



*Belfast Soup Kitchen and Kindness Community Market*  
**Volunteer Handbook**

Executive Director: Cherie Merrill

Phone (207)-338-4845

Email: [cherie@belfastsoupkitchen.org](mailto:cherie@belfastsoupkitchen.org)

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

### **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Belfast Soup Kitchen (BSK) is to provide a safe community where guests can find food, comfort, and hope for the future in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.

### **VISION**

BSK's vision is to reduce hunger in Waldo County by providing nutritious food and connecting guests to resources and education opportunities that can help address the challenges and associated circumstances of food insecurity.

With a strong infrastructure managed by a committed and engaged board of directors and staff, BSK will continue to expand its ability support and reach more individuals and families throughout Waldo County.

The Belfast Soup Kitchen will succeed in its mission and vision by:

- Culturing compassion for those we serve
- Treating all guests with Dignity and Respect
- Providing a safe and affirming environment for all
- Encouraging support and involvement from the local community
- Maintaining stewardship and transparency in the use of our donated resources

The BSK serves all guests who come, with no qualifications, in an open, inclusive, and welcoming atmosphere. We strive to create a sense of community in a non-judgmental environment. Our Guests include working families, the unemployed, senior citizens, individuals with intellectual or physical disabilities, veterans, food insecure children, and people experiencing homelessness.

## ***Guiding Principles***

**Food First** – BSK prioritizes feeding the hungry in Waldo County, providing access to nutritious food for all in need.

**Opportunity to Serve** - BSK values the contribution of volunteers and continues to provide meaningful opportunities for service, allowing volunteers to express their values through work.

**Needs-Based Planning** - New programs and services will be developed in response to the documented needs of our community, ensuring our efforts are targeted and effective.

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### **Overview of Handbook**

**The Volunteer Handbook is designed as a resource for BSK volunteers. It explains policies, procedures, and helpful facts that may assist volunteers in their roles. Adherence to the provisions of this manual will be the rule in preventing and resolving problems among volunteers.**

### **Disclaimer**

**The Volunteer Handbook is not a contract of employment.**

**Any individual may voluntarily leave upon proper notice and/or be asked to leave BSK at any time for just cause. The contents of this handbook are subject to change at any time at the discretion of the Executive Director or Board of Directors.**

## Why We Need Volunteers

Volunteers and donors are the lifeline of almost any non-profit organization, and BSK is no exception.

The Belfast Soup Kitchen was originally developed and supported by St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Belfast. We have existed for over 15 years in various locations in the city of Belfast. We became a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation in December 2010 and are supported by generous donors throughout the area, as well as continuing grants from a variety of sources.

In 2020, we moved to a permanent 3,500 square foot facility on Belmont Avenue, which has allowed us to expand our programs and help even more individuals in Waldo County experiencing hunger. Our new facility seats 80+ guests, has ample storage, and houses the Kindness Community Market.

From our inception, BSK has relied on the generosity of volunteers to help prepare and serve meals, and help maintain a clean, welcoming environment for our guests.

Our volunteers come from schools, churches, civic and social organizations, corporations, families, and individuals – not only from Belfast but the surrounding area. Thanks to their commitment, BSK is able to operate Monday through Friday, 52 weeks a year.

## On-Site Volunteer Opportunities

**Kitchen** - Kitchen volunteers help with preparing food, setting up the dining room for meal service, washing dishes, and other tasks as assigned by the Kitchen Manager. Food preparation takes place from 7:30am-10am. Meal service is from 10:30am-1pm.

**Dining Room** – Dining Room volunteers help with setting up the dining room for service, preparing pastries for Coffee Hours, prepare and refill beverages during service, serve guests and clear plates. Dining Room volunteers also help with cleaning at the end of service.

Dining Room volunteer shifts are typically from 9am-1pm.

**To-Go's/"Outside"** – BSK offers to-go meals to guests who prefer to not dine with us. Guests may take up to 10 meals at one time. To-Go volunteers greet guests upon arrival and provide packaged meals to them upon request.

To-Go volunteer shifts are 10am-1pm.

**Kindness Community Market** - The Kindness Community Market BSK's version of a food pantry. Volunteers assist guests through the market and aid them in finding food items for their household size. Volunteers also help stock the market upon request.

KCM volunteer shifts are typically 10am-2pm, and 2pm-6pm.

**Meal Deliveries** - BSK offers meal deliveries across Waldo county to those who are experiencing hardship and are unable to leave their home due to illness or disability.

**Summer Opportunities** - In the summer months there are often additional opportunities for volunteering, such as the Summer Food Service Program which packs and delivers meals to school-age children.

You may choose to volunteer during these shifts, or you may overlap shifts. We are glad and grateful to have you volunteer your time and will work with you to find a time and position which works for you.

## Volunteer Expectations

We want to set our volunteers up to have an enjoyable and rewarding experience. We ask that you please adhere to the following expectations to ensure everyone's success.

**Conduct:** A friendly and respectful tone with guests, staff, and fellow volunteers is key to a positive experience. We hope your time with us will be enriching and fulfilling as we serve our neighbors in Waldo County.

**Call Outs and Attendance:** We understand that life happens! If you are ill or unable to come in for your assigned shift, let us know as soon as possible – ideally at least four (4) hours in advance – so we can find a substitute. If you expect to be more than 15 minutes late to your shift, please let us know. You may call the Soup Kitchen at 338-4845, option 3 for the Volunteer Coordinator.

That said, consistent attendance is important. If a volunteer is frequently late, repeatedly calls out, or doesn't show up without notice, we reserve the right to reevaluate their role with us.

**Training:** Volunteers are required to complete the Receipt of Volunteer Handbook, Volunteer Agreement, Civil Rights Training, and Good Shepherd Food Safety training before their first shift. Volunteers will be provided training on their assigned tasks – this may be with a staff member or experienced volunteer. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

**Personal Belongings:** Please refrain from bringing valuables and large purses/bookbags to BSK. BSK is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Volunteers have access to a coat rack/storage shelf for their personal items.

**Dress Code:** Volunteers should be prepared to be on their feet and wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes. No sandals or flip-flops, please. Jeans or leggings are fine, but we ask that you avoid clothing with political slogans, profanity, or references to drugs. Please also avoid crop-tops, low-rise pants, or anything with offensive statements. For those working with food, BSK provides food service gloves, aprons, and hair coverings.

**Completion of Tasks:** At BSK we rely on volunteers to help us run smoothly and serve our community. To make sure everything operates efficiently, it is important that volunteers complete their assigned task(s) as trained. All volunteers will be trained on their position and expectations, and are encouraged to ask questions if needed.

If an assignment is not the right fit, we'll work with you to find a position that better fits your strengths. If we cannot find an immediate match, we may ask you to step back until one becomes available. Our goal is to ensure that everyone can contribute in a way that benefits both you and BSK.

**Communication:** We value open communication. If you have any questions, concerns, or feedback during your time with us please do not hesitate to reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator. Your input helps us improve and ensures a positive experience for everyone!

**Meal Breaks:** We encourage our volunteers to enjoy lunch with us! If you do choose to dine during your shift, please be sure to log your meal with the Kitchen Manager. Meal breaks should be taken during a non-busy time to avoid disrupting service. If you are working in the kitchen or KCM, please check in with the staff member before taking your break to ensure it's a good time. Volunteers are welcome to eat in the dining room with guests during service.



## Social Media Policy

At BSK, we value the role that social media can play in raising awareness about our mission and connecting with the wider community. However, it is important for our volunteers to understand the boundaries and expectations when using social media in connection with BSK.

Volunteers who choose to mention or post about BSK online should do so in a way that reflects the organizations values and mission. When posting about BSK, please keep the following in mind.

- Be respectful and professional
- Do not share confidential information or any content related to our guests, staff, or internal operations.
- Do not post or share any information that could be considered confidential or private, including photos or details of guests, staff, or other volunteers. Always prioritize privacy and confidentiality as outlined in our Confidentiality Policy (pg. 13).
- If you are posting from a personal account, ensure your personal views are clearly stated as your own and not representative of BSK as an organization.
- Please avoid using official BSK branding for personal posts without prior approval.
- If you have concerns regarding your volunteer experience or BSK, please address them directly with the Executive Director or a staff member rather than airing them on social media. We value open and honest communication and would prefer to resolve any issues in-house.

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in review of your volunteer position and in some cases may lead to termination of your volunteer role.

For any questions, please see the Executive Director.

### **Ethical Limits of Agency-Volunteer Relationship**

At BSK, both the organization and our volunteers have a responsibility to uphold the values and standards that define us. It is important to be clear about the boundaries of the relationship, particularly when it comes to legal and ethical issues like conflicts of interest.

**Character and Philosophy of the BSK:** Volunteers are expected to perform their tasks professionally and respectfully, and maintain the ethical standards set forth by BSK.

**Conflicts of Interest:** It is not appropriate to use BSK's time, resources, reputation, or materials for personal gain or to benefit another organization.

**Volunteer Rights and Agency Obligations:** BSK respects each volunteer's personal beliefs, professional integrity, and private pursuits, as long as they do not interfere with the organization's mission or above ethical guidelines.

If any issues arise concerning these areas, the Executive Director will review and address the situation.

## Sexual Harassment Policy

BSK will not tolerate harassment of volunteers, guests, or staff by the director, other employees, or anyone associated with its operation. Under Federal EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission] Regulations, BSK is responsible for preventing sexual harassment at its location. This policy is not taken lightly. Remarks or actions intended to be in jest or as teasing expose the Executive Director or Agency to individual and/or class action suits. Therefore, the conduct of everyone must be above reproach. Guests may not harass volunteers or staff, and vice versa. Any and all concerns should be brought to the Executive Director promptly for resolution.

Volunteers who have any questions regarding the interpretation of the policy or who wish to clarify their rights and expectations should contact the Executive Director.

## Discrimination

BSK does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, national origin, pregnancy status, disability, political affiliation, religion, marital status, veteran status, or immigration status.

## Emergency Closing

The Executive Director is responsible for deciding if BSK will close due to an emergency or inclement weather. If BSK is closed on a day you are scheduled to volunteer, you will be contacted by text, email, and/or phone call.

If you have contact preferences, please see the Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Confidentiality**

**BSK is committed to maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of all records and information related to the organization, its patrons, and staff.**

**All documents, notes, files, computer records, and any related materials may not be removed from BSK without express permission from the Executive Director or Board of Directors, except in the ordinary course of performing duties.**

**Confidential information may not be shared with others unless authorized by the Executive Director or Board of Directors. This includes both formal records and casual conversations that could disclose confidential information.**

**Volunteers should avoid discussing any sensitive information – such as information regarding patrons – outside of BSK, unless they have express permission from the Executive Director or Board of Directors.**

**If you have any questions regarding this policy, please see the Executive Director.**



### RECEIPT OF VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

I have received a copy of The Belfast Soup Kitchen's Volunteer Handbook. I have read it carefully, and have clarified any statement, policy, or provision in the Handbook that I do not understand with the Executive Director. I understand that this Handbook outlines The Belfast Soup Kitchen's policies, provisions, procedures, and practices that are currently in effect as of October 2020. Lastly, I understand that the contents of this Handbook may be subject to change and may be amended or removed at any time.

Please sign and date this receipt and return it to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I give Belfast Soup Kitchen permission to use my statements and/or photos for publication in local newspapers or social media.

Please indicate:        \_\_\_\_\_ Yes        \_\_\_\_\_ No