

Volunteering During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In a facility that serves nearly 350 people daily, there has been no “closing due to the pandemic.” When people were told to shelter in place, that meant our clients had to stay here, at Transitions, and do their best to stay healthy, by wearing a mask and frequently using hand sanitizer. That also meant that most of our volunteers – anywhere from 20 to 50 people daily – chose to stop coming. Their concern is understandable. Would a homeless center with so many people in close proximity be a hot spot for the spread of covid-19?

We are happy to say, that those fears have not been realized. In fact, since March, we have only had two residents with confirmed cases of COVID-19, and both of those individuals have fully recovered.

We continue to do touchless temperature checks on all clients and volunteers as they enter the facility each day. We continue to require the wearing of masks and use of hand sanitizer. Volunteering during the pandemic looks a lot different, and we continue to monitor and adjust our protocol to keep in line with CDC and DHEC recommended safety precautions. No longer do we encourage large groups to come serve meals; meal service is now limited to 5 volunteers, and those volunteers work behind closed doors alongside our kitchen staff to portion meals into to-go containers. Classes have resumed, though the group sizes are limited, and social distancing is practiced. Some class leaders have elected to meet exclusively outdoors, and we have set up a tent and chairs for that purpose.

If you are comfortable coming back to volunteer in-person, we welcome you with open arms and a smile behind the mask. There are lots of available slots to help serve meals, work in the clothing closet, or lead a class. If you prefer more limited interaction with others, helping to landscape our campus is a great way to enjoy the fresh air and maintain greater social distancing.

Not quite ready to come back on campus to volunteer? We understand. Know that there are still numerous ways to remain engaged and help us to further our mission to end homelessness in the Midlands. You can spearhead a donation drive with your school, church, or civic group, and help source items we need the most to help our clients: trial-size toiletries, bottled water, undergarments, socks, or monetary donations are all items we consistently need. If you are interested in assisting with administrative tasks, we have a variety of opportunities this fall and winter to help with data entry and mail campaigns and most of these opportunities can be done remotely.

If you are still firmly sheltered in place, consider making Transitions your Amazon Smile charity by going to AmazonSmile.com and searching for “Transitions - Midlands Housing Alliance.”

Every person who volunteers their time, effort, and talent is helping to support the journey being taken by men and women in our community, as they continue to work towards stability and permanent housing.

Anyone interested in joining our volunteer efforts, whether in-person or remotely, should email Elise Burrows, Volunteer Coordinator, at EBurrows@TransitionsSC.org