**Volunteer Task: Home Visits**

*Purpose of Home Visits*

Home visits are an essential component of the RCP project. Home visits provide the critical link between content learned in the workshops and implementation and reinforcement of new practices. Each RCP family has an assigned caregiver who visits them weekly. Through the continuity of weekly visits, the caregiver is able to develop a relationship with each family, assess the implementation status of new practices learned in the workshops (e.g. hand washing, care of sick children, garden containers), evaluate the family's ongoing needs, provide information, and ask and answer questions. The caregivers are an integral link between the RCP families and the RCP staff.

*Format of Home Visits*

Caregivers are assigned to families that live in the RCP villages. Each caregiver has approximately 30 families. The caregivers visit 2-3 families in the morning and 2-3 families in the afternoon. Each home visits lasts between 30-45 minutes. Depending on the distance, caregivers either walk to their home visits or are driven by one of the Global Volunteer drivers. The caregivers all speak very good English and are able to translate for the volunteers who participate in the home visits.

*Role of the Volunteer in Home Visits*

Overall, the role of the volunteers assigned to home visits have four main roles:

1) Engage their expertise with RCP families during home visits;

2) Share their expertise with caregivers in order to build capacity in caregivers to expand their

 knowledge and skill in interacting with RCP families;

3) Contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of RCP mothers and children;

4) Help reinforce the knowledge learned in workshops.

The volunteers who are assigned to the home visit task will likely be partnered with one caregiver for a week. Prior to each home visit, the caregiver will provide information about each family (e.g. length of time in the RCP project, workshops attended, age/s of children and/or status of pregnancy, mental wellness challenges). As you walk from home to home there will be time to discuss observations, ask questions, and offer suggestions to the caregiver. The caregiver may ask you for suggestions relative to issues that were raised in the visit. Please share any concerns with the caregiver that you may have at the conclusion of a home visit.

Volunteers bring specific areas of expertise to the home visits. For example, if you are a nurse, you might address a mother's concern about a rash on her child's arm or possible side effects of a medication. If you are an educator, you can offer suggestions relative to developmental stages or answer questions that a parent might have about their child's learning. If volunteers have expertise in nutrition, they may offer suggestions as to beneficial diet changes or supplemental foods to assist with morning sickness. Volunteers who have had experience with their own pregnancies and child rearing can offer suggestions and answer questions based on personal experiences. If a volunteer has experienced a mental health challenge and if the family visited is experiencing a similar challenge, it can be helpful for the volunteer to share their experiences.

The caregivers are eager to learn from the expertise and knowledge of each volunteer. In addition to offering knowledge, you will also contribute ideas for different ways to ask questions and offer insights into varying ways to respond to questions asked by the RCP family members. You are working in collaboration with the caregiver. Each caregiver will guide you through the home visit process and are very willing to answer any questions you might have about the process.

The RCP families are welcoming to all volunteers. You will be greeted warmly and will be offered a place to sit. The caregiver will take the lead in the home visit conversation and will expect the volunteer to actively participate. The caregivers are very skilled at translating between Swahili and English. You will be enriched by the home visit experience as you get to know the strengths and needs of the families involved in the RCP project. Your contributions are vital to ensuring that the home visits provide ongoing support to our RCP families.

*Additional Information and Suggestions for Volunteers Participating in Home Visit Conversations*

During home visits, conversations are translated by the caregiver. Some volunteers worry that they might ask a question that is not culturally respectful. Be assured that the caregiver will provide guidance to help rephrase a question and alter the topic if needed. **Ask questions that are open-ended.** Open ended questions will stimulate conversation and encourage the RCP member to provide more information than a simple yes/no question. Here are some examples of questions that you might ask at a home visit. You can choose questions that are relevant for each home visit. As you get more familiar with the home visit process, you will no doubt develop your own questions to ask as you meet with each RCP family.

***Specific Information about RCP Participation***

• What are the ages of your child/children?

• How long have you been in RCP?

• What encouraged you to join RCP?

• What workshops have you attended?

• Who in your family has attended workshops?

***Knowledge Gained from Workshop Participation***

• What is the most recent workshop you have attended?

• What changes have you implemented as a result of attending this workshop?

• Which workshop/s have been the most helpful to you? Why?

• How do the workshops help you be a better mother/father?

• What helps you apply information that you have learned in workshops?

***Benefits of RCP***

• What have you learned as a member of RCP?

• What makes you different from other moms/dads who have NOT been in RCP?

• What do you do differently now to help your baby/child be healthy?

• What do you do differently now to help your child talk/interact more with you?

• What nutritious foods are you eating to help you have a healthy pregnancy?

• What do you wish/dream for your child/children?

***Thoughts and Reflections about RCP Participation***

**•** What suggestions do you have for how to improve RCP?

• What workshop topics would be helpful to you?

• How would you explain RCP to someone who isn’t enrolled in the RCP project?

• How might you encourage a mom/dad to join RCP?

***Specific Questions Related to Health and Hygiene***

• What are your concerns about your pregnancy? What is going well?

• How much water are you drinking?

• How is breastfeeding going for you and your baby?

• What types of support are you receiving from family and friends?

• How often do you refill your water station?

• Can you explain your process for boiling water for drinking?