

# **Samaritan House/Safe Harbor**

## **Volunteer Handbook**

“Service is the price we pay for living.”  
Marion Wright Edelman

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## **Samaritan House Mission**

Samaritan House is committed to fostering personal safety, self-sufficiency, and personal growth in adults and their children through freedom from domestic abuse and homelessness.

## **What it means to be a Samaritan House Volunteer**

Being a volunteer means lending a hand to someone in need without looking for anything in return.

It is to support families that are homeless; children that have lost their homes; men, women, and children that are victims of domestic violence and much more.

**Be someone!**  
**Be a Samaritan House Volunteer**

“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.”

Edmund Everett Hale

Families become homeless for a variety of reasons. Many of the families we serve are homeless as a result of family violence. Women with children often have a long history of abuse which precedes them. During their stay we attempt to provide sanctuary and to facilitate healing by extending our care and affirmation as well as help with housing, employment, court and legal proceedings, financial aid and assistance with household donations.

During a family's stay, we attempt to serve in a spirit of "solidarity" with them. We attempt to extend to them a sense of "home" and all that that implies: warmth, familiarity, safety, security and identity.

**Help!** Your time and caring are needed. We rely on volunteers to assist the staff with the needs of children, food shopping, crisis telephone intervention, fundraising, maintenance and clerical support.

To discuss our volunteer opportunities call Melody Sanders at 757 631-0710 x 279 or email [Melodys@samaritnahouseva.org](mailto:Melodys@samaritnahouseva.org) or Katherine Ashford at 757 631-0710 ext. 335 or email [katherinea@samaritanhouseva.org](mailto:katherinea@samaritanhouseva.org).

## **Samaritan House Volunteer Policy & Procedures**

### **Becoming A Volunteer**

- To become a volunteer:
  - Attend Volunteer Orientation
  - Sign a Confidentiality Agreement
  - Agree to abide by the Samaritan House Code of Conduct
  - Personal interview or reference checks may be required
- Individuals have the right to become volunteers of Samaritan House regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, financial status or age.
- A volunteer's personal information will be held in confidence.
- In order to allow appropriate time for healing and avoid possible conflicts of interests no one who is currently homeless or in an abusive relationship should volunteer for at least one year after moving out of that relationship.
- It is not uncommon that training will trigger in an individual issues that they may not have previously identified as abusive, or which they thought they had resolved. If that happens, we ask the individual to advise the trainer or the volunteer coordinator. They may complete the training, but will be asked to delay becoming an active volunteer until they have allowed themselves time to heal and resolve their issues.
- Due to issues of safety and confidentiality, no one under the age of 18, or still in high school is allowed to become a volunteer. Students may support the work of Samaritan House by participating in special projects, such as donation drives, work projects or fund raising activities.

### **Time Commitment**

- Your time is very valuable to the success of our program, once you have made a commitment staff will depend on your regular participation. Frequent absences or tardiness will seriously hamper the program, so please be punctual and reliable.
- When unable to attend volunteering, please call your supervisor immediately.
- Keep track of the hours you volunteer. A time sheet will be provided by your supervisor.

## Placement and Supervision

- All volunteers have the right to an assignment that is meaningful and challenging, however, all placements will be made with the overall needs of the agency in mind.
- Your supervisor will orient you to your responsibilities. In order to give services from which you receive satisfaction it is important that you know from the beginning what is expected of you. Feel free to ask questions and don't hesitate to approach your supervisor for assistance, especially if a situation arises about which you are unsure.
- Though we try to find the best job for each person, some volunteer assignments do not work out. If you feel the assignment is not what you expected talk with your supervisor within the first few weeks. This will allow him/her to make early adjustments in the assignment or to look for a more suitable activity for you.
- Likewise the situation may arise where we feel a volunteer is not a good match for our needs. If this happens the supervisor will talk with the volunteer and make every effort to offer additional training or support. However, it is Samaritan House's right to make the final determination on the placement of a volunteer.
- The Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible for handling any termination or re-assignment of a volunteer.
- If an issue or situation arises, which for any reason, you do not feel comfortable discussing with your staff supervisor, please, contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

## Training

- All volunteers have the right to expect orientation, training and adequate supervision so as to allow him/her to perform the job well
- Depending on your volunteer job, you may be expected to attend some additional training sessions. Your supervisor will let you know what is expected.

## Communications

- As a volunteer you have a right to be kept informed about in-house agency information and procedures.
- All volunteers will be added to the agency data base and thus will receive all agency communications.
- Additionally a newsletter, exclusively for volunteers, is produced monthly in an effort to assure that all our volunteers are kept informed.
- Please make suggestions that you feel will enhance our program. However, be aware that we may not be able to accept all suggestions and final policy and program standards rest with the staff and management of Samaritan House.
- Volunteers will be invited to All Staff meetings when appropriate and applicable for volunteers.

## Departure from the Volunteer Program

- Termination of a volunteer's services may sometimes be necessary. In all such cases, the volunteer coordinator will discuss the reasons for dismissal from the program with the volunteer.
- Reasons for immediate termination would be:
  - Violating the confidentiality policies of Samaritan House and any program participant, staff member, or fellow volunteer, including the location of an emergency house or a participant.
  - The use of physical violence, threatened or actual with any group participant, staff member, or volunteer.
  - The use of verbally abusive language with any caller, participant, staff member, or volunteer.
  - The use of alcohol or drugs while on duty or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on duty.
  - Violating any of the written protocols or direct instruction of supervising staff members.
  - Falsification of any information including but not limited to the volunteer application, crisis log sheets or any other internal record or form.
- Termination may be initiated for the following reasons:
  - Being tardy for a shift/scheduled appointment (**up to three strikes**)
  - Absences with no prior notification (**up to three strikes**)
  - Behavior not consistent with the goals of the program
  - Breach of the commitment to confidentiality
  - Inability to perform the tasks required to an acceptable standard
  - Receipt of three Volunteer Incident Reports (found in Appendix on page 13)

## Grievance Procedure for Volunteers

- If you have a conflict with an employee of Samaritan House that you cannot resolve yourself, or which you believe directly affects the quality of services to participants, you can make a formal, written complaint.
- The grievance is to be given in writing to the Volunteer Coordinator. If you do not receive satisfaction within five working days, you may then file the written grievance with the Executive Director. The Executive Director will have five working days to resolve the problem. The decision of the Executive Director is final.
- **The grievance form can be found in the Appendix on page 9**

## Evaluations

- In order to remain in compliance with the accreditation standards as outlined by the Virginia Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Action Alliance; all volunteers will receive a performance evaluation six weeks after their official start date and again in April for an annual review.

- In order to receive input that will allow us to continually improve our volunteer program, volunteers will also be asked to evaluate the Samaritan House Volunteer Program six weeks after their official start date, as well as in April for a annual volunteer review.

## **Appreciation and Recognition**

- Volunteers will be internally recognized for their support on the Samaritan House Volunteer Hall of Fame board in accordance with their total number of volunteer hours and/or magnitude of how their service has helped the organization accomplish our mission.
- Volunteer will be publically recognized for accomplishing mild stones, such as next level of total volunteer hours, via Samaritan House's social media sources.
- Volunteers will be given individual recognized during Volunteer Appreciation week in April and during the Holidays, each year, with a personalized gift and thank you note from staff.

## **Advancement**

- Volunteer may advance in their position when wither they have completed the requisite training topics and hours to graduate from a Volunteer Level (1, 2, 3), or within a specific level based on total number of hours volunteered, mastery of department information, and approval from their supervisor.

## Confidentiality

Samaritan House/Safe Harbor adheres to a strict confidentiality policy within its service provision to all individuals' access crisis intervention, advocacy and support services to adults, youth and children. All volunteers are expected to uphold the standards of confidentiality, to act in accordance with the code of conduct of Samaritan House and to comply with the policies and procedures governing Samaritan House.

- Volunteers will keep confidential the location of all Samaritan House emergency houses.
- Volunteers will not confirm or deny the presence of any resident in emergency housing or community client accessing the program.
- Volunteers will interact with residents in a professional/supportive nature.
- Volunteers agree that client information is privileged, and will keep it confidential from all outside sources.
- Volunteers will not discuss one resident with another resident.
- Volunteers will not discuss with residents any information discussed in staff meetings.
- Volunteers will not discuss outside of staff meetings, any incident in which someone could be identified, nor will use the names of any resident, past or present, without their knowledge or consent.
- Volunteers will acknowledge legal obligation of City, State, and Federal laws as it pertains to reporting of any instance of child abuse and/or neglect, and to report to the proper authorities immediately. Volunteers will consult with a staff member prior to taking these actions.
- Volunteers agree that if they violate the confidentiality standards, that it will result in immediate dismissal from their responsibilities and position as a Samaritan House volunteer.

## **Samaritan House Policy on Volunteer Attendance**

Volunteers are an integral part of our mission. Without your support we could not provide services to our clients. Part of our mission is to foster an environment where volunteers and paid staff work side by side, augmenting each other's work. In order to accomplish this it is imperative that all staff are present and on time during the work week, barring illness and personal emergencies. Below are our policies on absences and tardies:

### **Absence**

#### **Policy to be enacted if absences become habitual within a 30 day period.**

1. First absence supervisor will reach out to the volunteer to make sure he/she is alright and verbal remind them they had a committed to volunteer with Samaritan House. Supervisor will make note of this communication in volunteer's file.
2. Second absence supervisor will reach out to volunteer to make sure he/she is alright, verbally reminder the volunteer of his/her commitment to volunteering and how important their support is to our mission. Supervisor will emphasize how much we appreciate the volunteer's time and willingness to support our mission; however it is crucial ALL staff (volunteers are staff) show up for assigned shift(s). Supervisor will present the volunteer with a copy of the Samaritan House policy on absences. Supervisor will make note of this communication, including signed copy of policy, in volunteer's file.
3. Third absence supervisor will confirm volunteer is alright and verbally remind the volunteer they had a committed to volunteer with Samaritan House. Supervisor will inform the volunteer their absences have resulted in a formal warning. Supervisor will make note of this communication, including the Formal Warning, in volunteer's file.
4. Five or more absence will result in a meeting with the volunteer's supervisor and the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss the reason(s) behind the volunteer's absences. The volunteer will be encouraged to volunteer within Samaritan House but in a differ capacity. Supervisor will make note of this communication in volunteer's file.

### **Tardy**

#### **Policy to be enacted if tardiness becomes habitual within a 30 day period.**

1. First tardy supervisor will reach out to the volunteer to make sure he/she is alright and verbal remind them they had a committed to volunteer with Samaritan House. Supervisor will make note of this communication in volunteer's file.
2. Second tardy supervisor will reach out to volunteer to make sure he/she is alright, verbally reminder the volunteer of his/her commitment to volunteering and how important their support is to our mission. Supervisor will emphasize how much we appreciate the volunteers' time and willingness to support our mission; however it is curtail ALL staff (volunteers are staff) arrive on time to work. Supervisor will make note of this communication in volunteer's file.

3. Third tardy supervisor will confirm volunteer is alright and send (via email) a visual review of the Samaritan House's policy on lateness, emphasizing how much we appreciate the volunteers support. Supervisor will make note of this communication in volunteer's file.
4. Fourth tardy supervisor will reach out to volunteer to make sure he/she is alright. Supervisor will present the volunteer with a copy of the Samaritan House policy on time and verbally discuss the importance to our mission that all staff arrive on time for their shift(s). Furthermore, supervisor will issue a formal warning to the volunteer. Supervisor will make note of this communication, including signed copy of policy and formal warning, in volunteer's file.
5. Five or more tardies will result in a meeting with the volunteers supervisors and the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss the reason(s) behind the volunteers tardies. The volunteer will be encouraged to volunteer within Samaritan House but in a differ capacity. Supervisor will make note of this communication in volunteer's file.

## Samaritan House Background Check Policy

To ensure the quality of its staff and volunteers while safeguarding the interests of its constituents, Samaritan House will conduct background checks and screens for its employees and selected candidates for employment. In addition Samaritan House will screen its volunteers and students prior to service. Applicable statutes and regulations may require that employees, or certain categories of employees, be subject to additional background checks.

### Policy:

1. Samaritan House will conduct the following background checks on all employees, volunteers and students who have or may have direct contact with program participants:
  - CPS background checks from Virginia Department of Social Services/Child Protective Services Central Registry with a signed release.
  - Drivers record check from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) with a signed release.
  - Sex offender registry name search through the Central Records Exchange of the Virginia State Police.
2. Samaritan House may conduct the following background checks on all employees, volunteers and students:
  - Any combination of previous checks and/or including criminal history, credit history and other work related background checks deemed as necessary.
3. Upon employment and anytime thereafter, employees must advise Samaritan House if they have been convicted of, or plead guilty to, criminal charges. Disclosure of a criminal conviction may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, depending on the severity of the circumstances. Failure to disclose such a conviction will be dealt with severely and may subject an employee to immediate termination from employment.
4. To further safeguard program participants, all potential residents entering a housing program will be screened through the Sex Offender Registry prior to placement. We search the Virginia Sex Offender Registry and the National Sex Offender Registry.
 

\*Virginia Sex Offender Registry: <http://sex-offender.vsp.virginia.gov/sor/>

\*National Sex Offender Registry: <http://www.familywatchdog.us/>
5. All direct service staff will have annual mandated reporter training and therefor report all suspected child abuse and neglect to Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services within 24 hours.

# APPENDIX

## Samaritan House Code of Conduct

Volunteers of Samaritan House/ Safe Harbor agree to exercise the highest standard of personal conduct in the execution of their duties with Samaritan House. These include, but are not limited to, upholding the following in the practice of their volunteer responsibilities:

1. To treat all colleagues, peers and residents of Samaritan House with dignity and respect.
2. To intervene with residents in a non-victimizing manner. Resident's shall be served in a spirit of solidarity and empowerment. Volunteers will not dictate, rather they will uphold the plans and wishes of the residents and operate in a non-judgmental fashion.
3. To uphold the confidentiality of all residents as indicated in the Confidentiality Agreement.
4. Not to participate in any illegal acts
5. To keep the workplace drug and alcohol free
6. To support peers and colleagues in every way and to serve families in crisis as a team.
7. Not to preach to, nor force clients to participate in any prayer meeting, Bible Study, etc. If residents express a need or desire for spiritual direction ministerial assistance of the client's choice will be made available by way of the advocate.
8. Not to require or request residents or clients to perform any personal favor or tasks with or without remuneration. This action constitutes a conflict of interest. Further, volunteers are not to have any type of personal relationship with a client.
9. To interact with residents only at the direction of Samaritan House Staff and refrain from giving any personal gifts or loans to any client unless the matter is discussed first with the advocate assigned to the family.
10. No volunteer shall use his or her position, or the knowledge gained there from, in such a manner that a conflict between the interest of the organization and his or her personal interests arises. Each volunteer has a duty to place the interest of the organization foremost in any dealings with the organization and has a continuing responsibility to comply with the requirements of this conflict of interest policy.
11. The conduct of personal business between any volunteer and the organization and any of its affiliates is prohibited.

12. Volunteers may not obtain for themselves, their relatives, or their friends a material interest of any kind from their association with the organization nor shall they solicit or accept personal loans from the organization.
13. If a volunteer has an interest in a proposed transaction with the organization in the form of a significant personal financial interest in the transaction or in any organization involved in the transaction, or holds a position as trustee, director, or officer in any such organization, he or she must make full disclosure of such interest before any discussion or negotiation of such transaction.
14. To practice nonviolent behavior in all dealing with peers, colleagues, clients and residents of Samaritan House.
15. To provide the highest quality of service possible to our clients through expediently handling all requests for service, responding to all messages and calls and communicating relevant information to appropriate staff.
16. It is the policy of the Samaritan House not to discriminate against its residents and program participants regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, familial status, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical handicap, political affiliation or past participation in the discrimination complaint process.

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**Signature**

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**Date**

## Samaritan House Volunteer Opportunities Levels and Training Requirements

Volunteers must attend training on specific topics to meet eligibility requirements set forth for Samaritan House's accreditation. More training topics are presented at each level. Background checks are required for those working directly with clients and/or the children of clients. (Samaritan House's policy on Background checks on page 12)

Level 1 – Volunteers who may have incidental contact with persons accessing services

**Training Required:** Minimum 4 hours

**Volunteer Positions:**

- Emergency House cleaning
- Fundraising
- Grocery Shopper
- Holiday support
- Maintenance
- Sorting Donations

Level 2 – Volunteers who may have some contact with persons accessing services

**Training Required:** Minimum 20 hours

**Volunteer Positions:**

- Development
- Speakers Bureau
- Transportation

Level 3 – Volunteers and Interns who have ongoing contact with persons accessing services

**Training Required:** Minimum 32 hours (24 hours classroom and 8 hours departmental)

**Volunteer Positions:**

- Administrative Assistant
- Child Care support
- Court Companion
- Domestic Violence Education presenter
- Hotline Advocate



**Samaritan House 2015 Volunteer Evaluation**  
**Intake Department**

**Volunteer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Approximate volunteer start date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Activities are performed by the volunteer?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please rate the volunteer in each of the following categories on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the least achieved and 5 being outstanding).**

Demonstrates the ability to work well with participants in crisis situations	_____
Consistently follows thru on volunteer time commitments	_____
Hot line sheets, time sheets and other forms are well documented	_____
Treats clients and staff in a manner that exemplifies the respect and Dignity that each person is entitled to	_____
Provides sufficient notification for absence or tardiness	_____

Staff Comments and Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Comments & Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Samaritan House 2015 Volunteer Evaluation  
Non-Intake**

Volunteer's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate Volunteer Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

What activities are performed by the volunteer?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Please evaluate the volunteer in each of the following categories on a scale of 1-5. (5 being outstanding and 1 reflecting a need for further training)**

Treats, clients, staff, other volunteers and the public in a manner that exemplifies the respect and dignity that each person is entitled to.	
Follows thru on Time commitment	
Provides sufficient notification for absence or tardiness	
Demonstrates the ability to follow directions and act independently	
Is comfortable asking questions and seeking clarification when needed	
Reflects an understanding of and commitment to the mission of Samaritan House	
Respects and honors the Samaritan House commitment to confidentiality and the Samaritan House Code of Conduct.	

Staff Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Samaritan House Volunteer Survey

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1. How long have you been a Samaritan House Volunteer?

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2. What Samaritan House activities are you involved in?

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3. Please rate your experience as a Samaritan House Volunteer by placing an 'X' under the description that best describes your time as a volunteer.

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative

Comments:

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4. How would you rate the orientation and training you received for your volunteer job?

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative

Comments:

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5. Do you feel you are kept informed about events and meeting crucial to the operation of Samaritan House?

Yes

No

6. What could we do to improve communication?

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