

## 17. Appreciation and Guidelines Management

Each employee and volunteer should receive a copy of the “Employee Handbook” or “Volunteer Handbook” respectively. They both give an overview of the philosophy of the ministry, and outline the benefits and guidelines. Appendix 3, “Volunteer Appreciation and Guidelines” is an excerpt from the Handbook and is available for anyone who would like to read the pertinent information as a refresher.

This section gives ideas of ways to show appreciation to staff and volunteers. It also gives an explanation from a management view point of the guidelines for employees and volunteers.

### **Referenced Sections**

Appendix 1 – Employee Handbook

Appendix 2 – Volunteer Handbook

Appendix 3 – Volunteer Appreciation and Guidelines

### **Appreciation**

The volunteer base is as vital to the success of the ministry as is the paid staff. There are not enough hours in the day to go it alone; it takes the combined efforts of a team to have a well functioning ministry.

Here are several ideas of ways to show appreciation to staff and volunteers for their hard work and sacrifice. Tailor what you do for your particular situation; money available, number in the team, etc. Be creative, and remember that without the volunteers, the ministry would not survive.

1. Discounts
2. Free Clothes
3. Gift Certificates
4. Birthdays
5. Socials

### **Discounts**

A 30% discount on purchases is a great way to show appreciation. This appreciation is to those who have shown a consistent willingness to be of service. Therefore, it is recommended that the discount not be available until after someone has volunteered for approximately 40 hours.

Use discretion as to when a person no longer qualifies for the discount. If a volunteer is coming on a regular basis, they qualify. If they have been gone for several months, but are back and you know they will be consistent, they qualify. The discount is also available during a sale.

This discount is only available to the individual who is volunteering. It is a ‘thank you’ for the time, energy and resources of the volunteer expended in service with us. If this discount is given to someone other than the volunteer, it loses the aspect of being ‘special.’ If someone would like to receive a discount they are welcome to come and serve with us on a consistent basis.

## **Clothes**

When clothes are needed by staff or volunteers, they may be given free. This does not mean taking arm loads day after day. Use discretion and knowledge of a need. Four to five outfits per month per immediate family member should be adequate.

## **Gift Certificates**

Gift Certificates make a nice Christmas gift, they can also be used for birthdays and special occasions, or any time you see fit. Update the included sample with your information. There are three to a sheet, type each person's name, tracking number, and print, repeat for the next 3 people. We have found \$25.00 to be a nice amount, if you want to give someone a larger amount (duration of service, responsibilities, etc), give them additional certificates. Make a list of gift certificates given with name and certificate number. Check off each one when they are turned in.

Keep track on the back of the certificate the amount spent; do not ring it up in the register. If the certificate holder is eligible for a discount, deduct the discount amount from the purchase price. Example – Purchase price is \$5.00, less 30% discount (\$1.50) = \$3.50. \$25.00 gift certificate less \$3.50 gives a balance of \$21.50.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are a special time. We purchase a card and pass it around a week or so before and have everyone sign it. You could give a small memento with the card; a bouquet of flowers for the ladies and a balloon for the guys is one idea. Another idea would be to include a gift certificate in the card.

## **Public Recognition**

Personal ministry time on Sabbath can be used to recognize a volunteer, to thank them publicly for their willingness to serve and give them an opportunity to testify of how they see God working in the ministry. This could be done once a month or quarter. When you would like to honor a volunteer who is not a member of the church, let them know you would like to honor them on a specific Sabbath and invite them to church, give them an opportunity to say a few words about what the thrift store ministry means to them.

This recognition not only lifts the spirits of the volunteer, it informs the church of blessings experienced with the ministry

## **Lunch**

If you have the facilities, you may consider providing lunch one day a week. Think this through carefully, we have found that once you start, it is very difficult to discontinue; the volunteers are not happy if you take away their lunch. If you have pot luck, you run into the problem of the same few people bringing something every week for others who come just on that day for lunch yet do not bring anything.

## Socials

Social get-togethers provide a special time for everyone to be together, to share experiences, to thank them and let them know how much they are appreciated. Christmas is a nice time to have a party or maybe a summer cook out. Here are a few ideas.

Christmas:

1. Have a Party
  - a. Find someone with space in their home to accommodate everyone.
  - b. Have Food
    - i. Provide soup and finger food.
    - ii. Have the party catered. Check with local restaurants. You may have a volunteer that is capable who you can hire to cater the party. Estimated cost: \$16.00 – \$25.00 per person
  - c. Carol around the piano.
  - d. Give out poems to a few beforehand to be read.
  - e. Tell a story.
2. Dinner and a show – find a church that is putting on a Christmas play that will give you a private showing, you provide the food.
3. Take a lake ‘cruise’ to see Christmas lights.
4. Bring in a singing group to provide entertainment.

Cook Out

1. Have each person bring a side dish, the store could provide the entrée to cook on the grill.
2. Meet at a park or someone’s home.

## Guidelines

### **Buying things before they are put out on the floor / who does the pricing**

This is an area that we grow in the longer we are involved with the store. In the beginning we want everything we see; like a kid in a candy store for the first time. As we allow God to grow us, we come to realize that we do not need all this stuff. Some like to have a box where they put things in to purchase at a later time. This is fine as long as it does not overflow. One box should be sufficient, when it becomes full (instead of starting a second box) the person should go through their box, buy and take home what they want to keep, put the rest out on the floor for sale, and start over.

This area gives God a great opportunity to show us how greedy we are and is a way for Him to demonstrate to us that He is our provider. The human mind says “I must have this” or “I want what I want and I want it now.” God is teaching us to submit our desires to Him, He is teaching us that we do not need to ‘horde’ things for the future, He is willing and able to provide what we need when we need it.

If a staff member or volunteer see an item they want that has not been priced yet, the item should be priced by one or two others at a price that would be placed on it if the item were going to be put out on the floor.

There needs to be an awareness to not hold back a lot of things from the sales floor. We do not want customers to complain that ‘all the good stuff’ gets taken before it ever gets out on the floor. Again discretion is advised in this matter, there should be a balance. We want our volunteers to be blessed, but we also need merchandise available to bless others. This is especially true for larger items and furniture out on the floor.

### **Hold Tags**

‘Holds’ are generally for one or two days, except in extenuating circumstances. The issue: 1) Space in the store. 2) It is very discouraging for customers to come in and find many things in the store on hold by the same people.

The hold policy applies to volunteers just as it does to customers. If there are extenuating circumstances, the volunteer must get the approval of a manager to place something on hold for more than two days. When a hold expires, it expires, whether it was for a customer or a volunteer.

### **Sold Tags**

Volunteers should not leave an item in the store marked sold for more than a week. The space is needed for new merchandise and it reduces customer complaints of favoritism.

### **Dress**

Our personal appearance and what we wear makes an impact on those we associate with each day. As a Christian organization we want to be well groomed and promote decency in the way we dress. What we wear should be neat and orderly, it should convey our attitude of placing Christ first in our life and not drawing attention to ourselves. It should not be suggestive, it should be clean, comfortable and well-fitting.

It is important that the manager and staff model this in the way they dress. It is very difficult to question someone regarding their attire, when ours is lacking.

One of the areas dress may need to be addressed more often, is with those who are doing community service hours. If a community service worker does not have appropriate attire, we allow them to ‘shop’ in our store for something suitable to wear.

### **Eating**

It is very unprofessional to have someone eating behind the register. When it is time for the register person to eat, have someone relieve them so they may take a break. There may be times when there is only one person to ‘man’ the store and it is unavoidable, when this is the case, the eating should be done as discreetly as possible.

### **Phone**

It is rude to use the phone, especially a personal call (land or cell), while you are behind the register or helping a customer. At times it is unavoidable, the principle is to be aware and avoid doing so if possible.

## **Allowing God to Shine Through Us**

It is the joy of leadership to be first in allowing God to give us a willingness to learn, grow, and change, to create in us the love and wisdom of heaven as we respond to life's situations. The way we react to life is infectious; the attitude of those placed in positions of responsibility affect the rest of the team.

## **The Customer Is Always Served**

The customer is always served. If we are talking with other staff and a customer comes up to be waited on, we should suspend our conversation and take care of the customer immediately, we can then resume our conversation.

## **Public Discussion**

The following things are never appropriate to discuss in front of, or with customers:

- a. 'Family Issues' – interactions between the team are never appropriate for outside discussion.
- b. Sales for the day – the customer may not have an understanding of the cost in running a business and the amount may seem like a lot to them.
- c. What a previous customer did or said – the customer you are telling will wonder what you say about them when they are gone.
- d. A grievance with another volunteer or staff – take the conversation to a private location

The things we say before and after a sale have an effect on the customer. If we tell them that a sale will start the next day, they will wonder why they are making a purchase now and feel cheated by not waiting until tomorrow. If we tell them they missed the sale from the day before, they wonder why you do not give them the sale price today.

## **Frustrations**

It is never appropriate to talk about a customer while out on the floor or behind the register. If you see that a customer has frustrated the person at the register, step in and give that person a break to go and collect their thoughts. Make yourself available to the team member so they may vent their frustrations on you and not the next customers.

If you see a team member having an altercation with a customer, make yourself available immediately. Notice the word 'available', do not step in and take over, be aware of the situation and attempt to decipher what has brought the discussion to this point. When it is appropriate, or when the other team member indicates they need your assistance, step in to further explain or rectify the situation.

When there is a question or disagreement with a customer, our goal is to find a way to resolve the issue so that the customer feels good about themselves and their experience in our store. Remember the old saying "the customer is always right"? Well, it's not true, the customer is not always right. But it is not a matter of who is right or who is wrong; it is a matter of reflecting Jesus love. If the customer is mistaken, what can I do to demonstrate the love of God to them? If I am mistaken, what can I do to make it right? Regardless of who is at fault, what can I do to give the customer Christ-like service?

If a disagreement arises between a manager and another team member move to a location that is out of sight and hearing of the public. If a disagreement arises between volunteers, guide them to a private location for further discussion.

### **A Servants Heart**

When my prayer each day is a choice to allow God to use the day to transform my character, I will more often approach each interaction with an attitude of acceptance and understanding, a willingness to be nonjudgmental, to show empathy, kindness and friendship. As God's light fills my heart I will more often enter each situation with the attitude of a servant; how can I help, how can I lift up those God brings across my path? Portray the attitude of servant hood through example.

### **Generosity/Shining God's Love**

Encourage an environment that promotes an attitude of generosity in staff and volunteers. When you witness generosity, give support and praise. The more generous we become, the less selfish we become and the more God is able to bless us in all areas.

As we allow Jesus to create His nature in us, we grow in our ability to be generous, liberal, and openhanded. The Holy Spirit will give us words to say that put a smile in someone's heart, things we can do that give the customer a pleasant memory of their time with us, ways we can allow Jesus to shine through us, ideas of how to put the following verse into action.

**“Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.”**  
Matthew 5:48 (The Message)

We are Jesus arms of love; showing kindness, building friendships, portraying His generosity, giving a smile, offering a prayer of comfort.

Use every opportunity to encourage staff and volunteers, to come up with ways to become acquainted with people, to build rapport with the customers, to lend a listening ear, to pray, to reach out with the arms of Christ and embrace those God brings across their path.

### **Whistle While You Work**

Lead out in a spirit of fun and laughter. We may get busy and harried with the demands of the day and forget to have fun. However, God is always there encouraging us to cast our cares upon Him, (“casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” <sup>1</sup> Peter 5:7 NKJV) to allow Him to fill our hearts with peace and give us a joy in living life. Fun should never be at another's expense, our goal should be to lighten each others burdens, not add to them. Joy and appropriate laughter lifts our mood and brings us together as a family.

**“A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength.”**  
Proverbs 17:22 (NLT)

As we experience the peace of God when we cast our cares upon Him, we continue to learn that God is our source of all things, physical and spiritual. We grow in our understanding that

regardless of the circumstances that surround us, God is offering us His peace. As we experience the peace of heaven in our hearts, we find the praise of God on our lips.

As God teaches us to rejoice in all things we find burdens lifted and a peace that passeth all understanding permeating the store.

**“Always be joyful...No matter what happens, always be thankful,** for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16, 18 (NLT)

## **Refuge**

Enlist the help of all to promote a haven of refuge. This takes place as each is willing to allow God to change their heart and give them the peace of heaven.

## **Safety**

Encourage an environment that promotes safety. Think before acting, look ahead, be aware of the surroundings. Educate each team member to realize it is their responsibility to either report or fix hazardous situations immediately.

Utilize the First Aid kit for minor injuries. If there is an emergency requiring medical attention, call 911 – do not attempt to transport.

## **Together in Purpose**

The volunteers are a gift to be upheld and appreciated for their commitment and willingness to give of their time and means. We have the privilege to Learn, Grow, and Change together, as we become Jesus arms of love. We rejoice together as we experience God's ability to shine through us as He draws a dying world to Himself.

## 18. Community Service

Additional assistance to operate the ministry is gained by allowing those required to perform community service hours, to serve at the store.

Categories of community service.

1. Those who have been convicted of a crime and are required to give a certain number of hours of community service as part of their sentence. The number of hours will vary; twenty-five to one-hundred hours is common. One time we had a lady with five-hundred hours. The most common reasons are DUI and petty theft.
2. Those who are receiving public assistance. They are required to give a specific number of hours per week. Fifteen to twenty-five hours per week is common.
3. Students who are working towards school awards or scholarships.

Contact local agencies and let them know you are a not-for-profit entity and are available as a work site to provide community service hours. They will provide an application (some are more involved than others) and place you on their list of venues where offenders may fulfill their hours.

Help from the first and third categories is sporadic, the second category is more consistent. If you have someone from the second category who is there week after week, you may consider giving them more responsibility in an area where you have a need, e.g., place them in charge of the linen department.

The client will usually have a form from their particular agency to keep track of their hours. We also have a form. We keep our forms in a three ring binder in a location that is secure yet convenient for the client (behind the register). The client should 'clock' in when they arrive, by having a designated person mark down the time on their form. When they leave, they should have a designated person mark down the time and initial it. By keeping a form at the store, we have a record if they happen to lose theirs, it also contains pertinent information, e.g., contact information in case of an emergency. When they are finished with their hours make them a copy and file the original.

When someone comes for the first time, have them complete our form and read the Community Service Guidelines sheet. Discuss appropriate attire and what you expect of them. Give them a tour of the facilities (bathroom, lounge, etc.).

If a community service worker does not have appropriate attire, allow them to 'shop' in your store for something suitable to wear.

\*See "Community Service Guidelines"

When someone is doing community service hours, they are covered by the insurance of the referring agency.



### Phone Calls

Here are a few things to consider when you receive a phone call requesting information about serving at your store:

Age – We have found that under sixteen years old is too young (unless you have someone who can give direct supervision).

Number of community service workers at a given time – Not enough things to do or personnel to give supervision.

### After they have started working

Willingness to work – Do they come to you to find out what they need to do next, or do you have to go and find them most of the time?

Able to follow directions – Are they able to carry out a given task without you standing over them to constantly supervise?

### Ideas of things to do:

Male –

Assist with bringing in donations  
Assist in carrying out furniture  
Rearranging furniture  
Work on pick up & delivery truck

Female –

Sort Clothes  
Bag at register

Both –

Sweep / Mop  
Vacuum  
Straighten Shelves

### The Pros and Cons of Community Service

Pros

Extra help  
Opportunity to show love and compassion  
Positive atmosphere of the store and the influence on a soul for the kingdom

Cons

Just when you get them trained, they are gone  
The younger ones tend to be inexperienced and need constant supervision  
Some are lazy and you have to be on their case constantly  
You have too many at one time and not enough things for all of them to do

The community service worker should be treated with the same respect and love you would want to be shown. It is not appropriate to ask about the nature of their offence. If they choose to tell you, allow God to give you words of encouragement and concern as you point them to the only solution to sin – our Saviour Jesus Christ.

This part of the ministry gives a great opportunity to work side by side with members of the community who may feel ashamed or are struggling with addictions. Allow God to use you as His agent to show His love, to demonstrate His grace and mercy. Working together we are able to model a good work ethic, to share in the satisfaction of a job well done. Through our interaction, God will give opportunities to share what He has done for us and what He is offering to do for them.

## 19. Social Services

As the ministry grows, it can be expanded to include educational and teaching services. These take commitment and space, some more than others. Find out what services are needed in your area. There is no need to duplicate what is already being done. For instance, computer training classes are offered in our county by the state, so there is not a need for a computer training lab.

### **Here are a few ideas:**

Help with home work

Tutoring – reading, math

Computer training lab

Stop smoking clinics

Cooking classes

Child discipline classes

Marriage enrichment classes

Health Screening

Exercise / Aerobic classes

Enlist church members who are not able to help at the center during the day, yet are available to help or lead out in one of the evening classes.

You do not have to do everything at once. Start with a cooking class or Stop Smoking clinic once a quarter and build from there.

## 20. Spiritual Outreach (not yet completed)

