

Christ
House

TRAINING GUIDE

For New Volunteers

2025

PREPARED BY
Heidi Mills
Updated May 2025



Dear New Volunteer,

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about Christ House as you prepare to serve. Christ House relies on consistent volunteer support as we seek to provide compassionate and comprehensive medical respite care for men experiencing homelessness in the District of Columbia.

If you would like to provide any feedback on your volunteer experience, please scan the QR code below to access our volunteer survey:



If your schedule ever prohibits in-person volunteering, you can still contribute to our mission through in-kind gift donations. We are always looking for new men's clothing for our patients when they arrive at Christ House. You can always find a list of the items we are currently seeking on our Amazon Wish List by scanning the QR code:



Volunteer service can be transformative for all involved. I hope that your time at Christ House is a source of joy for days, months, or even years to come. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or comments about your experience.

Sincerely,

Heidi Mills
Volunteer Manager
heidi.mills@christhouse.org

WELCOME TO CHRIST HOUSE VOLUNTEERING!



Frequently Asked Questions

What volunteer opportunities are available at Christ House?

- Food services
- Nurses' station phone
- Patient activities facilitator (yoga, art, collage, writing, crochet, movies, etc.)
- Kairos House clean-up crew (ideally suited for groups)
- Gardening (as needed)
- Photography (as needed)

Does Christ House have volunteer opportunities on weekends?

Yes, but shifts fill up quickly. I would recommend signing up for weekend shifts at least a couple of weeks in advance to secure your spot.

I am a medical professional. Can I volunteer in my professional capacity?

We do not generally offer clinical hands-on volunteer opportunities. Registered nurses or doctors are welcome to reach out to heidi.mills@christhouse.org to inquire about other ways to get involved, including leading a patient class or activity.

Can children volunteer?

All volunteers must be 16 or above to volunteer in our kitchen or Kairos House and 18 or above to volunteer in our nurses' station. We do make exceptions during the holiday season, so please reach out then about available opportunities.

I would like to bring a volunteer group. How should I proceed?

- We can accommodate groups of 4-5 individuals in our kitchen at once.
- We can accommodate groups of 10-15 individuals to participate in cleaning or maintenance projects at Kairos House.
- To coordinate a group volunteer opportunity, email heidi.mills@christhouse.org with (1) the name of the group, (2) the estimated number of people, (3) the age range of volunteers, and (4) suggested dates. Please note that we can more easily accommodate large groups of volunteers during regular business hours.

WELCOME TO CHRIST HOUSE VOLUNTEERING!



Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get to Christ House?

We are located at 1717 Columbia Road NW in Adams Morgan. We are about a mile from the Woodley Park Zoo Metro (Red Line) and half a mile from the Columbia Heights Metro (Green Line). We are also located near or on several bus lines, including the 42/43, 90/96, H2/H4, and S2/S9.

Do you offer volunteer parking?

No, unfortunately we do not offer parking. Parking is extremely limited, so please build in an additional buffer of time to find a spot if you choose to drive.

How do I enter the building after business hours and on weekends?

The front door is monitored from the second floor nurses' station. Press the rectangular gray button on the stand to the left of the front door, located right above the accessibility button. If the door sticks, please do not try to pull open the door. Wait a few seconds for the second floor to unlock it.

What should I wear when I volunteer?

- In the kitchen, please wear comfortable clothing that you wouldn't mind getting dirty or wet. In other roles, please wear business casual clothing. Jeans are okay.
- Please refrain from wearing shirts with explicit messages or drug/alcohol/bar advertisements, spaghetti straps, short skirts/shorts, or low-cut blouses.
- Please refrain from wearing cologne or perfume, as the fragrance can bother patients or cause breathing problems.
- If you are helping in the kitchen, feel free to bring a baseball cap or bandanna. We also have hairnets available.

Where should I go when I arrive?

Please report directly to your department. If you are leading a patient activity during work hours, please stop by the Volunteer Office to check in. If you are leading a patient activity on the weekend, please check in with the nurses' station on the second floor and proceed down to the living room. Staff can help gather patients from their rooms if needed. Please do not enter any patient rooms by yourself.

WELCOME TO CHRIST HOUSE VOLUNTEERING!



Frequently Asked Questions

What is your cancellation policy?

- If you need to cancel up to 24 hours before your scheduled shift, please cancel directly on VolunteerHub.
- If you have an emergency and can't make your shift, please call 202-328-1100 and explain your situation to the relevant staff person. Then email heidi.mills@christhouse.org to communicate that you have relayed the message to the appropriate department. Notifying Heidi means that your hours will be recorded properly on VolunteerHub.
- Please note that we expect volunteers to sign up and show up. A no-show, no call will detrimentally affect our organization as we struggle to fill last-minute gaps. Three no-shows, no-calls may be grounds for suspension of your ability to volunteer. Additionally, cancelling three shifts in a row less than 24 hours before your scheduled shift may be grounds for suspension. There may be exceptions on a limited basis for extenuating circumstances (a sudden illness, transportation issues, etc).

What if I must leave early or come late?

Christ House expects volunteers to show up on time and stay for the duration of your shift. If you must leave early or come late, call 202-328-1100 and explain your situation to a staff member. You can also reach out to heidi.mills@christhouse.org.

What if no staff members are at my volunteer station when I arrive?

Most likely, your supervisor is on a quick break. Please wait 5-10 minutes. If they still haven't shown up, please find another staff member to help you track them down.

Can I purchase food or other gifts for a patient?

It is incredibly kind to offer, but please refrain from purchasing items for an individual patient. You can donate items to Christ House through our Amazon Wish List. If you would like to donate food, supplies for a class, or other items, please reach out to heidi.mills@christhouse.org.

WELCOME TO CHRIST HOUSE VOLUNTEERING!



Frequently Asked Questions

Where do I put my personal belongings during my shift?

If you are volunteering in the kitchen, please place your belongings at the volunteer station next to the sink or store them in the Food Services Office. If you are volunteering in the nurses' station, you can keep your belongings with you or store them in the nurses' break room. If you are leading an activity during the work day, you can store your belongings in the Volunteer Office. If you are leading an activity outside of business hours, you can either keep your belongings with you or ask the nurses if you can store them in the break room on the second floor.

Can I fulfill my service hour requirements or do court-mandated volunteering at Christ House?

Individuals can fulfill their service hour requirements. We ask for five days' notice to provide a confirmation letter. We require individuals seeking pre-court or court-mandated service to fill out an alternate form. We are unable to accommodate charges regarding violent crimes, sexual crimes, or crimes against an elder or child.

I'm interested in becoming a Christ House Ambassador or joining the Year-Long Volunteer Corps.

- Christ House Ambassadors assist Christ House with our fundraising and development goals, provide support for events, and promote the good work of Christ House. Please direct all inquiries about our Ambassador program to development@christhouse.org.
- We partner with four local service organizations to offer full-time year-long volunteer opportunities. In 2025, we are looking for a Medical Services Assistant and Patient Support Assistant. If you would like more information about our long-term volunteer opportunities, please reach out to heidi.mills@christhouse.org.

My question wasn't answered. Who can I contact?

Please reach out to our Volunteer Manager, Heidi Mills, at heidi.mills@christhouse.org. You can also call our main office at 202-328-1100.



Christ House Kitchen Guide



Your primary responsibilities for this shift include organizing and cleaning the kitchen and dining room; helping with meal preparation; serving food to patients; and washing dishes. You are welcome to enjoy a meal after service if you like.



1.

Wear comfortable clothes that you wouldn't mind getting dirty or wet.

2.

You are welcome to bring a hat or bandanna. If not, we have hairnets available.

3.

Wear closed-toed shoes. Refrain from wearing shirts with explicit messages, alcohol/drug/bar references, tank tops, spaghetti straps, short skirts or shorts, and low-cut blouses.

4.

Always follow instructions from your chef!

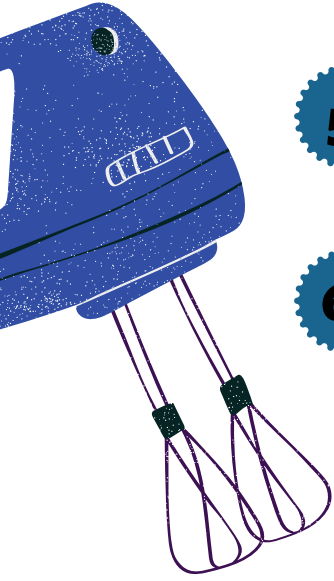
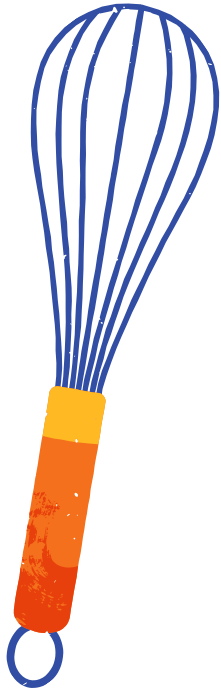


5.

If a utensil falls on the floor: Put it in the DISHWASHER.

6.

If food falls on the floor: Put it in the TRASH.

If you get hurt: There's a first aid kit at the volunteer station. If there's a serious emergency, have someone call 911 immediately.



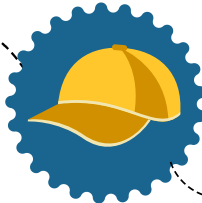


Christ House Kitchen Guide

Preparing to serve? Here's what to do when you arrive!

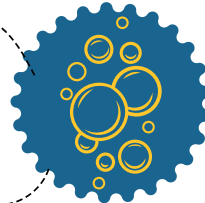


Place your belongings in the volunteer station and check in on the paper schedule in the kitchen or food services office by initialing or signing your name. If it's not listed, write your name.



Tie up your hair and/or put on a hairnet or hat.

Wash your hands for at least 30 seconds with hot water and soap.



Put on an apron.

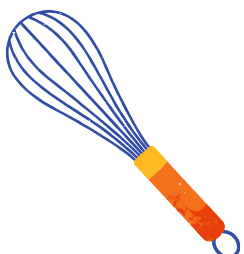
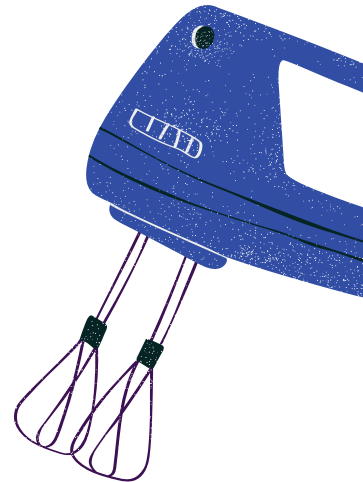


See the first aid kit? Good. Just know it's there.

Glove up. Please change your gloves frequently between tasks. Never handle the trash or cleaning supplies and then go to handle food. EVER.



You are READY! Please find your chef for further instructions!





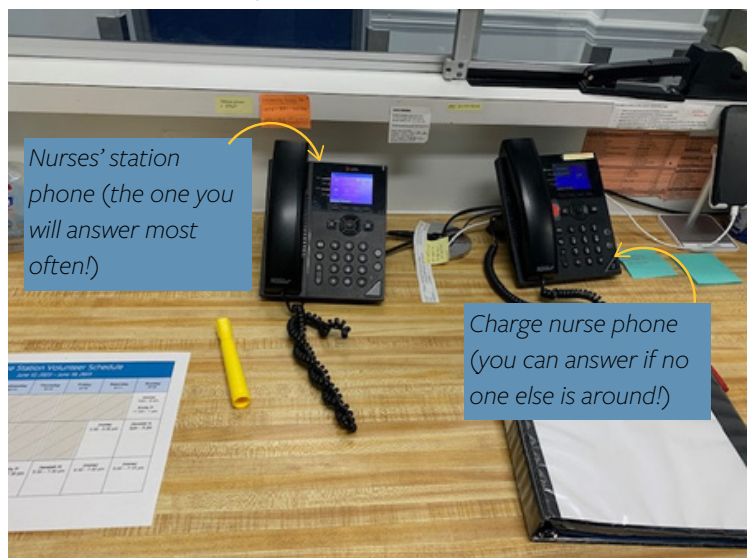
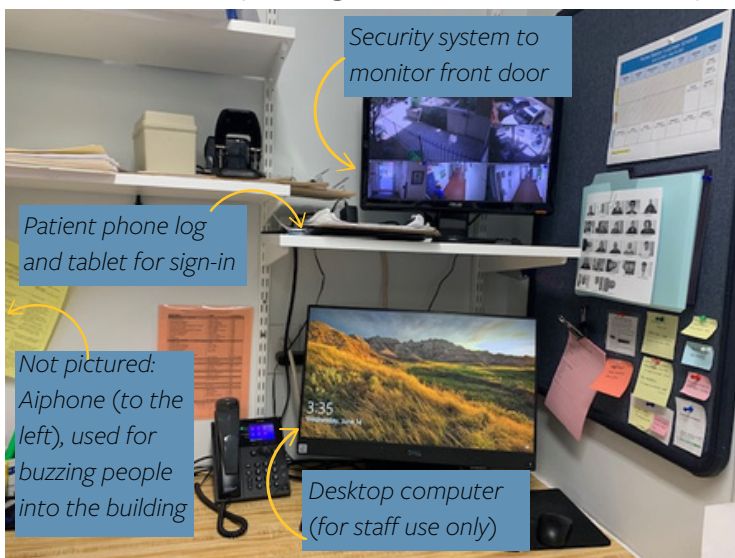
Christ House Nurses' Station Training Guide



Your primary responsibilities include providing access to the building for patients, staff, and visitors during off hours; answering the phones and taking messages as needed; and assisting patients to make phone calls. If there is downtime, you are welcome to read a book or work quietly on other tasks. Please refrain from excessive cell phone use or working on a large electronic device like a laptop or tablet. Please wear clothing appropriate for a business casual setting.

Learning the Space

Where is everything? Review these handy photos to orient yourself to the station!

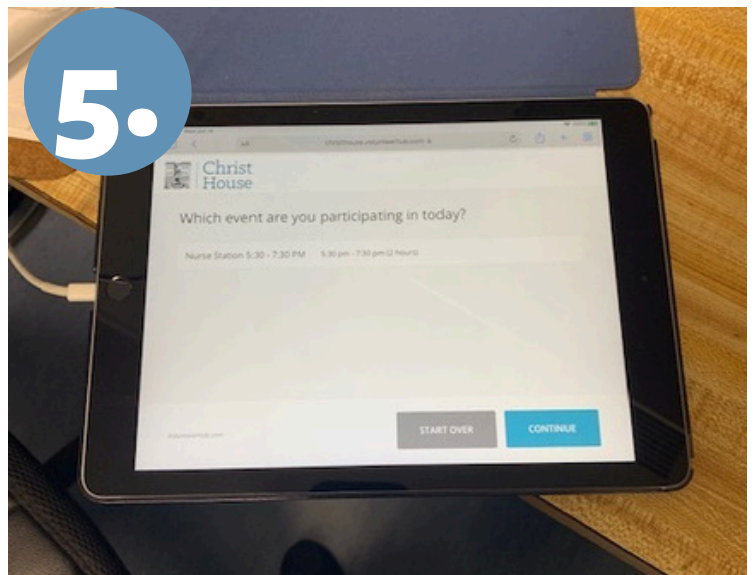
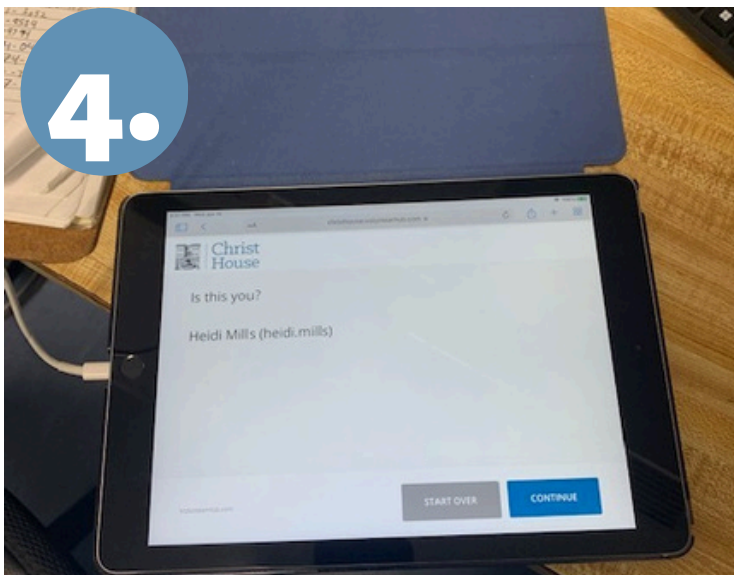
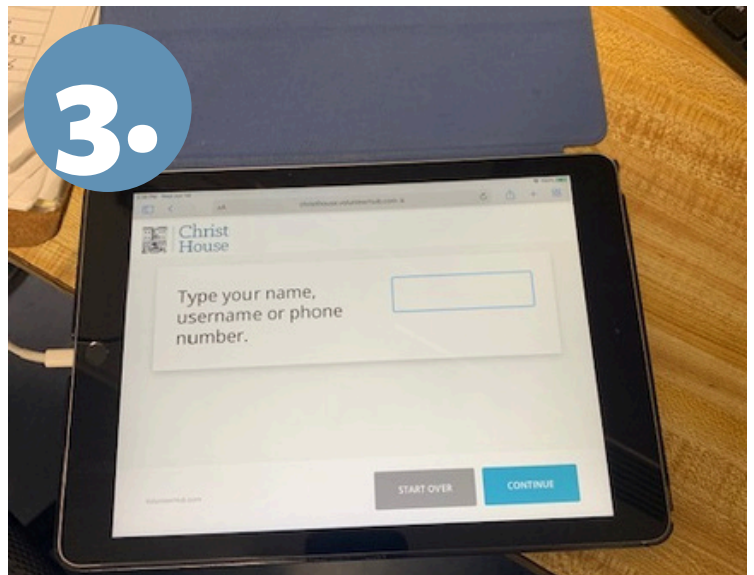
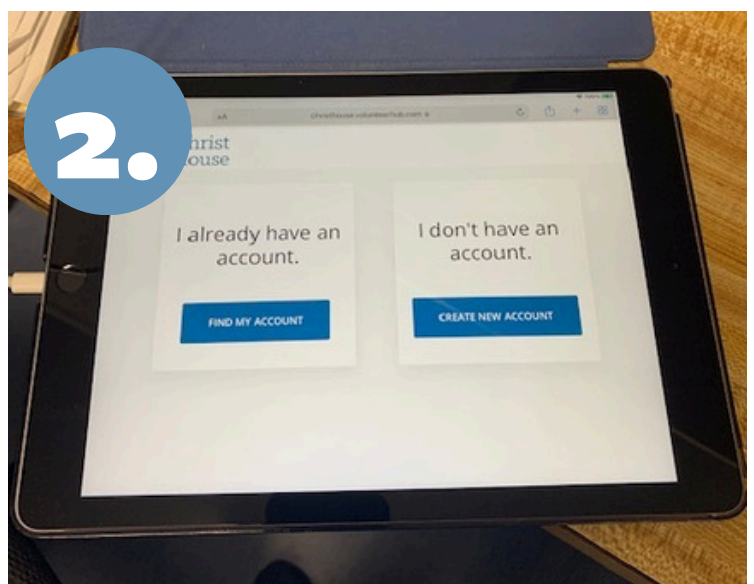


Checking In

1. Open the tablet on the shelf above the computer. It says "Hello Volunteer" on the case. When you open it, it should automatically navigate to the VolunteerHub kiosk.



2. Select “I already have an account.”
3. Type in your name or phone number, then hit continue.
4. On the page that says, “Is this you?” select continue if it has successfully found your account. If it did not find your account, go back to the previous page, and try whatever you didn’t try before (i.e., your phone number instead of your name).
5. Select your appropriate shift and hit continue.
6. If this system did not work, initial next to your name on the paper schedule and email heidi.mills@christhouse.org.
7. You’re good to go!



Monitoring the Front Door

This security screen lights up with video when someone approaches so you can get a closer look.



Press this button to activate the video screen.

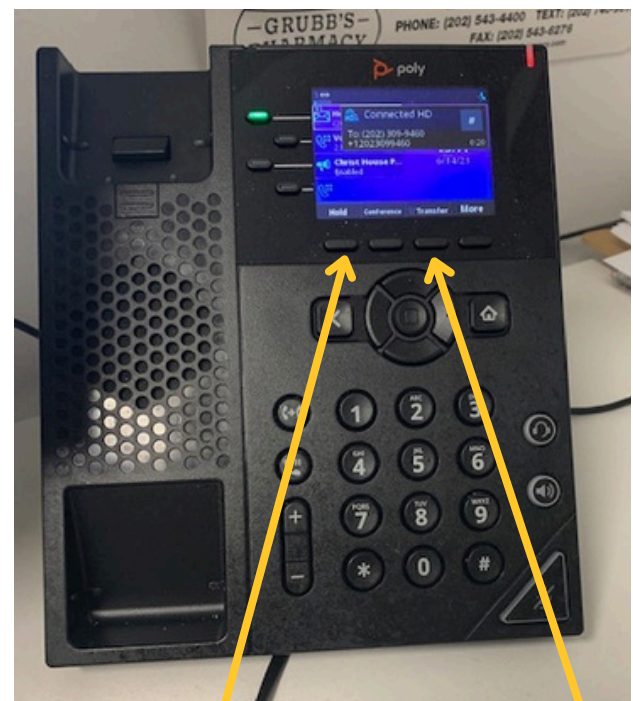
Press this button to let people into the building.

Press this button to talk to the person outside.

1. Keep an eye on the front door. When someone approaches, they will press the clear rectangular button on the machine outside. The AiPhone (pictured above) will chime and activate the video screen so you can see who is approaching the building. You can also view them on the larger security monitor above the computer.
2. Press the key button in the middle of the navigation panel to open the front door. The door will swing open and allow the person to enter, then close by itself.
3. If the person looks confused or lost, notify a staff person. They might be a new volunteer or visitor. If you are ever in doubt whether the person seeking entry should be here, ask a staff person immediately.
4. If the front door sticks, press and hold the bottom button on the navigation panel. Inform the person to wait a few minutes and not to pull on the door. Try again to open the door in a few minutes.

Answering the Phones

1. Most calls will come through the phone on your left as you're facing the nurses' station window. When the phone rings, please answer it within three rings and inquire about who's calling. If it's medical-related or an emergency, ask a staff member to take the call. If it's a kitchen matter, transfer them to the kitchen or Food Services Office. If it's about something else, either transfer them to their voicemail or encourage them to be in touch during business hours. A list of common transfer numbers is available at the desk for your reference.
2. To put someone on hold, press the far left button that says "Hold" on the screen.
3. To transfer to another line, press the third button that says "Transfer" on the screen.
4. If the charge nurse phone to the right rings and there is not a medical staff member to answer it, please answer it as you would answer the other phone.



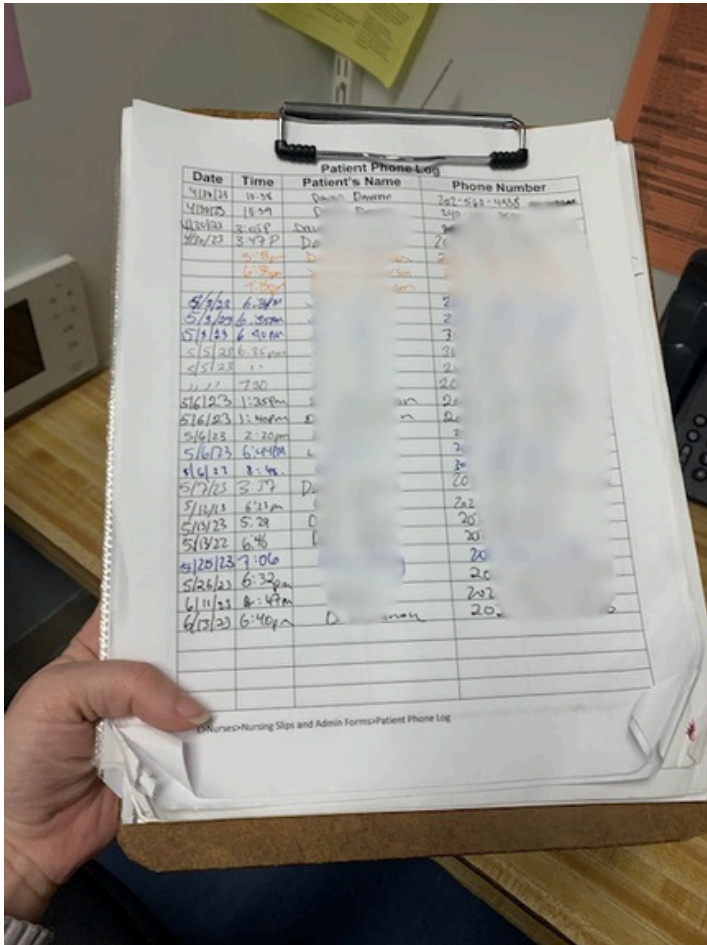
Press for hold

Press for transfer

Patient Phone Calls

Occasionally, patients without a cell phone will request to make a call at the front desk. Since patients are not permitted to use the nurses' station phones, volunteers can make the call and transfer it to the patient phone at the end of the hall, right next to the pastoral and case management offices.

1. When a patient requests to make a phone call, please write down their name, the name and number of the person they are trying to reach, and the time and date of the call on the phone log on the desk. It should be located on the shelf with the security monitor.
2. Make the phone call. When the individual picks up, inform them about the patient who wishes to speak to them and tell them you will transfer the call.
3. To transfer the call, hit the "Transfer" button, which is the third button from the left. "Transfer" is also on the screen. Input extension 2460 and hit the "Dial" button. Instruct the patient to go down to the hallway phone to conduct the call.
4. If the person does not answer, hang up and instruct the patient to try again later.



Patient phone log



Patient phone (next to pastoral office)

I hope this is helpful! If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Heidi at heidi.mills@christhouse.org or call 202-328-1100. During your shift, you can always ask any of our staff members to assist you. Thank you so much for your service. Your volunteer work helps us to provide comprehensive and compassionate medical respite care for men experiencing homelessness.

Patient Activities

COME SHARE A TALENT OR HOBBY WITH PATIENTS--OR JUST COME HANG OUT.

Popular Activities

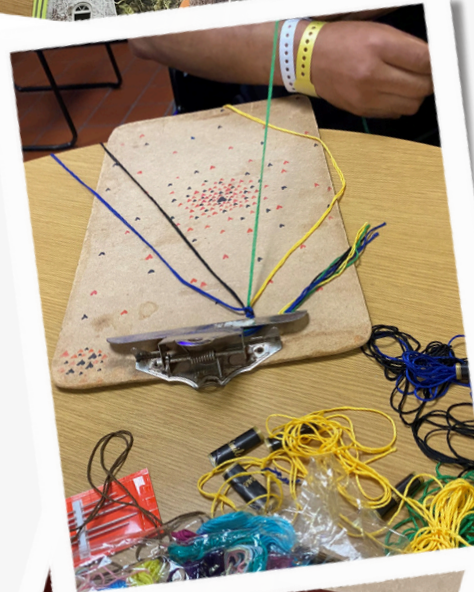
Arts and crafts (especially collage), board games, ping-pong, Wii games, card games (especially Spades), movie watch parties, sports game screenings -- but the sky is the limit!

To Sign Up

Either sign up for suggested times and activities on VolunteerHub, or email Heidi with your proposed activity, date, and time.

When Arriving

1. If you are coming in during business hours, please check in with the Volunteer Office. If you are coming in outside of business hours, please go up to the second floor and tell the charge nurse that you are here to lead an activity. They may be able to help you round up patients, but you are responsible for setting up and cleaning up after the activity yourself. Please do not go in patient rooms by yourself.
2. Set up your activity in the Living Room. You are more than welcome to bring in your own supplies. Please refrain from bringing in gifts or purchasing items for patients without checking with staff first.
3. Have fun! IONS?
4. Reach out to Heidi to confirm number of patients and activity.



Questions?

Email heidi.mills@christhouse.org or
call 202.328.1100.

A large, abstract splash of blue watercolor paint on a white background. The splash is irregular in shape, with various shades of blue and visible brushstrokes. The text "Thank You" is written in a black, cursive script across the middle of the splash.

Thank You