**THE SAMARITAN HOUSE OF ORANGEBURG COUNTY, INCORPORATED**

**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

**NOT A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT**

**Policy Manual Disclaimer**

This handbook represents the current policies and procedures of The Samaritan House (TSH) of Orangeburg County, Incorporated. These policies and procedures will be changed and updated by the board as needed. This document does not create an express or implied contract of employment between TSH and the volunteer. This information is not intended to bind TSH or any volunteer to any specific procedures, policies, benefits, working conditions, or privileges of employment.

**Volunteer’s At-Will**

**ALL VOLUNTEERS ARE VOLUNTEERS AT-WILL AND ARE FREE TO LEAVE THE ORGANIZATION AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY REASON, OR FOR NO REASON AT ALL. CONVERSELY, THE SAMARITAN HOUSE OF ORANGEBURG COUNTY, INC. HAS THE SAME RIGHT TO TERMINATE A VOLUNTEER AT ANY TIME, FOR ANY REASON, OR FOR NO REASON AT ALL.**

Oral or written statements or promises to the contrary are hereby expressly disavowed and should not be relied upon by employees.

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**Volunteer’s Signature**  **Date**

**Purpose of Manual**

The purpose of this manual is to help volunteers understand about TSH of Orangeburg County, Incorporated.

1. We want volunteers to know our background, purpose, mission, objectives, and Code of Ethics. These have much to say about where we are and where we are going.
2. We want volunteers to understand our philosophy so they will have a clear guide in all that they do.
3. We want volunteers to understand the policies and procedures that help us serve one another and the residents effectively.
4. We want volunteers to understand the most effective way to work with others.

Every volunteer is responsible for upholding the integrity of TSH. This policy manual will help assist in maintaining good administrative relationships and practices.

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**Approved: July 16, 2020**

 **Revised: December 12, 2023**

Instructions

1. Each volunteer person signs an “Employment at Will” statement.
2. File the “Volunteer at Will” statement in the file of the volunteer.
3. Provide a copy of the Volunteer Handbook to each Volunteer.

**WELCOME TO VOLUNTEERING!**

We hope your association with us will be a mutually beneficial experience. It is our hope that your heart and mind will grow as you share your time, talents, and enthusiasm with us. Thank you for choosing to serve with us.

This Volunteer Handbook has been prepared to inform you about The Samaritan House (TSH), Incorporated shelter’s history, philosophy, practices, and policies. Although no handbook can answer every question, we have attempted to cover the major points of volunteering at TSH. We ask that you read the Volunteer Handbook carefully and refer to it whenever questions arise.

Please always feel free to stop in at TSH to get further clarification or to share your questions or concerns with the Executive Director.

TSH utilizes the support of volunteers in all aspects of its program and services. Volunteers are an integral part of providing adequate services for the residents of TSH including shelter services, fund raising, and community support. Shift volunteers provide coverage during the day and evenings (if necessary). Hiring enough staff to cover all shifts would be too costly for us, making it financially unfeasible. As a result, we would be forced to either close our doors completely or make substantial cuts to the service we offer. Our organization serves as a prime example of a community program that heavily relies on the dedication and support of volunteers. Without their selfless contribution, we would simply not be able to exist.

In addition to the monetary value of our volunteers, there is another, less tangible benefit: you are demonstrating to our residents that there are people in our community who really care about other people and are willing to donate their precious time and energy to providing housing, companionship and compassion to those going through difficult times. Many people who pass through our doors have never before experienced this type of unconditional kindness and caring from strangers. We understand that each of you live a busy life and have numerous other commitments. Despite this, you have made the choice to volunteer here, dedicating your time to assist individuals who are facing significant challenges. We want to express our heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the Board, Director, Volunteer Coordinator, Staff, and most importantly, the Residents of The Samaritan House. Your support are genuinely valued and appreciated!

We hope this handbook will allow you to feel comfortable with TSH. Again, please do not hesitate to ask questions; we will gladly answer them. We also welcome your ideas for ways to improve our service. We believe you will enjoy your volunteer work here and get to know and appreciate your fellow volunteers. You will also get to know and appreciate the residents, people who are experiencing homelessness, but who are working towards a better life. We hope you will find TSH a rewarding place to volunteer.

On behalf of our staff, residents, and Board, we thank you in advance for the time and energy you are about to give to TSH and your community. We look forward to getting to know and working with you.

**THE SAMARITAN HOUSE OF ORANGEBURG COUNTY, INCORPORATED**

The name of the organization is **The Samaritan House of Orangeburg County, Incorporated**, hereinafter referred to as TSH, is located at 1580 Middleton Street, Orangeburg, South Carolina, 29115. It is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of South Carolina.

 The organization shall be non-partisan and makes no discrimination on the basis of age, race, religion, color, creed, sexual orientation, national origin, or ability to pay. No part of the contributions and/or earnings of the Corporation shall enrich its Board of Directors, officers, committee members, and/or volunteers.

**Background**

TSH was organized in 2001 from a response to fulfill the great need in the Orangeburg area as was evident by the use of a now defunct “shelter” that existed under deplorable conditions. As a result, a group of community leaders saw the need and began serving the homeless in 2002. TSH began providing transitional housing effective June 2004 through 2016 (primarily funded by HUD). TSH was funded through federal grants, community contributions and private donations. The primary source of funding (HUD) ceased in 2016. TSH was closed due to a lack of funding and a huge indebtedness that created a fiscal crisis for the Board and management.

Since the closure of TSH, the homeless population is seen on the streets of Orangeburg seeking shelter in the woods of Edisto Gardens, empty businesses, waiting rooms of the local hospital and other businesses, in wooded areas with makeshift accommodations, in vacant buildings and just wandering around town from place to place – unclean, hungry and even in some cases needing medical attention. The population does not include the invisible homeless that are sleeping from couch-to-couch and house-to- house daily, or with whoever may provide a temporary shelter. On very cold nights the City of Orangeburg opens the city gym to provide temporary shelter. The Transitions House in Columbia, South Carolina indicates that they provide shelter and services to residents of Orangeburg County that arrive at their doorsteps sometimes being transported by law enforcement.

The last homeless count by Point-in-Time (2018) identified 1,200 people as homeless in the area. This is a one-day count sponsored by United Way of the Midlands on an annual basis. Even though the official count is not available, a drive by a downtown site shows the compelling presence of those individuals that may be homeless and or indigent. TSH when opened stayed full or at capacity of 40 residents per night.

**Purpose**

TSH is organized exclusively for charitable purposes. The purpose of the organization is to provide safe housing and transitional services to the homeless. Services to include, but not limited to, personal and professional development, vocational development, interpersonal skills development, community involvement, independent living preparation, educational assistance, health care, financial literacy, and spiritual enrichment.

**Our Mission**

* To offer people who are homeless shelter and resources to secure housing.

**Objectives**

* To dedicate securing the necessary funding to ensure the continued operation(s) of The Samaritan House.
* To create safe housing that provides not only temporary shelter, but also stabilization services to support and guide residents to become productive, healthy members of the community with empowering skills.
* To develop a strong Board of Directors that can offer guidance, help with fundraising efforts, and oversee the smooth operation of the organization.

**Code of Ethics**

**Values**

* Respect & Dignity
* Service
* Outcome-driven
* Compassion & Caring
* Integrity
* Accountability

**Each person served will:**

* Be treated with dignity, respect, honesty, and compassion.
* Receive services that meet all regulatory and professional standards.
* Experience confidentiality and privacy within the context of accountability.
* Have access to information in their resident records.
* Be assured that services will be delivered with awareness and respect for cultural,

racial, gender, age, physical, mental, and other individual differences.

* Be able to express and to have a method for resolving disagreement about services or treatment received or recommended.
* Not be used by employees, contributors, or board members for personal gain or

Retribution.

**Keys to Success**

* Enable and provide essential services and support to those in need.
* Ensure that the offered services meet the needs of the target population.
* Design and implement operational guidelines with strict financial controls and accountability.

**Market Analysis**

TSH is unique in the Orangeburg community as it is the only facility organized to provide homeless men, women, and their children with the following services:

1) Temporary shelter and residential services

2) The most beds for the homeless in one location

3) Case Management Services

4) Individualized Treatment Plan

5) The most meals for the homeless in one location

6) Four (4) Program Levels:

1. Assessment
2. Emergency
3. Stabilization
4. Extended
5. Referral Services

Other service providers do not offer temporary shelter, in-depth case management and stabilization services to this population. The lack of competitive providers makes TSH the premier source of interim housing and transitional services. The last annual report of TSH indicated there were more female and single mothers being served who have problems with alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic violence, and poverty. Most of the homeless males had difficulty managing chronic substance use, unemployment, with a history of criminal convictions that further impeded their attempts to achieve self-sufficiency. Many of these individuals had physical disabilities and many had serious mental illness. The need for services is usually extensive.

The last annual report of TSH also indicated significant referrals were received from local agencies to include law enforcement; Probation, Pardon and Pardon; the Dawn Center; Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center; the Regional Medical Center; Department of Social Services; churches and from Street Outreach for homeless shelter and transitional services for men, women, and their children.

**Target Population**

TSH has identified three distinct target market segments of residents, namely, adult men and women and their children to the extent that our services, guidelines, and accommodations will allow. TSH does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, sex, disability, or age.

**SO, YOU WANT TO BE A VOLUNTEER…**

Volunteering to help those less fortunate is a noble undertaking if it is done for the right reasons. As you contemplate this new volunteer experience, we ask that you carefully consider our volunteers’ ***Code of Responsibility*** and ***Bill of Rights.***

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| --- | --- |
| **CODE OF RESPONSIBILITY** | **BILL OF RIGHTS** |
| **Be sure:** Look into your heart and know that you really want to help other people. | **As A Volunteer You Have the Right to. . .****Be treated as a co-worker . . .** not just as “freehelp” ... nor as a “prima donna” |
| **Be convinced:** Do not offer your services unless you believe in the value of what you are doing. | **a suitable assignment . . .** with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education, and employment background. |
| **Accept the rules:** Do not criticize what you do not understand. Do not hide your doubts and frustrations until they drive you away or affect your performance. | **know as much about the facility as possible.**its policies, its people, and its programs. |
| **Be willing to learn**Training and listening are essential to any job well done. | **training for a job . . .** thoughtfully planned and effectively presented training. |
| **Keep on learning:** Know all you can about the client base and our organization and continuously seek improvement. | **a continuing education on the job. . .** as a follow-up to the initial training - information about new developments - training for greater responsibility. |
| **CODE OF RESPONSIBILITY** | **BILL OF RIGHTS** |
| **Welcome supervision:** You will do a better job and enjoy it more if you are doing what is expected of you. | **sound guidance and direction . . .** by someone who is experienced, well-informed, patient, and thoughtful - and who has time to invest in giving guidance. |
| **Be dependable:** Your word is your bond. Do what you have agreed to do. This is a commitment, so do not make promises you cannot keep. | **a place to work . . .** an orderly, designated place conducive to work and worthy of the job to be done. |
| **Be a team player:** Find a place for yourself on the team. Adapt to the environment and develop a role that will balance out the team. Be willing to help when needed. | **promotion and a variety of experience . . .** through advancement to assignments of more responsibility; through transfer from one activity to another; through special project assignments. |
|  | **be heard . . .** to have a part in planning; to feel free to make suggestions; to have respect shown for an honest opinion. |
|  | **recognition . . .** in the form of promotion and awards for some tangible evidence; through day- by-day expressions of appreciation, and by treatment as a bona fide co-worker. |

**Volunteer Policy and Procedures**

1. TSH of Orangeburg County encourages volunteer participation by individuals and groups.

**Definition:**

***“Volunteer or Material Donor”*** is a person who, of his/her own free will, provides goods and services to the agency without receiving monetary or material compensation.

1. As a volunteer at TSH, you are expected to demonstrate ethical and professional conduct towards all Samaritan House residents, staff, volunteers, other agencies, and the general public. This includes speaking and acting in the best interests of our residents and the organization. Please treat all participants and staff members with dignity and respect and show concern for their rights as individuals.

1. Requirements for Volunteers
	1. Perform duties within the policy, procedures and rules set by TSH.
	2. Perform tasks assigned by their supervisor and approved by the director.
	3. Must maintain strict confidentiality concerning any information to which they may have access within their volunteer duties.
	4. Will not discuss any of the residents by name or identifying information with anyone but TSH staff.
	5. Will not discuss residents at TSH with any other residents.
	6. Should avoid relationships with current and former residents that may interfere with their ability to benefit from TSH services. Do not enter into friendships with residents in your personal time.
	7. Should avoid entering into a romantic or sexual relationship with a current resident regardless of whether such relationship is consensual or otherwise.
	8. Should avoid any commercial transactions with residents.
	9. Volunteers must not express a personal opinion to the public that could be confused with policy or formal position of TSH.
	10. Avoid any appearance of sexual harassment, which is defined as any unwelcome or offensive conduct, whether written, verbal, or physical.
	11. Shall sign in and out in the Volunteer Log. Volunteers must keep track of their hours and report them to the volunteer coordinator each month.
	12. Volunteers must wear name tags.
	13. Volunteers must attend a volunteer orientation.
	14. Volunteers must submit to a criminal background check.
	15. Understand that TSH is a drug-and alcohol-free agency.
	16. Will not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, economic status, political beliefs, mental or physical disability.
	17. Volunteers may not transport residents in a personal vehicle.
	18. Do not give money to TSH residents.
	19. Volunteers must be trained for the jobs they will be assigned to do.
	20. Volunteers must not knowingly be exposed to any unnecessary danger or hazards in the workplace and must not perform any functions requiring a license or certification unless they have a current license or certification to do so.
	21. Notify staff immediately if injured while performing your volunteer task.

**Age**

TSH requires that all individual volunteers be at least 18 years old. Exceptions may be made for certain supervised programs. Please contact us directly for further guidelines. For volunteers coming in a group from a church, school, etc., there is no set age limit. But any volunteer under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult unless an exception has previously been approved by the volunteer coordinator. ***Please contact Samaritan House for any questions or concerns with this policy.*** Volunteers who have children under 18 years old are welcome to bring them along with them as well.

There must be a minimum of 1 adult chaperone per 8 youth volunteers. There may be limitations on what youth volunteers can do based upon their age and abilities but generally all volunteer opportunities are open to them as well with a chaperone accompanying them. ***Please contact Samaritan House for any questions regarding this policy.***

**Resident Interaction**

At no time is a Samaritan House resident allowed to ask ANY volunteer for any personal information ***(i.e.: e-mail address, phone number, home address, etc.).*** We also ask that you do not offer this information to our residents without prior approval from Samaritan House staff and while interacting with a resident, please do not offer any services or assistance without prior approval from a staff member. Also, while an active volunteer, you are not allowed to offer the assistance of letting a resident come live with you when they leave TSH.

Currently, we have limited volunteers who are authorized to take residents to church services. When residents are in your care for church services, we ask that you remain with the resident at all times ***(exception: using the restroom).***

**TSH** **DOES NOT** allow any volunteer to take any resident to their residence, friends’ residence, or family residence at any time for any reason. This is for the safety of both the volunteer and the resident. Volunteers may offer to take a resident to a scheduled appointment. **Please advise a staff member if you wish to do so**.

**Volunteer Conduct and Health**

All volunteers of TSH are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and appropriate manner while volunteering with TSH. In respect of the health of all Samaritan House residents, staff, and other volunteers, we ask that volunteers be in good health. Please, if you are going through a cold, the flu or other medical issues that may be contagious, please reschedule your volunteer service to a later date. This includes volunteers needing the use of oxygen, IV’s or other medical devices that may interfere in their volunteer service. ***Any disrespect towards a staff member, resident and/or other volunteer will not be tolerated.*** All volunteers are expected to dress appropriately and according to their assignment. Any volunteer who dresses inappropriately may be asked to leave.

When you are given an assignment and that assignment is complete, please notify a staff member. If there are more chores or duties to complete, they will be assigned as such. Otherwise, you may leave and return another day for more hours of volunteer work. Unless authorized by a Samaritan House staff member and/or the program you are completing, volunteers are not allowed to sit and watch television, make personal phone calls, etc. If you need an assignment, please notify a staff member. If no assignments are available, then you may leave and return another day.

Residents may not ask any volunteer for money, housing, or other resources. We request that volunteers not give money, gifts such as clothing, Bibles, personal items, ***etc.***

If a resident at any time requests personal information, money, or housing or if a resident makes you feel uncomfortable in any way, please advise a staff member immediately. A Samaritan House resident can be very persuasive and often demanding. Please do not feel the need to agree with their requests. It is better for you to simply pass the request onto a Samaritan House staff member to decide how to deal with it.

**Volunteer Safety**

At no time may any volunteer offer TSH residents any services, favors or benefits in regard to providing them jobs, financial assistance, and/or housing of any type while they are an active resident of TSH. This especially includes but is not limited to providing housing when a resident is discharged. It is inappropriate but more importantly it is very unsafe for any volunteer to do this. Any volunteer found to be violating this policy, may be asked to not return to TSH.

Volunteers come to TSH to provide invaluable volunteer services which are greatly appreciated by Samaritan House staff and its board of directors. But we also take seriously the safety and well-being of all our volunteers and as such we strongly insist that you as a volunteer **DO NOT** make offers to our residents unless you receive approval to do so by a staff member or until after they are discharged from TSH. Please **DO NOT** violate this policy for any reason, while they are active residents.

**Application/Training**

Volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application and attend orientation and on-going training as requested by the Director. A criminal background check will be done on each volunteer at no cost to the volunteer.

**Attendance**

Sign-in sheets are necessary for our program in order for us to keep an accurate record of your contribution to TSH. We ask that you sign in and out each time you volunteer. It is very important to be punctual when you arrive for your shift; ten minutes early is recommended to give an opportunity to exchange information with volunteers from the previous shift and staff as well as to get a chance to meet residents.

**Boundaries and Limitations**

Please maintain proper boundaries with residents; being kind and compassionate is important. Becoming too friendly or intrusive can lead to serious problems. The primary focus on one’s work at TSH must be service to the residents, not fulfillment of personal needs. If personal issues arise in your life that may cause difficulty in fulfilling your responsibilities, it may be best to take a break from volunteering.

**Confidentiality**

Maintaining confidentiality is our utmost importance when working with individual(s) in vulnerable situations. Any information shared with you at The Samaritan House must be kept strictly confidential. Please take the time to carefully read and sign the confidentiality policy.

**Conflict Resolution**

 If you encounter a difficulty with another volunteer, resident, or staff member, contact TSH Executive Director. A meeting will be arranged to hear the concerns and a plan devised to resolve the conflict. If your concern is with the Executive Director or you do not feel the conflict has been resolved, you may contact TSH Board Chairperson.

**Drugs and Alcohol**

TSH is a substance-free environment. Please report any suspected use/abuse to staff or Director.

**Volunteers do not necessarily have the time.**

 **they just have the heart.**

* Elizabeth Andrew

**Equal Volunteering Opportunity**

TSH provides equal volunteering opportunity for everyone regardless of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religious persuasion, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, or disability that does not prohibit performance of essential job functions. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon ability to perform the job as well as dependability and reliability.

**Gifts, Tips, Soliciting**

Our goal is to cultivate a supportive environment where our residents are not expected or compelled to offer rewards or expressions of gratitude to The Samaritan House staff and volunteer(s) for their expected performances. Also, you may not promote or solicit your own business enterprise, political agenda, or religious beliefs while volunteering with us. Solicitation for a private charity is also prohibited.

**Harassment**

Sexual harassment or harassing conduct will not be tolerated at TSH. If you feel you have been harassed, or if observe harassment of a resident, report your concerns immediately to the Director.

**Incident Reports**

Volunteers will be required to document, in writing, any unusual incidents that may occur on a shift on the Incident Report within 24 hours. (Examples of incidents that need reporting include volunteer or resident injury, medical emergency, serious disagreements or conflicts, law enforcement involvement, and any other unusual situations.) If a serious situation arises when staff is not present, contact the Executive Director for support and consultation. Never hesitate to call 911 in an emergency situation.

**Parking**

TSH does not assume any liability for loss or damages your car may sustain while parked in our lot.

**Meetings/Trainings**

Volunteers may be required to attend meetings/training on occasion as determined by the Executive Director and the Volunteer Coordinator, to discuss changes in policies, overall functioning of TSH and/or other topics of significance. There will be occasional Volunteer Support meetings that will be opportunities to discuss situations and brainstorm solutions with other volunteers. These meetings are optional, but a good opportunity to share concerns and ideas for improving services.

**Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted in The Samaritan House facility. Residents and volunteers may smoke in the designated outside area only!

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

**\_\_\_\_Instructional & Group Volunteers**

* Teach residents of TSH functional skills. Examples could include making crafts, life/parenting skills, budgeting, computer training, resume development, literacy skills, etc.
* Assist Shelter Director and Volunteer Coordinator with daily shelter tasks as assigned
* Engage in activities and resources that will benefit the community and the shelter

**\_\_\_\_Spiritual Enrichment**

* Conduct devotionals, worship service and Bible Study
* Petition for community outreach programs and volunteers to assist with spiritual enrichment.

**\_\_\_\_Coaching & Mentoring Volunteer (Children’s/Youth Volunteer)**

* Assist Case Manager/Intake Coordinator with mentoring and developing skills to enhance the youth lives, their academics and family bonds
* Promote and empower youth programs and activities assigned by the shelter case manager
* Involve youth in projects, decision making and provide feedback

**\_\_\_\_Adult (Individual) Mentoring Volunteer**

* Assist Case Manager/Intake Coordinator with creating a positive non-threatening learning environment
* Create a wide-range of opportunities for professional development and growth
* Assist and encourage attendance for mandatory shelter trainings and meetings and provide feedback

###### **\_\_\_\_ Kitchen Assistant Volunteer**

* Assist with food and beverage preparation, serving, and clean-up.
* Stock pantry and keep it neat and clean.
* Clean refrigerators and ensure unused items are discarded.
* Sanitize kitchen as scheduled.
* Provide guidance on sanitization/food service.
* Provide meals 3 times a day to non-residents.

###### **\_\_\_\_Hospitality/Receptionist Volunteer**

* Professionally answer, receive, transfer, and distribute messages using a multi-line telephone system.
* Ensures Residents sign in and out when exiting and returning to the shelter.
* Check Residents bags to ensure the shelter’s policies and procedures are followed.
* Ensure all donations are accurately recorded.
* Assist with the shelter’s monthly volunteer report.
* Assist with distributing meals (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner) to Non-Residence

**\_\_\_\_Greeter Volunteer**

* Work in the day room and are available to answer questions when residents first enter TSH.
* Chat with residents and share information on TSH services with residents new to the facility.
* Check bags of potential residents for items that should not be brought into the facility.

###### **\_\_\_\_ Shelter Assistant Volunteer**

* Sign residents into the room.
* Make sure they have clean linen for their bed.
* Give each a hygiene packet.
* Provide them with a change of clothing, if needed.
* Sort, label, and stock donated items.

**\_\_\_\_ Case Management Assistant Volunteer**

* Intake Assistant – take applications on prospective residents.
* Assistant Case Manager.
* Sort, label, and stock donated items.

###### **\_\_\_\_Office Assistant Volunteer**

* Provide data entry, filing, mailings, copying, and general clerical work.
* Manage/Organize files and documents.
* Assist in coordinating meetings/appointments.
* Order and Maintain Office Supplies
* Assist with basic bookkeeping.
* Provide general support to other staff members.

###### **\_\_\_\_ Computer Technician/Technology Volunteer**

* Update hardware and software for all computers.
* Provide social media development and updates.
* Provide newsletter/brochure development and updates.

###### **\_\_\_\_ Instruction Volunteer**

* Teach residents of TSH functional skills. Examples could include making crafts, parenting skills, budgeting, computer training, resume development, literacy skills, etc.

###### **\_\_\_\_ Donation Volunteer**

* Solicit, receive, sort and/or manage donations from the community for use by residents.
* Maintain listing of needed items.
* Secure contact information on donor.
* Ensure the storeroom is maintained in an orderly fashion at all times.

**\_\_\_\_ Spiritual Enrichment**

* Conduct devotionals, worship service, Bible Study, mentoring.
* Solicit community volunteers to provide spiritual enrichment.

 **\_\_\_\_ Facility Management**

* Assist with minor repairs, maintenance issues, upkeep of building, etc.
* Coordinate and manage maintenance and repairs such as cleaning, landscaping, plumbing, and electrical, HVAC system, etc.

 **\_\_\_\_ Transportation Volunteer**

* Assist with travel assignments for residents to and from appointments, occasional grocery shopping needs.
* Ensure the safety and comfort of passengers during transportation.
* Maintain clean and well-maintained vehicles.
* Coordinate pick up/drop off times and locations with Case Managers
* Keep track of trips and mileage for reporting
* Adhere to any specific guidelines/requirements set by The Samaritan House Policies, Rules, and Regulations

**VOLUNTEER CONCERNS**

At The Samaritan House we believe in providing volunteers with a platform to express any concerns they may have, regardless of their magnitude, while actively volunteering.

Consider the following if you find you have a concern while volunteering:

* In the event that another individual is directly involved, we strongly encourage you to first attempt to resolve the matter though open and respectful communication. It is important to address any concerns directly with the person involved in order to find a mutually agreeable solution. However, if the issue remains unresolved despite your efforts, we recommend escalating the matter to the Executive Director, Volunteer Coordinator for their intervention and guidance. They will be able to pursue further assistance and support in resolving the issue effectively.
* In the event that you have any questions or concerns regarding volunteer conditions, terms, policies, practices, or actions by The Samaritan House that you believe to be unjust, we strongly encourage you to schedule a private meeting with the Executive Director and Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. This meeting will provide you with an opportunity to openly discuss your complaint and provide substantiated reasons for your feelings. It is important to engage in a respectful and constructive conversation to address and resolve any issue that may arise. The Executive Director and Volunteer Coordinator is committed to addressing your concerns and working towards a resolution.

**REASONS FOR DISMISSAL**

The following is a list of major reasons the Executive Director may feel the need to dismiss a volunteer:

* **Attendance problems** – Has frequent absences or arrives late and leaves early too often.
* **A poor attitude** – May be cynical, “passes the buck” when something unpleasant happens, cannot accept suggestions or criticism, is negative to the public, resident and/or employees.
* **Difficulty** with volunteer duties, has to be supervised too much of the time (does not follow instructions when given), fails to recognize errors or problems, takes no initiative.
* **Not following** volunteer program policy or agency rules.

However, TSH reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer at any time.

It is necessary to approach volunteering with a sense of commitment, open mindedness, resourcefulness, and initiative. By doing so, volunteers can make the experience a rewarding experience.

**WHEN YOU MUST BE ABSENT**

We ask that you take responsibility for the work schedule to which you have made a commitment. However, we understand that there will be times when you must be absent from your volunteer position. If you know ahead of time, please inform your immediate supervisor as soon as possible and mark the date(s) on the appropriate Absence Calendar in the sign-in book. If you are sick and cannot come in, please call your immediate supervisor as soon as possible.

**VOLUNTEER RESIGNATIONS**

TSH hopes that you find your volunteer experience both enjoyable and rewarding. However, circumstances can change. If your schedule should change and you can no longer volunteer in your current assignment, please note the date of your last day in writing and submit it to the Executive Director and Volunteer Coordinator. Providing an email address is an option. You will be asked to complete a Volunteer Exit Survey so that we can take steps necessary to correct any problems that you may have had while volunteering.

If your assignment is not providing you with the skills and learning opportunities that you would like, please talk with the volunteer coordinator who will work to resolve the problem.

**VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION**

  Volunteers are an essential part of The Samarian House, therefore; The Samaritan House will make every effort to acknowledge and reinforce the accomplishments of all its dedicated and supportive Volunteers. Once a Volunteer has completed TSH Orientation process, TSH Handbook Training, and have completed at least 3 months of on-site volunteering services to include; a minimum of 60 hours, the volunteer will be given a Samaritan House Volunteer Certificate. In addition, upon completion of a 12 months or more volunteer period, TSH will host an Annual Volunteer Appreciate Day with additional incentives and also highlight its volunteers in their quarterly Newsletter and Annual Report. During the course of volunteering, at any given time, the Executive Director and the Volunteer Coordinator will periodically evaluate volunteer performances to ensure that the volunteers are meeting all volunteering requirements and standards. The Samaritan House Volunteer Program is dedicated to exemplary work ethics and effective and proficient professionalism.

#### **WHAT CAUSES HOMELINESS?**

###### **Lack of Affordable Housing**

This is a primary cause of homelessness. With rents going up every year and mortgages becoming increasingly more difficult to obtain, many individuals are finding that they are unable to fulfill their housing needs. When an affordable home is not found, homelessness is inevitable.

###### **Mental Illness**

A mental illness can restrict the amount and types of work that an individual may conduct as well as the types of environments where they can live. An example of a group that consistently faces homelessness due to mental illnesses are veterans who, due to their state of being, are not able to support themselves and find a stable home.

###### **Substance Abuse**

Individuals who battle substance abuse are much more likely to be homeless due to familial conflict, job loss, and even incarceration. Healthcare costs associated with treatment of substance abuse are more than enough to put individuals into debt and force them into homelessness.

###### **Low-Paying Jobs**

Many individuals are employed when homelessness sets in. A missed rental or mortgage payment can send individuals into the streets despite the possibility of a clean financial history prior to eviction. When jobs do not pay a living wage, a home may be nearly impossible to afford.

###### **Slashed Services and Government Assistance**

Many housing developments (primarily low-income developments) are funded through federal funding. When funding is cut or scarcer, these programs stop accepting applications and people who otherwise would have had a home are stuck in the stage of homelessness. Furthermore, many low-income developments have been replaced by high-rent developments that force individuals and families out of their neighborhoods and they are often homeless during this transition period.

###### **Domestic Violence**

Victims of domestic violence are one of the most vulnerable populations that experience homelessness. In order to escape dangerous and abusive situations, many individuals (including children in most cases) have no other choice than to flee their homes for a safe haven. During this period of flight, the family might experience homelessness.

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###### **Unemployment**

Individuals who may have had good jobs are also vulnerable to homelessness if they are forced into unemployment. Even in the best-case scenario where an individual is eligible up to the maximum 26 weeks of unemployment, people must rely on personal savings thereafter— assuming there is any—to make ends meet. Even if another job is found, the chance remains that making ends meet and paying off debt accrued while unemployed will be very difficult.

When these ends are not met, not only may homelessness become a reality, but also job loss may happen again and the prospects of finding another job may decrease with an increasingly inconsistent employment record.

###### **Poverty**

Poverty can be either relative or absolute. Relative poverty is the condition in which an individual or family is living below the standard of living set by the government based upon a set poverty threshold. This threshold is the point at which a family can afford all of the necessities for survival. Absolute poverty is a level of poverty as defined in terms of the minimal requirements necessary to afford minimal standards of food, clothing, health care and shelter. Set at a much lower level, families and individuals who fall below this standard cannot afford the most necessities needed for survival. The presence of federal, state, local, and private programs diminish the chances that those who are homeless will experience absolute poverty; however, the chances are still there and there is a population present that experiences this extreme form of poverty. A lack of shelter is strongly correlated to poverty.

**FEELINGS THAT MAY BE EXPERIENCED**

 **BY PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS**

**Anxiety:** This is the most common feeling. Any substantial threat produces anxiety. Normal amounts of anxiety help one mobilize against threats in ways that are appropriate and healthy. Great or on-going anxiety, however, may produce confusion, distorted perception, poor judgment, and self-defeating behaviors.

**Helplessness:** People work hard to manage successfully and develop coping skills. To have the roof fall in as the result of an external disaster or a series of events may produce feelings of helplessness.

**Shame:** People are taught to be competent and self-reliant but during a crisis one can feel incompetent and may have to depend on others. This can produce feelings of shame.

**Anger:** This may be directed at others, the event, the support people, or turned inward on the person.

**Ambivalence:** A person in crisis feels ambivalent because of struggling with independence vs. dependence, self-reliance vs. reliance upon others, controlling emotions vs. losing control, and increasing self-confidence by managing by him/her vs. increasing vulnerability by reaching out to another for help.

**Low Self-esteem:** All of the above feelings can produce a decrease in self-esteem and leave the individual feeling extremely vulnerable. It is this decreased self-esteem and great vulnerability that make a crisis both a danger and an opportunity.

Clients in crisis may act on their feelings and how they think one ought to behave to accomplish something. This is why some clients act angry, demanding, and manipulative; these are feelings and actions which defend against their real feelings of anxiety, helplessness, shame, and incompetence. Although the behavior is an attempt to regain control, it usually fails to obtain the necessary help or to restore control.

**Caution for caretakers!!!**

While we may have valuable insights on how Residents can address their situations, it is crucial to respect their autonomy and allow them to make their own decisions. We can offer suggestions and highlight available resources, but ultimately, we should encourage residents to dedicate for themselves how they want to proceed!

Our purpose is to**EMPOWER.**

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## **COMMUNICATION**

### How **NOT** to communicate with Samaritan House residents :**(or children, neighbors, students, friends, co-workers, etc.).**

In talking with residents at The Samarian House, it is important to avoid certain types of responses that block communication and put the residents in powerless positions. Examples of **ineffective responses** include the following:

* 1. **Ordering, warning, or threatening –** “*You have got to join the group*” or *“If you don’t do it, you’ll be sorry*.” This can produce fear, defensiveness, or resistance in residents and leave them feeling rejected and/or humiliated.
	2. **Preaching, moralizing –** “*Look on the bright side*,” or “*There’s a reason why you’re going through this pain*.” This can create guilt, resistance, and low self-esteem.
	3. **Reasoning, arguing, or persuading** – “*You’re wrong because*….” Or “*You’d feel* a *lot better if you would only*…” Responses like this may produce helplessness and defensiveness and set up a win/lose situation.
	4. **Providing answers or solutions –** “*The best thing would be for you to*…” This takes away power from residents and it can foster feelings of inferiority or resistance.
	5. **Blaming or criticizing –** “*I thinkis your fault*,” or “*You’re too trusting*.”

Responses like this communicate a lack of respect and may engender feelings of inferiority and resistance or withdrawal in residents.

* 1. **Sarcasm or teasing –** “*So you think the world is going to end if* Responses

like this can hurt and humiliate clients, resulting in anger, resistance, or withdrawal.

* 1. **Avoiding or digressing –** “*That reminds me of* …” This can communicate disinterest, leaving residents feeling ignored and/or rejected.
	2. **Labeling –** “*It sounds like you’re co-dependent*.” This can make residents feel like they are being seen as problem types rather than individuals; it can produce feelings of inferiority, resistance, and anger.

There are other types of responses that must also be used with caution: They may block communication if they are not used carefully. Responses that have potential to be **ineffective** include the following:

1. **Interpreting –** “*What you mean to say is*…” Responses like this imply that you know residents better than they know themselves. These responses can produce feelings of confusion, inferiority, and frustration at not being understood. Stated differently “*do you mean*…?” can help clarify communication.
2. **Questioning –** “*Why did you do that*?” Questions, especially if asked in a series, may come off as interrogation that produces defensiveness and distrust in others. Certainly, it is appropriate to ask some questions; to be most effective questions should be open-ended (how or what questions…those not answerable by “*yes*” or *“no*.”)
3. **Praising - “***I think you must be a wonderful mom*.” Praise coming from someone who barely knows you can sound very insincere and may have the opposite of the intended effect; this is especially likely when dealing with someone whose self-concept is low. On the other hand, it can be very helpful and effective to point out strengths you do notice in residents (“*I know it was scary for you to come here; I’m glad you had the courage to do it*.”)
4. **Reassuring –** “*Things probably aren’t as bad as you think*.” Or “*You’ll get through this*.” This kind of response may have the opposite of the intended effect. Residents may feel worse if they feel that their situations are being minimized.

**KINDNESS,**

 **Like a Boomerang,**

**Always returns.**

* Author Unknown

**TIPS FOR HELPING CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS**

Experiencing homelessness is especially traumatic for children; their lives have been uprooted and they do not understand what has happened. They will require additional attention and lots of patience. Obviously, this is a time that is extremely difficult for their parents. When talking to parents who need help and support, remember these points:

1. Let parents know **THEY ARE NOT ALONE**. Parents need to hear other’s input, ideas, and support. You can say things like, “I’ve heard many parents talk about that struggle” or “I know what you’re talking about, my two-year old acted the same way.” With these kinds of statements, parents know that others have had the same struggles.
2. Reassure parents that their child’s behavior is normal. For example, it is normal for two-year-olds to say “no” all the time, for three-year-olds to whine a lot and forgive-year-olds not to want to go to sleep or wash their hands before eating. Be as informed as you can about child development issues. Your priority is to immediately reassure the parent.
3. Share ideas with the parents about positive reinforcement. Remember, rewards do not have to be objects; they can be hugs, smiles, loving words. Here are some tips for when and how to reinforce POSITIVE behavior:
	* Immediate reinforcement is most effective.
	* To get it going, reward every time. To keep it going, reward periodically.
	* Reward improvement.
	* Watch and be careful not to occasionally reward negative behavior.
4. Help parents talk about their children in a positive way. Suggest positive adjectives to describe their children (helpful, sensitive, lighthearted, serious, curious, energetic, loving, etc.). Also notice what parents are doing right and congratulate them.
5. Talk to the parents about stress management for themselves. Parents need to hear about self-care skills (sleeping, eating, and supportive resources). Parents need to take some time for themselves and need adult conversation. Encourage them to take that time and help them plan how they will be able to do that.

## **THE SAMARITAN HOUSE HOSPITALITY CODE**

1. **It is nice to hear your name**, so learn the names of our residents, too.
2. **Labeling people creates invisible barriers**; remember that residents are residents, not “the homeless.” Labeling – whether spoken or printed on a posted sign – creates divisions and can foster an “us” and “them “syndrome.
3. **Personal questions can be tough to answer;** do not put residents in awkward positions by asking personal questions. If residents need to talk, give them the chance, but do not pry.
4. **We all like to keep some things to ourselves**; all information about residents is confidential. Do not discuss residents’ situations with other people.
5. **Everyone can use a little privacy;** our shelter is a temporary home for our residents. Knock before entering a resident’s room.
6. **Sometimes we need to spend time alone**, respect residents’ needs for quiet time alone or with family.
7. **We all have bad days**; depression, sadness and hopelessness may come. Allow residents the space to deal with their emotions. Be prepared to forgive outbursts without judging residents ungrateful.
8. **We understand and care for our children**; allow residents to do the same. Avoid contradicting residents’ instructions to their children. Always ask parents’ permission before giving things to children.
9. **Parents need a break;** offer to tutor, play with, and plan activities for interested children while their parents take a break.
10. **Adult residents should be treated like adults**; although our residents are in situations that may make them temporarily dependent on others, remember that they are adults who are capable of making their own decisions.

**Life’s most persistent and urgent question is,**

**What are you doing for others?**

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

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