

# **Volunteer Handbook**

**Adopted November 11, 2013**

**St. Anthony Park Area Seniors**

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This Volunteer Handbook is an important document intended to help you become acquainted with the St. Anthony Area Seniors (hereafter know as Program). This Handbook will serve as a guide; it is not the final word in all cases. It will illustrate our Mission and our Vision that will serve our clients.

Please read the following statement and sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgement of the Volunteer Handbook.

- I understand that the policies, rules and benefits described in it are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Program at any time.
- I further understand that my volunteering is terminable at will, either by myself, or the Program, regardless of the length of my volunteering.
- I understand that my signature below indicates that I have received this copy of the handbook and that I agree to read prior to my first volunteer assignment.

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Volunteer's Signature

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Date

## **Purpose of This Handbook**

This Handbook has been produced to help you become a better volunteer. This book will share with you a little of our history, philosophy, practices, and policies, as well as all the benefits we will provide to you as a valued volunteer.

No volunteer handbook can answer all the questions you might have about our volunteer program. It is in our person-to-person interactions that we can better get to know each other, express our views, and work together in a valuable way.

We hope this Handbook will allow you to feel comfortable with us. We depend on you - your success is our success. Please don't hesitate to ask questions. Your volunteer supervisor will gladly answer them. We believe you will enjoy your volunteer work and your fellow volunteers here. We also believe you will find St. Anthony Park Area Seniors a good place to volunteer.

We ask that you read this Handbook carefully, and refer to it whenever questions arise.

## **About the St. Anthony Park Area Seniors**

The Program is a private, non-profit agency that helps seniors with differing levels of need related to all facets of health and issues like safety, homemaking, transportation, respite, socialization, etc. in the St. Anthony Park neighborhood of St. Paul, the City of Lauderdale and the portion of the City of Falcon Heights that is west of Snelling Avenue.

The Program is governed by a Board of Directors and staffed by a Program Coordinator, a Service Coordinator and a Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Mission**

The mission of St. Anthony Park Area Seniors is to maintain levels of independence and interdependence for seniors and their caregivers in the St. Anthony Park area, through the collaborative efforts of professional staff, volunteer staff and contracted nursing services working together to integrate health services, social services, community activities, education and advocacy. (Adopted by the Board of Directors at its meeting of September 12, 2011)

## **What You Can Expect from St. Anthony Park Area Seniors**

As a volunteer, you have the right to:

1. Receive a description for each assignment.
2. Be assigned appropriate work according to skill, interests, availability, and training.
3. Be trusted with confidential information that will help you carry out assignments.
4. Be given appropriate expressions of appreciation and recognition.
5. Receive orientation, training, and supervision.
6. Expect that your time will not be wasted by lack of planning, coordination and cooperation within the agency.
7. Receive feedback regarding your performance.
8. Expect your suggestions to be well received about your assignment and The Program's volunteer program.
9. Expect that volunteer records will be kept documenting volunteer experience and training.
10. Be treated as a valuable member who contributes to the Program through your volunteer work.

## **What St. Anthony Park Area Seniors Expects From You**

The Program expects that as a volunteer, you will:

1. Learn and appropriately carry out your assignments.
2. Cooperate with staff and your fellow volunteers.
3. Participate in opportunities for personal development that are offered.
4. Attend all training sessions scheduled for your assignment.
5. Maintain records of your volunteer hours.
6. Inform your volunteer supervisor as soon as possible of any planned absence or lateness.
7. Keep all communications with or concerning clients confidential.
8. Report for your work assignments on time.
9. Voice your opinions and contribute your suggestions to improve the quality of work by The Program.
10. Adhere to the policies and procedures in this handbook, as well as those specific to your assignment area.

## **Volunteer Policies & Procedures**

### **Absence and Lateness**

The positions volunteers fill are critical to this organization. If you fail to show up or show up late, it affects how services are delivered and can upset the routines of other volunteers and/or staff. If you are unable to report to volunteer, or if you will arrive late, please contact St. Anthony Park Area Seniors program staff at the office immediately. Give him or her as much time as possible to arrange for someone else to cover your position until you arrive. Excessive absences may be cause for termination. If you plan to be absent consecutively for a week or more, please inform your supervisor to help get a replacement while you are gone.

## **Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco**

The Program realizes the importance of providing a safe and healthy workplace and minimizing risks to our employees, our clients and to the public to whom we provide our services. For these reasons, we are committed to protecting the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, clients and the public from the hazards caused by abuse of alcohol, drugs and tobacco by volunteers while they are volunteering.

The use, possession, or transfer to others of tobacco, alcohol or controlled substances during volunteer hours is prohibited in the presence of those being served. Reporting for your assignment, or being or remaining at work, or on the Program's premises under the influence of or impaired by alcohol or controlled substances is prohibited. Violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include discharge.

## **Background Check**

In order to ensure a safe environment, a volunteer will be required to submit to a criminal background check and a reference check prior to being accepted as a volunteer. Individuals who refuse to comply with this request will not be accepted as a volunteer.

A signed consent for release of information form must be obtained from the prospective volunteer prior to a request for a background check.

## **Benefits**

Benefits to volunteers include the following:

- ✓ Development of marketable skills for future career opportunities.
- ✓ Training and other learning opportunities.
- ✓ Documentation of training and work experience
- ✓ Recognition for volunteer service
- ✓ Satisfaction of helping others

## **Confidential information**

We have an obligation to our clients to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. Every client served by The Program has the right to confidentiality. But at the same time, every volunteer must use his or her best judgment.

As you work with staff, information of a confidential matter may be shared with you. You must not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know. Such information is not to be shared with your family, friends, or acquaintances.

No one is permitted to remove or make copies of any Program records, reports or documents without prior approval.

Release of confidential information to unauthorized persons can result in dismissal from your service, and could involve you in legal proceedings.

## **Dress Code**

Take your lead from the staff and dress appropriately for the job you are doing. Casual clothing is fine, but we ask that your attire be neat and conservative. Personal appearance should be a matter of concern for each volunteer. If your volunteer supervisor feels your attire is out of place, you may be asked to leave your volunteer assignment until properly attired.

## **Drivers of Motor Vehicles**

A volunteer who will be driving a motor vehicle on behalf of the Program must provide proof that he or she has a valid driver's license and has current liability insurance on his or her vehicle. A volunteer is required to notify the Program if there are any changes to his or her driver's license status or if he or she no longer has liability insurance. A volunteer will not be reimbursed for mileage for use of their motor vehicle on behalf of the Program but they can consider it to be a donation for their personal income tax purposes.

## **Equal Volunteering Opportunity**

St. Anthony Park Area Seniors provides equal opportunities for everyone regardless of race, color, age, religion, sex, pregnancy, or disability related to pregnancy or childbirth, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, status with regard to public assistance, membership in a local commission, membership or non-membership in a labor organization, or any other condition protected under federal, state, or local law. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon ability to perform the job, as well as dependability and reliability.

## **Gifts, Tips, Soliciting**

Do not accept any tips or gifts from clients, their families or friends. We do not want to create an atmosphere where our clients feel obligated to reward the Program's volunteers for doing a job.

Also, you may not promote or solicit your own business enterprise, political agenda or religious beliefs while volunteering with us. Solicitation for a private charity is also prohibited.

## **Harassment/Sexual Harassment**

St. Anthony Park Area Seniors intends to provide a volunteer environment that is pleasant, healthful, comfortable, and free from intimidation, hostility or other offenses, which might interfere with volunteer performance. Harassment of any sort – verbal, physical, visual – will not be tolerated.

Harassment can take many forms. It may be, but it is not limited to: words, signs, jokes, pranks, intimidation, physical contact, or violence.

The Program will not tolerate any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when such conduct creates an intimidating environment, prevents an individual from effectively performing the duties of their position, or when such conduct is made a condition of volunteering, either implicitly or explicitly.

## **Hours-Reporting**

A volunteer will keep track of volunteer hours for the Program and report those hours to the staff monthly by e-mail, phone, or on paper. This is very important for the Program in order to apply for funding and to complete reports for grantors.

## **Open Communication**

St. Anthony Park Area Seniors invites volunteer suggestions and comments. If you have an idea that you think would make our operations more efficient and accurate or provide better service to our clients, we would be very interested in hearing it. Please feel free to bring such ideas to your supervisor. If you have any complaint about any Program practice, policy, or decision, we request that you first attempt to resolve this matter with your immediate supervisor. If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction, please feel free to bring this matter to the attention of the Program's Board of Directors.

## **Resignation**

While we hope both you and the Program will mutually benefit from your continued volunteering, we realize that it may become necessary for you to leave your volunteer position. If you anticipate having to resign, you are expected to notify the Program Coordinator as far in advance as possible.

## **Standards of Conduct**

By accepting volunteering with us, you have a responsibility to St. Anthony Park Area Seniors and to your fellow volunteers to adhere to the guidelines in this document. The purpose of these rules is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that you understand what conduct is expected and necessary. When each person is aware that he or she can fully depend upon fellow volunteers to follow the rules of conduct, then our organization will be a better place to volunteer for everyone.

## **Unacceptable Activities**

Generally speaking, we expect each person to act in a mature and responsible way at all times. However, to avoid any possible confusion, some of the more obvious unacceptable activities are noted below. If you have questions regarding any volunteer or safety rule, or any of the unacceptable activities listed, please see your supervisor for an explanation.

If a volunteer violates any rules established by the Program including the following rules, that person may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

- Willful violation of any agency rule; any deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is obviously detrimental to the Program.
- Negligence or any careless action that endangers the life or safety of another person.
- Possession or use of all illegal drugs or other illegal substances on agency property or while volunteering.
- Excessive tardiness or absenteeism.
- Possession of dangerous or illegal firearms, weapons or explosives on agency property or while volunteering.
- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or making threats of violence toward anyone on Program's premises or when representing the Program.
- Fighting, or horseplay or provoking a fight on Program's property, or negligent damage of property.
- Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions properly issued by your supervisor.
- Threatening, intimidating or coercing fellow volunteers on or off the premises – at any time or any purpose.
- Theft of Program's property or the property of fellow volunteers or clients; unauthorized possession or removal of any Program's property, including documents, from the premises without prior permission from the management; unauthorized use of the Program's equipment or property for personal reasons; using Program's equipment for profit.
- Dishonesty; willful falsification or misrepresentation on your application for volunteering or other volunteer records; alteration of Program's records or other agency documents.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.
- Sexual harassment or discriminatory conduct.

## **Termination of a Volunteer**

St. Anthony Park Area Seniors is an at-will agency and has the right to terminate a volunteer without cause, but will always consider the cause leading to the termination. In general, failure to adhere to policies of the Program is cause for immediate release.

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