



AVENS Volunteer Program

A Handbook for New Volunteers

By

The Volunteer and Recreation
Supervisor at AVENS



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead (1902-1978)



AVENS Mission, Vision and Values

AVENS Mission is *“Building a supportive community for the health of seniors.”*

AVENS Vision is that *“AVENS will be the recognized leader in Yellowknife and the NWT for:*

Working with seniors to provide quality community living choices,

Working with seniors to advocate for their needs,

Working with seniors to develop services that allow them to remain in their community,

Working with seniors to create supportive networks of seniors and community organizations committed to the health of seniors, and

Working with seniors to deliver services in a safe and respectful manner.”

AVENS Values are expressed in the following statements which describe the most strongly held beliefs within the organizational culture of AVENS and its operations:

“Safety is paramount in everything we do.”

“Seniors are important contributors to society, to the community, and to family.”

“The expertise and contributions of our staff are highly valued.”

“A strong community is a place where seniors can stay when they need support.”

“By working with groups and individuals, AVENS can build capacity in our community and address anticipated needs for the health of seniors.”

“Opportunities for personal choice and individuality are essential for promoting self-esteem and independence for seniors.”

“By liaising with other agencies, AVENS can coordinate its services with other community resources to meet the total needs of seniors.”

“A positive image is earned and sustained by the consistent efforts of capable and caring people associated with AVENS over time.”

“Good stewardship of the public purse must be met.”

“Facilities should be built and maintained to high standards with specific attention paid to creating safe, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing space to live and work.”

“Operations and governance shall be continuously improved.”



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Welcome to AVENS Volunteer Program

Our Purpose

To assist in the provision of recreational therapy services and leisure experiences to improve the physical, mental and socio-emotional health and well-being of Residents.

Our Philosophy

The philosophy of volunteer services at Aven Manor is based upon the humanitarianism of community members who are concerned about and care for others, and who willingly participate in various forms of volunteer action.

The need for volunteers at Aven Manor relate significantly to the following observations:

There is a gap between the total needs of residents and the services that staff can reasonably provide to meet those needs.

There are people in Yellowknife and surrounding communities who are willing and able to be of service to others when their help is needed and appreciated.

Many of the unmet needs of residents are of a nature that can be met by volunteers who are not limited by professional relationship.

Our Goals

1. To develop and organize volunteer services to provide maximum benefit to residents, volunteers and staff.
2. To provide resident services supplemental to the essential services provided by staff.
3. To provide experiences which are satisfying and rewarding to residents and volunteers.
4. To promote personal development of individual volunteers.
5. To promote community knowledge and understanding of the aging process and Aven Manor.



Application Process

The Application Package

Once you have indicated to the Volunteer and Recreation Supervisor that you would like to volunteer at AVENS, she will provide you with an Application Package (also available online). The package contains a volunteer checklist that must be completed before you begin volunteering. Please note that a Criminal Records Check is mandatory (for individuals over the age of 14).

As part of the application process, volunteers will be fully oriented to the facilities. The orientation will occur before the volunteer begins work and will continue during the volunteer's first two visits.

Age Requirement

Applicants who wish to volunteer unsupervised must be 14 years of age or older.

Applicants under 14 years old may volunteer with supervision from a parent or guardian; however, the parent/guardian must complete a Parental Consent Form (Appendix A.).

If the child is under the care of an adult other than his/her parent or guardian, the supervising adult (e.g. teacher or group leader) must complete a Waiver Form (Appendix B.).

Time Commitment

The time that a volunteer commits may vary depending on his/her work schedule, home-life, etc. The Recreation Department is appreciative of any time that a person can donate. However, please advise the Volunteer and Recreation Supervisor of any intended absences.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are required to take an Oath of Confidentiality. As such, volunteers must keep confidential any information they may learn about individual residents or staff. Questions relating to a resident's personal history should be directed to the Volunteer and Recreation Supervisor. The inability to keep residents information confidential is grounds for termination.



Volunteer Roles

Each volunteer is placed in a role that is suited to his/her needs, interests and abilities while fulfilling the needs of Residents.

Large Group Activities

Volunteers assist the Recreation Coordinators with the organization and facilitation of Recreational Therapy Activities, including: Tai Chi, Bingo, Ball Toss, Arts & Crafts, Balloon Badminton, Bowling, etc.

Small Group Activities

Volunteers initiate social and recreational activities with two to five Residents. The activities may include: crafts, hair care, tea and coffee, etc.

1:1 Activities

Volunteers visit individual Residents. Volunteers may engage the Resident in: a walk, playing cards, reading, etc.



Special Events

Volunteers assist with organizing (as part of a committee) and/or facilitating special events such as the Thanksgiving Dinner, the Christmas Party, and Monthly Birthday Celebrations.

Each month, the Recreation Department releases a calendar displaying the large group activities and special events on offer. The calendars are available on the website or from the Volunteer and Recreation Supervisor.



Volunteer Responsibilities

Responsibilities

- Establish a regular time for visits. Be consistent, regular, dependable and on time.
- For the safety of the Residents, please do not come in if you are ill.
- If you cannot come in, advise the Volunteer and Recreation Supervisor.
- Record your volunteer hours here at AVENS. You make an enormous contribution to our program which we honor annually.
- Keep confidential what you see and hear at AVENS. If a Resident refers a problem to you, report it to a staff member, so that something can be done to solve it. Please do not attempt to solve it yourself.
- Work with and not for the Residents.
- Under no circumstances go into a Resident's room. All activities and visits should occur in common areas.
- Do not transfer a Resident or take him to the bathroom. Report requests of this nature to a staff member.
- Do not give food or drink to a resident. Many Residents have specific dietary needs/restrictions.
- Be conscience of the topic of conversation you choose. Some topics could be upsetting to a Resident.
- If a Resident speaks sharply or finds fault in you, do not take it personally. Try using humor or changing the subject. If behavior continues, remove yourself from the situation and request assistance from staff.
- Be respectful towards the Residents, staff members, your co-workers, and the rules at AVENS.
- Dress appropriately and bring indoor shoes to wear.



Fire Evacuation Procedures

In the event of a fire, the volunteer must remember to:

- R** – Remove anyone in immediate danger
- A** – Activate the alarm system if it is not already activated
- C** – Contain the fire by closing the door(s)
- E** – Extinguish the fire if possible, without risking personal safety

If the bells alarm, the volunteer should move Clients/Residents to a safe area (moving individuals outside should only occur as a last resort).

Volunteers should take direction from the Recreation Coordinator or the Care Staff (Resident Care Aide or Nurse) on duty.

If necessary, volunteers may use the two-way radio for communication.

Volunteers must know the locations of the Fire Extinguishers – main exits and kitchens.

Volunteers must know the locations of the Fire Blankets – main exits and entrance of the Multipurpose Room.

Volunteers must know the location of the First Aid Kits – near the elevator outside the Multipurpose Room, the administrative wing entrance and Aven Manor dining room.



Recognition

Volunteer Appreciation Board

Each month a new volunteer is featured on the Volunteer Appreciation Board.

AVENS Newsletter Recognizing Volunteers

Volunteers are featured in our 'Volunteer Recognition' section of AVENS quarterly newsletter: Chatterbox.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

All volunteers are invited to an annual celebration dinner for volunteers held during Volunteer Appreciation Week in April.





Additional Information

Staff as Volunteers

AVENS staff participating in volunteer programs after or before regular working hours shall be governed by the policies and procedures to volunteers.

Parking

Volunteers shall be provided with free parking on AVENS grounds. Parking is available on a first come, first serve basis. Parking is not allowed in reserved areas and fire lanes. Tickets will be issued to anyone parked in a NO PARKING ZONE. During the winter, volunteers may use the free plug in service provided by the Manor. Only one block heater per vehicle shall be plugged in.

Sign-In/Sign-Out

Volunteers must sign-in and sign-out in the volunteer book provided for that purpose.

Lockers

Two lockers are available for volunteers; however, AVENS is not responsible for any items that go missing.

Smoking

Volunteers are not permitted to smoke on AVENS property.

Meals

Volunteers whose work at the Manor:

- a) Is scheduled over a meal hour
- b) Is extended at the request of staff

are welcome to eat meals at the Manor. Provided they give kitchen staff at least one hour notice of their intentions. There is a \$5.00 charge for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Dismissal

A volunteer's services may be terminated voluntarily, being a personal decision of the volunteer, or by dismissal for just cause, being a decision made by the Volunteer and Recreation Supervisor.