



Artist- Delma Tayer- Founding Member

# Volunteer Handbook

***Yakima and Selah Neighbors Network*** is a local, volunteer-based, non-profit organization founded to empower members of our community to continue living in our homes, where we want to be as we age.

**Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to provide services to promote the independence of seniors in our community by creating a network with resources to keep seniors confident at home and connected to the community.

Volunteers are a vital component of Yakima and Selah Neighbors' Network (**YSNN**). Without dedicated volunteers we would not be able to provide the services that are necessary to help seniors age at home. The members of the YSNN Board of Directors and members are extremely grateful to our volunteers.

## **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM POLICIES**

### **General Expectations**

We require volunteers to adhere to the rules and policies of the Volunteer Handbook. Volunteers reflect the organization in our relationship with members and the public. Working closely with the Program Manager, volunteers are expected to:

Attend orientation and training sessions

Be prompt and reliable

Exercise good judgment

Notify the Program Manager as soon as possible when unable to report for a scheduled assignment

Treat members and other volunteers with respect

Consult with the Program Manager or office staff before taking on new responsibilities

Complete time sheets and other records

Protect confidential information

Decline tips or any gifts of significant monetary value that may be offered and financial or material gift offered through inheritance

### **Boundaries**

Sometimes service volunteers may have difficulty with establishing boundaries with members. Measure your level of engagement; go through us first if a member makes requests beyond the services assigned through the office. Be on the watch for signs of boundary violations:

- Are you feeling compassion fatigue and not taking care of yourself?
- Are you spending extra time doing things for one member/household beyond your assigned task?
- Are you disclosing personal information and problems to a member?
- Are you finding it hard to say no to a member's additional request?

If you are having difficulties with boundaries, be sure to talk to a staff member.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all private and personal information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Such information should never be shared except when it is reasonable and necessary to provide services to YSNN members and should *never* be shared outside the organization. It is appropriate to discuss a volunteer experience with the Volunteer Coordinator or Program Manager but not with others. Volunteers are required to comply with the YSNN Privacy Policy (for the full Code of Ethics, refer to Appendix 2). For its part YSNN respects the privacy of its members, volunteers and donors and does not sell, exchange or share personal information for use in marketing or solicitations of any kind. We collect personal information only as needed and with consent of the member.

## **Safety First**

The office will attempt to screen the tasks to which you are assigned. You won't, for example, be asked to move large pieces of furniture down two flights of stairs. Sometimes potentially dangerous circumstances can only be spotted after you arrive at the member's home. Do only what you feel safe in doing. If a member is not putting safety first, let us know. Trust your judgement.

*For issues requiring an urgent response, call 911 and then call the YSNN office at 509-853-1917.*

## **Representation of the Organization**

Volunteers are important ambassadors for YSNN within the community. They must not act on behalf of or make statements representing the organization unless they have been authorized to do so by an officer of the Board of Directors. Volunteers must not make statements to the press or media without prior authorization. No volunteer is authorized to sign any agreement involving contractual or financial obligations of YSNN.

## **For Volunteer Drivers**

YSNN expects that volunteer drivers will use and be covered by their own insurance policies when driving their own automobile. YSNN carries liability insurance that would provide secondary coverage. Volunteer drivers may not operate Member's vehicles. Drivers will be asked to give permission for the YSNN to review their motor vehicle records. A copy of the driver's current license and auto insurance must be on file in the YSNN office.

Mileage may be a deductible charitable contribution for income tax purposes using the IRS mileage reimbursement rate. YSNN suggests that volunteer drivers check with their personal accountant or tax preparer to see if they are eligible for a deduction for volunteer miles driven. It is expected that any parking fees incurred will be paid by the member, not the volunteer driver.

## **Time Sheets and Records of Volunteer Service**

Volunteers are requested to keep monthly records of time spent and mileage on assignments for YSNN. Your time sheets may be used as proof of tax deductions for mileage to and from assignments. In addition, we ask that you email or leave a voicemail of your time spent with the member to the YSNN office and we will put your hours and comments of the experience in our data base. If you have a concern that is more than the typical assignment, please call YSNN office and talk with the Program Manager.

*\* Time tracking is important for volunteer recognition, insurance coverage, budget purposes, program promotion, and fundraising when YSNN is seeking foundation support.*

## **MEMBER SAFETY**

**If a member falls while you are with them, DO NOT attempt to move them.**

- 1. Call 911 (know the address).**
- 2. Call Program Manager or call manager at 509-853-1917.**
- 3. Stay with the member until help arrives.**
- 4. Use common sense, but do not do anything that could cause further harm.**

## Basic Guidelines for Volunteers

We want your volunteer experience with YSNN to be engaging and rewarding. How much time you volunteer depends on your availability and the number of service requests received in any given week.

- Any one assignment generally takes about 2 hours with a MAXIMUM of four hours, however, transportation for medical appointments could unexpectedly take longer than originally scheduled. If you are available, running longer than expected won't be a problem.
- Although the office tries to gauge the time needed for all requests, on occasion a request might require more time.
- You are not obliged to do anything beyond what you have volunteered. If you don't mind doing the extras, please let us know so we may update the service and adjust your hours.
- Please be prompt and reliable when providing a service to a member.
- When in doubt about anything or are uncomfortable with a situation, call the program manager.
- You are not required to provide your contact information to the member, though you may if you wish. **If a member misuses your personal phone number, call the office.**
- You may decide to volunteer regularly for a particular member (e.g. driving a member to a weekly yoga class). Such an arrangement should be set up by a member request through our office. Don't feel obligated to provide regular service, but such regular contact may be beneficial for both you and the member. Talk to our Program Manager if you have any questions or concerns.
- For the purposes of funding, grant applications and insurance coverage, we try to keep an accurate log of all service requests. It is important for all member requests to go through our office.
- Notify YSNN staff as soon as possible when unable to report for a scheduled assignment.
- Know your limits: physically, emotionally and otherwise. If you need advice on setting boundaries, talk to our staff.
- Notify Program Manager if you observe changes in the members physical or cognitive condition.
- Look for "red flags", unusual situation or a situation you are concerned about.
- Inform Program Manager of any situation of harassment or abuse.
- Grocery shopping – if you take a member grocery shopping, you may help them put their groceries away if they ask.
- Home organizing and downsizing – volunteers are cautioned to be very careful about discarding a member's possessions. Volunteers are encouraged to simply sort items and involve a family member (if possible) in the decision to discard.

Specific things we cannot do:

- Volunteers please remember you CAN NOT provide medical services that should be done by a physician, a skilled nurse, Certified Nurse Assistant, LPN or a paid care provider. Questions please see YSNN Program Manager or Volunteer Coordinators.
- Please do not use alcohol or non-prescribed drugs during volunteer assignments.
- Volunteers should not take sides in a domestic dispute.
- The member must be mobile enough to stand up alone. You can lend support with your arm as they get in and out of a car, but we are not medical or personal care providers and are not trained in the special mechanics of moving elders.
- We do not provide personal care, which includes personal grooming, dressing, toileting, bathing, clipping nails, dressing wounds, giving medications. You could help with a coat or sweater. Use good judgement.
- Do not offer medical, legal or financial advice or services.
- Volunteers do not cook meals on a regular on-going basis *but* special arrangements can be made for occasionally helping with this, but only in the member's home with groceries purchased by the

- member; they can also provide prepared foods such as serving take out or heating frozen entrees.
- Household tasks - we do not paint rooms, wash windows, or clean bathrooms. There are referral services we may be able to help find for these types of projects.
  - A volunteer can change a light bulb, but cannot install light switches.
  - It is okay to decline to provide services that do not coincide with a volunteer's skills or available time.
  - Do not make decisions for the member when making a pile of clothes or household goods to take to Goodwill or throw away. Instead offer options, make recommendations. Be conscious that people sometimes change their minds or forget from day to day. When possible, leave the goods for a family member or friend to throw or give away. If you do choose to take something to Goodwill or the dump, for example, write a simple list, date it and ask member to sign.
  - Do not rearrange the member's desk or piles of papers.
  - Don't move furniture that changes the flow of their habitual path or orientation unless this is the assignment discussed in advance with the volunteer coordinator. One person's seeming disorder could actually be their order. Don't mess up their order.
  - Volunteers are not expected to help with legal documents that are considered confidential.
  - Transportation – Volunteers who have been approved as drivers provide short distance transportation for members primarily within our service area. **Members must be able to get into and out of the car on their own with only standby assistance. Volunteers can help steady them once they are up. Volunteers will not use a gait belt.**
  - When you are “on duty” with YSNN, please do not bring along your family members, friends or pets.

## **BECOMING A VOLUNTEER**

### **Eligibility**

Interested persons are encouraged to call the office to discuss the program with the Program Manager. Applicants will be expected to complete an application form, available from the YSNN office, and must be officially accepted and enrolled by the Program Manager or Board member before performing any volunteer tasks.

### **Interview**

The Program Manager will interview applicants to determine their qualifications, interests, and availability and answer any questions they may have about the program.

### **Orientation and training**

Volunteers will attend an orientation and be trained in the field before they are asked to volunteer. Further opportunities for training and yearly trainings may be required.

### **Placement**

Volunteers will be asked to accept assignments that coincide with their particular interests and abilities, as well as match the needs of the organization and its members. Volunteers are free to discuss a change in assignment at any time they feel a change is necessary or desirable.

### **Special-Case Volunteers**

For special projects and activities, as deemed appropriate by the Program Manager and Board Members, YSNN may accept volunteers participating in student community-service activities, Scout projects, student intern projects, church/synagogue groups, and corporate volunteer programs. In these cases, an agreement must be made with the organization, school, or program that identifies responsibility for the care, management, and recognition of the volunteers.

## **Background Checks**

All YSNN staff and volunteers are required to pass an official background check. YSNN currently uses Washington State Patrol for this purpose. The reports are stored securely at the YSNN office (without Social Security numbers). All volunteers may request a copy of their own report.

## **Volunteer Support and Recognition**

The Program Manager is responsible for recruiting, training and managing the volunteer component of YSNN.

A major component of the volunteer program is support, recognition and rewards for volunteers. Support begins with training to build volunteer knowledge about the goals and practices of YSNN. Volunteers are encouraged to give us feedback at any time about positive experiences they are having or ways to improve our volunteer program

Support will also be provided by prompt attention to volunteer needs for individual guidance and problem resolution. Small group management meetings and special events may be created to encourage friendships and sharing between volunteers.

YSNN will strive to keep volunteers confident that their work is known, understood and appreciated by others.

Volunteers are encouraged to participate in the various interest groups that are being formed.

## **Resignation and Dismissal**

Volunteer assignments are not permanent. A volunteer may decide to stop volunteering at any time. Volunteers are expected to give as much notice as possible to the Program Manager if resigning or interrupting their volunteer assignment for a brief or an extended period of time. To help the organization grow and learn from its experiences, volunteers will be asked to participate in an exit review before leaving the program.

YSNN may dismiss a volunteer if he or she fails to fulfill their duties and/or meet the basic standards of professionalism set by the organization and judged essential to its performance. Grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: missed assignments without timely arrangements through the office for a substitute, misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while on duty, theft of property or misuse of the organization's equipment or materials, verbal or physical abuse of members and breach of confidentiality.

***Yakima and Selah Neighbors' Network appreciates the time and effort that each volunteer contributes. We rely on the commitment of volunteers; they are the heart of the organization.***

# APPENDIX 1 YSNN RECEIPT

Please print this form and fill out when you carry out a request that involves receiving funds from a member to purchase groceries or other items. Both you and the member must sign the form.

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

Amount Received: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Total Cost of Purchase: \_\_\_\_\_

Change Given to Member: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Yakima and Selah Neighbors' Network  
PO Box 11691  
Yakima WA 98909  
509-853-1917

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **YSNN Code of Ethics**

This is to certify that I, \_\_\_\_\_, a YSNN volunteer, understand that any data created, witnessed or obtained during the performance of my duties must remain confidential. This includes all information about members, volunteers, and employees of YSNN or other colleagues or referral organizations, all information about donors, and any information that is marked or known to be confidential.

However, I understand that information about members and volunteer experiences may be shared with YSNN staff or coordinators consistent with YSNN policies and guidelines presented in volunteer trainings.

I further understand that any unauthorized release or carelessness in the handling of this confidential information is considered a breach of the duty to maintain confidentiality and could be grounds for dismissal.

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Signature of Volunteer

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Date

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Signature of Staff/ Board Witness

## **YSNN Abuse Prevention Policy - Employee,**

### **Volunteer and Member Agreement**

If you have any uncertainty or questions regarding the content of this policy, you are required to consult your supervisor. This should be done prior to signing and agreeing to the Yakima & Selah Neighbors Network Abuse Prevention Policy.

I have read and understand Yakima & Selah Neighbors Network's Abuse Prevention Policy and agree to abide by its terms and conditions throughout the course of my employment and/or time volunteering. I understand that my failure to follow the terms of this policy could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employee/Volunteer or member signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Staff/Board signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_