generously supply many of the resources).
- As appropriate, contact schools for loan of minibuses.

<u>Volunteers</u>
- Establish the preferred number of volunteers; contact recent volunteers and where necessary, recruit new volunteers.
- Check DBS as appropriate.
- Arrange holiday briefing and safeguarding training.
- Check on transport arrangements.
- Agree key volunteer roles: minibus drivers, first aiders, team leaders for each age group.

<u>General</u>
- Monitor budget and fund raising.
- Keep MU president fully informed on arrangements.

During the holiday

- Keep a watchful eye on the families to make sure they are happy.
- Daily meetings with volunteers to review programme, deal with any issues.
- Liaise with hotel on meal issues, general arrangements, room issues etc.
- Ensure safety is the top priority for the volunteers: in the hotel, at the beach, in the swimming pool, in the minibuses.
- Engage with families on return travel arrangements.

After the holiday

- Check final hotel bill and arrange payment via the MU finance officer
- Make tentative plans for the holiday reunion.
- Send out invitations for the reunion and plan the day.

Time Commitment

The application process starts in Q1 and should end by April/May. It is a matter of sending out and receiving application forms.

The main part of the work starts in April/May (equivalent of 1 day per week) as the programme starts to develop, numbers start to firm up, arrangements are finalised with the hotel, volunteers recruited.

The busiest time is the ¾ weeks before the holiday, for obvious reasons, and probably requires a commitment of the equivalent of 2 days per week, max.