



## **Volunteer Action Team to Form**

“We want to do more!” was a common phrase heard from volunteers and Coordinators during the strategic planning process that took place in 2006. Volunteers are hungry for opportunities to reach out to IHN families in new and creative ways to meet a wider variety of needs not only during the families’ stay at Alpha House but also in the critical months that follow their transition into homes of their own. Though IHN staff and volunteers do a tremendous job supporting families during their stay at Alpha House and during follow-up, there is so much more we could do.

At the last Coordinators’ meeting, we revisited the idea of forming an Action Team to develop a vision and create a plan to expand volunteer involvement to more effectively and comprehensively serve IHN families. If you or others in your congregation are interested in lending your voice and insight to this exciting process, please contact Heidi, IHN Volunteer Coordinator, at 734-822-0220 or [hbeck@alphahouse-ihn.org](mailto:hbeck@alphahouse-ihn.org).

## **Endurance 5K a Huge Success!**

Huron Hills Baptist Church, a long-time IHN congregation, hosted its 4th Annual “Endurance” 5K Fun Run/Walk on April 28<sup>th</sup>. All proceeds will go to fund IHN services! Approximately 150 runners and walkers gathered at Gallup Park on a brisk spring morning. Julie Steiner, IHN Executive Director, shared a few words before the race about the resilience of IHN families and the important ways IHN staff and volunteers reach out to families enduring the crisis of homelessness.

## **Congregational Giving Campaign**

Like so many in our community, IHN is feeling the pinch of difficult economic times. Grantors are putting increasing restrictions on their funding and grant dollars are not increasing at the same rate as the need. As a result, IHN needs to begin to find more creative ways to raise unrestricted dollars.

At the last Coordinators’ meeting, we discussed ways to involve congregations in a new giving campaign. We have lots of ideas and the coordinators in attendance at that meeting gave us great feedback. Julie and Casey will be contacting each

congregation’s leadership (that includes you) to discuss these ideas. Each congregation is so different in size, giving and social justice initiatives that we want to come up with the best plan for each congregation. If you have any thoughts in the meantime, please feel free to contact IHN Development Coordinator, Casey Frazee, at [cfraze@alphahouse-ihn.org](mailto:cfraze@alphahouse-ihn.org) or 822-0220 ext. 204.

## **Welcome NorthRidge!**

We are excited to welcome NorthRidge Church to the IHN family! NorthRidge congregation members volunteered for the first time at Alpha House on Sunday May, 20. They prepared a fantastic breakfast and spent time with the children. NorthRidge will be serving a Sunday breakfast at Alpha House once a month through the end of the year. Welcome!!

## **Highlights from the Celebration of Volunteers**

Coordinators, volunteers, board members, and IHN staff gathered on Sunday May 6<sup>th</sup> at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation for the fourth annual Celebration of Volunteers. The group feasted on delicious deserts and ice cream and enjoyed an afternoon of fellowship. Congregation Coordinators presented former IHN Volunteer Coordinator, Joel Eckel, with a gift of appreciation for his years of great leadership and service to IHN. Beth Manual, from Child Care Network, accepted the Outstanding Community Partner Award on behalf of her organization for their dedicated service to IHN families. Thank you to the many hands who assisted with set-up/tear-down, provided children’s activities, contributed food and helped us celebrate a fantastic year of hard work!



## **Friends Mailing Update**

Thank you to all the coordinators who took part in writing notes to their friends for the IHN Friends Mailing this spring! Special thanks to Susan Greenburg, Jeanne Hernandez, Margaret Gaugler, Sally and Burt Lamkin, Lucie Audette and Jim Johnston for your time and efforts. It truly makes a difference. We have raised over **\$12,000** and we are only a few weeks into the campaign. That’s halfway to our goal! Thank you to each and every one of you for everything you do!

## **IHN Program Highlight**

### **The Wraparound Program**

The Wraparound Program is a family centered, community-oriented, strengths-based, highly individualized approach to case management. Upon their arrival to Alpha House, families are assigned a Facilitator whose primary role is to coordinate the Wraparound process and work with the family to establish goals, identify needs, and create a plan of action that uniquely addresses the family's obstacles. Wraparound plans focus on the family's strengths, assets, and skills.

The Facilitator also helps the family assemble a Wraparound Team. This team is composed of natural supports identified by the family such as friends, relatives or clergy; key professionals employed at the shelter such as the Housing Coordinator and Children's Service Coordinator; and professionals from other agencies. Wraparound Teams meet formally with families once a week during the family's three-month stay at Alpha House and when needed while the family is in the follow-up program. Families are an integral part of the team and the plan reflects their voices, choices, and preferences.

The Wraparound Plan is designed to comprehensively address family needs in the following life domains: housing, mental health, family, school, work, safety, legal issues, physical health, finances, and relationships. As part of Wraparound, families are asked to save at least 80% of their income after expenses. IHN has an incentive savings program which boosts the families' income while they are saving. In addition, facilitators use Wraparound Funds to assist families with various needs such as car repairs, educational expenses, and clothing.

Trudi Bennett and Denise Diggs-Taylor (starting June 18) are IHN's Wraparound Facilitators. Their skills, creativity, and caring help support and guide our families through the difficult experience of homelessness.

### **Coordinators' Meeting** **2007 Schedule**

Tuesday, July 17  
7pm at Alpha House

Thursday, September 06  
7pm at Alpha House

Tuesday, November 13  
7pm at Alpha House

### **Gimme Shelter: Save the Date!**

Gimme Shelter, IHN's annual fall fundraiser, is **Saturday, October 20 at 6:30 p.m.** at the Morris Lawrence Building at Washtenaw Community College. As always, there will be great food, music, and a silent action. Casey will be contacting Congregation Coordinators towards the end of August to enlist your help with selling tickets. Please save the date and we hope to see you there!

### **☀ Summer Schedule Challenges ☀**

The summer can be a challenging time for Coordinators to find enough volunteers to fill their host week. College students may be gone for the summer, families are busy with sports and other activities, and many people head out of town for much needed vacations. However, the summer is also a time when schedules free up, class loads are lighter, and parents and kids are looking for fun ways to spend time together. Please let Heidi know as soon as you can if you are having any trouble finding enough volunteers for your summer host week. Also, please encourage members of your congregation who may be looking for something to do this summer to contact Heidi for extended volunteer opportunities during the summer months.

### **Handouts for Volunteers**

We are always looking for ways to make things easier, more effective, efficient and enjoyable. This is only possible with your feedback and input! Many Coordinators have suggested creating brief informational handouts describing the responsibilities of each volunteer shift and step-by-step instructions. The Volunteer Handbook still contains the most comprehensive information about volunteering at Alpha House and we would like all volunteers to have read it before volunteering. However, the handouts can serve as a quick refresher for experienced volunteers or provide more information to first time volunteers about what to expect. The new handouts are included with this issue of the Coordinating Times. Please let Heidi know what you think of them and if you find them helpful!

### **Questions, concerns, ideas?**

Please contact Volunteer Coordinator  
Heidi Beck, MSW

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# Children's Activity Volunteers



## Overview

Evening children's activities at Alpha House begin at 7pm and end promptly at 8pm daily. Please arrive by 6:45pm. There are additional children's activity times from 2pm until 5pm on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. This important aspect of Alpha House programming could not happen without volunteer involvement! Two adults (over the age of 18) are needed to supervise the children during these times. Children's activities may occur outside if the weather is nice, in the basement play area, or at the dining room tables. A staff member or the Evening Host will give you instructions, help round up the children, go over the rules, and provide you with a walkie-talkie to use to contact staff with questions, problems, or in case of emergency.

We try to promote a structured, creative, and fun environment. A different activity is scheduled for each evening (see the schedule below). However, *volunteers are welcome to prepare a special activity to lead during their volunteer shift, but this is not required.* If you have come prepared to lead a special activity, please talk to a staff member when you first arrive at Alpha House. If you are interested in leading a more extensive activity, please contact your Congregation Coordinator prior to your volunteer shift. Your Coordinator will help facilitate the planning of this activity with Alpha House staff.

Please refer to the Volunteer Handbook for more detailed information on volunteering at Alpha House.

## Activity Volunteer Responsibilities

- Please sign-in at the front desk and make a name tag.
- Check in with the Evening Host or staff member and let them know if this is your first time volunteering at Alpha House.
- Find out what the evening activity will be or let the staff know if you have prepared something.
- Staff or the Evening Host will direct you to the play area (outside, basement, dining room) and give any special instructions.
- Please make sure that children have asked their parents for permission prior to participating in activities.
- Participate in the evening activity and model healthy interactive play. Redirect kids when needed.
- Alert staff immediately if problems arise, if you have questions or if you are unsure of what to do.
- Please remind, encourage, and model picking up all toys and cleaning up the play area prior to ending activity time.
- Check in with the Evening Host or staff member when leaving.

## Important Things to Remember:

**Touching:** You should not initiate physical contact with children at Alpha House. However, if a child asks for a hug, it is fine to give a quick one. Please do not pick children up without the parent's permission, give piggyback rides, or engage in other overly physical play. Some children have experienced or witnessed abuse, and we need to respect their physical space and mentor appropriate boundaries.

**Discipline:** At Alpha House, staff and volunteers never discipline the children. We feel very strongly that this is the role of the parents. If, while you are playing or working with children and they get out of control or do something you consider worthy of discipline, please immediately inform the staff. Do not impose consequences for misbehavior (even time out). A gentle but firm tone of voice works best in redirecting children. You may also repeat expectations to the child. If the misbehavior continues, notify staff and they will involve the parent. This helps to maintain parental authority and provides a safe and supportive environment for all of our children, parents, volunteers, and staff.

**Helmets:** Helmets are required when riding bikes, skateboards, or when using roller skates/blades.

**Adult Supervision:** Two adults are needed to be with the children at all times when playing outside or in the basement.

**Ask for Help:** If you ever feel uncomfortable or unsure with a responsibility (too many kids for you to watch, discipline problems, etc.) please tell the staff or the Evening Host immediately.

Questions, concerns, ideas? Please don't hesitate to speak with a staff member, your Congregation Coordinator, or contact Heidi Beck, IHN Volunteer Coordinator

# Weekly Activity Schedule



## **Monday: Game Night**

There are many game options to choose from on Monday evenings. During warmer weather, volunteers and children may go outside and play games like soccer, red rover, basketball, or tag. When it is raining or too cold to go outside, the group can either play active indoor games in the downstairs play area or quieter board games upstairs in the dining room. Downstairs play usually includes games like Simon Says, Mother May I, or Hide and Seek. Alpha House also has a closet full of board games to choose from. If you are volunteering for activity time on a Monday, you don't need to worry about bringing any games with you. However, you are welcome to bring along a favorite game to play with Alpha House children if you would like.

## **Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday: Open Play**

Open play allows the children to exercise their creative imaginations! If the weather is nice, volunteers and children may play outside and do activities such as riding bikes, playing in the play ground, or drawing with sidewalk chalk. If the group stays inside, they will go to the playroom in the basement where there are lots of toys, costumes and other interesting things to do. The children lead the way on these nights, so don't worry about bringing any sort of organized activity.

## **Wednesday: Art Night**

Art night usually takes place in the basement, however sometimes art projects are done upstairs in the dining room. We have many art supplies in our art room. Generally, a staff member or Alpha Volunteer (a regular volunteer not connected to the congregation) will organize the art night activity. As a volunteer, your role is to help the kids with the project and be an extra set of hands. *As always, if you have an idea of something you would like to do with the children, please feel free to bring it!*

## **Friday: Movie Night**

Every Friday, a staff member rents a movie for the children to watch and sometimes the parents join too! A staff member will usually bring popcorn and juice for the group midway through the movie. As a volunteer, please help supervise the children and enjoy the show. And, of course, have some popcorn ☺

# Dinner Volunteers



## Overview

The time between 5pm–6pm can be chaotic around Alpha House, just like it is in many of our homes! Kids are antsy and probably hungry and unwinding from their day. Likewise, many parents are returning from work and transitioning into evening responsibilities. Dinner is served promptly at 6pm daily and we rely on volunteers to prepare the meal, help serve, and clean up. If you are not needed to help with dinner preparations, it may be useful for you to engage the children in some quiet play or activity while waiting for dinner to be ready. Please check with a staff member or the Evening Host to see what may be needed.

## Dinner Volunteer Responsibilities

- Please sign-in at the front desk and make a name tag.
- Check in with the Evening Host or staff member and let them know if this is your first time volunteering at Alpha House.
- Prepare kitchenette and dining room for dinner by cleaning off tables and placing dinnerware, drinks, and food on kitchenette counter.
- When dinner is ready to be served, let the staff member know and have a child ring the dinner bell.
- Families typically serve themselves. However, please be available to assist with serving food if needed.
- Monitor the food and make sure enough food is available. If it looks like there will not be enough food, tell a staff member and assist in preparing food from the pantry, fridge, or freezer.
- Be available to retrieve items from the kitchen if needed.
- Make a plate for yourself and eat with the families. Relax and be yourself!
- Clean up kitchen and kitchenette area and take the garbage out to the back dumpster.
- Empty and load dishwasher and restock utensils in serving area.
- Throw away food that is old or won't be used and save usable (large amounts) leftovers.
- Please label, date, and securely store any and all leftovers in the kitchen fridge.
- Check in with staff or the Evening Host when you leave.

**Questions, concerns, ideas? Please don't hesitate to speak with a staff member, your Congregation Coordinator, or contact Heidi Beck, IHN Volunteer Coordinator**

# Dinner Preparation Guide



Figuring out what to cook for dinner can be hard, and it's even harder when it is for twenty-some people that you have never met! Please consult the IHN Menu Format on the following page to help get you started thinking about what to prepare. This format helps us avoid having the same meal multiple times in a week but general enough to give volunteers flexibility in planning meals. The Dinner Preparation Guide will also help direct you in deciding what specific dishes to cook. We ask that you make something that is kid-friendly and that you like to eat and enjoy cooking. It is important that we supply our families with well rounded and nutritious meals, and it is very important to make sure that there is enough food to go around.

A few days before you are scheduled to prepare the Alpha House dinner, please call your Congregation Coordinator or Alpha House to find out how many people are currently staying with us and if they have any food allergies or other special dietary needs. Eating together as residents, volunteers, and staff helps to build an important sense of community here at Alpha House. So remember to make enough food for the residents, the meal volunteers (usually 2-5 people), and a few additional people typically here at Alpha House in the evening (usually 2-3 people).

Main Dish Ideas (pick one)

Side # 1 Ideas (pick one or two)

Side # 2 Ideas (pick one or two)

Spaghetti  
 Fish sticks  
 Chicken nuggets  
 Hamburgers  
 Sloppy Joe's  
 Fried or baked Chicken  
 Pork Chops  
 Tacos  
 Fajitas  
 Enchiladas  
 Beef Stew  
 Ham  
 Meatloaf  
 Hot Dogs/Corn Dogs  
 Pot Roast  
 Pasta with Veggies/Meat  
 Chili  
 Pizza  
 Swedish Meatballs  
 Turkey  
 Stir Fry  
 Fish

Veggie Platter  
 Veggie Salad  
 Fruit Platter  
 Fruit Salad  
 Fresh or frozen cooked veggies  
 -peas  
 -carrots  
 -corn  
 -cauliflower  
 -green beans  
 -broccoli (with cheese!)  
 Cole Slaw  
 Green Bean Casserole  
 Apple Sauce  
 Baked Apples

Baked Potatoes  
 Mashed Potatoes  
 Rice (brown or pilaf)  
 Rolls/French/Garlic bread  
 French Fries  
 Tater-tots  
 Macaroni and Cheese  
 Pasta Salad  
 Shake & Bake Potatoes  
 Cornbread  
 Scalloped Potatoes  
 Spanish Rice  
 Roasted Potatoes  
 Deviled Eggs  
 Sweet Potatoes  
 Cheese and Cracker Tray

- \*Don't worry about beverages; we have plenty at the shelter
- \*Casseroles or other "creative" food items are usually not well received
- \*Desserts are not required and are typically provided on the weekend

## Overnight Volunteers



## Overview

Overnight volunteers are asked to arrive at Alpha House around 8:30pm. This is typically a time of transition for our families. Activity volunteers may be leaving and parents will be putting children to bed, beginning their chores, and preparing for the next day. The two primary responsibilities of the overnight volunteer are to assist parents and staff with making sack lunches for the following day and to be available to help in case of an emergency during the night. There is always a staff member on duty who will assist you throughout the evening and in the event of an emergency. After lunches are made, please feel free to hang out in the common areas and chat with parents before going to bed.

Overnight volunteers spend the night in a private room equipped with a comfortable twin bed, phone, alarm clock, and small television. You do not need to bring any bedding with you. Alpha House has plenty of sheets, blankets, and pillows. However, you are welcome to bring linen or a sleeping bag from home if you would like. There is a restroom located near the overnight volunteer room. However, Alpha House does not have shower facilities for volunteers. Typically, overnight volunteers leave around 7am (earlier if needed). Please let the evening staff know if you need a wake up call in the morning.

Thank you for your time, energy, and service to Alpha House families. Know that you made a difference even while sleeping!

## Volunteer Responsibilities

- Please sign-in at the front desk and make a name tag.
- Check in with the Evening Host or staff member and let them know if this is your first time volunteering at Alpha House.
- Offer assistance/back-up to parents as needed (i.e. by reading, talking, holding children while parents get other children ready for bed).
- Promptly at 9:00 p.m., help staff set lunch food out for parents to prepare lunches for the next day. Lunch foods are located in the kitchen refrigerator and pantry. All children should be in bed at this time.
- Parents typically make lunches for themselves and their children. However, please be willing to assist a parent in making several lunches, but only if the parent asks.
- Be available to retrieve food items from the kitchen.
- Hang out in the common areas and provide an open ear if a parent wants to talk. Feel free to read the paper or a magazine. Be yourself and relax.
- You may go to bed anytime after 10 pm. The staff will assist you with your overnight bedroom. If you need to leave in the morning before 7 a.m., please feel free to do so.
- If there is an overnight emergency, a staff member will wake you and ask you to staff the front desk while they handle the problem. If necessary, other shelter staff will be called to assist.

**Questions, concerns, ideas? Please don't hesitate to speak with a staff member, your Congregation Coordinator, or contact Heidi Beck, IHN Volunteer Coordinator**