

Just Neighbors Interfaith Hospitality Network

JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN) VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES

Overview of JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN)

Just Neighbors (Interfaith Hospitality Network of Fort Wayne) brings together faith based organizations and community volunteers to meet the emergency shelter needs of homeless families. JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN) provides ongoing support and education to its guests encouraging the goal of self-sufficiency. Guests come to JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN) through self-referral or by referral from a local agency. Prior to entering the facility prospective guests must meet admission requirements such as passing a drug screen no felony convictions or active warrants among other criteria. The JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN) Administrative Building is located at 2925 East State Street with parking and entrances located at the rear of the building. 2325 Santa Rosa Drive is the Family Center or shelter.. These two buildings connected by a covered walkway. The building off Santa Rosa Drive is the residential building where the guests have rooms, a kitchen, dining area, family room, showers and laundry facilities. To enter the residential area where you can cook/heat the meals you must be buzzed in by a staff member or guest. The office phone number is 458-9772.

General Guidelines for Volunteers Working with Guests

- a. let the guest be your guide re: conversations, don't ask questions you would not want asked of yourself, remember to listen and avoid expressing personal opinions, allow them to have time to themselves as needed
- b. JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN) staff work with guests to provide what they need; please do not offer money or other items
- c. Very rarely are there difficult situations, but if one would occur please go to a staff member or ask your volunteer coordinator for advice
- d. Avoid being in a situation where you are alone with a child or children during activities
- e. Children are welcome to volunteer with their families. This can be a wonderful experience for both the children at JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN) and the volunteer child. Remember that you are responsible for your child at all times
- f. Volunteers are to be self-directed when it comes to cooking and evening activities. A staff member is available for support if needed.

Prior to your evening of volunteering:

- a. Your volunteer coordinator will provide information about allergies, number of guests, number of children, etc.
- b. This number can vary daily so please be flexible.
- c. Food can either be prepared in the JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN) kitchen or ahead of time.
- d. Avoid leaving food containers or serving utensils at JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN); transfer food to a dish that is there if you are unable to stay.

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What to do the evening you volunteer:

- a. Sign in on the volunteer book on the counter directly across from the door on the page with your church's/group's name at the top, fill in the appropriate boxes with: your name the amount of time it took to shop for and prepare the meal including your travel time to and from the center and the time you arrived.
- b. Dinner is typically served between 5:30 and 6:30 pm. Verify meal time with your volunteer coordinator.
- c. The TV is turned off during dinner.
- d. Set up what is needed to serve the meal (utensils, etc.) on the large kitchen counter, guests often help with this
- e. Guests may provide their drinks with the meal or you can bring them. Milk is encouraged.
- f. JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN) has cooking utensils, plates, silverware, and cups available in the kitchen area and encourages the use of reusable dinnerware.
- g. Items in the fridge with names on them are guests' personal items and are not to be used.
- h. You are encouraged to sit with the guests during the meal; many churches say a prayer before the meal.
- i. JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN) guests are responsible for cleaning up after the meal, washing dishes, cleaning tables and sweeping the floor.
- j. If there are leftovers, ask the guests what they might like to have leftovers for the next day or for guests who may come in later from work or school. Also check with the staff member on duty if food needs to be saved for guests coming in later or new arrivals.
- k. The refrigerator at JUST NEIGHBORS (IHN) gets very full and also includes food for individual families; please avoid leaving large quantities of food unless requested by the guests or staff.

Evening activities:

- a. Do verify with your volunteer coordinator on which evenings activities after dinner can be planned.
- b. Verify with staff member on duty the best location for the activity and which guests would participate.
- c. On school nights conclude any evening activity by 8 pm.

Leaving:

- a. Sign out on the volunteer log book indicating the time you leave and totaling your volunteer time.
- b. Take all cooking and serving items with you.
- c. Take any items used for evening activities home with you.