



*Sisters of Charity*

o f C i n c i n n a t i

*Associates in Volunteer Ministry*

**HANDBOOK  
FOR THE VOLUNTEER**

**Revised 2009**

## **ASSOCIATES IN VOLUNTEER MINISTRY**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Associates in Volunteer Ministry embrace the values and visions of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati as they strive to meet the needs of the poor and oppressed by:

- ❑ deepening their personal commitment to service while working with Sisters of Charity
- ❑ reflecting on their ministerial service in the light of the Gospel
- ❑ sharing in the life and prayer of the Sisters and Associates

## **SISTERS OF CHARITY OF CINCINNATI**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Urged by the charity of Christ, we Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati,

strive to give compelling witness

to Christ's active presence by doing justice,

expressed as loving trust shaping all our relationships

and as sharing our individual and Congregational resources

for the liberation of the oppressed.

## DEFINITIONS

**Associate in Volunteer Ministry** – a person who embraces the values and vision of the Sisters Charity. They meet the needs of the poor and oppressed by working alongside Sisters of Charity, reflecting on their ministerial experience in light of the Gospel and sharing in the life and prayer of the Sisters and Associates.

**Ministry Site Supervisor** – the Sister or Associate who is responsible for all aspects of supervision of the Volunteer during working hours. Arrangements for direct supervision will be clearly stated in the Associate in Volunteer Ministry agreement. The Volunteer is accountable to the Supervisor for her/his ministry performance.

**Contact Person** – a Sister or Associate who meets regularly with the Volunteer and reflects with her/him on this experience in the light of the Gospel and the Sisters of Charity mission and vision.

**Director of Associates** – the person responsible for the oversight of the Volunteer Program and Volunteers at the ministry sites. As an Associate, the Volunteer is accountable to the Sisters of Charity through the Director of Associates.

**Associate in Volunteer Ministry Advisory Committee** – a group of Sisters and/or Associates who advise the Director on matters concerning this program. Members of this committee participate in the application process and oversight of the program as needed.

## **OVERVIEW**

Associates in Volunteer Ministry, during their time of service, participate in a relationship with the Sisters of Charity and with other Associates. (See page 11)

Volunteers are placed in ministry situations where Sisters of Charity or Associates in Mission serve. Volunteers live a simple life style and minister living out the motto, *The Charity of Christ Urges Us!* Volunteers are invited to local Associate gatherings and Sisters of Charity community events.

Each Volunteer has the opportunity to meet regularly with a Contact Sister or Associate who will reflect with her/him on the Volunteer experience in the light of the Gospel and the Sisters of Charity Mission and Vision.

The Director of Associates handles all aspects of Volunteer application and placement.

## **MINISTRY SITE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The ministry site is the hiring agent and is the responsible party for the Volunteer. The ministry site bears the liability for the Volunteer and is responsible for paying the stipend and mileage.

The ministry site makes every effort to provide a safe working environment for the Volunteer and provides workplace orientation.

The Volunteer is given a 40 hour per week position. In a ministry where flexibility in hours is necessary, the work week does not exceed 40 hours. Holiday absences are negotiated with the Supervisor.

The Director of Associates or a delegate will visit the ministry site during the ministry experience. At the culmination of the Volunteer term an evaluation will be completed by the Volunteer and the Supervisor and discussed with the Director.

## **FINANCIAL GUIDELINES**

### Stipend

The Volunteer receives a monthly stipend. This is intended to cover housing, food and personal expenses in a simple lifestyle. The stipend is paid by the ministry site. The Volunteer and the site may agree to withhold social security.

### Housing

Housing arrangements will be mutually agreed upon at the time of the Volunteer's placement. Housing choices may include living alone, with other Volunteers, with a group of Sisters of Charity, with a family in the area of ministry, or with an Associate in Mission. Housing, food and personal expenses are paid for through the monthly stipend.

### Health Costs

Health insurance coverage is provided for each Volunteer during the time of service. Options are discussed with each individual. This is arranged for through the Office of Associates.

The Associate Office may pay for necessary medical expenses not covered by insurance including deductibles, prescriptions and doctor visits if the Volunteer is unable to do so. The program is not responsible for paying non-emergency optical or dental expenses.

If the Volunteer already carries health insurance and wants to remain on that plan or if the Ministry Site could provide health insurance but the Volunteer wishes to remain on the plan already carried, the Associate Office reimburses the Volunteer for the cost of the health insurance during the time of service up to the amount which would usually be paid for insurance.

### Transportation

The Volunteer usually provides her/his own transportation to interviews and orientation at Mt. St. Joseph, Ohio. The Volunteer is responsible for her/his own transportation during her/his term.

The Volunteer may receive mileage reimbursement for ministry-related travel except for one round trip daily travel to and from the ministry site or office based on current IRS rates.

#### Student Loans: Cancellation/Deferment

The Sisters of Charity take no responsibility for any loan deferment or cancellation. The Volunteer wishing to obtain loan deferment or cancellation contact the loan company and obtains papers needed to request loan deferment.

#### Dues, Fees, Conference Costs

The ministry site is responsible for all professional dues, fees, conference costs which may incur in normal work-related matters.

#### Taxes/ Worker's Compensation

Taxes are the responsibility of the ministry site as the hiring agency. Any taxes withheld do not decrease the basic stipend of the Volunteer. The Volunteer and the Director of Associates are apprised of the site's decision regarding income taxes. The ministry site is responsible for Worker's Compensation where applicable.

#### Liability Insurance

The ministry site is responsible for providing liability insurance to cover the site and the Volunteer during the service time. The ministry site submits a copy of its liability insurance during the inquiry/placement process. It is recommended that the Volunteer carry personal liability insurance. At the time of signing the Agreement, the Sisters of Charity ask the Volunteer to sign a release of liability.

#### Personal Days

The Volunteer is allowed 2-4 personal days to interview for post-Volunteer employment. The Volunteer is responsible for her/his own transportation and other costs for personal interviews.

### Recruiting Days

The Volunteer may be asked to assist with recruiting. Ministry sites allow two to four days for recruiting purposes. The Director of Associates makes the necessary arrangements with the ministry site and the Volunteer.

### Early Departure

If the Volunteer is considering leaving the Associate in Volunteer Ministry Program, for whatever reason, she/he is asked to first discuss the situation thoroughly with the Contact Person, Director of Associates, support persons and the community with whom she/he is living or relating.

The Volunteer is asked to pursue every possible attempt at resolution before making a decision to leave.

In the event of an early departure from the Associate in Volunteer Ministry Program, the Volunteer pays her/his way home. The Volunteer should also consider the financial burden placed upon the community and/or ministry site caused by early departure. She/he should look for ways to ease that burden.

## **NON-FINANCIAL GUIDELINES**

### Orientation

The Volunteer participates in a retreat/orientation experience at Mt. St. Joseph, if possible, or at the Ministry Site. The Volunteer is usually responsible for her/his own transportation to the orientation at Mt. St. Joseph.

The ministry site provides work place orientation: introduction to site goals and philosophy, co-workers, neighborhood or geographical area, and cultural uniqueness.

### Performance

The Associate in Volunteer Ministry conducts herself/himself in such a way that will further the credibility of the Sisters of Charity Associates. The Volunteer is

expected to fulfill her/his job description with an attitude of generosity and conscientiousness.

A Volunteer may be dismissed from her/his ministry if her/his behavior is deemed detrimental to the community, work place, neighborhood or integrity, vision and values of the Sisters of Charity and/or the Sisters of Charity Associates. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, allegations of sexual harassment or abuse, drug or alcohol abuse, violent behavior, psychological or emotional instability. The final decision for dismissal from the Volunteer Program lies with the Director of Associates.

A Volunteer is expected to complete her/his full commitment. In case a Volunteer begins to contemplate leaving her/his ministry, she/he should consider that Volunteers are not asked to work indefinitely in an unhealthy work setting, but they are asked to give their work situation every chance.

A decision to leave the ministry site should not be taken lightly and should be discussed with the Supervisor, Contact Person, support people, and the Director of Associates.

A meeting between the Volunteer, the Supervisor and the Director of Associates, or a Sister of Charity designated by her, would be necessary to see if adjustments can be made to improve the situation. The results of this meeting should be given some time for an effective change in the ministry situation.

If the ministry situation does not improve, the Volunteer, always in collaboration with the Director of Associates, may decide to terminate.

If another placement with a Sister of Charity ministry cannot be made, the Associate relationship is also terminated.

#### Theological Reflection/Spiritual Development/Associate Relationship

During the time of service, the Volunteer is an Associate of the Sisters of Charity. She/He tries to learn about and live the mission and spirit of the Sisters of Charity.

A Contact Person serves as a reflector with the Volunteer. They will meet regularly to reflect on her/his experience in the light of the Gospel. She/he will



also serve as a connection between the Volunteer and the Sisters of Charity. The Contact Person is usually not the Supervisor.

The Volunteer is encouraged to participate in a retreat sometime during the time of service. The Volunteer participates in local Sister of Charity and Associate gatherings when possible.

In so far as the ministry responsibilities permit and financial resources allow, the Volunteer is encouraged to participate in spiritual development opportunities in the local area.

### College Courses

Since the Volunteer's ministry experience and the Associate relationship can be very challenging, enrolling in college classes during the year is discouraged.

However, if time and energy, as well as the work schedule permit, a Volunteer may enroll in a class after discussion with the Contact Person and the Director of Associates.

### Work Outside the Volunteer Experience

Volunteers do not hold a "second job" or other outside employment.

If a Volunteer finds herself/himself with not enough to do, she/he discusses the situation with her/his Contact Person, Supervisor and/or the Director of Associates.

### Pets

Volunteers who live with Sister of Charity communities or with other Volunteers are not permitted to have pets.

If a Volunteer is living alone and she/he has a pet, she/he is totally responsible for all costs such as increased rent, liability, veterinarian costs, food and other costs for the pet. The presence of the pet is not to interfere with ministry or Associate commitments.

## **THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF CINCINNATI**

The first Sisters of Charity came to Cincinnati in 1829. They were members of a religious community founded in 1809 by Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American-born saint canonized by the Roman Catholic Church. Originally founded in Baltimore, the community later relocated to Emmitsburg, Maryland. Six independent communities of women religious developed from Elizabeth Seton's original foundation, including the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. Their Motherhouse, Mount St. Joseph, overlooks the Ohio River in Delhi Township.

When the Sisters of Charity arrived in Cincinnati in 1829, they undertook the care of orphans and the creation of a free school. As new needs emerged the Sisters took on responsibility for St. John Hospital in 1852. The Sisters developed a pattern of service in which they responded to the needs of their time, and they served where the needs were greatest.

In 1852 Archbishop John Purcell confirmed the Cincinnati group as an independent diocesan community retaining the spirit, rules and tradition established by Elizabeth Seton. In 1853, Sister Margaret Cecilia George was elected the first Mother Superior. The Sisters of Charity remained a diocesan community until 1931 when the community became a Congregation of pontifical right.

During their years in Cincinnati, the Sisters of Charity were sent in all directions to respond to the poor, the suffering and the needy in the expanding American nation and beyond. In 1928 the community opened an orphanage and hospital in Wuchang, China. Since then, Sisters of Charity have continued to minister internationally.

Today, over 450 Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati continue their work of education, social service, health care, pastoral ministry and elder care in 20 states and one foreign country. They also sponsor institutions and programs that address education, health care and social service needs, with particular concern for advocacy for and direct service to the poor.

In the Spirit of Elizabeth Seton, the Sisters of Charity are committed to serving wherever the needs are greatest. The spirit of the Congregation is best summarized in its motto, "The love of Christ urges us" (2 Cor.5:14)

## **THE ASSOCIATE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF CINCINNATI**

The Associate relationship of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati grew out of the Congregation's belief that community grows out of our relationships that impel us to be for others. The Sisters of Charity extend relationship to persons who actively share their mission and spirit and who wish to associate with the Congregation in a non-canonical manner. This extended Christian community provides mutual strength, enrichment and support.

Since 1973 the Congregation has explored ways the Sisters could relate with individual persons in forming a "unique companionship within the Christian community."

**Associates in Mission** refer to those women and men who share in the mission and spirit of the Sisters of Charity and express their relationship on an annual basis. There are currently over 170 Associates in Mission.

**Associates in Community** describe persons who wish to share in the mission, spirit, ministry and life style of the Congregation while living in a local community of Sisters of Charity.

**Associates in Volunteer Ministry** are persons who embrace the values and vision of the Sisters of Charity. They meet the needs of the poor and oppressed by working alongside Sisters of Charity, reflecting on their ministerial experience in light of the Gospel and sharing in the life and prayer of the Sisters and Associates.

### **ASSOCIATES OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF CINCINNATI MISSION STATEMENT**

We Associates of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati  
are women and men striving to live the Gospel values.  
Called by God,  
we choose to be in mutual relationship  
with the Sisters of Charity guided by their Mission Statement.  
We commit ourselves to participate in this mission  
through our individual life situations.