

Caring Neighbors, Inc.

Aging in Place

With the help of caring neighbors

Volunteer Handbook



Caring Neighbors, Inc.
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Caring Neighbors Volunteer Handbook

We extend an enthusiastic and warm welcome to you as a volunteer for Caring Neighbors. We hope that you will find your work with us meaningful and enjoyable. Your work benefits our organization as well as our neighbors and their families. The time and service you contribute are greatly appreciated. We thank you for becoming a volunteer for Caring Neighbors and hope that the service you provide will enrich *your* life as well as the lives of our community.

The information that follows will familiarize you with Caring Neighbors and what is expected of you as a volunteer. Please carefully review all information. You will find it important as you begin your volunteer service. **“Neighbor” refers to any person who we have interviewed and for whom we provide a service.**

Caring Neighbors Mission Statement

To provide non-medical services by screened volunteers that will enable Bluffton residents to age in the comfort of their homes with confidence and security.

Caring Neighbors was established on the premise that when neighbors help neighbors everyone benefits. We provide services and resources that support and enhance independent living and wellness for all Bluffton residents. All of our services are provided free of charge at this time.

Services are generally provided by **carefully screened volunteers**. When volunteers are unable to provide a particular service, the neighbor may choose assistance from a list of reliable vendors whose services they may employ. Although we strive to serve as many neighbors as possible, Caring Neighbors cannot take the place of a health care provider, assisted living facility, or skilled nursing facility for those who require medical care or intensive custodial services.

Our services are based on what our community wants and needs to age in place. We will mutually discover what is needed and possible for us to provide.

Caring Neighbors, Inc. will be referred to as CNI in the rest of this handbook

The Mission of Volunteer Services

The mission of Volunteer Services is to develop, maintain, and continually improve the quality of our volunteer program, and to enhance the services we provide to neighbors in our community. We hope to personally enrich the lives of our volunteers by providing them with a way to fulfill the human need to nurture others.

Introduction to Volunteering

Volunteers are instrumental to the success of CNI. Each volunteer is expected to be a good will ambassador for CNI and to positively represent the organization to neighbors and to the community that we serve. We value volunteer suggestions for improving our services.

CNI appreciates and values the time and the talent volunteers bring to our organization. In return, we believe that volunteers have the responsibility to honor the commitments they make to CNI. Before they begin work, volunteers are expected to undergo orientation to ensure their understanding of the policies and procedures of CNI.

As a volunteer, you have the responsibility to let us know your capabilities, to perform work to the best of your abilities, and to not exceed the boundaries of the requested service. You have the right and responsibility to politely refuse assignments with which you are uncomfortable or do not feel you have the ability or training to handle. You may also refuse an assignment that you deem unsafe or compromising in any way. If ever questions arise regarding your responsibilities, CNI welcomes and expects volunteers to ask for further information or clarification. Clear and open communications between you and CNI are essential. Please discuss all questions and/or problems with a board member as quickly as possible. Your concerns are always important to us.

In this handbook, CNI is attempting to anticipate most of the situations that volunteers may encounter. If you feel there is additional vital information that ought to be included, we would appreciate receiving that feedback from you.

Service Standards

The values of CNI - **Caring, Respect, Excellence, Confidentiality and Communication** - shape and influence all of our decisions and actions. Our service standards reflect these values. We expect all members of our team to adhere to these service standards.

1. We will treat our neighbors with sensitivity, dignity and courtesy.

Courtesy and Communication

Greet neighbors pleasantly, using the neighbor's title and last name unless asked to do otherwise; always introduce yourself and offer to be of assistance. For example: *“Good Morning Mrs. Jones, my name is Sarah AND I AM A VOLUNTEER WITH CARING NEIGHBORS. I will be taking you to your doctor's appointment today. Do you need help getting into the car?”*

Please give a neighbor your full attention, taking the time to listen. Take your cues from neighbors as to what they would like to talk about. Avoid asking personal questions. Let the neighbor tell you what they are comfortable with. It is usually best to avoid discussion of controversial subjects (for example, politics or religion) with neighbors or their families.

Personal Appearance

As a volunteer, you represent CNI to its neighbors and the public. Neighbors will have more confidence in you and in CNI if you present a positive and professional demeanor. While performing your service, treat neighbor's possessions with care, do not smoke, and do not carry any weapons, illegal drugs, or alcohol when serving for CNI.

Managing Complaints

If there is an expression of dissatisfaction with our services, do not be defensive. Ask if there is anything you can do to rectify the situation. If you are unable to resolve the issue, speak with the Volunteer Coordinator.

2. We will ensure our neighbor's right to privacy

All neighbor information is considered protected and private and should be held in the **strictest confidence**. Never refer to or discuss, with anyone other than the Chairman of the Board, a neighbor's identity, personal information, services they request or receive, or any information you may acquire through your work as a volunteer. CNI maintains a “Need to Know” philosophy. This means that a neighbor's information is not accessed or shared with anyone, unless that person legitimately needs it to fulfill his or her duties/assignments. Volunteers can be a wonderful source of comfort to neighbors. While you are visiting with or assisting others, they may share personal details about themselves. Neighbors must know that they can trust you to keep these conversations confidential.

Assignments and Schedule Changes

After you have completed all the Caring Neighbor volunteer paper work and background checks are done, your name will be sent to the volunteer who schedules assignments through signupgenius.com. You will receive an email inviting you to sign in. The volunteer then establishes a personal log in. At that point you are able to open the Caring Neighbors calendar. Simply click on those assignments you are able to do. If you need to change an assignment and you can work that out with another volunteer, change the assignment on the calendar through deleting what you can no longer do and entering what you are now planning to do. Be sure to let the Volunteer Scheduler know of the changes. If you are not ready to work on the computer sign up, the coordinator will help you with assignments until you are ready to sign into the computer program.

If there are needs that come in after the calendar has been published a separate email will be sent to all volunteers asking for someone to fill that specific need.

Volunteers are asked to call the Neighbor the night before any assignment they take on to confirm the time and place.

Commitment/Attendance

As a volunteer, once you have accepted an assignment, CNI depends on you to follow through. We ask that you be committed to your volunteer schedule and tasks. If for any reason, you are unable to fulfill an assignment, it is your responsibility to notify the Volunteer Scheduler in sufficient time so that a replacement can be identified. CNI depends on you.

You are asked to send in your CNI volunteer hours monthly, so please keep track of these. They are important for us for applying for grants and working with other agencies. Also, if you no longer report any hours for several months with no notification to the coordinator, your name will be removed from the volunteer list and you will no longer receive messages from CNI. (Termination on page 9)

Transportation

Volunteers who drive neighbors to and from appointments should keep their automobiles clean. Please be courteous and do not play the radio unless a neighbor prefers that. Refrain from cell phone use while driving a neighbor. Do not use a neighbor's automobile unless this is authorized by the Volunteer Coordinator when you are given the assignment. **DO NOT SMOKE** while driving a neighbor!

Please abide by all traffic laws and drive in a manner that ensures the member's safety at all times.

Once you have an assignment, please contact the neighbor to confirm time and location of pickup. Please ask the neighbor to take their **File of Life** form with them. This is an emergency precaution and has all important medical information on it. Be sure to take the neighbor's profile that should be given to you when you take an assignment. It will have address, phone number and emergency contacts. If you do not have a profile, contact the volunteer coordinator and she will email it to you.

Park near the neighbor's house or designated meeting place, get out of the car, greet the neighbor and, if necessary, assist the neighbor into the car. When taking a neighbor to a doctor's office, please make sure to discuss the time and location for pickup following the appointment, or ask if the neighbor would like you to wait in the waiting room. CNI does not want to have a neighbor waiting alone or waiting outside for a ride from the volunteer. This is a safety precaution and one of the benefits that a CNI neighbor can expect. After the appointment, you may need to confirm the neighbor's next appointment with the office staff. When taking a neighbor home or to another designated area, please pull over to the curb and assist the neighbor out of the car, if necessary, and into the location.

If you are driving a neighbor and your car breaks down, please consider the neighbor's comfort and safety. Be sure to have a cell phone with you to call for help

If you are driving a neighbor and you have an accident, please make every effort to ensure the safety of the neighbor by calling 911 if necessary. Also, please report this to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Basic safety kit for your car: paper towels or terry towel, disinfectant, rubber gloves, tissues, band aids, plastic bag, tissues, and flashlight. You may think of other items as you transport volunteers. Please carry CELL PHONE in case of an emergency. Take a phone number for contact person, and the neighbor's FILE OF LIFE

Volunteering in a Neighbor's Home

Please be respectful at all times while working in a neighbor's home. If you need to use the telephone, please make sure to ask for permission first. Refrain from using the neighbor's computer for your personal use. Remember that you are a guest in the house. Please tidy up after your job is completed and let the neighbor know that you are leaving.

Be mindful of your limits and communicate those limits to the neighbor if necessary. If you are asked by the neighbor to do something that you do not know how to do, or are not comfortable doing, or that you do not have time right then to do, please communicate that to the neighbor. Make sure the neighbor realizes that you will

request that the needed task be done at a later time. Please report this to the volunteer coordinator by phone or email.

Companions

When volunteering as a companion for those who want a friendly visit or a break for a spouse, please remember that you are there for companionship only. Reading to a neighbor, talking, or keeping a neighbor company is what a companion does. **CNI volunteers are not in neighbor s' homes as medical professionals of any kind.** We are not Home Health and we are not licensed. **Please do not assist with or attempt any sort of nursing care. Remember to be a good listener but do not give medical advice. Notify the volunteer coordinator if these services are needed.**

Volunteer Callers

Several neighbors live alone and like to receive a friendly phone call on a routine basis. If the neighbor has a need, please contact the volunteer coordinator to assign someone. When you make the phone call to an assigned neighbor:

1. Identify yourself as a Caring Neighbor Volunteer
2. Set a specific time to call your assigned neighbor (when they prefer)
3. NO ANSWER – call back in 30 minutes and then again in 30 minutes.
4. If still no answer call the neighbor's local contact person who has a key to their house.
5. If no one is able to reach the neighbor, contact Rose Hill security gate person and they will check on them.
6. Report the incident to the Volunteer Coordinator in a timely manner.

Grocery Shopping

The Neighbor will need to purchase a gift card from Publix for the method of payment. The neighbor will give a detailed shopping list to the volunteer along with the gift card. The neighbor will keep the gift card updated. The assigned volunteer will get the gift card from the Neighbor and pick up the order that day and deliver to the neighbor's home. If requested, the volunteer can assist with putting the food away.

Insurance

Driving volunteers must have their own liability insurance coverage. A copy of the front page of the auto insurance is required by CNI Insurance Company. CNI volunteers may want to carry an addition to their insurance coverage to cover them while volunteering.

CNI understands that over time, friendships will develop with neighbors. If you choose to give the neighbor your phone number and they call you for a request,

remember that this is not a CNI assignment and it will not be counted for CNI hours and it will not be covered under CNI insurance if anything happens.

Medical Emergencies

If a neighbor has a medical emergency while you are volunteering for CNI, please dial 911 and wait for the appropriate emergency services to arrive. Do not leave the neighbor until help has arrived. Report the incident to the Volunteer Coordinator in a timely manner.

Feedback/Suggestions/Questions

Any constructive criticisms, comments, questions or concerns of neighbors or others should be directed to the Volunteer Coordinator. This also includes suggestions for improving volunteer services. You can do this by email, phone, or ask for a personal meeting.

Telephones

We ask that all volunteers, if at all possible, carry a cell phone when working with our neighbors. This is especially important if you sign up to transport members. In case of an emergency, you will have the ability to **call 911**. We ask that you refrain from lengthy personal calls while working with our neighbor.

CNI's Volunteer 3 M DO NOTS:

MONEY - Check writing and paying bills: CNI will have a trained person to do this. Volunteers must not get involved in neighbor's finances. Please let the Volunteer Coordinator know if a member needs check writing, etc. If this task is too extensive for our trained volunteer, then we have reliable vendors to whom we can refer neighbors. Volunteers are not permitted to accept gifts or tips or monies from neighbors.

MEDICAL - Filling pill dispensers: CNI volunteers are not to dispense medications to a neighbor. We are not licensed medical volunteers. Suggest that a close friend or family member sort medication if a medical person is not available and the service is needed by the neighbor.

MANAGE - Volunteer assignments: All assignments are scheduled through Sign Up Genius and the Volunteer Scheduler. Please do not accept additional assignments from a neighbor. Do not give out your phone number or ask neighbors

to call you directly. Instead, make sure a neighbor understands that all assignments are made by the Volunteer Scheduler. Thanks for your cooperation in this.

Solicitation and Distribution

Volunteers are not permitted to distribute material or to solicit neighbors of CNI for any purpose at any time.

Change of Contact Information

Please let CNI know if you have any change in your address, telephone number or emergency information. Email this information to info@caring-neighbors.org or leave a message at 843-368-2096.

Volunteer Termination

If it is necessary for you to discontinue your volunteer work, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator or the CNI Director as soon as you can so that arrangements can be made in a timely fashion for your replacement. CNI reserves the right to terminate from service any volunteer whose absence or lateness is continuous or who violates the policies and confidentiality agreement of CNI.

**Thank you for your time and commitment to
Caring Neighbors, Inc. and to our mission.**