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|  | *Volunteer Handbook* |

Welcome to the CHS Family!

As a volunteer with Children’s Home Society of Florida, you are part of our team of GOOD, a team dedicated to bringing hope, stability and opportunities to children and families throughout Florida. The need for CHS’ programs and services continues to grow each day – and we can only meet this need because of YOU. Because you are sharing your time and talents to advance our critical mission of *Building bridges to success for children*, more children will have the chance to realize their full potential … to chase their dreams … and to achieve goals they may have once thought impossible. Whether you’re in the community advocating for children and spreading the word about CHS, beautifying one of our campuses, mentoring a youth, or putting together much-needed resource kits for our kids and families, you are reshaping the future for children right in your community … and throughout Florida. While words can’t convey my sincere appreciation, I will simply say “thank you.” Thank you for making an unforgettable difference.

With gratitude,

Andry Sweet

President and CEO

Table of Contents

[CHS Mission, Vision and Bold Direction 2](#_Toc90919351)

[Our CHS Mission 2](#_Toc90919352)

[Our CHS Vision 2](#_Toc90919353)

[Our Common Bond Values 2](#_Toc90919354)

[CHS Areas of Service 3](#_Toc90919355)

[Early Childhood Services 3](#_Toc90919356)

[Community Partnership Schools 3](#_Toc90919357)

[Child Welfare 3](#_Toc90919358)

[Counseling & Mental Health Services 3](#_Toc90919359)

[Mentoring, Outreach and Job Training 4](#_Toc90919360)

[CHS Volunteer Program Overview 5](#_Toc90919361)

[Philosophy of the CHS Volunteer Program 5](#_Toc90919362)

[Goals of the CHS Volunteer Program 5](#_Toc90919363)

[Team Member Guidebook 5](#_Toc90919364)

[Volunteer Hub 5](#_Toc90919365)

[Important policies and practices located in the Team Member Guidebook 5](#_Toc90919366)

[Volunteer & Employee Relations 5](#_Toc90919367)

[Volunteer Feedback 6](#_Toc90919368)

[Types of Volunteers 6](#_Toc90919369)

[Accessing Volunteer Hub 6](#_Toc90919370)

[How to Create an Account 6](#_Toc90919371)

[Volunteer Schedule & Courtesies 6](#_Toc90919372)

[Dress Code 7](#_Toc90919373)

[Volunteer Development 7](#_Toc90919374)

[User Names & Password Security 7](#_Toc90919375)

[Client Safety and Protection 8](#_Toc90919376)

[Client Confidentiality 8](#_Toc90919377)

[Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting 8](#_Toc90919378)

# CHS Mission, Vision and Bold Direction

We do good because we are champions of a brighter future. A future where children can know hope. And love. And joy. And grow to live a life that inspires others in need of that same hope.

## Our CHS **Mission**:

Building bridges to   
success for children.

## Our CHS **Vision**:

A world where children realize  
their full potential.

Each part of our **Mission** matters:

***Building Bridges*** – we do more to connect children and families with the right services and solutions that will create better futures.

***To Success*** – our programs and solutions empower individuals to find and build upon their strengths**.**

***For Children*** – no matter their age, CHS embraces and empowers children, young adults and parents.

As does each part of our **Vision**:

***To Create A World*** – we aim high by delivering solutions that impact entire communities.

***Where Children*** – children, as well as young adults and parents, are empowered every day.

***Realize*** – with our help, they can envision a brighter future within reach.

***Their Full Potential*** –We empower those we serve to create the life they once only dreamed of … for their family and for future generations.

## Our Common Bond Values

How do we bring the CHS Experience to as many people as possible? We do so by living by **Our Common Bond**. Our organizational values – our guiding principles – are at the core of everything we do:

* They drive our decision-making.
* They help us with our planning.
* They steer us in our daily work.

We take pride in …

By applying our values to the services and solutions we provide, we create balance and stability for children, families and communities so they can know success.

## CHS Areas of Service

When children and families face hard situations, we empower them to find – and pursue – opportunities for success and happiness.

Life can be hard – and no child, no family should face the tough times alone. CHS meets children and families at the right time with the right services – no matter where they are in life. With CHS, more families are safe, strong and together.

### Early Childhood Services

Primarily serving families in poverty, we empower families to create safe, strong, solid foundations so their children can grow up in healthy, nurturing homes.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Children in poverty are 7x more likely to experience neglect and 3x more likely to experience abuse.

With CHS more children are safe at home with their families. Nearly 100% of families that complete our voluntary home-visiting early childhood programs remain free from abuse and neglect – and never enter the foster care system.

### Community Partnership Schools

By addressing barriers to learning – poverty, mental health struggles, homelessness and others – Community Partnership Schools (CPS) bring together high-quality academic supports, health care, counseling, mentoring and more. CPS improve student behavior, increase academic gains and graduation rates, and enhance parent involvement, offering equitable learning opportunities for all students.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Children in poverty are 5x more likely to drop out of high school.

With CHS, more students in marginalized communities graduate high school. Graduation rates have increased an average 30% with the Community Partnership Schools Model.

### Child Welfare

When families become involved in the child welfare system, we help ensure kids have safe, stable homes while we help them through their trauma. We also work with parents to overcome challenges that led to involvement in the foster care system so they can bring their children safely back home. If that is never possible, then we find forever families for children through adoption.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Consequences of youth exiting foster care at 18 without a family are devastating: 40% are homeless, 52% are unemployed and 60% of young men are convicted of a crime.

With CHS, more children in foster care find safety and stability.

### Counseling & Mental Health Services

Mental health issues can significantly impact children’s education, mental, social and physical well-being, as well as their family peace and stability. We provide personalized treatment and support to equip children and families with tools, coping skills and connections so they can find hope, stability and opportunities for happiness and success.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Mental illnesses are the cause of 90% of suicides.

With CHS, more children and families have access to trauma-informed caring mental health services during their greatest times of need. CHS serves children and their family members where it’s most convenient for them – at home, at school, in the office or even virtually, through telehealth.

### Mentoring, Outreach and Job Training

WHY IT MATTERS:

Youth without a high school education are 3.5 x more likely to be arrested than those who have a high school diploma.

Youth and young adults at the crossroads of struggles and success receive services and practical guidance to make positive decisions and pursue opportunities that can lead to lifelong success.

With CHS, more youth are finding stability and success. More than 80% of youth participating in our job training program secure stable employment, earn their GED or diploma or begin post-secondary education

# CHS Volunteer Program Overview

## Philosophy of the CHS Volunteer Program

The CHS Volunteer Program recruits and trains non-compensated individuals to assist in the operational activities of the organization and to provide support that will best advance the delivery of services to our clients.

CHS encourages our employees and volunteers to work together to offer the highest quality programs and services to our clients. Volunteers contribute their unique talents, skills and knowledge of the community, providing special, personalized attention to our clients; assisting employees in delivering services; supporting the organization and its programs through special projects that allow employees to focus on the work for which they were trained; and educating the public about the organization, its purpose and its needs.

## Goals of the CHS Volunteer Program

**The Children’s Home Society of Florida Volunteer Program will:**

* Offer training, support, supervision and recognition to participants.
* Use management techniques that encourage positive working relationships and a healthy work environment for employees and volunteers.
* Recruit and train volunteers who will provide special support to CHS projects.
* Recruit volunteers who will assist with ongoing operational activities and public awareness activities.

## Team Member Guidebook

All volunteers are part of the CHS family and considered part of our CHS team. As such, all volunteers must review and agree follow the responsibilities outlined in the CHS Team Member Guidebook located on the CHS Volunteer Hub. A copy can also be found on the CHS intranet or by asking the volunteer supervisor.

The Team Member Guidebook outlines important policies and practices designed to keep our workplace harmonious and fair for everyone. We also encourage volunteers to talk with the local site or program supervisor to see if their region has additional guidelines.

### Volunteer Hub:

<https://chsfl.volunteerhub.com/>

### Important policies and practices located in the Team Member Guidebook:

* CHS Culture
* Code of Ethics & Conduct
* Core Services & Solutions
* CHS Leadership & Locations
* Equal Opportunity, Nondiscrimination & Anti-Harassment
* Sexual Harassment
* Workplace Violence
* Drug-Free Workplace
* Tobacco- & Smoke-Free Workplace
* Solicitation and Distribution of Literature
* Prohibition of Retaliation
* Client Safety & Protection
* CHS Technology, Equipment & Software Use

## Volunteer & Employee Relations

CHS recognizes the important role both employees and volunteers play in the successful delivery of services to our clients. To that end, we strive to create a working environment that is mutually beneficial to the staff and volunteers. It is important that both employees and volunteers be pleasant, professional and efficient in the performance of their respective duties. If you encounter any problems or difficulties that you are not able to resolve, bring them to the attention of the program’s supervisor or the person responsible for managing the region’s volunteers. In honoring our core value of Respect, we ask that any challenges are handled professionally, and that our volunteers and employees refrain from discussing such issues with other employees or volunteers.

## Volunteer Feedback

Through the volunteer feedback process, we can increase communication between volunteers and CHS team members as well as improve the volunteer experience. After completing a CHS volunteer experience, volunteers will receive a survey so they can share their thoughts about their experience and provide other important feedback.

## Types of Volunteers

**Category A Volunteer**

* Volunteer has less than 10 hours of client contact per month, always in the presence of a CHS team member. This volunteer has no access to CHS systems.
* Local law enforcement check is required, initiated and completed by the volunteer if there is intentional client interaction
* All waivers must be up to date in Volunteer Hub.
* Category A volunteers include remote volunteers, group or individual landscaping volunteers and CHS event volunteers.

**Category B Volunteer**

* Volunteer meets any of the following categories:
  + More than 10 hours of client contact per month in the presence of a CHS team member; or
  + Any unsupervised client contact; or
  + Access to CHS systems.
* Level 2 background check initiated by the CHS Talent team. All waivers must be up to date in Volunteer Hub.

## Accessing Volunteer Hub

All CHS volunteers must create an account on [Volunteer Hub](https://chsfl.volunteerhub.com/#_=_), review and agree to the Team Member Guidebook, and complete necessary waivers.

### How to Create an Account:

First, volunteers choose their region at [www.chsfl.org/volunteer](http://www.chsfl.org/volunteer). Next, select “Create an Account,” located on the top right of the Volunteer Hub site, and create a username and password. Continue the set-up process by answering any questions and uploading necessary documentation.

By creating an account through Volunteer Hub, you will complete the necessary first steps required of any CHS volunteer and also become part of our volunteer database, which allows you to stay informed on upcoming activities and changes to any volunteer policies, see the impact of your service, and learn more ways to get involved. CHS values and respects our volunteers, and we will not share contact information with other entities or organizations.

## Volunteer Schedule & Courtesies

Each volunteer’s hours will be established and scheduled by the CHS region based on program needs and the availability of the volunteer.

Please make every effort to be on time for your volunteer assignment. If you are unable to come at your scheduled time, please notify the program’s supervisor or the person responsible for managing the region’s volunteers as far in advance as possible. We understand unforeseen circumstances arise, and we thank you for letting us know of any changes, as we count on your dependability. In the event you decide to withdraw from our volunteer program, please try to give two weeks’ notice so we can recruit a suitable replacement (although all of our volunteers are irreplaceable!). You also may be asked to complete an exit interview form so we can continue to improve the volunteer experience.

## Dress Code

CHS requests that all volunteers dress in appropriate professional attire unless otherwise stated in the opportunity description. (For example, if you are completing a landscaping project, please dress accordingly.) If you are in doubt, please check with the program’s supervisor or the person responsible for managing the region’s volunteers. Please keep in mind that the intent of a dress code is to maintain a professional image, representing an organization that provides the best quality of care for children. During the course of a day, volunteers may come into contact with clients, other volunteers, vendors, applicants and personnel from other agencies, so your image and appearance affects those individuals’ impressions of CHS.

## Volunteer Development

CHS is committed to our volunteers’ growth and development of knowledge, abilities and skills so they may carry out their various responsibilities. CHS will provide volunteers with the opportunity to receive an orientation to become familiar with CHS’ purpose, mission, structure, and policies and statewide directives.

## User Names & Password Security

For specific roles, volunteers may have access to functions within CHS’ information technology world.

If your volunteer role requires you to be issued a user name and password for any CHS system, those credentials are equivalent to your legal signature. Please review all policies and procedures in the CHS Team Member Guidebook to ensure you meet all necessary requirements and practices to best protect yourself and CHS.

# Client Safety and Protection

Our clients and their families are our top priority. We recognize and respect the diverse backgrounds and cultures of our clients and their families. We strive to make every client’s experience with us the best it can be.

We treat our clients as we treat one another, with respect and dignity. This means for example, that we don’t harass or discriminate against our clients, don’t use derogatory language, don’t use corporal punishment or other inappropriate behavior control, and don’t engage in physical contact with clients where there is a possibility of psychological harm, or when we should respect culturally sensitive boundaries.

Our commitment to our clients means that we also take steps to protect their information, health and safety. We expect our team members (including volunteers) to follow the policies and practices relating to client health and safety as outlined in our Team Member Guidebook.

## Client Confidentiality

CHS firmly upholds each client’s right to privacy and confidentiality. Information concerning our clients and their families, including their name, life circumstances, services provided, Protected Health Information (PHI) and the like, is strictly confidential under state and federal law and subject to certain reporting requirements.

Should a CHS volunteer become aware of personal or confidential information about clients during the course of their time with our organization, you must hold this information in the strictest of confidence and not discuss it with anyone, including your fellow volunteers (unless they have a professional need-to-know) and definitely not with family members or friends.

You must not divulge personal information concerning clients to newspaper, television, radio or other members of the media. Any inquiries regarding clients must be directed to the Regional Executive Director or Functional Chief, who will work with the Senior Vice President of Communications, Marketing and Engagement to appropriately handle.

## Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting

If you observe or suspect neglect or abuse in the course of your personal life, at any time, contact the Child Abuse Hotline immediately at **800-962-2873.**