Volunteers are the heart of the community

Volunteer Manual
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"The Lou Walker Center is a place where dreams are birthed, identities are renewed, and talents are rediscovered. It is a place of destiny where people realize their purpose, their passion, and their part in society. It is filled with ideas, hopes, imaginations, creative thoughts, great history, mind blowing mysteries, and stories that can transform life. It has the power to bloom and to blossom, making the world more beautiful, more powerful and more precious."

Melinda Davis, Inaugural Director of the Lou Walker Senior Center
Who Was Lou Walker

Community activist Lou Walker worked diligently and tirelessly to bring about change and promote a higher quality-of-life in DeKalb County. His mission was to provide an open, accessible government ... a government for “we the people”.

Mr. Walker’s endeavors stretched far and wide from public service to the film and television industry. As a champion for minority-owned business participation in public and private contracts, he founded the Georgia Black Chamber of Commerce in December 1996 where he served as President and Chairman of the Board.

For over 22 years Mr. Walker spearheaded a community grassroots campaign to make the dream of building a hospital in South DeKalb a reality. Through his efforts, the DeKalb Medical Center at Hillandale opened a 100-bed hospital in 2005. In honor of his contributions, the driveway leading to the hospital is named “Lou Walker Way.” A few of his accomplishments during his tenure as District 7 Commissioner include his work to secure passage of the $125,000,000 Park Bond Referendum and proposing the DeKalb County Bureau of Cultural Affairs.

As an actor, Mr. Walker appeared in over 65 feature films and made-for-television movies, some of which include, “Mississippi Burning,” “Fighting Temptation,” and “Remember the Titans.” Some of his television credits include, “In the Heat of the Night,” “Super Boy,” and “Sheena Queen of the Jungle”. Working behind the scenes, Mr. Walker was appointed to serve on the Georgia Film and Video Tape Office in 1983 by Governor Joe Frank Harris and was reappointed in 1991 by Governor Zell Miller to bring film to Georgia. He also served as vice president of the Screen Actors Guild.

Mr. Walker was frequently acknowledged as a renaissance man and a man of vision and wisdom. He was a staunch advocate for youth and providing quality-of-life programs for active senior citizens. The Lou Walker Senior Center, a $10 million, 40,000 square foot facility opened on Panola Road in November 2005. Although the center was Mr. Walker’s dream, his wife, Theresa Walker, made that dream a reality after his death in 2004. It was her proudest accomplishment. She had long worked to improve the lives of seniors, and her advocacy efforts only increased into her retirement and later years.
Introduction

Volunteer
A volunteer is an individual who assists in the accomplishment of a mission without expectation or receipt of compensation.

This manual was prepared to give you some essential information about the policies and procedures of the Lou Walker Multipurpose Senior Center Volunteer Program. Please take the time to read through it and refer back to it as questions arise. It is our desire that the information found herein will enhance your volunteer experience. We make no distinction among nationality, race or beliefs. Volunteering at Lou Walker Senior Center (LWSC) is a positive and rewarding experience.

Volunteers are expected to adhere to the fundamental principles of the LWSC. Each person is responsible for his/her own behavior and the standard to which they hold themselves, such as accountability, commitment, trustworthiness and concern. Volunteerism is a two-party decision. You are fulfilling your desire to give back and we are filling a need. Each volunteer should be realistic in considering interests, skills and availability when accepting an assignment.

You will be trained in the role that you accept at the LWSC. Asking questions and staying in touch with your coordinator will help you learn more about your volunteer assignments. One must be reliable and dependable in doing his/her job and working with other volunteers.

Follow all policies and procedures of the LWSC Code of Conduct, observe confidentiality when needed, and engage in appropriate public behavior at all times.

Volunteers are encouraged to participate in the feedback process by letting the coordinator know how you feel about your volunteer experience and by giving constructive suggestions for improvement.

We wish you a rewarding experience and thank you for your interest in choosing to volunteer at the LWSC.
Meet the Volunteer Coordinator

From the Desk of MaeDean Robinson-Srother

All of the great things you are hearing about the Lou Walker Senior Center are true, especially the Volunteer Program. It’s fun and exciting and has privileges such as meeting new people, hosting special events and serving as tour guides. As an active volunteer you will get the opportunity to fit your classes into your volunteer schedule.

I have been a member of the Lou Walker Senior Center since its opening in 2006 and since then I have served in the role of Volunteer Coordinator. We have over 200 volunteers at the center and we welcome you to join our team.

LWSC Volunteers
How to Become a Volunteer

To become a volunteer at LWSC, you must fill out a volunteer information form which can be obtained and returned to the front desk.

You must contact the Volunteer Coordinator (VC) to schedule time for an interview and orientation. You are required to volunteer four (4) hours before being entered into the volunteer tracking system. The four (4) hours can be done during multiple sessions. Credit will be given once the four (4) hours have been completed.

Volunteer Assignments

The VC will assign volunteers to specific tasks after determining their interests, skills and availabilities. Assignments may be given for the front desk, registration and special events at the LWSC and/or off-site.

The following represents a list of duties and/or special occasions for which volunteers may be asked to perform routinely:

Tour Guide
Provide tours of the facility to visitors and perspective new members; explain programs and activities provided at the facility. A tour script will be provided.

Office Work
Assist as needed with filing, computer input, proofreading, etc.

Mailings
Prepare materials for mail-outs, including notices of membership dues, notices regarding class registration, schedules and other materials as necessary.

Greeters
During special events, greet and escort guests and members as they enter the facility.

Library Attendant
Ensure books are neatly and properly catalogued, stamp new books as they come in and discard outdated magazines. Make sure check-out forms are available. Follow up with phone call for books that have exceeded the two month check-out limit.
Registration
Provide various services as assigned by the VC. Activities may include distribution of materials to members, work at individual stations to register members for classes, provide clarifying information by answering questions, serve as a runner and provide data input.

Host/Hostess
Assist in the distribution of materials to participants, such as programs, schedules and other pertinent information related to the event; serve at the registration table, provide logistical control and any other activities as needed.

Parking Lot Assistant
Assist security guard on special occasions.

Membership Photo ID
Assist in the processing of members’ photo IDs and ensure that all data is accurate.

Volunteer Instructor
After staff approval, volunteers may serve as instructors for various classes.
Code of Conduct

Volunteers should:

- Practice professionalism at all times.
- Always greet members, staff and visitors with a smile.
- Maintain a positive, courteous and helpful attitude with all persons that you come in contact with.

If a problem should arise with another volunteer, staff, or member of the public, attempt to reconcile the matter directly in a professional and courteous manner. However, if you feel that a workable agreement or a satisfactory solution to your problem has not been reached from this discussion, notify the VC immediately.

Foul language, bad attitude and confrontational language is prohibited at all times. Violation of this code may result in any of the following disciplinary actions:

- Reprimand
- Probation
- Removal from the volunteer program

If you disagree with your assignment, you should immediately advise the VC. Every effort will be made to provide another assignment.
Offsite Procedures

Assignments
The offsite coordinator will give assignments to the volunteers upon arrival at the site.

Recording Hours:
The LWSC VC will assign a volunteer to be responsible for sign in sheets.

Signing In/Out

Volunteer Time
Our volunteers donate something far more valuable than money: their time. Therefore, it is important that we track and recognize the amount of time our volunteers donate. Volunteers should record their time on the clipboard provided outside the VC’s office as well as the kiosk near the front entrance.

Volunteer time does not include the time you are in a class. If you have signed in to volunteer and leave your post to go to a class, you must sign out for that amount of time. If you plan to volunteer after your class you must sign in again.

Volunteers signing in must advise the VC of their availability and their location in the building at all times.

Volunteer instructors should sign in and out when teaching classes.
Volunteer Dress Code

General
Volunteers are permitted to wear casual attire for routine, daily non-specific assignments, i.e., tours, assembling material, mailings, etc.

Special Occasions
Volunteers are required to wear solid black jackets/blazers with solid white shirts/blouses and solid black pants/skirts. Stripes, flowers or any other prints are not acceptable attire.

Volunteers who have earned the maroon jacket will wear it in place of black jackets/blazers when requested.

Front Desk
Volunteers who work the front desk should dress in professional attire, except on Fridays when business casual attire may be worn. Exceptions will be made for volunteers who are unexpectedly asked to cover the front desk on short notice.
Volunteer Policies and Procedures

The VC will assign and designate tasks for volunteers. The coordinator will have a weekly schedule of regular activities that cover key positions, like the reception desk.

Absences
Volunteers who are unable to report for their job assignments should notify the program coordinator as soon as possible so that a substitute can be found. Volunteers that are assigned to the front desk should inform the VC in advance of their vacation and other plans that will cause them to be absent.

Confidentiality
Volunteers may learn information that has not been released to the public, or that is not intended for the public. LWSC volunteers are expected to maintain the confidentiality of the information. Inability to maintain confidentiality can lead to dismissal.

Drug Free Workplace
The LWSC has a vested interest in maintaining a safe and efficient work environment for volunteers and employees. Use of drugs, being under the influence of alcohol, or being in an impaired condition poses safety and health risks, and is prohibited. Violation of this policy will result in the termination of one’s status as a volunteer.

Guest Relations
When dealing with the public, remember that as a volunteer you represent LWSC and have an important role to play in enhancing the visitors’ perception of the center. Volunteers should always be friendly and helpful. If a visitor’s question cannot be answered, the visitor should be directed to an appropriate staff person for an answer. If a volunteer observes inappropriate behavior from a visitor, he/she should report the problem to the nearest staff member. At no time should a volunteer provoke a confrontation with a visitor.

Scheduling
Once assigned to a program area, volunteers are responsible for working during the times and dates scheduled. If you are unable to make your scheduled time, please contact the VC.

Sexual Harassment
No volunteer should experience unsolicited or unwelcome sexual overtures from any employee, volunteer or member. Any incidents of this nature should be reported in a timely manner to the VC for investigation.

Non-member Volunteers
Non-member volunteers are prohibited from participating in any LWSC classes, clubs or activities that are provided for members.
Resignation and Grounds for Suspension/Termination

A volunteer may decide to end his or her service with the LWSC at any time and for any reason. Notice of the volunteer’s decision to separate should be communicated as soon as possible to the VC. The exit interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, suggestions for improving the program and the possibility of future volunteer involvement.

Upon occasion, it may become necessary to suspend and/or terminate the service of a volunteer or they may elect to do so themselves. If termination is not elective, the VC will provide a written reason why services have been suspended and/or terminated.

Volunteer service may be suspended and/or terminated if his/her actions violate the LWSC policies and procedures.
Volunteer Agreement Form

This form is to be read, signed and returned to the VC before beginning any volunteer activities.

I, ____________________________________________, have received a copy of the Lou Walker Senior Center Volunteer Handbook and agree to follow the policies and procedures as listed in the handbook.

____________________________________________
Signature

____________________________________________
Date

Please return this form to:
Mae Robinson Strother
mdrobinson@dekalbcountyga.gov
770-322-2914