

# Volunteer Handbook



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## **Welcome**

Welcome to the Voice of Hope Volunteer Program. Voice of Hope is a ministry operating on Biblically based principles in the context of an urban Christian community development center. We consider your contribution to be a valuable part of our ministry. We know and understand that your time is valuable, and we sincerely appreciate you donating your time to Voice of Hope. We believe that it is a wonderful opportunity to have an effect on the future of Dallas by helping raise up a generation of Christian leaders.

The Voice of Hope volunteer program is based on the Christian principles of prayer, Bible Study, commitment, stewardship, services and evangelism. We need volunteers to further these principles throughout the community. With your help, we will be able to accomplish our goals. There are many ways for you to help and no matter how you choose to help, a child will be uplifted by your generosity and God will be glorified.

Voice of Hope recognizes that without the skills, generosity and commitment of our volunteers, it would be extremely difficult to maintain either the range or quality of our services. As a volunteer, you have the right to be given meaningful assignments, to be treated as equal co-workers, to receive effective and ongoing supervision and the right to ongoing support and recognition for your contribution to Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc. In return, we ask that you agree to actively perform your duties to the best of their abilities, be accountable to Voice of Hope, and remain faithful to the philosophies, policies and procedures. Additionally, we ask that you work cooperatively with staff, volunteers and youth, to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information and to positively represent Voice of Hope to the community and participants.

The following pages include additional information about Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc. This information will help you better understand Voice of Hope and your role at Voice of Hope. Please feel free to ask the volunteer coordinator any questions that you may have.

Welcome to Voice of Hope! Thank you for committing yourself to the important work we do for children and their families! Together we can accomplish much more than we could ever accomplish without you. Each and every time you volunteer, you will have the opportunity to change the lives of children.

We look forward to working with you in rebuilding our community. God is the key to our success as we work together as a team. And, together we can continue “changing lives...one child at a time”.

- **Our Mission**

Voice of Hope Ministries exists to extend the love of Jesus Christ by nurturing and training children and youth through Biblical teaching, Christian character models, life skills coaching and educational support.

- **Our Vision**

- **Voice of Hope children will become adults who are:**

PRODUCTIVE Voice of Hope children and youth will become career and college ready, and ultimately contributors to the economic vitality of their communities and world.

CHRISTIAN Voice of Hope children and youth will be exposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and sound Biblical discipleship, so that their hearts are transformed, and so that they are equipped to live an informed, committed, and passionate life for Christ and His kingdom mission.

CITIZENS Voice of Hope children and youth will develop a Christ-like concern for their communities, both local and worldwide and will responsibly give back to these communities above and beyond what they themselves were given.

- **Our Long-Term Goal**

Over the past 35 years we have reached thousands of children. Now we seek to serve thousands more by expanding the ministry to over 20 school-based sites over the next 10 years.

## **Our History**

Founded in 1982, Voice of Hope has grown to serve over 300 children daily in our ASPIRE after-school program and Summer Day Camp. Following Mrs. Dudley's leadership, several others have taken the reins of Voice of Hope's presidency: Norman Henry, Aaron Gaddis, Daniel Prescott, and our current president since 2004, Edward Franklin.

Voice of Hope has been recognized and received numerous awards over the years. In 1991, Voice of Hope was presented the "424<sup>th</sup> Point of Light" award by President George Bush for outstanding service to the West Dallas community. Voice of Hope is a three-time Crystal Charity Ball beneficiary - in both 1998 and 2004, and most recently in 2012. We were also recognized as a Dallas Morning News Charity. In addition, Voice of Hope has received recognition from The Hillcrest Foundation, Meadows Foundation, etc.

Voice of Hope has operated from the same facility on Gentry Drive, in Dallas, Texas, since 1982. Since then many children and teenagers have participated in our programs.

All of the children who have participated in our program for at least 3 years have also graduated from high school (a great accomplishment considering the 66% dropout rate in this area).

Graduates have continued on to attend college or trade school and/or raise families of their own. Some graduates have even returned to the community to give back.

## **Statement of Faith**

Voice of Hope Ministries Affirms the Following:

- We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, divinely inspired in all parts and free of error in the original writings.
- We believe in Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, who became a man by being born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a life of perfect obedience, died for our sins in our place, rose bodily from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God the Father. He is now in a position of authority over all things and is our only advocate before God. We believe in His personal, visible, imminent return from heaven as Lord and Judge of all.
- We believe that the Holy Spirit is the work of God to people – that He renews our hearts persuades us to repent of our sins and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and empowers us to live our lives pleasing to God.
- We believe that human beings are created in the image of God. Tempted by Satan, they rebelled against God and became tragically estranged from their Creator. Now all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are incapable of returning to God apart from faith in Jesus Christ.
- We believe that both the just and the unjust will be raised bodily at the end of the age, some to everlasting blessedness and some to everlasting punishment.
- We believe that the Church is the living body of Christ and is made up of all who are united to it by faith. Christ calls His Church to offer acceptable worship to God; to love and care for one another, to make disciples of all nations by going, baptizing and teaching; and to strive for social justice and relief to human distress and need.
- We believe that the Church as the living body of Christ is to enjoy relationships of reconciliation among all who are united to Him by faith. We believe Christ calls His Church to a life of reconciliation that is unhindered by racial, cultural, economic, social, national and other barriers.

## Core Programs

### ASPIRE

The **ASPIRE after-school program** begins with us picking up children and youth in grades K-12 from their schools and bringing them to Voice of Hope. Each child is fed a meal each day through our partnership with the North Texas Food Bank. After eating a meal, our children have playtime to release energy, then they complete their homework and other enrichment activities. Our faithful volunteers provide one-on-one tutoring to help children with their homework or problem areas. The ASPIRE after school program follows the Uplift calendar and operates from 3:30 – 6:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

### Summer Day Camp

Voice of Hope has offered **Summer Day Camp** since 1986. Our Summer Day Camp provides a safe haven for children during the summer months while sustaining educational achievement in a recreational atmosphere. Our Biblically based camp provides a stimulating environment where students can: improve in reading, writing and math; gain technological skills; explore areas of science, arts and community involvement through field trips; and of course have fun because kids, summer and fun belong together! Summer Day Camp generally runs June – July each summer, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

### Family and Community Services

In order to holistically minister to west Dallas children, we recognize that we are also called to serve the families of those children. Our **Family and Community Services Outreach** provides food, encouragement, prayer and assistance to the families of the children and youth that are a part of our programs and also other families living in west Dallas.

**Food Pantry:** Our Food pantry provides food and prayer with dignity to our working poor. Through our food pantry, we provide not only physical needs, but through prayer and support, we provide for spiritual needs as well. We are the only food pantry in West Dallas that serves evening and weekends by appointment to accommodate to families that work.

**Fresh Fruits and Vegetables:** We are fortunate to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to families each day through a generous partnership donation. For many of our families, fresh fruits and vegetables are too expensive and most often not very fresh at local supermarkets.

**Seniors Bible Study:** We minister to widows and seniors weekly through Bible Study and fellowship. In the past, there was a strong division between African American and Spanish-speaking seniors; however, through this fellowship, barriers have been broken, creating an atmosphere where African American seniors and Spanish-speaking seniors build mutual friendships.

## **What you can expect as a Voice of Hope Volunteer**

As a volunteer, you do not replace our paid staff but you greatly enhance and expand our work when you come alongside and join in the effort. Because of volunteers, we are able to provide services to children and families that they would not receive otherwise. We are committed to a Volunteer Program that will bring benefits to both the community and the volunteer.

Voice of Hope volunteers have the right to:

- Clear and specific job descriptions.
- Be assigned to appropriate assignments according to skills, interests and availability.
- Receive thorough orientation, training and supervision for the jobs they accept.
- Expect that their time will not be wasted by lack of planning and coordination by the Voice of Hope.
- Be trusted with confidential information as necessary to carry out their assignment.
- Receive appropriate expressions of appreciation and recognition.
- Be reassigned if a position is not a good fit.
- Expect that volunteer records will be kept documenting volunteer experience, positions held, training evaluation and commendation.
- Receive ongoing feedback, encouragement and training.
- Offer suggestions about your assignment and the Volunteer Program.
- Be treated as a fellow Voice of Hope staff member who contributes to the goals of the organization through your volunteer work.
- Have all these things done in a spirit of friendliness and cooperation.

## **What Voice of Hope expects of you**

We recognize that your time is your own and you serve at your pleasure. Every VOH volunteer has the right to refuse any assignment that they are unable to do or would rather not do. Please let your Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator know in the event that an assignment has become undesirable or unmanageable. You will be offered the opportunity to serve in another capacity that is more of a fit for your skills and interests.

Additionally, the Voice of Hope expects every volunteer to:

- Know your own duties and how to do them promptly, correctly, and pleasantly.
- Ask for assistance whenever needed.
- Voice your opinions and contribute your suggestions to improve the quality of the VOH programs and services at the appropriate place and time.
- Cooperate with VOH staff and fellow volunteers and maintain a good team attitude.

- Attend all training sessions scheduled for your assignment.
- Report for assignments on time.
- Inform your Volunteer Coordinator or Supervisor as soon as possible of any planned absences or lateness.
- Express problems or concerns to appropriate staff in a timely and professional manner.
- Completely and promptly submit documentation as appropriate.
- Keep all communication with or concerning clients confidential.
- Follow the VOH guidelines, curriculum and procedures, including drug and alcohol policy, dress code and confidentiality.

### **Volunteering Policies and Procedures**

As a new VOH volunteer, you may have many questions. We suggest you carefully read this Handbook so that you will know exactly what is expected of you as you volunteer for the VOH. Keep it handy and refer to it often, but don't hesitate to ask your Volunteer Coordinator for help. We want you to feel comfortable whenever you are volunteering for the VOH.

### **Absences or Lateness**

If you anticipate an absence or tardiness, please attempt to call or text the Director or Volunteer Coordinator. Email may not reach the appropriate contact as quickly - please call.

### **Attendance**

When you make a commitment to volunteer for a specific date and time, our staff and clients will depend on you to fulfill your commitment. An unexpected absence may disrupt the delivery of services to our clients. If you anticipate an absence, please attempt to call your Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.

### **Background Checks**

To ensure a safe environment and comply with Texas Safety and Child Care Licensing Guidelines, all volunteers 14 years and older will be required to submit to a criminal history background check prior to acceptance as a volunteer. Volunteers younger than 15 years will be required to be accompanied by an adult who has submitted an application and background check. Please make VOH aware of any changes in your criminal record. Background checks expire every two years and will be resubmitted automatically when possible.

## **Communication**

Open communication between volunteers and VOH staff is crucial to fostering a spirit of unity and cooperation. Volunteers are encouraged to call, text or email the director or coordinator with concerns or suggestions for improving VOH services and programs. The Director or Volunteer Coordinator will communicate regularly with volunteers through text, personal emails, notes, and phone calls.

## **Confidentiality**

We have an obligation to our clients, donors and volunteers to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. Every “customer” served by VOH has the right to confidentiality. If you are aware of a client issue that requires immediate help, please inform your Volunteer Coordinator or Supervisor. As you work with the staff, information of a confidential nature may be shared with you. You must not share this information with anyone who does not have a professional right or need to know or with anyone outside of the VOH staff. No one is permitted to make copies of any VOH records, reports, or documents without prior approval. Release of confidential information to unauthorized persons can result in dismissal from your service and could involve you in legal proceedings. A volunteer whose assignment with the VOH terminates may not subsequently disclose, directly or indirectly, any sensitive or confidential information about VOH or its “customers” acquired during his or her association with VOH.

## **Curriculum and Property**

All curriculum and supplies provided to the volunteer are the property of the VOH and must be returned to the agency in good condition when a volunteer separates from the organization.

## **Dress Code**

All VOH volunteers are expected to exercise good judgment in determining what is considered to be in good taste by the community, the work environment, and the particular needs of the position. Casual clothing is fine, but we ask that your clothing be neat, clean, and conservative. Keep in mind that volunteers are Christian role models for the children and teenagers. A good rule of thumb, “When in doubt, don’t wear it!”

## **Emergency Contact Information**

Volunteers are asked to provide emergency contact information and cell phone numbers to VOH to be kept in the volunteer’s file. The person listed will be the first contact attempt in the case of a VOH or a personal emergency.

## **Equal Volunteering Opportunity**

The VOH provides equal volunteering opportunity for everyone regardless of age, sex, color, race, creed, national origin, religious preference, marital status, sexual orientation, political belief, or disability that does not prohibit essential job functions. All matters relating to volunteering are based upon ability to perform the job, as well as availability and reliability.

## **Evaluations**

Evaluations by staff and volunteers serve the organization and the volunteer as we work together to maintain a standard of excellence in all our programming and services. Evaluations will be scheduled on an individual basis.

## **Exit Interviews**

In instances where a volunteer voluntarily leaves, the VOH would like the opportunity to discuss your reasons for leaving and any other impressions that you may have of the VOH. If you decide to leave, you will be asked to grant us the privilege of an exit interview. During the Exit Interview, you can express yourself freely. It is hoped that this interview will help us part as friends, as well as provide insights into possible improvements to the program. All information will be kept strictly confidential and will in no way affect any references that VOH will provide to another agency about you.

## **Expenses**

You must have written permission from the Director or Volunteer Coordinator prior to incurring an expense on behalf of the VOH. In order to be reimbursed, you must provide an expense report, accompanied by receipts and approval from the appropriate supervisor.

## **Firearms and Weapons Policy**

Regardless of license to carry, concealed handguns and any type of weapons are not allowed on VOH property. VOH property is defined as buildings, driveways, walkways, parking lots, VOH vehicles, lockers, desks, and files. The “Concealed Handgun Act” gives employers the right to prohibit persons from carrying a concealed handgun on property owned or controlled by the employer.

## **Gifts, Tips and Soliciting**

Do not accept any gifts or tips from clients, their families or friends. We do not want to create an atmosphere where our clients feel obligated to reward VOH volunteers for doing their job. Do not give gifts to clients or their

families. If you have concerns about clients who have expressed ongoing needs, please provide this information to the Director so that they may find the appropriate community resource to assist them. Volunteers are not permitted on VOH premises or in its facilities to solicit or to distribute articles or printed matter to VOH's employees and visitors, or to post printed matter anywhere on VOH's premises. We also ask that you not promote or solicit your own business enterprise, political agenda, or religious beliefs while volunteering with us.

## **Harassment**

Voice of Hope intends to provide a working environment that is pleasant, healthy, comfortable, and free from intimidation, hostility, or other offenses that might interfere with volunteer performance. Harassment of any sort – verbal, physical, sexual, visual – will not be tolerated.

## **Job Descriptions**

The VOH maintains a specific job description for every volunteer opportunity in the organization. When duties and responsibilities change, the job description is updated. Volunteers receive their job description from the Volunteer Coordinator. After reviewing the job description assigned, your signature will signify your agreement to fulfill the requirements of that job to the best of your ability.

## **Nametags**

Volunteers should wear a VOH nametag to identify themselves as a representative of the VOH. This will help you build relationships with the clients and with the VOH staff.

## **Political Activities**

All volunteers are prohibited from soliciting funds for any candidates or causes. In any outside work on behalf of a political candidate or party, you may not publicly present yourself as providing any expressed or implied endorsement of VOH.

## **Resignation**

While we hope you and the VOH will both benefit from your continued volunteering, we realize that it may become necessary for you to leave your job with the VOH. If you anticipate having to resign your position, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator as far in advance as possible and make arrangements for an Exit Interview.

## **Smoking**

The VOH offices and centers are non-smoking facilities. If you smoke, there are outdoor places for you to enjoy a short break. Please be courteous and concerned about the needs of your fellow volunteers and others.

## **Substance Abuse**

The VOH has no intention of intruding into the personal lives of its volunteers. However, both on-the-job and off-the-job use of mood-altering substances can have an effect on our agency and on the VOH's ability to achieve our objectives of safety and security. Therefore, you are expected to report for your assignment with no mood-altering substances in your body. The possession, sale or use of mood-altering substances while volunteering will be a violation of volunteer standards of conduct and be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

## **Standards of Conduct**

Volunteers are expected to conduct all duties in a Christ-like manner. The continued impact of VOH is dependent upon the community's trust, and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Each volunteer owes a duty the Lord, to VOH and to the community to act in a way that will honor the Lord and will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

Even if an action is legal in the sight of the law of the US, it may not be an action that is necessarily the highest Biblical standard and so volunteers yield to the even higher standard of God's Law.

In general, the use of good judgment, based on Biblical principles, will guide you with respect to the lines of acceptable conduct. If a situation arises where it is difficult to determine the proper course of action, the matter should be discussed openly with the Volunteer Coordinator or CEO for advice and consultation. Each volunteer's conduct reflects on Voice of Hope and its mission.

Your avoidance of these activities will be to your benefit as well as the benefit of the VOH. If you have questions about any volunteer or safety rule, please see your Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator for explanation.

- Willful violation of any VOH rule; any deliberate action that is extreme in nature and is obviously detrimental to the VOH.
- Willful violation of safety rules or practices.
- Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited at any VOH event or activity designed for the participation of minors.

- Possession or use of illegal drugs or other legal substances is prohibited.
- Excessive tardiness or absenteeism.
- Possession of dangerous or illegal firearms is prohibited on VOH property or while on duty.
- Engaging in criminal conduct or acts of violence, or threatening anyone on agency premises while representing the VOH.
- Insubordination or refusing to obey instructions issued by your Supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator.
- Theft of agency property or the property of fellow volunteers.
- Willful falsification or misrepresentation on your application or records.
- Breach of confidentiality of client information.
- Malicious gossip and/or spreading rumors; engaging in behavior designed to create discord; interfering with another volunteer on the job.
- Engaging in a relationship with any client that is solely personal in nature. No physical contact should be initiated by the volunteer. If a client asks for or initiates a hug, it is at the volunteer's discretion to return it. No sexual contact is allowed.
- Any sin as clearly defined in Scriptures.

## **Supervision**

Volunteers are under the management and supervision of appropriate staff at all times. You will be assigned to specific staff members who act as your Supervisor. The Supervisor is most often the coordinator of the program to which the volunteer is assigned. The Supervisor is a volunteer's first "go-to" person for questions about specific client needs, how duties should be performed or changes in the volunteer's availability or schedule.

## **Social Media and Photography**

Please do not photograph VOH children or staff. This is for their protection and to respect that they have given permission to VOH to use their images, but not to other parties. If you would like or need a photo posted to social media or any publication, please make the volunteer coordinator aware and he/she will provide and/or post the information and media which you can then share and use.

## **Termination**

The VOH is an at-will agency and has the right to terminate a volunteer without cause, but will always consider the cause leading to the termination. In general, failure to adhere to the policies and guidelines of the VOH is cause for immediate release.

Grounds for immediate dismissal may include but are not limited to:

- Gross misconduct or insubordination
- Reporting for a volunteer assignment under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Theft of property or misuse of equipment, funds, or materials.
- Falsifying statements on the Volunteer Application or during the interview process.
- Illegal, violent or unsafe acts.
- Abuse or mistreatment of clients or volunteers.
- Release of confidential information.
- Unwillingness to support and further the mission of the organization.
- Immoral or indecent conduct.

### **Time Tracking**

Time Tracking is necessary for us to keep an accurate record of your contribution to VOH. Please record all hours served when you serve. Donated time may include all time spent in orientation and training, travel time to and from locations, as well as the hours given performing specific duties. The Volunteer Coordinator will monitor volunteer shifts and hours, log volunteer hours, and update information in the volunteer's profile. Please be sure to sign up for your shifts via our online calendar and report your hours upon completing your shift at Voice of Hope or one of the on-site campuses at the digital kiosk.

### **Statement of Felonies or Misdemeanors**

Upon orientation, volunteers must sign a statement verifying their criminal history. Statements of convictions of felonies, misdemeanors, and deferred adjudication, along with identification as a Community Service Restitution volunteer, are required for volunteer files. An explanation of criminal history is required as well.

## Receipt and Acknowledgement of Voice of Hope Handbook (Volunteer Copy)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand all of the Volunteer Packet guidelines for being involved at Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc. and agree to work within the guidelines. I have had an opportunity to ask any questions about the material.

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Print Name

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Signature

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Date

I give permission to Voice of Hope and a third party (food banks, partnering churches and agencies) to use photographs or video images of myself in print or electronic media for the purposes of marketing the work of the ministry.

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Print Name

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Signature

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Date

## Receipt and Acknowledgement of Voice of Hope Handbook (Voice of Hope Copy)

Please bring this signed copy with you when you volunteer, Thank You!

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand all of the Volunteer Packet guidelines for being involved at Voice of Hope Ministries, Inc. and agree to work within the guidelines. I have had an opportunity to ask any questions about the material.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I give permission to Voice of Hope and a third party (food banks, partnering churches and agencies) to use photographs or video images of myself in print or electronic media for the purposes of marketing the work of the ministry.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# Voice of Hope

## Volunteer Guidelines

### Working with Kids Safely

1. Please arrive on time for your scheduled volunteer assignment. Coaches are counting on you.
2. Parking is available in the lot on the side of the Main Building. At the Main Campus, please do not park in front of the house with the purple trim. For Gradus, please park in the open lot on the cafeteria entrance side of the building. Observe the posted signs.
3. You may dress comfortably but please dress conservatively. As a Christ-centered ministry, we want to set a good example for the children in all our behaviors, attitudes and appearance.
4. A sign-in station will be located at the front entrance of each site **ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST CHECK IN/OUT.**
5. Name badges are located near the Check In. All Volunteers must wear **name badges** while in the building.
6. If not on a regular schedule, please be sure to sign up for a shift on the volunteer calendar on the website so site leaders can assign you to an area of greatest need. Be sure to check the website for available times and shifts.
7. If you serve on a regular schedule and, for any reason, you will not be reporting to your assigned area of service on your scheduled day, **please call or text us.** We are counting on you and will need to make other arrangements to ensure that program activities are not interrupted due to a volunteer shortage.
8. Please remember to check-out at the end of your shift and report your hours at the digital kiosk.

**Once you have signed in and have your badge, please report to your assigned Class Coach or Program Director:**

- Ask your Coach what assistance he/she needs.
- Assist Coaches or reporting Supervisors in whatever they need you to do. Coaches have a lesson plan to follow and need your help to manage the class, assist children with homework and stay on track.
- Serve with a Christ-like attitude.
- Show interest in the children as individuals.
- Ask what assignments the child will need help with.

- Be flexible and remain cheerful. Voice of Hope Coaches may need to change the plans for any number of reasons during the course of an afternoon.
- Help the Coach tidy up after activities and keep the classroom organized.
- We want your feedback and input. Please wait to offer your suggestions or feedback after all the children have left the building or unless specifically asked by the Coach or Voice of Hope Staff member.

### ***A Few More Guidelines***

- Do not allow yourself to be left alone with a child. If you find yourself alone with a child, immediately move to a space where others are working or playing.
- When walking children to the restroom, wait for the child/children in the hallway but within hearing of the child/children.
- Please, do not discipline any child. If a child is acting inappropriately, ask your Coach to address the situation.
- Please, do not pick up/hold a child around your waist, in your lap or on your shoulders.
- Please be sure to check with the Coach or reporting Supervisor before beginning any new activities.
- If you are asked to provide transportation (must be approved by appropriate VOH staff), please be aware of the type of music played in the car and your conversation. Remember you are a role model!
- Voice of Hope prohibits outside activities with the students unless otherwise approved by the CEO or Director of Programs.
- As a Voice of Hope Volunteer, you may be asked to leave an assignment at any time at the discretion of an authorized staff member. It is our expectation that all volunteers will conduct themselves appropriately, rendering themselves to be used by God for His glory. Additionally, it is our expectation that all will be governing themselves according to the Holy Scriptures. Happily, we have rarely had to ask a volunteer to leave an assignment. However, in the event that a volunteer becomes disruptive, argumentative or refuses to follow instructions given by the staff or Coach in charge, they will be asked to leave the assignment and seek a new assignment with the help of the Director of Programs and Volunteer Coordinator.
- If injured or involved in an accident while involved at Voice of Hope, report your accident or injury immediately to the Supervisor or to the Volunteer Coordinator or Director of Programs.
- If for any reason, a ministry assignment is not a good fit for you, please let us know. Volunteers may decline a proposed placement or request a change of placement at any time. Volunteers may explore other volunteer opportunities to find the right “fit”.

## **Healthy boundaries make for great relationships!**

Orientation and training cannot fully prepare you for the wide range of experiences you will share with the children (and parents) at Voice of Hope. The stressful circumstances of the families we serve may make it difficult for volunteers to resist becoming over-involved. Over-involvement occurs when volunteers give more of themselves than is essential to providing encouragement and guidance. At all times, VOH Volunteers should remember that they are not professional staff and that they should limit their interactions with the children to those outlined in their volunteer position description. This is for the volunteer's wellbeing as well as the children receiving services.

The following behaviors may create an unhealthy relationship between the child and the volunteer.

### **Please do NOT:**

- Communicate with the child or parent at times other than your designated volunteer shift
- Withhold information from VOH staff about concerns of the children or parents
- Give children a ride in your vehicle
- Choose favorites
- Give gifts or money to children or parents
- Loan personal items to children to play with (cell phone, keys, gadgets)
- Allow children to play with your hair
- Give unsolicited advice to parents
- Give your phone number, address, email or other personal information to children or parents
- Become a friend of a child via social media.
- Please do not use Restrooms in Programs Building they are reserved for the children only. Please use Restrooms in the Administration Building.

*Absolutely no information should be posted on social media regarding specific VOH children or parents.*

### **Please do:**

- Encourage, encourage, encourage!
- Communicate your belief in the child's abilities
- Focus on the child's strengths
- Express empathy and compassion with words and facial expressions instead of touching.
- Report any suspected abuse, severe neglect or critical needs (food, water, electricity) to Director of Programs or Direct Supervisor.

## Precautions Against Accusations of Abuse

Child abuse is a spiritual and criminal offense. As a Voice of Hope Ministries Volunteer you may be placed in sensitive situation, making you vulnerable to charges of child molestation. However, if you take these simple precautions, you need not be afraid of groundless accusations.

- Please **do not be alone with any child**. No exceptions. If you find yourself left alone with a child in a classroom unexpectedly, you should take the child with you to the nearest Coach or VOH Staff member. Please alert the Volunteer Coordinator if a Coach leaves you alone with a child (or children).
- Respect the privacy of the child. Do not become intrusive or curious more than is necessary to monitor the health and safety of the child.
- Please **hug children from the side**. Refrain from hugging children from the front. Front hugs can be misinterpreted and may make children feel uncomfortable.
- The child has the right to reject displays of affection if he or she feels uncomfortable with them. Not every child comes from a background in which affection is openly displayed. Respect the child's wishes.
- Protect your own privacy. There may be a natural curiosity about boyfriends, girlfriends and other personal relationships and some children may inquire about sexual activity. You should use common sense in discussing sensitive subjects with children and you should avoid details of your private life.
- In the event in which a child may be dressing or undressing, A Staff member must be present when supervising this situation.
- Sexual exploitations should not be confused with physical contacts that are true expressions of affection. A warm and healthy relationship can exist between volunteers and children if the child is respected and there are reasonable limits on physical interaction.
- Please do not use Restrooms in Programs Building they are reserved for the children only. Please use Restrooms in the Administration Building.



## **Emergency Procedures**

**Fire --** (Each classroom has a plan of action in case of a fire)

When VOH identifies a concern with fire or safety; a plan is followed that has been developed. The first effort is to ensure the safety of the students and staff. This may require being sheltered in place and the VOH locked down from perceived threats. Or, the students may be immediately evacuated such as in the case of a fire. VOH has an emergency plan that is followed. First actions are to ensure students and staff safety. Parents are notified subsequent to taking the required action to ensure safety. If VOH remains open during a reported threat, please be assured that local authorities have fully investigated the matter and have determined that no danger is present for students, volunteers, or staff.

### **Each class has a Fire Safety plan located by the door**

When VOH identifies a concern with fire or general safety, a previously developed plan is implemented. Most important is to ensure the safety of the students and staff. In some cases, this may require being confined to one place and Voice of Hope being locked down from perceived threats.

In other situations, such as fire, students and volunteers may be evacuated immediately. Each class has a Fire Safety Plan located by the door. Students and staff participate in monthly drills to ensure the understanding of the safety plan.

Parents are notified subsequent to taking the required action for safety.

## **Upon Receiving a Bomb Threat**

- ***Director of Programs and CEO*** orders evacuation or other actions according to threat assessment.

Scanning process considerations:

- Have staff that is familiar with the building scan classrooms and common areas for suspicious items. Assign staff to certain areas of the building. A bomb could be placed *anywhere* inside or outside on the property.
- Any suspicious devices, packages, etc, should be pointed out to emergency responders. Do not touch.

Evacuation considerations:

- If a decision is made to evacuate, notify staff via phone system. **Do not use cell phones, radios, or fire alarm** because of risk of activating the device.
- While notification is being made, other staff should survey the grounds to clear exits and all areas where students and staff will be going.
- When evacuating, leave everything as-is and room doors unlocked. Accompany your coach and class to the assigned safety area.

## **Flooding**

- Monitor Weather Radio, and emergency alert radio stations. Stay in contact with ***Voice of Hope at 214-631-7027***
- Review evacuation procedures with all staff.
- Check relocation centers. Find an alternate relocation center if primary and secondary centers would also be flooded.
- Check transportation resources.

- If district officials and emergency responders advise evacuation, do so immediately.
- Accompany your coach and class to the assigned safety area.
- The coach will take attendance to ensure you and all participants are present.
- Notify parents/guardians

Flood Relocation Centers for the Main Campus:

**Primary Relocation Center:**

**West Dallas Community School**

2300 Canada Dr. Dallas, TX 75212

214-634-1927

1. *Depart Gentry Dr toward Canada Dr  
Turn right onto Canada Dr  
West Dallas Community School on the right*

**Secondary Relocation Center:**

**YMCA**

3737 Goldman St., Dallas, TX 75212

214-630-9880

1. *Depart Gentry Dr toward Canada Dr*
2. *Turn right onto Canada Dr*
3. *Turn right onto Westmorland*
4. *Turn left on Bickers St.*
5. *YMCA on the right*

Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm

Signs preceding a tornado include one or more of the following:

- Severe lightening.
- Destructive high winds.
- Heavy rains.
- Large, heavy hail.

Report immediately, even your suspicions of any of the following:

- Funnel-shaped, rotating clouds.
- Protuberances or rotary motion at the base of a thundercloud system.
- Any rotating cloud, debris, or dust near the ground.
- If it is too dark to see, listen for any distinctive roar similar to an aircraft or train.

Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm WATCH has been issued in an area near your site:

- Monitor Weather Radio, National Weather Service, or emergency alert radio stations.
- Bring all persons inside building(s).
- Prop open vents and doors between rooms and hallways.
- Open all windows slightly.
- Review tornado drill procedures and location of safe areas.

*Tornado safe areas are at the lowest level of the building. They are interior hallways or rooms away from exterior walls and windows and away from large rooms with long span ceilings.*

- Review “drop and tuck” procedures with participants.

Tornado/Severe Thunderstorm WARNING has been issued in an area near your site:

- Move participants and staff to safe areas.
- The Coach will take attendance and ensure all participants are present.
- Ensure that students are in “tuck” positions.
- Remain in safe area until warning expires or emergency personnel have issued an all-clear signal.

If outside and unable to reach shelter:

- Escort participants to a ditch or hollow and have them lie down with hands locked covering the head.

Post-Tornado

- If a tornado passes without striking you, be cautious, as there may be other funnels in the area.  
If your building is struck by a tornado:
- Administer first aid as necessary.
- Evacuate damaged area cautiously.
- Move injured as little as possible.
- Note all injured and immediately report all missing to *Alexandra Hardesty/ Dr. Kevin Norvell*
- Retain participants in area until it is considered safe for participant to return to programming, go home or be released to parents.

### Emergency Evacuation

1. Alert staff or Directors, indicating the need of assistance from the local Fire Department and law enforcement.
2. Help coach make certain all children and staff members are accounted for and are safe.
3. Evacuate with your class to an area as far from the building as safely practical.
  - a) Adhere to predetermined evacuation routes, if possible; however, do not hesitate to adjust these routes to avoid dangerous areas.
  - b) All children and staff members with **special needs** are to be assisted as needed.
  - c) Attendance will be taken upon exiting the building and upon arrival at designated location.
    - In the event the Evacuation procedures need to be fulfilled Voice of Hope will utilize all accessible vehicles and owners to transport participants to our DeSoto Campus located at:

#### **Uplift Gradus Preparatory**

Address: 121 Seahawk Dr. Desoto, Tx 75115

Phone:( 214) 451-5551

### Lock Down

The Lock-Down procedure will take place in the event that there is a perceived threat from an intruder, or if a warning from the police department is issued. A Lockdown alert is given by a call over the walkie-talkie to all staff.

Staff will:

- Proceed quickly to the nearest classroom
- Close and lock all access doors
- Move children and volunteers out of sight as much as possible
- Turn off lights

No one except emergency personnel will be allowed to enter or leave the building. Everyone will remain in position until notified by law enforcement, the fire department or the Director.

*In the case of a Lock Down or any other emergency event any volunteers scheduled for a shift on the effected campus will be notified via text message, informed of the situation, and told not to come to Voice of Hope. Volunteer shifts can be rescheduled on the website volunteer page.*