

**SO YOU ARE GOING TO BE A SAMARITAN SHELTER
VOLUNTEER ... THAT'S GREAT!**

Guide for Shelter Volunteers

This booklet has been prepared to help you get oriented before you arrive. For some of you, this will be your first time volunteering (welcome!); for others, it will have been awhile. For those of you who are "old pros", please let us know how well we have done at capturing the important points, and what we should include in the next edition.

With the help of your ideas and comments, we have prepared a set of checklists that will help walk you through the routine. Copies are included at the end of the handbook so you can review them in advance. We have given you this booklet so that you can review the routine in a leisurely manner and write down any questions that you might have for the staff.

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1. Who Are the Shelter Guests?

The shelter serves up to 30 single adult men and 10 adult women per night. The shelter average is 22 per night. Guests may be from Manchester or surrounding towns. The average length of stay is 5 to 10 days. Extensions are granted in any case if the individual is working with a case manager on a plan to arrange a permanent living situation and if space permits.

2. What is the facility like?

Our facility is clean, bright, and highly functional. It provides a warm environment for our guests, volunteers, and staff.

The main floor contains the dormitory, television area, showers, bathrooms, sign-in desk, and interview cubicle. The lower floor contains the kitchen and dining area, food pantry, bathrooms, laundry area and storage. The upper floor is mostly offices, with a clerical work area and bathroom for staff and volunteers. This floor is off limits to guests, unless they have an appointment with a case manager

3. What Services Are Available to Guests?

Guests are admitted for an overnight stay between 6:00 and 8:00 PM and can stay until 8:30 AM the next day. They receive supper and a light breakfast and are welcome to partake in the main meal served by the Shepherd's Place Soup Kitchen from 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM.

Sheets, blankets, pillow, pillowcase, and towels are provided for use while they are here. Personal supplies such as toothbrushes, shaving cream, deodorant, combs, etc. are available for those that need them.

Case Management staff is available Monday through Friday, 8:30AM – 4PM to assist guests in finding housing, financial assistance, substance abuse or mental health treatment, medical care, legal advice or other needs that they may have.

Twelve Step and MACC Faith Sharing group meetings are held on location on a weekly basis.

4. Who Staffs the Shelter?

A House Manager is on duty from 6:00 PM to 9:00 AM.

5. What is the Volunteer's Role in the Shelter Program?

For many years the shelter was staffed entirely by volunteers. We now always have a member of staff on duty whenever the shelter is open.

A minimum of two volunteers is needed from 7 PM – 9:30 PM each evening. Two to three volunteers are needed to heat up the food and serve supper. These volunteers also oversee the dining room and clean up the kitchen and serving area after meals. In addition, after the kitchen is cleaned, these volunteers set up for breakfast and make bag lunches when requested. Sunday evening meals, which are made by the volunteers, should always be planned for 40 shelter guests. An alternative to buying and cooking the food is to order pizza, which is enjoyed by the guests.

A volunteer is also needed to stay overnight, from 7 PM – 7:00 AM if also serving dinner, or from 10:00PM – 7:00AM if just staying overnight. The volunteer sleeps in a bed on the shelter floor. There is a designated bed on the male side of the dorm for the male overnight volunteer. There is also a designated bed on the female side of the dorm for the female overnight volunteer. This volunteer is available to assist the staff person during the night. Most of the time you will sleep through the night, but occasionally you will be awakened to assist the staff on important matters. The staff member stays awake and is on duty all night. The overnight volunteer will be awakened at 5:45 AM to supervise breakfast, which starts at 6:00AM. Once breakfast is over at 6:45AM, the volunteer cleans up and puts away breakfast items.

6. Tips on getting ready for Your Work at the Shelter

- Wear comfortable clothes. Jeans or sweats and a t-shirt are fine.
- Try to talk to your church's Shelter Coordinator or others who may have volunteered at the shelter. They can help answer some of the questions you may have.
- Be sure to have the following information:
 1. The telephone number of your church or organization's Shelter Coordinator
 2. The phone number of the shelter: (860) 647-8003
 3. The names of one or two people who could fill in for you if you are detained or have an emergency
- Because of the nature of the people we serve, it is important not to have a cocktail, wine, or beer prior to coming to serve dinner or stay overnight.
- If you are assigned to serve dinner, arrive promptly at 7:00PM so that the staff person can show you around and you can get oriented to your assignment.
- If you are assigned to stay overnight, arrive promptly at either 7:00 PM if you are also serving dinner, or 10:00 PM, if you are only volunteering overnight, so that you will have time to go over your assignment with staff. Bed linens and a pillow are provided, but you may bring a sleeping bag or your own bedding, whichever makes you feel comfortable.
- You may park behind the shelter. If the lot is full, you may park in the lot next door. If you are staying overnight, you must park behind the shelter.
- Each volunteer must enter and leave through the shelter door at the top of the ramp.
- All volunteers must sign in (and out) and complete an Emergency Form (a form which tells the shelter who to contact should you have an emergency). The emergency form only needs to be filled out once; the information is kept on file and in a locked cabinet.
- The staff will show you:
 1. How to use the telephone in the kitchen (press intercom and then 19 to reach the staff upstairs).
 2. Where the emergency button is, which is directly connected to the police department. (It is hanging on the fire extinguisher in the kitchen near the telephone.) It should be used in case of imminent danger or in case of violence.
 3. Where the menu is for the night.

**If the staff does not show you, please ask.
Sometimes it is quite busy at that time of night.**

- ***In the serving area on the counter are a locked box with a slot and a file card box with 4x6 evaluation cards. Each time you volunteer, please fill out a card and drop it in the box. All information is confidential.***

7. Kitchen and Overnight Volunteers

Basic Procedures for serving dinner at the Shepherds Place Soup Kitchen

1. The staff member will unlock the kitchen and show you around. Dinner is served from 8:00PM until 9:30PM or when all guests have eaten, completed their chores, and have returned to the dorm area.
2. Verify that the oven has been turned on (this is usually done ahead of time by the staff member).
3. Check the notebook on the counter for the evening's menu.
4. All food needed for dinner should be in the refrigerator closest to the oven unless specified. Desserts may be kept in the yellow refrigerator behind the serving table.
5. Please do not deviate from the menu, as the food may be planned for other soup kitchen meals. In the very unusual event that there are more guests than anticipated, easy to prepare items (soups, stews, pasta, and canned fruit) can be found on the shelves opposite the sinks. Or, you may ask the staff member. Please do not take food from the back storage area without checking first with the staff member.
6. Start the coffee first so that it has time to brew while dinner is being prepared.
7. Place all foods that need to be warmed up in the oven. Use the metal tops instead of aluminum foil on the metal pans, and always use oven mitts. Check the item and – for example - add milk if the macaroni and cheese appears dry or water to rice or pasta if dry.
8. Turn on the warming table so that the food will be kept warm during the serving period.
9. Set up trays, cups, plastic ware, plates, napkins, condiments, etc. in the serving area.
10. Check the container for water. If low, add ice (should be already made in a container in the freezer) and water.
11. Prepare or put out other items. If bread is being served, check to see that it is sliced; put out crackers if soup is on the menu; put out dessert and place at the beginning of the serving area; put out salad dressing if salad is on the menu; each guest is allowed one glass of milk.
12. Write menu on the board.
13. Help to serve the meal. Each guest is given one portion of each item on the menu. When all guests have been served, second helpings can be served.
14. Following the meal, the guests are assigned chores and will clean the dining room tables, sweep the floors, mop the floors, take out the garbage, and wash the trays. Shelter guests are not allowed in the kitchen area except when performing chores.
15. Wash, dry and put away any dishes, utensils, etc. used to prepare and serve the meal; clean serving area and worktable; turn off oven (the silver knob must be vertical for the oven to be off) and warming table; make certain the gas burners on the stove are completely turned off if used; unplug coffee pot; put away perishables.
16. If there is food leftover, use your judgment as to whether it should be thrown away or wrapped up and left in the refrigerator. If in doubt, throw it away.
17. Breakfast set up should be done before you leave: set up the serving area with trays, utensils, paper plates, napkins, tea bags, and cereal.
18. Make bag lunches if requested: if there is no lunch meat in the refrigerator, try and use the meat from supper; use rolls or slice bread if you need to. There is usually mayonnaise and mustard in the refrigerator. Try to add cookies or fruit if available – or anything else that can be used for lunches.

Please note:

- The bathroom housed behind the locked doors in the kitchen area is for volunteers only. Please ask shelter guests to use the bathroom on the shelter floor.
- No one should exit through the soup kitchen doors...alarms will sound!
- The staff member will answer any questions you have – please ask!

Basic Procedures for Overnight Volunteers

1. Ask the staff member if there is anything you can do to assist him or her.

2. Feel free to mingle with the guests, watching TV, playing cards, or just talking.
3. Lights go out at 10:30 PM on the shelter floor so that shelter guests can go to sleep.
4. You will be awakened at 5:45AM to supervise breakfast, which starts at 6:00 AM (guests may serve themselves). You may need to put out milk for cereal, juice if available, and margarine. Once breakfast is over at 6:45AM, you should clean up and put away breakfast items.

8. More on the Volunteer's Role

In most ways your role is similar to that of a staff person. You are the representative of both the caring mission and the structure and rules of the shelter. Certainly you will not be expected to know the guests as well as the staff do, or to handle "sticky" situations with guests. Feel free to call on staff whenever you need to answer questions.

Here are a few important things to remember when working with shelter guests:

Personal Respect

- All of the research indicates that one of the most devastating aspects of being homeless and poor is the loss of a sense of personal worth. Homeless people on the street describe how passers by look "through" or "past" them, as if they were not there. Looking warmly and directly at guests, addressing them by name, smiling, and expressing care and concern are all very helpful.
- Simply sitting with them to share a cup of coffee or watch television can be enormously effective. If you are not busy with other tasks, remember that your involved presence is one of the most important parts of work at the shelter. Lending a willing ear to their concerns, life story, etc. can be very important.
- Please refer any specific requests to the guest's Case Manager.

Confidentiality

- We must all be careful to respect the privacy of guests. This means not bringing visitors into the shelter when guests are there and taking care not to put guests "on display".
- This also means being careful not to talk to others outside the shelter (family members, friends, and coworkers) about any information you may have picked up about guests while on duty. It is all right to talk in generalizations, but guest's names and particular circumstances should not be mentioned outside the shelter.

Personal Boundaries

- This is the flip side of confidentiality of guests. It is healthy for you and can be helpful to guests, for you to retain privacy for yourself and your family. It is important for your own peace of mind, as well as the guest's, that you are careful about extending your relationship with guests beyond the shelter.
- Many of our guests have a variety of problems that make it difficult for them to understand appropriate social relationships, and some may misinterpret or exaggerate the meaning of personal communications. There is no need to be secretive, and sharing information about you is valuable and creates an excellent sense of openness and person-to-person contact. You want to be careful about providing such things as your exact address, telephone number, exact place of work, etc.

Consistency

- The shelter's rules have evolved out of the necessity of safely managing a large facility and a large number of guests. It is the behavior of staff and volunteers about the rules, which make them work. Exceptions, however easy, tempting, or justified they may be in a particular case, essentially make a new rule which guests will expect staff and future volunteers to abide by. There is a very effective "grapevine" on the street that accurately reflects the *actual* operating policies and rules and the tone of the shelter, as contrasted to what is published as the official shelter rules.
- Rules need to be followed. The importance of some rules – such as prohibiting the possession of weapons – is obvious to all, but the importance of others – such as requiring guests to store all of their belongings on their own bed during the day – may be less evident.
- We have found that the most difficult policies for volunteers to follow relate to food. It sometimes feels wrong to decline to fill "special requests" and refuse seconds on food (before all guests have been served). Please refer such requests to staff.

9. Volunteer Assistant to the House Manager

A volunteer assistant to the house manager is a volunteer who assists the staff member between 6:00 and 9:00 PM. This volunteer is hired specifically for this position. The volunteer may come from college as an intern, from social science courses, from one of the churches, or a volunteer applicant who is specifically interested in this position.

Upon arrival, ring the buzzer and let the staff member know that you are a volunteer. Sign in and complete an emergency form if one is not already on file.

The staff member is the only on-site paid staff person; together you make up a team. If time permits, read the shelter rules posted on the wall (a current copy is included in this manual).

- Learn how to use the telephone on the staff member's desk.
- Volunteers never open the door! Only the staff member may admit shelter guests. It is the staff member who makes the determination about who will be admitted. Please keep in mind that he/she has more information than may be apparent about the past experience and prior history of the guest.
- Shelter guests are not permitted to leave the building once admitted.
- Shelter volunteers may welcome guests. Feel free to introduce yourself using your first name only. Many guests enjoy conversation with volunteers; others prefer to be quiet – use your best judgement.
- Guests go downstairs for dinner at 8 PM.
- You are not permitted to breach confidentiality regarding any guest. Please do not use any names or physical references in referring to guests. Certainly you may wish to share your experience with others, but please be respectful of guests.

Some jobs that volunteer assistants to the House Manager may be asked to do include the following:

- Check inventory on shelter floor and restock as necessary.
- Check inventory in the supply area.
- Strip and makes up beds.
- Supervise chores assigned to shelter guests.
- Supervise laundry chores.
- Fold blankets and sheets.
- Do client intakes and orientation
- Assist the House Manager with the operation of the shelter.

Please note: Shelter guests are not permitted upstairs unless accompanied by staff or a volunteer

10. Volunteer Checklist

All Volunteers: must sign in and out

KITCHEN:

- _____ Serve dinner and/or breakfast (dinner or overnight volunteer)
- _____ Clean kitchen and serving area (dinner or overnight volunteer)
- _____ Prepare bag lunches when requested (dinner or overnight volunteer)
- _____ Supervise chores (dinner volunteer or volunteer assistant to the house manager).

SHELTER FLOOR:

- _____ Assist with sign in at door; hand out and explain rules (volunteer asst. to house manager)
- _____ Strip and wash beds (volunteer asst. to house manager)
- _____ Bag and tag belongings; bring to storage and log (volunteer asst. to house manager).
- _____ Supervise chores (dinner volunteer or volunteer asst. to house manager)
- _____ Accept in-kind donations; write tax voucher if requested (volunteer asst. to house manager)
- _____ Distribute personal care items (volunteer asst. to house manager)
- _____ Distribute medications (volunteer asst. to house manager)
- _____ Check to see that guests have only two bags of belongings at their beds (volunteer asst. to house manager)
- _____ Supervise laundry (volunteer asst. to house manager)

11. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q. Does the shelter take families?

A. The Samaritan Shelter is not equipped to handle the needs of homeless families. A homeless family will be given a referral to another facility that is equipped to handle entire families.

Q. What about guests who are physically handicapped?

A. There is ramp access to the shelter floor, and the dining room is accessible from the ground level, so handicapped guests can easily be accommodated. Bathrooms and showers are accessible and equipped for handicapped individuals.

Q. How do shelter guests obtain clothing if they need it?

A. There is a voucher system in effect between the Samaritan Shelter and the Church Mouse thrift Shoppe, which is part of MACC.

Q. Where do the shelter guests eat during the day when the shelter is closed?

A. The Shepherd's Place Soup Kitchen provides a hot meal from 11AM to 12:15PM Monday through Saturday in the dining room on the lower level of the shelter building. A full-time staff person and a crew of 3 to 6 volunteers staff it. The Soup Kitchen is open to anyone who is in need of a hot noontime meal.

Q. What kinds of donations are needed for the shelter?

A. Small sizes of personal care items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, disposable razors, shampoo, shaving cream, combs, brushes, tube socks, men's underwear, sweats & sanitary supplies for women are always needed. The shelter works on a very tight budget, so donations of money are always welcome.

12. Shelter rules and policies

The following is a list of shelter rules and policies that may be helpful:

1. Weapons, drugs and alcohol are not allowed in the shelter.
2. Guests who arrive after 8:00 PM are not admitted, unless they work late and have had their late arrival approved *in advance* by the staff, or have never been to the shelter before and are unaware of the 8 PM curfew.
3. Once guests enter the building and sign in, they will be discharged if they leave the building and/or open an outside door. This is to prevent drugs and alcohol from being brought into the building and to protect the security of guests, staff, and volunteers.
4. Smoking in the shelter building is prohibited.
5. Fighting, violence, destruction of property, and threatening of guests, staff or volunteers are all grounds for discharging a guest.
6. No sexual relationships or physical displays of affection are permitted in the shelter. Men and women sleep in separate sections, regardless of their relationship outside of the shelter.
7. Guests are not permitted to bring food or beverages on to the sleeping floor of the shelter. Food and beverages are only allowed to be consumed in the dining room.
8. Anyone who is absent from the shelter for two consecutive nights can expect that his or her bed will be given to someone else. This may happen the first night a guest is absent if the shelter is full.
9. Showers may be taken in the evening from 6:00 to 7:45 and 8:15 to 10:00. Showers may be taken in the morning from 6:00 to 8:00.

There are other rules, which can be found in the handbook for shelter guests, which is available at the shelter. Those listed above are the ones that may affect your work as a volunteer. Please remember that the MACC staff member who is on duty should decide all questions pertaining to shelter rules.