

Volunteer Rights, Support, Benefits & Responsibilities

UGMTC Volunteer Rights

1. To apply for volunteer positions in which they are interested
2. To a timely response to an application
3. To have personal data kept confidential
4. To a timely notice of a job assignment
5. To be assigned a job that is worthwhile and challenging
6. To receive training that is appropriate to the volunteer's assignment
7. To receive supervision and support
8. To receive appropriate recognition
9. To have their ideas, opinions, and feelings listened to respectfully by staff
10. To be treated with respect and courtesy
11. To receive the bi-monthly e-newsletter
12. To be kept informed of relevant changes within UGMTC
13. To participate in the life of UGMTC

UGMTC Volunteer Support

Volunteers are essential partners in our work with those who are experiencing homelessness, poverty or addiction. In addition, committed volunteers help with reaching men, women, children, teenagers and families in our community by mentoring and encouraging them. UGMTC is committed to carefully matching volunteer interests, skills, and experience with the work to be done. In addition, we provide well-planned, relevant, and on-going training and support throughout the year. You will be informed of training opportunities with periodic articles in our newsletter. We encourage your participation and hope you will take advantage of these opportunities.

Your gift of time means a great deal to us. We will always confirm your participation and ask that you follow through on your commitment – our staff and students are counting on you. If for any reason you are unable to participate as you planned, we ask that you notify us immediately so we can schedule another volunteer.

UGMTC Online Support

UNION GOSPEL MISSION
TWIN CITIES

DONATE SEARCH MENU

A stubborn will to live
David and others like him survive the harsh winter on local streets. YOU can help change that. **GIVE NOW**

OUR MISSION
Who we are

GET INVOLVED
How you can help

STAY CONNECTED
Receive email updates
Enter email address here **SEND**

Recognized and trusted
We're committed to accountability. You can trust that your donations are handled with care.

MEMBER OF THE MISSIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA
ECFA
MEETS STANDARDS

Join the Mission for Joyful Noise 2016

Website: www.ugmtc.org : UGMTC news, sign up for our volunteer newsletter, volunteer forms and applications, UGMTC history, and more.

Volunteer Connect e-newsletter

All volunteers can opt-in to receive this e-newsletter. You will find UGMTC volunteer-related articles, opportunities, quick links for event sign-ups, volunteer spotlights and more.

Volunteer Benefits

Benefits most often mentioned by UGMTC volunteers include:

- Making a difference in somebody's life
- Feeling needed and valued
- Learning and developing new skills
- Gaining a deeper understanding of issues surrounding homelessness, poverty and addiction
- Increased sense of belonging to a community
- Larger circle of contacts and friends

Volunteer Responsibilities

Please contact your UGMTC Program Staff Supervisor when:

- You have questions about your volunteer role and what you will be doing
- You have questions about boundary issues with our students, neighbors and friends; e.g., one of our students is asking for money, your personal information or transportation
- You are unsure about your scheduling and need to cancel or switch your volunteer service time
- You are unsure about your expectations in your department of service
- You are having trouble making relationships with our students; e.g., it's hard striking up conversations with our students
- You would like more responsibilities with your volunteer role
- A student gets upset with you and you are not sure how to handle the situation
- You just need to talk

Please contact UGMTC Volunteer Department Staff when:

- You want to sign up to participate in other volunteer opportunities
- You want to refer a volunteer
- You have ideas or stories to share about your volunteer experience with UGMTC
- You are not sure which UGMTC location to go to

Appearance

Personal appearance is important in representing UGMTC to our students, neighbors and friends. For the benefit of those we work with please dress modestly when you are volunteering with us. Be mindful that some volunteer roles require long periods of standing, and wearing comfortable shoes is essential.

Age Limit

Any volunteer under 18 years of age is required to volunteer with a parent or legal guardian. All required forms will need to be signed by an adult. If this volunteer experience is for a school service learning experience, Volunteer Services will work with the group leader directly to schedule.

Interacting with our students

General tips for visiting and talking with our students

- Think of open-ended questions you might ask to start conversations. Open ended questions require more than a “yes” or “no”
- Know your audience. Certain slang or sarcasm may be difficult for some of our students to understand, where as many of our teenagers will relate to it.
- Maintain appropriate eye contact. This helps to facilitate direct communication.
- Be ready to re-word phrases if necessary

- Many of our students are open to discuss their faith. Feel free to pray or read scripture when appropriate. With this in mind, not all of our students are at the same place in terms of sharing about God. Don't push a student to talk about their faith if it's not comfortable for them. Redirect the conversation to something else if this happens
- Respond positively: Give feedback by making caring, appropriate comments that encourage the student.

Listening

Being a good listener means creating space for the other person – and it is vital to a fulfilling relationship! One must keep his or her evaluating and correcting to a minimum. Instead, accept what the student says as a valid expression of their thoughts and feelings. Being a good listener does not exclude being a talker; it does mean, however, responding to what is heard from the other person, verbally as well as nonverbally.

Why Listen?

- To understand
- To let the student know you understand

3 Do's of listening

- Restating/reflecting
- Clarifying
- Asking questions

3 Don't of Listening

- Problem Solving
- Giving advice
- Interrupting with your personal experiences

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Probing into personal matters before establishing rapport
- Jumping from getting to know the student to problem solving pre-maturely
- Trying to "fix" the person's problems or current situation
 - Fixing is not always possible or helpful with our students.
 - Is there a need for fixing, or is it your perception?
 - Each student has a program staff that supervises them. Anytime you feel the need to cross a boundary in terms of a student's situation, please contact a staff immediately to discuss before going forward.

Beyond Listening

Situations you may encounter with our students

Despair

Sometimes our students will express loneliness and depression in a way that makes us feel uncomfortable; perhaps we ourselves are uncomfortable with depressing thoughts. We are not going to be able to “fix” the student’s distress by ignoring it; rather, listening with empathy is a useful alternative. Remember to always be as supportive and honest as possible. If you need to talk to a chaplain, case manager or other program staff, please do so as soon as you can. Our staff is here to help with these situations. It is not a responsibility of our volunteers to take the place of trained counselors and ministers. In the end, most people will gladly accept prayer over these feelings.

Advice

While it may be tempting, be very careful not to give advice to our students. Quick advice can send the message to the person that you don’t feel he or she is very intelligent; your suggestion is likely one that the individual has thought of or tried in the past. Instead, help the student think through the options and always allow them to make independent decisions. At the end of the day, our dedicated program staff will work through any issues the student is going through. Always refer the student to discuss this with their assigned staff member.

Volunteer Policies & Procedures

I. Confidentiality:

Confidentiality of any identifying or sensitive personal information pertaining to a student, volunteer, donor, or staff is essential.

II. Criminal Background Check:

All ongoing staff members and volunteers are required to have a criminal background check. One-time group and individual volunteers do not need to fill out a background check if they are not working directly with minors.

III. Drug and Alcohol Policy:

Illegal substance use and/or alcohol abuse, sale or possession on UGMTC property or reporting to your volunteer assignment under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance is prohibited

IV. Harassment Policy:

UGMTC does not allow any form of harassment or conduct that has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual’s volunteer or work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive environment for volunteers, students, staff, donors or guests.

V. Inappropriate Behavior:

Incidences of inappropriate behavior (e.g. derogatory or degrading comments, unwanted touch, harassment, illegal activity, etc.) will not be tolerated. Any person who has experienced or witnessed inappropriate behavior, or has an allegation reported to them, should immediately report this to a UGMTC staff member and Volunteer Services.

VII. **Insurance:**

Every volunteer who drives their own vehicle for UGMTC-related events must have a valid driver's license and automobile insurance which covers their vehicle and liability. UGMTC carries an umbrella policy which is a secondary insurance covering general liability. This does not cover a volunteer's vehicle. Mileage reimbursement is not a part of our policy. The state minimum coverage of \$100,000 per person, \$300,000 per accident, and \$100,000 property damage is required.

VIII. **Repudiation of Gifts & Gift giving:**

Volunteers may not accept or give cash gifts or non-financial gifts from any of our students, provide financial, banking or tax advice or perform any type of assistance to a student for pay. Every volunteer must sign a Repudiation of Gift statement. Do not loan or give money to our students.

IX. **Transporting students:**

For liability reason, volunteers that want to drive our students are required to have a DMV background check and attend a UGMTC defensive driver class.

X. **Physical Touch:**

Always ask permission before a touch or hug. When first getting to know our students, limit touching to what you would do with any other recent acquaintance. Be mindful the some of our students have had negative experience when it comes to physical touch, and may not receive something simple as a hug.

XI. **Sexual Comments or Advances:**

Sexual advances and comments from a student or volunteer are always inappropriate. If you, the volunteer, experience this type of situation, please promptly discuss this with a UGMTC program staff and volunteer services.

Boundaries and Setting Limits

Definitions

Boundary: Something that indicates a border or limit. The extent beyond which an activity cannot or should not take place.

Boundaries are limits that allow for a safe connection based on the student's need. These limits protect the space between the volunteers power and the student's vulnerability.

Guidelines for Developing Healthy Boundaries

- Know the organizations policies to help define limits

- Balance “I can’t” with “I won’t” Maintain an awareness of over-using policy to set personal limits. Some things you wouldn’t want to do, regardless of the policy. This distinction will help you develop boundary-setting skills
- Make conscious decisions about the boundaries you are setting
 - What do you want in this relationship?
 - What do you want to avoid in this relationship?
 - What level of closeness is appropriate in this relationship?
- Protect and help each other avoid too much self-disclosure. Example: You may not need to or want to know all the intimate details of family life. Direct conversation to contact that maintains healthy space.
- Buy time for yourself if you are unsure of how to respond. You might say, “I’m not sure what to say about that” or “I need to think about that more.”
- Get in touch with your physical responses. Tune into your feelings and gut responses.
- Acknowledge the request, even if you can’t grant it
- Stay involved in the solution. You might say, “I am not able to do that, but let’s see if we can figure it out.”

Steps for Setting Limits

- Offer support and acknowledge the situation the person is facing
- Be clear about what you are not willing or able to do
- Describe what you can do
- Restate your role and relationship to the student
- Reiterate the program purposes and goals
- Assist the student in identifying strengths
- Engage the individual in problem solving
- Request support from the UGMTC staff and volunteer services
- Articulate the student’s needs to UGMTC staff and volunteer services and resources when appropriate

Volunteer Separation and Termination

Volunteer service may end voluntarily by resignation or involuntarily by termination. A volunteer may be re-assigned to a position that is a more appropriate match to their skills and experience. If a volunteer needs to resign their position before the agreed term date, it is requested that the volunteer provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for the decision.

For the well-being of the students UGMTC serves, volunteers who do not adhere to the rules and procedures of UGMTC, or who fail to satisfactorily perform their volunteer duties, are subject to dismissal. No volunteer will be terminated until they have had an opportunity to discuss the reason for possible dismissal with the UGMTC Program and Volunteer Staff. However, an individual’s volunteer

duties may be suspended immediately, if deemed prudent, at the discretion of UGMTC staff until such a time as discussion is possible. This may be necessary pending investigations, etc. This suspension will be effective immediately upon verbal or written communication – whichever comes first.

Grounds for Termination

Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to abide by UGMTC policies and procedures
- Abuse or mistreatment of UGMTC affiliated students, neighbors or friends
- Theft of property or misuse of UGMTC equipment or materials
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance
- Failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties

Procedures

- The Program and Volunteer Manager will call the volunteer and when possible will arrange an in-person meeting with the volunteer. If contact is made with the volunteer over the telephone, a letter summarizing the conversation will be written and mailed to the volunteer
- If the volunteer does not return the call within two weeks, the volunteer will be sent a letter indicating the attempts to contact the volunteer and indicating the reason(s) for dismissal. A self-addressed exit interview form will be enclosed.