

## ***Faith in Action of Edgar County*** **Volunteer Policies**

### **Introduction**

Every individual who agrees to carry out the mission of the *Faith in Action* of Edgar County (FIAEC) in a volunteer capacity is covered by the volunteer policies and procedures contained in this document as well as any additional information that may be provided at the time of appointment. These are designed to provide opportunities for personal growth, satisfaction, development and recognition. The policies contained herein do not constitute a contract of any kind and are subject to change at the discretion of the Board of Directors of the *Faith in Action*.

Each volunteer will have a written job description and/or agreement with opportunities for regular evaluation, support and supervision. The work done by volunteers is the heart of this organization. It should provide satisfaction and accomplishment. For this reason the following policies are established by the Board of Directors.

### **Mission**

The *Faith in Action* of Edgar County, through congregations and agencies united for service, offers compassion and love to our neighbors thereby making a difference in their lives. This is accomplished by easing loneliness and isolation, providing transportation to adolescents and adults with chronic illnesses and/or physical impairments.

### **Non-Discrimination**

There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified volunteer by reason of disability or on the basis of age. Furthermore, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, gender, creed, national origin or socioeconomic status.

FIAEC respects the privacy and personal beliefs of all volunteers and care receivers. FIAEC does not permit proselytizing by one faith community for members of another or the maligning of any person's faith. FIAEC does encourage interaction and understanding among faith communities and respect for the religious beliefs of all persons. The open practice or advocacy of racism by any volunteer is not permitted.

### **Appointment**

Each candidate for a volunteer position is required to complete a volunteer application and an interview with the Program Director. The application will reflect the individual's qualifications and skills in relation to the specific volunteer opportunities available. Every effort will be made to find a position for each volunteer that will be rewarding and will meet the individual's interests, skills, experiences, needs and personality.

Background information about your assignment will be given to you before your introduction to the Care Receiver and the family. Be sure to keep all information confidential. Volunteers should follow their prescribed responsibilities only. Any additional requests should be discussed with the Program Director before increasing services.

Volunteers retain the right to request a reassignment at any time. Volunteers also retain the right to determine the number of hours to be offered and to refuse any appointment.

A copy of these policies will be provided to all volunteers at the time of appointment.

### **Volunteer Records**

FIAEC will maintain all volunteer records in a confidential manner. Volunteer names, addresses or other personal information will not be released to any outside organization or group for any reason without the written permission of the volunteer, unless such release is required by law.

## **Position Descriptions**

Written position descriptions will be provided for all volunteers. These will be reviewed periodically and revised as ways of work and operating procedures are changed so that each volunteer has a clear understanding of duties and accountabilities.

Position descriptions will identify general responsibilities for the position and clarify expectations. Volunteers can always request specific terms in position descriptions and should meet with the Program Director to discuss these.

## **Training Programs**

All volunteers, regardless of previous experiences or position, are required to complete the Volunteer Training prior to the start of the volunteer assignment. In some special cases, the Program Director has the authority to waive this requirement.

The Volunteer Training provides the volunteer with information on the history, mission and philosophy of the organization; reviews position descriptions and expectations; reviews policies and procedures; discusses emergency procedures; provides information about Alzheimer's and dementia; review communication skills, examines the issue of diversity; and discusses what to expect as a volunteer.

The FIAEC may offer additional training programs designed to help volunteers acquire new skills, knowledge and attitudes. Volunteers are encouraged to attend these sessions but are not required to do so. Volunteers are encouraged to request training on special topics that they think would help them provide better care for the care receivers or for self-development. Care of the Caregiver is very important to the FIAEC. Volunteers will not be asked to provide services for which they have not been properly trained.

The FIAEC will provide basic training programs for volunteers at no cost to the participant. In exchange, volunteers are asked to make a commitment of service to the organization.

## **Position Qualifications**

Individuals serving the FIAEC do not need to meet any special qualifications for most volunteer assignments. All volunteers should have a desire to serve God and others using their talents and gifts; the ability to work with people in the community whose circumstances leave them with social, physical or spiritual need; and a sincere respect for people of different faith backgrounds. Interfaith volunteer caregiving provides means for individuals to put their faith into action.

## **Identification**

For the safety and peace of mind of those receiving care, all volunteers will be given some form of identification indicating affiliation with the FIAEC. This card or button should be shown to care receivers upon initial contact and any time the care receiver seems confused or does not seem to remember the volunteer.

## **Volunteer Expenses**

The term "volunteer" as used by the FIAEC implies that an individual gives of his or her time without financial compensation. Volunteers should not incur expenses other than those involved with the use of a personal vehicle while performing volunteer work. No volunteer expenses will be reimbursed unless the Program Director gives permission in advance and in writing.

Care receivers are responsible for providing funds for groceries, bills or other expenses incurred for the benefit of the care receiver. Should a volunteer caregiver find that a care receiver is not in a financial situation to provide funds for necessary items, the volunteer should discuss this with the Program Director who can make a referral to an appropriate agency.

If a volunteer is shopping for a care receiver and the amount of money that the care receiver provides for the volunteer does not look like it will be sufficient to cover the cost of the items, the volunteer should ask the care receiver to prioritize the items on the list.

### **Transportation**

Volunteer caregivers who provide transportation services must have a vehicle in proper working condition that is duly licensed and insured. All Volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and have a valid driver's license in the state in which the volunteer resides in order to drive on errands, transport a Care Receiver or drive in any capacity for the FIAEC. A photocopy of the Volunteer's current driver's license and insurance card will be kept on file at the FIAEC office.

The driver and all passengers must use seat belts at all times.

In vehicles equipped with front seat passenger side air bags, care receivers who are frail or small in stature must ride in the back seat when being transported by a volunteer caregiver.

### **Insurance**

The FIAEC maintains a general liability insurance policy for the organization. Details of this coverage can be obtained by contacting the Program Director. Volunteer caregivers who provide transportation services are required to maintain their own full coverage automobile insurance that provides adequate medical coverage for the driver and any passengers. Verification of this must be provided to the FIAEC Program Director, and a copy of the volunteer's insurance card may be kept on file.

### **Accidents**

Any accident or injury must be reported as soon as possible to the Program Director. If the Program Director is unavailable, the Volunteer should contact the President of the Board of Directors or other Board Member as soon as possible.

### **Emergencies**

Volunteers should call the office and talk with the Program Director if the Care Receiver does not answer the door at the designated time. The Program Director will have on file how each Care Receiver would like to handle the situation. If there are any signs of foul play, the Volunteer should call 911 and the FIAEC office.

In case of a medical emergency, call 911. Do not offer any medical advice. Do not transport the Care Receiver to the hospital. The Care Receiver or the family makes all decisions for the Care Receiver's welfare.

### **Confidentiality**

All information related to those who receive care will be treated as confidential. "Confidential" means that any materials seen or heard regarding a care receiver are not discussed or shared in any manner without the written consent of the individual. All volunteers will be required to sign an "Agreement of Confidentiality" during the Volunteer Training and each year they remain active.

### **The Role of Children and Teenagers**

The FIAEC believes that it is by the example of caring adults that children and teenagers will learn the value of using one's gifts in the shared ministry of interfaith volunteer caregiving. There are many ways that children and teenagers can share in volunteer caregiving experiences and to develop a pattern for their own volunteer service as they grow into adulthood.

Before allowing children to participate in a visit or caregiving mission, the adult volunteer caregiver must have made at least one visit or contact with the care receiver. The volunteer must also discuss whether or not a visit by children would be welcomed or appropriate.

Volunteer caregivers are reminded that the elderly and disabled may not have been in the presence of young children for quite some time. Volunteer caregivers must be responsible for the behavior of children during the visit. Adults should prepare the children for the visit by discussing any special needs of the care receiver. The volunteer may want to bring an activity that the child can share with the care receiver.

When individuals under the age of 18 assist as volunteer caregivers, a parent or guardian must sign a permission form that will be supplied by the FIAEC. A trained adult volunteer must accompany and supervise volunteers under the age of 18 at all times. Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older in order to run errands, transport a Care Receiver or drive in any capacity for the FIAEC. Individuals in this group must attend the Volunteer Training.

### **Use of Alcohol and Other Drugs**

The FIAEC recognizes that the diseases of alcoholism and drug addiction may affect volunteer caregivers. However, the use, abuse or possession of illegally obtained drugs; the abuse of over-the-counter drugs; or the use of alcoholic beverages while performing the work of a volunteer with the FIAEC is prohibited. Volunteers are also prohibited from reporting for volunteer work under the influence of any type of controlled substance.

The use of tobacco is not permitted while serving as a volunteer caregiver.

Likewise, if a volunteer arrives to provide service for a care receiver who is under the influence of a controlled substance, the volunteer should immediately leave the care receiver's home and report the incident to the FIAEC Program Director. If the volunteer is picking up the care receiver from a pre-determined location and notices that he is under the influence, the volunteer should not transport the care receiver alone. The volunteer should call the care receiver's emergency telephone number to request assistance then call the FIAEC office to report the incident and/or ask for assistance.

### **Serious Illness Policy**

The FIAEC and its Board of Directors is committed to the task of maintaining a healthy and safe environment for employees, volunteer caregivers and care receivers. It is expected that all will share in this commitment.

It is the responsibility of each person to report any injuries or unsafe conditions to the Program Director and/or the Board of Directors. In addition, it is the obligation of all involved with the FIAEC to use protective equipment appropriate for the tasks to be performed.

The FIAEC recognizes that volunteer caregivers with serious illnesses including, but not limited to cancer, heart disease and HIV/AIDS, may desire to continue to engage in as many of their normal pursuits as their condition allows, including volunteer work. As long as these persons are able to perform essential volunteer functions and medical evidence indicates that volunteering does not result in a direct or indirect threat of harm to themselves or others, they will be encouraged to continue to perform volunteer assignments.

The FIAEC does not discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability with regard to volunteer application, placement, advancement, discharge, recognition, training or other terms, conditions or privileges of the volunteer assignment. Additionally, the FIAEC does not discriminate in the provision of service to those in need based on physical disability or health related concerns, unless the disability requires training beyond the scope of volunteers.

### **Safety**

Volunteer safety is a high priority for the FIAEC. It is important that volunteers do not put themselves into dangerous situations to provide care for a care receiver. The FIAEC Program Director and/or an appointed volunteer will visit a care receiver's home whenever possible prior to asking a volunteer to provide any service at his residence. Volunteers will not be asked to provide any service at the care receiver's home if the Program Director does not feel that it would

be safe to do so. However, as circumstances often change, a volunteer may find something at the home to be threatening to his safety. Such things might include but are not limited to guns, knives, dangerous family or friends, dangerous neighborhood or dangerous pets. The volunteer should inform the FIAEC Program Director immediately of any situation that he feels is unsafe.

A volunteer may continue to visit the care receiver either by phone or at a safe location that is convenient and agreeable to both.

### **Legal Matters**

In order to avoid potential conflicts of interest, volunteers should not act as Power of Attorney, Executor, Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care or Witness for any Care Receiver.

### **Medical Treatments**

In order to assure the Care Receivers receive reliable and accurate medical information, volunteers shall not attempt to provide medical advice or service to Care Receivers and shall refer Care Receivers to their physician for all medical questions. The Care Receiver's physician knows about his medical history and reactions to any medications. It is important to remember that each individual reacts differently to medications and treatment. If a Volunteer has a concern about a treatment prescribed for a Care Receiver, he should discuss the issue with the FIAEC Program Director. They will decide together the best course of action.

Under no circumstances should a Volunteer administer any type of medication to a Care Receiver. The Volunteer may get a glass of water for the Care Receiver, remind the Care Receiver that it is time to take his medication and/or point out the medication to be taken, however, the Volunteer should not handle the medication in any way. If more skilled care should become required to ensure medication is taken properly, a referral may be needed to an appropriate agency.

### **Reports**

Volunteers will be expected to submit a short monthly report describing all services performed for the month. Report forms will be provided by the FIAEC. Volunteers should be accurate and timely with these reports and understand that they are necessary to insure the continuity of care for those receiving assistance.

These reports are crucial to the success of the organization because accurate information must be submitted to funders. If the organization does not have documentation of services, it will not receive future funding and will not be able to continue serving our neighbors.

### **Volunteer Meetings**

Volunteer meetings will be held quarterly. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend. These meetings will give volunteers the opportunity to learn more about providing care for our Care Receivers, share experiences with other volunteers and support one another. Special meetings will be called if necessary to discuss issues that are important to the Volunteers.

If a Volunteer would like further information on any topic or needs any type of support, he is encouraged to discuss this with the Program Director.

### **Attendance Standards**

The FIAEC is committed to providing dependable service to its Care Receivers. Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to the proper operation of any organization.

If you are unable to report for work for any reason, if you will arrive late or must leave early, please notify the Program Director or the Care Receiver as soon as possible. At times a replacement will need to be found to provide the service. It is important that the Program Director have as much time as possible to find another Volunteer to provide the service.

## **Dress and Personal Appearance**

Volunteers are expected to maintain an appropriate appearance that is neat and clean, as determined by the requirements of the work area. Dress and appearance should not be offensive to Care Receivers or other individuals you may come into contact with.

Apparel should be appropriate and clean. Volunteers are asked to refrain from wearing tattered jeans, shirts displaying inappropriate advertising or writing, tank tops or revealing clothing. If a volunteer is doing work in which he will likely get dirty, he may wear appropriate clothing for that task.

The FIAEC requests that Volunteers practice good personal hygiene.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted in the FIAEC office area. Volunteers may smoke in the designated smoking areas outside of the building.

Smoking may cause problems for some Care Receivers. Volunteers may not smoke in the presence of a Care Receiver. If the Volunteer is providing a service that lasts for a period of time, the Volunteer may ask to be excused to step outside or to a designated smoking area to take a smoking break if the Care Receiver is safe without his assistance for that time.

## **Appropriate Conduct**

The FIAEC is committed to providing an environment in which relationships are characterized by dignity, courtesy, respect and equitable treatment. It is also the policy of the FIAEC to provide all Volunteers and Care Receivers with an environment free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment, abusive behavior and other forms of abuse.

In accordance with this policy, the FIAEC will not condone or tolerate the following:

- Emotional maltreatment of employees, volunteers or care receivers, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks
- Use of inappropriate, offensive or threatening language
- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury upon anyone involved with the program
- Infliction of sexually abusive behavior upon anyone affiliated with the organization, including sexual touching and bodily contact, exhibitionism and/or involvement in pornographic materials

Any Volunteer who believes that he has been the subject of abusive conduct is required to report the incident to the Program Director or to the President of the Board of Directors as soon as possible.

Any Volunteer who believes that a Care Receiver has been the victim of abusive conduct by another volunteer caregiver, by an employed staff member or by any other person, is required to report the incident to the Program Director or to the President of the Board of Directors as soon as possible. The Program Director will assist the Volunteer in determining whether there is any reporting required by law.

If the abusive conduct is in a nature that is an immediate threat to the safety of the Volunteer or the Care Receiver (i.e. serious physical violence), the Volunteer should call 911 and then the Program Director or President of the Board of Directors.

Any reports of abusive conduct will be documented and investigated. The Board and Program Director will take appropriate action. All reports will remain confidential to the extent possible.

### **Concerns and Grievances**

When problems or grievances arise in the performance of care giving duties, the following steps are to be taken until the problem is resolved. All parties involved shall maintain strict confidentiality of information throughout the process.

- The Volunteer should discuss the problem with the Care Receiver, other Volunteer or employed staff person involved.
- The Volunteer should discuss the problem with his supervisor. The supervisor will initiate objective documentation.
- The Volunteer, the supervisor and the individual involved will meet to work out a plan of action which will include check points and a time frame for completion.
- The supervisor, if this person is not the Program Director, will report the plan of action to the Program Director.
- On the completion date, if the plan of action has not been successful, a determination will be made by the Program Director regarding future action.

Volunteers, when unable to resolve a problem including the Program Director, should address their concerns to the President of the Board of Directors.

### **Evaluations**

Volunteers are entitled to ongoing feedback concerning performance of duties. The FIAEC may relay to the Volunteer correspondence or other communications received from those who receive care.

The FIAEC will provide documentation on hours of service to employers or others upon the written request of the volunteer.