



# **Volunteer Handbook**

## **THE LUNCH BOX**

### **Guidelines & Procedures**

**Thank you for volunteering your time.  
Your efforts enable us to continue to feed many  
People who might otherwise go without.**

**This handbook is to serve as your guide to understanding  
the mission of Dutchess Outreach and to outline the safety  
and conduct guidelines for volunteers at the Lunch Box.**

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## **Background**

The Lunch Box is a program of Dutchess Outreach and provides nutritious meals free of charge, qualification or judgment in a safe, welcoming atmosphere. Staff members and volunteers work together toward the common goal of helping those less fortunate, creating a powerful sense of camaraderie and community.

The Lunch Box began in December 1982 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Mansion Street, Poughkeepsie. There were only ten people, and the project was only expected to fill a temporary need but every year the number of people continued to increase.

In 1999, the program moved to its current location on the ground floor of the Family Partnership Center (FPC) at 29 N. Hamilton Street, Poughkeepsie. In 2001, the Lunch Box began offering meals for the Teen Resources Activity Program (T.R.A.C.) an after school program run by Family Services, Inc.

In 2008, the Lunch Box began providing evening meals at the end of each month, in collaboration with various faith communities, professionals, businesses and volunteer groups from around Dutchess County.

Today the Lunch Box operates 6 days a week, serving lunch Sunday through Friday and dinner four nights a week. After school meals are served daily during the school year to hundreds of at-risk kids in the City of Poughkeepsie who attend the R.E.A.L. Skills Youth Program and the Teen Resource Activity Center (T.R.A.C.) at the FPC. The Lunch Box's small staff depends heavily on community volunteers.

Our volunteers include individuals who want to give back to their community; community groups such as local businesses, schools or faith communities and those who need to fulfill community service obligations. For more information volunteers can contact our Manager of Volunteers at 845-454-3792.

## **Mission**

Dutchess Outreach acts as a catalyst for community revitalization and exists in Dutchess County as an advocate and provider of hunger and relief services in order to ensure that everyone, regardless of income, has access to fresh, healthy food and the support they need. More information about Dutchess Outreach, Inc. and our mission is located on our website at [www.dutchessoutreach.org](http://www.dutchessoutreach.org).

The goal of the Lunch Box is to create a safe, comfortable environment in which individuals and families can come and enjoy a balanced, filling meal. Being located in the Family Partnership Center enables our clients to take advantage of a variety of services offered by Dutchess Outreach and other agencies in the building.

## **Lunch Box Staff**

Executive Director - Renée Fillette

Lunch Box Manager – Tess Connors

Assistant Lunch Box Manager – Keith Wood

Dishwasher – Richard Oszip

## **Our Service**

The Lunch Box is our Community Meal Program and it is a direct response to food insecurity in Dutchess County. Food insecurity is defined as limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or a limited or uncertain ability to acquire food in socially acceptable ways. Some of our guests are experiencing homelessness or struggling with mental health conditions and/or addiction. We serve meals to anyone in need, no questions asked, free of charge. The only time we turn anyone away is when they have been clearly inappropriate, and even then we often give them a second chance. It is imperative that we treat everyone with compassion and be respectful at all times.

We are here to serve all people who come through our doors without qualification or condescension. We ask no questions, make no judgements and the only time we turn anyone away is when they have been inappropriate. Second chances are given. It is imperative that we always treat everyone with compassion and respect at all times.

# Guidelines for Working at the Lunch Box

Thank you for volunteering to donate, cook, prepare and/or serve a meal at Dutchess Outreach's Lunch Box! We are happy to have you and appreciate your time and your help! We cannot achieve our mission without the support of our volunteers.

The following are the guidelines and procedures that will ensure your experience will be a positive one and guarantee your safety along with the safety of all those who come to the Lunch Box. We realize that there is a lot of information here, please don't hesitate to ask any question that you may have.

## General Rules

- It is the obligation of every volunteer to read this handbook before performing any duties at the Lunch Box.
- Only scheduled volunteers are permitted in the kitchen.
- Each volunteer or group leader is required to complete a volunteer application (online or in person). Please attach the names of each volunteer from your group to your application. Only one application is needed as the group leader will serve as the primary contact and liaison for the group.

**Link: <http://dutchessoutreach.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer/form/>**

- All groups are to arrive at scheduled time. When you arrive the Manager or designee will meet with the group. The Manager or designee will present a brief orientation on the mission of the Lunch Box, safety procedures, and workflow and job assignments.
- Once serving begins, if a volunteer needs to leave a station, please notify the coordinator or Manager or designee so that a backup can be assigned.
- If a problem or a potential problem arises, please inform the Lunch Box Manager or designee as quickly as possible.
- Dutchess Outreach cannot be held responsible for any lost or stolen items. We strongly urge that any valuable items not be brought into the Lunch Box.

## Health Department Rules

- Appropriate attire is required. (see dress code)
- The Health Department requires that gloves be worn when working with food. Hair must be tied back, and hats/caps must be worn to cover loose hair. Hairnets are available. When wearing gloves, remember they are sterile, do not touch hair, nose, etc. If you do so, you must change your gloves.
- You are not to work if you feel ill, have a sore throat, diarrhea, stomach cramps, vomiting, fever, infected cuts or abrasions, boil or any condition that causes flaking of the skin. Please call and inform the Manager or designee that you will not be available to work (845.454.3792).
- Smoking is not permitted in the Family Partnership Center.

## Conduct

It is important that all staff, volunteers and consumers be treated with respect. Consumers' behavior may not always be what is considered appropriate. While most people are very grateful, it may be very difficult for some to accept "charity" while others may be exhibiting behavior that may be necessary for life on the streets. It is important to listen and not judge. Our #1 priority is the people we serve and providing them a nourishing meal.

Disruptive behavior is not a common occurrence; however, if inappropriate behavior does occur it will be addressed firmly by the staff. The person(s) whose behavior is out of line will be talked to and if necessary asked to leave. If additional support is required, the staff will contact facility security for assistance to remove them from the property.

- Giving or lending money to a guest is not permitted.
- For safety, bathrooms are to remain locked at all times even when you are inside them. Please ask Manager or other staff on duty for the key.
- There is no yelling, shouting, or rough housing allowed in the kitchen or service area.
- Servers are not to eat while working on the serving line. If a server wants to eat, please get permission from the group coordinator.
- **IMPORTANT:** Please do not use cell phones when working. It is disruptive to the service and also phones have germs on them. If you must take a phone call during service, you need to change your gloves afterwards.
- Please, if you are unavailable to come in on your assigned day please notify the Manager or designee as soon as possible (845.454.3792).

## **Additional Rules for Groups:**

- Every group that comes to the Lunch Box needs to assign a group leader. The leader is responsible for managing the other volunteers. This includes ensuring the number of volunteers is between 4 and 8 people\* for a meal service. The Lunch Box kitchen cannot safely accommodate more volunteers than that.  
*\*Subject to change*
- The group leader is to work with the cook/manager in assigning tasks to their team - ensuring that all duties are covered, including busing and dishwashing.
- The group leader communicates with Lunch Box staff in menu planning and supply needs.
- Every group is responsible for preparing food, setting up the buffet line, serving the meal and cleaning up after the meal service is completed.
- If a group shows up with extra volunteers on a particular day, Lunch Box staff may assign other tasks, away from the kitchen. This may include cleaning and organizing the storage rooms, office and pantry, helping in the food pantry of Dutchess Outreach, and weighing and logging donations of food items.
- Due to NY State Department of Health and NY State Labor Laws, the Lunch Box cannot accept volunteers below the age of 16.
- Volunteers between the ages of 16-17 years old, must be accompanied by an adult 18 years old or older.

## **Dress Code**

- Volunteers are to dress in clean shirts and pants, free of rips or holes, and in good condition. No sleeveless shirts or shorts are to be worn in the kitchen or dining room.
- All volunteers must wear sturdy, low or no heeled shoes which prevent slips and falls. Shoes must fit properly and enclose the foot. Absolutely no flip-flops, sandals or other open toe or foot shoe wear.
- Amount of jewelry worn on fingers and forearms is to be limited to a plain wedding band, medical bracelet or plain watch band. Jewelry can hide food particles and germs that can cause people to become sick.
- Each volunteer should always wear a clean apron while involved in food preparation.
- Hair must be tied back, when possible, and each volunteer is to wear a hairnet or clean baseball cap when working in the kitchen area.

## **Serving and Volunteer Schedule:**

- **Lunch** is served from 11:15 a.m. - 1 p.m.

- Volunteers - Arrive: 9:00 a.m. or 11 a.m. Leave: 11 a.m. or 1:00 p.m.
- **After school program** begins at 3:00 p.m.  
Volunteers - Arrive: 2:00 p.m. Leave: 4:00 p.m.
  - **Dinner** is served from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Volunteers - Arrive: 4:00 p.m. Leave: 6:30 p.m.
  - **Sunday lunch** is served from 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.  
Volunteers – Arrive: 11 a.m. Leave at 1:15 p.m.
- To volunteer contact: Nyhisha T. Gibbs - Manager of Volunteers 845.454.3792

## SAFETY GUIDELINES

Following proper safety procedures is of utmost important in order to keep our clients, employees and volunteers safe. Please read this section carefully and ask any questions that you may have.

All staff and volunteers need to watch out for dangerous situations that may occur. These may include:

- Wet, slippery floors
- Improper use of knives or equipment
- Risk of fire or burns
- Medical emergencies
- Altercations among people

If a problem does occur, please notify staff immediately. The staff have complete responsibility. They will instruct you on what to do. Please give them your complete attention and follow directions calmly. Panic will only make the situation worse.

### **Food Safety**

Food borne illness presents a major challenge to both general and at-risk populations. Each year, millions of illnesses in the United States can be attributed to contaminated foods. It is a preventable public health problem and anyone at the Lunch Box is required to strictly adhere to proper food handling procedures.

The information provided below in this handbook will guide you in keeping you and our patrons safe. We ask that you take time to review this section thoroughly and ask us any questions you may have before food production begins.



## Getting Started

1. Sign in
2. Pull back hair and put on hair net or clean hat
3. Wash hands (see below)
4. Put on clean apron

## FOUR SIMPLE STEPS TO FOOD SAFETY



Practice Good Hygiene  
Use Safe Food Preparation &  
Cleaning Techniques  
Keep Food at Proper  
Temperatures  
Store Food Properly

Clean

Separate

Cook

Chill

## Getting Ready

### Many Nasty Illnesses Start with Poor Hand Hygiene

Salmonella, campylobacter, MRSA, flu, diarrhea and sickness, the common cold, impetigo are some of the viruses and infections passed between people who do not wash their hands.

Children and the elderly are most likely to get very ill and potentially die from food borne illnesses caused by bacteria and viruses. The unfortunate part is that many of these illnesses can be prevented by following simple procedures.

# Hand Washing

## How to Properly Wash Your Hands



*A NOTE ABOUT HANDWASHING: Wearing gloves does not eliminate the need to wash hands regularly. You must wash your hands*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Before starting work                                      | After working with trash, garbage or dirty non-food equipment                   |
| After using the toilet                                    | After sneezing or coughing into your hands                                      |
| After eating or smoking                                   | After switching food preparation from raw foods to cooked or ready to eat foods |
| After using cell phone                                    | After you leave the work area or change work duties                             |
| After touching your mouth, hair, nose or other body parts |   |

## Preventing Cross Contamination When Preparing Food

Cross-contamination is a common factor in the cause of food borne illness. It is important to follow these guidelines in order to keep people from getting sick from a food borne illness.

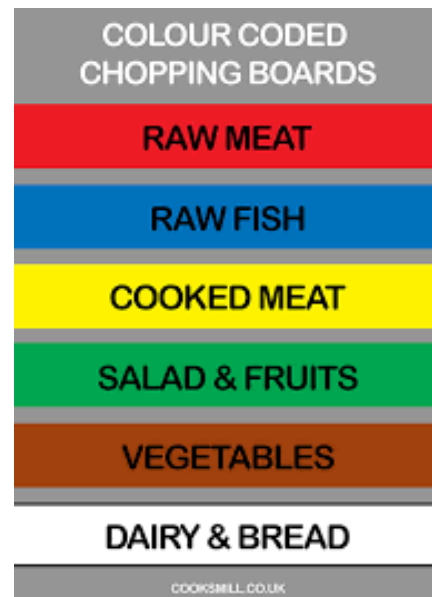
### Keep it clean:

- Wash hands and surfaces often. Harmful bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, and countertops. To prevent this:
- Wash hands with soap and hot water before and after handling food, and after using the bathroom.
- Use hot, soapy water and paper towels or a clean cloth to wipe up kitchen surfaces or spills.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next item.

**Using cutting boards:**

- Always use a clean cutting board.
- If possible, use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.

\*See diagram A



**Diagram A**

**When refrigerating food:**

Place raw meat, poultry, and seafood in containers or sealed plastic bags to prevent their juices from dripping onto other foods. Raw juices often contain harmful bacteria.

Store eggs in their original carton and refrigerate as soon as possible.

\*See diagram B

**Diagram A**



**Diagram B**

## Food Safety in Relation to Time and Temperature

### Temperature Danger Zone -

bacteria that cause food poisoning multiply quickest in the “Danger Zone” between 40° and 140° Fahrenheit?

### Use a food thermometer.

Cooked food is safe only after it’s been heated to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria. Color and texture alone won’t tell you whether your food is done. Instead, use a food thermometer to be sure.



**Diagram C**

### Keep food hot after cooking (at 140 °F or above).

The possibility of bacterial growth actually increases as food cools after cooking because the drop in temperature allows bacteria to thrive.

1. Keeping foods covered to maintain proper temperature. Use a product thermometer to frequently check food temperature.
2. Never add fresh foods to old foods.
3. If hot foods temperature falls below 135°F, reheat the food to 165°F

\*See diagram C

## **Cooling foods after cooking.**

When cooling foods, the food temperature must decrease from 140 degrees F to 70 degrees F within 2 hours and from 70 degrees F to 41 degrees F within another 4 hours. Here are three methods for cooling hot foods

1. Rapidly cooling foods of large volume or prepared in large quantities by cutting large items into smaller pieces or dividing large batches into smaller ones.
2. Using ice water baths
3. Place the food in shallow stainless steel pans. Thick foods, such as chili and stew, should be in pans with a product depth no more than two inches. Thinner liquids, such as broth may be in pans three inches deep

## **Reheating Foods.**

Leftover foods that have been cooked and cooled and reheated can be served only once. Discard any reheated food that is leftover, leftovers.

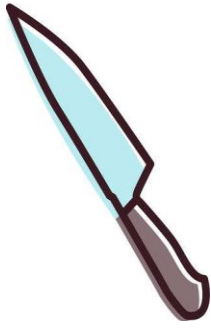
## **Kitchen Safety**

### **Burn Prevention When Using Equipment**

- Use tongs and oven mitts to remove hot items from the stove or oven.
- Use a tray or cookie sheet to carry items that may drip or are too hot to carry.
- Keep handles of pots out the way of traffic.
- Avoid overfilling pots.
- Do not leave hot oil unattended.
- Make sure clothing fits properly.
- Keep burners at a level so that the flame is completely covered by the pot or pan.
- Uncover pots or hot items by opening away from you.
- Ask for assistance in lifting heavy objects, especially pans of hot food.
- Clean up spills immediately to avoid slips and slides.



### **Preventing Injury When Using a Knife**



- Select the right knife for the task. If you do not know ask Manager
  - Work only with sharp knives
  - Always use a cutting board
  - Cut downward with firm even pressure away from the body
  - NEVER catch a falling knife
- \*\* If you get cut or burned, IMMEDIATELY inform the Lunch Box Manager or assigned staff!!!\*\***

### **Serving Food Safely**

- Servers need to handle dishes or utensils so that their hands do not come in contact with the guest's food or touch where the food is being placed.
- Hold plates by the edge or the bottom and do not touch glasses by their rim.
- During service, store utensil, when not in use, with handles extended out of food or on a clean, dry surface, such as a plate.

### **Working Environment Safety**

- Don't argue with clients. Refer disruptions to the kitchen manager or assigned staff.
- Familiarize yourself with the Heimlich Maneuver Poster. Take notice of the fire extinguisher's location.
- Take precautions when working around the stoves and ovens. If a fire occurs on the stove, use a lid, salt, or flour to smother the flame. If it is a grease fire DO NOT use water.
- In the event of an emergency, contact one of the Managers immediately. They will let you know if any action is required. If there is a need to evacuate, it is important for volunteers to remain calm and exit with the clients in an orderly fashion.

## **Daily Food Preparation Procedures**

### **Daily General Guidelines for Working in the Lunch Box Kitchen**

- Clean up after yourself after prepping: bring all dirty utensils, cutting boards, pots and pans to the dish room and place on the dirty dish rack. Scrape pans clean of leftover food particles before bringing to the dish room.

- Wipe down your work area with a towel from the bleach bucket after each prep item.
- Sweep the kitchen at the end of your shift
- Label and date with a sharpie marker and tape every item prepped and store in the Walk In fridge. Note: For food safety reasons, any food item put in the fridge unlabeled will be thrown away by the Manager. Please be conscious of this so that we do not waste food.

### **Daily Jobs at the Lunch Box**

- Preparing and making sure trays are ready for service
- Making utensil/napkin roll ups
- Meal preparation
- Hot & cold beverage preparation
- Rotating desserts by date in refrigerator and plating desserts for service
- Preparing dining room – cleaning tables, chairs and sweeping/mopping floor
- Meal service
- After meal clean up
- Taking out garbage and recyclables
  
- Wiping down all surfaces in kitchen including: all prep tables –in the kitchen and in back storage room, both the prep counters, and underneath shelves; stoves, ovens, sinks, utensil shelves, buffet line area, steam table, coffee area, bussing area, dining room tables, sweeping and mopping of dining room
- Sweeping and mopping kitchen
- Assisting the dishwasher – keeping dirty dish rack orderly, returning clean items to their appropriate places for storage, managing bussing area

### **For Groups That Are Providing & Preparing the Meal**

If your group is buying or bringing in the food that will be served for the meal, we ask that you provide us with the menu 1 week prior to service. The following items are needed for each meal:

- Main Course (Meat or fish, starch and vegetable)
- Appropriate condiments

### **Important Procedures to Follow When Bringing in Food**

- So that you do not run out of food or prepare too much, please make sure you talk with the Manager for guidance about quantities.

- Please make sure food is bought or received from reliable sources which adhere to safe food safety practices.
- Please adhere to food safety guides. Keeping food safe is of utmost importance.

## **Serving Procedures**

### **General Guidelines:**

- The people are always served. They do not touch or handle food on the serving line.
- The servers place the food or beverage on the guest's tray.
- Anyone who will be handling food on the serving line must wear gloves.
- All requests for take-out are referred to the Manager or designee. The Lunch Box does not refuse anyone a meal, however, there are some individuals who have restricted access to the Lunch Box. The Manager or designee will see that those individuals are provided a meal.
- No seconds are given except for coffee until the Manager or designee approves and announces it to all. Please ignore all pleas for exceptions. What is done for one must be done for all.
- Do not give anyone anything extra, no matter how persistent they may be. There are no substitutions. If a guest asks not to be served part of the meal, the portion sizes for the rest of the meal remain the same.
- **No customer is allowed to touch food.**
- **Refer any problems immediately to the Manager or designee.**
- These are your guests. Please address them with respect. Please say “you’re welcome” if they say “Thank You.”
- Serving stops at 1:00. Begin cleaning your station at that time

### **Serving Jobs:**

Note: The line is organized from left to right facing the counter.

#### **Trays:** (one person, adult only)

- Act as greeter. Welcome the people to the Lunch Box and keep an eye out for anyone coming for seconds before we make the call for seconds
- Set out a tray on the counter with a utensil bundle. The type of utensils depends on the meal being served.
- Knives are **not** provided.

#### **Meal:** (3 people)

Two servers plate the food from the warming station (i.e. one serves meat, one serves vegetables, etc...). One server stands between the warming station and the serving counter and places the plate on the guest’s tray.



**Hot Drinks:** (1 person – adult only)

- One hot drink (coffee) per person. Refills allowed.
- Hot drinks: If more coffee is needed, make a new pot. (Replace coffee and filter, fill carafe with water, activate coffee maker.)
- Maximum of two level teaspoons of sugar.
- Place the cup on the guest's tray.

**Cold Drinks:** (1 person)

- One cold drink (iced tea or lemonade) per person.
- One milk per child in addition to cold drink.

**Dessert:** (1 person)

- Ask guest which dessert they prefer of those available on serving tray.
- Place dessert on guest's tray.

**Dishwasher Assistant:** (1-2 people)

The role of the runner is to ensure that the server station stays supplied with food/beverage and dishes, etc. so there is a continuous serving flow and to help in the dish room.

- Help carry trays for clients who need assistance.
- Cold drinks: Fill cold drink glasses to backfill initial beverage trays.
- Meals: Transfer dishes from the storage rack (or dish room) to serving. Assist in refilling hot foods and removing used food pans to the dish room.
- Monitor the supply of dishes (plates, cups and glasses), utensils and trays. If needed, ask the person at the clean-up station to pass needed items through to the dish room. As items are cleaned, either place in the storage area or resupply the station.

**Cleanup****Busser**

The busser maintains the window to the dishroom by organizing dirty plates, cups and utensils and taking out the garbage.

**Lunch Box**

Each person, whether server or preparer, needs to be responsible for their area. The Lunch Box has a paid dishwasher, who washes the dishes, utensils, pots,

pans and trays. Please be aware of the number of dishes and utensils used during food preparation. The more you use, the harder you are making it for the Dishwasher.

- Wipe down kitchen counters and stove, as well as serving counter.
- Remove remaining food from the warming station, bread and dessert racks. Check with the manager or designee about what to do with leftovers.
- Clean your station area. (Example: rinse out coffee carafes and place them on the table next to the coffee maker, throw away used filters.)
- Be sure any dirty items are placed in the dish room on one of the bottom 2 shelves of the rack.
- Please do not walk out and leave the staff or one volunteer to clean up everything. Clean up is important and can be done quickly if everyone helps.

***Thank You for the  
Lives You Touch.***

***Your Help and Commitment  
are Very Much Appreciated!***