

# Guidelines for Volunteers at Rainbow Homes

An effective volunteer program provides enriching experiences for the residents, helps staff better meet the needs of the residents, develop better ties between Rainbow Homes and the community as well as provides the volunteer with personal satisfaction. The following guidelines outline the responsibility of the volunteer.

Before you decide to volunteer at Rainbow Homes please visit our website and become aware of our mission and program at: [www.rainbow-homes.org](http://www.rainbow-homes.org)

Our Community Room located at 2111 Adelpha Apartment B, will be your first stop in volunteering opportunity at Rainbow Homes. Please report to a staff person on duty and sign-in.

- **Boundaries**

It is important to maintain boundaries and professionalism when /if residents ask personal questions. Have a clear idea of what you are willing to share of your personal life. When those boundaries are crossed, be polite yet firm that it is an inappropriate question explaining why. Staff understands the issues that you will encounter. They can assist you in determining the best way to respond in difficult or uncomfortable situations.

- **Be Punctual and Responsible**

Although you are volunteering your time, you are participating as a reliable, trustworthy and contributing member of the team. Both the individual(s) you serve and the staff rely on your punctuality and commitment to completing your service hours over the entire course of the semester.

- **Call if You Anticipate Lateness or Absence**

Call/e-mail your supervisor if you are unable to come in or if you anticipate being late. Again, the residents will come to depend on your services and will be at a loss if you fail to come in as scheduled. Be mindful of individual's emotional needs. If you need to change your shift time, day, or volunteer area, please let Susan know. We will discuss the options available to you. We understand that LIFE happens.

- **Respect the Privacy and Confidentiality of All Residents**

Please at all times keep matters relating to the Resident(s) you work with, information relayed by the staff about the residents, personal stories shared by the residents, all records and any related information confidential. Use first names only particularly in class discussion and reports. Please use discretion in commenting about matters that can be easily misinterpreted by others who are not as familiar as you are with the situation. Should you have any concerns regarding the residents, please talk to the staff and/or Program Administrator.

- **Be Appropriate**

You are in a work situation and are expected to treat all residents as well as staff, with courtesy and respect. Use appropriate language. Dress comfortably, neatly, and appropriately. If you feel a resident is inappropriate with you or others please contact a staff person immediately.

- **Be Flexible**  
The level or the intensity of the activity at Rainbow Homes is not always predictable. Your flexibility to changing situations can assist the program to run smoothly and produce positive outcomes for the residents involved.
- **On the other hand....**  
NEVER report to your service site under the influence of drugs or alcohol.  
NEVER give or loan resident money or personal belongings.  
NEVER give a resident your address or telephone number.  
NEVER make promises or commitments to a client you cannot keep. You may be well meaning but LIFE happens  
NEVER tolerate verbal exchange of a sexual nature or engage in behavior that might be perceived as sexual with a resident. Nor tolerate that from a resident.
- **Keeping track of your time**  
Be sure to sign in each visit on the clip board on the file on the staff office door. This procedure serves two purposes. Resident's security as Rainbow Homes needs to know who is in the buildings. Secondly for documentation of your time in case you want to use this experience as a reference in the future.
- **Communication:**  
An effective volunteer program depends heavily upon good communication between every one involve. Your volunteer work should be a rewarding experience for you. If you have any questions or concerns as to resident concerns, policy, procedures, etc., please don't hesitate to ask the staff.

Thank you for considering volunteering at Rainbow Homes. We appreciate all your time and efforts. We are certain that you will have the opportunity to impact on people's lives and in turn your life will be changed.

Susan Shehan  
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### **Rainbow Homes Mission Statement**

*To provide ecumenical Christian housing and services for adults with cognitive disabilities, where they can grow personally and spiritually to reach their God given potential. Residents will be nurtured in a homelike Christian setting.*