Volunteer Handbook

The Bridge of DeLand
421 South Palmetto Avenue
DeLand, FL 32720
386-337-4403
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**FEB 15, 2020**
Welcome to The Bridge!

We are delighted that you have chosen to volunteer your time with us. We understand that your time is precious, and we are honored that you are willing to spend some of it with us. We truly appreciate and value your contribution of time, talent, energy, and enthusiasm to help us fulfill our mission. The goal is to provide hope to the hopeless at The Bridge.

The Bridge is an extension of services provided by The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia. This new extension will operate as a crisis shelter and day center developed in partnership with a coalition that includes local government, faith community, businesses and non-profits. Your commitment is valuable to The Bridge and to the homeless community we serve. The Bridge is a community program that could not operate without volunteers.

The purpose of the Volunteer Handbook is to answer many of the questions you may have about the volunteer programs we offer and to prepare you for your volunteer experience. While the content is intended to inform you of your responsibilities as a volunteer, it’s also intended as a reference to be used at your convenience should you have any questions during your volunteer service with The Bridge. You are responsible for reading and understanding the Volunteer Handbook, and for adhering to The Neighborhood Center policies and procedures. If anything is unclear, please reach out to the volunteer coordinator! The content and materials in this guide may be modified at any time in order to provide you with the most updated information available.

Again, on behalf of our team and everyone here at The Neighborhood Center, we welcome you to our volunteer program. Thank you for taking time to help us end the cycle of homelessness.

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” —Helen Keller
About The Bridge of The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia

Mission Statement
Our mission is to provide food for the hungry, prevent homelessness, and provide shelter for the homeless.

Vision Statement
Our vision is to help people experiencing homelessness return to permanent housing as quickly as possible

History
Since 1969, The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia has been serving the homeless, feeding the hungry and working to prevent homelessness in the DeLand and West Volusia County area.

Our Services
The Bridge will operate as a crisis shelter and day center. The facility will provide homeless adults with shelter in conjunction with support services such as meals, laundry, showers, access to health care, linkage to housing, case management, and benefit assistance.

The Bridge will employ national best practices of coordinated entry and housing first with a goal of housing within 30-90 days. These services aim to see successful transition into transitional, permanent supportive housing, or permanent housing within 90 days. Our goal is to bring hope to the hopeless.

Hours of Services
Below is the schedule for shelter:
  o Day Center: 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM
  o Case Managers Available: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM
  o Evening Services: 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Meals are provided two times a day at the following times:
  o 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Lunch: Served meal
  o 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM: Dinner: Served meal

Guests have access to showers and laundry at the following times: TBD
Volunteer Roles & Responsibilities

Criminal Background Check
The Bridge will conduct Criminal Records Checks as appropriate for the protection of clients, and volunteers in certain assignments may be asked to submit to a background criminal check. Volunteers who do not agree to the background check may be refused assignment. A local background screen will be required for drivers, group leaders, mentors, safety monitors, and service assistants. A background screen is not required for cold weather & emergency shelter, laundry, meal providers, receptionist, and shower assistant.

Cold Weather & Emergency Weather
- The Colder Weather Shelter opens on nights that are 40 degrees or below. Volunteers are needed to operate the shelter to provide a safe and warm environment to those without homes.

Group Leaders
- Lead small groups in verbal and nonverbal communication, anger management, decision making, goal setting, cooperation/team building/collaboration, listening, and self-management/initiative.

Laundry
- Assist clients in doing laundry in an efficient manner

Meal Providers
- Provide, prepare, and serve meals

Mentor
- Act as a support coach, advisor, or advocate
- Provide a stable, supportive relationship for guest

Receptionist
- Welcome clients, check clients in, answer phone, and provide general information

Safety Monitor
- Help ensure that The Bridge remains a safe and manageable environment

Shower Assistance
- Support open shower days for homeless
- Provide clients with towels and toiletries
- Make sure our guests have everything they need, and most importantly engaging with our unhoused neighbors and making them feel important

Service Assistance
- Help clients apply for various services online such as food stamps, identification, and eventually housing options
Transportation
- Provide transportation to residents for job interviews, doctor appointments, or other support services
- You will be asked to submit a copy of your valid driver’s license

Volunteer Experience

At The Neighborhood Center a volunteer is anyone who provides time and talent to our organization through work for the office, The Bridge, food pantry, thrift store, or any other Neighborhood Center projects. We thank you, and all volunteers, for the personal investment you make in our organization and its mission. Every volunteer is valuable, and everyone’s time, talents, and efforts are special gifts that are to be appreciated, respected, recognized, and never taken for granted. Please know that you are making a difference in the lives of those you are helping. We fully anticipate that your volunteer experience with us will be both fulfilling and meaningful for you.

As a volunteer, The Bridge at The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia commits to providing you with the best opportunity possible. You will:

- Be assigned appropriate tasks according to your skills, interest, availability, and training.
- Receive training and supervision for the tasks accepted.
- Be treated as a fellow team member who contributes to The Bridge’s goals.
- Expect that The Bridge will be a good steward of your time.
- Be given appropriate expressions of appreciation and recognition.
- Be trusted with confidential information, if necessary, to carry out assignments.
- Make suggestions that will be acknowledged and valued by staff.
- Be treated with friendliness and cooperation.
- Be provided a safe and inviting work environment.

Volunteer Conduct

The Neighborhood Center expects you to conduct yourself with common courtesy to others at all times and wants your volunteer experience to be a positive one. As a volunteer, you agree to:

- Represent The Neighborhood Center with professionalism, dignity and pride.
- Display respect and courtesy for employees, other volunteers, guests, visitors, clients and property.
- Respect the privacy of persons assisted by The Neighborhood Center and hold in confidence sensitive, private, and personal information. Remember that client stories are theirs to tell, not yours to tell.
- Follow through and complete accepted tasks, dress in attire that follows the volunteer dress code, and be prepared for your shift.
- Sign in and out when coming in and going off duty. The Neighborhood Center needs to keep records of all our volunteer hours.
- Report any emergencies or unsafe conditions to an appropriate staff member.
• Keep personal opinions and actions separate from those made as a representative of this organization.
• Maintain appropriate boundaries with clients, staff, and other volunteers.

Drug-free Volunteer Environment
The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia maintains a drug-free workplace and volunteer environment. The Neighborhood Center strictly prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substance in the volunteer environment. If there is any reason for suspicion, volunteers will be subject to random Urinalysis and/or Breathalyzer.

Absences and Punctuality
Volunteers are critical to The Neighborhood Center. If you are unable to attend a scheduled volunteer day, or if you will arrive late, please contact your point of contact in advance so your position can be covered.

Sign-in Sheets
Your time is very valuable to The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia. It is imperative that we track and document the hours you donate to us. Each time you volunteer, you will be required to sign in and out. If there is not a sign in sheet available, please make a staff member aware of this immediately. Volunteer hours can be used for recognition, grant writing, and insurance purposes. If working independently, please keep a log of your volunteer hours and submit them weekly to supervising staff.

Harassment and Discrimination Policy
The agency has a longstanding commitment to a work environment that respects the dignity and worth of each individual. Inappropriate workplace behavior and unlawful harassment create conditions that are wholly inconsistent with this commitment. The purpose of the policy is to foster a work environment that is free from all forms of unlawful harassment, whether that harassment is because of race, color, religious creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, gender, physical or mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation, medical condition or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law.

Confidentiality Policy
Volunteers understand the importance of communicating information with others as needed to support smooth and efficient operation of The Bridge and its programs and to guarantee the safety and welfare of all The Neighborhood Center program participants, residents, staff, and other volunteers. Volunteers will not discuss any actions/incidents or use anyone’s name(s) with anyone outside the agency without first discussing and obtaining approval from Shelter Director.

Incident Reporting
Any incident in which you have been harmed or injured should be immediately reported to the volunteer coordinator. A form should be completed including all of the incident information. These forms are available through the Shelter Director.
Gifts and Favors
Agency volunteers may not give or accept gifts, payments, fees or services or other favors that influence, or appear to influence, the performance of their duties. In particular, volunteers should never directly offer financial or other personal assistance to individual clients. All in-kind and financial donations must be received by The Neighborhood Center staff or volunteers under the direction of staff.

Client Relations
It is the policy of The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia that clients be treated with dignity and respect. Volunteers must maintain a professional attitude in all dealings with clients and their families. Corporal punishment of a client by anyone is prohibited. No volunteer shall strike, abuse, use threatening or intimidating language or inflict cruelty by physical, psychological or any means upon a client.

Additionally, in order to protect clients, to ensure fair and impartial treatment of clients, and to support The Neighborhood Center’s mission, the following conduct is prohibited:

- Volunteers are prohibited from dating or pursuing social, romantic or sexual relationships with clients.
- Volunteers must not hire to work, meet socially, trade, barter, or otherwise engage in any non-professional transactions with clients.
- Volunteers must not lend or give money at any time to clients.
- Volunteers must not directly or indirectly accept from any client or member of a client’s family anything in the nature of a tip, gift or the promise of a gift.
- Volunteers are prohibited from engaging in undue familiarity with clients or their families.
- Volunteers must not discuss client business with the client's family or friends.

Together we are going to end homelessness for many in our community!
Volunteer Liability Release Form

In consideration of my desire to serve as a volunteer for The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia inclusive to The Bridge program, 421 S Palmetto Avenue, Deland, FL 32720. I hereby assume all responsibility for any and all risk of property damage or bodily injury that I may sustain while participating in any voluntary relief effort, disaster exercise or other activity of any nature, including the use of equipment and facilities of The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia.

Further, I, for myself and my heir, executors, administrators and assigns, hereby release, waive and discharge The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia and its officers, directors, employees, agents and volunteers of and from any and all claims which I or my heirs, administrators and assigns ever may have against any of the above for, on account of, by reason of or arising in connection with such volunteer relief efforts or my participation therein, and hereby waive all such claims, demands and causes of action.

Further, I expressly agree that this release, waiver and indemnity agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as permitted by the State of Florida, and that if any portion thereof is held invalid, it’s agreed that the balance shall, notwithstanding, continue in full legal force and effect.

I currently have no known mental or physical condition that would impair my capability for full participation as intended or expected of me.

Further, I have carefully read the foregoing release and indemnification and understand the contents thereof and sign this release as my own, free act.

Volunteer Signature: __________________________________________________________

Volunteer Name (print): _______________________________________________________

Date: _____________________________

Staff Signature: ______________________________________________________________

Staff Name (print): ____________________________________________________________

Date: _____________________________
Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement

By signing this form, the respondent agrees that any information given while volunteering with The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia is to remain confidential outside of the Neighborhood Center. This includes, but not limited to, client information, personal conversations, staff information, or other relevant Neighborhood Center information. In the event information regarding these areas should need to be disclosed to other agencies, law enforcement or medical professionals, the respondent agrees to notify staff to attend to the exchange of information. This information is otherwise confidential to the other clients, family members of the clients and other public entities and individuals.

Volunteer Signature: ____________________________________________

Volunteer Name (print): _________________________________________

Date: ____________________