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# Families in Transition

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## Volunteer Handbook

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2014

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122 Market Street, Manchester, NH 03101

(603) 641-1143 x357

## **WELCOME TO FAMILIES IN TRANSITION!**

Starting a new volunteer position is exciting. This Volunteer Manual has been developed to help you become acquainted with Families in Transition (FIT) and answer many of your initial questions.

As a volunteer at Families in Transition, the importance of your contribution cannot be overstated. Our goal is to provide the finest-quality services to our participants.

You are an important part of this process, for your time directly influences FIT's ability to serve in an efficient way. FIT is committed to providing the best possible climate for volunteer development and fulfillment. Our practice is to treat each volunteer as an individual. We seek to develop a spirit of teamwork; individuals coming together to attain a common goal.

In order to maintain an atmosphere where these goals can be accomplished, we provide a comfortable and progressive volunteer-space. Most importantly, we have an environment where communication is open and problems can be discussed and resolved in a mutually respectful atmosphere. We take into account individual circumstances and the individual volunteer.

We firmly believe that with direct communication, we can continue to resolve any difficulties that may arise and develop a mutually beneficial relationship.

We are glad you have joined us, and we hope you will find your volunteer time to be both challenging and rewarding.

Warm Regards,



Maureen Beauregard  
President

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Established in 1995 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, FIT exists to develop, promote and support programs for homeless individuals with and without children. As such, FIT's mission statement is as follows:

*“To provide safe, affordable housing and comprehensive social services to individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless enabling them to gain self-sufficiency and respect.”*

While most of FIT's funds come from state and federal sources, additional monies are often secured from private foundations, local governmental agencies, other non-profits and individual donors. Any of these funding sources may have operating guidelines, which must be met by individual employees or FIT as a whole.

FIT's management and activities are overseen by the organization's Board of Directors. Directors are elected to specified terms and meet on a regular basis to make decisions relative to the operations of the organization.

Families in Transition is a non-profit organization providing social services and/or housing to families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Families in Transition owns and operates a variety of housing programs including transitional, permanent supportive and permanent affordable housing. Participants receive subsidized housing and on-site supportive services designed to help them attain economic and emotional stability.

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**SECTION 1: THE WAY WE WORK**

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## **A WORD ABOUT THIS POLICY MANUAL**

This Volunteer Policy Manual contains information about the volunteer policies and practices of FIT. We expect each volunteer to read this Manual carefully, as it is a valuable reference for understanding your service and FIT. The policies outlined in this Volunteer Policy Manual should be regarded as management guidelines only, which in a developing business will require changes from time to time. FIT retains the right to make decisions involving volunteerism as needed in order to conduct its work in a manner that is beneficial to the volunteers and FIT. This Volunteer Handbook supersedes and replaces any and all prior Volunteer Handbooks and/or Policy Manuals and inconsistent verbal or written policy statements. FIT reserves the right to revise, delete and add to the provisions of this Volunteer Policy Manual.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

FIT is committed to equal opportunity. We are committed to the treatment of volunteers without regard to their veteran status, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age and physical or mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation or citizenship.

## **POLICY AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT**

Families in Transition wants to provide all volunteers a service environment which encourages productive activity and mutual respect. To accomplish this, FIT will not tolerate discrimination or harassment described in this policy by any person and will deal severely with anyone who engages in discrimination or harassment. Therefore, it shall be FIT's policy to prohibit discrimination or harassment of volunteers on account of their race, color, sex, age, national origin, citizenship, religion, disability, military status, sexual orientation or marital status.

Harassment is serious or pervasive and offensive conduct directed toward a volunteer because of his/her race, color, sex, age, national origin, citizenship, religion, disability, military status, sexual orientation or marital status. Most harassment starts out as just offensive and inappropriate conduct directed toward a volunteer because of his/her race, color, sex, age, national origin, citizenship, religion, disability, military status, sexual orientation or marital status and will not be tolerated by FIT. In many cases, the person who is offended can stop the conduct by telling the other person that he/she is offended and expects the other person to stop; the person must immediately stop that conduct. FIT encourages this kind of forthright communication. FIT wants to assure that all volunteers are not subjected to harassment or inappropriate conduct.

Sexual harassment is difficult to define. It generally is serious or pervasive offensive conduct which is directed toward a volunteer because of his/her sex and is unwelcomed by the volunteer. It also generally has a sexual or sexist component. Certain conduct is more offensive to some people than others. However, the basic guideline which FIT will follow is that discussions, jokes or remarks involving sex, sexual matters, propositions or physical makeup or gender-stereotyping are prohibited. No volunteer or supervisor may engage in this type of conduct. Although all the kinds of prohibited conduct could not be listed, the following list sets out examples of types of prohibited conduct:

- unnecessary touching
- brushing against someone
- comments or slurs of a sexual or sexist nature
- cartoons or pictures that deal with a sexual or sexist subject
- pressuring someone to go on a date
- dirty or offensive jokes or comments of a sexual or sexist nature

Anyone who has information regarding any prohibited conduct described above should notify his/her supervisor or the President or COO. This includes harassment or inappropriate conduct by another volunteer, supervisor or non-volunteer.

FIT will undertake an investigation of the conduct, keeping information as confidential as possible. All persons contacted must cooperate fully.

Any person who is found to be responsible for harassment or inappropriate conduct will be subject to the appropriate action.

No one who participates in this process or makes a complaint under this policy shall suffer any retaliation. Obviously, everyone is expected to be truthful and to use his/her best judgment.

## **NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION**

Each new volunteer is required to meet with the Coordinator of Volunteers and/or other personnel for an orientation to FIT either before or shortly after beginning. As a part of your orientation, you are being given this copy of FIT's Volunteer Handbook. After reading, please sign the receipt page and return it to your supervisor. You will also be responsible for signing our and returning our Confidentiality form, Photo, Video, Audio Release form, and a Service Description before beginning.

If you lose your Volunteer Handbook, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible to obtain a replacement copy.



Your supervisor is responsible for the operations of your department. (S)he is a good source of information about FIT and your volunteer position.

## **BENEFITS OF THE VOLUNTEER**

**Letters of Recommendation:** We will provide letters of recommendation for our outstanding volunteers.

**Volunteer Recognition Award:** We recognize volunteers in various categories each year – business, school, individual, and youth.

**Hour certificates:** We celebrate your volunteering for various levels of hours with us with a certificate that you can display.

**Birthday cards:** On your birthday, you will receive a birthday card from us which includes a coupon that you can redeem at the Outfitters Thrift Store.

## **TALK TO US**

We encourage you to bring your questions, suggestions and complaints to our attention. We will carefully consider each of these in our continuing effort to improve operations.

If you feel you have a problem, present the situation to your supervisor so that the problem can be settled by examination and discussion of the facts. We hope that your supervisor is able to satisfactorily resolve most matters.

Your suggestions and comments on any subject are important, and we encourage you to take every opportunity to discuss them with us. Your assignment will not be adversely affected in any way because you choose to use this procedure.

If at any time you do not feel comfortable speaking with your supervisor or the next level of management, discuss your concern with any other member of management with whom you feel comfortable.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

If an area of concern arises regarding a volunteer's responsibilities and/ or actions, the following will occur:

1. Supervisor will directly address the concern with the volunteer to resolve any outstanding issues.
2. If the previous meeting does not change the outcome of the volunteer's future actions, then the Coordinator of Volunteers & FIT VISTA Program will meet with the supervisor and the volunteer to further discuss final options for a resolution and/or disciplinary actions as appropriate.

3. If, at any time, the volunteer's actions are in violation of any FIT volunteer policy, ethical policy, and/or a legal issue, the volunteer will be immediately dismissed by the Coordinator of Volunteers & FIT VISTA Program

## **FINGERPRINTING POLICY**

If you are volunteering with children at the preschool for more than 5 hours a week, you are required per our license agreement with the State of NH to be fingerprinted

**SECTION 2: ON THE JOB**

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## **SCHEDULE CHANGES**

If you are unable to volunteer when scheduled, we would appreciate you calling the supervisor you are assigned to prior to the start of your shift on each day you are unable to work. We appreciate you as a volunteer; however, if you can let us know when you are unable to come in, we can plan ahead and distribute the responsibilities to those who will be available.

In the case of severe weather, we leave it up to your discretion to determine whether or not you feel comfortable coming in for your shift.

## **PARKING**

OutFITters Manchester: 394 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Manchester. There is parking available for volunteers on West Hancock Street – we reserve the main parking lots for tenants and store customer.

OutFITters Concord: 20 S. Main Street, Concord There is not a parking lot, so volunteers need to park along the street or in parking garages in the area.

IOP Daycare: 161 S. Beech St, Manchester. There is parking available for volunteers in the parking lot.

Other volunteer locations: Please check with your supervisor or the Coordinator of Volunteers about parking.

## **SIGNING IN AND OUT**

A daily schedule book is used to maintain an accurate record of each volunteer. Please complete and record the time you arrived and when you leave daily. Volunteers will be shown where to sign in by supervisor. If not, the book may be found at:

122 Market Street – The receptionist’s desk.

394 Second Street – The receptionist’s desk

161 S. Beech Street – The IOP receptionist’s desk.

OutFITters Manchester – In the store back room/Volunteer Center

OutFITters Concord – In the break room.

*These locations are subject to change. Be sure to ask you supervisor for the locations of sign in sheets.*

## **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Each volunteer has an obligation to observe and follow FIT's policies and to maintain proper standards of conduct at all times. If an individual's behavior interferes with the orderly and efficient operation of a department, corrective disciplinary measures will be taken. The decision as to whether a volunteer's conduct violates FIT's policies rests solely with FIT.

Following are the types of conduct that are not acceptable to FIT. This list is not all-inclusive, but is intended to set forth guidelines as to the type of conduct that will not be tolerated. FIT reserves the right to change, add to or amend this list at any time.

The following may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge:

- 1) Disregard of safety rules or health or sanitation regulations.
- 2) Possession of firearms, explosives or any weapon on FIT's property.
- 3) Using abusive, profane, discourteous, disrespectful or false or malicious language concerning FIT's activities or any volunteer, participant or member of management.
- 4) Dishonesty of any kind, including but not limited to, such conduct as falsification of personnel or other records or reports; unauthorized reproduction of keys or misuse of security precautions; misappropriation of FIT's property, its participants or that of fellow volunteer, or destruction or abuse thereof.
- 5) Damaging or defacing property of FIT.
- 6) Commission of any unlawful act on or off FIT's premises.
- 7) Threatening, intimidating or coercing participants, volunteers, employees, or FIT management.
- 8) Using, possessing or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs during the workday or on FIT's property.

## **DRIVING**

If a volunteer is driving as part of their volunteer role, the individual must be able to provide a copy of their current and valid driver's license, as well as proof of automotive insurance. Copies of both of these will be added to the volunteer's paper file.

FIT requires that you have a bodily injury liability section with limits of \$100,000/\$300,000.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST/CODE OF ETHICS**

FIT's reputation for integrity is its most valuable asset and is directly related to the conduct of its officers and other volunteers. Therefore, volunteers must never use their positions with FIT, or any of its participants, for private gain, to advance personal interests or to obtain favors or benefits for themselves, members of their families or any other individuals, corporations or business entities.

FIT adheres to the highest legal and ethical standards applicable in our business. FIT's business is conducted in the strict observance of both the letter and spirit of all applicable laws and the integrity of each volunteer is of utmost importance.

Volunteers of FIT shall conduct their personal affairs in such a fashion that their duties and responsibilities to FIT are not jeopardized and/or legal questions do not arise with respect to their association or work with FIT.

## **CHANGES IN PERSONAL DATA**

To aid you and/or your family in matters of personal emergency, we need to maintain up-to-date information.

Changes in name, address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents or changes in next of kin and/or beneficiaries should be submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator promptly.

## **PARTICIPANT RELATIONS**

FIT's reputation is built on excellent service and quality work. To maintain this reputation requires the active participation of every volunteer.

The opinions and attitudes that participants have toward FIT may be determined for a long period of time by the actions of one volunteer; therefore, each volunteer must be sensitive to the importance of providing courteous treatment in all working relationships.

## **PROTECTING FIT INFORMATION**

Protecting FIT's information is the responsibility of every volunteer, and we all share a common interest in making sure it is not improperly or accidentally disclosed. Do not discuss FIT's confidential business with anyone who does not work for us.

We would appreciate that volunteers not use FIT's mailing address for the receipt of personal mail.

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

All media inquiries regarding the company and its operations must be referred to the Director of Marketing and Economic Development or the President. Only the Director of Marketing and Economic Development or the President are authorized to make or approve public statements pertaining to the company or its operations. No volunteers, unless specifically designated by the President, are authorized to make those statements.

## **CARE OF EQUIPMENT**

You are expected to demonstrate proper care when using FIT's property and equipment. No property may be removed from the premises without the proper authorization of management. If you lose, break or damage any property, report it to your supervisor at once.

## **DRESS POLICY**

Volunteers are expected to maintain the highest standards of personal cleanliness and present a neat, professional appearance at all times.

Our participants' satisfaction represents the most important and challenging aspect of our business. Whether or not your job responsibilities place you in direct participant contact, you represent FIT with your appearance as well as your actions. The properly attired individual helps to create a favorable image for FIT, to the public and fellow volunteers.

At OutFITters Thrift Store and Boutique all volunteers are required to wear long pants and close-toed shoes.

## **SHOPPING DURING SERVICE**

While volunteering at the OutFITters Thrift Stores we ask that volunteers, as well as staff, do not shop from the back room. All merchandise must be put out on the floor for half an hour before it can be sold

Also, volunteers cannot shop while they are on their volunteer shift. You can, however, shop before your shift begins or once your shift ends.

## **ENDING SERVICE**

At the end of your service we ask that you fill out an exit survey letting us know how your experience was and what we could do to improve our program.



## **SECTION 3: WORKPLACE ETIQUETTE**

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## **PERSONAL TELEPHONE CALLS**

It is important to keep our telephone lines free for work calls. Although the occasional use of FIT's telephones for a personal emergency may be necessary, routine personal calls should be kept to a minimum.

We appreciate it if volunteers keep personal cellular telephones set to vibrate or silent while volunteering. Please note, that during a volunteer shift, it is expected that personal calls and texts are kept to a minimum.

## **PERSONAL INTERNET USAGE**

The Internet is intended for business purposes only. The use of FIT's Internet access for non-job-related solicitations including, but not limited to, religious or political causes is strictly prohibited. Volunteers are also prohibited from displaying, transmitting and/or downloading sexually-explicit images, messages, ethnic slurs, racial epithets or anything which could be construed as harassment or disparaging to others.

Volunteers learning of any misuse of FIT's Internet access shall notify a member of management immediately.

## **SECTION 4: SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE.**

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## **EACH VOLUNTEER'S RESPONSIBILITY**

Safety can only be achieved through teamwork at FIT. Each volunteer, employee, supervisor and manager must practice safety awareness by thinking defensively, anticipating unsafe situations and reporting unsafe conditions immediately.

Please observe the following precautions:

1. Notify your supervisor of any emergency situation. If you are injured or become sick at work, no matter how slightly, you must inform your supervisor immediately.
2. The use of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances during service hours will not be tolerated. The possession of alcoholic beverages or illegal substances on FIT's property is forbidden.
3. Use, adjust, and repair machines and equipment only if you are trained and qualified.
4. Get help when lifting or pushing heavy objects.
5. Understand your volunteer position fully and follow instructions. If you are not sure of the safe procedure, don't guess, just ask your supervisor.
6. Know the locations, contents and use of first aid and firefighting equipment.
7. Wear personal protective equipment in accordance with the volunteer position you are performing.

A violation of a safety precaution is in itself an unsafe act.

## **SEARCHES**

To protect the property and to ensure the safety of all volunteers, participants and FIT, FIT reserves the right to conduct personal searches consistent with state law, and to inspect any packages, parcels, purses, handbags, brief cases, lunch boxes or any other possessions or articles carried to and from FIT's property. In addition, FIT reserves the right to search any office, desk, file, locker, equipment or any other area or article on our premises. In this regard, it should be noted that all offices, desks, files (including electronic files), lockers, equipment, etc. are the property of FIT, and are issued for the use of volunteers only during their service. Inspection may be conducted at any time at the discretion of FIT.

## **VIOLENCE POLICY**

Violence committed by a volunteer or anyone else against a volunteer, employee, supervisor or member of management will not be tolerated. The purpose of this policy is to minimize the potential risk of personal injuries to volunteers at work and to reduce the possibility of damage to FIT property in the event someone, for whatever reason, may be unhappy with a FIT decision or action by a volunteer, an employee or member of management.

If you receive or overhear any threatening communications from an employee, volunteer, or outside third party, report it to your supervisor at once. Do not engage in either physical or verbal confrontation with a potentially violent individual. If you encounter an individual who is threatening immediate harm to a volunteer, an employee, or visitor to our premises, contact an emergency agency (such as 911) immediately.

All reports of work-related threats will be kept confidential to the extent possible, investigated and documented. Volunteers are expected to report and participate in an investigation of any suspected or actual cases of workplace violence.

Violations of this policy, including your failure to report or fully cooperate in FIT's investigation, may result in dismissal.

## **SMOKING POLICY**

FIT is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for volunteers, staff, and visitors. Smoking is not permitted on any FIT property, inside of or outside of the building or in FIT trucks and/or automobiles.

## **CONCEALED WEAPONS**

Possession, use or sale of weapons, firearms or explosives on work premises is forbidden. Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

FIT has vital interests in ensuring a safe, healthy and efficient working environment for our volunteers, employees, their co-workers and the participants we serve. The unlawful or improper use of controlled substances or alcohol in the workplace presents a danger to everyone. For this reason, we have established as a condition of service and continued service with FIT the following drug and alcohol free workplace policy.

Volunteers are prohibited from reporting to work or working while using illegal or unauthorized controlled substances. Volunteers are prohibited from reporting to work or working when the volunteer uses any drugs, except when the use is pursuant to a doctor's orders and the doctor has advised the volunteer that the substance does not adversely affect the volunteer's ability to safely perform his or her job duties. Volunteers are also prohibited from reporting for duty or remaining on duty with any alcohol in their systems. Volunteers are also prohibited from consuming alcohol during working hours, including meal and break periods.

In addition, volunteers are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful or unauthorized manufacture, distribution, sale or possession of illegal drugs and alcohol in the workplace including: on FIT paid time, on FIT premises, in FIT vehicles or while engaged in FIT activities.

In accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, volunteers must notify your supervisor of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring within the place of service within five days of such conviction.

Your service or continued service with FIT is conditioned upon your full compliance with the foregoing drug and alcohol free workplace policy. FIT assures that any information concerning an individual's drug or alcohol use will remain confidential.

## **FIRST AID KITS ARE LOCATED IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS**

- Each vehicle of FIT
- Millyard II – staff bathroom and in children's room cabinet.
- Millyard I—in bathroom on top of cabinet.
- Concord – in kitchen on the right hand top cabinet shelf.
- Family Mill – children's room and bathroom.
- OutFITters Thrift Store – at cash wrap in cabinet and in truck.
- Family Willows – in 1<sup>st</sup> floor Treatment Coordinator space, in bathroom in Recovery Center, and in bathroom of Community Room.
- Douglas St – bathroom in office area.
- Lowell St. – 2 kits are located in the second floor staff office.
- Belmont – on tall filing cabinet in main office or with drug testing kits.

## **FIRE EMERGENCY PLANS**

In the case of a fire emergency, please adhere to the following protocols regarding the safety of staff, tenants and buildings (fire alarms should be pulled, if necessary and are located by each exit door):

### **Millyard I and II - 106 Market Street and 122 Market Street**

Evacuate the building immediately upon fire alarm. If safe to do so, close all doors while exiting the building. All staff and tenants are to gather at Wadleigh, Starr & Peters Law Firm at 95 Market Street directly across from 122 Market Street. The management staff on site should have a cell phone with him/her, if possible, before exiting building and should insure that all tenants and staff are gathered at the correct meeting place. This would include, if necessary and safe to do so, ringing tenant buzzers to help with the evacuation process.

Management staff on site are to be the primary contact for the fire personnel if needed.

### **The Family Mill/ Outfitters - 394 Second Street**

Evacuate the building immediately upon fire alarm. If safe to do so, close all doors while exiting the building. All staff, volunteers, tenants and store customers are to gather at the parking lot of Nault's Honda on Hancock Street directly behind The Family Mill. The management staff on site should have a cell phone with him/her, if possible, before exiting building and should insure that all tenants and staff are gathered at the correct meeting place. This would include, if necessary and safe to do so, ringing tenant buzzers to help with the evacuation process.

Management staff on site are to be the primary contact for the fire personnel if needed.

### **FIT-Concord – 9 Oddfellows Avenue and 5 Market Lane**

Evacuate the building immediately upon fire alarm. If safe to do so, close all doors while exiting the building. All staff and tenants are to gather in Bicentennial Square by the rock structure between the two buildings. The management staff on site should have a cell phone with him/her, if possible, before exiting building and should insure that all tenants and staff are gathered at the correct meeting place. This would include, if necessary and safe to do so, ringing tenant buzzers to help with the evacuation process.

Management staff on site are to be the primary contact for the fire personnel if needed.

### **Family Willows – 161 and 163 So Beech St**

When events warrant an evacuation of the building, you should follow the instructions of your supervisor or other management or building official. You should leave the building in a quick and orderly manner. You should assemble at the pre-determined location as communicated to you by your supervisor to await further instructions or information.

The management staff on site should have a cell phone with him/her, if possible, before exiting building and should insure that all tenants and staff are gathered at the correct

meeting place. This would include, if necessary and safe to do so, ringing tenant buzzers to help with the evacuation process. Management staff on site are to be the primary contact for the fire personnel if needed.

**Douglas St – 307 Douglas St**

Evacuate the building immediately upon fire alarm. If safe to do so, close all doors while exiting the building. All staff onsite should ring doorbell to evacuate building. Staff and tenants should meet on sidewalk across the street from the building. Staff on site should have a cell phone with him/her, if possible, before exiting building and should insure that all tenants and staff are gathered at the correct meeting place.

Management staff who are on site are to be the primary contact for the fire personnel if needed.



**RECEIPT OF VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK  
AND VOLUNTEER-AT-WILL STATEMENT**

*Please sign and return to Emily Melhorn The Coordinator of Volunteers & FIT VISTA  
Program for Families in Transition.  
(603) 641-1143 x357 or [emelhorn@fitnh.org](mailto:emelhorn@fitnh.org)*

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Families in Transition Volunteer Policy Manual and understand that it sets forth the terms and conditions of my service as well as the duties, responsibilities and obligations of my service with FIT. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read the Volunteer Policy Manual and to abide by the rules, policies and standards set forth in the Volunteer Policy Manual.

If I have questions regarding the content or interpretation of this Volunteer Policy Manual, I will bring them to the attention of my supervisor.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

VOLUNTEER SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

**RECEIPT OF CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO  
VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

I have this day received a copy of the updated policies for my Volunteer Policy Manual. I understand that I am responsible for reading the updated polices and then placing them in my Volunteer Policy Manual. The updated and/or new polices include:

These policies supersede and replace the former policies contained in the Volunteer Policy Manual.

If I have questions regarding these policies, or the content or interpretation of any policy in the Volunteer Handbook, I will bring them to the attention of my supervisor.

**NAME**\_\_\_\_\_

**DATE**\_\_\_\_\_

**VOLUNTEER  
SIGNATURE**\_\_\_\_\_