

2021-2022

Volunteer Handbook



Rick Morgan

Jackson Interfaith Shelter

2020-2021

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Dear Volunteer,

You are the backbone of The Jackson Interfaith Shelter. Without you, we could not continue to do all that we do! Each one of you helps us serve and provide opportunities for transformation to those in greatest need – through the grace of Jesus Christ. You give us hope. Hope because there are more of us who care than those who are suffering from homelessness and hunger. You are ready to roll up your sleeves and give of yourself – whether it is serving food, stuffing envelopes, mentoring, leading a Bible study or sharing at chapel services – you are truly making a difference. Thank you for living out the greatest command: to love one another.

“As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34-35 NIV)

You are a vital part of all that we are doing. Our Board of Directors, our staff, and the many people we serve join me in saying – thank you!

Gratefully,

Pastor Rick

Rick Morgan

Director of Ministry and Community Engagement

Rick@interfaithshelter.com

517.789.8735

Contact Information: Jackson Interfaith Shelter, 414 S. Blackstone St., Jackson, MI 49201

Volunteer Coordinator - Rick Morgan, rick@interfaithshelter.com, 517.789.8735

Also known as the Director of Ministry and Community Engagement.

MISSION

Seeking to put God's love into action, Jackson Interfaith Shelter provides temporary shelter and other essential resources to people experiencing homelessness or poverty.

CORE VALUES

Love | We are called by God to respond with love, compassion, patience, and tangible assistance to people experiencing homelessness and other major life challenges.

Dignity | We believe in the inherent worth of all people and serve everyone with dignity and respect.

Hope | We offer hope and empowerment, working arm in arm with people experiencing homelessness to address their current circumstances and build a path to a healthier future.

Stewardship | We will be good stewards of all financial and other resources entrusted to us.

Partnership | We welcome and rely upon volunteers, community partners, and supporters from all backgrounds.

Excellence | We strive for excellence, integrity, and continuous improvement in our work.

VISION

Jackson will be a community where everyone has access to decent, affordable housing, and where resources needed to prevent or resolve homelessness will be available to all.

History

Jackson Interfaith Shelter opened in November 1974 as a Christian organization based on biblical principles with a goal of serving men experiencing homelessness due to chronic alcoholism. It was founded by Beverly Garges, a devout Roman Catholic, supported by a variety of other faithful individuals and religious organizations. For more than four decades we have been supported and encouraged by area churches, and community partners, both religious and secular. Our primary focus has been helping members of our community who are experiencing homelessness, assisting them with their physical, mental, and spiritual needs, and working with them to obtain decent, affordable housing.

Today our faith foundation remains the same, and we have broadened our services to include men, women, and families.

Visitors and clients find a haven of safety and acceptance, learning and responsibility, structure and productivity. We offer a place to find new birth, a sense of purpose for today and hope for tomorrow. Today we have 74 beds for men, women, and children in need. We are an extension of the ministry of the local church. More than 45 years later, the Shelter still partners with individuals, churches, organizations, and the local government to awaken hope in the hearts of people overcome with homelessness. We have been supported by faithful churches and individuals who recognize the calling of Matthew 25 to minister to the hungry, the thirsty and the individuals in need of a place to stay.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe that what the Bible teaches about Jesus is true. Jesus was God in the flesh and modeled the incredible Love and compassion God has for his people and creation. The same Spirit that lived in Jesus lives in his followers and allows them to do the joyful yet, at times, difficult work of serving compassionately, loving courageously, and giving sacrificially.

Jesus had a special value for and identification with the poor and those the world often overlooks and marginalizes. He went so far as to say, “when you do something for the least of these, you do it for me.” It is our joy to join with Jesus in this work and continue to build the “Kingdom” he came to establish.

Director of Ministry and Community Engagement (Volunteer Coordinator)

The Volunteer Coordinator oversees the enrollment of all volunteers, whether serving individually or as part of a family, church, organization, or business. The Volunteer Coordinator approves all volunteers and helps in placing them throughout the Shelter programs and facilities. The volunteer process has been streamlined and is fully accessible through the website at interfaithshelter.com/volunteers. General volunteer questions can be directed to:

Rick Morgan

Email – rick@interfaithshelter.com

Phone: 517.789.8735

The Shelter's Commitment to You and the Volunteer's Commitment to JIS

We will endeavor to:

- Treat you as a co-laborer in the ministry of Interfaith Shelter
- Offer you suitable assignments
- Provide appropriate training and supervision
- Offer you information about new developments and opportunities
- Provide guidance and direction by experienced, informed, patient, and thoughtful staff
- Provide an orderly designated workplace
- Solicit your feedback and suggestions
- Give recognition and appreciation for your service as a vital and trusted volunteer

As a Volunteer you will:

- Be timely and reliable in the fulfillment of your duties
- Accept supervision graciously
- Conduct yourself in a professional manner, with courtesy and consideration
- Speak and behave in a manner consistent with the faith and values of the Interfaith Shelter
- Hold in confidence any information gained about our clients at Interfaith Shelter
- Be supportive of JIS staff and their decisions

Your Commitment to Interfaith Shelter:

- Take concerns or suggestions to my volunteer supervisor or the volunteer coordinator
- Be flexible when changes are needed
- Treat everyone with respect, loyalty, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration
- Avoid situations where I am alone with children, youth, visitors, and/or clients
- Use positive reinforcement when working with children, youth, and adult clients
- Report suspected abuse to staff, administrator, or appropriate supervisor

As a vital and trusted volunteer, I will not:

- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or marijuana while volunteering
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time

- Volunteer when I am sick
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap children, youth, or adult clients
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade children, youth, clients, or guests
- Touch a child, youth, client, or guest in a sexual or other inappropriate manner
- Use discipline that frightens or humiliates children, youth, clients, or guests
- Use profanity or other inappropriate language while volunteering at the Shelter
- Enter any agreement/contract on behalf of the Shelter

Why Volunteer

We are Called – As a faith-based organization, JIS believes that individuals are called and gifted by God to serve one another. Matthew 20:28 says that “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...,” so we are called to serve. Volunteering is a practical, tangible way of being God’s hands and feet to those in need and volunteers are needed to serve and help transform those in greatest need.

Great Need – There are great needs within our neighborhoods, communities, and the region we serve. The Shelter could not reach and impact as many people as we do without the wonderful support and partnerships we have with our volunteers.

Fun and Rewarding – It is fun to serve. You meet new people, develop new relationships, and discover, grow, and use gifts and talents you may or may not know about.

Obligation – Sometimes we start serving as an obligation – for school, church, community service, or simply out of civic obligation. It is perfectly fine to serve for this reason. Many volunteers start in this mode but are transformed themselves and keep on serving after their “obligation” is met.

Better Health - Volunteering means you are active. Activity has long been linked to better overall physical health and well-being. New research suggests positive feelings translate to better mental health as well.

Experience Transformation – As a volunteer you will get to see and experience transformation in the lives of clients, guests, staff, volunteers, and the communities we serve. Transformation through restored relationships with God, self, and others is an extraordinary thing to be a part of!

VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Volunteer Application

Please complete the online volunteer application at interfaithshelter.com/volunteer. Your volunteer application will be reviewed typically within 1-3 business days, and further documentation may be required. Make sure you read the full document including the release portion before signing.

Age Requirements

All volunteers, ages 13 years or older, must complete the online volunteer application and be approved. Minors (under 18) may serve alongside their parents, but not alone. Rare exceptions can be explored for 16 & 17 year-olds to serve for specific assignments, but in such cases a permission/waiver form is required to be signed by their guardian.

Criminal Background Review

Jackson Interfaith Shelter serves a substantial number of vulnerable populations, such as domestic violence victims, human trafficking victims, etc. To help protect these populations, the volunteer application process includes a background review of criminal history. Volunteer applicants with a criminal history are not automatically excluded from volunteering. The Shelter considers a variety of factors, including, but not limited to the type of offense, frequency, magnitude, and timing of offenses. On rare occasions, volunteer applicants will not be allowed to serve—typically if they have an extensive and on-going criminal history and/or record of criminal sexual assault. Volunteer applicants are always offered the opportunity to explain their criminal history and their accompanying stories of redemption, restitution, corrective actions, etc. that may not be readily apparent in an initial criminal background check. Additional questions or concerns about this process can be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator, Rick Morgan, rick@interfaithshelter.com

Reporting Volunteer Hours/Nametags

It is vital that we track all volunteer hours. We ask that all volunteers sign up for each volunteer opportunity/event they are helping with through our website. This greatly assists us in planning and scheduling activities and programs. When you arrive to serve, please check in at the front desk and sign in. *All volunteers are required to wear name tags.* At sign-in make sure you receive a name tag and wear it for the duration of your work assignment.

For grant and insurance purposes, it is important that the Shelter has an accurate record of our volunteers and the dates and times they served. In the event of an emergency, it is helpful to have a record of all people – staff, clients, and volunteers who are in the building.

Community Service (Required by court, school, organization, etc.)

Generally, we **do not** take on individuals *needing* community service hours. This is because individuals in these positions are usually trying to get large numbers of hours in a short period of time. If you are willing to break up your service hours over a long period of time, then you CAN register as a regular volunteer and pass the background screening. You can then volunteer in all eligible areas until community service hours are fulfilled. Once fulfilled, the volunteer can contact the Volunteer Coordinator, who can prepare and issue a Community Service letter for the volunteer and/or their organization/school/court.

Unable to attend an assigned event/activity

The Jackson Interfaith Shelter relies on and plans activities and events based upon registered volunteers. Please make every effort to keep your volunteer commitments. However, we understand that changes—illness, car troubles, etc.—are sometimes unavoidable. If you are unable to volunteer as planned, please cancel your volunteer commitment as soon as you are aware, by contacting Rick Morgan, rick@interfaithshelter.com, 517.789.8735 and/or notify the manager of the facility/program area you were scheduled to serve.

Groups

Our compact size restricts the size of most large groups; this constraint is an operational and safety consideration for volunteers, staff, clients, and guests. Larger groups may be considered on a case-by-case basis, but generally if your group is larger than 10 volunteers (including any chaperones), then we ask that your group be deployed into smaller teams. This helps ensure effective service and ministry to our clients and guests and helps ensure volunteers have a meaningful and transformative experience. We generally accommodate large volunteer groups on Saturdays or for evening fun nights.

Dress code

To help prevent accidents and injuries, we have basic dress codes for our volunteers. Listed below are guidelines which may be supplemented with requirements specific to a particular facility or program where a volunteer is serving:

- Long or short sleeved shirts are appropriate, no tank tops, halter tops, etc.
- Pants are appropriate. Skirts and dresses are permitted, but not recommended, strictly for practical reasons— serving, cleaning, etc.
- Closed-toe shoes must be worn for volunteer events involving physical activity or in the kitchen.
- Wear clothing appropriate to the weather, if serving outside. In addition, modesty of dress is very helpful to support the spiritual, social, and emotional health of our clients, some of

whom have been victims of human trafficking, domestic abuse, and/or sexual abuse. Therefore, modesty in clothing should be exercised. Clothes that are too loose, too tight, too short, too revealing, etc. are not appropriate. Clothing must not portray alcohol, cigarettes, drugs, sexuality, violence, death, or un-Christian themes.

Non-harassment

Jackson Interfaith Shelter seeks to maintain an environment free from all forms of harassment. Conduct that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment is not acceptable. Any such conduct can result in dismissal from the Shelter. If you believe you have been subjected to or witnessed any type of harassment while volunteering at the Shelter, you are required to bring the matter to the immediate attention of your supervisor, or the Volunteer Coordinator. Harassment complaints are investigated promptly, and appropriate action will be taken.

Non-fraternization

We welcome volunteers to interact in a friendly, respectful, and courteous manner, but use caution when relating to program clients. We recommend that you do not give out your last name, email, phone number, address, or social media contact information. We also ask that you do not make plans with a client to meet outside the Shelter without counsel from JIS staff.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality can be a life and death issue for people fleeing dangerous situations. JIS staff and volunteers are responsible for protecting the privacy of clients. No information about Shelter clients is to be given verbally or in writing to anyone, including news agencies and social media, and no photos are to be taken without a signed release from the Interfaith Shelter and the resident/guest involved.

Gifts to Clients

Clients should have all their physical needs provided for within the Shelter program. If a volunteer learns about unmet needs, the most productive way to respond is to alert the staff on duty to the need. At no time should a volunteer give money to a client of JIS without proper approval.

Supervision

Volunteers working on site at JIS will be supervised by paid staff and/or a trusted volunteer. The supervisor should always be available to answer questions and provide direction and support. Supervision will include making the volunteer familiar with restrooms, drinking

water/coffee, and emergency exit routes, the volunteer's work area, work expectations, supplies, and any other applicable information and working guidelines.

Working with Children

For the protection of the volunteer and children, volunteers should not be alone with a child at any time unless approved by the volunteer coordinator. If a need arises that requires an exception, permission from the on-site staff is required. If providing childcare, both the parent and the volunteer babysitter must sign a release of liability form to allow children to be supervised.

Smoking, Alcohol & Drugs

All facilities operated by the Jackson Interfaith Shelter are non-smoking facilities, and alcohol and drug free zones. If you smoke, JIS staff can direct you to a smoking area. Cigarette butts must be disposed of in a receptacle.

Meals for Volunteers

Please join us for a meal any time you are serving. We serve 3 meals a day, 7 days a week beginning at 7:00, 11:30 and 4:30. Simply sign your name on the meal form and interact with our clients and staff. It is our pleasure to provide this small “perk” as you serve.

Personal Belongings

Volunteers are responsible, at all times, for their personal belongings. We encourage you not to bring purses, wallets, cameras, unnecessary extra items (clothes, bags, etc.), money and other valuables when you come to serve. If something is missing, please report it to your volunteer supervisor.

Do I have to be a Christian to Volunteer at the Shelter?

Generally, no. We welcome people of all faith backgrounds and perspectives to volunteer with us. We simply ask that if you do not share our beliefs, you respect them and do not proselytize against our Statement of Faith. Some volunteer opportunities (e.g., Bible Study leader) do require agreement with our Statement of Faith.

Volunteers with Disabilities

In accordance with applicable regulations, we will work to make appropriate accommodations for persons with disabilities. Please contact us directly at rick@interfaithshelter.com so we can work with you to find the best fit for your accommodations.

Reserving the right to limit or remove Volunteers

The Jackson Interfaith Shelter reserves the right to limit, remove or refuse a volunteer from serving at any Shelter facility, program, or event. This determination—made at the sole discretion of Interfaith Shelter staff—may be due to, but is not limited to such things as non-compliance with volunteer guidelines, not maintaining appropriate physical, emotional and relational boundaries, being a recent client at JIS, angry, harassing, threatening, or disrespectful behavior and/or words directed towards staff, clients, and other volunteers.

First Aid

First aid kits are available at the front desk. There is one AED in the Main building. Staff MUST be notified when any first aid is needed. Incidents require an incident report to be filled out whether or not the incident required a hospital visit or 911 call.

Food Handling

It is unlawful for any person afflicted with any contagious or infectious disease to work in or about any place where unwrapped or unpackaged food and/or beverage products are prepared. If this applies to you, please stay home until you are well. Kitchen volunteers MUST always wear closed-toe shoes to provide protection in addition to gloves and a hair net. Kitchen volunteers should receive information or training regarding safe food handling practices prior to the commencement of volunteering. Children under the age of 12 are welcome to serve alongside their parents.

Personal Safety

Volunteers are expected to remain in their assigned work area. Please do not enter other areas of the shelter without the knowledge and permission of your volunteer supervisor. Do not give personal information to anyone other than JIS employees while volunteering. Be alert and aware of your surroundings. Please pay attention to the people around you and provide personal space to our clients. Take care not to startle clients or get involved in arguments. Move away from any client who begins to use a loud voice or seems agitated. Alert a staff member to any situation that concerns you.

Final Comments

We have endeavored to cover all volunteer related questions in this handbook, but you may still have more questions. If so, please feel free to contact me at rick@interfaithshelter.com with further questions. Your volunteer efforts will be a part of serving and transforming lives of those in greatest need through the grace of Jesus Christ. Thank you and God Bless!