**Volunteer Guidelines**

**Overview of Just Neighbors (JN):**

Just Neighbors brings together faith- based organizations and community volunteers to meet the *emergency shelter needs of homeless families*. Just Neighbors provides ongoing support and education to its guests encouraging the *goal of self-sufficiency*. Families (guests) come to Just Neighbors through self-referral or referral by other agencies. Prior to entering the facility, prospective guests must meet admission requirements: minor children in their legal custody, pass a drug test, no felony convictions, no active warrants, and other criteria.

Just Neighbors Administrative Building is located at 2925 East State. The Family Center (shelter) is located directly behind the Admin Building at 2325 Santa Rosa Drive. These two buildings are connected by a covered walkway. The Family Center is where the families reside. It is equipped with ten family rooms, a dining room, kitchen, family/play room and laundry room. To enter the Family Center where all meals are prepared and or served, you must be buzzed in by a staff member. The office phone number is 458-9772.

**General guidelines for Volunteers Working with Guests:**

 a. Let the guests be your guide re: conversations, don’t ask personal 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 staff work with guests to provide what they need; *please do not offer*

 *money or other items.*

 c. In very rare instances some difficult situations may arise, staff will be in the building to

 assist you or ask your volunteer coordinator for advice.

 d. Avoid being in a situation where you are alone with a child/children during activities.

 e. Children are welcome to volunteer with their families. This can be a wonderful

 experience for both the children of Just Neighbors and the volunteer child/children.

 Remember, you are responsible for your child/children 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 volunteercoordinator will provide information about allergies, number of guests

 number of children, etc. This information can also be found on the JN Website

 ihnfamily.org under the volunteer tab.

 b. The number of individuals in shelter can vary daily, please be flexible.

 c. Food can be prepared in the kitchen at the Family Center or brought into the shelter.

 d. Avoid leaving food containers or cookware at Just Neighbors, transfer food to a dish

 that is there if you are unable to stay.

**What to do the evening you volunteer:**

 \* **Sign in** on the volunteer book on the counter directly across from the entrance door.

Fill in the appropriate boxes with your name, email address, preparation time for the

 meal, (including shopping), travel time to and from the Family Center and your arrival

 time.

 \* Dinner is typically served between 5:30pm and 6:30pm. Verify meal time with your

 volunteer coordinator.

 \* The Family Room will not be open during dinner.

 \* Set up what is needed to serve the meal (utensils, plates, etc.), on the large kitchen

 counter, guests will often assist with this.

 \* Guests may provide their drinks, however, it is encouraged for milk or water to be

 served with dinner by the volunteers.

 \* Just Neighbors has cooking utensils, plates, silverware and cups available in the kitchen

 area. You are welcome to bring disposable plates forks/spoons.

 \* Items in the refrigerator with names or room numbers are guest’s personal items and

 not to be used. Usually, there are condiments and salad dressing in the refrigerator.

 \* Congregations and community groups pray before dinner.

 \* Just Neighbors guests are responsible for cleaning up after the meal. Washing dishes,

 wiping down tables/chairs, kitchen counters, sweeping and mopping the floors.

 \* If there are leftovers place them in JN containers and place in refrigerator. Remember

 to check with staff to see if food should be set aside for employed family members.

**Evening Activities:**

Verify with your coordinator on which evenings activities can be planned for after dinner.

Verify with the staff on duty the best location for the activity to take place. Feel free to ask

staff to round up the participants. On school nights, any activity should be completed by 8pm.

**Leaving:**

Sign out in the volunteer log book and total your time. Take all cooking and serving items your

Brought with you. Take any items used for evening activities home with you.