

SHEARITH ISRAEL SHELTER VOLUNTEER GUIDE

Thank you so much for volunteering your time to serve dinner at Shearith Israel Shelter! Your service ensures that homeless women have a warm & safe place to stay the night while they heal and repair their lives. Please familiarize yourself with the following volunteer guidelines prior to volunteering.

SHELTER GUESTS: Always treat shelter guests with friendliness and respect. Homeless individuals may be ignored or disrespected outside the shelter and our attitude can help boost their self-esteem.

TALKING WITH GUESTS: Converse with shelter guests in a friendly, positive manner but please avoid counseling or giving specific advice. If guests raise personal problems, please encourage them to talk to staff.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Please protect the privacy of our guests. Federal law protects the confidentiality of personal information about guests that staff or the guests themselves may share with you. Do not share this information with anyone except shelter staff. We may have guests fleeing domestic violence situations, so confidentiality is of utmost importance. Refrain from discussing guests in the halls, common areas or on the telephone. If a guest makes an inquiry about another guest, refer her to staff for follow up. Information about our volunteers and staff is also to remain confidential. If you choose to share your personal information with our guests, we ask that you do not share your address or telephone number. Please do not share personal contact information of staff or volunteers with guests. These inquiries may be referred to staff, who can assist the guest with contacting the volunteer in an appropriate manner.

TELEPHONE GUIDELINES: In order to maintain confidentiality of our guests, answer the phone with a simple "Hello" and do not identify the shelter's name or location or confirm that an individual is staying in the shelter. If the call is for a guest, find out who the caller is and tell the caller you will take a message and if that person is here, you will ask them to call.

FRONT DOOR ACCESS: Only authorized persons are to enter the shelter. During the shelter season, the door is to remain closed and locked. Due to Fire Marshal regulations, **please do not bolt the lock**. The door automatically locks as it is pulled shut.

NO SMOKING: There is no smoking allowed inside the shelter.

KITCHEN GUIDELINES: The shelter is **KOSHER**. We follow the rules of **KASHRUT** (one of which is no mixing of dairy and meat). Staff and volunteers work together to operate and maintain a **KOSHER** kitchen. Information about Kosher requirements will be provided at the shelter. Shelter residents are not allowed in the kitchen.

ASK FOR HELP: Please ask for help if you need it. The Volunteer Trainer and shelter staff are there to assist you and help make your volunteer experience successful.

LET US KNOW: We want you to enjoy your volunteer job and know that you are making a difference. If you're not happy with your job, please talk to Shelter Director Sallie Weddell.

SHARE YOUR IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS: Help us make the volunteer program better. Please let us hear from you in the volunteer log and the on-line survey you will receive.

Dinner Volunteer Guidelines

- 1. The Volunteer and Volunteer Trainer arrive at the shelter between 6:00 – 6:15pm.** The Volunteer Trainer or Resident Manager will provide your orientation for the evening. The Resident Manager will be available all evening for any other questions that may arise.
- 2. Sign in, complete a volunteer application if this is your first visit, and participate in orientation with the Volunteer Trainer or Resident Manager.** During your orientation, you will receive keys for the evening. **Please be mindful that the office door should remain locked at all times that it is not in use.**
- 3. The guests begin to arrive at 6:30pm (6:45 on Sundays).** They will ring the bell to let you know that they have arrived. Introduce yourself to them and make sure that they each sign in before entering the dorm or community room. In cases of inclement weather, the staff may allow the guests to enter the shelter earlier.
- 4. Personal care supplies** (deodorant, socks, underwear, over the counter medications) are kept in the shelter office. You have authorization to provide those items to any guest requesting them. **Please note in writing any over-the-counter medication distributed.**
- 5. Check the kitchen** to determine whether small tasks need to be completed (i.e. countertops cleaned, leftovers in the fridge disposed of, etc.) Talk with the Resident Manager to determine dinner plans. If the meal will be delivered, go ahead and preheat the oven in the event that it needs to be heated up. If the meal will be prepared on site assist the Resident Manager with preparing the meal.
- 6. Make sure that there are snacks and beverages available for the women at the time of their arrival.** Talk with the Resident Manager to decide what to serve as snacks. You may need to make tea or lemonade. Make sure that the hot water urn is on and that cups, spoons and condiments are available. Again, the Resident Manager is available to assist where needed.
- 7. Dinner is served at 7:00.** The Shelter opens at 6:30 so most women have arrived by then. Check the sign in sheet to see if others are expected later. If so, be sure to prepare a plate for those guests. Volunteers (and/or the group that prepared the dinner) should serve dinner to the guests first, joining them once everyone is served. This is a great opportunity to get to know the guests!
- 8. Following dinner** each guest should dispose of her own plate and clean up after herself. One guest will be assigned to clean the community room after all of the food is taken away. When washing dinner pans and utensils, please abide by Kosher guidelines, washing items in the designated sink side (red/meat; blue/dairy). Please label and store the leftovers.

Ask the guests if they would like to take any for lunch the following day and prepare sack lunches for residents who want them. **Lunches are distributed after breakfast..**

9. You are welcome to leave at 8:00pm or if you wish, to stay for the entire evening or overnight. For the remainder of the evening there may be structured activities. If not, guests are allowed to watch TV, read, access the computers, retire early, talk with volunteers, etc. The Resident Manager will make sure that their chores are completed. If you note an area of the shelter that has been neglected, please bring it to the attention of the Resident Manager. Your volunteer trainer will likely leave following dinner, but the Resident Manager is available to you throughout the evening.

10. At 10:00pm lights go out in the dorm room. You or the Resident Manager may check and remind the ladies that the lights are going out. Then feel free to flip the switch. Laundry must be completed by 10:30pm. Only staff may offer alternatives for laundry not completed. **Guests must leave the community room by 11:00pm and may not reenter it until 5:30am the following morning.** If you wish to stay for the night you will find linens in the office. You have the choice of sleeping on the sofa or sleep sofa in the community room.

11. 5:30am is wakeup time Monday – Friday. On Saturday and Sunday mornings, wake-up time is 7:30am. You may want to prepare for breakfast before leaving or retiring for the evening. Items needed are as follows: cold or hot cereal, bowls, spoons, hot cocoa, coffee, fresh fruit, pastries, milk, juice, etc. Place packaged items on a hallway table for women who are leaving before wake up time.

12. In the morning, assist the Resident Manager in preparing the continental breakfast. On weekdays, all guests should leave the shelter by 6:30am. On weekend mornings, guests leave by 8:30. Assist the Resident Manager with wrap up for the morning.

Thank you for your willingness to assist homeless women. We hope that you have a rewarding experience and enjoy your evening at the shelter. We welcome all ideas and feedback!