

Notre Dame Urban Education Center

14 East 8th Street | Covington, KY 41011

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Volunteer Handbook

Dear Volunteers,

Congratulations on embarking upon an exciting journey as a volunteer at the Notre Dame Urban Education Center in Covington, Kentucky! The Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." You had the desire to take that single step in a journey that will enrich your life as well as those whom you serve as a Notre Dame volunteer.

This Notre Dame ministry began in the summer of 2010. Volunteers continue to play a significant role in our programs for children and families. You add an incredibly special dimension to our mission providing transformative educational experiences for those we serve.

As a volunteer, you assist children with their school homework while encouraging them to make positive choices in their educational endeavor. We are excited you have chosen to volunteer at NDUEC, and know you will further enhance the high-level care and service for which we are known.

Please use this handbook as a volunteer guide in partnering with the Sisters of Notre Dame. May the good and provident God bless you and all we do at the Notre Dame Urban Education Center.

Sincerely,

Sr. Maria Therese, STD

Executive Director



Notre Dame Urban Education Center

Mission

NDUEC provides transformative educational experiences to impact individual wellbeing.

Vision

To awaken and support one's passion for life-long learning

Core Values

- **Nurturing.** We foster a safe and welcoming environment that encourages personal growth and development.
- **Dependable.** We honor our commitments by being reliable and treat all people with dignity and respect.
- **Unconditional Faith in Action.** We are driven by our SND Catholic heritage and strive to bring witness to gospel values.
- **Equity.** We believe each individual deserves access to educational resources and aspire to provide equitable opportunities to those we serve.
- **Collaborative.** We value working with others and aim to bring a collaborative spirit and strategy to all we do.

Background Information

The Sisters of Notre Dame of the United States of America are members of an international congregation of over 2000 women in eighteen countries. They are consecrated for mission in the Catholic Church to serve people, especially those who experience poverty in its various forms through education and other ministries. There are 500+ members in the SNDUSA province. Locally, the Sisters of Notre Dame sponsor Notre Dame Academy and Julie Learning Center in Park Hills, KY; Notre Dame Urban Education Center in Covington, KY; St. Charles Care Center in Ft. Wright, KY; and St. Claire Regional Medical Center in Morehead, KY. The sisters have served in education in this area since their arrival in the United States in 1874.

Currently, there is much focus on education in the city of Covington. Using the Covington, Kentucky Education Data charts from 2020, Covington has a High School Graduation rate of 84% while 25% of people living in Covington have a Bachelors' Degree or higher. Therefore, there is a smaller pool of people with higher education in the community. Many adults in poverty are reported to have had a negative experience of school which is often passed from one generation to the next. Early childhood is receiving the strongest focus by the educational community as there is the need to encourage this age population to develop a positive attitude toward school. Another factor leading to the high dropout rate is the fact that many of the children in poverty come from predominately single parent homes. Single mothers try to work and support their children when often they themselves lack basic employment or educational skills. Further, these mothers often lack the parenting skills and resources to support their children and to encourage them in their schoolwork.

NDUEC is a sponsored ministry of the Sisters of Notre Dame to continue their mission to serve the poor and marginalized members of the Covington community. NDUEC was created to provide educational support services to individuals and families in the urban area in a faith-based context. These services are provided in an integrated model that strengthens both individuals and families. The hope is that persons will develop their talents, continue their education, and contribute to the building up of the community.

NDUEC's transformative educational programs have been established which contain a strong and effective tutoring component to increase a children's success in the classroom. Other parts of the program include enrichment activities, fitness, critical thinking, and creative play. These are designed to build self-esteem and confidence. Individuals who wish to work collaboratively to meet the needs of those served are welcome. Volunteers play a unique role in direct service to the children or in assisting with the mission to help others.

Purpose of the Volunteer Program

The purpose of the Volunteer Program is to develop and coordinate activities for volunteers that promote and expand Notre Dame Urban Education Center's mission and programs.

- *To assist and support NDUEC* in order to more effectively serve the educational needs of the children.
- *To provide an environment* in which the skills and interests of the volunteer may be utilized for the benefit of both NDUEC and the volunteer.

The Volunteer Coordinator is the volunteer's representative on staff. The Coordinator is responsible for the operation of the overall volunteer program. This includes recruiting, interviewing, placement, orientation, record-keeping, recognition, and publicity of volunteer activities.

Volunteers are unpaid personnel assigned to various areas of the Center in which they perform needed functions and receive training, support and supervision. The tasks of volunteers are defined by position descriptions.

Volunteer Position Descriptions

Administrative Support

Volunteers may provide clerical assistance to the staff and administration. Volunteers serve as receptionists who answer incoming calls as well as greet the children and visitors who come to the Center.

Early Learning

Volunteers assist the children under the direction of the Early Learning teacher with their daily routine.

Homework PLUS

Volunteers who participate in the tutoring session commit to remain with NDUEC for a semester at a time. The primary purpose of the tutoring program is to assist the children with their classroom assignments. Volunteer tutors may assist children with computer-based activities and/or play an educational game. NDUEC focuses on the improvement of reading and math skills. Volunteers may assist the enrichment coordinators to instruct and guide the children with the enrichment activities.

Summer Academics

Summer Academics is held during the four weeks in June. The volunteers assist the children to complete their Summer Solution books for Math, English, and Reading.

Volunteer Essentials

Appreciation

Notre Dame Urban Education Center recognizes the many gifts that the volunteers bring to the Center throughout the year. The Center shows its appreciation to its volunteers both formally and informally during the year including social media, the Christmas Celebration, the observation of National Volunteer Week in April, and in the Annual Report.

Background Check & Sexual Misconduct

Volunteers, eighteen years of age and older, are subject to a routine background check for the purpose of discovering any record of child abuse, misuse, or endangerment. They also are asked to sign the Diocesan Policy on Sexual Misconduct and are expected to complete the Protecting God's Children training program as well as any on-going training of this nature. All must be Virtus compliant.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an essential element in maintaining an effective and successful educational organization. It is imperative that all volunteers keep all written or verbal information concerning the children and their families, obtained either directly or indirectly, strictly confidential. Further, information cannot be sought regarding a child or family unless that information is necessary for the completion of the volunteer's work.

Ending Volunteer Service at NDUEC

If it is necessary for a volunteer to resign for any reason or when a volunteer completes a specific project, the Volunteer Coordinator should be notified as soon as possible. Occasionally it becomes necessary for NDUEC to ask a volunteer to leave because a placement is not suitable or performance is unsatisfactory. Volunteers showing no service time recorded for one year will be automatically retired.

Emergency Procedures

Exits are clearly marked in case of the need for emergency evacuation. If you should see a child or family member, staff person, or other volunteer involved in an accident, do not attempt to move the person or administer first aid. Contact the Program Director or staff personnel.

Grievance

Notre Dame Urban Education Center endeavors to treat volunteers fairly and justly. It is hoped that most disagreements can be resolved in a collective and constructive spirit. The Volunteer Coordinator should be contacted when there is a problem. If the disagreement cannot be resolved through negotiations, the volunteer may submit in writing an appeal to the Executive Director. The volunteer is entitled to a hearing with the Executive Director in the presence of the supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator.

Harassment

It is the policy of NDUEC that no volunteer or employee shall be subjected to harassment because of ethnicity, creed, gender, age, physical ability, or sexual orientation. Harassment of this nature is expressly prohibited. Sexual harassment which consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or acts as a condition of continued service, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which interferes with an individual's performance, is expressly prohibited. Any incidents of harassment should be reported to the Executive Director.

Inclement Weather Days

Volunteers should watch WLWTV Channel 5 or check NDUEC's Facebook page for the school closings to check for inclement weather closings.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered and indemnified under the same policy as paid staff while engaged in NDUEC approved activities. Coverage includes liability and malpractice but does not cover any criminal or intentionally negligent acts. Insurance is provided through the Christian Brothers Service.

Orientation & Training

All persons wishing to volunteer with Notre Dame Urban Education Center are interviewed by the Volunteer Coordinator. At that time, the various opportunities for volunteering at NDUEC will be explored as well as the special interests, skills and abilities of the candidate. This discussion allows for the best possible match between volunteer and position. The potential volunteer is given a tour of the Center with an explanation of the programs and procedures. Introductions to appropriate staff will also occur at this time. The Volunteer Handbook as well as some practical information about the Center will be discussed.

Each applicant is expected to complete an informational packet which includes a request for references and permission to complete background inquiries as required by law. The Virtus program through the Diocese of Covington must also be completed by all individuals eighteen years of age or older. All information is contained in the volunteer's confidential record which is available to the volunteer upon request.

Parking

Parking is available in the city lot which is located directly across the street from the Center. There is a pass for volunteers to place on the dashboard of their car. Volunteers should **not** park in the lot next to NDUEC. They should be aware of local parking restrictions if choosing to park on the street. There are several parking spaces reserved for handicapped individuals in the back of NDUEC.

Student/Youth Volunteers

Notre Dame Urban Education Center provides volunteer opportunities for students and youths. When the student/youth applies to NDUEC, it is expected that appropriate documentation and orientation will be completed. However, there is no background check completed on students and youths. A permission/release form from the parent/guardian must be completed.

Tax Deductions

Mileage expenses to and from NDUEC as well as any additional mileage expenses incurred while doing NDUEC work may be allowable income tax deductions. There may be other costs incurred as a result of the responsibilities of a volunteer position that are tax deductible as well. The IRS provides detailed information on allowable deductions for contributed services in the free Publication #526, "Charitable Contributions". A copy of this booklet is on file in the Volunteer Office or it may be accessed via the Internet. Volunteers are encouraged to seek their own counsel for an opinion as to the eligibility of these deductions.

Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours are tabulated monthly and are kept on file. High school students may request their service hours so they can be reported to their respective high schools. The Program Director signs forms for the high school volunteers.

Volunteer time is valuable in reflecting the participation and accomplishments of the volunteer program. It allows the Board, potential funding organizations, and others to recognize the value of community support given through volunteer service to NDUEC.

Volunteer Records

The Volunteer Coordinator maintains volunteer files: emergency contact information; confidentiality agreement; Virtus documents; Covid-19 waiver form (as required during the Covid-19 pandemic); and any information pertinent to the volunteer's work. When this information changes, the Volunteer Coordinator needs to be notified immediately.

Rights of the Volunteer

- To be interviewed carefully and appropriately assigned to a meaningful position.
- To receive adequate orientation and training to meet the responsibilities of the position.
- To be given supervision and feedback regarding the volunteer's performance.
- To be given opportunities for growth.
- To be treated with respect.
- To make suggestions.
- To be recognized for service.
- To decline any task with which the volunteer is uncomfortable.
- To contact the Program Director or Volunteer Coordinator if any difficulties are experienced with an assignment.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

- Complete the required application paperwork and attend orientation and training sessions. All volunteers must be Virtus compliant.
- Be prompt and dependable. Please notify NDUEC if you are not able to keep your scheduled time. Email or voicemail is appreciated.
- Please sign in on arrival.
- To abide by the policies and procedures of NDUEC
- To keep all written or verbal information about the children or families confidential.
- Communicate to the Program Director and Volunteer Coordinator any questions, problems, suggestions and/or concerns the volunteer may have.
- Attend scheduled orientation, training and volunteer presentations.
- Keep personal records, health forms and hours served up to date.
- Contact the Volunteer Coordinator if moving or otherwise leaving volunteer service.
- Never arrive to your volunteer assignment under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Using alcohol, drugs or tobacco during your volunteer time is prohibited. Weapons are not permitted on NDUEC's campus.
- Support the work sent by the classroom teacher and staff.
- The volunteer's role is one of assistance.
- Photos will only be taken by staff personnel.
- Volunteers should follow business casual guidelines for dress.
- Volunteers will be shown where personal belongings may be stored; however, NDUEC cannot be held responsible for losses.

Benefits to the Volunteer

- Acquisition of new job skills and valuable experience.
- An environment of mutual support and respect between staff and volunteers.
- Establishment of a record of successful work experience.
- Exposure to the education field.
- Formal recognition for services rendered.
- Liability insurance coverage while performing volunteer duties.
- Opportunity to participate in NDUEC's mission of service.
- Personal development and self-fulfillment.
- Tax deductible cost of transportation to and from NDUEC as well as the cost of other expenses incurred because of volunteer work.
- Written reference if needed for continuing education or employment.

Right to Amend: Statements in the handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. Notre Dame Urban Education Center will attempt to keep you informed of all changes as soon as is practical; however, some changes might be necessary immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.