**BUDDY VOLUNTEER AT FOREST FARM PEACE GARDEN**

Forest Farm Peace Garden offers a structured Ecotherapy Programme of gardening and nature-based activities for mental health recovery. The buddy volunteer role provides additional support to people referred to our service to help them get the most out of their time with us.

Being a buddy is an opportunity to gain skills and hands-on experience in support work and therapeutic gardening, plus receive training focused on mental health and ecotherapy.

Buddies can make a huge impact by helping to make our volunteers’ experience in the garden welcoming and purposeful.

**ROLE DESCRIPTION**

* To work alongside volunteers in the garden, offering encouragement and support in line with people's support needs.
* To create a safe, friendly and welcoming environment for all and help new volunteers to integrate into life in the garden.
* To help with setting up sessions and clearing up after.
* To assist with workshops and other special events on site.
* To support with looking after the garden so that it remains a welcoming space.
* To share ideas with staff, give feedback and highlight any concerns or problems.
* To understand our Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding policy and Confidentiality agreement.
* To understand our Health and Safety guidance and set a good example for other volunteers around safety in the garden.

**WHAT IS PROVIDED FOR BUDDIES**

* Free two day induction training.
* Two staff members available on site to supervise sessions and to go to for advice.
* Buddy debrief sessions to reflect and share your experiences with others, and the option of one-to-one supervision with the Ecotherapy Worker where needed.
* Additional training days during the year.
* The opportunity to lead/co-lead an activity or a workshop according to interest and skills.
* Reasonable travel expenses to training and garden sessions, as agreed in advance (currently up to 10 pounds per month).
* Certificate of recognition and reference on request for future opportunities.

**COMMITMENT TO THE ROLE**

* This is a minimum one-year role during our garden opening times (Feb to mid-Dec), although buddies are able to continue for more than one year.
* Ideally a commitment of **two days a month** volunteering during garden opening times (10.30am-1pm and/or 1.45pm-4.15pm) on a Wednesday or a Friday is expected (if this is not possible then a minimum commitment of one day a month is acceptable.)
* Buddies must be able to attend the training days.
* Buddies are required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS), due to being directly involved with supporting adults at risk. (*FFPG will arrange this.)*

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

* Ideally some gardening experience, although this is not a requirement for the role as our staff supervise gardening sessions.
* It would be desirable to have some experience of working with adults with mental health support needs or community volunteering experience.
* Good communication and group skills, including group decision-making.
* Good ability to follow instructions and supervise a group activity.
* An interest in and enthusiasm for ecotherapy, organic gardening and wildlife activities.
* An understanding of and ability to keep professional boundaries and to share any safeguarding concerns with a member of staff. This will be covered in more detail in the training.