



## **PARISH CONTACTS/ ADVOCATES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES Office for Persons with Disabilities & The Deaf Apostolate**

### **DESCRIPTION**

The Parish Contact acts on behalf of persons with disabilities to ensure that all are invited to share in the life of the parish. The contact is a volunteer who serves as liaison between persons with disabilities and their parish and between the parish and the Archdiocesan Office for Persons with Disabilities.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. To assist the pastor in his ministry with Persons with Disabilities and their families.
  - Ascertain the needs of parishioners with disabilities and their families and the extent to which they desire to be involved in the life and ministry of the parish.
  - Work with parish leaders to overcome barriers, both architectural and attitudinal, within the parish.
  - Recruit and coordinate other volunteers including Persons with Disabilities.
  - Contacts area urged to present an annual written report to the Pastor and the Archdiocesan Department for Pastoral Care for Persons with Disabilities.
  
2. To identify persons with disabilities in the parish.
  - Locate people in the parish who have physical or mental disabilities. (Parish registration may include this information.)
  - Ask the pastor, parish staff, parish leaders, etc., if they know the people who have disabilities.
  - Scan the parish congregation during a weekend liturgy to discover persons with noticeable disabilities.
  - Place a short article in the parish bulletin saying who you are and asking people to contact you with information regarding parishioners and disabilities.
  - Identify, provide outreach and welcome individuals in group homes and institutions within the parish limits.
  - Contact people with disabilities either by phone or a personal visit. Maintain contact through occasional phone calls.
  - Inform the pastor and share the census information with him.
  
3. To sensitize the parish to the needs and gifts of persons with disabilities.
  - Inform parish leaders of both the talents and the needs of individuals with disabilities.
  - Provide opportunities for awareness education, and include appropriate language.

- Sponsor talks on specific disabilities and topics of inclusion. Ask the priests to include the concerns of persons with disabilities in their homilies.
  - Occasionally have Sunday liturgies that encourage awareness of persons with disabilities.
  - Provide parish bulletin inserts
  - Ask that the needs of persons with disabilities be included in the prayers of the faithful, as are those of other parishioners.
  - Advocate for and with persons with disabilities in affirming their rights.
4. To welcome persons with disabilities and their families into parish life and parish programs.
- Invite and assist persons with disabilities to become active in parish life (liturgical, educational and social) according to their interests and abilities.
  - Assist the parish in implementing the Ministry with Persons with Disabilities accessibility survey of its facilities and programs.
  - Work toward physical accessibility of the church and other parish buildings.
  - Coordinate a transportation program for parishioners who are visually impaired, mobility impaired or elderly.
  - Collaborate with the Director of Religious Education (DRE) and adult faith formation coordinator to accommodate the needs of learners with disabilities.
5. To make referrals to appropriate agencies, Catholic Social Services, or the Office for Persons with Disabilities.
- Be aware of existing resources and share that information.
  - Develop your own list of local agencies, contacts and resources.
  - Contact the Office for Persons with Disabilities, [sr.kschipani@archphila.org](mailto:sr.kschipani@archphila.org) or call 215-587-3530.

### **Support**

The Office for Persons with Disabilities will provide consultation, training, information, and support services on a continuing basis for the fulfillment of the parish contacts responsibilities.

**OFFICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES &  
THE DEAF APOSTOLATE**

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