

## **Project Food Volunteer Safety Policy**

THANK YOU for volunteering with Project Food!

We encourage people to come and volunteer to help our organization make a difference in the Riverside community. Project Food is a social service project of First Congregational Church. It began in November of 1984 in response to the increasing numbers of homeless and needy in and near the downtown area. Our understanding of God's work leads us to address the needs of the homeless and poor of our community through Project Food. Project Food provides a weekly hot meal and includes a program for the children in a non-threatening, caring environment. There shall be an effort to coordinate services and cooperate with appropriate public agencies and other churches. The program shall include ongoing assessment of needs as well as yearly re-evaluations by the Project Food Board.

Project Food serves from 170 to over 200 guests every week of the year. Thanks to regular volunteers of about 20 each week to over 50 during the holidays, there has never been a Wednesday night that the church doors did not open and welcome their guests. There are many long time volunteers from FCC, other area churches, temples, and businesses. Students from UCR, RCC, Cal Baptist and local high schools also volunteer every Wednesday. Project Food continues to operate thanks to the kind people and organizations that donate their time and gifts of food, clothes and toiletries. Volunteers are needed to assist in the preparation and serving of food, set up tables & chairs, set out clothes, serve hot & cold beverages and clean up.

While volunteering you will find that there are quite a few volunteers who have been coming for many years. These experienced volunteers are always available to help explain the objective of each activity and can help guide you during your time with us. Feel free to ask the more experienced volunteers how you can help.

If you have any questions in advance feel free to contact the program coordinator at [fcc.projectfood@gmail.com](mailto:fcc.projectfood@gmail.com).

Hours for prep are 3-5:30pm, guest hours are 5:30-6:30pm clean up 6:30-7:00pm

### **At-will Volunteering**

Volunteering with Project Food is an at-will opportunity. We will do our best to meet your expectations by matching your skills and desire with the best volunteer opportunity available.

While volunteering at Project Food, you will:

- Be assigned appropriate tasks according to your skills, interest, availability, and training.
- Be treated as a fellow team member.
- Be given appropriate expressions of appreciation and recognition.
- Make suggestions that will be acknowledged and valued by staff.
- Be treated with friendliness and cooperation.
- Be provided a safe and inviting work environment.

Some of your tasks may include:

- Interacting with guests
- Setting up tables and chairs
- Serving food and drinks
- Greeting customers at the door
- Gathering remaining aprons, napkins, rags and place in laundry basket.
- Wiping tables and chairs with bleach/water solution
- Stacking chairs on the tables
- Sweeping the floor
- Mopping the floors as necessary

## **Volunteer Conduct**

Project Food expects you to conduct yourself with common courtesy to others at all times and wants your volunteer experience to be a positive one.

Here are some guidelines to help you, help us, help others:

- All volunteers are welcome to come and help. While volunteering please be patient as, at times, we have more volunteers than expected and have trouble with orchestrating everything.
- Please try to show up on time. Hours for prep are 3-5:30pm, guest hours are 5:30-6:30pm clean up 6:30-7:00pm.
- If you choose not to finish a shift or are unable to do so, let the program coordinator know that you are leaving.
- Sign in and out when coming in and going off duty. Project Food needs to keep records of all our volunteer hours.
- If you can, please bring a donation of toiletries or clothing.
- Display respect and courtesy to staff, other volunteers, guests, and church property.
- Respect the privacy of guests served by Project Food.
- Dress in attire that follows the volunteer dress code.
- Please put away cell phones, except for emergency situations.
- Stay on task: Feel free to chat while you work but stay attentive to your duties.
- Feel free to jump in where you see the need, but also be aware and respectful of the established routines which are already in place.
- Make a new friend today introduce yourself to another volunteer or a guest.
- Report any emergencies or unsafe conditions to an appropriate staff member. If you become aware of a situation in which a guest intends to harm him/herself or another, alert the program coordinator.
- Refrain from initiating physical contact of any kind. Many guests are not comfortable with being touched.
- Don't get talked into things: If asked to do anything that you are not sure about, always ask the program coordinator. Do not rely on what other volunteers or guests say.
- Be neutral on matters of religion and refrain from promoting religious or political viewpoints in interacting with guests, other volunteers and staff. If a guest brings up a religious or political topic feel free to respond but keep your focus on what the guest brings up. Please be respectful to the diversity of political views and religions.

- Maintain appropriate boundaries with clients, staff and other volunteers.
  - Don't give guests rides.
  - Don't give guests money.
  - Don't make arrangements to help guests on your own (with housing, jobs, etc.). If you have a particular concern, please bring it to the program coordinators.
  - Don't make arrangements to meet with guests outside of Project Food.
  - Don't answer personal questions or share personal information.
- Keep personal opinions and actions separate from those made as a representative of this organization.
- Remember that your conversations should have:
  - No shame/blame/judgment.
  - No swearing or inappropriate language.
  - No name-calling.
  - No sex talk or drug talk.
- If your needs are not being met, please contact the program coordinator for other alternatives.

## **Dress Code**

Project Food is a professional institution and as such must project a professional image and manner. Neatness and good taste in dress and manner significantly affect the perceptions and credibility of the agency to guests, volunteers, donors, vendors and the general public.

Dress code is critical to ensure the safety of our volunteers as well as to preserve the quality of the food.

Volunteers must wear:

- Comfortable closed-toed shoes (sneakers, working boots, etc.).
- Clothing appropriate for working with food products.
- Modest clothing that covers chest, shoulders, underarms, torso and thighs (no "belly shirts," tank-tops, short-shorts, "low-rider" pants, etc.)
- Do not wear expensive jewelry or other articles of clothing that are of high personal value.
- We provide aprons, hair coverings, and sanitary gloves for people working with food.

## **Personal Belongings**

Please refrain from bringing valuables and large purses/book bags to Project Food. We have lockers in which you can put your belongings, however they are not locked. If driving to Project Food, please make sure that nothing of value can be seen through your car windows. Please stash items under the seats or leave them in your trunk out of view. Project Food is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.

## **Drug-free Volunteer Environment**

Project Food maintains a drug-free workplace and volunteer environment in accordance with the provisions of the California Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1990. Project Food strictly prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of any controlled substance in the volunteer environment. We are also a smoke free facility; if you need to smoke, please observe the 25 feet rule and remember to properly dispose of your cigarette butts.

## **Safety Policy**

You and Project Food share the responsibility of establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. Project Food will attempt to ensure a safe work environment that complies with federal, state, and local safety regulations. In turn, you are expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all of your work activities.

In order to maintain safety:

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not get involved if there is a fight.
- Find a staff member if you see a dangerous situation happening or about to happen.
- Apologize and walk away if a guest becomes angry with you.
- Never be alone with one individual.
- Avoid physical touch.
- Let a staff member know if a guest, volunteer, or staff member is exhibiting crude behavior toward you.
- If you do not feel comfortable with a guest, get a staff member or experienced volunteer to help them.

## **Volunteer Protection Act**

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 provides immunity from lawsuits filed against a nonprofit's volunteer where the claim is that he/she carelessly injured another in the course of helping the nonprofit. The Volunteer Protection Act is similar to the Good Samaritan Act. You can be provided a copy of The Volunteer Protection Act upon request.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

Project Food will not tolerate harassment of its volunteers or guests, by the staff, or anyone associated with its operation. Under Federal EEOC Regulations, Project Food is responsible for preventing sexual harassment at work. Therefore, the conduct of everyone must be above reproach. By no means should patrons be harassing volunteers and Project Food staff, or vice versa. If there are any problems, it should be reported to program coordinator. Volunteers, who have any questions regarding the interpretation of this policy or wish to clarify their rights, should contact the program coordinator.

## **Grievances**

If a volunteer has any problems or concerns related to his or her volunteer position or to other Project Food's employees or volunteers, he/she should speak with his/her supervising staff. If the issue is not resolved, the volunteer should speak with the program coordinator. Project Food will make every attempt to address the concern.

## **A Positive Volunteer Experience**

Your volunteer time, talent and commitment are valuable to Project Food and to the individuals we serve. We fully anticipate that your volunteer experience with us will be both fulfilling and meaningful for you. Please know that you are making a difference in the lives of those you are helping. Depending on your volunteer duties and length of service, you may or may not personally observe the direct impact of your efforts on the families served, but just one positive experience can be life changing.