

Sarah's... an Oasis for Women -- Volunteer Opportunities

At Sarah's there are opportunities for individuals to become more involved in the life of the house as well as support Sarah's through off-site work (fundraising and donation drives, for example).

At Sarah's, volunteers who work in the house must possess these qualities to some degree and have a willingness to work with others toward the development of these qualities:

- ability and willingness to relate with women of diverse backgrounds, language skills, appearances, and life experiences while respecting physical, life experience and emotional privacy
- commitment to Sarah's mission and ministry
- knowledge of CSJ mission and ministry
- good communication skills including ability to follow written and verbal directions
- ability to maintain resident confidentiality
- flexibility: allowing for change in oneself, in others, and in the environment
- self-awareness: ability to listen to feedback, recognize own potential and limitations, ability to express feelings/recognize and acknowledge others feelings, and good sense of humor
- energy and spirit of cooperation
- ability to be collaborative with and accountable to residents, staff, and other volunteers
- ability to meet the physical demands of the volunteer opportunity which may include lifting, bending, stooping, reaching, walking and standing for a period of time.

Volunteers are selected based on mutual expression of Sarah's needs and the individual volunteer's expectations, skills and strengths. Sarah's staff must be able to assure Sarah's women that their privacy and safety are being protected at all times. Volunteers are therefore expected to make a long-term commitment to on-site volunteer work.

The first step in the process of becoming a volunteer is to attend a tour and complete the volunteer application. Please contact Martha at 651-696-8672 or via email at communityrelations@sarahsoasis.org if you are interested.

Sarah's has a variety of volunteer opportunities available for those who are interested in getting more involved. The following categories include opportunities for volunteering both individually and as a group:

- **Household Support/ Hospitality (more internally focused)**
 - **Administration**
 - **Community Dinner Preparation**
 - **Companion**
 - **Gardening/grounds maintenance**
 - **Tutor/Skill Mentor**
- **Community Relations (more externally focused)**
 - **Administration**
 - **Fundraising**
 - **Social Media**
- **Sarah's Advisory Council Member**
- **Summer Intern**
- **Volunteer Driver**

Volunteer opportunities may be onsite at Sarah's, off-site or a combination of both.

Volunteer Application



Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Sarah's... an Oasis for Women. Potential volunteers will be contacted if there is a match between Sarah's needs and the volunteer's qualifications and interests. After this, volunteers must complete orientation individually or as a group depending upon availability.

Contact Information

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Primary Phone: _____ Secondary Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Demographics

Birthday (Month/Date/Year): _____ Gender: _____

Ethnicity: _____ Country of Birth: _____

How did you learn about Sarah's? _____

Languages spoken (please list all): _____

Are you:

CSJ or Sister in another community Yes__ No__

CSJ Consociate or Associate Yes__ No__

Education

Current Student? Yes__ No__

High School: _____ University: _____

Other Education: _____ Field of Study: _____

Employment History

Currently Employed? Yes__ No__ Occupation: _____

Most Recent Employer(s): _____

Service Requirement

Do you need to fulfill a service requirement? Please explain. Yes__ No__

Availability

Please tell what days and times you are available. Please note: evening and weekend opportunities are limited.

Skills and Interests

What are the skills would you like to share with the community at Sarah's? Why are you interested in volunteering here? What are your goals as a volunteer? If you have Board or Advisory Council experience with other organizations, please list that here.

Sarah's... an Oasis for Women is a home for women in transition. At Sarah's, boundaries, professionalism and confidentiality are critical. In addition to enacting the other values of Sarah's (simplicity, accountability, opportunity, possibility, beauty of our home and grounds, right relationships, healing and hope), we have the following behavior expectations of all staff, including volunteers:

- Responsibility- this includes being on time, following through with commitments and asking for help
- Strong communication- this includes appropriate use of voice mail, email, notes and conversations to convey facts, questions, concerns and clarification needed to address any problems in a timely manner
- Respect- this includes respectful words and actions including wearing appropriate attire
- Honoring diversity- this includes honoring and recognizing the differences and beauty in each individual's cultural, religious, language and other expression. Evangelizing, proselytizing, and using religious language and posting symbols specific to any one religion is prohibited.
- Show initiative- this includes seeing what needs to be done and doing it, trying to come up with solutions or find answers before asking for help, as well as sharing good ideas or new solutions to a problem.
- Flexibility and attitude of openness- this includes being willing to try new things, take on new challenges and staying calm under pressure. A sense of humor is helpful!
- Sharing lives and changing lives with boundaries- this includes being supportive and encouraging, developing relationships and friendships but keeping them professional. This does not include spending time with residents socially or developing anything other than professional relationships with staff and current or former residents.
- Positively representing Sarah's to the broader community and looking for ways to expand Sarah's reach and community knowledge of Sarah's.

By signing below, both parties agree to the expectations outlined in this letter and will notify the other party immediately if any changes occur.

By signing below, you agree to allow Sarah's to use photos and videos containing your image in internal and external paper and electronic publications. If you wish to opt out, please note so below.

By signing below, you also acknowledge that **Sarah's... an Oasis for Women is not liable for any harm sustained to person or property during volunteer activities performed off-site**, even if activities are on behalf of Sarah's are performed with a Sarah's staff member or resident. All volunteers are covered under the CSJ Province liability insurance policy while on premises at 520 Warwick St. in St. Paul.

Volunteer

Date

Sarah's Staff

Date

Emergency Contact Information

Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone 1 _____ Phone 2 _____

The residents at Sarah's come from different; countries, cultures, and walks of life. Despite these differences, they share in common experiences such as; parenting, working, joy, and sorrow. These women are so much more than the trauma they have experienced. They are incredibly smart women! Volunteers are often surprised at the level of education or professional achievement that our residents have reached before coming here. Residents are really grateful to have you here! Below are some helpful hints as you get to know Sarah's residents.

1. Share about yourself, offer up information. Leave it open to the residents—you'll notice if someone wants to talk or not. Listen. Don't push it! Be okay with silence. Providing a ministry of presence means being present, not necessarily talking. Offer words of encouragement. Encourage their English use especially. Offer up personal experience BUT don't pretend to share their experience.

Example Conversation Starters:

- "I love to cook."
- "I'm from Wisconsin."
- "I grew up in the country."
- "I love to dance."
- "My granddaughter is 4 years old."
- "Wow! That's a big deal that you got your driver's license!"
- "It sounds like you work really hard."
- "Your English is great."
- "I understand you."
- "I studied Spanish and I was always so nervous to speak it but the more I spoke the better my Spanish became."

2. Volunteers are often seen as authority figures. The residents may feel obligated to answer any questions that you ask. Be aware of this and don't ask anything too personal. Don't ask questions about why they are here, their immigration status, the situation back home, etc. Even questions about kids or family can stir up difficult memories. If the resident offers up some information, feel free to ask about that, but it's best to leave it up to them. Don't make generalizations. Don't ask questions through the lens of assumption, "Were there animals roaming in your backyard?"

Example Questions you might ask:

- "How's your day going?"
- "What's your day/week looking like?"
- "Do you like work/school?"
- "What is your dream job/what would you love to learn about?"
- "Do you like (snow, rain, sunshine)?"
- "What's your favorite season?"
- "How is the weather here different than back home?"
- "What are you making?"
- "This food is delicious! Who made it?"
- "Do you like XYZ food?"

3. Holidays- Careful about assumptions! Share how you celebrate the holidays. Often, if you talk to the residents about your own traditions, they'll offer up something about theirs.

Examples:

- "Do you celebrate XYZ?"
- "How do you celebrate XYZ?"