



# **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

**Revised 7-26-11**

## **Welcome to A Place for Hope (APFH)!**

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with A Place for Hope, Inc., the community resource center, meeting place, and outreach facility of the Blackmon Road Community (BRC) in York County, South Carolina. The following contains information to familiarize you with Center policies pertaining to our 501(c) (3) non-profit status, our day-to-day operations, and our volunteer programs.

All volunteer activity will be conducted under the supervision and guidance of APFH. Volunteers serve in a number of capacities from tutoring, to special events help, to grounds maintenance.

Please read all information, and sign the page at the end of this booklet. If you have any questions regarding this material, please speak with the Executive Director.

Volunteering brings many benefits including the opportunity to make a worthwhile contribution to society, personal satisfaction, developing skills, improving future employment prospects, social benefits and just having fun! Volunteering is an activity which takes place through non-profit organizations or projects and is:

- A service given of one's own free will without coercion
- A service given for no financial payment
- To benefit the community and the Volunteer.

### **People volunteer for many different reasons which include:**

- Improve the community
- Personal satisfaction
- Develop social networks
- Gain work experience
- Utilize untapped skills
- Learn new skills
- Build self confidence and self esteem
- Enjoy the contact they get with other people
- Maintain existing skills
- Do satisfying work
- Meet new challenges
- Enhance responsibility
- Find that volunteering looks good on your curriculum vitae
- Pathway to employment
- Assisting in meeting components of government or study guidelines

**As an APFH volunteer your responsibilities include, but are not limited to:**

Respect confidentiality  
Carry out specified tasks  
Be accountable for your actions  
Be committed to the organization  
Undertake training if required by the organization  
Ask for support when you need it  
Be courteous to clients, staff and other volunteers  
Value and support other team members  
Speak with the ED about any issues/concerns you may have with the organization  
Do not denigrate the organization to clients, staff and other volunteers.  
Give notice before you leave the organization

**VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES**

**BE CONSISTENT.** The most critical role of a volunteer is to be present on a consistent and regular basis. The children and adult clients look forward to your visits and expect you on your scheduled day and time. Your consistent presence builds trust and positive mentoring relationships that are rewarding to both volunteers and Center clients. Volunteers are the backbone of our organization. Your absence may mean that we are unable to provide our promised services for a period of time. Please respect the commitment you have made to the Center and to the individuals of the Blackmon Road Community by notifying the Executive Director of any scheduling changes in advance.

**SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE.** Volunteers help set the standard of acceptable behavior for the children and adult individuals who use the Center. It is important that you maintain a high standard of behavior throughout all interactions with them, their families, and their friends. While being accepted by the community members that you serve is important, do not overlook inappropriate behavior in order to “fit-in”. For example, obscenity in word, gesture, music, or film is not tolerated. Your response to such behavior should reflect adherence to rules and to acceptable behavior in general. Disciplinary action may be needed, as well as an explanation of why such behavior is unacceptable. If an adult or child displays prohibited behavior that you feel you are unable to manage, or that you find threatening, please seek immediate assistance from the Executive Director or other available staff member.

**BE AWARE.** Pay attention to where you and others are in the Center. Do not hesitate to call 911 if there is a true emergency. The York County Sheriff’s Department has agreed to dispatch immediate assistance.

**BE RESILIENT.** Though you will often encounter challenging and frustrating situations in your role as a volunteer, your ability to approach these instances with patience and creativity will help maintain a fun and positive learning atmosphere.

**BE SURE TO LOG YOUR HOURS.** Sign in and out at the volunteer register at the front desk. This information helps the agency to receive grants and other funding.

**ABIDE BY CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS.** A Place for Hope, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation dependent on donations and multi-year pledges. As representatives of APFH, all board members, employees, volunteers, and community residents are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the values of basic human dignity and respect. In addition, we expect all representatives of A Place for Hope to abide by our Code of Ethics. The unique identity of each person will be respected and promoted. There will be no stereotyping or discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability. Confidentiality will be observed concerning information about all clients and other staff members. Children will be supervised at all times while on Center property and for the duration of off-premises field trips. Positive methods of child guidance are mandatory. Discipline involving corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, humiliation, isolation, or the denial of basic needs is prohibited. Weapons and the use of illicit drugs, alcohol, or profane language are strictly prohibited on Center property. Adherence to the conduct policy is necessary to maintain an atmosphere of love, trust, and respect for all who come to A Place for Hope. Disregard or violation may result in termination of the volunteer position.

**DONATIONS.** Please do not take any donated items out of APFH. In certain cases, exceptions may be made to this policy but any exception needs to be discussed with the Executive Director. In addition, please assist us by recording the receipt of any donations on the appropriate form.

**TRANSPORTATION.** Upon rare occasions, volunteers may be willing to transport residents. Volunteers need to have approval from the Executive Director to do so and must understand that they are not covered by APFH's insurance while transporting residents. Volunteers may not drive the APFH bus without prior approval and being added to our insurance.

**OTHER RULES.**

Use the front door for arrival and departure at all times. The back door is to remain locked at all times! Please wash any dishes you use and clean up after yourself. Accountability is expected during your time on the premises

## APFH HISTORY

*A Place for Hope* was founded as a community care and resource center to address the physical, educational, and empowerment needs of the neighborhood residents of the Blackmon Road Community. Supported and run through the efforts of volunteers, private partnerships, and public donations, the Center opened Thanksgiving Day 2001. Receiving official 501(c)3 status as a non-profit, tax exempt, charitable organization in 2003, the Center has been able to expand its primary function to include educational and developmental services as well.

The Blackmon Road Community is comprised of approximately 20 families (75-100 individuals) living along Archer Drive, Joe Louis Boulevard, and Blackmon Road, outside the city limits of Rock Hill, in York County, South Carolina. Some of our residents live without electricity or indoor plumbing. The past efforts of the county to address the extreme poverty of the community have been hindered by complicated property ownership issues, sub-standard soil and water opportunities, and have ultimately resulted in little significant support for the area. Residents of the community have depended upon the compassion of churches and faith-based initiatives, concerned individuals, and community organizations to help them meet their most immediate needs. APFH began by addressing the physical, educational, and psychological needs of the residents of the community with a strong focus on the neighborhood's children. This focus continues to be the primary activity of the agency. After-school programming and summer day camps have been on-going. A Community Center was created at the entrance of the neighborhood. Services have expanded to include assistance to all residents in the form of food, clothing, kerosene, adult education, and parenting support. The consistent and accessible presence of the Center has had a significant and positive impact on the community. The children in the neighborhood are making A/B Honor Roll and are being promoted. Teachers report noticeable improvements in behaviors. Support from DHEC, EPA, local government, and other donors and grants has resulted in leadership development, the construction of a Wash House, healthier housing and living conditions, and employment for many of the community's residents. Children who live in surrounding low-income areas and children of extended family members who now live outside the BRC are also participating in our children's programs.

## **AGENCY POLICIES**

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

APFH is an equal opportunity volunteer organization and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, marital status, height, weight or disability. Please speak with the Executive Director if you believe this policy has been violated.

### **THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires employers to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities. It is the policy of A Place for Hope to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities as well as our volunteers. It is our policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to any aspect of the volunteer selection, orientation, or training process. A Place for Hope will reasonably accommodate qualified volunteers with a disability so that they can perform the essential functions of their volunteer assignment. All volunteers are required to comply with appropriate safety standards while volunteering at APFH. If you become disabled during the time of your volunteer experience at APFH, it is your responsibility to notify the Executive Director about the disability so that reasonable accommodations might be investigated, and if appropriate, made.

### **DRUG FREE WORKPLACE**

It is APFH's policy not to allow individuals to volunteer who use or traffic illegal drugs, or who abuse prescription drugs or alcohol. It is a violation of APFH's position on drugs and alcohol for a volunteer to:

1. Be in possession of illegal drugs while at APFH
2. Sell or distribute illegal drugs on or off the job.
3. Work while under the influence of drugs or alcohol or with illegal drugs in one's system.

Volunteers are expected to report for their volunteer shift on time and in appropriate mental and physical condition for work. APFH reserves the right to dismiss volunteers based on a reasonable suspicion that a volunteer is impaired.

### **HARASSMENT**

APFH strives to maintain a quality environment free from intimidation and insult. We expect all volunteers and employees to conduct themselves with dignity and with respect for fellow volunteers, employees, donors, clients and visitors. Harassment of others based on age, gender, race or national origin or any other statutorily protected reason will not be tolerated.

Harassment includes:  Making submission to unwelcome sexual advances, submission to requests for sexual favors, or submission to other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature a condition of any person's continued association with APFH  Making submission to or rejection of such conduct the basis for volunteer decisions affecting any person.  Creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive volunteer environment. You should speak to the ED immediately if you feel you have been subjected to harassment. Complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly, thoroughly and given serious

consideration. Appropriate action will be taken to eliminate such harassment. Reports of harassment and subsequent investigations will be handled as discreetly as possible.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The standard of behavior at APFH is that all volunteers scrupulously avoid conflicts of interest between the interests of APFH on one hand, and personal, professional, and business interests on the other. This includes avoiding potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as perceptions of conflicts of interest. An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when a volunteer is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that volunteer or for a relative of a volunteer. A “relative” is any person who is related by blood or marriage or whose relationship with the volunteer is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage. No “presumption of guilt” is created by the mere existence of a relationship with such potential. If volunteers have any influence on transactions involving purchases, contracts or leases, it is, however, required that they disclose such to the Executive Director promptly so that safeguards can be established to protect all parties. The purposes of this policy are to protect the integrity of APFH’s’ decision-making process, to enable our constituencies to have confidence in our integrity, and to protect the integrity and reputations of volunteers.

### **DISCLOSURE OF NEWS OR INFORMATION**

The Executive Director of APFH serves as the principal contact with the news media and the spokesperson for the organization. Volunteers will not participate in public interviews or release information related to APFH without the permission of the Executive Director. Foundations, donors and budget planning information as well as Board, staff and volunteer information related to any activities of APFH shall not be disclosed or released to any person or public media unless it has been previously published or otherwise made public. Questions concerning protocols for specific situations should be directed to the Executive Director.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY OF CLIENT AND DONOR INFORMATION**

APFH deals with sensitive, confidential client and donor information. All interactions with clients and donors are privileged and confidential and not for public distribution. All information, including financial and other data reports, Board and Committee reports, and all other non-public documents and materials, are the property of APFH and must be treated in the strictest of confidence. Volunteers must follow established security policies and procedures to protect unauthorized modifications, destruction or disclosures. Upon separation from APFH, any information not independently obtained or otherwise available to the volunteer from public sources shall be treated as confidential and shall not be used or disclosed without written permission. A violation of confidentiality could result in termination from volunteer service and/or legal action.

### **COMPUTER, ELECTRONICS AND COMMUNICATION**

APFH maintains computer, electronic mail (“e-mail”), telephone, voice mail and facsimile (“fax”) equipment and systems, on line internet access and other analog, digital and electronic communication and information equipment. These systems and services are referred to in total as “APFH’s communications system.” Information contained in any and all of the above is the property of APFH. Volunteers may not add, run, download or install any computer software without the prior approval of the Executive Director. Volunteers should have no expectation of privacy as to use of any e-mail or voice mail, or documents or files of information created, sent, received or stored in this communications system, either from APFH or through remote access. Electronic communication is to be used for APFH business only and must not be offensive to anyone or contain material that could be

construed as harassment or disparagement of others with regard to any characteristic protected by federal, state, and/or local laws and ordinances. Any evidence of such use could result in the individual being determined in violation of APFH's anti-discrimination policy. Communication systems should not be used for personal email, Facebook, shopping, games, commercial ventures, political causes, outside activities or other non APFH activities. APFH reserves the right to disclose volunteer electronic communication or internet improprieties to law enforcement without notification to, or permission from, volunteers sending or receiving communication. This policy also encompasses any upgrades to current or future communication system acquisitions.

#### **POSTAGE, COPY AND FAX MACHINES**

Postage, copy and fax machines are the property of APFH and may be used for business purposes only. Personal use of these resources is forbidden without the express authorization of the Executive Director.

#### **SMOKING**

APFH is a non-smoking facility. There are designated areas located for smoke breaks.

#### **WAIVER AND RELEASE**

I agree to release, discharge, indemnify, and hold APFH harmless for any and all damages to me or my personal property while performing my volunteer services in a voluntary capacity. I recognize that while performing my volunteer services in a voluntary capacity, there exists a risk of injury including personal physical harm. On behalf of myself, my heirs, personal representatives and executors, I hereby release, discharge, indemnify and hold harmless APFH, its agents, servants and employees from any and all claims, causes of action or demands of any nature or cause connected with my Volunteer Service. This might include costs and attorney's fees and court costs incurred by APFH in connection with my volunteer services based on damages or injuries which may be incurred or sustained by me in any way. Such damages or injuries might include, but are not limited to accidents, injuries and personal property damage. I understand that public relations are an important part of volunteering with APFH's program. I therefore agree on behalf of my heirs, personal representatives and executors to allow APFH to use any photographs taken of me for use in public relations efforts. APFH will use reasonable efforts to notify me, but such notification is not a condition of the photograph's release for public relations purposes. The Volunteer Handbook describes important information about the organization and my responsibilities as a volunteer. I understand that I should consult with the ED if I have questions regarding anything covered in the Volunteer Handbook or any other volunteer policies. I have entered into a volunteer relationship with APFH and acknowledge that I shall not nor shall I expect to receive any form of payment for volunteer talents and services I contribute while a volunteer. I can terminate my volunteer service at any time and for any reason. APFH also reserves the right to end my volunteer service whenever it is deemed to be in the best interest of the organization. Since the information and policies described in the Volunteer Handbook are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the Handbook may occur. APFH reserves the right to make changes in content or application as it deems appropriate, and these changes may be implemented even if they have not been communicated and may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies.

#### **WORK PRODUCT**

I understand that any materials provided to me for the purpose of my volunteer service are to be returned to APFH upon completion of service or termination of my participation as a volunteer. I understand that all materials and products which may be created by me in the course of my volunteer service for APFH are the property of APFH.

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to ensure that APFH staff, officers, volunteers, and Board members fulfill their obligation to the public trust, operate in a framework of fairness and objectivity, and make decisions in keeping with the mandates of *A Place for Hope, Inc.* All board members, employees, and volunteers will respect and promote the unique identity of each person in all agency related interactions. APFH does not stereotype or discriminate on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or disability in either our hiring practices or our daily operational activities.

1. No staff, officer, volunteer, or board member shall derive any personal financial or material profit or gain, directly or indirectly, as a result of his or her service to the Center. This includes the acquisition of any materials, food, clothing, or money from the Center for personal use. All goods belonging to the Center should be stored on the physical property of the Center or in another BOD authorized location.
2. All business on behalf of *A Place for Hope, Inc.* must be conducted in an open manner, rather than in private or secret, and is subject to the oversight of the Board of Directors.
3. No preferential treatment should be given by staff or volunteers to any particular client or group of clients. Staff, officers, and volunteers should strive for fairness and equity in their interactions with clients.
4. Interaction with the media should take place through designated outlets, under the guidance of Executive Director
5. There will be no stereotyping or discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.
6. Interaction with children shall adhere to positive methods of child guidance. Corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, humiliation, isolation, or denial of basic needs is prohibited.

I have received a copy of, and read the information in, the Volunteer Handbook for A Place for Hope, Inc. I agree to abide by the policies and guidelines stated in this Handbook. I understand that my signature to this and any other referenced document does not designate me as an employee. I understand that South Carolina is a hire at will state. I also understand that this is not a contract or agreement, but a general overview of volunteer service at *A Place for Hope, Inc.*

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

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