

## MBCH Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to Missouri Baptist Children's Home and affiliate corporations ("MBCH"). We are very pleased that you have an interest in contributing of your time and talent, and pray that your involvement here will be a rewarding experience, as well as an opportunity for personal growth.

This handbook has been developed to provide you information you will need to serve as a volunteer. It contains information you will find useful in determining if volunteering with MBCH or one of its affiliates is right for you. And as a volunteer, it also provides guidance for any volunteer assignment you may undertake. Following is a listing of the contents:

1. Types of Volunteers and Qualifications/Requirements
2. Volunteer Policy and Philosophy
3. MBCH History and Purpose
4. MBCH Children and Family Ministries Program Descriptions
5. What the Volunteer Can Expect from MBCH
6. What MBCH Expects of You
7. Working Together

Please read this handbook thoroughly and become familiar with its contents. If you have any questions, please contact a volunteer coordinator at [volunteers@mbch.org](mailto:volunteers@mbch.org) or by calling 1-800-264-6224. Thank you for volunteering! You are a very important part of the programs of Missouri Baptist Children's Home.

### 1. Types of Volunteers and qualifications/requirements

MBCH uses two primary types of volunteers:

- **Non Client Involvement:** This is an individual or a group of people providing services to MBCH but who are never left alone with residents. The type of assignment typically performed by these volunteers includes such areas as yard work, painting, light carpentry, office/administrative, fundraiser events and festivals, etc. These volunteers are not required to undergo any specific background checking process, nor meet any specific age or other criteria.
- **Direct Client Involvement:** These volunteers have the opportunity for individual direct contact with clients and who could potentially be alone with them. Examples of these kinds of engagements include tutoring, leading devotions, mentoring, teaching life skills, recreation, summer camp leadership, etc. Because of the nature of these kinds of volunteer assignments, there are specific qualifications and requirements that must be met before any volunteer may be considered for an assignment. These include:

- Completing an online volunteer application
- Being a committed Christian and at least 21 years of age
- Providing three references, one from a church leader
- Undergoing child abuse/neglect, driver's license and criminal background checks

## **2. Volunteer Policy and Philosophy**

***When possible and as appropriate, MBCH will use volunteers as they are available to provide service for the benefit of the residents***

The agency and its staff hold volunteers in high regard. Volunteers have a specific role and purpose in the agency and are treated as important contributors possessing valuable skills and talents. Our goal is to provide quality experiences with opportunities for service and personal growth. In this way, MBCH seeks to minister to the volunteer, as well as benefit from the volunteer's ministry.

We believe that volunteers should take their role seriously, recognizing the importance of the tasks assigned whether or not they involve direct contact with the clients. The involvement of volunteers is not to be based on convenience, but on commitment.

Volunteers can expect a definite work assignment and not placed in a position of doing "busywork" or being haphazardly used to fill in the gaps left by professional staff. Volunteers serve to complement the efforts of the staff.

Volunteers are encouraged to use their particular interests, talents, and skills and gifts which are used in their work life, hobbies, or other engagements. In this way the agency benefits from the utilization of the most appropriate placement for each volunteer. You can express these attributes when you complete the online volunteer application.

Later in this handbook is a statement of the rights and responsibilities you can expect while serving as an MBCH volunteer.

## **3. MBCH History and Purpose**

The Missouri Baptist Orphan's Home was founded April 1, 1886 by a group of women from five Baptist churches in downtown St. Louis. The Home was organized as an extension of Christian ministry from the Baptist churches in the State of Missouri and was founded to care for the large number of orphan children at the time. In 1907, the facility was moved to its present location in Bridgeton, Missouri. In response to the changing needs in child care, the name was changed to Missouri Baptist Children's Home in the 1930's, and the agency began to serve the state as a full service child care provider. Terms like child abuse and neglect, and "dysfunctional family" began to replace the word orphan in the child care vocabulary.

The Home has continued to minister to the needs of families and children for more than a century. However, the needs of society's children have evolved from orphans, to dependent children, to those who are victims of abuse, neglect and dysfunctional families.

Although the needs of children have changed, the purpose of ministry has remained. Christian people in the State of Missouri continue to minister to children in the name of Jesus Christ. We strive to employ the highest and most advanced techniques of today's sciences, but the underlying motive remains the same-Christian ministry.

In order to better respond to these growing challenges, Missouri Baptist Children's Home has established four affiliates, each with its own defined mission:

- **MBCH Children and Family Ministries** is the affiliate responsible to provide the majority of the program services, through two primary avenues: residential services and community-based services.
- **MBCH Professional Development Institute** provides services in the areas of tutoring and providing training workshops for the public.
- **MBCH Foundation** is responsible for the endowment and provides fundraising services, including annual and deferred gifting opportunities.
- **MBCH Properties** owns the properties that are used in the program services of MBCH.

#### 4. MBCH Children and Family Ministries Program Descriptions

Most but not all volunteer assignments occur within MBCH Children and Family Ministries. Following is a brief description of those programs:

- **Therapeutic group homes:** Serve children and youths ages 6-21. In addition to the basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, and medical care, the clients also receive individual, family, and group counseling, public education, a structured environment, and therapeutic recreation. Each cottage typically houses eight clients, and two youth care specialists. The cottages are operated similarly to a typical family unit, with the goal being the reunification of each child with their natural families if possible, or the development of an alternative family structure when necessary.
- **Pregnancy Services Program:** Offered with the primary emphasis being to assist young women in exploring, deciding, and planning alternatives to abortion and assisting them with the choices they face during an untimely pregnancy. This program offers campus housing for residential placement, as well as in-home counseling. While the professional staff realizes that the decision to parent or relinquish custody can only be made by the biological

parents, an atmosphere of acceptance, security, and caring is essential during the decision making process.

This program also provides residential care for young mothers and their babies from the time of discharge from the hospital until the babies are up to one year old. The mothers receive support, medical care, parenting classes and group sessions to learn independent living/parenting skills as they adjust to their new parenting role.

- **Transitional Living Program:** Provides the opportunity for young people between the ages of 16-21 who are transitioning out of residential care into independence. In this program skills including budgeting, good decision making, positive relationships, and job skills are modeled and encouraged. These young people also learn everyday survival skills such as grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning, and transportation.
- **Family Resource Development:** Committed to providing permanent planning for children within a Christian family. This program serves children who need foster placement or who may be available for adoption. Pre-placement counseling and training are provided for the child and the family and are continued as long as needed during and after placement. In addition, home studies and other related activities are provided for relative/kinship placements.

Other MBCH CFM programs include treatment foster care, family foster care, family preservations services, and a safe house for victims of human trafficking.

## 5. What Volunteers Can Expect from MBCH

It is our goal that your time of service at MBCH will be enjoyable and personally rewarding. Listed below are the things you can expect from MBCH to help facilitate this goal.

1. **Registering:** Volunteers must register with MBCH prior to receiving any consideration for volunteer assignments. This is a simple process consisting of completing a volunteer application online (or by paper copy). If desiring work involving direct contact with clients, there will also be the need to obtain background checks and references as described earlier in this handbook.
2. **Interview:** Before you can receive a volunteer assignment, you must interview with an MBCH leader. During the interview, the leader will explain the general aim and functions of the Volunteer Program, discuss your specific interests in more detail, and determine the most appropriate volunteer assignments for you. Because it is the goal of the Volunteer Program to place only qualified volunteers in service, it may be necessary in some circumstances to reject applicants for volunteer service. Every effort, however, will be made to provide volunteer applicants with an opportunity to serve.

3. **Orientation:** After your initial interview, you *may* attend a Volunteer Orientation Session. This orientation may be held online. In the orientation session, we will review the information contained in this handbook and respond to any questions you may have. We will also begin to familiarize you with the agency, particularly those areas where you will be working.

Staff members will provide general training regarding your particular area of interest and your assignment in order to enable you to begin your work with a minimum of difficulty. Finally, the orientation session provides you with an opportunity to get acquainted with staff and other volunteers with whom you may be working.

4. **Training:** After orientation you will be provided with training and guidance as needed to enable you to perform your assignment effectively. Be sure to ask any questions you may have regarding your work assignment.

In addition you will have opportunities for further training to refine skills you have and expand your skills into other areas. While much of this additional training is optional, some of these may be required for continued involvement as a volunteer depending on the assignment.

Training will enable you to provide the agency with more qualified, effective service. Training also provides increased skill and knowledge to be used well after involvement with the agency ends. Please take advantage of opportunities for growth and training as they arise.

5. **Supervision & Support:** There will always be someone available to help you, providing guidance and answering any questions you may have regarding your assignment. You will not be sent out on a “sink or swim” basis. Staff will be available for encouragement and support in any area needed.

The preceding list gives you some idea of what you can expect to receive from MBCH as a volunteer. If at any time you feel that you are not getting enough of this assistance, or if there are other things you feel you need in order to make your service here more effective or rewarding, do not hesitate to inform us so that we may work to improve the situation.

## 6. What MBCH Expects of You

Just as volunteers can expect certain things from MBCH, we also expect certain things from volunteers.

1. **Know your role as volunteer:** It is important that you read and become familiar with the information that is contained in this handbook. You cannot responsibly fulfill your volunteer assignment without doing so. You are expected to abide by the procedures and guidelines as outlined. If you have any questions, consult your supervisor.

2. **Notify us in advance if you need to be absent:** When you are scheduled to perform services but need to be absent, make sure you call the supervisor of the area to which you are assigned. It is very difficult when staff or children are expecting you and you fail to notify anyone that you are not coming.
3. **Be a positive example:** We expect you to maintain an attitude and conduct which will serve as a positive example to the children, fellow volunteers, and staff. We expect you to maintain harmonious relationships with others. This will make everyone's work a little easier and certainly more enjoyable. Relatedly, we request that you refrain from smoking on any of the MBCH Campuses.

## 7. Working Together

When you arrive on campus for a volunteer job assignment, report to the supervisor and perform the assignment as outlined.

Although rare, issues with the assignment, the work environment or with staff/other volunteers may arise. Please follow the procedures, below, to ensure quick and appropriate resolution:

- ✓ If you encounter any difficulties regarding your assignment, feel that the placement is inappropriate for you, or feel additional training is needed, consult your supervisor immediately. He/she should be able to work with you to resolve the difficulty. If any issues still remain or if you are not comfortable with the resolution, contact Human Resources, who will make every effort to resolve the situation in a satisfactory manner.
- ✓ If you have an issue with your supervisor, such as serious personality conflicts or inadequate communication, talk about it with your supervisor. He/she should be presented with the problem and given the opportunity to work with you to resolve the issue. However, if the problem remains unresolved, then contact Human Resources who will work with both of you to resolve the difficulty in a satisfactory manner.
- ✓ If an issue with another volunteer arises, discuss the matter with your co-volunteer in an effort to come to a mutual resolution of the difficulty. If this fails, consult the supervisor. He/she will work with the two of you to effectively deal with the difficulty. If this proves inadequate, please contact Human Resources who will work to find an appropriate solution.

It is our hope that the need for these procedures never arises. However, we want to provide avenues through which conflicts can be quickly and effectively managed and resolved. Please make every effort to work cooperatively and considerately with the supervisor and fellow workers. If conflict does arise, **always** follow the steps outlined above.

If you have any other questions or problems regarding your involvement as a volunteer, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Coordinator. He/she is there to help make your time with MBCH as enjoyable and rewarding as possible.