



## Mothers' Advocate Job Description

Patty's Hope provides practical help, hope, and healing for biological mothers of children in foster care. We partner with local organizations and the Christian community to implement a holistic, individualized program with a focus on four areas: housing advocacy, trauma care, life skills, and healthy community. Patty's Hope aims to honor Jesus by seeing mothers transformed mentally, physically, and spiritually, leading to lifelong, and eternal, health and stability.

Patty's Hope is seeking a person to lovingly walk alongside biological mothers whose children are in foster care. The foster care system is confusing and full of ups and downs. The mothers' advocate helps the mother navigate the foster care system, provides case management services by working in partnership with the department of social services, other service providers, and generally advocates for her during this difficult time.

### Job Description

The mothers' advocate (formerly known as a client services coordinator) supports biological mothers who have decided to fully engage in our program and, therefore, receive most of the services we offer which are derived from our desire for her to have stable housing, receive trauma care, experience life skills development, and build a healthy community. She will advocate for the mothers she serves by attending court hearings with her, sitting in on family partnership meetings (FPM's), going to her home to visit her or meeting with her at our office or out in the community. Sometimes this means praying with and for her after a difficult court hearing or some other hard event. This could include meeting a mother for coffee and sitting with her to hear her story, fears, concerns, and/or hopes, bringing her flowers to remind her that she is not alone, or perhaps, when/if the opportunity arises and it feels appropriate, sharing the hope of Jesus with her. The mothers' advocate is the mother's main point of contact with Patty's Hope. It is our desire that the mothers advocate will reflect the love of Christ towards the mothers she serves by being a safe place for her to share her struggles without fear of judgement or condemnation.

It is important for the mothers' advocate to be trauma informed. If the impacts of trauma are something the applicant feels she does not have a lot of knowledge about, Patty's Hope is happy to support the mothers' advocate obtaining trauma training in the community or online. This should not be something that prohibits an applicant from applying for this job. Our desire is that, most importantly, all mothers' advocates have a heart to be sensitive and informed about the very real trauma that the mothers we serve have experienced in their lives.

The mothers' advocate role can include helping the mother set and reach goals that are consistent with her service plan with her foster care case the Department of Social Services (DSS). Sometimes this involves having hard, but necessary conversations with a mother in the hopes that she will grow as a person as she works through the issues in her life. The mothers' advocate will work closely with other Patty's Hope staff to ensure mothers are receiving consistent care across the organization, including attending monthly care groups and/or therapeutic activities. At our weekly staff meeting, the mothers' advocates will share updates about the mothers she's supporting with the Patty's Hope team. This is to discuss the mothers' needs and to bring together our collective experience, wisdom and knowledge. Together we share biblical perspectives, experience with the foster care system, and what local resources might be available to help the mothers' advocate serve the mothers well as these cases can be challenging. There is a very real secondary trauma aspect to this work.

It is important that the mothers' advocate document her interactions with the mother through regular case notes. This case note would include the nature of the visit, what occurred, and who was involved. The mothers' advocate is responsible for ensuring that the mother's chart is complete, all forms are signed, and that service plans and waivers are up to date and reviewed annually.

As touched on above, the mothers' advocate guides the mother through the twists and turns of the foster care system. Helping her to understand the terminology used when a child is placed in care (FPM, TPR, 'return home', 'trial home placement', etc.) and the various players involved in a foster care case (GAL, CASA, attorneys, social workers, therapists, counselors, judges, etc.). Some of this can be learned on the job, so the applicant does not have to know the foster care system inside and out, but some experience or knowledge is helpful. It is also beneficial that the applicant has experience working with people living in poverty and chronic dysfunction.

The mothers' advocate may at times be requested to provide transportation for mothers to appointments, care group or a therapeutic activity. Mothers' advocates may occasionally be asked to help plan special events and retreats with other Patty's Hope staff.

The mothers' advocate may also be required to supervise visits, when needed. These visits are between the biological mother and her child(ren) and they often occur at the Patty's Hope office (at Christ Presbyterian Church). Visits are typically one hour in length for one child.

It is encouraged that the mothers' advocate seek out guidance, as needed, and also provide peer-to-peer support and guidance when possible. We encourage mothers' advocates to feel comfortable seeking out ongoing professional development opportunities. Mothers' advocates are expected to maintain a self-care plan and to communicate to our program manager if she is experiencing signs of compassion fatigue or burnout.

## **Qualifications**

Patty's Hope seeks staff who are followers of Jesus, so they are motivated by the Gospel and Christ-like compassion. Each role is essential to the organization. Each person on staff has a responsibility to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly (Micah 6:8) as an ambassador of Christ and of Patty's Hope to mothers, partners, volunteers and community members. How Patty's Hope staff execute our roles and responsibilities is essential to how well the program functions and to the quality of the services that Patty's Hope provides. Honesty, integrity, accountability, and diligence are expected as staff use their skills, talents, and time for Patty's Hope.

We prefer that Mothers Advocates are female and mothers themselves so they can sympathize and understand the unique position the mothers we serve are in.

- 1-2 years' experience in a social work, counseling, or a ministry field
- Experience working with people from hard places preferred
- Experience with the foster care system preferred, but not required
- Applicant agrees with our statement of faith, as found on our website ([www.pattyshope.org](http://www.pattyshope.org))

- Must have a caring heart and be willing to shepherd these mothers as they walk a very difficult road, yet also have the grit to enter into the realities of what these women have been through in their lives that has led them to the point of having their children removed
- A bachelor's or master's in social work, counseling, or ministry is desired, but not required
- Able to provide own transportation
- Access to a laptop computer
- Comfortable with Microsoft Office platforms
- Flexibility as some weeks are busier or slower than others
- Occasional availability on evenings and weekends, though this is rare.

### **Job Type**

Part-time position

### **Schedule**

On average, 20 hours per week. Nearly all work is performed Monday through Friday. One or two evenings per month is needed to assist with our monthly care group and/or therapeutic activity. There may be a very rare need for weekend work if there were some kind of retreat or special activity.

### **Compensation**

\$25 hourly

### **Benefits**

Partial benefits are being offered, including 2 weeks' prorated paid leave and sick pay.

### **References and Background Checks**

We request contact information (email or phone) for two references:

1. From a senior leader, elder or pastor from your church. Preferably someone who knows you well and has seen you perform in a serving capacity.
2. From someone who is familiar with your character, heart and work ethic.

If you are offered this position, we will request permission to perform a background check.

Thank you so much for considering this position with Patty's Hope. If interested, please contact Peter at 804-882-4789 or [peter@pattyshope.org](mailto:peter@pattyshope.org) for further details.