Family Shelter Service   
of Metropolitan Family Services DuPage

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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Welcome!

Congratulations on becoming a volunteer. We are thrilled that you have chosen to share your time and talents with Family Shelter Service. Each of our volunteers is a vital part of achieving our goals of supporting domestic abuse victims and their families as they work toward building a life free from violence. Woodrow Wilson once said:

“We make a living by what we get . . . a life by what we give.”

We are lucky to have volunteers at Family Shelter Service who understand the wisdom of his words, who care about what happens to those who live in fear as a result of domestic abuse, and who are willing to give of themselves to help victims find a pathway to safety.

This handbook will help you have the best possible experience as a volunteer. It answers many of the most commonly asked questions and provides information about Family Shelter Service and your role as a volunteer. Your supervisor can answer most of your other questions, but please feel free to contact the Volunteer Advocate with any questions at any time.

We hope you find the duties of your particular job assignment to be fulfilling and that your volunteer experience with us is rewarding and positive.

Sincerely,



Judie Caribeaux Katie Peterson

Executive Director Volunteer Advocate

## Family Shelter Service Information

Family Shelter Service assists families escaping the devastating effects of domestic violence through life-saving services that provide hope and a pathway to a life free from violence. Our 24-hour hotline provides a critical lifeline to victims needing immediate help, as well as community members looking for information to help loved ones. Our emergency shelter is a refuge for women and children experiencing life-threatening violence. Our court advocates help those seeking Orders of Protection and provide outreach to victims identified by local police. We offer individual and group counseling for adults, teens, and children. All of our services are offered in both English and Spanish. Family Shelter Service also plays a vital role in raising community awareness, providing education and information about how best to address domestic violence.

## Mission

Family Shelter Service transforms lives by offering help and hope to those affected by domestic violence.

## Vision

We confront domestic violence, in the moment, where people need us, turning no one away.

## Our Promise

We will provide faster, greater, equal access to services that help people in DuPage County thrive, not just survive.

**Our Hope**  
We want our clients to be more emotionally, physically, and spiritually secure.

**Our Belief**  
  
We believe that our clients have seen the worst of humanity at the hands of their abusers, and that they deserve to see the best of humanity in us.

**History of Family Shelter Service**

Family Shelter Service was founded in 1976 through a grass-roots effort to address the growing number of homeless people in DuPage County. It quickly became apparent that shelter and support for victims of domestic abuse was a critical and overlooked factor in confronting homelessness. Family Shelter Service started with a hotline that operated 8 hours a day; today our hotline offers support 24/7. In 1978 we established a network of private “safe homes” in the Glen Ellyn area. In 1980 we opened our first shelter, with a 12-bed capacity. In 1986 a second 18-bed shelter was added, and in 1989 a third shelter brought our total capacity to 43 beds. In 2008, following a $4 million capital campaign, Family Shelter Service opened a new facility in Downers Grove, offering emergency shelter with 29 beds and non-residential counseling.

Over time, we came to understand the importance of providing victims with supportive services other than shelter. In 1982, with the passage of the Illinois Domestic Violence Act, we implemented a Court Advocacy program. In 1984 we added the Children’s Program to address the unique needs of young victims of domestic abuse. In 1989, Family Shelter Service played a significant role in the development and implementation of the DuPage County Domestic Violence Protocol, which provides the structure for the justice system’s response to domestic violence. Since 2008, we have also offered continuing opportunities for personal growth and career development through employment support provided by advocates and volunteers. In 2009 we began the PEACE Project (Prevention, Education and Community Engagement) to raise awareness and provide education to engage the entire community in ending domestic violence. We now have three prevention educators who visit area middle and high schools, as well as churches, civic groups, and parent groups. In 2016, to better meet the needs of our clients, we reorganized our programs. Our Safer Living department offers services within our walls, including emergency shelter, counseling, and case management services for adults and children. Our Safer Communities department offers publicly accessible services in community-based settings, including 24-hour hotline and community advocacy, court and victim advocacy, prevention, and training. This program realignment allows us to fulfill our promise to the community: to provide faster, greater, equal access to services so that our clients can thrive, not just survive.

**Impact of Family Shelter Service in DuPage County**

One in 3 women and 1 in 4 men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetimes. In DuPage County, that translates to approximately 200,000 people who will be victims of domestic abuse at some point in their lives. Family Shelter Service exists to help provide hope and a pathway to safety and independence for victims and their families. Family Shelter Service is the only comprehensive provider of services to domestic abuse victims in DuPage County. Each year, our hotline handles approximately 5000 calls from victims, their families, and friends, and an additional 5000 calls from DuPage County police departments, who report to us after they respond to any domestic violence incident. We provide a range of services, including shelter, counseling, assistance with protective orders, and case management to over 2000 clients each year. Family Shelter Service also provides prevention education for middle and high school students in DuPage County, in an effort to educate young people about domestic abuse and encourage them to build healthy relationships.

**Trauma-Informed Care/Engaging With One Another**

Family Shelter Service is committed to practicing Trauma-Informed Care. We approach each person with an understanding that:

*“Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and physical, social, and spiritual well-being.”*

Keeping this definition in mind, we are mindful of how we engage with one another and work together to create an environment where people are seen, heard, and valued.  
  
**Ways to Practice Mindful Engagement**:

1. *See conflict resolution as an opportunity for open dialogue – be willing to accept and give feedback, assume good intentions, and take time to understand the other person’s point of view.*
2. *Practice non-judgmental, direct communication that includes courtesy, confidentiality, and extends grace to others who are being vulnerable.*
3. *Recognize personal expectations and limitations, and practice self-care.*
4. *Be fully present in all interactions.*
5. *Work as an agency-wide team to support one other and recognize each person’s unique contributions.*

Together, the definition of trauma, the Trauma-Informed Care perspective, and the practice of mindful engagement form the basis of our ongoing commitment to using a trauma-informed approach in all we do, whether we are interacting with clients or with each other.

**Family Shelter Service Locations**

**Downers Grove** is our emergency shelter location, as well as a counseling and training site. This building hosts counseling services, support groups, parenting and children’s groups, hotline, Board meetings, team meetings, committee meetings, and various trainings, such as our 48-hour Domestic Violence Training and volunteer trainings.

We ask that our staff and clients respect the importance of safety and refrain from sharing information about this location. The building has several outside cameras with two monitors inside recording any activity. All staff, clients, and visitors are asked to ring the bell or use an assigned FOB key for entrance to the building. Those who come to the door, either planned or unplanned, are communicated with through the monitor/speaker system to verify that they are to be let into the building. To further enhance safety, Downers Grove police conduct regular drive-bys of the shelter, and since they are aware of the services we provide, they respond quickly to any calls we make to them for support.

**Court Advocacy Office**  We offer court advocacy services from our office on the third floor of the DuPage County Courthouse (also called the Judicial Office Facility), located at 505 N. County Farm Rd. Our advocates are there to assist with Orders of Protection, Monday through Friday from 8-4 pm.

**Administrative Building** or “605 Building” is located in Wheaton and is home to our administrative and advancement staff. This building is also a hotline, counseling, and support group location.

**Second Chance Resale Shops** We have two resale shop locations:

Central Store is located at 1512 N. Naper Blvd., Naperville IL 630-955-9599

South Store is located at 1131 Fairview Ave., Westmont, IL 630-241-7268

**Family Shelter Service Programs and Services**

**Safe Connections Program**

* Hotline (**630-469-5650**) staffed 24/7
  + Access all services (intakes)
  + Information and referral
  + Emotional support and safety planning
  + Police responses
* Support groups in community-based locations
* Case management, resources, and referrals to Family Shelter Service programs and to community partners

**Safe Home Program**

* Emergency shelter for victims and their children
* Staffed 24/7
* Case management and counseling services
* Support groups
* Life skills workshops

**Safe Adults Program**

* Domestic Violence Education Series
* Individual crisis counseling
* Support groups
* Case management
* Walk-in hours
* Workshops

**Safe Children Program**

* Children’s groups
* Family counseling
* Parents & Kids Group
* Individual counseling

**Court & Victim Advocacy Program**

* Assistance with Orders of Protection
* Court process education and accompaniment
* Legal Clinic offered monthly
* Support and referrals
* Judge on bench 9:00 -11:30 AM and 1:30 -3:30 PM

**Educational Community Program**

* Community education on domestic abuse and teen dating violence
* Educational programs on healthy relationships
* Prevention education in middle schools, high schools, and colleges
* 48-Hour Domestic Violence Training

**Resale Shops**

* Accept donations of clothing and small household items
* All Family Shelter Service clients shop free
* All proceeds directly support our services

## Volunteer Information

## Importance of Volunteers

Volunteers have always been an integral part of the Family Shelter Service team. Each year, volunteers provide approximately 20,000 hours of service, the equivalent of almost ten full-time staff members. The gift of your time and talent enhances the lives of our clients; provides service and support to implement and enhance programs, activities, and operations; and expands community awareness of the issue of domestic violence and the mission of Family Shelter Service. We could not provide the services we do without your support.   
  
As a volunteer it is your right to:

* Feel trusted, respected, and valued as a person who can make unique contributions
* Freely discuss problems, ask questions, and make suggestions
* Feel welcomed, work cooperatively, and be given sound guidance and direction by our staff
* Remain informed of agency policies and procedures, including issues of safety and security
* Acquire written work descriptions
* Have a clear understanding of the specific tasks, duties, responsibilities, supervisory structure, and time requirements
* Receive orientation, training, support, supervision, and evaluation

As a volunteer it is your responsibility to:

* Practice self-awareness, understanding that people who have experienced trauma may be triggered by our words and actions
* Accept the guidance and direction of supervisory staff and carry out your duties promptly
* Participate in any training required by Family Shelter Service
* Adhere to a strict code of confidentiality
* Maintain appropriate boundaries with clients
* Be punctual and notify supervisors of absences as much in advance as possible
* Stay alert, sober, and free of illegal substances while volunteering

**Overview of Volunteer Opportunities**

**Direct Service – Work with Clients**

Direct service opportunities allow volunteers to work directly with clients. You must be at least 18 years old. You must also complete a state-mandated 48-hour training course that explores questions such as “Why do people choose to abuse?” and “Why don’t victims just leave?” Family Shelter Service offers this training throughout the year; information on training dates and registration forms are available on our website, [www.metrofamily.org/family-shelter-service](http://www.metrofamily.org/family-shelter-service).

**Non-Direct Service**

Volunteers who would like to get started right away, or who don’t wish to work directly with clients, can provide support for day-to-day tasks, philanthropy, special events, and our Resale Shops.

1. Day-To-Day: Volunteers support day-to-day tasks primarily in administrative or special project positions in our offices. The minimum age for non-direct service volunteers is 16. Hotline Assistant positions are also available, which involve directing calls and attending to police reports. The minimum age for Hotline Assistants is 18.
2. Philanthropy: Philanthropy is defined as “the desire to promote the welfare of others,” which is something every one of us can do in a variety of ways. Philanthropic activities on behalf of Family Shelter Service include talking to friends and family about what we do and why you believe our work is important; encouraging people you know to support Family Shelter Service by attending a special event or donating to our Resale Shops; assisting with fundraising efforts; donating money, items, or time; and spreading the word about Family Shelter Service and our work to end domestic violence on your favorite social media platforms.
3. Special Events: Family Shelter Service holds several special events each year, including a 5K/10K run, holiday events, our annual gala, and a housewares show. Volunteers support the successful implementation of each of our events.
4. Second Chance Resale Shops: Volunteers support the operations of our resale shops in Naperville and Westmont. Volunteers under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent.

A complete list of volunteer positions and job descriptions is available on our website, www.metrofamily.org/family-shelter-service. Please be aware that while we will attempt to match volunteer opportunities with your skills and interests, not all volunteer positions are available at all times.

## General Policies

## Boundaries

It is important to establish and maintain good boundaries so that we can support our clients as they make difficult choices and find their own paths. Though this can be difficult, staff are always available to aid you in determining how best to assist clients and work with employees, interns, and other volunteers. The following may be helpful in maintaining effective boundaries with clients and coworkers:

* Being aware of your personal biases (we all have them!) will help you remain objective.
* Do not give out your personal phone number; instead provide our 24-hour hotline number.
* Minimize self-disclosure when talking with clients. Self-disclosure can blur the distinction between helper and friend.
* Do not give advice. We are here to provide options and support, and we must allow each client to determine what is right for them.
* Be aware of your surroundings. For example, when speaking with a client or when discussing a client’s situation with a coworker, consider whether it is an appropriate time and place to be discussing personal or confidential matters.

If you are ever unsure about how best to support a client, how to manage boundaries in a particular situation, or your role as a volunteer, feel free to talk with any staff member or your supervisor.

## Confidentiality

Family Shelter Service employees, volunteers, and interns are required by law to adhere to a very strict code of client confidentiality. This means that volunteers cannot discuss a client’s situation with another client and cannot discuss clients with anyone outside of Family Shelter Service. In addition, you are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of information relating to staff members, volunteers, and shelter locations. All volunteers are required to sign and adhere to the “Statement of Confidentiality.” Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in termination of the volunteer’s relationship with the agency and may result in legal action.

**Safety/Security**

During orientation, volunteers are briefed on the agency’s philosophy regarding safety and security. In general, you are responsible for:

* Knowing and following the safety and security rules as explained by your immediate supervisor.
* Supporting efforts to promote safe working conditions and habits.
* Not being alone or leaving another person alone in a Family Shelter Service building.
* Reporting all unsafe work conditions immediately to your direct supervisor.
* Reporting all accidents, with or without injuries, immediately to your direct supervisor.

## Standard of Appearance

Dress code for volunteers is business casual.

## Absences

Volunteers are expected to be reliable in the performance of their volunteer duties. When an absence is anticipated, you must inform your immediate supervisor as far in advance as possible so that alternate arrangements can be made. You should inform the Volunteer Advocate if you require an extended leave of absence, giving as much advance notice as possible.

## Non-Discrimination

Family Shelter Service will not permit discrimination in its programs, activities, or employment based on race, color, religion, age, sex, gender, national origin, ancestry, mental and/or physical disability, military status, marital or parental status, Order of Protection status, sexual orientation, or genetic information.

## Harassment

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based upon a person’s protected status such as sex, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or other legally protected group status. Family Shelter Service will not permit any conduct, comment, gesture, or contact of a harassing nature, whether on a one-time basis or in a continuous series of incidents, that might reasonably be expected to cause offense, embarrassment, or humiliation to others.

## Use of Electronic and Telephone Equipment Family Shelter Service owns and maintains all electronic and telephonic communication systems. It is the responsibility of each of us to use these resources responsibly and respectfully. If you use Family Shelter Service equipment (including voice mail and e-mail) for personal purposes, you should not consider this communication to be private. Any information transmitted by, received from, or stored in our systems are the property of Family Shelter Service. As such, they are to be used primarily for job-related purposes.

## All communications represent Family Shelter Service as a whole, and should be written in a professional and appropriate manner. This also applies to any material that is published on our website or social media platforms. Volunteers are not permitted to use or share a password unless they have received permission from their supervisor. Confidential information should not be sent by e-mail.

## All software, programs, applications, templates, data, and data files residing on the Family Shelter Service network or storage media, or developed on our computer system, are the property of the agency.

## Alcohol/Drugs

Volunteers may not bring alcohol or illegal drugs into Family Shelter Service facilities under any circumstances, nor may they be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while performing their volunteer duties.

## Smoking

To ensure a healthy environment for clients, visitors, volunteers, employees, and staff, Family Shelter Service is a smoke-free environment. Volunteers may go outdoors to smoke.

**Stewardship of Donations**As a volunteer, you may be involved in receiving, transporting, or organizing items donated by community members. As a non-profit organization that depends upon support from the community, we are committed to being good stewards of these donations. Donated items are intended for distribution to clients and/or agency support purposes only. They are not for personal use and should not be taken by individuals or removed from Family Shelter Service sites without the express consent of a supervisor.

## Volunteer Process

## Supervision/Evaluation

Supervisors will maintain open communication and provide feedback to you on an ongoing basis. These informal evaluations should include time for both you and your supervisor to discuss any issues or concerns, and include follow-up to address any training or additional support that may be required. Although no written evaluation is required, your supervisor may choose to communicate any issues to the Volunteer Advocate for inclusion in your volunteer file.

## Performance Concerns

If performance concerns arise, your supervisor will initiate a conversation, using the agreed-upon standards from the job description as a basis for the conversation. To aid in the discussion and ensure that expectations are clearly communicated, supervisors will also complete a Volunteer Performance Improvement Plan, describing the specific actions you must take to correct performance problems and specifying a time frame for improvement. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled within the specified timeframe to discuss whether expectations have been met. A copy of the Volunteer Performance Improvement Plan will be sent to the Volunteer Advocate for inclusion in your volunteer file.

## Timesheets

You are required to fill out a time sheet whenever you volunteer. These may be obtained from your immediate supervisor.

## Recognition

Informal recognition is ongoing. In addition, on an annual basis, Family Shelter Service hosts a volunteer appreciation event. During the volunteer appreciation event, staff members honor volunteers for their efforts.

## Resignation

You are under no obligation to continue volunteering for Family Shelter Service and may choose to resign from your position at any time. While it is not a requirement, we would appreciate two weeks’ notice of resignation. When you resign, the Volunteer Advocate may conduct an Exit Interview.

## Professional Development

Resources are available within Family Shelter Service to enable volunteers to pursue professional development. You are encouraged to explore these resources, support the development and maintenance of professional standards, and participate in the organizations which enrich your skills and energy.

The Volunteer Advocate will also communicate about open and new volunteer positions regularly and encourage volunteers to develop their skills by taking on new roles and responsibilities. From time to time throughout the year, Family Shelter Service may also conduct training sessions for staff and volunteers on a variety of domestic violence related topics; these training opportunities will be communicated to volunteers through Constant Contact emails. Finally, the Volunteer Advocate will include outside learning opportunities (such as webinars or seminars from groups like the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence) in email communications to volunteers.

## Becoming a Certified Domestic Violence Professional

Volunteers who are interested in completing the requirements to become a Certified Domestic Violence Professional (CDVP) must interview with the Director of Safer Communities before beginning to volunteer with Family Shelter Service. The Director of Safer Communities will review the CDVP requirements with the volunteer candidate and determine whether the candidate may be a suitable fit. Family Shelter Service provides supervision of the 150 required direct service hours for approved volunteers. The cost to take the exam is the volunteer’s responsibility.

## Resale Shop Volunteers

The General Policies and Volunteer Processes outlined in this manual apply to all volunteers, including Second Chance Resale Shop volunteers. There are a few areas where resale shop volunteers are guided by slightly different policies; additional information is available in the *Resale Shop Procedure Manual*.

**Volunteer Opportunities:**

Volunteering at Second Chance Resale Shops is a great way to support Family Shelter Service. Resale Shop volunteers must be at least 16 years old; anyone under 16 must be accompanied by a parent. We provide on-the-job training for the many types of tasks required to run a resale shop. Some of the areas in which we need assistance include sorting and cleaning donations, researching and pricing items for sale, displaying and organizing the items on the sales floor, and assisting customers.

We have volunteers who work with clothing, shoes, household items, seasonal décor, and books. Plan to work a minimum of 2 hours on a shift. The monthly time commitment is flexible and may be discussed with the shop manager. If you cannot make your regularly scheduled shift, we ask that you please call the shop to let us know.

Occasionally we need assistance with picking up from a one-time event (such as a rummage sale, estate sale, or the International Housewares Show), or need help with our storewide half-price sales. Many resale shop volunteers also help out with other functions of the agency, such as special events, Holiday Shoppe, or in the Family Shelter Service administrative office.

Regular volunteers receive a discount off of non-sale merchandise as our way of saying, “Thank you for what you do!”

**Dress code:** Dress code at Second Chance Resale Shops is casual, with closed-toe shoes recommended.

**Timesheets:** We keep track of all resale shop volunteer hours on a sign-in sheet.

## Statement of Receipt

I hereby certify that I have received the Family Shelter Service Volunteer Handbook. I will review the contents and I will comply with the policies contained within.

Volunteer Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Advocate/Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_