

The LIGHT House Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to The LIGHT House! We are very pleased that you have an interest in contributing of your time and talent, and pray that your involvement here will be a rewarding experience, as well as an opportunity for personal growth.

This handbook has been developed to provide you information you will need to serve as a volunteer. It contains information you will find useful in determining if volunteering with The LIGHT House is right for you. As a volunteer, it also provides guidance for any volunteer assignment you may undertake. Following is a listing of the contents:

1. Types of Volunteers and Qualifications/Requirements
2. Volunteer Policy and Philosophy
3. The LIGHT House History and Purpose
4. The LIGHT House Program Descriptions
5. What the Volunteer Can Expect from The LIGHT House
6. What The LIGHT House Expects of You
7. Working Together

Please read this handbook thoroughly and become familiar with its contents. If you have any questions, please contact the Community Program Manager at andream.lighthouse@mbch.org or by calling 816-361-2233 ext. 231. Thank you for volunteering! You are a very important part of the programs of The LIGHT House.

1. Types of Volunteers and qualifications/requirements

The LIGHT House uses two primary types of volunteers:

- **Non Client Involvement:** This is an individual or a group of people providing services to The LIGHT House, but who are never left alone with residents. The type of assignment typically performed by these volunteers includes such areas as: yard work, painting, light carpentry, office/administrative, baby boutique organization, fundraiser events and festivals, etc. These volunteers are not required to undergo any specific background checking process, nor meet any specific age or other criteria.
- **Direct Client Involvement:** These volunteers have the opportunity for individual direct contact with clients and who could potentially be alone with them. Examples of these kinds of engagements include: leading devotions/bible study, mentoring, tutoring, teaching life skills, child care, baby boutique assistants, door monitor, recreation, etc. Due to the nature of these types of volunteer assignments, there are specific qualifications and requirements that must be met prior to volunteer consideration for an assignment. These include:

- Completing an online volunteer application
- Being a committed Christian and at least 18 years of age for most programs
- If under age 18, parent/guardian must be onsite during volunteer assignment
- At least 21 years of age for volunteer assignment for the Maternity Home Program
- Providing two references
- Undergoing child abuse/neglect, driver's license and criminal background checks

2. Volunteer Policy and Philosophy

When possible and as appropriate, The LIGHT House will use volunteers as they are available to provide service for the benefit of the residents.

The agency and its staff hold volunteers in high regard. Volunteers have a specific role and purpose in the agency and are treated as important contributors possessing valuable skills and talents. Our goal is to provide quality experiences with opportunities for service and personal growth. In this way, The LIGHT House seeks to minister to the volunteer, as well as benefit from the volunteer's ministry.

We believe that volunteers should take their role seriously, recognizing the importance of the tasks assigned whether or not they involve direct contact with the clients. The involvement of volunteers is not to be based on convenience, but on commitment.

Volunteers can expect a definite work assignment and not placed in a position of doing "busywork" or being haphazardly used to fill in the gaps left by professional staff. Volunteers serve to compliment the efforts of the staff.

Volunteers are encouraged to use their particular interests, talents, skills, and gifts which are used in their work life, hobbies, or other engagements. In this way, the agency benefits from the utilization of the most appropriate placement for each volunteer. You can express these attributes when you complete the online volunteer application.

Later in this handbook is a statement of the rights and responsibilities you can expect while serving as a LIGHT House volunteer.

3. The LIGHT House History and Purpose

The LIGHT House is a Ministry that opened in 1985 out of the Youth for Christ initiative. It was originally located in the convent on Meyer boulevard from 1985-2000. In 2000, the administrative offices moved to Brookside, and the home moved to a 3-story historical home in midtown Kansas City, MO.

The LIGHT House is licensed by the state of Missouri, and has been since inception. In 2012, The LIGHT House became an affiliate with Missouri Baptist Children's Home. In May 2018, The

LIGHT House became accredited by the council on accreditation. It is funded by donations, church support, grants and some state contracts.

The LIGHT House is committed to serving God by responding to the needs of children, youth, and families to ensure all Life Is Given Hope for Tomorrow. There are three key programs that provide Christ Based services to families facing an unplanned pregnancy:

- Adoption Program
- Maternity Home
- Outreach

4. The LIGHT House Program Descriptions

The following is a brief description of each program that a volunteer might work with:

- **Adoption-** The LIGHT House is a full service adoption agency licensed in the State of Missouri. Since 1985, our experienced staff has facilitated hundreds of successful adoptions. We help connect expectant mothers, who will be delivering or have delivered their babies in Missouri, with prospective Christian adoptive families who may live throughout the country.
- **Maternity Home-** The Maternity Home houses young moms ages 12 – 21, who are either pregnant or have a child under the age of 3. The program provides a safe place for the moms to stay while they prepare to become independent mothers. The program offers full residential services, including: housing, case management, counselor, medical assistance, furthering school, obtaining a job, help with obtaining government assistance, childbirth education, and engaging in classes to learn educational and life skills. All residential services are provided free of charge.
- **Outreach-** The LIGHT House offers a variety of programs to serve the Greater Kansas City Area, including:
 - A weekly parenting program for young mothers who are either pregnant or already have young children. The mothers are expected to learn parenting, life, and personal development skills to exceed self-sufficiently, and then have access to shop in the Baby Boutique for diapers, wipes, bottles, toy, clothes, and more.
 - Dad's Connect- a monthly gathering of dads for support and connection with each other, and to learn new ways to interact and build relationships with their children.
 - Perinatal Support group- coming soon! This group will be open to all pregnant and parenting women, desiring support and connection, through the child's first year.
 - Community Presentations:
 - Stewards of Children- a prevention training that teaches adults how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. The program is designed for organizations that serve youth and for individuals concerned about the safety of children. It is the only nationally distributed, evidence-

informed program proven to increase knowledge, improve attitudes, and change child protective behaviors.

- Tech Savvy Parenting- a presentation for parents to foster open communication, create a media contract, ensure online safety, apply parental controls, know what their kids are doing online and so much more!

5. What Volunteers Can Expect from The LIGHT House

It is our goal that your time of service at The LIGHT House will be enjoyable and personally rewarding. Listed below are the things you can expect from The LIGHT House to help facilitate this goal.

1. **Registering:** Volunteers must register with The LIGHT House prior to receiving any consideration for volunteer assignments. This is a simple process consisting of completing a volunteer application online (or by paper copy). If desiring work involving direct contact with clients, there will also be the need to obtain background checks and references as described earlier in this handbook.
2. **Interview:** Before you can receive a volunteer assignment, you must interview with The LIGHT House Community Program Manager. During the interview, the staff will explain the general aim and functions of the Volunteer Program, discuss your specific interests in more detail, and determine the most appropriate volunteer assignments for you. It is the goal of the Volunteer Program to place only qualified volunteers in service, and it may be necessary in some circumstances to reject applicants for volunteer service. Every effort, however, will be made to provide volunteer applicants with an opportunity to serve.
3. **Orientation:** After your initial interview, you *may* attend a Volunteer Orientation Session. This orientation *may* be held online. In the orientation session, we will review the information contained in this handbook and respond to any questions you may have. We will also review agency policies, and the volunteer code of conduct. We will also begin to familiarize you with the agency and organizational structure.

Staff members will provide general training for direct client interaction.

Finally, the orientation session provides you with an opportunity to get acquainted with staff and other volunteers with whom you may be working.

4. **Training:** After orientation, you will be provided with specific training and guidance regarding your particular area of interest and your assignment in order to begin your work effectively. Be sure to ask any questions you may have regarding your work assignment.

In addition, you will have opportunities for further training to refine skills you have and expand your skills into other areas. While much of this additional training is optional, some of these may be required for continued involvement as a volunteer depending on the assignment.

Training will enable you to provide the agency with more qualified, effective service. Training also provides increased skill and knowledge to be used well after involvement with the agency ends. Please take advantage of opportunities for growth and training as they arise.

5. **Supervision & Support:** There will always be someone available to help you, providing guidance and answering any questions you may have regarding your assignment. You will not be sent out on a “sink or swim” basis. Staff will be available for encouragement and support in any area needed.

The preceding list gives you some idea of what you can expect to receive from The LIGHT House as a volunteer. If at any time you feel that you are not getting enough of this assistance, or if there are other things you feel you need in order to make your service here more effective or rewarding, do not hesitate to inform us so that we may work to improve the situation.

6. What The LIGHT House Expects of You

Just as volunteers can expect certain things from The LIGHT House, we also expect certain things from volunteers.

1. **Know your role as volunteer:** It is important that you read and become familiar with the information that is contained in this handbook. You cannot responsibly fulfill your volunteer assignment without doing so. You are expected to abide by the procedures and guidelines as outlined. If you have any questions, consult the manager of the program of your volunteer assignment.
2. **Notify us in advance if you need to be absent:** When you are scheduled to perform services but need to be absent, make sure you call the manager of the program to which you are assigned. It is very difficult when staff or children are expecting you and you fail to notify anyone that you are not coming.
3. **Be a positive example:** We expect you to maintain an attitude and conduct which will serve as a positive example to the children, fellow volunteers, and staff. We expect you to maintain harmonious relationships with others. This will make everyone’s work a little easier and certainly more enjoyable. Relatedly, we request that you refrain from smoking on any of The LIGHT House properties.

7. Working Together

When you arrive on campus for a volunteer job assignment, report to the manager of the program and perform the assignment as outlined.

Although rare, issues with the assignment, the work environment, or with staff/other volunteers may arise. Please follow the procedures below to ensure quick and appropriate resolution:

- ✓ If you encounter any difficulties regarding your assignment, feel that the placement is inappropriate for you, or feel additional training is needed, consult the manager of the program immediately. He/she should be able to work with you to resolve the difficulty. If any issues still remain or if you are not comfortable with the resolution, contact the Community Program Manager who will make every effort to resolve the situation in a satisfactory manner.
- ✓ If you have an issue with the manager of the program, such as serious personality conflicts or inadequate communication, talk about it with her/him. He/she should be presented with the problem and given the opportunity to work with you to resolve the issue. However, if the problem remains unresolved, then contact the Community Program Manager who will work with both of you to resolve the difficulty in a satisfactory manner.
- ✓ If an issue with another volunteer arises, discuss the matter with your co-volunteer in an effort to come to a mutual resolution of the difficulty. If this fails, consult the manager of the program. He/she will work with the two of you to effectively deal with the difficulty. If this proves inadequate, please contact the Community Program Manager who will work to find an appropriate solution.
- ✓ If an issue with a staff member arises, discuss the matter with that staff in an effort to come to a mutual resolution of the difficulty. If this fails, consult the manager of the program. He/she will work with the two of you to effectively deal with the difficulty. If this proves inadequate, please contact the Community Program Manager who will work to find an appropriate solution.

It is our hope that the need for these procedures never arises. However, we want to provide avenues through which conflicts can be quickly and effectively managed and resolved. Please make every effort to work cooperatively and considerately with the manager of the program and fellow workers. If conflict does arise, **always** follow the steps outlined above.

If you have any other questions or problems regarding your involvement as a volunteer, please do not hesitate to contact the Community Program Manager. He/she is there to help make your time with The LIGHT House as enjoyable and rewarding as possible.