



VOLUNTEER PACKET

1395 Bancroft Avenue
San Leandro, CA 94577
510 357-0205 x206
volunteer@bffc.org
www.BFFC.org
Crisis Line 1 866-292-9688

Thank you for contacting Building Futures about serving as a volunteer!

Our agency is in our 32nd year of service to individuals and families in need. Our mission is to build communities with underserved women and children where they are safely and supportively housed, free from homelessness and domestic violence.

- Last year, we provided 26,526 night of shelter to women, children and individuals in our emergency shelters located in San Leandro and Alameda. Our homeless shelters are consistently recognized for leading our County in rates of linking shelter residents to permanent housing. Of the total guests, 25% were toddlers ages 0-4 years old.
- No woman is ever turned away because of the severity of the obstacles she faces. *Space limitations are the only barrier to entry at our emergency shelters.*
- With over 4,766 calls to our free 24/7 crisis hotline last year, we connected a record number of callers with help.
- Our Children's Program is available to every child served at one of our four residential sites. Services focus on the physical, emotional, and social well-being of these vulnerable children.
- We served 257 domestic violence survivors in free support groups in the community at our shelters and supportive housing sites.
- We housed 412 homeless children and adults in our rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing programs

We invite you to learn more about our programs and services at www.bffc.org.

VOLUNTEER POLICIES

Because of the issues faced by women and children surviving homelessness and domestic violence and the community setting within which we operate, all staff and volunteers must follow these policies regarding our interactions with each other and residents while at work. These policies are intended to ensure that residents are treated with respect, concern, and sensitivity, and that the safety of each person is strictly upheld. Toward these goals, we ask that you observe the following:

CONFIDENTIALITY

- The shelter locations are confidential, and we do not allow visitors. Never give out the shelters' addresses or directions. If you know someone who would like to volunteer or make a donation, please feel free to refer them to (510) 357-0205 x206 or direct them to our website. Always ask staff for permission before having anyone drive you or come with you.
- Sister Me Home's confidentiality policies are even stricter than the shelters'. Outside of staff, residents, and trained and authorized volunteers, NO ONE may know its location. Please respect this policy to protect our residents' safety. If you do not drive, talk with your volunteer supervisor about arranging the best way for you to arrive at the safe house.

CONDUCT

- For safety reasons, it is very important that you never confirm or deny any person's residency at our shelters to any outside person.
- To ensure fairness, all donations must be given to the program, not to individuals. Please do not give material goods or money to residents. If you wish to demonstrate your generosity, we would love for you to bring something that everyone can share.
- We do not allow alcohol or drugs on the premises or tolerate any person being under the influence while at our sites or representing our agency.
- Please refrain from comments or behavior that offend anyone's gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, veteran status, disability, ethnicity, or skin color, or that may insult anyone in any other way.
- If you have questions or concerns about shelter policy or about how a staff handles a situation, please wait and ask the staff privately. If you do not feel comfortable speaking to the staff, please talk to your direct supervisor or Volunteer Manager, who can be reached at 510-357-0206, ext. 206. It is important that you not address these matters in front of residents.
- Please do not take any donations or other shelter property.
- If any situation arises that you are not trained to handle, that you are unsure how to handle, or that makes you uncomfortable, immediately bring it to the attention of the staff on duty.

INTERACTING WITH RESIDENTS

- Please do not inquire about residents' personal information. Residents may or may not be comfortable sharing personal information and will raise the subject if they wish.
- Romantic or sexual comments or relationships are prohibited.
- If you are acquainted with a shelter resident, you may not volunteer with us for the duration of her stay.
- Please do not discuss your personal matters with residents; they should be left outside the door. We are here for the benefit of the shelter residents.
- Volunteers may not get involved with any resident's recovery (please do not invite them to your meetings or offer to be a sponsor).
- Volunteers may not offer rides to residents, nor accept if they ask.
- Please do not discuss staff, volunteer or other residents' matters with residents. However, if you become aware of any information that could jeopardize anyone's safety or recovery, or that may be pertinent to a resident's case management, please share it with staff right away.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- If you will be unable to volunteer at your scheduled time, please call and notify us at least 24 hours in advance, so that we may schedule another volunteer or make other arrangements.
- Please be prepared to take your volunteer position seriously. We do depend heavily on our volunteers. Not showing, not completing your project thoroughly, or not holding yourself accountable to the above policies can be detrimental to the operation of our shelters.
- Each time you volunteer with our agency, please enter your name, task completed, time in and time out and total hours worked on the "Volunteer Sign-In Sheet" (ask the staff on site where to find this sheet). And if you are a dinner cook dropping off your meal, please provide us on the "Volunteer Sign-In Sheet" with the hours it took to make your meal. By tracking your service, you will help us demonstrate to current and potential funders the depth of our community support, which can significantly impact their funding decisions.

*We are very grateful for your interest and your help!
We look forward to working with you.*

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES *(Please note: Before applying, confirm current volunteer needs)*

★ CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

At all of our residential sites, we conduct a structured program of activities for our young residents (ages 3 to about 14). The program occurs in the evening while mothers attend support groups. **Volunteers must also be at least 18 years old or older and must be committed to volunteer for at least three months.** Activities include arts and crafts, gardening, and cooking, and are a part of a larger curriculum. Volunteers work closely with children, staff, and each other to create a fun and safe learning environment. For this program, volunteers should be sensitive to children's needs; able to interact with both women and children in a warm, genuine, responsible and respectful manner; open to and affirming of different cultural, class, ethnic, and religious and committed to volunteering **once a week for at least three months.** Due to the importance of understanding issues faced by survivors of domestic violence, those interested in the **Sister Me Home Children's Program** must have been certified in a **40-hour DV Counselor training** and commit to at least **two evenings per week for five months.**

★ DINNER COOK PROGRAM

Our shelters rely almost exclusively on volunteers to provide our evening meals. Dinner cooks provide a healthy, well-balanced meal for 30 women and children. These volunteers **deliver meals by 5:00 p.m. after preparing them at home, at their church, or at another facility.** Individuals and groups alike fulfill this volunteer role, but of course coordinating a group reduces each individual's work load and cost contribution. Most volunteers **provide dinner at least monthly,** but we can consider other schedules.

★ ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

We sometimes need help with such tasks as bulk mailings (newsletters, holiday mailings, & invitations), photocopying, filing, and data entry. Other clerical tasks may be available.

★ AT THE SITES

Volunteer needs include **repair and Shelter Maintenance assistance, yard work and gardening, handling and sorting donations, hauling heavy items, serving meals, and cleaning/organizing.** We can schedule **one-time projects,** depending on the task. We often need volunteers with trucks or hauling vehicles to help us move heavy items and dump runs. If you have experience with services such as hair styling, massage, or exercise, we would love to speak with you about providing these services for our clients.

★ GROUP PROJECTS

Groups of volunteers, such as business or faith groups may schedule **one-time or quarterly projects.** Examples are painting, reorganizing our storage sheds, and preparing and serving meals such as a brunch or barbecue during a holiday. Groups are also welcome to **independently hold a drive for food** or supplies to give to the shelter. **Please contact us to discuss your project and complete paperwork one to two months before your proposed date.**

★ HOLIDAYS

The holidays can be a good time for volunteer groups or individuals to provide meals, entertainment, or educational programming. **If interested, we ask that you contact us to discuss your project one month in advance.** The following is a list of holidays and what we would like to provide for the residents:

- **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day** — educational celebration
- **Easter** —Easter egg hunt and dinner
- **Mother's Day** — brunch; activities, services, gift cards or self-care products for relaxation
- **Memorial Day** — barbecue (preparation, serving, cleaning up)
- **July 4th** — barbecue (preparation, serving, cleaning up)
- **Passover, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Hanukkah** — an educational program to help children understand one or more of these holidays
- **Labor Day** – barbecue (preparation, serving, cleaning up)
- **Halloween** — costume drive, general entertainment activities, such as decorating the shelter, painting faces, telling fortunes, apple bobbing, etc.
- **Thanksgiving** —dinner, re-organization, art project, etc.
- **Kwanzaa** — a special meal or project with the kids
- **Winter holiday gift drive**— drives or donations of new gift items from our holiday wish list, gift-wrapping for our 250 clients, and transporting gifts between the office and the sites.
- **New Year's** — non-alcoholic cider and a special meal for New Year's Eve or New Year's Day



Individual Volunteer Application Form

Date _____

Name _____ Birth Date _____
(first) (last) (optional)

Work phone _____ Home phone _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Emergency contact _____
(name) (relationship)

(daytime phone) (evening phone)

Health-related limitations _____

Name of employer _____ Position/Job title _____

Available days/hours: *(Please only include the times you would want to volunteer)*

Weekdays _____ Times: _____

Weekends _____ Times: _____

Site: Community Office. SL Shelter Safe house Midway Bessie Coleman

How did you become aware of and interested in our volunteer opportunities?

Please list any education, work, and volunteer experience, and skills or interests that you would like to share.

Don't forget to complete the 2nd and 3rd page!

OFFICE USE:

DATE REC: _____ TASK ASSIGNED: _____

DATE SENT TO CO MID SLS SMH BCC : _____

Please check the volunteer opportunity you are most interested in:

40 Hour Training- Please send me information!

Our **40-hour Domestic Violence Counselor training**, offered semi-annually, is a prerequisite to volunteering at the Sister Me Home Safe House.

Children's Program

Four nights a week at our residential sites, we conduct a structured program of activities for our young residents. **Must be 18 years old or older!**

Activities include arts and crafts, gardening, and cooking, and are a part of a larger curriculum.

Dinner Cook Program

We have several available dinner slots. Dinner cooks provide a healthy, well-balanced meal for 30 residents. Dinner cooks **deliver meals no later than 5:00 p.m. after preparing them at home, at their church, or at another facility.**

Administrative Office

At the office we occasionally need help with such tasks as bulk mailings, copying, filing, and data entry.

Shelter Site Projects

Activities include painting, yard work, building shelves, reorganizing our storage shed, hauling heavy items, and cleaning/organizing.

Holidays

We rely on volunteer groups or individuals to provide meals, entertainment, or educational programming over the holidays. Please read Volunteer Opportunities sheet for complete list of holidays.

Portrait and Event Photographer

Seeking a volunteer photographer for our quarterly publications, annual fundraiser, and special events.

Which volunteer opportunity is your primary interest? _____

By signing below, I attest that the above information is accurate and correct to the best of my knowledge, and that I have read and understand the agency's policies with regards to confidentiality, alcohol/drugs, and interactions with residents, staff, and other volunteers. I agree to follow all of these policies, as well as any other rules or directions given by staff while I am volunteering. By signing below, I also grant BFWC permission of the use of my name, picture, story, likeness, voice and words in television, radio, website, CD-Rom, newsletters or in any way to promote activities of Building Futures.

Signature _____ Date _____

This organization is not obligated to provide a placement, nor are you obligated to accept any position offered. We reserve the right to conduct a criminal background check for any volunteer applicant. Opportunities for volunteers are provided without regard to religion, skin color, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.

Please return application to volunteer@bfwc.org or 1395 Bancroft Ave., San Leandro, CA 94577



Confidentiality Agreement

I agree that during my volunteer service with Building Futures with Women and Children, I will not disclose or release confidential information to any persons other than those legally authorized to receive same.

I understand that I must not reveal the address of residential sites or client identities to anyone, including but not limited to friends and family members, persons who call or visit the agency's main office and persons wishing to make donations.

I understand that I am bound by a "duty to warn" in the following circumstances:

- 1) If I suspect child abuse or elder abuse.**
- 2) If a person is homicidal or suicidal.**
- 3) If a person in any other way presents a danger to themselves or anyone else.**

In these circumstances, I am obligated to make a report to the appropriate legal authorities, including but not limited to: the police, child protective services, public health officials and/or a mental health professional.

I understand that it is a misdemeanor crime to maliciously reveal the whereabouts of a battered women's shelter (California penal code section 273.7).

I understand that any violation of my agreement may result in my immediate dismissal without recourse and that further action as provided by Federal and State law and regulations or other legal recourse may be taken against me.

I further understand and agree that after any termination of volunteer service, I am still bound to observe all rules and regulations relating to confidentiality of shelter information and that legal action may be taken against me for violation of same.

I agree that clients must at all times be treated in such a manner to preserve individual dignity and the rights of individual privacy.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Street Address

City,

State

Zip Code

Printed Name

Email Address

Phone Number