

Friendly Housemates Research Project General Description & Application

In partnership with Centennial College

In partnership with Community Living Toronto and Centennial College, applications are being accepted for an initiative called “The Friendly Housemates” Research Project. This exciting project supports an innovative living arrangement that will help to facilitate social integration and full citizenship for people who have intellectual disabilities. The project will create an opportunity for shared apartment living between a first or second year, full time college student and an individual(s) who has an intellectual disability supported by their family and Community Living Toronto. Community Living Toronto is a non-profit organization that provides support for individuals with intellectual disabilities searching for accessible and meaningful ways to live in the community. The successful candidate will be a student who is interested in a shared living experience with a person who has an intellectual disability in the role of a Friendly Housemate. It is our hope that the shared living results in richer life experiences and learning for all parties involved.

The person with an intellectual disability, their family and Community Living Toronto will offer guidance and support to the shared living situation. There are many possible benefits from the shared living situation. The people involved in the initiative will have opportunities to learn about themselves, improve their social and community connectedness, experience greater control and autonomy over their lives, develop new relationships and ultimately make contributions to each other and to their community. The role of a Friendly Housemate is the beginning of the development of a new network of friendships and supports.

We would also like to make you aware of some of the potential risks of participating in this project:

The nature of two people living in a shared living arrangement makes it possible that there may be physical, psychological and/or social risks. The psychological risks relate to your reflecting on your aspirations, experiences, and challenges in participating in the project, particularly if there is not a good match between you and your housemate.

In addition, your participation in the project may have an impact on your academic achievement if you experience difficulty in balancing time for study with time for socializing and offering mentorship in the shared living arrangement.

Because you will be living in close proximity with your housemate, there is risk of access to personal information by the other person. All of these risks represent a greater risk than one would expect to encounter in everyday life.

To help address these potential risks, you will be provided with regular support and supervision/problem-solving meetings with CL Toronto staff who are trained in providing this type of support and supervision to students working in the field of intellectual disabilities. In addition you will receive training and orientation, provided by CL Toronto, to prepare you for the role of “friendly housemate”. You will also have access to additional support and

consultation with CL Toronto staff as needed, as well as access to additional supports, including academic and counselling support, offered through Centennial College.

The successful candidate will receive a bursary not exceeding \$1,000 over a maximum of three semesters and in kind living expenses including rent, utilities and internet provided by the individual's family. The student must be registered full time in their post-secondary program and is required to maintain a good academic standing with a GPA of 3.0. The student is expected to live full time with their housemate(s) and provide 8-10 hours for relationship-building each week. Housemates will engage in a variety of shared experiences that could include: household responsibilities, at home leisure and recreational activities, social interactions, community experiences, learning, and problem solving. Orientation and training, as well as ongoing support, guidance and direction, will be offered to the housemates from the family and representatives of Community Living Toronto. Housemates are encouraged to be actively involved in all decision-making and problem solving.

Note that this opportunity is separate from your enrolment in your school program. This living arrangement is not a field placement and is not related to your academic course work or requirements.

Important note: In order to better understand and inform future iterations of this project, there is a research evaluation component to the project. If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to:

1. Participate in an interview with a research assistant *before* you move into the shared living arrangement. You will be asked a series of open-ended questions to explore possible opportunities you think that you might experience, what you are hoping to learn and discover, your ideas and assumptions about what will happen, and possible challenges that you foresee. Prior to the first research interview, you will receive a draft copy of the interview questions for the three research interviews and you will be invited to give us feedback about the questions, and to propose revised or new questions for us to ask you.
2. Participate in an interview with a research assistant *in the middle* of your experience in the shared living arrangement. You will be asked a series of open-ended questions to explore your experience of the opportunities, learning, discovery and challenges.
3. Participate in an interview with a research assistant *at the end* of your experience in the shared living arrangement. You will be asked a series of open-ended questions to explore your experience of the opportunities, learning, discovery and challenges throughout the pilot project.

Note that all three interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

The interviewer will ask questions focused on:

- What opportunities the research participants envision in the situation
- What the research participants hope to experience and discover
- What assumptions the research participants need to test or challenge in thinking about the situation
- What potential dilemmas the research participants anticipate.

Application Requirements & Process

Students interested in applying for the “Friendly Housemates” Research Project must provide the following items as part of their application package:

1. A completed application form, provided in this document.
2. Two letters of reference. One reference **must** be an academic source. The second can be professional **or** personal. In addition to these reference letters, contact information for both references must be provided on the Application Form.
3. A clear and valid Vulnerable Sector Police Check no older than **one year** must be presented in order to be considered for an interview. It is recommended that interested applicants complete this step immediately as checks can take several weeks to process.
4. A 500 word personal statement outlining their desire to participate in the project, why they would make a good “Friendly Housemate” and what they hope to gain from the experience of this shared living situation.
5. A copy of academic transcripts. A GPA of 3.0 is required to be considered for the project, and must be maintained for the duration of the project.
6. An updated resume and cover letter.
7. Proof of First Aid/CPR certification. **(Desired but not mandatory)**

Only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted. The successful candidate will be required to have a medical certificate completed by their doctor. Certificate will be provided by Community Living Toronto.

Questions and completed application packages can be forwarded to:

Matt Poirier
Community Support Coordinator, Membership Services
Community Living Toronto, Central Region
20 Spadina Road
Toronto, ON
M5R 2S7
Email: matthew.poirier@cltoronto.ca
Phone: 647.729.1210
Fax: 416.644.4274



Friendly Housemates Research Project

Application Form

In Partnership with Centennial College

Where choices change the lives
of people with an intellectual disability

Date: _____

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: _____
Last *First*

Address: _____
Street Address *Apt./Unit #*

_____ *City* *Province* *Postal Code*

Phone: () _____ Alternate Phone: () _____

E-mail: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____
Last *First*

Address: _____
Street Address *Apt./Unit #*

_____ *City* *Province* *Postal Code*

Home Phone: () _____ Alternate Phone: () _____

REFERENCES

We require **2 letters of reference** which must include the contact information for the individual providing the reference. The first must be an academic reference. The second can be a professional or personal reference.

REFERENCE #1

Name: _____
Last *First*

Relationship: _____

Phone: () _____ Email: _____

REFERENCE #2

Name: _____
Last *First*

Relationship: _____

Phone: () _____ Email: _____

Application Contents Checklist

- One page personal statement
- Two letters of reference
- Updated resume & cover letter
- Copy of school transcripts(if applicable)
- Vulnerable Sector Police Check
- Completion of application