



Volunteer Handbook

The Samaritan Center

310 Montgomery Street
Syracuse NY 13202

Office: 315-472-0650

Kitchen: 315-472-8156

E-mail: volunteer@samcenter.org
www.samcenter.org



About Us

The Samaritan Center was founded by several downtown churches in 1981, who were responding to the need that they saw in the community.

In the early days, the Samaritan Center served a brown bag lunch out of the side door of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

In the years since, the Samaritan Center has evolved to serve hot meals to our guests. We are now a 501(c)(3) organization run by a small professional staff.

Despite the changing times, the Samaritan Center still depends on volunteers to make serving a meal every day possible. It is with the help of these volunteers that the Samaritan Center continues to feed the hungry in our community.



After you volunteer...

Call and schedule a time to come back! 472-0650!

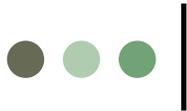
Consider other ways you can help out at the Samaritan Center. We are always in need of people to help with our wonderful fundraising events, such as our Beach, Blues and Barbeque, The Good Samaritan Awards Dinner and The Soup Bowl Open.

We are also looking for volunteers interested in making sandwiches to hand out to our guests at mealtimes. Contact the volunteer coordinator for more information.

Get creative! Do you have any ideas about supporting our guests?

Think about the people and situations you encountered. Was it what you expected? Remember the people that you met. What surprised you about our guests? What problems do they face everyday? What can our community do about it?

One of the most important things that you can do is talk to your friends and family about your experiences at the Samaritan Center. You can teach people about the hungry and needy in our community.



*There is more hunger for love and appreciation
in this world than for bread.
-Mother Teresa*

Rarely, there might be some disagreements and disturbances downstairs. If such an event happens to occur, please contact a staff person immediately. Please NEVER attempt to intervene yourself.

Remember to take time for our guests—they are the reason we do what we do! It can get a little hectic during the meal, but taking a moment to smile or ask someone how they are will make a huge difference in everyone's experience!

During the meal, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask a staff member. We are always around to help out any of our beloved volunteers

Some of our guests are very open about their stories and some are much more guarded. It is important to reflect upon how you would want to be approached if the situation was reversed.



The Samaritan Center

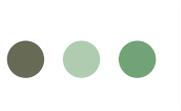
Who are our guests?

Our guests are people, that are just like you and me, going through a difficult time in their lives. It is our mission to treat them with dignity and respect.

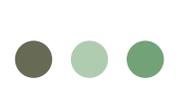
Some of our guests are highly educated, some are not. Some are unemployed or under-employed. Some of our guests struggle with addictions, but some do not. Some are afflicted with mental illnesses and physical handicaps, but some are not. Our guests are a diverse group, yet they all know that they are always welcome for a meal.

Our guests are children, adults, and the elderly. They are mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, daughters, sons, grandparents, and friends. All are hungry.

One of the most striking things you will find in the Samaritan Center is that our guests are not statistics or stereotypes, but real living people with whom you will form relationships.



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Before you volunteer...

It is very important to schedule with the Volunteer Coordinator before you come down to the Samaritan Center. We would love for you to bring friends and family with you, but in order to be sure we have the right amount of volunteers; we would ask that you contact us before you come. This will ensure that there is enough jobs for all of our volunteers.

Similarly, be sure you let the staff know if you cannot make your scheduled time by calling the kitchen at 472-8156. If someone scheduled calls to let us know they cannot be come in, we can try to find another volunteer. However, if we do not have enough volunteers, running the meal can be quite challenging.

Take some time to think about the people that you will meet. What do you expect them to look like? What challenges do you think that they face in their daily lives? How are their lives different from yours? How are your lives similar?

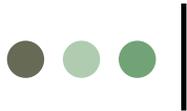
When you are preparing to volunteer, please be sure to wear close-toed shoes and appropriate attire. Your clothes should be comfortable and not revealing or offensive. Work can sometimes get a little messy downstairs, but we do provide aprons, gloves and hairnets. If you would like, you are more than welcome to bring a favorite baseball hat to wear instead of a hairnet... but be prepared to get heckled if people don't like your team!

It is important to stay at your position until the manager on duty asks you to begin with clean-up. There are a few different jobs to do, such as wiping the tables, wiping down chairs, putting up chairs, sweeping and mopping. Helping out with this part of the meal ensures we all can pack up quickly.

When cleaning, it is important to never begin wiping down a table while a guest is still sitting there. The chemicals should not be around our guests' food.

Similarly, be sure to not touch any food after you have touched the cleaning chemicals, supplies or dirty dishes. If you are asked to wrap the food or serve it to a late-arriving guest, please switch your gloves or ask someone else that has not touched the chemicals to tend to the food.

The staff of the Samaritan Center is committed to serving our guests in a safe and healthy way. Our kitchen staff is certified in food safety. If there are any questions or concerns you have, our experts are ready to answer your questions.



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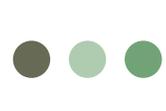
With the sometimes hectic atmosphere, our volunteers naturally want to help out wherever they can at mealtime. However, it is very important for all volunteers to stay in their assigned job. This will allow all aspects of the meal to be more organized and efficient.

Remember, most jobs require gloves for our guests' safety! While you have on the gloves, be sure to be aware of what you touch. For example, please don't grab dirty dishes or pick something off the floor and then serve a guest a plate. Think about what you would expect from the staff at a restaurant where you are eating.

Additionally, certain jobs require that you wear a hat or hairnet. The manager on duty will let you know if this is necessary.

If you are at a station where you are giving out food, please check with the manager on duty before you call for more food or re-fill an item that has emptied. This is essential, as we do not want to create any waste!

If at any time you have a question, just look for someone in a green Samaritan Center apron. They will surely have an answer for you!



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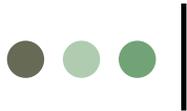
While you are here...

When you first arrive, find the manager-on-duty. The Samaritan Center Staff wears green aprons, so they will be easy to spot! Introduce yourself or just say hello. These lovely folk will be your best resource during your volunteer experience. They are happy to answer any of your questions about the Samaritan Center, our guests, our mission, and about what role you will play as a volunteer!

Make sure you take time to meet our other amazing volunteers!

Be sure to find the sign-in sheet. Please write in your name or place a check mark next to your name if it already appears on the list. If it is your first time volunteering or if you have new information, fill out the details about yourself, such as your address and phone number.

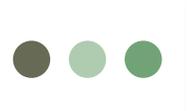
Also, if you have not done so, please fill out a volunteer application. Write in whatever information you can. They are located in the volunteer binder, which is on the corner of the desk. Please ask the staff member on duty if you have any questions regarding this.



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The Manager on Duty will assign you a job. There are many jobs to do during meal service, all of which help to make everything go as smoothly as possible. If you are uncomfortable or unable to do the task assigned to you, please simply let the Manager know as soon as possible. Some of these duties include:

- Hand Sanitizer:** This volunteer has a twofold job: greet every new guest coming through the door and give every guest a little squirt of hand sanitizer at the door if they want one.
- Guest Count:** While we ask no questions of anyone who comes in for a meal, we do need to keep an accurate count of our guests. Do your best to estimate the ages of our guests and be sure to utilize both columns designated for our guests' first and second servings.
- Cups:** This individual will hand every person who is coming through the line for the first time a tray with a cup on it. It is a great job to have as you get to talk to all of the guests in line!
- Salad, Fruit, Dessert:** Each guest may have a fruit, salad and dessert when they come through the line for the first time that day. The guests can have any combination of these three items as long as they only have one dessert. This volunteer makes sure we are well stocked on all the items! (At our breakfast meal, this individual will provide each guest with a fruit, a sweet, and oatmeal or cereal. This volunteer also passes out tea and hot chocolate to those who ask for it.)
- Serving:** The servers will help dish out the hot portion of the meal. The manager on duty will show you the accurate portion size. Please do not add more than the manager shows you. This job keeps you on your toes!
- Bread Passing:** Each guest may have a piece of bread, if they choose. A person is needed to hand out the bread to our guests. (Dinner job only.)
- Silverware Passing:** This individual will pass out a napkin, a fork, a knife and a spoon to each guest. When we offer second helpings, they will pass out a fork and a napkin only.



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- Juice:** The guests get one Styrofoam cup that they take to a volunteer to fill with juice. We cannot put juice inside any containers the guests may bring for sanitary reasons. Our guests are welcome to come and get juice re-fills as often as they like.
- Tray Pick-up:** When the guests arrive at their seats, most will remove their food from the tray. A couple of volunteers come along and scoop them up. Similarly, these volunteers should also check on the tables and bins by the trash for dishes and flatware used by our guests that need to be washed.
- Tray Washing/Drying:** The dirty trays are delivered to the back where they are washed and dried by this volunteer. This job is a surprising work out!
- Dish Machine:** This job comes with our most stylish apron! These volunteers will scrape the dishes and load them into our dishwasher. It is the best place to be in the summer sauna season!
- Pots and Pans:** A volunteer is always needed to clean all of our large pots and pans. Roll up your sleeves and scrub away!
- Silverware Sorter:** This volunteer dries all the silverware when they come out of the dish machine. Dry silverware is then sorted back into plastic holders and delivered to the silverware passer for re-use.
- Dish Monitor:** This volunteer is stationed next to the garbage bins to ensure none of our dishes or silverware gets accidentally thrown away! He or she can help a guest with lots of plates and trays by holding the swing-door on the garbage can open for them. It's a great opportunity for socializing with guests!
- Miscellaneous Passing:** Sometimes we have extra treats to give to our guests (such as sandwiches, or candy). This volunteer ensures that our guests get extra treats with their meal as provided.
- Food Running:** You don't need your running shoes for this job, but you might need some muscle. This volunteer assists the manager on duty in the kitchen. When instructed by the manager, this person will bring out fresh pans of food or re-fill our juice supply.
- Toiletry Cart:** Whenever we have enough supplies and volunteers, we love to put out our Toiletry Cart! This volunteer passes out personal hygiene items to guests in need!