

Welcome to the Mary's Home Family, Volunteers!

Welcome to our home, and thank you for volunteering your time and talents with us. We hope that your involvement with our volunteer program will be both enriching and enjoyable.

Our team of volunteers is essential to our mission, and it with your generous time and dedication that we are able to run a unique, educational, and interactive program.

With the help of both volunteers and the staff, our home is able to not just "provide services" but also to create a supportive community for the moms, model a healthy lifestyle, and help the residents identify and take strides toward personal goals. Volunteers bring unique perspectives, new opportunities for friendships to form, and a new set of talents into the home.

Our community - staff, moms, donors, and volunteers - is diverse in perspectives, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. All volunteers are encouraged to share their time, talents, and spirituality in a manner that supports our activities and mission. Via this handbook and orientation, we will share key aspects of our mission, philosophy, and practice.

Mary's Home recognizes volunteers as key in accomplishing our mission. Thank you again for contributing your time, resources, talents, and energy!



Mary's Home's Mission

We provide a safe, pro-life, home environment and holistic program of services to expectant mothers in crisis and their children in need.



Our Vision

With a structured, holistic program, we strive to provide women with the best care, educational and occupational resources, and opportunities for growth. Embracing mothers with love and support, we assist them in building confidence and establishing self-sustainability and success for themselves and their children.

Volunteer Guidelines

While at Mary's Home, we ask that you uphold the following ethical guidelines, which are consistent with the industry-established ethics, deemed by accreditation standards, licensure requirements, and other legal requirements. These are integral in our program being grounded in a non-judgmental approach that is free from discrimination, honoring the individuality of the guests and respecting the essential humanity, worth, and dignity of all people. It is crucial to be aware of one's values, attitudes, and beliefs, and not to impose these on guests or pursue agendas.

Core Values

Commitment to promoting the guest's well-being. This principle means to act in the best interest of the guest. Our guests may have diminished capacity based on immaturity, distress, psychological disturbance, emotional imbalance, and physical incapacities (pregnancy concerns), due to their crisis that brought them to Mary's Home.

- *Autonomy*

Mary's Home is a free-will program. All guests retain their human and civil rights, and these are never abridged. Volunteers are expected to make every effort to foster **self-determination** and **individual responsibility** on the part of all guests and to avoid fostering long-term dependence unnecessarily. It is a respect for the guest's right to be **self-governing**. This principle emphasizes the guest's commitment to participate in Mary's Home Program on a voluntary basis. It prohibits volunteers and staff from manipulation of a client or swaying her personal decisions. Instead, we ask that all members of the Mary's Home family promote the guest's control over her own life, by respecting and supporting her. Guests must be capacitated to make their own self-determined choices. Guests are seen as ends in themselves and not means to an end.

- *Confidentiality*

Respect the privacy of our guests and preserve any information within agency. Defined as an ethical responsibility and duty that demands a need-to-know and understand that professionals in the community, which Mary's Home fully respects, solely work with the guest in all medical/health issues and social services.

- *Non-maleficence*

Commit to avoid harm to a guest. Mary's Home is designed to do no harm, do good, and encourage self-love and self-forgiveness.

- *Empathy*

Feeling from another's perspective and acknowledging that they have their own beliefs, values, and morals.

- *Wisdom, Sincerity, and Fairness*

With the possession of sound judgement (wisdom), commit to being consistent in what is known as appropriate, what is said, and what is done (sincerity) in the effort to care for all guests (fairness).

- *Respect and Humility*

Show appropriate esteem to others and their understanding of themselves (respect), and accurately assess what we desire to achieve in relation to the guest's self-determination and the professionals involved in guiding the guest (humility).

- *Integrity and Commitment*

Display straight-forwardness and commitment to being moral, ethical, honest, and coherent (integrity); additionally, keep appointments, inform of changes, respect the individual, and uphold Mary's Home's philosophy and foundation through your words and actions.

Boundaries

It is important to understand that our moms come from varying backgrounds. Setting appropriate boundaries with them and with yourself models the skill of setting boundaries. Appropriate boundaries are essential to the health and growth of every member of our home. Listed below are examples of maintaining healthy boundaries at Mary's Home.

- *Maintaining Confidentiality*

Our organization has made a commitment of confidentiality to the women we welcome in the homes. This commitment creates a safe place where their deepest needs can be addressed. As a volunteer at Mary's Home, you are expected to help uphold our culture of confidentiality. We expect that any information that you receive via your time at Mary's Home will be used in a manner that upholds the dignity of the moms we serve and protects their confidentiality. You will be asked to sign a HIPAA Volunteer Compliance Agreement before beginning your volunteer time with us.

- As a volunteer, you may receive information pertinent to your role (i.e. expected return times, food allergies, special needs of a the resident). It is important to recognize that you may receive only a snapshot of information, pertinent to the time that you are volunteering with us.
- While staff are to be mindful of confidentiality at all times, volunteers may occasionally have access to confidential information. The information should not be shared outside of the home or discussed openly within the home.
- It is our hope that you engage in conversations with moms at the home. The moms may at times disclose personal information. This information should not be shared with other moms,

volunteers, or anyone outside of the staff. It is with your discretion that you should determine which information is pertinent to share with staff, in order for us to better serve the moms. Keep in mind that creating allies or splitting one against another may be a form of manipulation.

- The house address may be given out for legitimate reasons by staff only but should be protected. Information or whereabouts of staff or residents should not be given out.
- Please refrain from making social media posts that include any personal information or images of the moms and/or their children. Please ask our moms before taking photos of them and/or their children.

If you are ever uncertain about what information can and cannot be shared, please consult a staff member.

• *Enforcing Rules and Culture*

We ask that volunteers be conscientious of the house rules, which our moms are expected to follow. This allows for transparency and unity with the Mary's Home community. It will help you to know the boundaries that we already have in place and encourage moms to follow these rules when appropriate.

As we are an organization founded on Catholic values, we ask that you refrain from speaking negatively about the Catholic faith and its practices in your interactions with our residents. Please refrain from promoting or encouraging our moms in the use of contraception, sex before marriage, cohabitation, and abortion.

Our residents come from various faith backgrounds. Please do not proselytize them. If they ask you faith-related questions, then you may certainly respond if you feel comfortable and confident in your answers. Such conversations should be handled with the utmost respect, tact, and compassion. Be sure to clarify that you are not speaking on behalf of Mary's Home but from your own experience and acquired knowledge. It is okay to say that you do not know the answer to a question but that you can help her find it. People often feel honored by this response. You may speak to the staff about this, and we can provide you or the mom with resources.

• *Providing Resources*

It is inappropriate for a mom to ask a volunteer for money, rides, food, or to run errands. Moms have access to and can request these resources through different avenues within our home. If any of these situations come up, please bring the situation to a staff person. In addition, a mom should not ask a volunteer for his/her personal information. If this happens, then volunteers can let that mom know that the staff is capable of reaching out to volunteers when needed. If you choose to provide personal information to the moms, know that Mary's Home cannot be held responsible for any potential misuse of that information.

- *Respecting Personal Space*

In order to respect a mom as the primary care giver of her child, please ask a mom before picking up her baby/child. It is important for the moms to know that they are capable of caring for their children and are the full decision-maker in regard to her child's well-being.

In addition, please ask an expectant woman before feeling her belly for the baby. This is a polite way of respecting a woman's body. Some moms have had a history of personal space being violated and may be especially sensitive to someone touching their body.

If you need to enter a mom's room for any reason, please knock and obtain permission before entering, even if the door is open. All of these boundaries about respecting personal space are important for building trust between our moms and staff/volunteers.

- *Using Appropriate Language*

We strive to be respectful of each mom's background. We commit to use affirming language to create a supportive and encouraging atmosphere. We discourage language that may stereotype an individual due to race, religion, background, or history.

It is in our house rules not to use curse words or other inappropriate language. We expect staff and volunteers to adhere to the same rules. Inappropriate language includes being disrespectful or making references about things like drugs, alcohol, sex, etc. (While they may be innocent in nature, we would prefer that you didn't say things like "Margaritas are only \$2 during happy hour" or "the wedding I'm going to this weekend will have an open bar" in front of the moms).

Although it may be a source of passion for some of our volunteers, we ask that volunteers refrain from initiating conversation about abortion with our moms. Some of our moms may have had abortions in the past, and they need healing and love. At an appropriate time, a staff member will speak with a mom who has had a past abortion or is still considering having an abortion. If the topic of abortion arises, we ask volunteers to handle the situation with gentle tact and report the conversation to staff.

Our organization is supportive of the adoption decision. Volunteers are expected to honor women making an adoption plan and avoid any comments that might be understood as critical of adoption. These comments may be thought of as innocent (i.e. "I could never do that," or "I saw a special on tv where a sociopath adopted a child.") As a woman learns to advocate for her adoption decision, she will learn responses to these comments, but you may encounter a woman during an early phase of consideration. Please be mindful of your words.

- *Avoiding Dependency*

Mary's Home is a respite during a critical, crisis-oriented time in the lives of those we serve. We are designed for independent living, so guests can acquire the tools, skills, and knowledge to make better choices for their own lives and families. We will not always be a part of their lives and will at some point wish them well and hope they continue on their own path of self-discovery and success. We are to do no harm in making them dependent and reliant on us in any way.

Harassment Policy

Mary's Home maintains a strict policy prohibiting harassment based on sex, race, religion, age, national origin, disability, or any other factor made unlawful by law, ordinance, or regulation. This policy applies to all persons and prohibits such harassment by any staff member, guest, volunteer, or vendor/supplier.

Harassment refers to any unwelcome, inappropriate behavior that has the effect of interfering unreasonably with another individual's activities or which creates a hostile or offensive environment. Harassment in any form, including verbal/physical/visual conduct, threats, demands, and/or retaliation, is unlawful, is prohibited, and will not be tolerated. Any volunteer who believes he or she has been the object of harassment should report the alleged act immediately to the Executive Director. All complaints of harassment will be promptly investigated as confidentially as possible, protecting the rights of all concerned.

Dress Code

We welcome volunteers to wear comfortable clothes in which one would not mind cleaning and working on a variety of tasks. We do not permit shirts with offensive language or drug/alcohol/sex references. We also ask that volunteers refrain from wearing revealing clothing. Said bluntly, we have a "no butts, no breasts, no bellies" rule for the moms' clothing, and we ask the same of all staff, interns, and volunteers. We strive to affirm the dignity of our bodies, and we appreciate you upholding our mission in this way.

Out-of-pocket Expenses

In normal circumstances, volunteers will not be asked to purchase items for the home using personal funds. If a volunteer offers to run an errand for the community, any out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed for the exact amount shown on the receipt.

Background Check

In order to protect the safety of our moms and children, we will perform a background check on all volunteers and run their names through the national sex offender registry.

All volunteers must disclose any criminal charges and conviction (pending or final). The report needs to be made to the staff member responsible for your volunteer activities. Mary's Home may, at its sole discretion, determine whether such charges, convictions, or conduct are grounds for reassignment or removal from the organization.

Other Volunteer Expectations

- We are a drug-free and alcohol-free organization and strongly prohibit the use of any of these substances while volunteering. A volunteer will be asked to leave if found under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Mary's Home reserves the right to reassign or remove any volunteer whether there appears to be justification for this action or not.

Tracking of Hours

All volunteers are asked to submit their hours in the Volunteer Hours Reporting Form on site or through our online form upon finishing an assignment. Volunteers needing to track hours for community service, school, employee matching programs, etc. are responsible for tracking those hours and providing the paperwork to be signed. Any staff member may sign off on tracked hours.

Complaints or Problems

If volunteers have any complaints or problems with their volunteer experiences at the homes, they should inform the Executive Director or Client Services Director immediately. We are always open to your feedback and will seek to resolve conflicts as they arise. It is important to consult a staff member with complaints or problems in a private manner.

Liability

By Maryland State Law, as a volunteer, you will not be held liable for any harm or injury you cause beyond the limits of your personal insurance if you:

- acted within the scope of your volunteer duties;
- had the proper license or certification, if necessary, for your volunteer duties (i.e., doctor or nurse);
- and did not act in a deliberate, intentional, criminal, or extremely careless way.

When they accept a ride from staff or volunteers, our guests consent not to hold you liable for harm caused by or a motor vehicle that you are driving.

Volunteer Agreement

As a volunteer, I _____, acknowledge that I:

- am aware of the core values of the program and will incorporate them in my interactions and discussions as needed or appropriate.
- have read and agree to abide by the guidelines of the Volunteer Handbook in its entirety.
- am aware that the program does not extend worker's compensation coverage to its volunteers.
- understand the confidentiality statement and agree not to misuse any personal information that I may have access to during my duties as a volunteer, as outlined in the Volunteer Handbook.
- agree to disclose any criminal charges and convictions (either pending or final).
- understand and consent to Mary's Home running my name through a background check and sex offender registry.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mary's Home Maryland

Embracing Life, Mother and Child

