

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS IN CORRECTIONS

The following guidelines are written to assist the volunteers coming into this facility to work with inmates, either individually or with groups. These guidelines or rules must be strictly adhered to by both the staff and the volunteer in order to provide for an efficient and well functioning program.

June, 1989

A. GENERAL RULES

1. Vehicles must be locked at all times. Do not leave any contraband such as instruments for escape, medications, or weapons in your vehicle.
2. Do not bring anything into the facility for an inmate, no matter how innocent or trivial it seems at the time.
 - a. It is advisable for you to adopt a policy of saying "no" to any request such as this. Even items such as cigarettes, magazines, books, etc., are not permitted to be brought in by you. Inmates can purchase almost everything they need at the institution commissary.
3. Do not take anything out of the facility for any inmate no matter how innocent or trivial it seems at the time.
 - a. Even letters to mailed outside are not permitted. Inmates have mail privileges the same as you, and other means to get messages or items to their families outside. Too often, by attempting to be a nice person, everyone involved, including the inmate, gets into trouble.
4. Avoid personal involvement in an inmate's life by not making personal contact with his family or friends. This very often does more harm than good to you, the inmate, and his family.
5. Respect and treat inmates as human beings.
 - a. Inmates are people like yourself, but have made a regrettable mistake in life and are now paying for it. In 99% of the cases, they will be returning to society and hopefully will become productive citizens once again.
6. Avoid flaunting your stature in the Community or putting yourself down to inmates.
 - a. Don't look down on these people, because they have feelings like yourself.
 - b. Avoid trying to be "one of the boys". Be yourself - a concerned and caring person from the community, simply trying to put a little meaning into the life of someone in their position.
7. Do not make promises to an inmate that you are unable to keep.
 - a. Never promise an inmate something just to get him "off your back" or to sound like a nice guy. If you cannot produce, it can cause many problems.
8. Contraband, meaning anything inmates should not have, such as chewing gum, should not be brought into the facility at anytime. If in doubt, ask.
9. Avoid being naïve or gullible.
 - a. Occasionally, inmates will attempt to dazzle you with "footwork". In other words, they will do anything to lure you into a compromising position.
10. Be firm in any decisions on your part, but above all, be fair.
 - a. Do not favor any particular inmate or inmates. Do not show partiality in any situation.
11. Maintain a neat appearance at all times.
 - a. Dress conservatively, but neatly. Very often, your physical appearance will help establish a good working relationship with the inmate.

- b. Men - clothing should be neat and clean. A coat and tie are not required, but long trouser, shoes, and a shirt with long or short sleeves are required.
 - c. Women - a dress, a skirt, or slacks with an appropriate top are required. Shorts and extremely short skirts (above mid-thigh) are not permitted under any circumstances. Shoes must be worn.
12. All correspondence and telephone calls relative to business of the facility must be cleared through the staff.
 - a. Inmates are not permitted to make calls on staff telephones at any time. If an inmate requests a telephone call, refer him to your supervisor.
 13. No individual will strike or lay hands on an inmate unless it be in self-defense. Only the amount of force necessary for self-defense is to be used.
 14. An office is never to be left unlocked, nor is an inmate to be permitted in an office.
 15. When answering a telephone, always give your name and location. When calling another party, always make sure they identify themselves and their location. Know to whom you talking.
 16. Any unusual situations or information received which could threaten person, property, or security must be relayed immediately to your supervisor.
 17. Should you be issued keys or ID card, always keep them on your person. Never remove keys or ID Card from the facility, and never give them to an inmate. They are to be turned in to the proper authority before leaving the facility.
 18. Volunteers are not permitted by themselves in several specified areas.
 19. The ranking official on duty is responsible for the institution. It is his option to conduct the affairs of the facility as he deems necessary for proper operation. Should any controversy arise, you are expected to abide by the decisions of the official at the time. You may discuss any issues with higher authorities at a later time.
 20. Individuals may be subject to search n upon entering or leaving the institution.
 21. All individuals working with inmates may be subjected to legal implications. Two examples of this are (1) penalties for bringing contraband into s correctional institution and (2) potential law suits by inmates.
 22. Avoid feeling sorry for inmates. Know the difference between "sympathy" and "empathy".
 23. Remember that all information concerning inmates is confidential. Do not discuss this information outside the institution.
 24. Finally, do not lie to inmates. Be honest, and be yourself.

B. SITUATIONS

1. What to do if:
 - a. You are surrounded.
 - (1) Remain calm
 - (2) Do not appear frightened
 - b. You are threatened.
 - (1) Do not exhibit alarm or fear
 - (2) Report it at once to a staff member
 - c. Asked for a favor.
 - (1) Tell inmate you must request permission.
 - (2) Report request to sponsoring staff member.
 - d. You feel the staff is wrong on an issue
 - (1) Do not discuss a situation such as this with inmates.
 - (2) Discuss with a staff member.
 - e. You are asked about institution procedure.
 - (1) Unless you have the particular procedure in writing close at hand, do not discuss it with inmates.
 - (2) Do not offer your own opinions.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

1. To staff
 - a. Abide by all facility rules and regulations.
 - b. Report any suspicious situations, no matter how seemingly trivial, to your sponsor.
 - c. Report periodically (verbally) on progress of your work to your sponsor.
 - d. Do not hesitate to inform staff of positive aspects of your work as a volunteer.
 - e. Inform staff of any changes in inmates' attitudes, or radical changes in their daily routine.
2. To Inmates
 - a. Keep in mind that this is a job in which you are working to assist inmates in preparation for their return to society.
 - b. Treat them as you would a neighbor or friend whom you are trying to help.
 - c. Talk to them as adults, not children.
3. Staff responsibilities to you.
 - a. Staff will assist you with any problems that arise, providing you inform them of such situations.
 - b. Staff will keep you informed about any changes in the facility policy or procedures.
 - c. Remember! Any assistance you may need at any time is no farther away than the closest staff member.

THE ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF WISH TO THANK YOU FOR DEMONSTRATING YOUR CONCERN AND CONTRIBUTING YOUR TIME AND ENERGY TO BEING A VOLUNTEER IN CORRECTIONS. WE HOPE THAT THE TIME YOU SPEND WITH US WILL BE REWARDING AND PRODUCTIVE.