

2023

HOMEBASE YK

*Program Guidelines & Policies for
Volunteers*

A program run by Home Base Yellowknife
www.homebaseyk.com

2023



PRIMARY EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

- **Communicate with Home Base YK Staff** – Open and frequent communication with Home Base YK staff is fundamental to the volunteer experience. You will always be able to connect with the Volunteer Coordinator at any time, and you will also have key staff contacts based on the areas / program in which you are volunteering
- **Be a Good Friend & Mentor to Youth** – If you will be volunteering directly with youth, it is important for you to be consistent and reliable to the youth that you begin to develop a relationship with. If you are out of town for a prolonged period, ensure the Volunteer Coordinator and your key staff contacts are aware well ahead of time. By dedicating time to volunteering and showing the youth that you care, you can become an important figure in their life.
- **Be an Advocate for our Volunteer Program** – If you enjoy your time volunteering, please advocate for the program to your friends, family, and in the community! Advocacy is not only about promoting our youth activities, but also ensures its viability, impact, and sustainability in the long run. Advocacy creates a ripple effect, positively influencing recruitment, community engagement, resource mobilization, and overall program effectiveness

PROGRAM SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS

KITCHEN / COOKING VOLUNTEERS

- Plan and prepare nutritious meals for youth based on provided recipes
- Assist in creating grocery lists for meal preparation
- Maintain a clean and safe kitchen environment
- Commitment: can range from a one-time activity to longer term (ex. multi-year, ongoing volunteering weekly)

YOUTH CENTRE VOLUNTEERS

- Spend evenings at the Youth Centre engaging with youth
- Participate in planned activities and support staff in creating a safe and fun environment
- Be a positive role model for the youth
- Commitment: at least 6 months

WORKSHOP LEADER VOLUNTEERS

- Plan, advertise, and/or run classes or workshops for youth, hosted at the Youth Centre or at other community locations
- Collaborate with Home Base YK staff to ensure workshops align with organizational goals
- Share skills and knowledge to empower youth and provide them with opportunities to discover new interests
- Commitment: can range from a one-time activity to longer term (ex. multi-year, ongoing volunteering weekly)

RECREATION PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

- Join the recreation staff team to support youth during recreational programs
- Participate in various activities such as soccer, basketball, swimming, day trips, pottery, gymnastics, and more
- Ensure the safety and well-being of youth during recreational events
- Commitment: At least six months

REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE VOLUNTEERS

- Assist with repair and maintenance tasks at various youth housing program locations
- Follow safety protocols and report any hazards or concerns to staff
- Work collaboratively with other volunteers and staff to ensure the upkeep of facilities
- Commitment: can range from a one-time activity to longer term (ex. multi-year, ongoing volunteering weekly)

EMPLOYMENT AND TUTORING SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

- Support youth in reaching education and employment goals during the specified hours (1-3 pm, Monday - Friday at the Youth Centre)
- Assist with resume building, practice interview skills, and help with homework
- Foster a positive and encouraging atmosphere for youth to build self-confidence
- Commitment: At least six months

WHAT WILL NOT BE EXPECTED FROM YOU AS A VOLUNTEER

- *Provide basic necessities like food or money to youth*
- *Organize elaborate or expensive activities*
- *Act as a substitute for a parent, guardian, or teacher*
- *Take youth to appointments*
- *Act as a therapist or social worker*

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

1. **Paying out of pocket:** Volunteers are not expected to pay out of pocket for any activities, food, or materials. Talk to a Home Base YK staff member about the organization paying for these things if you have any ideas of how to offer the best services to youth
2. **Gifts:** Do not purchase gifts for youth at any time. You are volunteering your time and/or skills, and that's the most valuable thing for the youth
3. **Other People:** If there are other people in your life that you would like to invite to volunteer with you, they must complete the full volunteer onboarding process. Please direct them to the website www.homebaseyk.com/volunteer to fill out the sign-up form
4. **Scheduling and Commitment:** Ensure to follow through with the commitment and schedule initially agreed upon for your chosen volunteer role. Communicate any changes in availability to the Volunteer Coordinator in advance
5. **Contact Information:** If your contact information changes for any reason, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator and your key staff contacts at the organization
6. **Communication:**
 - a. Maintain open communication with the volunteer coordinator and key staff contacts. Promptly address any challenges, concerns, or suggestions with the appropriate personnel
 - b. Avoid telling the youth that they are 'high-risk' or 'vulnerable'. Refer to them only as 'participants' or 'young people'
7. **Feedback and Evaluation:** Participate in regular feedback sessions to assess performance and discuss areas for improvement. Provide constructive feedback on the volunteer experience to contribute to ongoing improvements

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM POLICIES

1. Program Specific Guidelines and Policies

- a. **Youth Center:** Follow established guidelines and policies at the Youth Centre to maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all youth. Communicate any concerns or incidents to staff promptly
 - b. **Recreation Program:** Follow established guidelines and policies for the Recreational Programs and report any concerns to staff. Encourage youth participation and engagement in recreational programs
2. **Safety and Hygiene:** For volunteers who will be spending time in the kitchen, adhere to food safety and hygiene standards in the kitchen. Consider any allergies or dietary restrictions of the youth when planning and preparing meals

3. **Repair and Maintenance:** Follow safety protocols and report any hazardous conditions promptly. Coordinate with staff and other volunteers to efficiently complete repair and maintenance tasks

4. **Confidentiality:** Respect the privacy and confidentiality of the youth, refraining from disclosing personal information without proper authorization

5. **Code of Conduct:** Adhere to a professional code of conduct, treating all individuals with respect and dignity. Avoid engaging in any form of discrimination, harassment, or inappropriate behaviour

6. **Training and Orientation:** Complete an orientation session covering organizational values, policies, and safety procedures. Specific training will be provided for each volunteer role to ensure competence and understanding

7. **Safety:**

a. **Boundaries:** Respect youth's personal boundaries. Refrain from tickling, wrestling, sitting on laps, backrubs, or touching games. Enforce your own personal boundaries around the youth for safety and to set a precedent. Do not put youth in a situation that is embarrassing, uncomfortable, dangerous, or otherwise inappropriate for them.

b. **Drugs and Alcohol:** Alcoholic beverages and drugs should not be consumed by volunteers before or during times they interact with their mentees

c. **Punishment:** Physical or corporal punishment of youth is prohibited

8. **Driving:** Safe driving is extremely important. Seat belts must be worn, and traffic laws must always be obeyed. Children 12 and under must sit in the back seat. For more information, check here: <https://www.inf.gov.nt.ca/en/services/highways-ferries-andwinter-roads/child-car-seat-safety>. If volunteers will be using their personal vehicle to drive youth, they must: a) provide a copy of their license and b) registration to the Volunteer Coordinator, and c) show proof of auto insurance annually with \$2 million liability insurance

a. Firearms, weapons, and ammunition must be secured and not accessible to youth

b. Adult literature, videos, photographs, etc. must not be accessible to mentees

9. **Child Abuse:** Volunteers are required to report any suspected child abuse to Child and Family Services. They can be reached directly during daytime hours (Monday to Friday 9 - 5 pm) at 867-767-9122 and at all other hours at 867-445-1092. Following any child abuse report, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator

10. **Secret-keeping:** Never keep secrets or promote secret-keeping with youth. This is a way to keep them safe. You can have surprises, but there must be a clear timeline when the surprise will be presented (for example, if a youth wants to give a surprise gift to their

friend, you can support them to keep it as a surprise for a few hours, but ensure they know when they will be giving the gift to their friend)

11. **Vulnerable Sector Check:** Volunteers must complete the RCMP Vulnerable Sector Check every year

SAFETY OF YOUTH

Youth safety is our top priority. All of our volunteers play an integral role in ensuring youth safety. Volunteers are responsible for modeling appropriate behaviours and supervising youth. Some important safety issues that may come to light during volunteering shifts include: internet safety, bullying, neighbourhood violence, medical conditions, interactions with strangers, and child abuse. Talk to the Volunteer Coordinator if something arises and you do not know how to handle it.

COMMUNICATION AND UPDATES

Volunteers are responsible for filling out the check-in form after every volunteer shift.

Once fully onboarded, volunteers will continue to receive support, advice, training, and positive reinforcement from the Volunteer Coordinator and key staff contacts. In general, we want to encourage open and frequent communication. Volunteers are expected to fill out a form after they spend time volunteering, to update the Volunteer Coordinator on your activities. This does not need to be extremely detailed, but it is a requirement. We want to hear about the great things you are doing when you volunteer! The form can be found here:


<https://forms.gle/VTzsJGKsh2qY8YRc8>.

If filling out an online survey is not possible for you on a regular basis, please connect with the Volunteer Coordinator about alternative ways to check in. A culture of support and communication is a key component of the volunteer experience.

In addition to filling out the check-in form, you can connect with Home Base YK through:

- Telephone or text;
- Face-to-face - Meeting or Home Base YK event;
- Email.

YOUR CONNECTION TO HOME BASE YK

 www.homebaseyk.com/volunteer

 <https://www.facebook.com/homebaseyk>

Check out our pages regularly for updates on activities and programs happening at Home Base YK.