

# 2021

## Ulster County Habitat for Humanity



## Volunteer Handbook & Policy Manual

Aug-21

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## **Message from the Executive Director**

First and most importantly, thank you for volunteering with Ulster County Habitat for Humanity! The staff and Board of Directors welcome you to our team of talented volunteers. We are so pleased you've chosen to join us in our mission to provide families in Ulster County with decent, affordable housing.

Ulster Habitat relies on volunteers in a great variety of ways to help families realize their dream of owning their own home. Whether you are working on one of our build sites, volunteering in our ReStore, or serving on a committee, you are contributing to our goal of a county where everyone has a safe, decent, affordable place to live.

This manual will provide information on the policies and procedures of Ulster Habitat. If you have questions, please see our Volunteer Coordinators.

I welcome you to our Habitat family and wish you a wonderful volunteer experience. Thank you for sharing your time and talents.

Christine Brady LaValle  
Executive Director

## **Habitat for Humanity International**

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) is a nonprofit ecumenical Christian housing ministry. HFHI's vision is a world where everyone has a decent place to live and its mission is to put God's love into action by bringing people together to build homes, communities and hope. HFHI seeks to eliminate poverty housing and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action. Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses with the help of partner families.

Founded in 1976 by Millard and Linda Fuller, HFHI has built/repared more than 800,000 houses worldwide, providing more than 4 million people with safe decent, affordable shelter. HFHI has headquarters in Americus and Atlanta Georgia and now has 1,500 local affiliates in the United States and more than 70 national organizations around the world.

## **Ulster County Habitat for Humanity**

Established in Ulster County in 1996, Ulster County Habitat for Humanity (Ulster Habitat) is a not for-profit organization that builds simple, decent, affordable housing with the help of volunteer labor, donated funds, time and materials. Ulster Habitat is an affiliate in good standing of HFHI and is governed by a local board of directors. Habitat provides a hand up, not a hand-out. Each home is sold to a qualified homeowner partner who purchases their home with an affordable mortgage. These families contribute several hundred hours of "sweat equity" by helping in the construction of Habitat homes alongside Habitat staff and volunteers and in other Habitat projects.

## Communication and Location

Current news and information are available on our web site, [www.ulsterhabitat.org](http://www.ulsterhabitat.org). Instructions for registering to become a volunteer are available on the Volunteer page of the web site.

The Executive Director, Affiliate staff, Volunteer Office, Family Services, and Project Manager may be contacted during business hours at 845-340-0907.

To contact the ReStore or Donations Department call 845-853-7499 Tuesday - Saturday 10AM - 5:00PM.

Ulster Habitat Affiliate offices and the ReStore are located at 406 Route 28, Kingston, NY 12401. Volunteer parking is provided on the lower level of the building on Jockey Hill Road. Street level parking on Hwy 28 is reserved for handicapped parking only.

## Volunteer Opportunities and Requirements

**Habitat Build** volunteers who have experience, skills or are willing to learn skills are welcome to participate. No experience is necessary. Build schedules and shift assignments are determined by the Project Manager. Confirmation and work schedules will be coordinated through the Volunteer Office. Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older for most job site tasks. Minors between the ages of 16 and 18 may participate in specific projects like painting, landscaping and general clean up with parental permission, appropriate supervision and approval from the Project Manager.

**ReStore** volunteers participate in 3 to 4 hour shifts Tuesday through Saturday, or select short term projects under the direction of the Restore Manager. Assignments include working in the Prep Room (evaluating, cleaning, repairing and attaching price labels to donations); the Sales Floor (greeting and assisting customers, tagging and/or wrapping purchases, spot checking price tags, organizing displays of merchandise); Donations & Warehouse (maintaining an organized flow of merchandise from the donation intake area to the sales floor along with warehouse storage maintenance and assisting customers with loading and unloading). Volunteers may also serve on Affiliate Committees with specific objectives such as outreach to the community, fund raising organization, special events or developing opportunities for youth and children to participate in age appropriate activities.

Questions concerning Ulster County Habitat for Humanity opportunities and policies may be directed to the Volunteer Coordinators at 845-340-0907 X106.

## Volunteer Applications

To participate in the volunteer program:

- Complete an online application (see the website)
- Call or make an appointment with the Volunteer Office to discuss opportunities, schedules and review Ulster Habitat policies

- Sign the Habitat Volunteer Release and Waiver annually
- Take the Habitat online safety course and quiz that pertains to your work assignment (see the web-site, or do this at the Affiliate)

## Ulster County Habitat for Humanity Policies

### Code of Conduct

Ulster Habitat affirms that every participant in a Habitat activity is entitled to be treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. Ulster Habitat does not condone discrimination based on age, physical or developmental disability, race, creed, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or national origin.

Volunteers should be aware that although their efforts are voluntary and greatly appreciated, their adherence to this Code of Conduct is for their own safety, for the successful operation of the affiliate, and is a requirement for volunteering.

All volunteers are expected to refrain from:

- Any behavior that may be considered rude, profane, vulgar, demeaning, lewd, perverse, disrespectful or otherwise unprofessional
- Wearing any clothing that depicts or mentions violence, nudity, sexual acts, profanity, lewd conduct or illegal, immoral, or otherwise unethical behavior
- Unwelcome flirtation or uninvited physical contact
- Use of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances which impair the ability to fulfill assigned responsibilities
- Possession of weapons of any kind
- Stealing or misappropriation of Ulster Habitat funds, property or other assets
- Use of any tobacco products (including vaping) on any Habitat property
- Activity or behavior that poses a safety risk to yourself or others
- Leaving the premises without first notifying appropriate staff

### Safety

Safety is a primary responsibility for all Habitat staff and volunteers. Accidents can be avoided. Identifying and correcting potential safety issues is a shared responsibility. Hazards should be promptly reported to the ReStore Manager, Project Manager or Executive Director.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as safety glasses, gloves, or masks should be used as indicated by the task or directed by the Project or ReStore Manager
- Clothing should be appropriate to the task. Flip flops, sandals or any open-toed footwear, high heels, flowing scarves, short shorts, tank tops and clothing with inappropriate pictures or messages are not allowed.
- No volunteer may use heavy machinery, power equipment or drive Ulster Habitat vehicles without permission, proper training and approved Personal Protective Equipment.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are located in the volunteer office and must be reviewed before using any products for cleaning or restoration purposes.

## **Inclement Weather Procedures**

In the event of inclement weather, such as significant snow, ice or flooding, a delayed opening or early closing may be necessary. Every effort will be made to contact affected volunteers. A notice may be posted on the Ulster Habitat webpage ([www.ulsterhabitat.org](http://www.ulsterhabitat.org)), Facebook, and Twitter. A voice message may be placed on the Affiliate and ReStore phone. Volunteers should contact the Volunteer Office to receive the most updated information.

Volunteers are responsible for recognizing safety alarms; participating in safety drills; and knowing the location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and other emergency equipment and exits.

## **Accident Procedure - In the event of an accident**

- Stabilize the situation and inform management immediately
- DO NOT move an injured person. Do not suggest or recommend treatment
- A first aid kit is available in the Construction trailer, at the cashier's desk, in the Break and Prep rooms and in the Volunteer office.
- An Incident/Accident Report must be completed by Ulster Habitat management staff for any accident that occurs on Ulster Habitat property.
- Immediately report incidents to the Executive Director, ReStore or Project Manager. Staff will handle the situation. Do not offer, promise, or discuss responsibility on behalf of the Affiliate, ReStore or Build Project.

## **Confidentiality and Privacy**

The personal privacy of all Ulster Habitat volunteers is important to the affiliate. Volunteers should be made aware that volunteering with Ulster Habitat requires a certain waiver of privacy as outlined in their signed Waiver and Release of Liability form. Nevertheless, all personal information regarding volunteers will be retained in the manner specified in the Ulster Habitat Document Retention Policy.

All volunteers are expected to treat Ulster Habitat information with the strictest confidence. Any financial data, partner family information and all data that may be considered proprietary or private to Ulster Habitat or its stakeholders should not be shared with other non-authorized parties.

## **Volunteer Grievance**

Volunteers are welcome to share any grievances they have concerning Ulster Habitat staff, Board Members or other volunteers with full confidentiality, with the Volunteer Coordinators. Ulster Habitat takes volunteer grievances seriously and wishes to ensure all volunteers have a positive experience with us. Volunteers are encouraged to share their grievances first with the Volunteer Coordinators. If the grievance is concerning the Volunteer Coordinators, then the volunteer should share their grievance with their immediate supervisor or manager.

## **Staff Right of Refusal**

Ulster Habitat staff has the right to refuse to work with any volunteer they believe presents a danger to others or who they believe may jeopardize any aspect of the mission of the affiliate. All effort will be made to find a suitable task for each volunteer, but Ulster Habitat is aware that certain situations call for

a volunteer's immediate dismissal. Ulster Habitat staff is ultimately responsible for the safe and proper operation of the affiliate and will use good judgment, discretion and courtesy when handling all volunteer matters.

## **ReStore Policies**

A current Habitat liability waiver and Certificate of Completion for safety training must be on file in the Volunteer Office prior to volunteering in the ReStore.

### **Sign In/Sign Out**

Volunteers are expected to sign in and out at the beginning and end of each shift. A cumulative record of volunteer hours is maintained and reported to Habitat for Humanity International. Blue Habitat vests are to be worn by all volunteers while on shift. Lockers are available for safe storage of personal items.

### **Purchases**

Donated items are to be cleaned, evaluated and priced before they are available for sale. To avoid public perception that workers are gleaning all the 'good' stuff, no item is available for sale to friends, volunteers or staff until it has been placed on the sales floor!

Volunteers are welcome to purchase items from the sales floor before or at the end of a shift or any time they are not on shift. Please do not ask the cashiers to hold items in the area behind the cash register. Volunteers who have logged 50 or more hours within the prior six month period will receive a 20% discount card for all ReStore purchases. The card must be presented to the cashier before a purchase is rung up on the cash register. Discount cards are valid for a period of six months from date of issue.

### **Break Room**

The Break Room is available volunteers and staff to take lunch or snack breaks as needed. Please be sensitive to the needs of customers and other staff and avoid having everyone leave the sales floor at the same time. To reduce the risk of insects, rodents and/or damage to donated merchandise, no food is allowed in areas of the building other than the Break Room. Only liquids in containers or cups with lids are permitted outside the Break Room. Please be sure to clean up after yourself.

To offset the cost of supplies, a contribution jar is on the table by the coffee/tea maker.

## **Habitat Construction Site policies**

A current Habitat liability waiver and Certificate of Completion for safety training must be on file in the Volunteer Office prior to participating on the build site.

### **Sign in/Sign Out**

At the beginning of a shift volunteers report to the supervisor to sign in and receive instructions related to the tasks for the day. Volunteers are also required to sign out before leaving the construction site. All breaks must be approved and cleared by Project Manager.

## **Notification of work days**

As construction progresses, volunteers will be notified of the work schedule via email or phone by the Volunteer Office. Please make sure to notify the Volunteer Coordinator of any changes to your phone number or email address to ensure timely communication. To avoid messages being diverted to your spam folder, please add [volunteers@ulsterhabitat.org](mailto:volunteers@ulsterhabitat.org) to your list of safe senders. A typical job site day runs from 8:45am to 4:00pm with a four-hour minimum requested, beginning at the start of the workday or immediately after lunch.

## **Parking**

Habitat build projects are often located in residential areas where parking is limited. Volunteers will be notified of appropriate parking procedures. Carpooling with other volunteers is always helpful. Consideration of the neighbors is an important part of the Habitat mission to build community. Avoid crowding driveway entrances, blocking trucks delivering materials, cranes or other heavy equipment.

## **Tools and Equipment and Personal Items**

Habitat provides all necessary tools and equipment to complete work assignments. Personal items are the responsibility of the owner and should never be left on site. To avoid loss, each volunteer should identify personal items with the last name and first initial clearly and legibly printed with indelible ink.

## **Dress for Safety**

Safety is a priority at all Habitat for Humanity job sites. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is a requirement and will be provided as necessary. Please see the onsite Project Manager with any questions you have regarding PPE.

On a build site, comfortable and sturdy work shoes are required. Sandals, tennis and open toed shoes are prohibited. Long pants and sleeves may be required along with appropriate weather related outerwear. Work gloves will be available on site but individuals may bring their own.

## **Beverages, Snacks and Lunch**

Hydration and energy foods are important on a build site. Bottled water will be provided. Volunteers are encouraged to bring other drinks and lunch to the build site.