



VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

VOLUNTEER/VISITOR LOG

All volunteers and visitors at The O'Connor House should first sign Visitor's Log in the foyer.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Personal resident information or activities should be kept confidential. Residents must know that they can trust volunteers to not share their information with others. If a volunteer is concerned about something that a resident says, she should talk with a staff member rather than another volunteer or someone outside of The O'Connor House.

PRIVACY AND MOTHER'S AUTHORITY

All visitors and volunteers should respect a resident's right to privacy. Personal questions about the father of the baby, how the resident's family feels about the pregnancy, and the resident's past experiences with pregnancy, adoption, or abortion should be avoided. A resident may volunteer information as they feel comfortable, however, the role of a volunteer/informal mentor is to listen but refrain from offering advice.

Volunteers should respect a mother's authority over her children. The young women living at The O'Connor House desire a safe, secure environment to have their baby and to get assistance in this time of crisis. *Any sensitive topics such as placing a baby for adoption, abortion, difficult family dynamics, etc should not be initiated by volunteers.* **If such topics should arise, please direct the mom to a staff member. Our staff is trained and equipped with valuable resources to offer the moms if a need is determined.**

Please always allow the mother to attend to her child first. If you see she is struggling, you may ask if she would like any help. Please avoid offering parenting advice, however, modeling behavior by the way you talk or interact with the mother or child is a wonderful way to share a message.

If you have any questions, it is always best to ask a staff member.

PHOTOS

To protect the privacy of those we serve, volunteers are not allowed to take photos of the mothers, toddlers, or babies.

Last Update: August 29, 2023



SOCIAL MEDIA

The O'Connor House Social Media Liaison posts social media content on a variety of platforms which we welcome you to like and share. Please do not post pictures or content directly.

COMPASSION

Whether or not a volunteer agrees with decisions and actions a resident is making, she should always be a compassionate listener. When a resident has come to trust that a volunteer will act with compassion she will often be receptive to dialogue.

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Volunteers should ask before initiating physical contact with a resident or her children. If the child's mother is present, she should be asked before a volunteer picks up or hugs a child she is unfamiliar with. Often, the moms love volunteers to show interest in the child(ren) and appreciate the opportunity for a help. Asking, "Would you like me to help you by holding (or playing with) your child?" is a great way to show love and respect.

COMMUNITY AREAS

All volunteers and visitors should remain in the community areas of the house unless a staff member gives permission to go upstairs for a special reason. Men are not allowed in the home unless a staff member is with them at all times. Men are never allowed to go upstairs.

SMOKING

The O'Connor House is a smoke free environment.

ALCOHOL

Volunteers are not allowed to bring alcoholic beverages to The O'Connor House.

UNDERAGE VOLUNTEERS

We welcome volunteers of all ages and strive to maintain a family atmosphere. Our expectation is that while each resident is living here they will conduct themselves in an appropriate fashion. However, we cannot always filter information or actions they share with staff and volunteers. It is important to note that some women may share personal information about themselves that is difficult to hear. Therefore, all volunteers under the age of 18 need to have a legal guardian witness and sign the volunteer form.

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VOLUNTEER REFERRALS

New volunteers are welcome and appreciated at The O'Connor House. If you know someone who would be interested in volunteering, feel free to have them email us at: volunteer@theoconnorhouse.org or visit our website at www.theoconnorhouse.org for more information.

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

All questions or concerns should be directed to a staff member. If you have concern about any behavior or action from a resident or resident's child, please bring it to the attention of the house manager on duty.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Our hope is that our home is always a safe place. However, if you suspect that a child residing at the house may be a victim of child abuse or neglect, **please contact the House Manager on duty immediately to ensure that the proper report is filed with authorities.** Following is the Mandate to Report Law for Indiana.

Mandate to Report Under Indiana State Law:

4/7/2018

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Child abuse under the law includes the following, among other situations:

- Failure by a parent, guardian, or custodian to provide a child necessary food, shelter or medical care so as to cause the physical or mental condition to be seriously impaired;
- Physical injury by a parent, guardian, or custodian, endangering the child's physical or mental health;
- Where the child is a victim of a sex offense committed by any person (i.e., sexual abuse);
and/or,
- Allowing a child to endanger its own health or the health of another.

The reporting law applies to all persons without exception. Safety protocol training will help provide additional information on this topic.

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