



## Helpful Tips for ACHH Volunteers

We are blessed by our volunteers and believe that all those who choose to care enough to be a part of our mission will also experience a blessing in their own lives. **Thank you** for your interest in volunteering at ACHH.

We have compiled some information that we think will be helpful for you to read prior to your volunteer experience. Please take some time to read this and contact us with any questions you may have.

ACHH serves adults with developmental disabilities that occur prior to age 21 and result in delays or impairments in motor skills, communication skills, self-care skills, learning skills, etc. You can read more about the history and mission of ACHH on our website [www.achh.org](http://www.achh.org), as well as information about our facilities and services.

If you are a first time volunteer working with people who have disabilities, you may feel uncomfortable. Reviewing some **general etiquette tips** may help you overcome your discomfort and set a friendly and relaxed tone for your interactions with ACHH residents.

- Relax, be friendly, but not patronizing. Treat adults as adults.
- Remember, you are interacting with a person, not dealing with a disability or condition.
- Talk directly to the person with whom you are interacting, even if they are accompanied by a friend, staff or family member.
- Keep an open mind. Do not make assumptions about the limits of a person's abilities.
- Always ask before trying to help someone, then wait until the offer is accepted.

**When you volunteer for our agency we want you to consider your communication style.** Please utilize the tips listed.

- Use Person First Language to reflect a positive attitude in portraying disabilities:
  1. Do not focus on or sensationalize a disability.
  2. Put people first, not their disability. Say woman with arthritis, children who are deaf, or people with disabilities. Crippled, deformed, suffers from, victim of, the retarded, infirm, etc. are not acceptable.
- A person who has speech that is not easily understood has probably experienced frustration and humiliation. Try to understand what s/he means and be sensitive. Ask for help if you are having trouble understanding.
- Some people do not have verbal communication. These individuals may communicate with facial expressions, gestures, or speech generating devices.
- It is always good to introduce yourself and talk to individuals in a respectful and adult tone. This conveys respect and dignity.

- All behavior is communication. Keep in mind that a person's inappropriate or ineffective behaviors may be an attempt to communicate some need to you.

**We** have the responsibility to create a culture that values and respects all people at ACHH. The best way to **prevent abuse** for all citizens is to be meaningfully included and be accepted as valued members of society. When communities value all of its citizens, including individuals with developmental disabilities, the community recognizes people for their gifts, capabilities and contributions.

**We** want to protect you as well as our residents from the spread of illness. Most experts agree that the single most effective practice that prevents the spread of germs is good **hand-washing**. We also require that you wear gloves while handling food at ACHH. Please practice these hand-washing techniques.

- Always use warm, running water and a mild, preferably liquid, soap.
- Wet the hands and apply a small amount (dime to quarter size) of liquid soap to hands.
- Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 30 seconds. Be sure to scrub between fingers, under fingernails, and around the tops and palms of the hands.
- Rinse hands under warm running water. Leave the water running while drying hands.
- Dry hands with a clean, disposable (or single use) towel, being careful to avoid touching the faucet handles or towel holder with clean hands.
- Turn the faucet off using the towel as a barrier between your hands and the faucet handle.
- Discard the used towel in a trash can lined with a fluid-resistant (plastic)

**When** you choose to volunteer at ACHH, you agree to follow our **Volunteer Code of Ethics**:

- I agree to show enthusiasm and be helpful.
- I commit to be free from the influence of drugs and alcohol before arriving at and during my volunteer shift.
- I understand that no illegal actions will be tolerated.
- I agree to conduct myself with integrity at all times, showing respect for fellow volunteers & staff members, ACHH residents and their property, and use appropriate and respectable language.
- If I have volunteered to assist in an activity, I will make every effort possible to notify the supervisor or volunteer coordinator as soon as possible if I am unable to take part.
- I agree to use common sense when dressing for a volunteer opportunity.
- I understand that smoking is not acceptable while volunteering for ACHH.