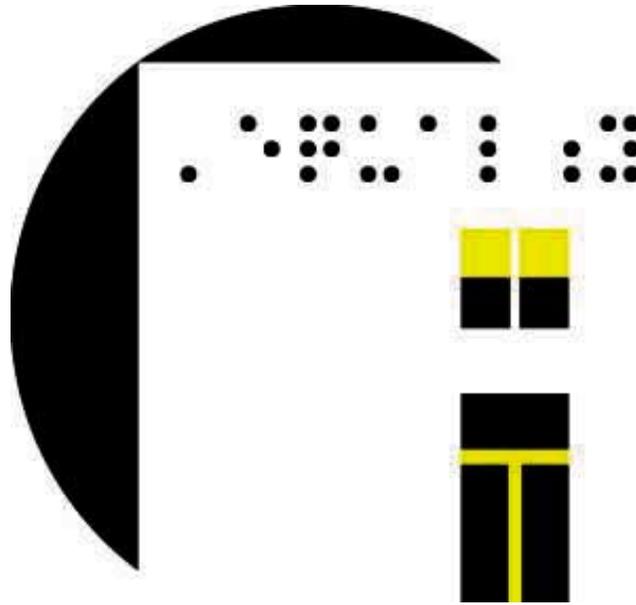


**LIGHTHOUSE FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED**



**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

# WELCOME

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired. For five generations Bay Area individuals like you have helped the Lighthouse fulfill our mission, we truly could not do the many things we do for the blind community without your support. As you contribute your time, efforts, and talents, we hope you also recognize the myriad benefits available to each of our volunteers:

- Have a positive and meaningful impact on the life of blind and low vision individuals
- Gain valuable work experience
- Acquire new skills
- Secure job references
- Explore career opportunities
- Improve interpersonal skills
- Cultivate a deeper understanding and knowledge of blindness and blindness related issues
- Establish new friendships and networks
- Personal satisfaction and fulfillment that comes from community service
- Expand your horizons

Again, on behalf of the LightHouse and the entire blind community, we thank you for your support, dedication, and solicitude.

Cheers,

John Liang

Director of Community and Volunteer Services

LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired

[www.lighthouse-sf.org](http://www.lighthouse-sf.org)

# **MISSION STATEMENT**

The LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired promotes the independence, equality and self-reliance of people who are blind or visually impaired through rehabilitation training and relevant services, such as access to employment, education, government, information, recreation, transportation and the environment.

# INTRODUCTION

Whether you have just joined LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired or have been with us for a while, we are confident that you will find LightHouse a dynamic and rewarding place in which to volunteer, and we look forward to a productive and successful association. We consider the volunteers of LightHouse to be one of its most valuable resources. That said, LightHouse has prepared this Volunteer Handbook in order to provide our volunteers with an overview of the agency's policies, benefits and procedures. It is intended to familiarize volunteers with important information about LightHouse, as well as information regarding your own privileges and responsibilities. It is important that all volunteers read, understand and follow the provisions of this handbook.

The handbook contains only general information and some guidelines. It is neither comprehensive, nor does it address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the agency's policies and procedures. Thus, if you have any questions concerning the content within, or the applicability of a policy or procedure to volunteers, please address your specific questions to the Volunteer Coordinator.

In addition, because it is impossible to anticipate every potential situation that may arise during your tenure with LightHouse, circumstances will undoubtedly require those policies, practices and benefits described in this handbook to change periodically. Accordingly, LightHouse reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind or revise any provisions of this handbook as it deems necessary or appropriate in its discretion. LightHouse will inform all volunteers of any changes as they occur. Moreover, the contents of this handbook do not create/imply, nor should they be interpreted as an employment contract between LightHouse and any of its volunteers.

LightHouse continually strives to improve its policies and positive relations with its volunteers. Accordingly, the agency maintains an open door policy, which encourages volunteers to approach LightHouse staff, their immediate supervisors or the Volunteer Coordinator with suggestions for improvement, or to address any questions/concerns they may have. By working together, LightHouse hopes that it will share with its volunteers a sincere sense of pride in the workplace and in the services we provide.

# ABOUT THE LIGHTHOUSE

The LightHouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired was founded in 1902 as a Reading Room and Library for the Blind. The first year saw 30 clients, and by 1905, more than 130 people were visiting the Library. In 1914, LightHouse leader Ruth Quinan launched Blindcraft, an employment program in which participants made and sold brooms, baskets and other products. As the disability rights movement took hold in the 1970s, advocates pushed for the elimination of this type of “segregated” employment. But in the early twentieth century, Blindcraft represented a unique opportunity for individuals with vision loss to earn a wage – an opportunity that wasn’t provided elsewhere.

In 1950, Rose Resnick and Nina Brandt founded Enchanted Hills Camp on 343 acres of land in Napa Valley, which still serves more hundreds of blind campers each summer. The next three decades saw expansion and diversification of LightHouse services, including employment programs for individuals who were deaf-blind, still in existence today. In 1989, the LightHouse merged with Broadcast Services for the Blind, disseminating printed information over the airways, and in 1996 the LightHouse began providing classes in alternative techniques to enhance self-reliance. The LightHouse established satellite offices in Marin County in 2000 and in the North Coast community of Eureka in 2002. Today, the LightHouse serves thousands of blind, visually impaired and deaf-blind and individuals annually through a range of programs:

- Employment training and opportunities for individuals who are blind, visually impaired and deaf-blind
- Access to information through conversion of print documents to Braille. Braille conversion services include on-demand tactile map and tactile floor plan creation
- Training and seminars on adaptive technology, such as accessible GPS systems, cell phones and software

- Education and training to assist people in learning alternative techniques, including Braille instruction, cooking and other daily living skills and training on use of white canes.
- Peer-led support and discussion groups
- An accessible web-site, providing detailed resources and information about services, events and other items of potential interest to the blind and visually impaired community
- Toll-free comprehensive information, referral and follow-up on vision loss-related issues and services
- Adaptations, a store selling adaptive aids and appliances and offering extensive product demonstrations
- A fully accessible summer camp and retreat for blind and visually impaired youth, adults and seniors
- Health, fitness and recreation classes, including yoga, martial arts, music and art

# **Agency Expectations**

## **DUTIES, PERFORMANCE, DISCIPLINE AND TERMINATION**

### **As volunteers, one should:**

- Read, understand, and adhere to all agency policies and procedures.
- Conduct oneself in a professional manner while volunteering with LightHouse, knowing that you are representatives of the agency.
- Perform all job responsibilities assigned.
- Maintain a positive and respectful attitude toward everyone.
- Communicate regularly and appropriately with immediate supervisors, colleagues, and clients
- Demonstrate efficient time management and the ability to prioritize work loads
- Consistently report to work on time and ready to begin performing any assigned duties and responsibilities.
- Work productively without causing distraction or disruption to LightHouse staff or other volunteers.

### **Job Duties**

During your tenure, your supervisor will explain your job responsibilities and the performance standards expected of you. Be aware that your job responsibilities may change at any time during your volunteerism with LightHouse. On occasion you may be asked to work on special projects, or to assist with other work necessary or important to the operation of your assigned department or LightHouse in general. Your cooperation and assistance in performing such additional work is not expected, but certainly appreciated.

LightHouse reserves the right, at any time, with or without notice, to alter or change job responsibilities, reassign or transfer job positions, or assign additional job responsibilities to any volunteer.

## **Performance Reviews**

LightHouse engages in an informal, yet ongoing volunteer performance review process in which the job performance of each volunteer is appraised by the immediate supervisor (s) and/or the Volunteer Coordinator.

The ongoing review process provides an opportunity for a collaborative two-way communication between the LightHouse and its volunteers.

## **General Rules of Conduct**

LightHouse promotes teamwork, efficiency, productivity, and cooperation among staff, volunteers, and clients. For this reason, it may be helpful to identify some examples of types of conduct that are impermissible and that may lead to disciplinary action, possibly including immediate discharge.

While LightHouse reserves the right to terminate a volunteer at any time, for any reason, the agency will take disciplinary actions up to and including termination for the below-listed impermissible conduct. Although it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of all types of impermissible conduct and performance, the following are some examples:

- Unsatisfactory work performance
- Insubordination, including refusal to perform work necessary to the volunteer opportunity
- Harassment of fellow volunteers, LightHouse staff, and/or clients, including sexual harassment, whether verbal, physical or visual
- Theft or dishonest conduct
- Excessive absences or tardiness
- Receiving or making excessive personal telephone or cell phone calls, emails and/or internet usage
- Falsifying Agency records or reports
- Removing any LightHouse property or property of other volunteers, LightHouse staff, and/or clients from LightHouse premises or a client's home without proper authorization

- Willfully or negligently misusing, damaging, or destroying any property of fellow volunteers, LightHouse staff, and/or clients
- Possession, distribution, sale, use or being under the influence of any illegal drugs while on LightHouse premises or in a client's home, while on duty, or while operating a vehicle or potential dangerous equipment leased or owned by LightHouse
- Use or being under the influence of any alcoholic beverage while on LightHouse premises or a in client's home, while on duty, or while operating a vehicle or potential dangerous equipment leased or owned by LightHouse except during agency-sponsored events at which alcohol is served
- Actual or threatened violence
- Excessive absence without notice to your immediate supervisor, unless a reasonable excuse is offered and accepted by LightHouse
- Falsifying or making a material omission on a volunteer application or any other agency record
- Bringing on LightHouse premises dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives, firearms or other similar items.

## **Attendance and Lateness**

Volunteers who are unavoidably late reporting to work should notify their immediate supervisor and Reception prior to their scheduled start time. Chronic absenteeism and/or continued lateness are grounds for discipline up to and including termination of assignment.

## **Fraternization Policy**

Lighthouse has policies prohibiting sexual harassment, discrimination and conflicts of interest in the workplace. These policies apply to all volunteers, employees, and clients of the agency.

To prevent these issues some employers prohibit employees from dating, or

entering into consensual social relationships with volunteers. LightHouse does not feel that such extreme measures are necessary, so long as the parties mutually and voluntarily consent to the social relationship, and the social relationship does not affect the performance of their duties or negatively impact the agency's business or reputation.

To ensure that social relationships do not violate the sexual harassment policy, volunteers who enter into such relationships must comply with the following:

- Review the agency's policies prohibiting unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment and discrimination
- Notify the Volunteer Coordinator of the relationship
- Agree to possible reassignment if the social relationship involves a direct supervisor-volunteer relationship
- Avoid indiscreet behavior while at the workplace
- Notify the Volunteer Coordinator should the social relationship terminate

## **Guide Dog Policy**

LightHouse believes in the need to insure that assistance animals do not interfere with day-to-day operations in our offices, and feels it is important to delineate acceptable attitudes and behaviors for both people and dogs, particularly in dealing with service dogs in the workplace.

Though we acknowledge and endorse all assistance dog handlers' ability to handle their dog as they see fit, LightHouse endorses a "please ignore" policy towards working dogs, and encourages handlers to educate the public that interfering with the work of a service dog is a violation of California law. No staff, volunteer, or client will interact with a service dog at any time without expressed permission from the handler each time. Also, LightHouse volunteers, employees, and clients, must respect the wishes of the handler in regards to interacting with their service dog.

## **Voluntary Termination of Assignment**

When leaving the LightHouse, volunteers must return any and all property and files of LightHouse and its satellite locations. Volunteers should meet with the Volunteer Coordinator to participate in an exit interview and provide any necessary feedback from their experience.

### **Termination and Grievance Policy**

Failure to comply with LightHouse's confidentiality policy will result in immediate dismissal.

Termination may also occur for the following reasons: completion of assignment and/or project, lack of work, non-compliance with any of the terms outlined in the Volunteer Handbook.

Under most circumstances, volunteers will be given the opportunity to know and correct any deficiencies which might result in termination.

Any volunteer who feels the volunteer policies have been unfairly or unjustly applied is welcome to discuss the problem with their immediate supervisor and/or the Volunteer Coordinator. If no resolution is forthcoming, the Executive Director may become involved. This is considered a last resort.

# **SECURITY, HEALTH & SAFETY**

## **Safety**

LightHouse is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe work environment for all volunteers, employees, clients, and visitors. Every volunteer is therefore responsible for safety. In order to achieve our goal of providing a completely safe workplace, everyone must be safety conscious. Hallways and floors should be kept clear to allow free and easy access to exits. Please report any unsafe or hazardous condition directly to your manager immediately.

In case of an accident involving personal injury, regardless of how minor, please notify your immediate supervisor or LightHouse employee immediately. Failure to report accidents can result in a violation of legal requirements, and can lead to difficulties in processing insurance and benefit claims. LightHouse maintains an Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IILP). The IILP is available for review in the Human Resources office. If a volunteer is injured on the job, s/he must report the injury immediately to the immediate supervisor AND Volunteer Coordinator.

### **For Medical Emergencies**

- Call 911 immediately on an office phone.
- Notify your immediate supervisor and the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Whether on LightHouse premises or in the field, should a client suffer an injury, do not move the injured person. Make them as comfortable as possible while you wait for help to arrive.

## **Prohibition Against Smoking**

LightHouse complies with state law by prohibiting smoking of cigarettes, cigars or pipes on the agency's premises. Smoking in LightHouse offices, on its premises, in its vehicles or within twenty feet of its front doors, is prohibited at all times. If volunteers wish to smoke, they may do so outside of the building during regularly scheduled breaks and meal periods.

## **Solicitation and Distribution of Literature**

In order to ensure efficient operation of LightHouse business and to prevent disruption to employees, LightHouse has established control of solicitations and distribution of literature on agency property. Any volunteer who is in doubt concerning the application of these rules should consult with his or her immediate supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator.

No volunteer shall solicit or promote support for any cause or organization in the workplace.

No volunteer shall distribute or circulate any written or printed material in work areas at any time.

## **Political and Religious Items in the Workplace**

The Internal Revenue Tax Code puts specific restrictions on a nonprofit agency in order for it to have tax exempt status. The foremost restriction is that an agency such as LightHouse cannot participate in partisan politics. We cannot support, nor appear to support, a candidate running for public office. This is especially important since the LightHouse volunteers its 214 Van Ness facility as a polling place.

All volunteers must be aware of and support this requirement: There can be no display of signs, flyers, placards, buttons, bumper stickers, jewelry or any other paraphernalia that supports a particular candidate for election to public office within any LightHouse facility or vehicle, or while conducting LightHouse business.

This does not mean that LightHouse in any way discourages its volunteers from being committed participants in the electoral process on their own time.

In the same light, LightHouse is not a faith-based organization, and a majority of our funding comes from public and private sources that specifically restrict support of organizations that promote, or appear to promote, a specific faith, religion or creed.

All volunteers must be aware of and support this requirement: There can be no display of religious items and other paraphernalia within any LightHouse facility or vehicle, or while conducting LightHouse business.

This does not in any way suggest an anti-religious bias by LightHouse but instead recognizes that belief systems are a matter of personal choice.

### **Drug-Free Workplace Guideline**

It is the intent of LightHouse to maintain a workplace that is free of drugs and to discourage drug and alcohol abuse by its employees, volunteers, and clients. LightHouse has a vital interest in maintaining safe and efficient working conditions for its volunteers. Substance abuse is incompatible with health, safety, efficiency, and success at LightHouse. Substance abuse in the workplace can also cause a number of other work-related problems, including absenteeism and tardiness, substandard job performance, behavior that disrupts other volunteers and employees, delays in the completion of assignments, inferior quality in work product or service, loss of confidential information, and disruption of client relations.

To further its interest in avoiding accidents, to promote and maintain safe and efficient working conditions for its volunteers, and to protect its business, property, equipment, operations and client relationships, LightHouse has established this Guideline concerning the use of drugs. As a condition of continued volunteerism with LightHouse, each volunteer must abide by this Guideline.

### **Drug Free Workplace**

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in and on any Agency owned or controlled property. No volunteer will report to work while under the influence of illegal drugs. Any volunteer in violation of this policy will be subject to mandatory disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## **Management Awareness**

LightHouse managers and supervisors are attentive to the performance and conduct of those who work with them and will not permit a volunteer to work in an impaired condition or to otherwise engage in conduct that violates this Guideline. When management has reasonable suspicion to believe that a volunteer is working in violation of this Policy, prompt action will be taken.

## **Criminal Convictions**

Volunteers must notify LightHouse of any felony conviction under a criminal drug statute for a violation.

## **Use of Legal Drugs**

LightHouse recognizes that volunteers may, from time to time, be prescribed legal drugs that, when taken as prescribed or according to the manufacturer's instructions, may result in impairment. Volunteers may not work while impaired by the use of legal drugs if the impairment might endanger the employee or someone else, pose a risk of significant damage to LightHouse property, or substantially interfere with the volunteer's job performance. If a volunteer is so impaired by the appropriate use of legal drugs, he or she may not report for assignment. Further, nothing in this guideline is intended to diminish LightHouse's commitment to reasonably accommodate qualified persons with disabilities.

## **Policy Against Workplace Violence**

LightHouse is committed to providing a workplace that is free from acts of violence or threats of violence. In keeping with this commitment, LightHouse has established a policy that provides "zero tolerance" for actual or threatened violence against employees, clients, other volunteers, visitors or any other persons who are either on our premises or have contact with employees or volunteers in the course of their duties. Security and safety in the workplace is every volunteer's responsibility. It is therefore essential that every volunteer understand the importance of workplace safety and security.

Violence in the workplace is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Every volunteer has the right to work in an atmosphere free from verbal, written, physical and psychological violence.

This list of behaviors, while not inclusive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited.

- Causing physical injury to another person
- Making threatening remarks
- Making menacing gestures
- Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person
- Intentionally damaging LightHouse or client property or property of another volunteer
- Possession of a weapon while on agency property or while on agency business
- Committing acts motivated by, or related to sexual harassment or domestic violence

Compliance with this anti-violence policy is a condition of volunteerism with LightHouse and will be evaluated, together with other aspects of a volunteer's performance. Due to the importance of this policy, volunteers who violate any of its terms, who engage in or contribute to violent behavior, or who threaten others with violence may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and possibly including immediate dismissal.

Any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to a LightHouse employee or the Volunteer Coordinator. Reports can be made anonymously and all reported incidents will be investigated. Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be handled appropriately and information will be disclosed to others only on a need-to-know basis. All parties involved in a situation will be counseled and the results of investigations will be discussed with them. LightHouse will actively intervene at any indication of a possibly hostile or violent situation.

While we do not expect volunteers to be skilled at identifying potentially dangerous persons, volunteers are expected to exercise good judgment and to inform their immediate supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator if any person exhibits behavior, which could be a sign of a potentially dangerous situation. Such behavior includes:

- Discussing weapons or bringing them to the workplace
- Displaying overt signs of extreme stress, resentment, hostility, or anger
- Making threatening remarks
- Sudden or significant deterioration of performance
- Engaging in frequent disputes with supervisors or co-workers
- Events affecting workplace conditions and/or generating stress
- Displaying irrational or inappropriate behavior

Contributing to a hostile work environment, characterized by harassment or similar unwanted behavior that interferes with the ability to do one's job and may violate anti-discrimination laws.

Volunteers who confront or encounter an armed or dangerous person should not attempt to challenge or disarm the individual. Volunteers should remain calm and talk to the individual. If it is possible for the volunteer to dial 911 or signal for help safely try to do so but not if there is a chance of endangering the safety of others. Afterwards, the volunteer should report the incident to the appropriate parties.

## **ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS POLICY**

LightHouse makes electronic systems available to employees and occasionally to volunteers, contractors, vendors and clients for use in conducting the agency's business. LightHouse has established this policy in order to make certain that volunteers utilize the electronic systems in a legal, ethical and appropriate manner. This policy extends, by way of example only, to all features of the agency's electronic systems, including email, fax machines, telephones, cellular phones, voicemail, desktop and laptop computers and their networks and Internet access. The agency's electronic systems are the sole and exclusive property of LightHouse. Volunteers should understand that LightHouse reserves its property interest in all information, data and communications that are stored in, transmitted by, or received from or on any electronic system. Furthermore, no one at LightHouse, besides the Executive Director has the ability to convey, license, assign, sell, limit, impair or alter this property interest. The Executive Director can do so only in a written agreement that is signed by the Executive Director and approved by the Board of Directors.

### **General Guidelines:**

It is not possible to identify every standard and rule applicable to the use of electronic systems devices. Volunteers are therefore encouraged to use sound judgment whenever using any feature of the agency's electronic systems. Occasional, limited, personal use of these systems is permitted when the use does not:

- (a) Interfere with the user's work performance;
- (b) Interfere with any other user's work performance;
- (c) Unduly impact the operation of the electronic system;
- (d) Violate any other provision of this policy or any other policy, guideline or standard of LightHouse.

At all times, users have a responsibility to use the electronic resources in a professional, ethical and lawful manner. Any violation of this policy by any volunteer will result in discipline up to and including immediate dismissal.

### **Prohibited Activities**

Any unlawful or otherwise inappropriate use of the agency's electronic

systems is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action, up to and possibly including dismissal. While it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of every type of inappropriate use of the Agency's electronic systems, the following examples should offer volunteers some guidance.

**A. Objectionable Material**

Material that is fraudulent, harassing, sexually explicit, obscene, intimidating, defamatory, or otherwise unlawful, inappropriate, or offensive may not be sent by email or other form of electronic communication (e.g., bulletin board systems, newsgroups, chat groups) or displayed on or stored in the agency's computers.

**B. Resource Depletion**

Users may not waste computer resources. Such activities include, but are not limited to, sending mass mailings or chain letters, spending excessive time on the Internet or playing games, or engaging in online "chat groups".

**C. Trademark, Copyrights and Licenses**

Individuals who use the agency's electronic systems are required to honor and comply with all laws and standards applicable to trademarks, copyrights, patents and licenses to software and other on-line information. No individual may download, upload or copy software or other copyrighted or legally protected information through the agency's electronic systems without prior written authorization from Human Resources. Software not licensed and/or not approved by the agency may be removed at any time.

**D. Proprietary, Confidential and Trade Secret Information**

Individuals who use the agency's electronic systems are strictly prohibited from altering, transmitting, copying, downloading, or removing any proprietary, confidential, trade secret or other information of any client, agency, proprietary software, or other

files without proper and legally binding authorization.

## **E. Improper Purposes**

Individuals who use the agency's electronic systems may not use or allow those systems to be used for any purpose that is either damaging to or competitive with the agency, detrimental to its interests, or that creates an actual, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

## **No Expectation of Privacy in Electronic Systems**

LightHouse establishes passwords and/or access codes for voicemail and email access in the interest of maintaining business confidentiality. The agency may monitor voicemail, internet use, and e-mail boxes. Users should be aware that management might be called upon to access voicemail, email, or documents, data or graphics on the agency's servers or the user's hard drive or any of the agency's electronic systems for business purposes or as part of an investigation brought about in response to a complaint, or in the event of some other extenuating circumstance. Consequently, volunteers should not have any expectation of privacy in any of the agency's electronic systems.

## **Individual Social Networking**

When using social networking tools for our personal lives, we must remember that LightHouse volunteers are LightHouse volunteers even when not volunteering. What you do on social networks should be presumed to be publicly available to anyone, even if you have created a private account, and as such, should be presumed to have a potential impact on the LightHouse. It is possible to use privacy controls online to limit access to sensitive information. But such controls are only a deterrent, not an absolute insulator. Reality is simple: If you don't want something to be found online, don't put it there. Personal social networking should be done on your own time.

## **POLICY AGAINST UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT**

LightHouse is committed to creating and maintaining a workplace free of unlawful harassment. Unlawful harassment includes not only sexual harassment, but also harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, physical or mental disability, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, or any other basis prohibited by law. The agency does not tolerate unlawful harassment of a volunteer by another volunteer, employee, supervisor, manager, vendor, client or other third party. It is every volunteer's responsibility to ensure that harassment does not occur in the workplace.

Unlawful harassment can take many different forms and the precise definition is constantly changing. Harassment includes unwelcome verbal, physical, or visual conduct that is offensive, and that disrupts the conditions of volunteerism with LightHouse.

Some examples of sexually harassing conduct include but are not limited to:

- unwanted sexual jokes, teasing, or remarks
- assault, blocking normal movement, restraint
- touching or other physical interference with work
- "dirty" jokes or sexually oriented language
- personal questions about social or sexual life
- introduction of sexual topics into business conversation
- the use of subtle hints, suggestions, or unseemly gestures
- displays of nude or pornographic pictures or cartoons
- the use of slang, derogatory, or demeaning language
- lewd actions or leering

Examples of other harassing conduct could include but are not limited to:

- "ethnic" or other jokes or remarks based upon someone's membership in a protected category
- teasing, tormenting, verbal abuse
- cartoons, e-mail, or other communications denigrating a person's protected status

- the use of derogatory or demeaning language

Any volunteer who feels that he or she has been harassed, or that this policy has been violated in any way, should immediately inform his or her immediate supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Under state and federal laws, the agency may be held liable for acts of unlawful harassment committed by an employee or third party against a volunteer if the Agency, a manager or supervisor, knew or should have known of the harassing conduct but did not act promptly to correct it. In addition, the agency or a manager or supervisor may be held liable for acts of unlawful harassment committed by a manager or supervisor against an volunteer. Thus, all managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the work environment is free of unlawful harassment.

LightHouse will promptly investigate any complaint with appropriate confidentiality. The complaining volunteer and all parties involved in the investigation are expected to cooperate fully in any investigation and must treat the information disclosed or learned during an investigation confidential. No volunteer will be retaliated against for reporting unlawful harassment.

Any person who violates this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including immediate dismissal. The severity of the disciplinary action will be determined by a number of factors, including the nature of the violation of this policy.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION**

During the course of assignment, volunteers may come into the possession of confidential information regarding a client or confidential information of the agency including client lists and information, financial information, leases, licenses, agreements, business plans, and proprietary information such as donor lists and personnel files. This information is strictly confidential. This information must not be disclosed to anyone, including family members, outside the agency or to any person who is not entitled to the information, either during or after a volunteer's tenure with LightHouse. Any doubts about the confidentiality of information should be resolved in favor of confidentiality.

### **External Communications**

Occasionally, volunteers may be contacted by outside sources requesting information about LightHouse matters, including information regarding current or former volunteers, employees, LightHouse projects, or other workplace issues. To avoid providing inaccurate, incomplete or inappropriate information to outside sources, any volunteer contacted by an outside source regarding LightHouse should immediately contact the appropriate person, as detailed below.

### **Media Contacts**

If a volunteer is contacted by a representative from any media organization (e.g., television, radio, bloggers or newspaper reporters,) the volunteer should immediately refer the media to the Director of Development. No volunteer may communicate with media agents regarding LightHouse without prior authorization.

### **LightHouse Social Networking**

The term social networking for LightHouse purposes is meant to encompass a variety of interactive and web-based features created and managed by the LightHouse to foster connections and information sharing. With an increased on-line presence on a variety of sites outside of the LightHouse

web-site, it is critical to ensure that our branding and messaging remain consistent as possible and in keeping with our mission. For this reason, new social networking pages, sites or opportunities set up on behalf of the LightHouse should be approved by the management team. It is the responsibility of the department managing a specific site, page or other social networking element to monitor and moderate user-generated content to ensure that no blatantly offensive or inappropriate content (e.g., profanity, discriminatory remarks, etc.) be allowed to remain posted.

## **Dress Code**

LightHouse strives to maintain a professional image, and this includes the volunteer's attire. It is important that everyone conducts themselves as professionals in both dress and in manner. LightHouse expects volunteers to use good judgment and to remember that every volunteer represents the agency.

Volunteers are expected to dress in a manner that is normally acceptable and appropriate in terms of workplace attire. Extreme styles, dress or grooming are unacceptable. Also, in order to allow individuals with environmental illnesses to access LightHouse services and events, all are asked to refrain from wearing perfume or other scented products.

Volunteers are recommended to speak to their immediate supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator if they are unsure of the appropriate style of dress or grooming.

## **Mobile Phones**

Writing, sending, or reading text-based communication—including text messaging, instant messaging, and e-mail—on a wireless device or cell phone while driving for LightHouse is strictly prohibited. Violation of this policy is both a matter of law and agency rules. Volunteers are encouraged to use sound judgment whenever using cellular phones in the workplace.

Occasional, limited, personal use of cellular phones in the workplace is permitted only when the use does not:

- (a) Interfere with user's work performance
- (b) Interfere with any other user's work performance
- (c) Violate any other provision of this policy or any other policy, guideline or standard of LightHouse

Any violation of these policies may result in discipline up to and including dismissal.

# BEING A HUMAN/SIGHTED GUIDE

**Human Guide technique (aka Sighted Guide Technique) enables a person who is blind to use another person (usually, but not exclusively sighted or low vision) as a guide. The technique follows a specific form and has specific applications.**

- Offer to guide a person who is blind or visually impaired by asking if he or she would like assistance. Be aware that the person may not need or want guided help; in some instances it can be disorienting and disruptive. Respect the wishes of the person you are with.
- If your help is accepted, offer the person your arm. It may be helpful to ask the person if they prefer you stand on their left or right side. Once your position is established, tap the back of your hand against his/her hand. The person will then grasp your arm directly above the elbow. Never grab the person's arm or try to direct him or her by pushing or pulling. If the person attempts to clasp your arm with theirs (locked at the elbow) or hold your hand, gently redirect their hand to your elbow. Verbalize this to the person as you are doing so.
- If someone needs extra support for walking, the guider should bend the supporting arm, parallel to the ground so he or she can apply weight to the arm.
- Relax and walk at a comfortable, normal pace. Stay one step ahead of the person you are guiding, except at the top and bottom of stairs and to cross streets. At these places, pause and stand alongside the person. Then resume travel, walking one step ahead. Always pause when you change directions, step up, or step down.
- It is helpful, but not necessary, to tell the person you are guiding about changes in terrain, stairs, narrow spaces, elevators, and escalator (i.e. "We are approaching a curb, the curb is slanted upward."). It is also helpful to provide any other information that may help orient the person, and/or of potential hazards within the three primary scan zones (ground, mid-level, head high/overhead).
- The standard form of sighted guide technique may have to be modified because of other disabilities or for someone who is exceptionally tall or short. Be sure to ask the person you are guiding what, if any, modifications he or she would like you to use.

- When you are acting as a guide, never leave the person in "free space." When walking, always be sure that the person has a firm grasp on your arm. If you have to be separated briefly, be sure the person is in contact with a wall, railing, or some other stable object until you return.
- To guide a person to a seat, place the hand of the person on the back of the chair so that they know which direction the chair is facing. If you are unable to do so, place your hand on the seat. The person you are guiding will find the seat by following along your arm. Let the person know if the chair is on wheels and/or if it swivels.
- When going through a narrow door or passage, move your guiding arm backward toward the small of your back, so the person being guided can step in single file behind you. When coming to a door, stop first, then say whether the door opens toward or away from you, and whether it opens to the right or the left. The person being guided can then move to the appropriate side. Open the door and proceed.
- When approaching escalators and revolving doors, use techniques similar to those for stairs, curbs, and doors. If the person you are guiding is uncomfortable, use stairs or regular doors. Buildings with escalators or revolving doors are required to have stairs and regular doors.
- When helping a visually impaired person into a car, place one of their hands on the door handle and have them locate the edge of the car roof with their other hand. Thus allowing the guided person to seat themselves.

## **ON MEETING A GUIDE DOG (From Guide Dogs of America)**

- As tempting as it may be to pet a Guide Dog, remember that this dog is responsible for leading someone who cannot see. The dog should never be distracted from that duty. A person's safety may depend on their dog's alertness and concentration.
- It is okay to ask someone if you may pet their guide. Many people enjoy introducing their dogs when they have the time. The dog's primary responsibility is to its blind partner and it is important that the dog not become solicitous.
- A Guide Dog should never be offered food or other distracting treats. The dogs are fed on a schedule and follow a specific diet in order to keep them in optimum condition. Even slight deviations from their routine can disrupt their regular eating and relieving schedules and seriously inconvenience their handlers. Guide Dogs are trained to resist offers of food so they will be able to visit restaurants without begging. Feeding treats to a Guide Dog weakens this training.
- Although Guide Dogs cannot read traffic signals, they are responsible for helping their handlers safely cross a street. Calling out to a Guide Dog or intentionally obstructing its path can be dangerous for the team as it could break the dog's concentration on its work.
- Listening for traffic flow has become harder for Guide Dog handlers due to quieter car engines and the increasing number of cars on the road. Please don't honk your horn or call out from your car to signal when it is safe to cross. This can be distracting and confusing. Be especially careful of pedestrians in crosswalks when making right-hand turns at red lights.
- It's not all work and no play for a Guide Dog. When they are not in harness, they are treated in much the same way as pets. However, for their safety they are only allowed to play with specific toys. Please don't offer them toys without first asking their handler's permission.
- In some situations, working with a Guide Dog may not be appropriate. Instead, the handler may prefer to take your arm just above the elbow and allow their dog to heel. Others will prefer to have their dog follow you. In this case, be sure to talk to the handler and not the dog when giving directions for turns.
- A Guide Dog can make mistakes and will need reminders to maintain its training. Correcting a mistake usually involves a time-out or leash

action. When the dog regains focus and correctly follows a cue, he or she is frequently praised and rewarded with a kibble. Guide Dog handlers have been taught appropriate management methods to use with their dogs.

- Access laws, including the United States' Americans with Disabilities Act and Canada's Blind Persons' Rights Act, permit people who are blind to be accompanied by their guide dogs anywhere the general public is allowed, including taxis and buses, restaurants, theaters, stores, schools, hotels, apartment and office buildings.
- Before asking a question of a person handling a dog, allow them to complete the task at hand.
- Remain calm in your approach and mannerisms.
- Never tease a dog.