



Introduction to Volunteering

Introduction

ECHO Neighbourhood Centre Inc. could not function without its many volunteers.

Successful volunteers provide many benefits: the service and care given to the community, the friendship and self confidence it brings out in people, the creativity of so many diverse volunteer activities and above all the enjoyment of achieving something worthwhile.

Volunteering is more than ever a personal choice, simply because today there are so many options to choose from such as education and hobbies, travel and leisure activities.

ECHO Neighbourhood Centre congratulates all those volunteers, of all ages and walks of life, who contribute their precious time and energy to make a difference to someone's life in the Waverly area and surrounds.

WELCOME TO ECHO NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Thank you for your interest in volunteering!

Volunteers provide invaluable assistance and are a crucial part of our Centre. We value the ideas and input of volunteers and encourage you to offer suggestions and feedback relating to the process of becoming a volunteer as well as our services, programs and clients.

OUR VOLUNTEERS PUT INTO PRACTICE THE FOLLOWING BASIC PRINCIPLES.

- Respect the dignity of every human being and their culture.
- Give their time freely.
- Promote family, community and national solidarity in a practical way.
- Advocate for members of the community and encourage self decision making processes.
- Identify gaps in service provision and act upon the need of the community, under the direction of paid staff.

Q&A

1. What is the role of ECHO and what other services are available?

The Centre provides many of the practical community services and information in the Waverley Local Government Area. There are a number of other services in the area that we have built networks with such as Community Transport, Meals on Wheels, Volunteer and Service Training (VAST), Waverley Council and so on. You will learn about these at your orientation and through your own volunteering experiences.

2. To whom am I responsible for my work at the Centre?

You are responsible in the first instance, and directly, to the Program Coordinator you are working with. For general enquires please refer to the Volunteer Coordinator.

3. Am I insured for any accident that may occur while I am working on the Centre's behalf?

In the event of an accident occurring to a client you are supporting, the Centre carries Public Liability Insurance covering all its activities and programs. If you have an accident and are injured in any way, the Centre also has Volunteer Insurance.

For volunteers who use their cars for their work (eg: to transport clients), it is essential that you have a current comprehensive insurance policy and roadworthy, licensed vehicle.

If you have an accident or a near miss of any kind (eg: injury) in the course of your work it is important that you tell your Program Coordinator or Volunteer Coordinator immediately. You will need to fill out an accident/incident report as soon as possible. Your Coordinator will help you to do this.

4. Can I be reimbursed for any expenses I may incur?

Volunteers will be reimbursed for agreed expenses incurred as part of their volunteer work for the Centre, consistent with the current Centre policy at the time. In order to make a claim you will need to complete a worksheet and attach all receipts. If you are using your car, please keep a log of the kilometers you drive and record these on your worksheet claim form.

Worksheets are provided by the Volunteer Coordinator and should be handed in monthly.

5. Will there be opportunities for employment and training?

Volunteering is an excellent way to gain experience in community services. It is recommended you attend volunteer orientation training through VAST (Volunteer and Service Training) in Maroubra and you will receive an orientation to the Centre and your role from the Volunteer Coordinator, as well as program and role specific training. You may also request relevant external training offered through the Centre, pending budget allowances. Ask the Volunteer Coordinator or your Program Coordinator for information about training opportunities.

6. What should I do in a crisis (eg: the person I am to visit or collect for program/ transport does not answer when I call)?

These (extremely rare!) occurrences remain the Centre's responsibility. You should phone the Centre or the Volunteer Coordinator and they will assist and advise you.

7. What happens if I am not happy with the job that I am doing?

If you are not happy with your volunteer role, or if you are having any problems, you need to tell the Volunteer Coordinator and s/he will help you sort things out. If you are not happy with the Volunteer Coordinator or the issues are not resolved and you wish to make a complaint then you can ring the Manager on 93872885.

8. Our requirements

The Centre is required to conduct police checks for all our employees and volunteers under the terms of our various government funding agreements. You will start in the position at a suitable time negotiated with yourself and the Volunteer Coordinator, unless you are working unsupervised in which case we will need to wait until your police check has been cleared. We will aim to get you started in your new volunteer job as soon as possible after this.

It is also a requirement for all employees and volunteers to observe our Code of Conduct and Confidentiality policy. Of course, this applies to your personal information as well.

9. Can I share contact details or information about the person I am helping?

It is a requirement for all employers and volunteers to observe our confidentiality policies and procedures. Of course this applies to your personal information as well. It's a good idea to take an ECHO brochure with you on your first visit and you can write your name next to ECHO's phone number. It is not recommended for volunteers to share their personal phone numbers with clients.

Volunteer Positions at ECHO

These include: Social Support Workers, Data Entry, Generalist Duties, Shopping List Assistance, English Conversation Tutors, Front Desk, Groups and Events, Gardeners.

Social Support Volunteers

- Provide ongoing support, encouragement and companionship to clients on a regular basis.
- Assist the clients with everyday tasks and accompany them to and from appointments.
- Observe and monitor clients for changes in their health and well being.
- Keep up to date and accurate records of time spent with clients.

Data Entry Volunteers

- Assist staff with the accurate collection and collation of statistical information in relation to clients and volunteers.

Generalist Duties Volunteers

- To ensure that the centre is properly maintained, clean and tidy at all times.
- Help out with odd jobs and tasks as required.

Shopping List Assistance Volunteers

- Take calls from clients wanting to place a weekly shopping order for Woolworth's home delivery.
- Fax completed orders to Woolworths and ring through to confirm orders have been received.

English Conversation Tutoring Volunteers

- Plan and provide English lessons to support migrants and refugees and people from non English speaking backgrounds on a term by term basis.
- Ensure the lessons meet the individual needs of the participants and is appropriate to their level of English.
- Maintain up to date and accurate participant's records.

Front Desk Volunteers

- Answering phone calls.
- Politely and respectfully assist people who come to the centre and provide them with the appropriate information or refer them to a staff member.
- Assist staff with administrative duties such as photocopying, attending to the information display, ensuring pamphlets are refilled and up to date.
- Money handling and other duties as requested.
- Recording all incoming correspondence in the computer and in the appropriate location.

Groups and Events Volunteers

- Support staff with the planning of activities for groups on a term by term basis and one off events and functions through the sharing of ideas, development of programs, administration, promotion and confirmation of activities with suppliers and participants and evaluation of activities.
- Accurately record information for the use of current and future group activities and events.

Gardening Volunteers

- Provide clients with general basic gardening duties in their homes including planting, pruning, weeding, sweeping and watering.
- No lawn mowing or rubbish removal required.

If you have any questions about the volunteer application form, or need assistance in filling it out, please ring the Volunteer Coordinator on 93872885.

You will be contacted as soon as possible after we have received your completed form, to arrange an interview with the Volunteer Coordinator. Once we have a better idea of your interests and skills, and you have agreed to accept a volunteer position with us, you will be given a Centre orientation by the Volunteer Coordinator and program orientation by the Program Coordinator.

You will also be given information about any training that you might have to complete before commencing work with us.

Thank you for your interest. Any feedback on this initial process of volunteering with ECHO would be appreciated as it will enable us to improve the process. This can be given face o face, via phone (9387 2885) or by email to volunteer@echocentre.com.au

We look forward to a positive working relationship with you.