



## **Volunteer Opportunities & Responsibilities**

### **Office/ Reception Assistance:**

Screening visitors, volunteers, workers, etc., taking phone messages/ directing calls, copying, filing, mailing, data entry.

### **BOOST Resource Center:**

Process and sort donations in our warehouse. Pick up donations from donors.

### **Food Pantry:**

Sort, stock, and create food boxes in our Food Pantry.

### **Tutoring:**

Help the children in our SPLASH homes to be successful students by giving homework help.

### **General Maintenance, Landscaping, & Labor:**

Minor carpentry, plumbing, painting, moving boxes or furniture, light groundskeeping, general maintenance.

### **Kitchen:**

Assist with food preparation, serving, and clean-up.

### **Prayer:**

Support our Ministry with a weekly prayer team.

### **Special Events:**

Help with concession stands, give-aways, games, etc.

### **Special Projects:**

Large group home improvement projects, sewing projects, running camps/kids programs.



gapministries

# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

## **Introduction**

Welcome to GAP Ministries! We would like to thank you for partnering with us and volunteering your time to our organization! We look forward to growing in ministry with you and seeing how God chooses to use you in our Ministry.

This Volunteer Handbook has been created to help you become more knowledgeable about volunteering at GAP. This book will share with you a little bit of our history, mission, practices, and policies, as well as the benefits provided to you as a volunteer.

Please don't hesitate to ask questions. The Volunteer Coordinator or any program manager will gladly answer any question you might have. We ask that you read this Handbook carefully and refer to it whenever questions arise.

Thank you again for choosing us as your organization to pledge your time to. Please share your experiences with your family, friends, and church to help make the community more aware of GAP and it's mission.

## **Mission & History**

The mission of GAP is this; through the empowerment of God, GAP Ministries will provide hope, help, and healing to those in need. We will defend the causes of the orphan, widow, hungry, and naked through practical community service. Partnering with others, we will fulfill His mandate to be one. As we serve together, unity is established and the walls of religion and culture crumble.

In 1999 the founders of GAP Ministries, Greg and Pam Ayers, followed the plans that God was laying out before them and moved to Tucson. Starting with a food ministry out of their garage their family began to minister to the hurting in Tucson. In 2000, God opened a door to purchase a large home that would eventually become a powerful tool to impact hurting children's lives. With the help of local church congregations, volunteers, and local businesses the home was renovated to become a place of honor for the hurting children it was to serve. Through some tremendous acts of God GAP Ministries received a contract to serve abused and neglected children in Tucson through providing 24-hour residential care.

In a few short years after GAP was started it grew to 10 SPLASH homes dedicated to providing children with loving care. This remained until 2012 when two more houses were added making it possible to care for nearly 120 children. Along the way many community outreach programs were started within GAP including, MERGE, Backpack 2 School, Boost Resource Center, Block Party Outreach, and Holiday of Hope. GAP continues to grow and strives to reach the community it is surrounded by.

## **What to expect as a Volunteer**

- We will strive to find an assignment that is based upon your interests, skills, and availability as well as GAP needs.
- We will give you the opportunity to work as part of a team, to contribute to the welfare of the community and the organization, and to be recognized for your contribution.
- We will strive to provide the necessary equipment, supplies, work space and helpful supervision.
- We will treat you as a fellow team member who contributes to GAP Ministries' goals through your volunteer work.
- We will give you the opportunity to give us feedback about your volunteer experience.
- You can expect that volunteer records will be kept documenting volunteer experience, positions held, training, evaluation and commendation.

## **What GAP expects from a Volunteer**

- Please be realistic and candid in accepting your assignments, taking into consideration your personal time frames and responsibilities as well as the needs of GAP.
- Learn the details of your volunteer assignments as well as you can by completing all training, asking questions, and staying in touch with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Please inform the Volunteer Coordinator or direct supervisor as soon as possible of any planned absences or lateness.
- Help us provide services to many in need by being reliable and dependable in doing your volunteer assignment and working with other volunteers and staff.
- Please follow all policies and guidelines of GAP such as observing confidentiality when needed and engaging in appropriate public behavior at all times.
- Please participate in the feedback process by letting GAP know how you feel about your volunteer experience and by giving us constructive suggestions for improvement in any areas.
- Develop your skills as a volunteer by participating in training and development opportunities. Learn as much as you can to do the best job possible.
- We ask that our volunteer make a minimum commitment of 4 hours per month.

## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Job Descriptions**

Job Descriptions for each volunteer position are available. Please be sure to review the description pertaining to the volunteer duties you are assigned.

### **Criminal Background Check**

Before you can become an active volunteer, you will need to complete a release of information form in order for us to perform a Criminal Background Check. This information will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the Volunteer Coordinator. Background criminal checks are required due to the nature of the children we serve. After receiving a report the Volunteer Coordinator will schedule your volunteer assignment. Thank you for entrusting us with your personal information and sharing our concern for others.

### **Standards of Conduct**

As a volunteer, you have a responsibility to GAP Ministries and to your fellow volunteers to adhere to certain guidelines for conduct. The purpose of these rules is not to restrict your rights, but rather to be certain that you understand what conduct is expected and necessary. When each person is aware that he or she can fully depend upon fellow volunteers to follow the rules of conduct, then our organization will be a better place to volunteer for everyone.

#### *Unacceptable Activities*

Generally speaking, we expect each person to act in a mature and responsible way at all times. However, to avoid any possible confusion, some of the more obvious unacceptable activities are noted below. Your avoidance of these activities will be to your benefit as well as the benefit of GAP Ministries. If you have any questions concerning any volunteer or safety rule, or any of the unacceptable activities listed, please see the Volunteer Coordinator for an explanation.

If a volunteer violates any rules established by GAP Ministries, including the following rules, that person may be subject to discipline up to, and including, immediate discharge:

- Willful violation of any agency rule; any deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is obviously detrimental to GAP Ministries;
- Negligence or any careless action which endangers the life or safety of another volunteer or recipient;
- Possession or use of all illegal drugs or other illegal substances is prohibited;
- Unauthorized possession of dangerous or illegal firearms, weapons or explosives while providing volunteer services;
- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or making threats of violence toward anyone on agency premises or when representing GAP Ministries;
- Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions properly issued by your supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator;

- Threatening, intimidating, coercing, or abusing fellow volunteers or recipients;
- Dishonesty; willful falsification or misrepresentation on your application for volunteering or other volunteer records; alteration of agency records or other agency documents;
- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs when providing volunteer services; and
- Breach of confidentiality of personal information.

### **Statement of Risk and Concern**

GAP Ministries is concerned that the health, safety, and welfare of our staff, volunteers, and the children placed in our care be protected to the greatest extent possible. We invite you to join in this concern, to offer suggestions, reports and comments wherever and whenever you believe that these will aid in protecting the health, safety and welfare of all involved with the agency. We urge you to use your best efforts in this endeavor. We expect you to act responsibly in all matters where your own health condition, your actions, and your observation may affect ours or anyone else's health, safety or welfare.

Volunteers are urged to use general caution when on GAP property to prevent the risk of injury. Abiding by general rules and direction from a supervisor is key to aid in this process. Volunteers incurring injuries during time of service will be properly cared for and the appropriate emergency numbers called.

Volunteers working with children in a child care facility such as GAP Ministries may be exposed to communicable illnesses common to young children, covering the entire spectrum from minor illnesses to major ones. Because children may be left with GAP without detailed or complete or accurate health history information, it is often difficult or impossible to evaluate the risk of exposure to illness associated with any particular child. As we are concerned about the welfare of our volunteers as well as their families, we urge volunteers to practice universal precautions. When these techniques and precautions are followed, the risk of contracting communicable illnesses can be greatly reduced.

### **Confidential Information**

GAP Ministries staff and volunteers adhere to Arizona state law (ARS 41-1959) requiring confidentiality of children and families involved in dependency proceedings. As you work with GAP staff, information of a confidential matter may be shared with you. You must not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know it. No one is permitted to remove or make copies of any GAP records, reports or documents without prior approval. Release of confidential information to unauthorized persons may result in dismissal from your volunteer service.

### **Media Policy**

We understand that as a volunteer you will want to share your experiences with your friends on the internet with photos of the work you did, please refrain from posting pictures of the children in our care on the internet. Due to the sensitivity of the cases of our children this is not allowed by CPS.

### **Smoke and Drug Free Environment**

GAP Ministries is a drug free workplace and asks all volunteers to abide by this policy. All GAP properties are considered smoke free. Please refrain from smoking on the premises.

## **Volunteer Grievances**

Volunteer grievances are of concern to GAP Ministries, regardless of whether the problems are large or small. There will be no discrimination against or toward anyone for his or her part in presenting a grievance.

Under this policy, a grievance is defined as any event, condition, rule, or practice which the volunteer believes violates his or her civil rights, treats him or her unfairly, or causes him or her a high degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude, a statement, or an opinion held by a supervisor, manager or volunteer. We encourage you first to take your concerns to your supervisor and see if the issue can be resolved. If you feel uncomfortable in doing that, please seek to address your concerns by following the feedback procedures as follows:

1. Address your Volunteer Coordinator. If you feel that any volunteering condition, policy, practice, or action by GAP Ministries is unjust, you should request a meeting with the Volunteer Coordinator and discuss the matter confidentially. If for some reason the Volunteer Coordinator fails to offer you the opportunity to discuss the matter, or if the discussion does not lead to a satisfactory conclusion, then proceed to the next step.
2. Meet with the Executive Director. The Volunteer Coordinator's immediate supervisor, the Executive Director, will review the grievance and may ask to meet with you. At this meeting, you should feel free to openly discuss your complaint and substantiate your reasons for feeling the way you do. The Executive Director will have the final say as to resolution of your grievance.

## **Dress Code**

Personal appearance of both staff and volunteers is a direct reflection on the organization and should be conservative and tasteful at all times. We do ask that no sleeveless t-shirts, halter, spaghetti-strap or tank tops, short-shorts, or any clothing which is inappropriate for the workplace be worn when volunteering including any item with slogans or pictures inconsistent with our mission.

For our volunteers who are working at the front desk and who are on the "front line" to greet potential people who enter our offices, we ask that your dress be a little less casual in nature as you are the first person who folks such as donors, dignitaries, and city, state, and government officials see when they walk in our front door. For our volunteers who are working in the warehouse or construction worksite closed toed shoes are required.

## **Absences and Tardiness**

The positions that volunteers fill are critical to GAP. If you fail to show up or are late, we are left short-handed. If you are unable to report for your volunteer assignment or if you will arrive late, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator. The same rules apply when going on vacation; the sooner you can tell us the easier it is on us. Excessive absences may be cause for a discussion between you and the Volunteer

Coordinator concerning whether your currently assigned volunteer position is a “good fit” for you.

We know that many of our volunteers are seasonal visitors; please let us know when you are leaving for the summer. We will put notes on your availability in our database until you let us know that you have returned. Please note that if you have not volunteered in a 12 month period, we will request you attend another orientation and another criminal background check will be ordered. You may volunteer again as soon as you have been cleared to do so by the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Resignation**

While we hope both you and GAP Ministries will mutually benefit from your continued volunteering, we realize that it may become necessary for you to leave your volunteer position with GAP. If you anticipate having to resign your position, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator in writing as far in advance as possible and make arrangements for an exit interview.

### **Receiving Donations**

Many of our volunteers are eligible to receive products from our Good360 program or donations from GAP. We ask all volunteers to fill out the proper application forms to receive this help and not to take products in return for volunteering with our agency.



## Child Abuse & Maltreatment Reporting

Abuse can be physical, emotional, or sexual.

- Physical abuse is application of force that produces pain or injury. Spanking, beating, holding hard enough to bruise, cutting, scraping, burning and tying up a child are forms of physical abuse. Signs of physical abuse include injuries that are inconsistent with the story of how the injury occurred. Bruises on the face, abdomen, or backside of an infant and welts in the shape of a belt buckle, tree limb, cord; rope, and/or hand are suggestive of physical abuse.
- Emotional abuse occurs when adults treat children in developmentally inappropriate ways, damaging their spirit and self-esteem through belittling, verbal abuse or excessive demands. Emotionally abused children are recognized by the extremes of behavior they display: unusual aggressiveness, unusual shyness, or low self-esteem with an inability to accept praise. They are unhappy, often emotionally unresponsive or fearful.
- Sexual abuse of children is the use of a child for sexual gratification. Generally, privacy and secrecy are necessary for sexual abuse to occur. By far the most common situation is for sexual abuse to occur in childcare toileting facilities during times when fewer caregivers are present. Sexually abused children often show no indication other than an unusual interest in or knowledge of sexual matters. Children who have been violently sexually assaulted may exhibit difficulty walking, stained or bloody underwear, bruises or infections unusual for children, and extreme changes in behavior.

All staff and volunteer members at GAP Ministries have the responsibility for the care and treatment of the children placed in the home. Any knowledge of child maltreatment or abuse must be reported IMMEDIATELY via the following procedures:

1. Notify the Volunteer Coordinator and/or Program Director of GAP Ministries and take precautions to prevent further risk to the child who allegedly suffered the maltreatment and potential risk to other children in care.
2. With the direction of the Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Program Director report the suspected incidents of maltreatment to law enforcement (911) or CPS Hotline (1-888-767-2445).
3. The Volunteer Coordinator will notify the Program Director and the Program Director will notify the licensing authority and the child's CPS caseworker/placing agency.
4. The Program Director and/or Director of GAP Ministries will evaluate the retention of any staff or volunteer that commits or allows child maltreatment, and conduct an internal investigation if necessary.

All staff and volunteers are required to sign a statement that they understand their duty to report child maltreatment.