



SISTERS *of* CHARITY
HEALTH SYSTEM

Volunteer Handbook

In all things Charity: A Community of Love

Artist: Mary Hoy



This multifaceted art piece, created by Mary Hoy for the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine (CSAs) and their ministries, beautifully captures components of the outreach and service of the CSAs and their collaborators throughout Ohio and South Carolina. The larger painting is comprised of nine smaller images, each representing areas of care and outreach of the ministries of the CSAs.

The canvases for the smaller paintings are blank puzzles. For a puzzle to reveal a bigger image in its completion, every piece is necessary. Each piece uniquely fits into the picture and reveals something greater when it connects with another piece. Similarly, all the people who work to continue Jesus' healing mission are like pieces of a much larger mission of God's love outpoured in the world, especially in areas where people are vulnerable and suffer. When all the smaller paintings are placed together, they form, in the background, an image of the Radiant Cross, a symbol for the CSAs that represents hope, respect, collaboration, courage, compassion, justice, and love.

Volunteering Handbook

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SISTERS *of* CHARITY
HEALTH SYSTEM

Welcome from our President and CEO

Welcome to the Sisters of Charity Health System Family!

We are truly grateful that you have chosen to share your time, gifts, and talents with us. As a faith-based organization grounded in the healing ministry of Jesus and the legacy of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, your role as a volunteer is both appreciated and sacred. Together, we strive to be a beacon of hope and healing, responding to the unmet needs of individuals, families, and communities.

Volunteering within our organization is more than an act of service, it is a ministry. Inspired by the example of Jesus in the Gospels, we are reminded that every act of kindness, every listening ear, and every moment of compassionate presence affirms the dignity and worth of those we serve as God's beloved. In serving others, we are ultimately serving God. As Jesus taught in Matthew 25:40, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Whether you are serving in the community, supporting our staff, or working behind the scenes, you are becoming the hands and feet of Christ to a world in need. Your joyful service builds bridges, brings light into dark moments, and offers hope to those who suffer.

Volunteering also opens the door to meaningful connections— with fellow volunteers, our staff, those we serve, and perhaps most profoundly, within yourself. As you engage with our mission, we hope you find deep fulfillment in using your unique gifts in the service of others.

Thank you for saying "yes" to this sacred calling. It is an honor to walk alongside you in this journey of healing, service, and love.

With gratitude and blessings,

Michael Goar
President and CEO
Sisters of Charity Health System

Sisters of Charity Health System

Volunteering Handbook

Dear Volunteer,

The Sisters of Charity Health System welcomes you as a volunteer in our health, education, social service, grant making, and advocacy ministries. Your presence and service helps fulfill the mission of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine who, since 1851, worked tirelessly to continue Christ's healing mission, responding to unmet needs with compassion, tenderness, and care.

As a volunteer, you are an important and valued member of our team, and we are grateful for the ways you contribute to our work. This handbook provides important information on the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, the Sisters of Charity Health System, our mission and core values, and our volunteering structure. Thank you for your dedication to serving unmet needs in our communities!

As a Catholic organization, we strive to follow the teachings of Jesus, working to serve the poor, the marginalized, and those who need support. This volunteer handbook is designed to guide you as you embark on this journey with us, ensuring that you have the information you need to be an effective volunteer.



What we ask of our Volunteers

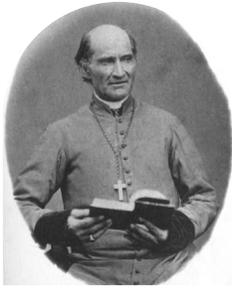
- **Commitment to our mission:** Volunteers are expected to be aligned with our mission and core values.
- **Respect for all individuals:** Volunteers should treat all people, regardless of background or belief, with respect and compassion.
- **Confidentiality:** Volunteers must respect the confidentiality of all individuals and sensitive information.
- **Punctuality and reliability:** Volunteers are expected to arrive on time and communicate promptly if they cannot fulfill a commitment.
- **Active participation:** Volunteers should engage actively in the tasks assigned to them and take initiative in fulfilling the organization's needs.

Who are we?

The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine (CSAs): A Heritage of Love

Courageous Beginnings

In 1851, Bishop Louis Amadeus Rappe, a Frenchman who served as the first bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, recognized a great need for medical services throughout the city of Cleveland and its surrounding areas. Desperate for help, Rappe returned to his native France to seek out faithful religious in Catholic health care who could accompany him to Cleveland and serve the sick and suffering. He invited a group of Augustinian Sisters from St. Louis Hospital in Boulogne-sur-Mer, France. Four women responded to the Bishop's request and, upon arrival, began caring for people in their homes. Not long after they began ministering in the city, two of the professed sisters returned to France while the other two postulants remained in Cleveland to serve. Because of the need for leadership within the new Congregation, an Ursuline Sister of Cleveland was asked to serve as the first American Superior of the newly formed Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine. Her name was Sr. Ursula Bissonette. Together, these sisters became the founding mothers of the CSAs, ministering throughout Cleveland, Ohio.



Bishop Louis Amadeus Rappe
First Bishop of the Catholic
Diocese of Cleveland



The Humboldt Ship

The first missionary sisters made the 2-week voyage across the Atlantic on September 24, 1851 with a few chapel furnishings and a box of linens to be made into sheets and bandages. During this trip, the sisters learned the basics of English.



Sr. Ursula Bissonette
First American Superior of the CSAs



The Sisters served as Cleveland's first public health nurses and quickly became known around the city as the "Angels of Cleveland"

Where there is need, respond in LOVE!



Sr. Ignatia Gavin, CSA worked with Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith to create Alcoholics Anonymous in Akron, OH. She is fondly remembered as “The Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous”



Sr. Henrietta Gorris, CSA worked with community leaders during the Hough Riots in Cleveland’s inner city to build homes for those who were displaced or homeless.

“What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of humanity. That is what love looks like.” - St. Augustine of Hippo

The Sisters of Charity Health System

The Sisters of Charity Health System was created in 1982 to promote collaboration and provide strategic direction and faith-based leadership to the family of ministries that are sponsored by the CSAs.

Throughout their tenure, the CSAs worked feverishly to continue the healing ministry of Jesus by serving wherever there was a need. Their commitment to care for the whole person inspired ministries in education, health and social service, advocacy work, and neighborhood development throughout Ohio and South Carolina. These ministries continue today with women and men who are impassioned by the CSA mission of charity.

The CSAs have been and continue to be courageous risk-takers and pioneers of healing, creatively responding to needs with great love and tenderness, especially with vulnerable communities.

Our Mission

In the spirit of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, our mission is to extend the healing ministry of Jesus to God’s people.

Our Vision

The Sisters of Charity Health System is a beacon of hope devoted to healing and addressing the unmet needs of individuals, families and communities through a network of innovative services.



OUR CORE VALUES

Compassion

Displays a profound sense of interconnectedness by:

- Responding to needs, pains and sufferings of others with concern, empathy and support
- Treating all persons we serve and with whom we co-minister with dignity
- Exhibiting an attitude of acceptance and forgiveness
- Listening with empathy and attention
- Serving as a catalyst for change, especially for the disenfranchised

Courage

Dares to take risks that our faith-based demands of us by:

- Speaking out on issues that challenge our mission and Catholic identity
- Making difficult decisions with integrity and in a timely manner
- Promoting economic, political and social conditions to support the fundamental rights of all individuals that enable them to meet their potential and achieve the common good of society
- Addressing institutional problems and issues quickly, objectively and directly

Respect

Values dignity and sacredness of life from conception through death by:

- Treating individuals and their families with profound respect and utmost regard
- Maintaining an attitude and atmosphere of loving hospitality
- Addressing the physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of the person
- Ensuring that diversity exists at all levels
- Being trustful, keeping confidences; being truthful, direct and sincere; apologizing for misunderstandings, inconveniences or mistakes

Justice

Develops right relationships internally and externally by:

- Developing or eliminating programs to ensure excellent service and quality
- Acting as responsible stewards of all resources
- Addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable
- Treating employees justly and respectfully
- Advocating to secure the human right to health care

Collaboration

Promotes inclusive, compassionate and collaborative relationships by:

- Encouraging interaction internally and externally to empower others for service
- Fostering and sharing of gifts and talents within our institution and larger community
- Facilitating dialogue and networking with individuals and organizations
- Assisting others to realize the importance of their work in contributing to the mission
- Promoting a sensitivity to diversity in planning and implementing programs, hiring practices, advertising and other initiatives



Volunteering – Working Together for a Common Mission

Sr. Judith Ann Karam, CSA, the congregational leader of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, often says of the sponsored ministries of the CSAs, “*We’ve never done it alone.*” From the beginning of their ministerial service, the CSAs have collaborated with dedicated volunteers in fulfilling their mission, serving the poor and needy, and bringing healing to the suffering.

As a faith-based organization, volunteering is ingrained in the fabric of our response to heal, educate, serve, and love. In the Gospel of John, Jesus humbly washes the feet of his apostles before they recline for dinner. This meek act of service is a recognition of the dignity of each of his apostles. Jesus then teaches them, saying, “I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do” (John 13: 15). Jesus challenges all faithful to serve with humble hearts, recognizing and protecting the dignity of all people, especially the vulnerable, voiceless, forgotten, and displaced. By volunteering, **we become the hands and feet of Christ** to those in need.



Why Volunteer?

Volunteering, which forms a heart of generosity, humility, and sacrifice, involves offering your time and energy without seeking personal gain or recognition. Here are several key motivations for why someone might choose to volunteer:

1. A Desire to Serve Others

For many, volunteering stems from a deep desire to help others and make a difference in their lives. This could be driven by empathy, compassion, or the desire to meet the needs of those less fortunate. This aligns with the Gospel call to love our neighbors (Matthew 22:39) and serve others selflessly.

2. A Sense of Purpose

Volunteering can provide individuals with a sense of purpose and fulfillment. When people engage in volunteer work, especially in areas they feel passionate about, it can give them a meaningful way to contribute to society and the community. The satisfaction of knowing you are making a difference in someone’s life or in the world can be incredibly rewarding.

3. Building Community and Connection

Volunteering often provides opportunities to meet new people and form connections. For some, the desire to create or strengthen a sense of community is a significant motivator. It can also provide opportunities to connect with like-minded people who share similar values, building relationships and fostering a sense of belonging.

4. Spiritual Growth and Fulfillment

Volunteering can be an expression of faith. It provides a tangible way to live out values like love, kindness, and sacrifice. In the context of Christianity, volunteering is seen as a way to imitate Christ’s own service to humanity, and it aligns with the idea of “living out the Gospel” in real, everyday actions.

Why Volunteer? *Continued*

5. Personal Development and Growth

Volunteering provides opportunities for personal growth. Volunteers can gain new skills, develop leadership qualities, and build confidence in a variety of areas, whether through organizing events, working with diverse groups of people, or learning how to handle challenges. For many, volunteering becomes a way to build both their professional and personal abilities.

6. A Desire to Be Part of Something Bigger

Many people volunteer because they want to contribute to something bigger than themselves. Whether it's supporting a cause, addressing social issues, or helping a charity fulfill its mission, volunteering allows individuals to be part of a collective effort working toward positive change, which can create a deep sense of belonging to a larger purpose.

7. Reciprocity and Giving Back

Some people volunteer because they have received help or support from others in the past and feel a desire to give back. It could be that they've been touched by a community or an individual who helped them through a difficult time, and volunteering is their way of paying it forward.

8. Making a Positive Impact on Society

For some, the motivation to volunteer is deeply rooted in a desire to improve society or address specific needs or injustices. Volunteers may seek to help fight poverty, promote education, protect the environment, or stand up for human rights. Their work serves as a means to contribute to systemic change, making a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

9. Developing a Greater Perspective

Volunteering can expand one's understanding of different cultures, backgrounds, and life experiences. People who volunteer often gain a broader perspective on the challenges faced by others, fostering greater empathy and understanding.

10. Healing or Coping with Loss

Sometimes, people turn to volunteering during difficult periods in their lives, such as after the loss of a loved one or a personal hardship. The act of helping others can provide emotional healing and a sense of purpose during times of grief, helping to shift the focus from personal pain to positive action.

11. Creating a Legacy

Some individuals volunteer because they want to leave a lasting impact or legacy. They may seek to contribute to causes that they care deeply about, hoping their efforts will inspire future generations to continue that work.

People choose to volunteer for a wide variety of personal, social, and spiritual reasons. Whether it's to serve others, grow spiritually, develop new skills, or make a difference in the world, volunteering often provides both external and internal rewards that align with an individual's values and desires.



How to become a Volunteer:

- Register as a volunteer on the SCHS *VolunteerMatters* site: <https://sistersofcharityhealth.volunteermatters.org/>
- Complete all required credentials necessary to volunteer with the respective SCHS ministry
- Read the Volunteer Agreement for the SCHS
- Review the SCHS Volunteer Introduction Video
- Review the SCHS Volunteer Handbook

Policies and Procedures

Code of Conduct:

- Volunteers are expected to embody the values of charity, kindness, and respect for others in all actions.
- We expect volunteers to be courteous to all clients, staff, and fellow volunteers.
- Volunteers must avoid any behavior that could be perceived as discriminatory, abusive, or inappropriate.
- Volunteers should dress modestly, and when appropriate, wear attire that reflects the dignity of the work and the individuals we serve.

Attendance and Punctuality:

- Volunteers are asked to arrive promptly for their scheduled shifts. If you are unable to attend, please notify the volunteer coordinator at the respective ministry as soon as possible.
- For regular commitments, please adhere to the agreed-upon hours. If you are unable to continue your commitment, please inform the volunteer coordinator with ample notice.

Safety and Emergency Procedures:

- The safety of our volunteers is a top priority. Volunteers should familiarize themselves with emergency exits, fire drills, and any safety procedures related to their work environment.
- If you witness or are involved in an accident or emergency, immediately notify a staff member and follow our emergency protocols.

Confidentiality:

- Within our ministries, we serve people who are often vulnerable. It is crucial to maintain confidentiality regarding personal or sensitive information shared by those we serve.
- Volunteers should not share any personal details or information about individuals unless specifically authorized or required by law.

Non-Discrimination Policy:

- Our work is inspired by the Catholic commitment to the dignity of all people. We do not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.
- Volunteers must treat all individuals with dignity and respect, regardless of their background or beliefs.



Volunteer Benefits

- Volunteers are welcome to participate in occasional retreats, spiritual formation activities, or community events organized by The Sisters of Charity Health System.
- Volunteers are deeply valued, and we believe in recognizing your contributions. Volunteer appreciation events will be held periodically.
- Special recognition, such as “Volunteer of the Month” awards, will be given to highlight exceptional service.

Communication Guidelines

How We Communicate:

- Volunteers will receive important updates via email or phone from our volunteer coordinator.
- For any changes to your availability or other matters, please notify us through [preferred communication method].
- Volunteers are encouraged to engage in open communication about any concerns or suggestions for improvement.

Conflict Resolution:

- If conflicts or issues arise, volunteers are encouraged to first approach their supervisor or the volunteer coordinator.
- If the issue persists, we have a formal conflict resolution process that can be initiated with the assistance of management.

Age Requirement

- All volunteers must be ages 18 years or older and must complete the online volunteer application and be approved to serve.
- Youth desiring to serve must volunteer with a parent/guardian or adult chaperone, but the adult will then be required to complete a volunteer application on their behalf. We encourage students to volunteer as we know that having an official volunteer record can help fulfill volunteer service requirements and/or expectations for schools, scholarships, job applications, etc.

Safe Environment and Vulnerable Population Trainings

Safe environment training is a program designed to equip individuals, especially those working with or around children and vulnerable populations, with the knowledge and skills to recognize, prevent, and respond to potential abuse or harm, fostering a culture of awareness and vigilance. Catholic Dioceses where our sponsored ministries exist require this training as part of their compliance expectations. More information on these trainings can be found in the links below.

Catholic Diocese of Youngstown

<https://doy.org/safe-environment/>

Safe Environment – VIRTUS

Catholic Diocese of Cleveland

<https://www.dioceseofcleveland.org/offices/parish-life/child-protection/overview>

Safe Environment – VIRTUS

Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston

<https://charlestondiocese.org/child-and-youth-protection/safe-haven-training/>

Safe Environment – VIRTUS

Volunteer Agreement

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the policies and guidelines outlined in this volunteer handbook. You agree to comply with the expectations of the Sisters of Charity Health System and commit to serving with compassion, respect, and integrity in alignment with the values of our Catholic faith.

Volunteer Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



SISTERS of CHARITY
HEALTH SYSTEM

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine