

# AFRICAN AIDS FOUNDATION



Solutions: Giving Children Homes, Hope and a Future



## Volunteer Information Pack

[www.africanaidsfoundation.org.au](http://www.africanaidsfoundation.org.au)

# African AIDS Foundation Volunteer Information Pack

## Introduction

Volunteering is an excellent way to find about other cultures and ways of life. It helps us to gain better insight into the great needs facing people and can be a wonderful contribution towards the solutions for those needs. It can also be a significant time of learning about oneself.

African AIDS Foundation supports a number of organisations in South Africa that rely on volunteers for much, if not all, of the activities in which they are involved. The majority of these volunteers are local people who have worked for many years with these organisations. Others are people such as yourself drawn from all around the world.



Helper and Kids at Play

Following are brief answers to some frequently asked questions that we hope you will find helpful as you consider volunteer service with African AIDS Foundation.

## Where can I go for Volunteer Service with AAF?

Volunteer opportunities are available with:

- Tabitha Ministries
- God's Golden Acre
- Philakahle Wellbeing Centre

Tabitha Ministries is in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu Natal. It is a comprehensive work led by Gail Trollip. Tabitha cares for vulnerable children aged from babies through to teenagers; conducts education and puppeteering programs in schools; offers home-based palliative care for the dying; and gives training to families in caring for dying relatives. Tabitha is able to accommodate volunteers but can only have a few people at any one time.



Rosalie Schwarz visiting a women in the home-based care program

Like Tabitha Ministries, God's Golden Acre is a very comprehensive work. Founded by Heather Reynolds, GGA is situated half way between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. GGA is able to accommodate many volunteers who are involved in many different areas of work. GGA has emergency relief programs; an orphanage; sports and cultural programs; and home-based care programs.

Monika Holst leads Philakahle Wellbeing Centre. It is situated in Bergville a couple of hours by car north-west from Pietermaritzburg. It is an umbrella organisation for a number of projects including emergency and development programs; home-based care training and provision; and orphan housing. Only a few volunteers at a time can be utilised at Philakahle. Volunteers are also responsible for their own accommodation, though Philakahle can assist in securing a suitable place to stay.

The Foundation is currently exploring options for volunteer service in a number of locations in Kenya.

## Do I need any particular qualifications to be a volunteer?

No particular qualifications are required. However a background in medical and allied health fields, teaching or childcare would be helpful.

So far, volunteers with AAF have included a journalist, photographers, teachers, a physiotherapist, nurses, students, clerks, and a grandmother. The only essential qualifications are a big heart, a desire to work hard, and an ability to fit in with the existing team.

African AIDS Foundation will arrange some orientation for successful applicants concerning HIV/AIDS, living and working in South Africa, and cultural awareness.

The minimum age for volunteers is 18 years of age.

## What sort of work would I be doing?

This will depend on the organisation with which you spend time and the experience and qualifications you have to offer.

Volunteers may work with babies or teenagers. You may be involved in emergency relief such as delivering food and medicines to those in need.

There are a number of grass roots development initiatives such as market gardening, vocational training and job creation, and sports and cultural programs.

Home-based care for dying people, and support for their relatives, is a very significant aspect of each organisation's work.



Some volunteers help in other practical ways with building projects, and sporting and holiday activities for the children.

## How long do people volunteer for?

The most effective volunteer is one who is able to maximize their contribution by spending a reasonable time with an organisation.

By staying for 3 to 12 months a volunteer gains more understanding of the situation in which they find themselves as well as earning the trust of those with whom they are working. God's Golden Acre prefers volunteers to stay a minimum of 6 months.

## How many volunteers are there?

This will vary with each organisation. They all have a blend of local and visiting volunteers. At GGA, there can be up to 30 overseas visitors working with local volunteers. The other groups generally have many less overseas volunteers than local workers.

## What sort of hours would I work?

Hours will vary depending on the type of work you are involved in and will be negotiated with the leaders of the organisations as part of your application process. These leaders are very aware of the need to consider the well-being themselves and their volunteers and ensure suitable recreation time.

## Do I get any time off?

Again, time off and days will be negotiated with the leaders of the various groups. As the work is often heart breaking and stressful it is advisable to regularly take time to rest and recuperate. These groups are flexible and, within reason, will work with a volunteer's plans. It is also understood that voluntary placement is often part of your broader travel plans.



Typical housing at Sweetwater near Pietermaritzburg

## What is the accommodation like?

At GGA and Tabitha the volunteer accommodation is basic. Volunteers can expect to share a room with a few other people. Bathroom facilities are also shared. At Philakahle Wellbeing Centre no accommodation is available. Assistance would be offered in finding suitable lodgings.

## What do the groups provide?

At GGA volunteers are given free accommodation and a basic evening meal. Food is provided daily, together with some other basic items such as margarine, sugar, powdered milk, tea, coffee, some fresh vegetables and soup. A small supermarket is close-by for weekly shopping.

Tabitha can provide basic accommodation including a kitchen. The volunteers must meet all other necessities. Pietermaritzburg is a major city and so volunteers can source all needs through local shops and banks.

Bergville, where Philakahle is based, is a small town. There are supermarkets and banks but no major retail shops. However, all your basic needs can be found in the town.

## How much does it cost per week to live?

This is difficult to answer and depends on the individual. To cover the absolute essentials, volunteers should allow AUD \$50 per week per person, but please keep in mind that this would cover very basic items only, and not include any 'extras' or accommodation costs.

## What about a visa, vaccinations and travel insurance?

Shorter-term volunteers (up to 6 months) should be able to access a tourist . However, longer-term volunteers will require a different type of volunteer visa.

All Visa related enquiries should be directed to the **EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA** - Cnr State Circle & Rhodes Place, Yarralumla ACT 2600 PH: 06 273 2424 FAX: 06 273 3543 TX 62734. AAF can provide a letter in support of your application and to confirm your plans for voluntary work.

Vaccination requirements will depend upon any travel plans to other parts of South Africa and other African countries. Please consult your GP well in advance of your departure date to discuss these requirements.

All volunteers will be required to hold an appropriate level of travel and health insurance covering the duration of the volunteer service.

## How do I get to GGA, Tabitha Ministries and Philakahle?

Durban and Pietermaritzburg are the nearest airports to all three organisations. International flights from Australia are generally to Johannesburg with connecting flights from the Johannesburg domestic terminal. Travel arrangements to the organisations from the airport will need to be negotiated prior to departure from Australia.

## Other Helpful Information

For longer-term volunteers, continued access to bank account at home may be the best way to manage finances. Without being a South African resident, it can be very difficult to open a bank account.

All three organizations are Christian in their ethos and practice. Volunteers need to be respectful of these Christian values and abide by the standards set by the organisations.

AAF requires an application form (attached) to be completed. Following receipt of the application, the Chairperson of the Volunteer Committee will arrange an interview, by phone or in person.



A volunteer at Tabitha

## What if I want to know more?

We hope this answers most of your questions! To apply and to find out more about volunteering please contact us here at the African AIDS Foundation.

# VOLUNTEERS CHECKLIST

1. Contact the Secretary or the Volunteers Coordinator of African AIDS Foundation to get the ball rolling. We recommend planning for your trip at least 6 months in advance of your intended departure.
2. Complete the Application Form and the Prohibited Employment Declaration and return them to the Volunteer Coordinator.
3. Attend an interview with the AAF Volunteer Task Group.
4. If successful, begin negotiation with AAF and its partner organisations for an appropriate placement and for orientation.
5. Consult your GP about your medical and vaccine requirements.
6. Apply for a Passport through your local Post Office (if you don't have one), and/or the Unpaid Volunteer Visa through the South African High Commission.
7. Confirm details for placement and organise travel arrangements.
8. Organise adequate travel and health insurance. Provide a copy to AAF.
9. Liaise directly with the selected group about arrival, departure and accommodation requirements.
10. Finalise all details with AAF Volunteer Coordinator.

## **African AIDS Foundation**

PO Box 701, Narellan NSW Australia 2567  
Ph. +61 2 4658 0580 — Fax. +61 2 4658 0887  
Email. [enquiries@africanidsfoundation.org.au](mailto:enquiries@africanidsfoundation.org.au)  
[www.africanidsfoundation.org.au](http://www.africanidsfoundation.org.au)