UNION GOSPEL MISSION
TWIN CITIES

Volunteer Manual

Our Mission Is Changing Lives

Welcome to Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities!

Thank you for volunteering your time and talents at Union Gospel Mission Twin Cities (UGMTC)! Volunteers are essential partners in our work with those who are experiencing homelessness, poverty and addiction. Committed volunteers help with reaching the men, women and children in our community by mentoring and encouraging them. UGMTC is committed to carefully matching volunteer interests, skills and experience with the work to be done. Additionally, we provide well-planned, relevant and ongoing training and support throughout the year. You will be informed of training opportunities with periodic articles in our monthly e-newsletter, *Volunteer Connect*. We encourage your participation and hope you will take advantage of these opportunities.

Your gift of time means a great deal to us. We will always confirm your participation and ask that you follow through on your commitment—our staff, guests, residents and other volunteers are counting on you. If for any reason you are unable to participate as you planned, we ask that you notify us immediately at volunteeers@ugmtc.org so we can schedule another volunteer.

Signing Up Online

All volunteers are required to create a volunteer profile and sign up to volunteer online. **We do not accept walk-in volunteers at any time.** This allows our staff to coordinate with one another—making the best use of your valuable time as well as meeting the needs of our programs.

The Mission is a hive of activity! For example, our amazing kitchen crew relies on volunteers 365 days a year to help serve meals! It is important to have all our kitchen volunteers sign up for their volunteer shifts at least 24 hours in advance. If we have too many volunteers at a meal, then we may not have enough work for everyone. Additionally, having an accurate number of volunteers and volunteer hours helps us report accurately and receive funding.

Your online profile is kept confidential and will only be used for volunteer coordination and communication. You have the opportunity to opt out of online communications at your discretion.

Website: Please visit volunteer.ugmtc.org to sign up to volunteer, find volunteer forms and applications, and more. If you need help signing up for an opportunity, please email **volunteers@ugmtc.org**. We are happy to help.

Your Volunteer Profile:

- **New volunteers**:
  - Go to volunteers.ugmtc.org.
  - In the upper left, click on VOLUNTEER PROFILE.
  - Register to create a volunteer profile.
- **Current Volunteers**:
  - Go to volunteers.ugmtc.org.
  - Click the green LOG IN button in the upper right to log in.
- Your profile will include upcoming opportunities, your volunteer history with us and any self-reported hours.
- You will also be able to manage your volunteer opportunities. If you need to cancel, just log in and cancel your volunteering within 1 hour of its start time.
- You will also have access to volunteer documents and forms.

Volunteer Connect (e-newsletter): All volunteers can opt-in to receive this e-newsletter. You will find UGMTC volunteer-related articles, opportunities, quick links for event sign-ups, volunteer spotlights and more.

Volunteer Benefits, Rights & Responsibilities

UGMTC Volunteer Benefits

Benefits most often mentioned by UGMTC volunteers include:

- Making a difference in somebody's life
- Feeling needed and valued
- Learning and developing new skills
- Gaining a deeper understanding of issues surrounding homelessness, poverty and addiction
- Increased sense of belonging to a community
- Larger circle of contacts and friends

UGMTC Volunteer Rights

1. To apply for volunteer positions in which they are interested
2. To a timely response from an email inquiry
3. To have personal information kept confidential
4. To a timely notice of a job assignment
5. To be assigned a job that is worthwhile and challenging
6. To receive training that is appropriate for the volunteer assignment
7. To receive supervision and support

8. To receive appropriate recognition
9. To have their ideas, opinions and feelings listened to respectfully by staff
10. To be treated with respect and courtesy
11. To receive the monthly volunteer e-newsletter
12. To be kept informed of relevant changes within UGMTC
13. To participate in the life of UGMTC

Volunteer Responsibilities

Please contact your UGMTC Program Staff Supervisor when:

- You have questions about your volunteer role and what you will be doing
- You have questions about boundary issues with our guests or residents (e.g., one of our guests or residents is asking for money, your personal information or transportation)
- You are unsure about your expectations in your department of service
- You are having trouble building relationships with our guests or residents (e.g., challenge striking up conversations)
- You would like more responsibilities within your volunteer role
- A guest or resident gets upset with you and you are unsure how to handle the situation

Please contact UGMTC Volunteer Department Staff when:

- You are having issues with your program staff supervisor
- You have feedback for the volunteer services department
- You want to sign up to participate in other volunteer opportunities
- You are unsure about your scheduling and need to cancel or switch your volunteer service time
- You want to refer a volunteer
- You have ideas or stories to share about your volunteer experience with UGMTC
- You are not sure which UGMTC location to go to

Appearance

Personal appearance is important in representing UGMTC to our guests and residents. Volunteers must have appropriate attire for the work they will be doing. Following our dress code will protect you, other volunteers, guests, residents and staff. It sets standards of respect for everyone in our organization.

All clothing must not portray themes related to alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, sex or violence. For the benefit of those around you, please dress modestly when you are volunteering with us.

Food Service Volunteers must wear:

- Closed-toed shoes
- Clothing that covers the chest, shoulders, underarms, torso and knees
- Hairnets or hat (provided by UGMTC)
- Gloves and aprons (provided by UGMTC)

Business casual attire is appropriate in all residential programs. Casual attire is appropriate for our Child Development Center. Be mindful that some volunteer roles require long periods of standing and wearing comfortable shoes is essential.

Age Requirement

All volunteers in Food Services must be 12 years of age or older. Volunteers under 18 years of age will need to be accompanied by a chaperone or parent/legal guardian. We do make occasional exceptions for church and school groups. Please contact **Volunteer Services** for more information.

Interacting with Guests and Residents

General information for your visit

- Think of open-ended questions you might ask to start conversations with our guests and residents. Open-ended questions require more than a "yes" or "no."
- Know your audience. Certain references, slang or sarcasm may be difficult for some of our guests and residents to understand, whereas many of our teenagers might relate to it.
- Be ready to re-word phrases if necessary.
- Maintain appropriate eye contact. This helps to facilitate direct communication.
- Many of our guests and residents are open to discussing their faith. Feel free to pray or read scripture when appropriate. Keep in mind that not all of our guests and residents are at the same place in terms of sharing about their relationship with God. Never push a guest or resident to talk about their faith if they are not comfortable. Re-direct the conversation to something else if this happens.
- Respond positively. Give feedback by making caring, appropriate comments that encourage the guest or resident.
- Do not take photos of our guests or residents. You are welcome to take photos of yourself volunteering or of our facility but please protect our guests and residents privacy.

- NEVER invite guests or residents to your home or to other outings that are not affiliated with UGMTC.

Listening

Being a good listener means creating space for the other person—and that is vital to a fulfilling relationship! A good listener also keeps their evaluating and correcting to a minimum. Remember to accept what the guest or resident says as a valid expression of their thoughts and feelings. Being a good listener does not exclude being a talker; it does mean, responding to what is heard from the other person, verbally as well as nonverbally. We listen to understand and to let the guest or resident know you understand what they are saying.

3 Do's of listening

- Restating/reflecting
- Clarifying
- Asking questions

3 Don't of Listening

- Problem Solving
- Giving advice
- Interrupting with your personal experiences

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Probing into personal matters before establishing rapport
- Jumping from getting to know the guest or resident to problem solving pre-maturely
- Trying to "fix" the person's problems or current situation
    - Fixing is not always possible or helpful with our guests and residents.
    - Is there a need for fixing, or is it your perception?
    - Each guest or resident has a program staff that supervises them. Anytime you feel the need to cross a boundary in terms of a guest or resident's situation, please contact a staff immediately.

Beyond Listening: Situations you may encounter with our guests and residents

Despair

Sometimes our guests and residents will express loneliness and depression in a way that makes us feel uncomfortable. Perhaps we ourselves are uncomfortable with depressing thoughts. We are not going to be able to "fix" the guest or resident's distress by ignoring it. Rather, listening

with empathy is a useful alternative. Remember to always be as supportive and honest as possible. If you need to talk to a chaplain, case manager or other program staff, please do so as soon as you can. Our staff is here to help with these situations. It is not a responsibility of our volunteers to take the place of trained counselors and ministers. In the end, most people will gladly accept prayer over these feelings.

Advice

While it may be tempting, be very careful not to give advice to our guests and residents. Quick advice can send the message to the person that you don't feel he or she is very intelligent. Your suggestion is likely one that the individual has thought of or tried in the past. Instead, help the person think through the options and always allow them to make independent decisions. At the end of the day, our dedicated program staff will work through any issues they are going through. Always refer the person to discuss what they are going through with their assigned staff member.

Volunteer Policies & Procedures

I. **Confidentiality:**
Confidentiality of any identifying or sensitive personal information pertaining to a guest, resident, volunteer, donor or staff is essential.

II. **Photos:**
   a. Do not take photos of guests or residents at the Mission. Photos of other volunteers, donors or staff may only be taken with permission.
   b. As part of signing up to volunteer, you give permission to the Mission to use your photo and photo likeness in mission-related materials. Should you like to revoke that permission, please contact Volunteer Services.

III. **Criminal Background Check:**
All ongoing staff members and certain volunteer opportunities are required to have a criminal background check. One-time group and individual volunteers do not need to fill out a background check if they are not working directly with minors.

IV. **Drug and Alcohol Policy:**
Illegal substance use and/or alcohol or cannabis abuse, sale or possession on UGMTC property, or reporting to your volunteer assignment under the influence of alcohol, cannabis or a controlled substance is prohibited.

V. **Harassment Policy:**
UGMTC does not allow any form of harassment or conduct that has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's volunteer or work performance or creating an

intimidating, hostile, offensive environment for volunteers, donors, guests, residents or staff. If a situation occurs, please alert the Volunteer Services team immediately.

VI. **Inappropriate Behavior:**
Incidences of inappropriate behavior (e.g., derogatory or degrading comments, unwanted touch, harassment, illegal activity, etc.) **will not be tolerated**. Any person who has experienced or witnessed inappropriate behavior, or has an allegation reported to them, should immediately report this to a UGMTC staff member and Volunteer Services. This includes having appropriate boundaries between a volunteer and a guest/resident. No volunteer may invite a guest or resident to their home, bring them off campus or to events not affiliated with UGMTC without permission from the program director.

VII. **Insurance:**
Volunteers who drive residents or guests in their own vehicle for UGMTC-related events must have a valid driver's license and automobile insurance which covers their vehicle and liability. UGMTC carries an umbrella policy which is a secondary insurance covering general liability. This does not cover a volunteer's vehicle. Mileage reimbursement is not offered as part of our policy. The state minimum coverage of $100,000 per person, $300,000 per accident, and $100,000 property damage is required.

VIII. **Transporting Guests and Residents In a UGMTC vehicle:**
For liability reasons, volunteers who want to drive any guest and resident in a UGMTC vehicle are required to have a DMV background check and attend a UGMTC defensive driving class.

IX. **Repudiation of Gifts & Gift giving:**
Volunteers may not accept or give cash gifts or non-financial gifts from any of our guest or residents, provide financial, banking or tax advice or perform any type of assistance to a guest or resident for pay.

X. **Physical Touch:**
Always ask permission before a touch or hug. When first getting to know our guests and residents, limit touching to what you would do with any other recent acquaintance. Be mindful that some of our guests and residents have had negative experience when it comes to physical touch, and may not wish to receive something simple like a hug.

XI. **Sexual Comments or Advances:**
Sexual advances and comments from a guest, resident or volunteer are always inappropriate. If you, the volunteer, experience this type of situation, please promptly discuss this with a UGMTC program staff and Volunteer Services member.

Boundaries and Setting Limits

A boundary is something that indicates a border or limit, the extent beyond which an activity cannot or should not take place. Boundaries are limits that allow for a safe connection based on the guest or resident's need. These limits protect the space between the volunteer's power and the guest or resident's vulnerability.

Guidelines for Developing Healthy Boundaries

- Know UGMTC's policies to help define limits. If you have questions, contact the program manager.
- Balance "I can't" with "I won't." Maintain an awareness of over-using policy to set personal limits. Some things you would not want to do, regardless of the policy. This distinction will help you develop boundary-setting skills.
- Make conscious decisions about the boundaries you are setting.
    - What do you want in this relationship?
    - What do you want to avoid in this relationship?
    - What level of closeness is appropriate in this relationship?
- Protect and help each other avoid too much self-disclosure. Example: You may not need to or want to know all the intimate details of family life. Direct conversation to topics that maintain healthy space.
- Keep your personal information confidential. Do not share your contact information with guests or residents.
- Create time for yourself if you are unsure of how to respond. You might say, "I'm not sure what to say about that" or "I need to think about that more."
- Get in touch with your physical responses. Tune into your feelings and gut responses.
- Acknowledge the request even if you cannot grant them.
- Stay involved in the solution. You might say, "I am not able to do that, but let's see if we can figure out a way to get you the help you need."

Steps for Setting Limits

- Offer support and acknowledge the situation the person is facing.
- Be clear about what you are not willing or able to do.
- Describe what you **can** do.
- Restate your role and relationship to the guest or resident.
- Reiterate the program purposes and goals.
- Assist the guest or resident in identifying strengths.
- Engage the individual in problem-solving.
- Request support from the UGMTC staff and Volunteer Services.

- Articulate the guest or resident needs to UGMTC staff and Volunteer Services and resources when appropriate.

Volunteer Separation and Dismissal

Volunteer service may end voluntarily by resignation or involuntarily by dismissal. A volunteer may be reassigned to a position that is a more appropriate match to their skills and experience. Additionally, volunteers may be required to take a period of separation away from a position before they are able to return. If a volunteer needs to resign their position before an agreed date, Volunteer Services requests that the volunteer provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for the decision.

For the wellbeing of the guests and residents UGMTC serves, volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of UGMTC, or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer duties, are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be dismissed until they have had an opportunity to discuss the reason for possible dismissal with UGMTC program and volunteer staff. However, an individual's volunteer duties may be suspended immediately, if deemed prudent, at the discretion of UGMTC staff until such a time as discussion is possible. This may be necessary pending investigations, etc. This suspension will be effective immediately upon verbal or written communication, whichever comes first.

Grounds for Dismissal

Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to abide by UGMTC policies and procedures
- Abuse or mistreatment of UGMTC volunteers, donors, staff, guests or residents
- Theft of property or misuse of UGMTC equipment or materials
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while volunteering
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties

Procedures for Separation and Dismissal

- Program staff and/or Volunteer Services Coordinator will call the volunteer and when possible, will arrange an in-person meeting with the volunteer. If contact is made with the volunteer over the telephone, a letter summarizing the conversation will be written and mailed to the volunteer.
- A determination of separation or dismissal will be made by program staff and Volunteer Services. The volunteer will be notified of this determination in a timely manner. If

contact is made with the volunteer over the telephone, a letter summarizing the conversation will be written and mailed to the volunteer.

- If the volunteer does not return a call within two weeks, the volunteer will be sent a letter indicating the attempts to contact the volunteer and indicating the reason(s) for separation or dismissal.

A word of thanks…

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with you because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

—Philippians 1:3–6

UGMTC would not be the place it is without each one of our volunteers. Thank you for taking the time to serve our guests and residents. You are serving with love, kindness, hospitality and dignity. We give thanks for each one of our volunteers who come to walk with us, shoulder to shoulder, in the community that we are called to serve.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to the Volunteer Services Department.

For more information, please contact the Volunteer Services Department

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