SOCIAL JUSTICE VOLUNTEERING

2020 GUIDE

A THRIVING COMMUNITY FOR ALL
hwmuw.org/volunteer
SOCIAL JUSTICE VOLUNTEERING GUIDE

The Volunteer Center at Heart of West Michigan United Way knows there are many opportunities to work for social justice through service and volunteerism. This guide outlines some ways individuals and groups can take action in the community.

Our goals are to:

1. Unite people from various segments of the community to have an impact on the social policies that affect their lives.
2. Build nonprofit capacity through volunteerism for those organizations who focus on marginalized populations.
3. Educate about social change needed in our community.

This list is just a glimpse at what is available across Kent County. Additional opportunities can be found at our website, hwmuw.org/volunteer.
EDUCATION

Adult Tutoring Program
Literacy Center of West Michigan
Give the gift of literacy and tutor an adult in reading! This program is a one on one program for adults who want to improve their English language skills. Tutors can be from all backgrounds. Training and support provided by Literacy Center staff. Volunteers are matched up with a learner that best fits each other’s preferences. A commitment of 2 hours per week for 6 months is required. Join us by attending our next orientation, held monthly.

GED Tutor/Assistant
Heartside Ministry
The students come to Heartside and take a series of four pretests, which helps to pinpoint exactly what they need to work on to pass the GED/High School Equivalency test. If a student passes the test, they will go on to take the official GED test. We are also a nationally accredited testing center and will pay for them to take the test right at our site. We also work in Literacy, Work keys Training, and the CASAS testing.

FAMILY SERVICES

Court Appointed Special Advocate
CASA of Kent County
A CASA Volunteer is specially trained to build a relationship with a child in care; to explore their circumstances; to understand their wishes and to communicate their needs with Family Court Judges. CASA Volunteers work independently to make certain the children for whom they advocate have the best possible chance at a happy, healthy, and successful future. CASA volunteers are from all backgrounds and every walk of life. They are dedicated men and women who work diligently to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable children in our community are not further neglected or compounded by an overwhelmed child welfare system. If you have 10-15 hours a month to give to a child, we encourage you to apply.

Social Media Expert
Hope for Single Moms
Our goal is to remove the barriers single moms encounter when trying to get a career education. We provide assistance for living and daycare expenses and academic, financial and spiritual counseling. A Social Media Expert will help create a dashboard for Facebook, Google+, Instagram and Twitter, schedule posts for a week at a time, and help set up automation for newsletter sign-ups on website.

“ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE BORN FREE AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS.”
- Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations
FOOD SECURITY

Check-In/Out and Stocking Volunteers
Community Food Club

The Food Club is a membership-based, grocery store environment in which Members access various educational sessions relating to food and health, and shop with points determined by household size.

Volunteers are needed to check-in members, check-out members, stock and organize shelving and displays, as well as light cleaning.

The Food Club is open Monday-Friday from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Volunteer shifts typically last 1-2 hours.

Delivery Driver
Meals on Wheels Western Michigan

Have the opportunity to deliver meals directly to our home-bound seniors throughout Kent County. Drivers use their own vehicles and are reimbursed mileage expenses.

Must be 18 years of age or older. Opportunity is available M, W, and F with routes delivered between 8am and 1pm.

Food Reclamation
Feeding America West Michigan

More than 900 agencies use Feeding America West Michigan to provide food to an estimated 492,100 people every year. We also send food directly to people in need through our local Mobile Food Pantry Program.

Volunteers help sort, label, or repack a variety of product. For example, we might have 800 pound bulk boxes of cereal that need to be repacked into family size portions. Generally, volunteer shifts are 3 hours long (either 9am-12pm or 1pm-4pm).

HEALTHCARE

Equipment Loan Closet Cleaning and Inventorying
Disability Advocates of Kent County

Disability Advocates of Kent County offers an equipment loan closet to the community where individuals can donate gently used equipment, like wheelchairs and walkers. These donated items are cleaned, sanitized and stored in our loan closet and made available to the public. Volunteers are needed to clean and sanitize the donated equipment, making them look sparkly and shiny, for their new owners.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee
Alternatives in Motion

As an organization that strives to enhance independence for persons with disabilities, equity is at the center of our work. Because of this, AIM has made efforts and strides to embed at DEI lens in our organization. This has culminated in the creation of a standing DEI committee. The DEI committee will work to apply DEI principles and values to all aspects of AIM’s work-our programs, website, bylaws, volunteer and board recruitment, among others.

Clean Works Volunteers
Red Project

Clean Works is Red Project’s comprehensive harm reduction program. This highly successful program has resulted in drastic reductions in the spread of HIV among people who use drugs, as well as their families and friends. Clean Works provides Hepatitis C testing and education along with accidental drug overdose prevention training and materials.

Clean Works volunteers provide a welcoming environment to our community, and they are the foundation of our service delivery. Our Clean Works volunteers provide individuals with syringes, condoms, safer shot and safer sex supplies, and document the supply appropriately. Clean Works volunteers are also trained to introduce new clients to the program and perform life-saving training with naloxone rescue kits. As a volunteer, your knowledge of harm reduction – in drug use, as well as sex – will greatly increase.

My Life Story Project
Spectrum Health Hospice

Everyone has a story and you can help a hospice patient document theirs and to share with their friends and family. This is a wonderful tool to assist our patients in reviewing their lives and ensuring their memories will last through the generations.

If you enjoy listening to others, have strong writing, editing and basic computer skills you can help patients document their memories/life stories. By guiding the patient through an interview process, documenting their stories, along with accompanying
pictures you can help us as our program will bind your work into beautifully designed booklets. Materials and training are provided.

Volunteers especially needed in Ada, Big Rapids, Caledonia, Fremont, Grandville, Grand Haven, Grand Rapids, Greenville, Holland, Lowell, Newaygo and Wayland areas.

*Once trained, ongoing in-services are provided for support and skill development.

*Volunteers are asked to wait one year from the death of a significant personal contact before volunteering.

**HOUSING**

**Fair Housing Testers**

*Fair Housing Center of West Michigan*

Our housing tester program is an interesting way to learn about the community and get first hand experience with fair housing. Testers play the role of a home seeker and participate in apartment showings, open houses, and other experiences to help us monitor fair housing practices. Testers are of vital importance to the advocacy and research programs of the Fair Housing Center. Without a vast and diverse pool of volunteer testers, the Fair Housing Center would be drastically limited in our ability to conduct research and investigate claims of illegal discrimination.

**Group Construction Volunteers**

*Habitat for Humanity of Kent County*

Come join us on a construction site Tuesday - Saturday, year round. We have the tools, equipment and safety gear - no prior construction experience is necessary.

**Shenanigan's Crew**

*Community Rebuilders*

The Housing Connection Center offers Bridge Housing, a short-term place to stay when a literally homeless household has been offered and accepted a permanent housing intervention. Volunteers support staff in organizing and implementing activities, participate in game nights, support a calm, welcoming and respectful environment and can be any age.

**Neighbor Knowledge Exchange Event Volunteer**

*Dwelling Place*

We’re in need of volunteers to help with our upcoming Neighbor Knowledge Exchange event in downtown Grand Rapids on Tuesday, March 31st between 1 & 7:30 pm. Each year, Dwelling Place hosts this event to connect local residents

"**FIGHT FOR THE THINGS THAT YOU CARE ABOUT, BUT DO IT IN A WAY THAT WILL LEAD OTHERS TO JOIN YOU.**

– Ruth Bader Ginsburg"
to resources in the Heartside area. Volunteers are needed in shifts to assist with set up, signing in, greeting, offering hospitality, and clean up.

INTERNATIONAL AID

Part-time Story Cultivator
Sow Hope

This volunteer position will support the agency's marketing and fund development efforts. Duties include transcribing audio recordings of interviews with various SowHope stakeholders, usually overseas interviews of on-site project leaders and beneficiaries from Africa and Asia. While transcribing, volunteers will be expected to find material from interviews that could make an interesting case story, important quotes, or program impact data. Depending upon the volunteer’s skill set, this work may also include photo and video editing and/or blog writing and social media content preparation.

Help solve the global water crisis: build water filters
20 Liters

Did you know 1.1 billion people have to walk to collect their daily supply of water?

Did you know 663 million people don’t have access to clean water?

Did you know the burden of collecting water is most often performed by women and children?

Do you want to roll up your sleeves and do something to help?

You should join us.

We host public builds several times a month and can schedule custom builds for your group of 6 to 20 people.

RE-ENTRY PROGRAMS

Mentor
70x7 Life Recovery

Become a concerned, accepting friend and advisor to someone positively changing their life after spending time in jail or prison. Mentors are matched with a 70x7 client and meet once a week. Support, encouragement and accountability are critical to successfully overcoming obstacles faced in reentering the community. Training and ongoing support from staff and other mentors is provided.

LIFE’S MOST PERSISTENT AND URGENT QUESTION IS, WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr
New Beginnings Mentor
Women's Resource Center

Serve as a friend, role model, and support person for a woman reentering the community from jail. Extensive training provided. This position requires a solid 1-year commitment.

Male Mentors Needed
Hope Network

Road to Success is a jail reentry program working with men transitioning from Kent County Jail back into the community. This is an opportunity to make a direct impact on a man's life. Mentoring changes lives.

- Meet with your Mentee weekly for an average of 6 months
- Maintain regular contact with the Mentor Coordinator
- Maintain confidentiality
- Model positive social behavior & attitudes
- Be supportive & understanding of difficulties your Mentee is facing

WORKFORCE

Accounting Clerk
Seeds of Promise

Our mission is to equip and empower community residents to govern and direct continuously improving, self-sustaining personal and neighborhood prosperity. Our foundation principle is that those who live in the community must direct their own improvement strategy. The volunteer accounting clerk will need:

- Proven accounting experience, preferably as an Accounts receivable clerk or Accounts payable clerk
- Familiarity with bookkeeping and basic accounting procedures
- Hands-on experience with spreadsheets and financial reports
- Aptitude for numbers
- Ability to perform filing and record keeping tasks
- High school degree

The unit has an active Events Committee that organizes and hosts a number of forums and presentations on police-community relations, immigration, LGBT rights, the mass incarceration crisis, education, women’s rights and other issues throughout the year. The committee works to tackle community concerns and partners with local groups to organize events on subjects that matter to residents and puts on an event honoring the Civil Libertarian of the Year for the region.

Groups and Individual Volunteers
West Michigan Center for Arts and Technology (WMCAT)

Volunteers help to advance WMCAT’s mission by greeting students at the front desk, completing one-time projects, lending a hand at special events, providing tech support, and so much more. If you would like to share your time and talent as a volunteer, we would love to meet you!

"WHEN WE IDENTIFY WHERE OUR PRIVILEGE INTERSECTS WITH SOMEBODY ELSE’S OPPRESSION, WE’LL FIND OUR OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE REAL CHANGE."
– Ijeoma Oluo, So You Want to Talk About Race