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*I shall pass through this world but once. Any good therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.*

.....Grillet

## Welcome

We are pleased and honored that you have chosen to join us as a volunteer and to donate your time and skills for the benefit of those we serve. You are now one of a special group of people who have made a decision to serve your community.

The strength of our community lies in its members. We believe that volunteers can provide a vital link between our programs and the citizens we serve. You can play a key role in bridging the gap between our worksites and the community. You can make a meaningful contribution by being another community voice, helping to ensure needs are met.

We are committed to involving you as a part of a team in meaningful volunteer opportunities to provide quality service to someone in need. You will benefit through personal growth and the sense of satisfaction from learning new skills while assisting others. Our hard working, dedicated staff look forward to having you enhance many of the things they do.

This manual is offered for the purpose of sharing information about our organization, your duties and responsibilities as a volunteer and other important information you will need to successfully perform your volunteer duties. Please take the time to read it and to highlight areas you have questions on.

Volunteering is a commitment to healthier families, individuals and communities. This is our purpose and we are grateful for your contribution to achieving it.

**Dana Helzer**  
Coordinator, Volunteer Services

## **Volunteer Services:**

### **Facts:**

- We are part of the health programs across Prince Edward Island and our health services employ approximately 1,000 people
- We assist citizens ranging in age from a few seconds to over one hundred years of age
- We offer the following health services throughout the East Prince area:
  - ▶ Prince County Hospital
  - ▶ Physician Services
  - ▶ Addiction Services
  - ▶ Community Mental Health
  - ▶ Child & Family Services
  - ▶ Evangeline Health Center
  - ▶ Public Health
  - ▶ Home Care
  - ▶ Housing Services
  - ▶ Stewart Memorial Hospital
  - ▶ Summerset Manor
  - ▶ Wedgewood Manor

The Volunteer Services Program has been developed to assist all of the above services and their programs. The following pages will familiarize you with the very important purpose, vision, values and goals of the program which you are now a part of.

## **THE VOLUNTEER SERVICES PROGRAM**

### **Our Mission (Purpose Statement)**

We will strive to strengthen our community by working together to provide meaningful volunteer assistance to citizens, staff and organizations in the community while providing a channel for more community input.

### **Our Vision**

Our vision for the future is a healthy community in which every citizen understands the value of volunteerism and then consciously volunteers in whatever capacity they are able.

### **Our Principles and Values**

**Caring** - we will respect the dignity and value of all people involved in the program, treating others as we wish to be treated.

**Community Involvement** - we believe it is a good thing for citizens to participate through volunteering. It adds value to our organization.

**Teamwork** - we believe that paid and volunteer staff should work together as equals in a climate of mutual respect, trust and support.

**Quality Service** - we will model high ethical standards at all times while continuously seeking to improve.

**Open and Honest Communication** - we will encourage and expect open, honest interaction and input from volunteers and staff at all levels.

## How to become a Volunteer

Any individual who is interested in becoming a volunteer will be asked to follow this process:

1. Complete a volunteer application form and supply two references. Obtain criminal record check documentation.
2. Take part in a personal interview to learn more about our programs and services so that a good match can be made based on the needs of those we serve and your skills and interests.
3. Take part in a general orientation and a more specific orientation and training at the worksite you are assigned to. By now you will have received a volunteer position description which will outline your duties and responsibilities.

If you are just at the interest stage and unsure whether you want to commit to volunteering, be sure to seek out the information you need. We would be very happy to talk with you or put you in touch with an experienced volunteer who could answer your questions. Reading through this handbook may also be helpful. Some individuals wish to volunteer on a regular basis and others may wish to assist occasionally or as part of a group. We are grateful for whatever you can contribute.



(4)

## Goals of the Volunteer Services Program

- To support staff, programs and community groups in an effort to enhance our response to the people we serve
- To reach out to the community to allow more public participation and input within our organizations
- To develop, support and promote volunteerism as a vital component of our organizations



(5)

## Benefits of Volunteering

As a volunteer you will benefit from:

- The satisfaction of knowing you have assisted another person
- Exposure to various work settings and learning new skills
- Meeting new people and making new friends
- Career development opportunities that can be included on a resume
- Receiving a letter of reference (after several months of regular service) based on your dependability and performance
- Knowing you are contributing to making your community healthier



(6)

## Responsibilities of a Volunteer

As a volunteer you are responsible for:

- Being dependable and notifying the worksite as soon as you know you are unable to attend
- Learning the skills necessary to perform your volunteer duties by attending the training sessions available and be knowledgeable about your program
- Complying with the policies and procedures outlined in the program manual
- Keeping records as requested such as the number of volunteer hours contributed
- Accepting support and feedback from others - ask about things you don't understand - there may be reasons for the way things are done or you may have a better suggestion - we welcome your input



(7)

## **Ethical Issues**

1. You are required to sign a confidentiality agreement and must respect the confidences learned on your volunteer assignment. Any information about the people you serve is strictly confidential and must be managed carefully.
2. Do not express personal, religious or political beliefs or give advice on someone's treatment.
3. You must serve all citizens without regard to race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
4. Respect the privacy, without judgement, of the people you serve. Each is an individual with different needs.
5. Politely turn down monetary rewards and gifts from the people you serve.

## **What is Confidentiality?**

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained for respectful relationships, as well as for legal and ethical reasons. All information learned directly or indirectly concerning your volunteer assignment must be held in strict confidence and not discussed outside the workplace. You are encouraged to talk about your volunteer experience so you may interest others; however, you must not talk about individuals in such a way that they may be identified. It is not even appropriate to tell others that someone is a patient in hospital if you have learned this through volunteering there. It is essential to respect the confidences of those you serve, the staff and fellow volunteers

This also means NOT asking questions of patients or fellow volunteers or staff which gives information we don't need to know . We only need to know what is necessary to do our job,

so inquiring about patient's condition is not appropriate. We want to be kind and caring, but need to respect confidentiality that is part of our role as volunteers.

Sometimes patient's disclose information to us, without our asking, so we become a listening ear. Please remember we can be good listeners, but are not here to learn about a patient's condition or tell others what is disclosed to us.

Confidentiality is a very important part of the orientation and training and all volunteers will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Everyone in the organization, which includes volunteers, is expected to respect the privacy of others and to treat confidential information responsibly.

## **Orientation and Training**

As a volunteer, you will receive a general orientation that will cover the background knowledge and information necessary to assist you to better understand your volunteer role and how it contributes to the overall purpose of our organizations.

Following this training, you will receive a more detailed orientation to the worksite where you will be performing your volunteer duties. An orientation checklist is attached for your use. Should you feel uncomfortable or dissatisfied with your volunteer assignment, discuss it with your supervisor and every effort will be made to make suitable changes.

# Orientation Checklist

Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Initial**

- 1. Signed oath of confidentiality \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Received volunteer handbook \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Reviewed and as copy of the position description \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Introduced to other staff and volunteers \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Information on our organizations \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Specific information on Volunteer Services Program \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Program policies and procedures reviewed \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. General appearance guidelines \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Received name tag \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Lines of communication \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Training opportunities \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Benefits \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Specific worksite information regarding:
  - a. hours of operation \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. lunch and rest breaks \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. use of telephone \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. smoking policy \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. security \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. lines of supervision \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. incident reporting \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. attendance and punctuality \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. fire safety \_\_\_\_\_
  - j. emergency procedures \_\_\_\_\_
  - k. occupational health \_\_\_\_\_
  - l. tour of worksite \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor's  
Signature

Ongoing education and training sessions will be available for volunteers to provide opportunities to learn new skills and for personal growth as well. You are encouraged to check the bulletin boards and newsletters for various topics that might interest you and to inquire about the availability of space.

The Volunteer Services Program has a policies and procedures manual that will be reviewed during orientation. There is one located on each worksite. Every volunteer should become familiar with it and know how to access it.

## Sign In / Out

Volunteers are asked to sign in when starting their service and sign out upon completion of their assignment. This is important for liability insurance coverage. It is a record of who is in the building in case of an emergency. It also enables us to keep track of the hours contributed by volunteers. Sign-in record sheets are available on each worksite. You will become familiar with this process during orientation. You are encouraged to arrive a few minutes early to review any information that may be waiting concerning your duties.

## Absences

It is very important that you show up on your scheduled day and that you are on time. Your presence and commitment is counted on by staff and by the people you serve. We recognize that sometimes a volunteer is unable to attend for various reasons. Please give as much notice as possible so that arrangements can be made to find a replacement. If you are feeling ill or have an infectious condition, please do not report.

## Dress Code

Your appearance is important since it establishes confidence and respect among the people you work with, the people you serve and the general community. Soft soled shoes are recommended. Clothing should be comfortable. In consideration of others, please do not wear scented products.



## Identification

Regardless of the location, all volunteers must wear an identification pin stating their name and title. These will be provided by the worksite and should be stored when signing out.

## Fire and Emergency Procedures

Every worksite is responsible for providing a safe environment for staff, volunteers, the people being served, and visitors. All volunteers must be aware of the procedures in place in the event of a fire or other emergency. This will be reviewed during worksite orientation. Please make sure you are familiar with what is in place.

## Infection Control

As a volunteer in health, it is essential that you understand how infection spreads and how to prevent it. You will be instructed in universal precautions and are required to:

- wash your hands before and after your volunteer assignment
- not report for your volunteer duties if you are sick

## Occupational Health & Safety

The services of an Occupational Health & Safety Associate are available to all worksites to assist with providing and maintaining a safe environment. If something appears unsafe to you, it probably is. Be sure to report it to a staff person right away.

## Incident Reporting

If you are involved in an unusual incident while performing your volunteer duties, be sure to notify a staff member. Guidance and direction will be available and you may be asked to complete an incident report form.



## **Insurance Coverage**

All registered and fully documented volunteers are covered by the liability insurance of government health services on PEI while acting within the scope of their duties. Volunteers are not covered by Workers Compensation.

## **Smoking**

All worksites are smoke free. Staff will inform you if alternate arrangements are in place for people to smoke. You are expected to refrain from smoking if you are volunteering in someone's home.

## **Termination**

Volunteer Services reserves the right to terminate the services of a volunteer if it is felt to be in the best interest of the program and the volunteer. This may occur when...

- A volunteer fails to comply with policies and procedures
- Continuous absences which show a lack of interest and commitment
- Arriving at the worksite under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Breach of confidentiality
- Abusive behavior towards another person
- Theft of any kind

Volunteers will be informed during orientation about offenses that can lead to termination. The decision to terminate is highly confidential and the volunteer's privacy and dignity will be protected. Termination is a last resort and will only occur after careful investigation and documentation with careful consideration of the rights and best interests of all parties. Appropriate support will be offered to the volunteer.

## Rights of a Volunteer

As a volunteer you have a right to:

- A meaningful and satisfying volunteer position with a position description of your volunteer duties
- Adequate orientation and training with access to on-going educational opportunities
- Good communication and information about matters that relate to your volunteer position
- Guidance, direction and support from staff and other volunteers with the opportunity to share your ideas and suggestions
- Regular feedback on your performance and recognition of your service
- Be heard and have your suggestions and opinions respected
- A safe and supportive work environment

## Exit Interview

When a volunteer separates from the program, they will be requested to give feedback on their volunteer experience. Their input will be sought regarding suggestions they might like to pass on for improvements in the program.

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## Recognition

We appreciate the valuable contribution made by volunteers to our programs and services. Volunteers will be formally recognized annually, particularly during National Volunteer Week in April. It is our belief; however, that recognition has to be an ongoing activity that should happen on a daily basis in a small, sincere way. We believe the best recognition you will receive is respect and gratitude from the people you assist.

We encourage volunteers to share with others how a particular staff member may have assisted them so that staff too will receive the recognition they deserve.



