

Caring Neighbors, Inc.

Aging in Place

With the help of caring neighbors

Volunteer Handbook



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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 with the Volunteer Coordinator 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 the Phone Manager at 843-368-2096 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. Avoid discussion of controversial subjects (for example, politics or religion) with neighbors or their families.

Sexual abuse is a sexual behavior or sexual act forced upon a person without their consent. Caring Neighbors will not tolerate such behavior and report any complaints received to the authorities. The person accused of abuse will no longer be associated with Caring Neighbors.

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 Phone Manager.**

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 Phone Manager, Volunteer Coordinator or the CNI Director, 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 Coordinator who schedules assignments through signupgenius.com. You will receive an email inviting you to sign in and establish a personal log in. At that point you are able to open the CNI calendar.

The needs are added to this online calendar on a monthly basis, and sent out two weeks in advance of the coming month. CNI sends out reminders when the calendars are published, as new requests are received, and weekly to advise of any unfilled requests.

For all your signups, you will receive an email from Sign Up Genius two (2) days before the day of the need. *However, once you have signed up to assist someone for a medical appointment, you MUST contact the neighbor right away to let them know their need is covered.* For all other needs, the Sign Up Genius email is your reminder to call the neighbor **2 days in advance** and let them know you will be coming. This allow you to confirm the time and place of the assignment.

During your phone conversation with the neighbor, confirm the scope of the request for service and if there are any additional needs. Should the neighbor request additional services, you will need to confirm that this need fits your time and is within the scope of our organization. **Contact the Phone Manager to approve and confirm that any additional requests can be added.** Once confirmed, call the neighbor back again to let them know that these need(s) can be added.

If you call and the neighbor does not answer, please leave a message for the neighbor to call you back to confirm the appointment. You are not required to make multiple calls to confirm an appointment. **If the neighbor does not call you back, you will NOT be covering their need. Please contact the Phone Manager to alert them about this issue.**

Commitment/Attendance

Assignments are typically for various transportation needs, household tasks, companionship and making calls to the homebound. Please sign up for medical appointments first and call the neighbor as soon as you have signed up.

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 call the Phone Manager in sufficient time so that a replacement can be identified.** After you have spoken with the Phone Manager, please go to sign up genius and delete your name.

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.

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 time

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 call the Phone Manager.**

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. Always carry a fully charged CELL PHONE in case of an emergency. Please take the neighbors profile summary with you as well, which can be downloaded from Signup Genius.

To reassure the comfort and safety of neighbors and drivers, it is suggested that everyone in the vehicle wear a mask and try to socially distance. The driver may wish to ask a neighbor to ride in the second seat on the passenger side of the car. This preferred driving arrangement should be clearly shared, with the neighbor, when calling the neighbor to confirm the transportation.

It is also suggested that the driver takes extra precautions by wiping off car surfaces before and after neighbors are transported to destinations and have sanitizer or sanitizing wipes available for the neighbor's use.

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. **Call the CNI Phone Manager if services beyond our scope 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 Phone Manager.

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. When you call at the assigned time; if NO ANSWER – call back in 30 minutes.
4. **If still no answer, call the Phone Manager**

Insurance

Driving volunteers must have their own liability insurance coverage. A copy of the front page of the auto insurance to CNI is required by CNI Insurance Company. CNI volunteers may want to carry an addition to their insurance coverage to cover them while volunteering. **If you have a car accident, you will be relying on your personal car insurance.**

CNI understands that over time, friendships will develop with neighbors, if they call you for a request, refer them to the CNI phone number, or pass the request to the Phone Manager to add this to the monthly schedule. **If you choose to fulfill this request on your own, remember that this is not a CNI assignment.**

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 CNI Phone Manager.

Feedback/Suggestions/Questions

Any constructive criticisms, comments, questions or concerns of neighbors or others should be directed to the Phone Manager. 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 carry a fully charged cell phone when working with our neighbors. This is especially important if you sign up to transport neighbors. In case of an emergency, you must have the ability to call 911. We ask that you refrain from any personal calls while working with our neighbors. Your cell phone contact list should include the Phone Manager number (843-368- 2096).

DO NOTS:

MONEY - Volunteers must not get involved in neighbor's finances. Please notify the Phone Manager if a neighbor makes such a request. Volunteers are not permitted to accept personal gifts or tips from neighbors.

MEDICAL - Volunteers are not to fill pill organizers or dispense medications to a neighbor. We are not licensed medical volunteers. **Alert the Phone Manager of this request.**

MANAGE - All assignments are scheduled on SignUp Genius by the Volunteer Coordinator. Please do not accept additional assignments from a neighbor that have not been preapproved. Do not ask neighbors to call you directly. Instead, make sure a neighbor understands that all requests are made through the CNI Phone Number.

SOLICITATION AND DISTRIBUTION - Volunteers are not permitted to distribute Non-CNI material or to solicit neighbors of CNI for any purpose.

Change of Contact Information

Please let CNI know if you have any change in your address, email address or telephone number. Email this information to caringneighbors@hotmail.com or leave a message at 843-368-2096.

Volunteer Termination

If it is necessary for you to discontinue your volunteer work, please call the Phone Manager so that arrangements can be made in a timely fashion for your replacement. CNI reserves the right to terminate from service any volunteer whose tardiness or absence is continuously disrespecting a neighbor, 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.

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