

Resident Volunteer Application to the Open Door Community

The Open Door is a residential Christian community. Believing that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a radical Word that calls for justice and righteousness rooted in the non-violent love of the Cross, we live together in an effort to resist the powers and principalities in our world. We struggle to resist the idols of money, power, violence, sexism, racism, death, war and the self. We also live together as a form of the body of Christ on earth in an effort to express the joy of salvation and the servanthood of discipleship. Our joy is expressed in worship, work, parenting, visiting, playing, eating together, friendship and study.

In all of our life and work together we strive to encounter and challenge the barriers of sexism, heterosexism, racism and classism that are within our own hearts and in our social structures. Because our community includes African Americans, European Americans, Hispanics, women and men, rich and poor, we deal with these issues on a daily basis. Living at the Open Door, therefore, requires a willingness to work for change in our social structures and in ourselves.

Our servanthood takes two basic forms. First, we are servants to those in prison, especially those under the sentence of death. In the name of Jesus we visit our condemned friends and witness against the death penalty in this state. Second, we serve the homeless and hungry on the streets of Atlanta. We share bread and beds with the poor and join our voices with the cries of the poor for justice in this city.

Some of the specifics of our ministry include providing shelter, breakfast, a soup kitchen, showers, clothes, advocacy for the homeless, visitation and letter-writing to prisoners, work with families of prisoners and anti-death penalty advocacy.

In all our work, we are called to practice hospitality and friendliness. We are not here to simply provide services, but to share God's love, mercy and compassion with our oppressed brothers and sisters. The following excerpt may be helpful in understanding hospitality:

“This is the ideal of hospitality: being sister to sister, brother to brother, children to the same Parent. Not scientific social work-hospitality. Not haughty superior dealing with ‘problem cases’-hospitality. Not condescending judge dealing with errant accused-hospitality. No, hospitality is derived from the Latin word for ‘guest.’ It expresses a relationship between equal people: host and guest. It is bound by the rules of courtesy and human companionship, and ruled by the law of charity.

There are always men and women who need hospitality, for one reason or another. There are, in an imperfect world of imperfect men and women, always those who need a calling back to life, a restoration of personality. There are always those lonely people, in all times, in all places, who need the knowledge of being respected as men and women, of living with other men and women with dignity, of sharing their own burdens with others and bearing some of the burdens for others.

Hospitality reminds people that they are sisters and brothers, children of God, dependent on others and capable of being depended on by others.

It is not a specialized work, requiring scientific training. It is something for everyone to practice according to the measure they are able to do so.

The charm of hospitality, because it is peculiarly human, appeals to all people...It is not surprising that often God should use the hospitality people give each other as an instrument of God's grace.” – John Cogley, The Catholic Worker, October 1947

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Specific Information

- A. Term – Suggested Resident Volunteer terms are six months to one year. The Leadership Team of the Open Door will consider exceptions on an individual basis.
- B. Before You Arrive
1. We ask that you do not bring a television set.
 2. Please do not bring your car to the Open Door, or use it during your RV term.
 3. During your time here, we ask that you live on the room, board and \$11.50/week stipend, leaving all other economic resources behind.
- C. Schedule
1. On a daily basis, each resident volunteer shares in some of the following ministry rotations: breakfast preparation, Soup Kitchen work, supervision of showers and clothes closet, answering the phone and door, house cleaning, receiving and sorting donations, and supper preparation.
 2. For at least the first three months of their volunteer term, male resident volunteers will share a room with community members from the streets or prisons.
 3. We gather for daily worship at 12:30 pm. On Sundays we celebrate the Eucharist at 4:00 pm. Everyone is expected to worship, eat lunch and supper together, and remain for kitchen clean-up every day except on one's day off.
 4. Each Resident Volunteer has one day (24 hours) off each week.
 5. Time away from the community should not be scheduled around Thanksgiving, Christmas-New Years, Holy Week, Easter, Festival of Shelters, and other times of community involvement and heavy demands on the work schedule.
 6. The community holds retreats four times each year at Dayspring Farm.
- D. Money
1. Each Resident Volunteer receives a \$11.50/week stipend.
 2. The Open Door does not carry medical insurance for partners or RV's. We use the Open Door's Harriett Tubman Clinic and Grady Memorial Hospital for routine and emergency medical care.
 3. Please do not charge long distance phone calls to the Open Door. Make collect calls if necessary while you are here, or purchase a calling card with your stipend.
- E. Study and Worship – As a Christian community, we are servants with, among and on behalf of the poor. Our lives are centered in worship, and our servanthood grows out of our personal and corporate relationship with Jesus Christ. Thus worship, sharing and study-reflection are as essential to our lives, as are the soup kitchen, showers and prison ministries. To this end we agree to gather together for:
1. Sunday and daily worship and retreats.
 2. Clarification Meetings: Speakers outside the community are invited to discuss issues relating to our shared life and ministry.
- F. Transportation – The Open Door owns several vehicles. They are primarily for use in our ministries. We strongly encourage all community members to use public transportation, and we provide tokens for this purpose.

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[Please attach a recent photo here]

Instructions

1. Before completing this application, please read all of the books published by the Open Door Community and at least two recent issues of the Open Door's newspaper, *Hospitality*. (See books listed on the Open Door web site at: <http://opendoorcommunity.org/new/wordpress/resources/publications>.)
2. Please mail or fax the completed form and your Faith History to:

Sarah Humphrey
The Open Door Community
910 Ponce de Leon Ave. NE
Atlanta, GA 30306-4212

Fax 404-874-7964

Alternately, you may attach the completed document to an email addressed to:

opendoorcomm@bellsouth.net

Your document should be in one of the following formats: Microsoft Word 2000 (or earlier), rich text format (.rtf), or plain text format (.txt).

3. Please have the following individuals provide references directly to the Open Door Community using the attached reference forms:
 1. Your pastor or spiritual director
 2. A close friend and peer
 3. A teacher or employer

Section I – Personal Information

Name:

Today's Date:

Address:

Phone: (Day) (Night)

Email:

Age:

Date of birth:

In case of accident or illness, please contact: (name)

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(phone)

Section I – Personal Information cont'd.

Do you smoke?

Do you know how to drive a standard transmission vehicle?

What is your current living situation (job, school, etc.)?

What future plans or commitments do you have?

How is your health? Do you have any physical, mental, or addictive issues that we should be aware of?

What dates are you available for a volunteer term? Beginning _____ through _____

Section II – Personal Reflection

Please reflect briefly on the following questions, using as much space as needed.

1. Have you lived in community before? If so, please describe.
2. Please reflect on your views regarding women's issues in American society. How does the Gospel relate to the oppression of women?
3. List any experiences you have had working, studying, living, etc. with people of a different class, race, or nationality from your own.
4. What do you understand to be the relationship between TV and politics in North American culture?
5. What place and role do prayer, meditation, and rest have in your life?

Section III – Faith History

Please write your "Faith History" for us. This should be approximately five to ten typed pages in length, and should describe your faith pilgrimage. The following questions might be helpful to you as you consider your own history.

1. What are your present beliefs and faith struggles?
2. How have family background, education and church affiliation influenced your faith pilgrimage?
3. What other life experiences have had significant impact on your beliefs?
4. What, if any, meaning does the Gospel as "good news to the poor" have in your own theology?
5. In your particular beliefs, what is your understanding of the political nature of the Gospel?
6. At this point in your life, do you experience a particular call or vocation?
7. Why are you interested in volunteering at the Open Door?

