

## **What are current volunteers are saying about their volunteer experience with Starting Point?**

*Volunteering at Starting Point has meant many things to me. It has meant answering phones in the office and never knowing who will be on the other end of the line or what they might need. It has meant enjoying meaningful conversation with the wonderful staff of Starting Point. It has meant waking up in the middle of the night to be there for someone who needs a listening ear. It has meant providing options for those who may feel trapped. It has often meant enjoying a sigh of relief from a woman who has nowhere else to turn. Most of all, and possibly most importantly, working for Starting Point has been bountifully educational. I have learned about the world, about myself, and about humanity, from our ugliest extremes to our most beautiful. For that I am thankful, because I have become more compassionate, wiser, and wholeheartedly a better person in the process.*

*– Gretchen D- Volunteer for 3 years*

*I got involved initially as a result of the sexual assault of my daughter while she was at college; I continue to be involved because I feel my volunteerism is making a difference. Getting a phone call from someone who needs a listening ear, a helpful suggestion or perhaps a safety plan for their life is good work. Going to court with a scared mom is good work. Holding a conversation with a dad whose child is at the Child Advocacy Center to be interviewed is good work. I have found being a good listener and showing the client that you care about them is what being a volunteer is all about. In addition the Starting Point staff is fantastic and always available for backup and support. Starting Point is a great organization and I am proud to be associated with it.*

*- Janet J- Volunteer for 15 years*

*I began this work as a means to give something back; I had been in a support group for a time in the 90's which was run by Starting Point volunteers and had found it very helpful. As I continue to learn through experience with clients, my own understanding of domestic violence deepens; I feel more compassion, more amazement at our clients' ingenuity and strength, and more clarity about the breadth and depth of this work. I now know the most important thing I can do is listen non-judgmentally and with an open heart. And believe. It truly is that simple, yet it is also very profound.*

*– Kathy S- Volunteer for 8 years*

# Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Volunteering at Starting Point

## 1. Who is qualified to become a Starting Point volunteer?

You are qualified if:

- you are 18 years of age or older
- you are sensitive to issues of domestic violence/sexual assault
- you are open-minded and non-judgmental in your interaction with others
- you are a good listener
- you complete the Starting Point training program for volunteers

## 2. What do volunteers do at Starting Point?

Volunteers listen, provide emotional support and discuss options with survivors and/ or their family members. There are many different volunteer opportunities including:

**Support Line Advocate:** Provide crisis intervention and support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence on the agency's 24hour support line. This coverage is provided with the minimal amount of disruption to the crisis line worker's life. Workers are provided with pagers and number-blocking services on their home phone. Shifts are 7a-7p and 7p-7a every day.

**Court Advocacy:** Advocates provide assistance obtaining protective orders and with other court appearances. Court advocates need to complete an additional three hours of classroom training and shadow an experienced court advocate.

**Hospital Advocacy:** Provide in-person support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence seeking medical attention at area hospitals and doctor's offices. Hospital advocates need to complete an additional six-hours of training.

**Shelter Assistance:** Trained advocates offer support, information and referrals to women and children while they stay in our home.

**Support Group Facilitation:** Facilitate a supportive peer lead forum for survivors to listen or talk with others dealing with abuse past or present. Facilitators need to complete an additional six hours of training.

**Child Advocacy Center Accompaniment:** Advocates provide support to families when a child has been a victim of a sexual crime. CAC advocates must complete an additional three hours of training.

**Outreach advocate:** Advocates serve as an ambassador for SP; you will be participating by appearing at information tables, community events, fundraising events and a number of other activities to help spread the word about the agency and our services. If you are outgoing, talkative, and passionate about building a healthy and safe community, this job is for you!

*Volunteers are also requested to help in a variety of other ways, including representation at health fairs, shelter projects (painting, sorting clothes) and fundraising. If providing direct services isn't your thing, Starting Point is always recruiting individuals for serve on its board of directors. For more information on serving on Starting Point's Board of Directors contact the Executive Director at 356-7993 / 539-5506*

### **3. How would I know the right thing to say or do when working with a survivor of domestic violence or sexual assault?**

Starting Point volunteers are provided with extensive training before working with victims. This training covers a wide range of topics and provides ample opportunity for volunteers to practice responses to a variety of situations. In-service sessions are presented to all volunteers on a regular basis to keep them up to date with the latest information needed to assist survivors.

### **4. Isn't doing this work too depressing?**

Many people fear they'll be overwhelmed by doing this type of work. Most Starting Point volunteers find, however, that it is very rewarding to have helped empower someone who is going through a crisis related to domestic violence or sexual assault. We learn as much about people's strength as we do from their pain. Starting Point volunteers have the satisfaction of knowing the work they've done has made a real difference, both in individual lives and in the struggle to end violence in our society.

Making a commitment to attend training does not mean you need to make a commitment to active volunteering; you are welcome to attend training and learn more. If you decide that providing direct services isn't for you, perhaps you have another skill that will match with a need of Starting Point's.

### **5. How can I get involved?**

The first step is to fill out Starting Point's volunteer application. You will be contacted by Starting Point's volunteer coordinator with upcoming training information and to set up an interview. We could not do all we do with our committed volunteers. Won't you consider joining us?

## Starting Point's Volunteer Application

*Please complete and mail to PO Box 1972 Conway, NH 03818*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Day time phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about Starting Point?

Areas of interest (check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ Support line

\_\_\_\_\_ Court advocacy

\_\_\_\_\_ Hospital advocacy

\_\_\_\_\_ Shelter assistance

\_\_\_\_\_ Support group facilitation

\_\_\_\_\_ Child Advocacy Center accompaniment

\_\_\_\_\_ Other duties

\_\_\_\_\_ Outreach advocate

**The best volunteers are those who have a commitment to the goals and mission of the agency. Starting Point welcomes each individual to bring to the agency their own unique talents. Are there relevant experiences that you would like to share with us that you believe would be significant to this work?**

**What do you hope to gain from volunteering at Starting Point?**

**Are you or anyone you know a survivor of domestic violence, stalking and/or sexual violence?  
If so, please explain (information on this application remains confidential):**

**Please provide a list of names, phone numbers, and nature of the relationship of three references for Starting Point to contact.**