

# Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greene County

## New Volunteer and Host Orientation Packet

**Revised February, 2018**

**1...Welcome**

**2-3 ...Frequent Questions of Hosts**

**4... Frequent Questions of Meal Preparers**

**5...Key Times at IHN**

**6-7...How Can I Help?**

**8... Hospitality Code**

**9-10...History of IHN**

**11...Confidentiality Agreement**



*Interfaith Hospitality Network  
of Greene County, Inc.*  
**A Community Response to the Homeless**

---

124 S. Detroit St. • Xenia, Ohio 45385  
Phone (937) 372-0705 or 429-5111 Fax (937) 372-2619



February 2018

Dear Volunteers and Potential Volunteers,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and staff of IHN of Greene County, "Welcome" to our organization. I want to sincerely thank you for your work with us. Without our volunteers, our mission to be the "hands and feet of Jesus" and serve the neediest in Greene County would be nearly impossible to carry out. You are indispensable to the work we do here.

Inside these pages you will find all the pertinent information you will need to make your time with us as comfortable as possible. However, if you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me or my staff at any time. We appreciate you, and want your time with us to be as pleasant and memorable as our work is for us. Additionally, I am available to come to your church and meet with entire congregations or small groups to offer trainings and answer any questions you may have.

Again, thank you. Your time is valuable to us, and the gifts you bring to our guests are invaluable. Thank you for being part of our mission.

Blessings,

*William L. Mallernee*

William L. "Bill" Mallernee, Executive Director  
IHN of Greene County - Schneider House of Hope

## Frequently Asked Questions from Overnight Hosts...

- **Is it safe here?**
  - Indeed it is. All of doors to the outside are securely locked, and can only be opened from inside the building. Only staff can get in from outside without being “buzzed in”. Additionally, there are motion-activated security cameras throughout the building and surveying every part of the outdoor property as well.
- **Where do I sleep?**
  - Our host room, along with all guest bedrooms except the handicapped-accessible room, is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. All rooms lock from the inside and can only be opened with a code to the electronic keypad or a master key. The host room features a ½ bath, 2 twin beds, a television and DVD player, as well as a security monitor providing access to all cameras throughout the property. Additionally, the telephone in the room provides you with access to the security speakers/buzzers located at each entry door downstairs. There is a full bath next door, and all your needed towels are located in the cabinet in your half bath. You also have a list of staff and board members to call in the event you have questions or concerns.
- **What if someone comes to the door seeking shelter?**
  - This is an extremely rare occurrence, but in the event it does happen we ask that you **absolutely do not go to the door or let them in.** This is for your own safety and the safety of all our guests, particularly the children in our care. Simply answer the phone in your room and do the following:
    - Explain that we are not a 24-hour emergency “drop-in” shelter.
    - They will need to call us back (937.372.0705) between 8:00 and 4:00 weekdays. At that time, we will begin the intake process.
    - For **Emergency Shelter** please refer all calls to:
      - **Simon Kenton Bridges of Hope-** 1087 West 2nd St.,  
Xenia  
Night 937-694-2403 -- Daytime- 867-4073  
Must have ID and check in is between 7-8:00 pm
      - **St. Vincent’s DePaul** - 1133 Edwin C. Moses Blvd.,  
ph. 937-222-7349 Or 372-3193
    - Offer to call the Xenia Police (937-372-9901). They can often transfer people to local hospitals or overnight shelter should the need arise.
    - **In the event of any emergency or situation in which you feel threatened, please call 911 immediately.**

- **What if the power goes out?**
  - Immediately our **backup generator** will start and will keep the house functioning until the power is restored. An emergency lighting system will activate and is good for several hours. Also, battery-powered flashlights are available in the storage closet on the first floor, on the floor immediately to the left.
  
- **Can I eat?**
  - Absolutely! We want you to feel at home with us. Guests are required to be in their rooms nightly by 9:00 and can't have food in their rooms, but you have a key to the kitchen and are more than welcome to help yourself to anything; we ask that you keep the door locked when not in use. After 9:00, the night is yours to do whatever you wish.
  
- **Is smoking allowed at IHN?**
  - **NO smoking is allowed inside the building or on the side or front porches.** All our guests are made familiar with our rules prior to move in and smokers must smoke near the smoker's pole **outside and away from** the door to the IHN facility.
  - **No smoking** is allowed after 9:00 p.m.

## Frequently Asked Questions from Meal Volunteers...

- **How many are we cooking for?**
  - At maximum, our facility can house 30 people, including adults, children, and infants. During winter months, we are usually full with a waiting list. At other times of the year, numbers fluctuate due to the fact that the weather is "mild" enough that many families choose to sleep in their cars, in rest areas, and even in parks. Reminders are sent out frequently to all church coordinators and their volunteers, particularly when our numbers change due to a big move out as guests find housing, or in a move-in when we get new families. We always try to keep you aware of numbers, including how many of those are adults/children/infants, as well as any food allergies that may need to be considered.
- **How do I know what they like?**
  - By and large, you don't. Our goal isn't to make everyone's favorite meal; it is to be the hands and feet of Jesus by feeding our guests. We don't want you to feel pressured, because with 20+ people eating here, it would be more than impossible to make sure everyone loves everything we serve.
- **How will I know what to fix?**
  - All church coordinators are given a list of sample meals. Beyond that, we will be more than happy to share with you when we see a meal that a group raves about, or one that isn't so popular, but in general, we don't give feedback on every single meal. We encourage every church group to coordinate within, so we can avoid overlap in the same week. In the winter of this year, for 13 days in a row our guests ate lasagna, because no one coordinated with each other. We encourage you to reach out to us, or one another, if you are seeking ideas.
- **What do the kids eat?**
  - All children can be picky. By and large, though, we find the children living here are less picky than most; they tend to eat anything their parents put in front of them. Please note that we **never want you to fix separate dishes for the children living here!** We leave their eating choices to the parents, and if they don't like what is served, IHN keeps kid-friendly (chicken nuggets, PB & J) on hand. If a child doesn't want to eat, please ***don't*** try to change their mind. As with all situations here, the ***parenting is best left to the parents***. As a staff, we leave the parenting choices to our guests, and respectfully ask that our meal volunteers and hosts do the same.

## Key Times at IHN

- ✓ **5:15 p.m.:** All guests are required to report for dinner **(typically served at 5:30 p.m.)**, unless they are working.
  - Guests are permitted to leave again briefly after dinner, provided they sign out.
- ✓ **7:15 p.m.:** All guests must report and sign in for the night, unless they are at work. This gives our evening staff person a chance to verify who is in the building prior to leaving at 7:30.
- ✓ **7:30 p.m.:** Our evening staff person leaves for the night.
- ✓ **7:15-9:00 p.m.:** Guests are permitted to spend this time however they wish, including going outside to smoke, but must remain on the property. This is frequently a time where our overnight hosts are able to watch TV and chat with our guests. All guests are assigned daily chores throughout the house, and many will do those chores at this time. Particularly in the evening, someone is assigned to clean, sweep, and mop the dining area and downstairs hallway, so he/she may be downstairs until 9:30 if necessary.
- ✓ **9:00 p.m.:** With the possible exception of the person assigned to clean the dining room/hallway, every guest is to be upstairs and in their room. While they may come out to use the restrooms upstairs, at no point should any of them be downstairs (especially to smoke) for any reason. The guests are fully aware of these rules and most abide by them faithfully. In the event they are lingering downstairs near 9:00, feel free to remind them of the rule—they know what to do!
- ✓ **6:30 a.m.(M-F)/7:00 (weekends):** Our morning staff person arrives; you are free to leave at any point after this.

*Again, thank you for your time and service. We so appreciate you and your work with us!*

# How Can I Help?

---

**How Can I Help? By understanding my role...**We all want to know the best ways to help. The Schneider House of Hope (IHN) volunteers help most when they understand their roles: As a volunteer you offer your time and talents to the guests as they make the Schneider House of Hope (IHN) their temporary home. Although volunteers cannot solve all the guests' problems, the volunteers' small acts of kindness make a difference in the lives of the displaced families they serve.

**How Can I Help? By seeing beyond stereotypes...**The Schneider House of Hope's (IHN) success lies in the ability of its volunteers to put a human face on the tragedy of homelessness and to develop relationships with guests based on mutual respect.

**How Can I Help? By striving for understanding...**Volunteers need to understand that The Schneider House of Hope (IHN) guests are going through what may be the most severe crisis of their lives. Each person deals with this trauma in a different way. Some individuals are optimistic and open about their situations, while others feel ashamed, humiliated, and alienated. However guests cope with their displacement, they find themselves dependent upon others to support their basic needs and the needs of their children. Many displaced people feel helpless and frustrated and may express these feelings by withdrawing or acting in an angry manner. Some may find it difficult to accept the goodwill of volunteers or to show appreciation. Volunteers need to recognize and be sensitive to the frustration and anger that guests may feel.

**How Can I Help? By not judging...**Volunteers should try to overcome the normal tendency to judge or criticize. Guests and volunteers may have different lifestyles and values; it is the volunteer's task to forego these differences and relate to guests as individuals worthy of trust, respect and utmost courtesy. An ability to see life from another perspective is an especially useful attitude for all volunteers.

**How Can I Help? By being a good listener...**While volunteers are not counselors, they do need to employ the listening skills of good counselors; reflecting back, clarifying, and summarizing what they hear. Good listeners don't assume that others think as they do; they listen more than they talk; they don't need to express an opinion on everything that's said. By becoming adept listeners, volunteers can help guests begin to work through the challenges they face.

**How Can I Help? By respecting privacy...**Guests will meet dozens of volunteers during their stay at The Schneider House of Hope (IHN). For this reason especially, volunteers need to take their cues from the guests. Volunteers should introduce themselves and be friendly, but not pry or hover. Guests who want to talk are not usually shy about it. Volunteers should respect those who don't.

**How Can I Help? By focusing on strengths...**As volunteers develop relationships with guests, volunteers become a helping force by focusing on guests' strengths and capabilities. This focus helps to create empowerment, or a state of mind in which an individual feels personal power as a result of confidence and self-esteem. As guests begin to feel empowered, they mobilize their own internal and external resources to take action and solve problems.

**How Can I Help? By understanding my limits...**At times, volunteers may feel helpless in the face of seemingly insurmountable problems in guests' lives. To temper any disappointment, it is vital that volunteers remain clear about their role. They are not counselors or professional problem solvers. At most, volunteers encounter guests a few times a week every two to three months. The role of volunteers is "not to solve but to serve." the goal of volunteers must be to provide a secure, homelike environment where guests can focus on their needs and take action to solve their problems. Volunteers make many contributions to homeless families, but their greatest contribution is the kindness they offer.

**How Can I Help? By adopting the Hospitality Code...**Just as the guests are asked to comply with a set of guidelines, volunteer hosts are asked to observe The Schneider House of Hope Hospitality (IHN) Code. The code summarizes our philosophy of treating guest families with dignity and respect. All volunteers should be familiar with the Hospitality Code and strive to live by it in their relationships with guests.

## **The Schneider House of Hope (IHN) Hospitality Code**

1. **It's nice to hear your name**, so learn the names of our guests also.
2. **Labeling people creates invisible barriers.** Remember the guests are guests, not "the homeless." Labeling—whether spoken, or printed on a posted sign—creates divisions and can foster an "us" and "them" syndrome.
3. **Personal questions can be tough to answer**, so don't put guests in awkward positions by asking personal questions. If guests need to talk, give them the chance, but do not pry.
4. **We all like to keep some things to ourselves.** All information about guests is confidential. Don't discuss guests' situations with other people.
5. **Sometimes we need to spend time alone.** Respect guests' needs for quiet time alone or with family.
6. **We all have bad days.** Depression, sadness, and hopelessness may come. Allow guests the space to deal with their emotions. Be prepared to forgive outbursts without judging guests as ungrateful.
7. **We understand and care for our children.** Allow guests to do the same. Avoid contradicting guests' instructions to their children. Always ask parents' permission before giving things to children.
8. **Parents need a break.** Offer to tutor, play with, and plan activities for interested children while their parents take a break.
9. **Adult guests should be treated like adults.** Although our guests are in situations that may make them temporarily dependent on others, remember that they are adults who are capable of making their own decisions.

## **Interfaith Hospitality Network Part of Family Promise Network of Homeless Shelters**

---

The Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), founded in New Jersey in 1986, was created in response to the growing need to provide shelter, meals and comprehensive support to families without homes. FP now has affiliates in over 200 sites in the US. <https://familypromise.org>

In 2003 Interfaith Hospitality Network became what is known today as Family Promise. The name was changed to reflect the broad range of programs and the vision of ending family homelessness. The name refers to the promise, in the sense of commitment, which communities make to families in need. But it also refers to the promise, the potential, inherent in every family.

Family Promise has come to represent not just the programs that touch the lives of more than 67,000 people in need annually and engage more than 180,000 volunteers. It represents a national movement that believes we can address family homelessness—right here in our own communities

The Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greene County was founded in 1995 as an affiliate of the national organization providing those services to displaced families in Greene County and the surrounding counties. The Network program unites religious congregations to assist displaced families. Initially, we followed the national model by housing the displaced families in the hosting church which provided accommodations and meals for four families (up to 14 people) for one week every two to three months on a rotating schedule. County social service agencies assess homeless families and refer them to the Network. Volunteering churches turn their Sunday School class rooms into temporary bedrooms to provide hospitality to guest families. The Greene County Interfaith Hospitality Network Day Center was provided in a small apartment size facility located in downtown Xenia

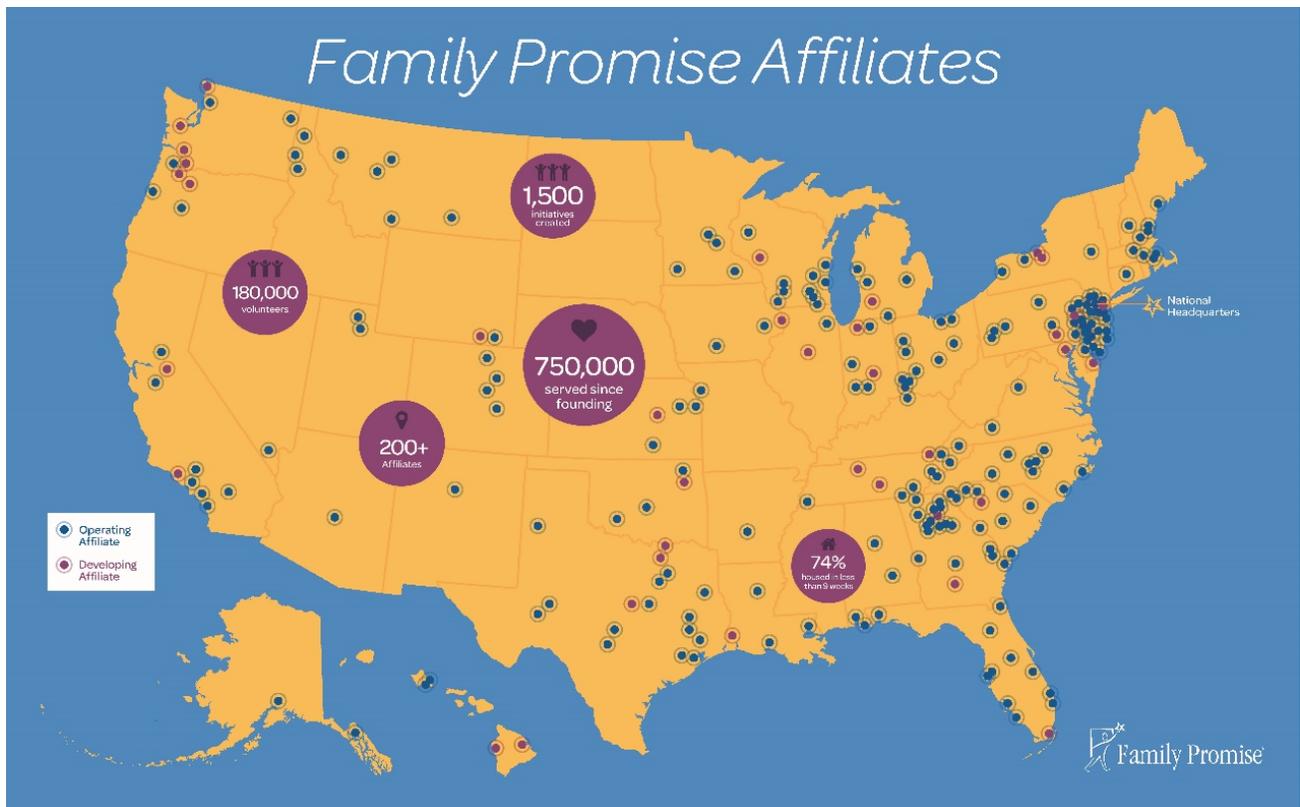
Participating churches furnished sleeping quarters and a hospitality room where guests relax, socialize, do homework, and watch television. The Day Center van transported the guests to the hosting church between 5:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and they remained overnight. Beds were provided by the Greene County IHN. The host congregation provided the evening meal, breakfast, and a bag lunch for the next day. In the morning, guests return to the Day Center by the IHN van. From there, children went to school, and adults cared for younger children or went out to work or to look for jobs or housing.

10-11

In 2002 the Francis Inn located at 124 S. Detroit St. in Xenia, Ohio, a condemned hotel, was donated to the IHN of Greene County and it was then renovated by a crew of over 1,050 volunteers over a period of seven years. IHN now has no mortgage or rent expense as the renovation was completed with material donations and \$350,000 in donations and grants. Since June of 2010, following the completion of the renovation the old Francis Inn, displaced families

are now provided with shelter, meals and hospitality in the permanent site 24 hours a day, serving up to 24 persons at a time. This newly renovated facility is now called Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greene County /The Schneider House of Hope. Hosting churches continue to provide the meals and overnight hosting, but now at The Schneider House of Hope (IHN), continuing on a rotating basis.

Volunteers in the IHN program provide homeless families with basic human needs —shelter, safety, and sustenance — with a spirit of warmth and hospitality, treating the hosted families as guests and accepted as they are. In this environment, guests are able to maintain their dignity. The kindness of hosts helps to diminish the hurt of homelessness, and both volunteers and guests grow and learn from each other.



## **Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement**

For mandated and normal volunteers (e.g., Greene Met, OWF, court workers)

As part of your volunteer time at IHN, you are likely to be exposed to any number of highly confidential pieces of information. In particular, this will likely pertain to guests and their cases, as well as policies and procedures within the Schneider House of Hope. Any such information, whether overheard or told directly to a volunteer, should be handled with the utmost of care, with any pertinent information shared only with staff.

By signing below, you acknowledge that you not only understand the highly confidential nature of information you may glean here, but also that you agree to abide by the following:

- You will not share information about guests with other guests.
- You will not share information about policies, procedures, the board or staff with guests or other volunteers
- You will not share any information about IHN, its guests, volunteers, staff or board with anyone outside of IHN
- You will immediately report any important information to staff and only staff, in a secure and confidential manner
- You understand that failure to abide by any of the above can result in your immediate dismissal from volunteering here.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Witness Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date