

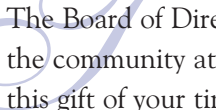
# Volunteer Handbook



Jewish Social Services of Madison



# *Welcome to the Jewish Social Services Volunteer Program!*



The Board of Directors and Staff of Jewish Social Services, along with the community at large, thank you for volunteering. We truly appreciate this gift of your time and energy, which enriches us all.

Volunteers have long been the lifeblood of our agency. Even before JSS incorporated in 1978, volunteers were helping seniors through programs of the Madison Jewish Community Council. When you volunteer for JSS you join a long line of dedicated people who met and continue to meet the community's needs.

At JSS, staff and volunteers work together as partners, resulting in a quality experience for clients. Now you are part of the team.

This handbook is intended to help you understand Jewish Social Services and your role as a valued volunteer, to answer questions and provide guidance if you find yourself in a difficult situation. Please read it and keep it for future reference. Contact the Director of Volunteer Services if you have any questions.

We hope that you enjoy a productive and fulfilling volunteer experience with Jewish Social Services.

With our appreciation,

*–The Board of Directors and Staff of Jewish Social Services*

# Volunteer Program Mission Statement

Our dedication to service will improve the quality of life and maintain the dignity of our clients in a compassionate and caring atmosphere. Volunteers will enhance the ability of the agency to achieve its overall mission.

The volunteer program will:

- Promote the value of volunteering for Jewish Social Services and reinforce the love of service in our volunteers.
- Strive to meet the ever-changing needs of the community, the agency and its clients.
- Increase, improve and target volunteer recruitment.
- Match volunteers to clients and projects which are mutually compatible with their needs, interests and skills.
- Effectively react to trends in volunteerism.
- Suggest names of volunteers for consideration for agency leadership roles.
- Continue the Jewish Social Services tradition of volunteer excellence and ethical service.

# Caring. Connections. Solutions.

Founded in 1978 and rooted in Jewish traditions, JSS is a not-for-profit human services agency governed by a fifteen-member board; our services are non-sectarian. JSS is an equal-opportunity employer and applies the same principles in its volunteer program.

Program areas include Individuals and Families under Stress, Elder and Family Support, Senior Social and Recreational Group Programs, Hand in Hand Program for Those Facing Life's Challenges, Protective Services and Financial Management, and Immigrant and Refugee Services.

Our funders include the Madison Jewish Community Council, United Way of Dane County, Friends of Jewish Social Services, the JSS Foundation for the Future, named endowments, fund-raising and grants. The largest percentage of our funding comes from individual donations.



# Code of Ethics

## For the Jewish Social Services Volunteer Program

These are the core values of our volunteer program; together they form our Code of Ethics. They are the values which characterize JSS and without which we would not be the agency we are today. We've accepted you as a volunteer because we are confident that you share these values. As you read this handbook and other materials you may receive from JSS, you will see them reflected in our expectations of you as a volunteer, and the expectations you should have of JSS. We hope that you will experience them in our dealings together.

Respect for clients

Confidentiality

Caring

Compassion

Respect

Service

Non-discrimination

Dignity

Loyalty to Jewish Social Services

Responsibility

Trustworthiness

No conflicts of interest

# JSS Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers have always been at the heart of JSS' work. We welcome you to this group of dedicated individuals who help us do the important work of serving our clients and the community. Please note that some of the opportunities below are seasonal or "as needed."

## *Connecting through the heart*

**Friendly Visitor** – Develop an on-going, one-to-one relationship that helps to provide a sense of community, security and belonging. You'll brighten someone's day and enjoy getting to know another person. *Minimum six month commitment with weekly contact.*

**Holidays and Shabbat Volunteer** – Assist at our monthly Friday afternoon Shabbat programs for seniors, deliver Hanukkah menorahs or serve at a Senior Seder.

**The Driver Connection** – Help those who can no longer drive get to an appointment, social engagement, religious service, funeral or other event. *Commitment can be regular or as needed.*

**First Friend** – Provide social interaction and support for non-elderly people with a disability through regular contact and appropriate activities. *Minimum six month commitment with weekly contact.*

**Designated Shopper** – Help a home-bound individual or couple maintain their independence and keep up good nutrition. You'll ease a family's burden or lessen someone's isolation. *Usually a once a week commitment.*

## Connecting through the mind

**Tutor English as a Second Language** – Can you imagine starting over in a new language as an adult? Tutoring ESL is important and rewarding volunteer work. *Once-twice a week for at least six months.*

**Provide Professional Expertise** – Put your legal, medical, financial or other expertise to work for a low income client on a *pro-bono* basis. These and other professional services help us support our clients through some difficult times.

**Harry J. & Belle Goodman, parents of Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman Lechayim Lunchtime Plus** – There's work to be done,



but you'll also enjoy a great meal, lively programs and conversation at our Monday kosher lunch for senior adults. Our presenters also volunteer their time and talents. *Weekly commitment on Mondays between Labor Day and Memorial Day.*

**Read to an individual or group** – Provide intellectual stimulation while alleviating loneliness and isolation for people with limited vision. *Regular weekly commitment or as needed.*

**Lend a hand at the Jewish Social Service office** – A warm welcome awaits you when you come to our office to help with mailings, filing or answering the telephones. *Commitment is weekly or as needed.*



## *Connecting through the soul*

**Bikkur Holim** – The Talmud teaches us that a person who visits the sick removes one-sixtieth of the illness. This centuries-old tradition is both rewarding and deeply appreciated. *Training is provided; commitment can be as needed or regular weekly visits.*

**Telephone reassurance** – Provide a sense of security through regular, brief phone calls. *Commitment is daily calls for at least six months; calling can be shared with another volunteer.*

## *Care Sharing*

We reach out to individuals and families facing physical and mental illness, loss, end of life and grief. To do so, the Hand in Hand program combines all three elements: the heart, mind and soul. Through “Care Sharing” JSS gathers and organizes friends, family, co-workers and other volunteers who provide practical support such as meals, transportation and errands.

## **Location**

The JSS office is wheelchair accessible, as are most of the facilities to which we send volunteers. Accessibility cannot be guaranteed in private homes. Goodman Lechayim Lunchtime Plus is held at Beth Israel Center, which is accessible.

## Benefits of Volunteering

- Gain experience, use skills, learn new skills and try new activities.
- Meet interesting people.
- Receive the *Madison Jewish News*, JSS's newsletter, *Connections* and the electronic *The Volunteer Connection*.
- Receive reimbursement for authorized expenses incurred during volunteering.
- Take a tax deduction for certain expenses incurred while volunteering, such as mileage for driving a client to an appointment. Check with your tax advisor.
- Receive a letter of recommendation or references for volunteers in good standing.
- Recognition of your volunteer work in a variety of meaningful ways.

## Volunteers Have the Right To

- Appropriate and meaningful volunteer assignments.
- Adequate information, training and assistance.
- Effective supervision and feedback.
- Respect for your skills, dignity and individuality.
- Respect for your feedback and suggestions.
- Recognition of your contribution.
- Treatment as a partner.
- Confidentiality of your personal volunteer file, except for purposes of supervision.

# Volunteers Have the Responsibility To

- Perform volunteer duties to the best of your ability and in the best interest of the client.
- Follow directions and JSS guidelines.
- Meet time commitments.
- Stay in communication with Jewish Social Services staff.
- Inform the JSS Director of Volunteer Services if you suspect any kind of abuse.
- Adhere to agency rules and procedures.
- Attend orientation to the agency and your project, one-to-one or in a group setting.
- Attend relevant trainings.
- Welcome supervision and be willing to learn.
- Ask questions, be open-minded and non-judgmental.

## Please Remember

- Do not drive a client without prior approval from the JSS Director of Volunteer Services; the JSS driving policy is on page 17 of this handbook.
- When visiting a JSS client in a facility, follow that facility's rules.
- Reschedule your appointment if either you or the client is ill, or you cannot meet for another reason.
- Any form of harassment is grounds for dismissal.
- Refrain from the use of tobacco, abuse of drugs and consumption of alcohol (unless used as part of a JSS program) while volunteering. Use of these substances while volunteering, or arriving intoxicated constitute grounds for dismissal as a JSS volunteer.

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- Active JSS volunteers who are convicted of any criminal drug alcohol statute violation or traffic offense should notify the JSS Director of Volunteer Services within five days of the conviction.
- Do not solicit clients for other organizations or for yourself.

## Volunteer's Limited Liability

Under State of Wisconsin ordinances (181.0670) and the Federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997, as a volunteer for a non-profit agency you cannot be held liable to a third party for any harm caused by your action or omission so long as these conditions are satisfied:

- You are acting within the scope of your responsibilities.
- You are properly licensed, certified or authorized to perform the activities in question.
- You do not act with gross negligence, willful, criminal or reckless misconduct or with a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights and safety of the individual harmed.

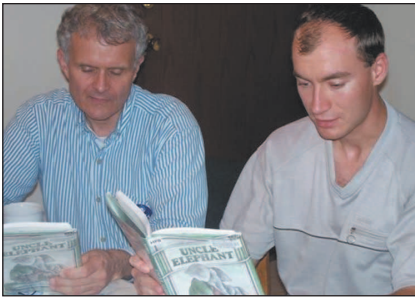
You were assigned to your project based on what we learned of your skills, talents, background and interests during the application process. Going outside the boundaries of your project as described in your project description, such as driving a client without being approved to do so, is generally not advised. This is for your protection because in doing so, you may lose your status as a volunteer and thereby have more liability under the law.

Primary financial responsibility for motor vehicle accidents rests with the vehicle's owner. Authorized JSS volunteer drivers will carry usual and customary vehicle insurance.

# Being a Volunteer

**It may seem obvious, but:** To many of our clients and the community, as a volunteer you ARE Jewish Social Services. We ask you to comport yourself in a manner that reflects well on yourself and the agency. Always identify yourself as a Jewish Social Services volunteer and dress appropriately and with respect for the client.

**The client-volunteer relationship:** As you and a client get to know each other, it is natural to want to share details of your lives; you may even come to feel more like a friend than a volunteer. However, this is



not a typical friendship. Do not discuss your personal problems, because this removes the focus from the client to you.

Conversely, your client may discuss his or her problems with you; this can be a cry for help, but you should refrain from suggesting solutions or trying to solve the problem. Suggest that

the client consult with the JSS Director of Volunteer Services and tell us about the client's problem.

**Stay connected with JSS while you're volunteering:** If you volunteer off-site, stay in touch and respond within a week of receiving the monthly e-mail Volunteer Check-in prompt. But don't wait to let us know about problems – or triumphs – you're having with the client or concerns about a client's well-being. We're always just a phone call or an inbox away.

**Training:** Generally training is done in a one-to-one discussion, and you may receive written information to supplement this discussion, which we expect you to read. Occasionally there are group trainings for specific projects, such as Friendly Visiting, which you should attend.



**Supervision and evaluation:** Initial goals are based on your project description and volunteers will be evaluated partly on how well these goals are met. Your first month is a “trial” period and we’ll check in again at about six months and a year. Supervision is an opportunity to clarify expectations and raise concerns. It’s a good time to consider extending your original commitment or to try something else.

**Change happens:** Life and circumstance can intervene in relationships. If you know you’ll be away, for example, during a semester abroad or an extended stay outside of Madison, let us know. If your volunteer placement is about to end, we want to help you say goodbye to your client, and we want to say thank you and goodbye to you. If you plan to stay in touch with a client by letter and phone, let us know, because our responsibility to the client does not end when you leave. To learn from your experience, we might ask you to do a short exit interview. Lastly, notify us of changes in your personal information.



**Saying goodbye:** Some endings are planned, such as the end of a semester, and some are surprises, such as a move out of town for a job, or the death of a client. As the end of your time together approaches, start by gently reminding your client that your time together will be ending and mention the date.

Let the client know how much you have enjoyed volunteering with him or her and what you have learned or gained from the experience. Plan to bring something small but special for your last time, such as cookies, a beautiful card with your heartfelt message inside, a photo of yourself with or without the client. The complete policy on gifts is on page 18 of this handbook.

If your client falls ill or dies we will do our best to let you know. Being there for your client during such difficult times is part of being a friend, and sometimes a funeral can be a good way to say goodbye.

**Reimbursement:** Expenses related to volunteering, such as photocopying, may be reimbursed with prior approval from the Director of Volunteer Services and upon submission of a receipt.

**Resignation and Absence:** We do our best to find the right project for you. However, if your placement is not what you expected or wanted, or



if you find yourself unable to fulfill its requirements, talk to the Director of Volunteer Services as soon as possible. Sometimes a small change or clarification of expectations is all that's needed, or perhaps a different assignment is called for. JSS asks you to give at least two weeks notice of resignation or planned

absences by notifying the Director of Volunteer Services. Whatever your reason for leaving, we'd like to learn from you by giving you a chance to reflect on your volunteer experience in an exit interview.

**Dismissal of a Volunteer:** On rare occasions, a volunteer violates a JSS policy, behaves inappropriately while on duty or is absent excessively without notifying us. The Director of Volunteer Services works with the volunteer to resolve the issue; together they'll set goals, and progress toward these goals will be reviewed periodically with the volunteer. Causes for dismissal of a volunteer can be found on page 21 of this handbook.

**Grievance Procedure:** If you have concerns about how you are treated, first talk to the Director of Volunteer Services. If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may seek remedy by contacting the JSS Executive Director. If you are not satisfied with that resolution, send a written summary of the problem to the President of Jewish Social Services, who will review the complaint for appropriate action.

**Gifts and Tips:** While there is never an expectation that gifts will be exchanged, we know that people who are fond of each other may exchange gifts. The policy on giving and receiving gifts can be found on page 18 of this handbook.

*(Continued on page 14)*

**Avoid conflicts of interest:** However tempting it may be, refrain from offering medical, legal or financial advice to clients; any such issues should be referred to the Director of Volunteer Services. Please do not solicit clients or staff for funds for other organizations, and do not make a public presentation on behalf of JSS without permission to do so.

**Maintain client confidentiality:** We know you will do all you can to maintain confidentiality, but there may be situations that test your resolve. If someone asks about a client, respond by saying “At JSS we never talk about anybody.” No further explanation is necessary.

You may hear that “so-and-so has a problem,” and that JSS should “do something about it.” Thank them for the information and say you’ll pass it on to JSS staff. It’s possible we are already aware of the situation and are doing what we can to help, or that the person involved has refused our help; these facts cannot be shared. The full confidentiality statement can be found on page 16 of this handbook.



**If you suspect abuse of an elder, child, or vulnerable person between the ages of 18-59:** JSS has a duty to report suspected cases of abuse. Contact the JSS Director of Volunteer Services if you feel someone is being abused in any way. It is not up to you to determine if abuse is taking place, but rather to alert the JSS Director of Volunteer Services of your concerns so that we can intervene and, if necessary, report the suspected abuse to the County Department of Human Services. A complete list of definitions of the different kinds of abuse can be found on page 20 of this handbook.



## Difficult situations you may encounter

In all of the following situations you should contact the JSS Director of Volunteer Services. If the office is closed, you can leave a message at any time at 608-278-1808.

- Client's sudden illness or accident: call 911 immediately. Do not take the client to urgent care or to the hospital; stay with the client until the EMTs arrive and let them decide how to handle a medical crisis. If you are trained in CPR, call 911 and then proceed as you would with anyone else who is not a JSS client. Then call the Director of Volunteer Services JSS at 608-278-1808 to report the incident.
- Client's death: call 911 immediately, and then call the Director of Volunteer Services JSS at 608-278-1808. If the office is closed, leave a message. Stay with the client until the EMTs arrive.
- Client falls while you are volunteering: if the client can get up with light assistance and you can help without hurting yourself, you may offer your arm, but you should not bear their weight. If the client cannot get up, call 911 and notify the JSS Director of Volunteer Services that you have done so. Stay with the client until the EMTs arrive.
- Client confides a secret: tell the client unequivocally that you cannot keep their secret because you care about them and are concerned for their health and safety. Never promise to keep a secret. Notify the JSS Director of Volunteer Services of this conversation. If the conversation takes place in a facility such as a nursing home or assisted living facility, notify staff as soon as possible.
- Client confides the intention to suicide: Do not leave the client alone. Ask if they have planned a way to commit suicide and/or have the means to do so; assure them you value their friendship and want them to live. Do not promise to keep this a secret. If you feel a suicide attempt is imminent, try to get the person to seek immediate help from his or her doctor or the nearest hospital emergency room, or call 911. If you think it is planned but not imminent, call the Dane County Crisis Intervention 24-Hour Help Line at 608-280-2600. You can do this in the presence of the client. If in a facility, notify staff there. Contact the JSS Director of Volunteer Services about this situation as soon as possible. *(Portions of the information in this paragraph are taken from the NIMH website, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>)*

# Volunteer Confidentiality

## What is confidentiality?

Maintaining confidentiality is behaving in a way that protects the client's privacy, identity and dignity.

## Why is confidentiality important?

Our ability to effectively serve our clients is based on trust. One way we maintain that trust is by keeping information about clients, including their status as clients, private. As a volunteer you are a partner with Jewish Social Services and as such you help us maintain that trust.

## How to maintain confidentiality

- Volunteers should be careful not to do or say anything that reveals a client's identity, or that the person is a JSS client.
- Try not to have anything about the client written on paper or on a computer screen where others can see it.
- It is natural to want to discuss one's activities with family or friends. Volunteers should not identify the client and should take care that identifying characteristics and/or facts are not revealed.
- Information about the client should only be discussed with Jewish Social Services social work staff.
- Volunteers should not under any circumstances discuss clients with any media.
- An emergency is not confidentiality-related and the volunteer should call 911; as soon as possible notify the JSS social work staff that 911 has been called, and the reason for the call.

# Volunteers Driving Clients

## *Policy*

Because transportation is problematic for some clients, Jewish Social Services volunteers drive some clients to Goodman Lechayim Lunchtime Plus, other senior or community events, appointments, shopping and so on. In many cases clients would not be able to participate in social/recreational programs without these rides. Jewish Social Services believes this is an appropriate use of volunteers.

## *Procedure*

- The individual will register as a Jewish Social Services volunteer and go through the standard application process including a criminal background check at the expense of the agency.
- The volunteer will show his/her driver's license to staff, who will record the number and expiration date and keep the information in the volunteer's file.
- The volunteer will show proof of insurance, and staff will record the name of the insurance company and keep it in the volunteer's file.
- Volunteer drivers will have usual and customary automobile insurance coverage and will keep this insurance in force and notify JSS of any change in coverage or in insurance companies. The volunteer will provide JSS with photocopies of insurance renewal cards.
- JSS staff will check the driver's records through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation at the expense of the agency.
- The volunteer will complete and sign a "Driver Record Information Request" (which JSS will provide) to release the information to Jewish Social Services.
- JSS reserves the right to decline the services of the volunteer as a volunteer driver.
- The driver's record will be kept in the volunteer's confidential file.

- JSS staff has the discretion to use their professional judgment in implementing this policy.
- Volunteer drivers will be given a copy of this policy.
- In the event of a motor vehicle accident or if stopped by a law enforcement officer, while driving a JSS client, the volunteer will fill out an Incident Report form as soon as possible and submit it to the JSS Director of Volunteer Services.

## Policy on Gifts and Tips

*For other than Pro-Bono Professional Volunteer*

### *Policy*

There is never an expectation that Jewish Social Services volunteers and clients will exchange gifts. However, we recognize that gift-giving is an accepted and appropriate way to express thanks and is a way to recognize a significant relationship. Over time, some volunteers tend to think of themselves more as a friend to the client than as a volunteer. But because the relationship began as a Jewish Social Services volunteer project *and the client remains a JSS client*, you are always volunteering.

Volunteers need to maintain some boundaries that ordinary friends do not have. We are aware that this can be hard to do and there is a risk of hurt feelings. This policy was written to give you guidance if you are presented with gifts or wish to give a gift to a client with whom you volunteer.

For some people, giving or receiving even the smallest gift places them in a position of obligation or establishes patterns that might interfere with the relationship. Volunteers should be careful to do nothing that might make the client more vulnerable in this regard. Volunteers should also keep in mind that many of our clients have fixed and/or low incomes.

It may also be the case that a client has the need to view him or herself as a person who gives as well as receives; giving a gift to a volunteer

*(continued on page 19)*

may be the client's way of "balancing" the relationship and maintaining his or her dignity.

Some people's judgment may become impaired or they may become confused. If they are isolated, they may be grateful for any friendly contact. These are some of the factors that may prompt a client to offer an inappropriate gift, and you should keep this in mind if you are offered one.

## *Procedure*

The giving and receiving of small tokens of respect, friendship and appreciation of reasonable value (e.g., a card, flower or snack) is a natural part of this kind of relationship and is acceptable.

It is never appropriate to accept from or give to a client or client's family a monetary or financial gift of any kind, such as tips, gratuities, cash, loans, securities, bequests, etc., or a gift of property. Volunteers should not give, solicit, or accept material gifts, the value of which is in excess of \$10.00. Gifts of property are also inappropriate.

You should notify the Director of Volunteer Services immediately if a client offers you a gift in excess of \$10.00.

Volunteers who drive clients may not accept reimbursement for mileage, gas or any other car-related expense; to do so can jeopardize your status as a volunteer with limited liability (*Wisconsin State Statute 181.0670*). Volunteers who use their personal automobile for their volunteer work may be eligible for a tax deduction.

Clients sometimes confide their or their family's financial troubles to a trusted volunteer and may directly or indirectly ask for your help. You should resist the natural impulse to help the client financially, and neither offer nor agree to do so. Instead, advise him or her to work with Jewish Social Services to deal the issue. You should also immediately report the information you receive to the Director of Volunteer Services.

## *How to Respond to the Client Who Offers an Inappropriate Gift*

Acknowledge that the client is offering the gift with the best of intentions and let him/her know that you value their appreciation. Tell the client you enjoy the time you spend together and that you get many intangible but worthwhile benefits from volunteering with him/her.

*(Continued on page 20)*

Make every effort to politely refuse or return a gift that is beyond permissible guidelines (i.e., more than a \$10.00 value). If a client prefers not to accept a similar gift that you have offered, you should graciously take it back.

Explain to clients that you are volunteering without expectation of or desire for remuneration and that volunteers may not accept more than token gifts (i.e., more than a \$10.00 value), and never monetary gifts. If the client insists on giving money, you may suggest that you would be very pleased if the client made a donation to JSS in your honor instead, which would benefit all the clients with whom JSS works.

Tell the client that if you did keep more than a token gift (i.e., more than a \$10.00 value), you would have to stop volunteering for the client. You can say it is against JSS policy for you to accept more than token gifts (i.e., more than a \$10.00 value).

If despite these explanations a client will not be satisfied until you accept money or a gift in excess of a \$10.00 value, please notify the Director of Volunteer Services immediately and bring the item or money to the JSS office. There is no need to tell the client that you are doing so.

## Definitions of Abuse

Categories of elder abuse, child abuse, and abuse of vulnerable adults age 18-59:

1. *Physical abuse.*
2. *Sexual abuse.*
3. *Emotional abuse.*
4. *Treatment without consent.*
5. *Confinement, tying or locking a person up.*
6. *Neglect.*
7. *Financial exploitation.*
8. *Self-neglect.*

## Causes for dismissal of a volunteer

- Failure to abide by JSS' volunteer policies and procedures.
- Failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.
- Gross misconduct or insubordination.
- Conduct endangering the life, safety, mental or physical health of others.
- Any kind of harassment or sexual, physical, mental or financial abuse of a client, volunteer, employee or member of the public based on race, gender, religion, creed, color, age, HIV status, arrest record, conviction record, source of income, family status, disability, national origin, any other classification protected by law, or against anyone who reports harassment.
- Use of tobacco, illegal drugs or alcohol (unless used as part of a JSS program) while volunteering.
- Arriving intoxicated at the volunteer placement.
- Conviction for violation of any criminal drug or alcohol statute that bears directly on the volunteer work being done.
- Conviction for a traffic offense if the volunteer drives for JSS.



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Affiliated with the Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies

*Jewish Social Services of Madison is a beneficiary of the Madison Jewish Community Council and is a partner agency of the United Way of Dane County.*

Office Hours Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

No portion of this handbook is intended to be relied upon nor construed as a contract between Jewish Social Services and its staff, volunteers, applicants or anyone else.