



## VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

“Building houses in partnership with God’s people.”  
1990 to the Present



## **HABITAT HISTORY**

- Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) was founded by Millard and Linda Fuller in 1976 with the purpose of eliminating sub-standard housing worldwide.
- HFHI has over 2,300 affiliates operating in 100 countries.
- Athens County Habitat for Humanity (ACHFH) became an affiliate of HFHI in 1990 and has built over 26 homes in our county.
- Athens Women Raise the Roof, Faith Build, and O.U. Students are coalitions of ACHFH. These groups coordinate volunteers and independently raise funds to sponsor specific homes. ACHFH purchases the land, administers grants, and subsidizes the purchase of building materials for coalition homes.
- In 2003, in partnership with the City of Athens and many local organizations, ACHFH renovated the building at 525 West Union Street, formerly known as the “Little Red Schoolhouse,” which now serves as the ACHFH office.
- ACHFH operates under a 15 member volunteer Board of Directors.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to Athens County Habitat for Humanity! Thank you for volunteering with us. We have such an exciting team of people from all walks of life working in partnership with God to provide low-income families with new, simple, decent, affordable homes. Volunteers are the backbone of what we do; they are our true partners in providing this service. Without you, there would be no Habitat for Humanity. Again, thank you so much for joining our team and may God bless us in our endeavors together.

The following handbook will provide you with much needed information concerning Athens County Habitat for Humanity, including our practices and policies, frequently asked volunteer questions, and volunteer policies and procedures specifically. We, of course, encourage you to familiarize yourself with the contents in order to better understand your role in our family.

In order to work on a site you must read this handbook and then sign a waiver of liability form. If you are reading this on-line, the waiver form is also on-line. Just print it off, sign it, and then take it to the site on your first day there.

In order to retain flexibility in the administration of policies and procedures regarding volunteers for Athens County Habitat for Humanity, we reserve the right to edit, append, or abolish any of the policies or procedures herein.

## ABOUT ATHENS COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

### ***Mission Statement***

Athens County Habitat for Humanity works in partnership with God and people everywhere, from all walks of life, to develop communities with God's people in need by building houses, so that there are decent houses in decent communities in which God's people can live and grow into all the God intended.

### ***A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out***

Habitat does not provide free homes. Homes are sold to families who become homeowners by *partnering* with Athens County Habitat for Humanity to purchase their homes with affordable, no-profit, no-interest mortgages. Because homes are constructed principally by volunteers, mortgage payments can be kept reasonable for those unable to obtain conventional financing. Habitat homeowners have incomes between 30% and 50% of the median Athens County income and show some kind of need for adequate housing. In addition to making monthly mortgage payments, homeowner families invest hundreds of "sweat equity" hours of their own labor into building their own houses and the houses of other Habitat family partners.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Barbara Brown, President	Mike Carpenter	Sharon Huge
Acting Vice President, Mary Kay Eastman	Lisa Eliason	Deb McBride
Acting Secretary Pat Merriell	Mike Finney	Judy Maxson
George Bain	Claudia Hale	Kenneth Oehlers, Executive Director

## OFFICE STAFF

Kenneth Oehlers, Executive Director	Faye Wilson Executive Assistant	
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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### ***House Construction***

Building homes is what we do and a majority of our volunteers give their time, money, and energy in this aspect of our organization. There are construction tasks for all skill levels and a willing volunteer can learn and do just about anything on the construction site. With the exception of a few highly skilled tasks such as electrical systems, plumbing, and heating, most of our work on a building site is done by volunteers.

Some related volunteer opportunities are various leadership roles required on site to maintain smooth operations. For example, the *On-Site Day Leader* is a skilled volunteer who is willing to lead/teach other volunteers in their area on the site under the supervision of the site coordinator.

### ***Special events***

From donation or volunteer information tables at local festivals to large annual fundraising events like Cardboard City, we always need assistance in this area. From manning the tables to giving small presentations on Habitat to running registration tables to working with our sponsors, special events is always a fulfilling opportunity for volunteers.

### ***Public Relations***

Habitat for Humanity's presence in and dedication to the community are of the utmost importance. Public relations volunteers serve on committees, brainstorm ideas, serve on our Speaker's Bureau, and make sure that our name and face are out where they need to be to accomplish our mission to eliminate substandard housing in Athens County.

### ***Office Assistance***

Our office is a full-time operation with only two full-time staff. Volunteers are essential to our daily operations here at the "Little Red School House." Volunteers do data entry, organizing materials, telephone answering, faxing, cleaning, and a myriad of other duties related to an office setting. Office Assistance is perfect for someone who just wants a few hours a week in an indoor setting.

### ***Mailing***

Twice a year, we do a mailing requesting assistance and donations from our community. This is a mailing with well over a thousand recipients. Assistance is always needed when these times arise. Smaller mailings occur throughout the year as well to get information to our partners and families.

### ***Fundraising***

Fundraising is the backbone of any Habitat for Humanity. Without funds, we can't build houses. To assist with fundraising, volunteers not only can assist at events, they can serve on a committee that brainstorms ideas and sets goals. This can be an opportunity to learn more about an interesting process and requires some creativity from our volunteers.

**Habitat Committees:**

We are always looking for dedicated and excited volunteers to serve on our committees. The following is a list of all our committees and their main focuses.

- **Family Partnership Committee:** Act as liaisons to our family partners. They act as the first line of assistance to our families with their needs.
- **Finance Committee:** Monitors all funds and expenses, materials, and loans. Reviews insurance matters as they relate to financing.
- **Faith Relations Committee:** Encourages and coordinates the participation of faith based organizations in support of ACHFH and its endeavors.
- **Site Selection Committee:** Deals with the process of finding, surveying, choosing, and approving sites on which to build houses.
- **Green/Eco Committee:** Is dedicated to making our houses more ecologically friendly.
- **Building Committee:** Selects floor plans, prepares budgets, and monitors progress of our builds.
- **Family Selection Committee:** Recruits and selects applicant families for approval to purchase a Habitat home.
- **Fundraising Committee:** Raise money for Habitat!

## **VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### ***Nature of Volunteering***

This handbook is not an employment contract. Volunteering is your contribution of your own time and energy and you are not contracted or bound to do so. Neither you nor ACHFH is bound to continue the volunteer relationship if either you or ACHFH chooses, at will, to end the relationship at any time.

### ***Personal Data Changes***

It is important for you to notify ACHFH of any changes in personal information. Information or changes in information to report to the volunteer coordinator would include: mailing addresses, email addresses, telephone numbers, interests and availability, individuals to be contacted in case of emergency, or other information you think is pertinent.

### ***Confidentiality***

ACHFH believes in protecting the personal information of all its employees, volunteers, partner families, and businesses. Each individual is personally responsible for maintaining confidentiality in all oral, written, and electronic communication.

### ***Safety***

We all share responsibility for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. ACHFH will do everything feasible to assure a safe work environment and will comply with federal, state, and local safety regulations. In turn, you are expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all your work activities. You are expected to report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor immediately. Any accident resulting in injury, regardless of severity, is to be reported immediately to your supervisor so that proper follow-up care and paperwork can be completed.

### ***Conduct***

ACHFH expects all volunteers to behave in a manner that reinforces the Christian ideas and founding principles of our organization. All volunteers will be accorded respect and consideration and should feel that ACHFH is a safe and productive place to work and volunteer.

While it is not possible to list every behavior that would be considered unacceptable, there are some obvious examples that would result in either a reevaluation or the termination of the volunteer/organization relationship.

Reevaluation:

- Disruptive activity or behavior in the work place.
- Insubordination or other disrespectful conduct.
- Repeated failure to follow a supervisor's reasonable request or to carry out a reasonable job assignment.
- Violation of safety or health rules.

- Excessive tardiness or absenteeism when scheduled as a volunteer.
- Unauthorized or improper use of telephones, mail system, or other ACHFH equipment.

Termination:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of ACHFH property.
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the work place, while on duty, or while operating ACHFH equipment.
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of property belonging to ACHFH or another person.
- False accusation of harassment, unlawful discrimination, or disparaging treatment of one volunteer or employee to another.
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the work place.
- Sexual or other unlawful harassment or discrimination including, but not limited to:
  - Verbal harassment or abuse with sexual, racial, religious, ethnic, or similar overtones.
  - Subtle pressure or unwelcome touching.
  - Requesting or demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning the individual's state of mind, volunteer status, or promises of preferential treatment.
  - Conduct which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

***Unlawful Harassment and Discrimination:***

If you believe you have been harassed, the order in which to report is to speak to: your immediate supervisor, then your volunteer coordinator, then the Executive Director, then directly to the President of the Board of Directors. ACHFH will investigate all claims in order to protect the privacy of the person making the complaint as well as that of the accused. If ACHFH determines that the complaint is valid, the harassed will be protected from further abuse and ACHFH will discipline the person who engaged in the harassment in accordance with its normal disciplinary procedures. ACHFH also will not tolerate any actions which constitute unlawful retaliation against an employee or volunteer making a complaint of sexual harassment or who assist in an investigation.

***Co-worker Relations:***

While ACHFH hopes every volunteer will receive fair and impartial treatment, we recognize that conflicts, misunderstandings, and other problems may arise. As a Christian organization, we believe that the quickest way to resolve a problem is to approach the individual(s) involved and discuss the issue calmly and diplomatically to reach an agreed upon solution. If this initial conversation does not lead to resolution, your supervisor, the volunteer coordinator, followed by the Executive Director, followed by the President of the Board of Directors should be contacted to assist in mediation of

the problem. Allowing problems to fester without resolution will detract from everyone's well being, the work being produced and our important contributions to this ministry.

***Attendance and Punctuality:***

In order to ensure smooth operations within our organization, we ask that volunteers extend to us common courtesy. Your immediate supervisor should be informed as soon as possible of any absences, late arrivals, or early departures so that we may plan ahead for these contingencies.

***Office Dress Code:***

Generally, unless a job specifically requires otherwise, ACHFH maintains business casual dress.

- Clothing should not be ragged, stained, or torn.
- Clothing should not be too short, too low-cut, or sheer.
- Undergarments should be covered with clothing.
- Shoes should be worn.
- Shirts should come to the top of one's pants or skirt.
- Clothing should not be provocative in the workplace.
- Any clothing with disturbing messages, which could be viewed by others as offensive or suggestive is prohibited.

***Use of Telephones***

You will be trained on how to answer the telephone using the proper greeting and are expected to conduct phone conversations in a courteous and professional manner. You will also be trained on how to take, record, and distribute phone information and messages. Personal use of phones is permissible provided calls are local, of an essential nature, and of short duration.

***Drug and Alcohol Use***

Volunteers of ACHFH are required to be medically (physically and mentally) capable of performing the required work, free from any substance that would diminish or impair the volunteers' ability to perform. Any volunteer found to be under the influence of an illegal substance, or in possession of, using, selling, trading, or offering for sale an illegal substance will be subject to termination of their role with ACHFH. Depending up on the circumstances, legal channels will be pursued. Volunteers with drug, alcohol, or other substance dependency are urged to seek professional treatment.

***Smoking***

In keeping with ACHFH's intent to provide a safe and healthy work environment, and Ohio State Law, smoking is only permitted outside. On site, smoking cannot be done in or around the home itself. In recognition of federal law, any volunteer under the age of 18 is prohibited from smoking at any time.

***Community Service***

ACHFH welcomes community service volunteers from civic groups, schools, community assistance programs, and the judicial system. It is the community service volunteer's

responsibility to maintain an accurate time sheet and to ensure that it is signed off at the beginning and end of each day by an ACHFH supervisor or duly appointed person. Hours worked, but not recorded or signed off at the end of each day of service, will not be counted. ACHFH does not recognize breaks or lunch to be community service time. It should be further understood that only actual time worked will be credited for community service. For appropriate placement within our organization, ACHFH reserved the right to know the offense related to court-appointed community service. In all other aspects, court-ordered community service volunteers will be treated and held accountable to the same standards as any volunteer.

## **CONSTRUCTION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### ***Construction site dress code:***

- Loose clothing is dangerous and not recommended. Breathable material shirts that are not too loose and jeans are recommended to protect the volunteer from injury and sun. A waterproof sunblock is also recommended at all times.
- Workers shall wear work boots or thick-soled shoes at all times. Any other type of shoe is prohibited.
- Hard hats are to be worn while doing demolition work, during the framing phase of construction, or when required by a supervisor, and are available to workers at each site.
- Protective glasses are required any time a volunteer is operating a power tool or when instructed by a supervisor and will be available at the site.
- Dust masks are required and provided when installing insulation, sanding, or when instructed by a supervisor and will be available at the site.
- Ear plugs are required and will be made available at the site for use when using a power tool for a prolonged period of time or when instructed by a supervisor.

### ***Tools recommended (not required) for construction site:***

- Tool belt
- Hammer

When arriving on site, the site coordinator or day leader will advise you as to what paperwork is required and what you are to do next.

**Once again, thank you for volunteering with  
Athens County Habitat for Humanity!**