

MICAH House Volunteer Handbook



“Providing a safe and nurturing environment for those families and individuals experiencing the crisis of homelessness.”

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WELCOME

Thank you for your decision to make a difference in the lives of families and individuals in our community who are experiencing the crisis of homelessness. We are excited that you have chosen our agency to dedicate your time and skills. Volunteers are a vital piece of MICAHA House programs, and your involvement helps us remain successful in our program delivery and day-to-day operations. We hope your volunteer experience will increase your awareness of the services we provide and the people we serve. The following information packet includes details about our organization and the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers. Welcome to MICAHA House, and thank you for your support!

ABOUT MICAHA House

For 30 years, MICAHA House has been a haven for families and single females who are experiencing the crisis of homelessness. The organization has grown from when the first guest was served in 1987 to meeting the needs of more than 650 individuals annually through extensive integrated services that offer support, education and respect.

From infants to adults, MICAHA House is committed to developing and delivering the very best services while ensuring that each individual is given the opportunity to thrive.

Today, MICAHA House is the only shelter in the Council Bluffs and Omaha metro area committed to serving families and single females who are homeless. Our agency also offers a wide range of services including adult education and case management services designed to maximize independence and stability while promoting privacy, respect in an effort to aid in the transition to permanent housing.

Services Provided

MICAHA house is an emergency family homeless shelter for families and single females. Our facility, located on the Charles E. Lakin Human Services Campus has 23 rooms with a capacity of 90 individuals. The shelter provides a temporary and stable environment while assisting individuals in gaining employment, permanent housing and addressing personal crises.

Services include:

- Individualized Case Management
- On-site Social Work Coordinator
- Employment, budgeting and parenting education classes
- Free professional clothing
- Computer and internet access
- Food distribution services to guests of MICAHA house and surrounding community
- Three meals and two snacks daily
- Provide all basic needs (clothing, hygiene, baby products, etc.)

MICAH House also partners with the following agencies to provide additional support to our clients:

- Housing, outreach and counseling services provided by Heartland Family Service
- Financial and credit education classes provided by local credit advisors
- Health screenings and referrals providing by the Visiting Nurses Association
- Legal advice provided by Iowa Legal Aid

MICAH House Mission Statement

The mission of MICAH House is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for those families and individuals who are experiencing the crisis of homelessness.

Objectives and Goals of MICAH House

- Provide shelter for families and single women who are experiencing the crisis of homelessness in the Council Bluffs and Omaha Metro Area
- Provide a safe and nurturing environment for all MICAH House residents to promote independence and stability
- Provide adult educational opportunities to instill confidence in subject areas such as: budgeting, finance and parenting skills
- Provide meals and basic needs for all MICAH House residents in order for families to utilize their financial resources for securing transitional or permanent housing
- Promote public awareness of the need for housing opportunities for homeless families and the purpose and goals of MICAH House
- Network with other state and national organizations to provide additional resources and support services for MICAH House residents

Hours of Operation

MICAH House is a 24 hour facility, which is why our organization relies so heavily on our volunteers! Volunteers are welcomed to schedule their hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Donations are received at the back of MICAH House in the garage from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

Communications

At MICAH house, we strive to maintain open communication between our clients, staff and volunteers. You are encouraged to ask questions regarding programs, policies, challenges and responsibilities. With task related questions, please contact the MICAH House staff member supervising your volunteer activities. With program or organizational related questions, please contact the Community Relations and Development Specialist.

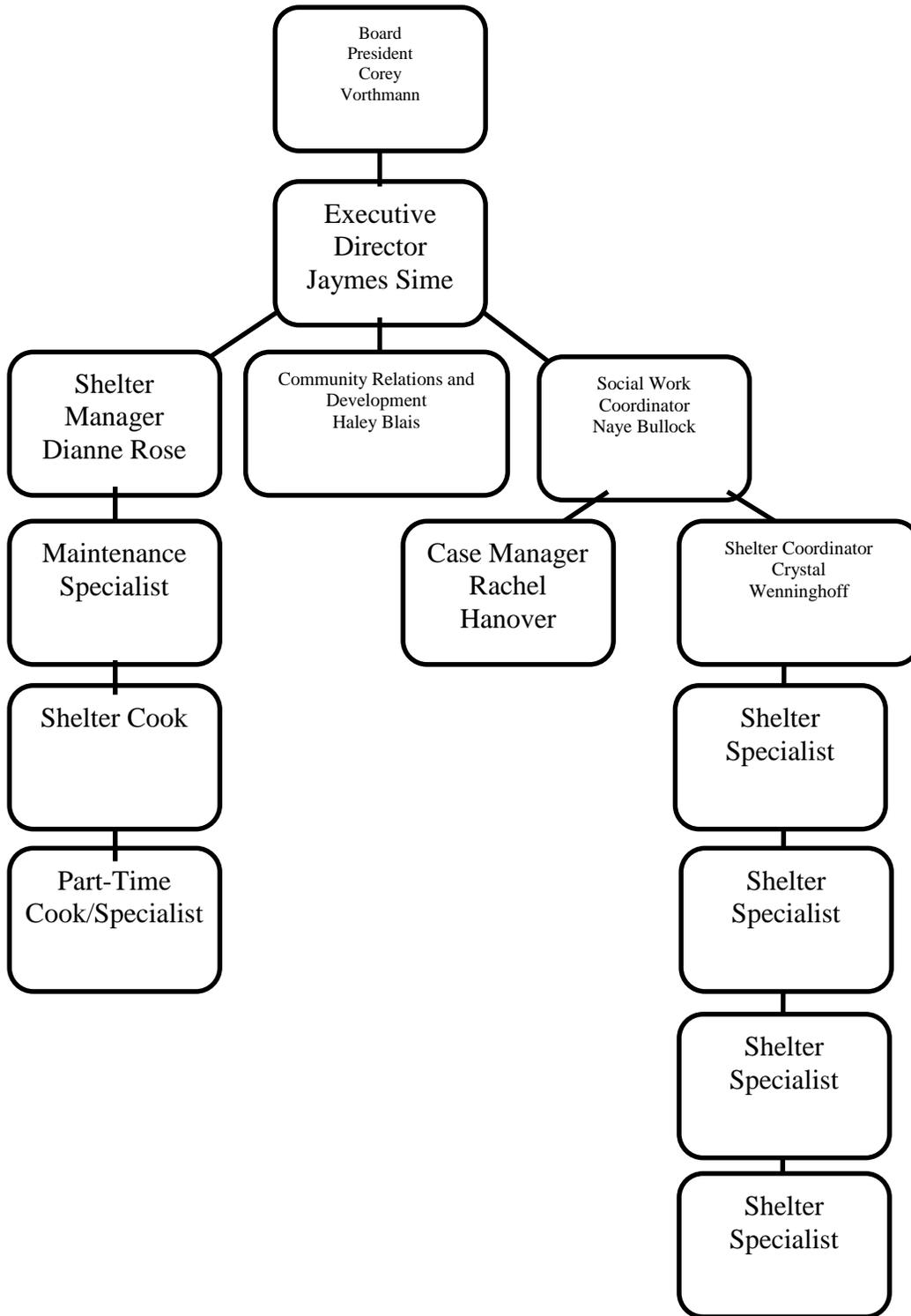
Staff and Volunteer Relations

Paid staff and volunteers come together at MICAH house to work toward achieving the mission, goals and objectives of the organization. Both contribute in significant ways, and volunteers are seen to compliment the work done by paid staff. Volunteers do not replace or displace paid positions. We value the experience and insights of both paid and volunteer staff and encourage feedback about our organization, processes and programs. Such feedback can be passed through respective supervisors.

Media

If approached by the media to provide a statement about MICAH House or your experience with our organization, please defer any response to the MICAH House Community Relations and Development Specialist or Executive Director. This policy prevents any misinformation and allows for consistency in MICAH House communications with the public.

Organizational Chart



VOLUNTEER SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The Importance of the Volunteer

Over the 30 years that MICAHA House has been operating, this organization has seen many milestones. Most recently, our annual fundraiser, the Champagne and Diamonds Benefit Auction, raised more than \$85,000 to support MICAHA House residents, and this feat would not have been possible without the involvement of MICAHA House volunteers, board members and guild members.

In addition, our program has grown from when the first guest was served in 1987 to serving more than 650 individuals annually 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. Volunteers have played a significant role in each of our milestones by contributing time, skills, enthusiasm and passion in all that they do. Volunteers have served in a variety of capacities in growing our organization. They have provided clerical services, participated in fundraising efforts, established critical donation routes, acted as advocates within our community and utilized personal skills to provide a high standard of resources for the families and individuals relying on MICAHA House. The work of our organization has been greatly extended through volunteer service into areas that other could not be considered because of limited resources. We are appreciative and grateful for all that our volunteers do and look forward to continued growth and relationship within the coming years.

Why Volunteer with MICAHA House?

My Reasons for Wanting to Volunteer with MICAHA House (select all that apply)

=

X		X	
	To get out of the house		To make contacts in the human services community
	To meet new people or make new friends		As an academic requirement
	To establish a track record to get a new job		To be in charge of something
	To try out a new career		To feel useful/needed
	To build confidence/self esteem		To make a transition to a new life
	As a break from other stresses in my life		To gain respect
	To rebuild on an old skill		To meet potential employers
	To help another person		To become an a board/committee/guild member
	To be with friends who volunteer		To have fun
	As an alternative to giving money		To get to know a new community
	To do something I love		As therapy
	To fulfill a community service requirement (for school, work, church, etc.)		To learn something new
	To test/challenge myself		To share what I know of the cause
	To spend quality time with my family by volunteering together		Because mom/dad/teacher etc. said I had to

Other reason for wanting to volunteer with MICAH House: _____

PERSONNEL POLICIES

Application Policy and Scheduling

Interested volunteers should submit the MICAH House Volunteer Application form available online at www.themicahhouse.org, or at the MICAH House front desk. This application also include authorization for a criminal records check and sex offender registry check. Volunteers may begin their service following review of application, record checks, phone screening and facility tour.

MICAH House staff supervisors will evaluate the abilities and competency of all volunteers and assign appropriate, safe activities as availability and conditions permit. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have a parent or legal guardian complete and sign the MICAH House Volunteer Application and sign a release of liability waiver. Volunteers under the age of 14 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian while volunteering at all times.

Volunteers should call MICAH House at least 24 hours in advance to schedule their service time and complete an accurate timesheet each of worked hours that includes arrival time, departure and tasks performed.

Attendance and Punctuality

MICAH House relies on its volunteers to operate efficiently on a day to day basis. As such, we appreciate those volunteers who are regular in attendance and punctual in arrival for their scheduled hours. If you are unable to attend a scheduled work day, or if you will arrive late, please contact the Community Relations and Development Specialist or your supervisor with as much notice as possible.

Boundaries and Safety

Volunteers should establish and maintain boundaries when interacting with clients. For the safety of both volunteers and clients, disclosing personal information or having a personal relationship with any client is prohibited. Please refrain from giving gifts, money or rides to clients during volunteer service hours at the shelter.

Community Service

MICAH House welcomes community service volunteers from civic groups, schools, community assistance programs and the judicial system. *Community service volunteers are responsible for maintaining an accurate timesheet and to ensure it is signed at the beginning and end of each day by a MICAH House supervisor or duly appointed person.*

Hours worked, but not recorded or signed off at the end of each day of service will not be counted. Three or more absences from scheduled volunteer days will be grounds for dismissal from the MICAH House community service volunteer opportunities.

Community service opportunities are unavailable for those who have charges of assault or abuse.

Community Service volunteers must also sign in and out at MICAH House's volunteer sign in sheets located at the front desk. MICAH House does not recognize breaks or lunches to be community service time. Only actual time work will be credited for community service. For appropriate placement within our organization, MICAH House reserves the right to know the offense related to court-ordered community service. In all other respects, court-ordered community service volunteers will be treated and held accountable to the same standards as all other volunteers.

Confidentiality

The safety and confidentiality of our clients is of the utmost importance. As a volunteer, we request that you maintain this policy in the shelter. Information regarding clients and staff should not be shared outside the facility.

Discrimination and Harassment

MICAH House admits guests regardless of age, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or social status. Discrimination against staff, other volunteers or clients will not be tolerated.

Drug Free Environment

MICAH House prohibits the possession, sale or use of alcohol and illegal drugs in the work place. Smoking tobacco on campus grounds is also prohibited.

Grievance Policy

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 any degree of unpleasantness or unhappiness on the job. A grievance may also deal with an attitude or an opinion or statement held by a staff member or fellow volunteer.

Volunteer grievances are of great concern to MICAH House, regardless of whether the problem is large or small. To provide prompt and efficient evaluation of, and response to grievances, MICAH House has established a procedure for all volunteers. It is MICAH House's policy to give full consideration to every volunteer's opinion. There will be no discrimination against or toward anyone for his or her part in presenting a grievance. All grievances are handled confidentially.

The grievance procedure is:

1. If urgent action is needed, notify your supervisor or Community Relations and Development Specialist immediately.
2. Attempt to discuss your grievance with your supervisor or Community Relations and Development Specialist to resolve the problem.
3. If you are unsatisfied, submit your complaint in writing to supervisor or Community Relations and Development Specialist.
4. A response should be made within five business days.
5. If you are not satisfied within five days of how your written complaint was handled, you may appeal by submitting your written complaint to the executive director. If the complaint is with the executive director, then submit it to the board president.
6. The executive director or board president should respond within 5 business days.
7. If you are still unsatisfied, you may ask that your written complaint be taken to the MICA House board. Within 30 days, the MICA House board will act on your grievance, affirming or denying your request or choosing to investigate further. The MICA House board's decision is final.

Phone and Equipment Use

Computers, Internet access, telephone lines and other electronic communication systems are primarily for staff use only. Should a volunteer need to use these resources, please request permission from the Community Relations and Development Specialist.

Security

Volunteers should use the main entrance of MICA House, located on the west side of the building. Please ring the buzzer inside the first glass doors and the front desk will allow you inside.

Volunteer sign-in sheets are very important to our organization. All volunteers must sign in and out on the sign-in sheet located at the front desk. If you are a long-term volunteer with regularly scheduled volunteer hours, you are responsible for maintaining an accurate timesheet located in the tech office in the hub.

Standard of Appearance

Volunteer dress code is casual. Due to safety precautions, closed toe shoes are encouraged for kitchen volunteers. Shirts exposing the midriff, spaghetti straps, low-cut tops and shorts that are above fingertip length are considered inappropriate to wear during volunteer service.

ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

All property owned and maintained by MICAH House is distributed and maintained to ensure proper utilization. *Property shall be defined as any donation, piece of equipment, furnishing, vehicle, building or supplies.*

We consider theft to be the unauthorized use of agency services or facilities, or the taking of any agency property for personal use. The following list of examples is not all-inclusive, but provides illustrations of activities that are unacceptable:

- Removal of MICAH House donations without prior approval from the Facility and Operations Manager
- Use of conference rooms without prior permission from Community Relations and Development Specialist or Charles E. Lakin Human Services Campus Coordinator
- Failure to deliver donations to the MICAH House facility
- Use of agency vehicles for personal use
- Unauthorized solicitation or pick-up of donation on behalf of MICAH House

Print Volunteer Name

Volunteer Signature

Date

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Do you have any criminal convictions (other than parking violations and/or juvenile offenses)? YES NO

If "YES," please explain (conviction will not automatically bar your from volunteering. Relevance to assignment will be considered): _____

The following information is required of all MICAH House volunteers:

- MICAH House reserves the right to perform a Criminal Background Check on any volunteer applicant.
- An applicant or volunteer under investigation for or charged with child abuse or criminal acts shall be disqualified from volunteering until the issue is resolved.
- A founded child abuse complaint will permanently disqualify an individual from volunteer placement
- All volunteers are contingent on verification of information in the Volunteer Application and a negative report on the State of Iowa Criminal History Records Check. *Please initial to indicate your understanding of this policy and to consent to a background search.*

I certify that the statements herein are correct and true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that, if asked to volunteer, falsified statement on the application shall be considered cause for dismissal. I agree to hold free from liability persons furnishing information regarding my character and qualifications for volunteering. I agree that the confidential information obtained or released by MICAH House will not be released to me.

Print Volunteer Name

Volunteer Signature

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian (if 17 years of age or under)

Date

MICAH House CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

It is the policy of MICAH House to hold confidential all written and verbal observations and information made by and between MICAH House guests, staff, donors and volunteers. No identifying information regarding guests, staff, donors and/or volunteers is to be released to parties outside of MICAH House without written consent of the individual. All staff members are required by law to report suspected child abuse and abuse of elderly or incompetent adults and can do so without written consent. All guests, staff, donors and volunteers are subject to this policy.

I, _____, understand it is mandatory that MICAH House guests, staff, donors and volunteers maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all issues pertaining to MICAH House in order to maintain a position of trust in the community and to protect the rights of all parties involved. I agree to follow the confidentiality policy of MICAH House. I understand that this agreement will be placed in my guest/personnel/volunteer file and that a violation of this policy may result in disciplinary and/or legal action.

Printed Name

Position in relation to MICAH House

Signature

Date

Witness Signature

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received a copy of the MICAH House Volunteer Handbook. I understand and acknowledge that not all policies and procedures can be set forth in this handbook, and that the organization may have additional applicable policies governing the volunteer program. I further understand and acknowledge that both MICAH House and I remain free to end our volunteering relationship with or without cause, for any reason as long as no discrimination occurs. This MICAH House Volunteer Handbook in no way creates a contract either expressed or implied between the facility and myself. I further understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand and abide by the provisions contained in the handbook.

Print Volunteer Name

Volunteer Signature

Date