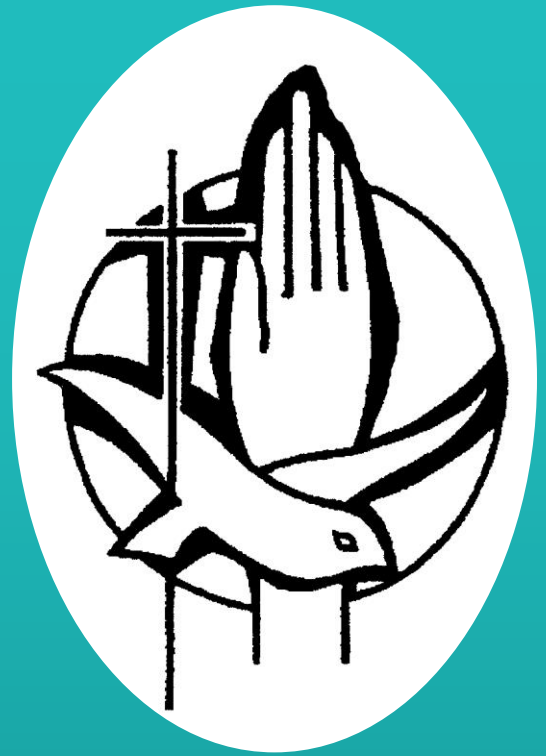




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# SUPPORTING SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

**Volunteer Chaplain Handbook  
YMCA OF GREATER FORT WAYNE**

Our Mission: to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

# YMCA Volunteer Chaplain Program Handbook

## YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne

Dear Friend of the YMCA,

Thank you for taking the time to prayerfully consider joining the YMCA Volunteer Chaplain Program. The YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne serves over 100,000 people in our community every year. Our desire is for experienced and respected Christian leaders in the community to help build healthy spirit, mind and body for all through the chaplaincy program. Our volunteer chaplains are here to simply love, serve and care for all staff, members, and volunteers.

Chaplains are part of the larger association Christian emphasis work at in all the branches. As volunteers they are part of a growing movement to empower Christian members to be the hands and feet of Christ in their local YMCA branch. We want to meet people where they are at, listening and being present to staff, members and volunteers in order to love, serve and care. Through the volunteer chaplain program, Christians can extend the presence of Christ and create a safe place for people to experience the love of God.

It is extremely important that we find the right people to serve alongside us in this important Christian emphasis volunteer opportunity. Thank you for your interest in wanting to serve with the YMCA and help us make a difference in our community. I look forward to exploring this exciting opportunity with you.

Sincerely,

Tim Hallman  
Director of Christian Emphasis  
YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne

**"I have reviewed the YMCA Volunteer Chaplain Program Handbook and agree to honor its purpose and faithfully love, serve and care to the best of my abilities."**

Chaplain Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Executive Director: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Christian Emphasis: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Program Purpose**

To demonstrate the love of Christ by loving, serving and caring for all YMCA members, staff and volunteers.

## **Opportunities for Service**

Each YMCA volunteer chaplain will have different skills, strengths and passions. We encourage chaplains to get to know their YMCA staff, members and volunteers. Here are some opportunities for fulfilling the mission of the Y and making a difference:

- Genuinely love, serve and care for people within the YMCA branch
- Get to know the name of each staff person and care about them
- Follow up with full time staff regularly in a supportive way
- Be an encourager to all staff, members and volunteers
- Write devotions or lead devotions for staff meetings as requested
- Email a short weekly devotional to staff as requested
- Pray for staff, members and volunteers as you get to know them
- Meet and greet members and guests with the welcome center staff

## **Requirements**

Support the mission and purpose of the Y and its Volunteer Chaplain Program by:

- Be an experienced Christian leader in your church and community
- Complete the candidate process and complete all necessary trainings
- During a crisis, the volunteer chaplain is to be supportive of YMCA leadership
- Be available to accept referrals from staff
- Be available to be "on call" for immediate and sudden emergency situations
- Show no partiality to persons with regards to their church affiliation, denomination, beliefs, ethnicity, nationality, gender, disability, or age
- The volunteer chaplain may not be an employee of the YMCA.
- Keep branch executive director updated on observations and experiences with staff, members and volunteers
- Be accountable to your branch's Executive Director
- Be available for ongoing training and an annual review with the Director of Christian Emphasis

## **Skills**

- Listen empathetically and encourage sincerely
- Love genuinely and build trust
- Tactfully refuse to engage in controversial theological, political, cultural debates
- Be sensitive and perceptive to individuals needs
- Demonstrate gentleness in offering prayer, advice, referrals, assistance and support
- Live a lifestyle that honors God

## **Commitment**

- Each volunteer chaplain will start on a 90 day trial period to see if this is a good fit for them and also for their YMCA branch
- If both parties are in mutual agreement, they will serve one year terms and then evaluate to determine future service in one year increments with the Director of Christian Emphasis and Executive Director of the branch
- Serve an average minimum of 1-3 volunteer hours per week each month at your YMCA
- Be consistently present – stick to a predictable schedule and places within the branch in order to build community with staff, members, and volunteers

## **Limitations**

The YMCA volunteer chaplain program is not designed to:

- take the place of the local church
- be used to threaten or condemn anyone or make people feel uncomfortable
- proselytize or recruit for your church
- be a professional counseling service nor is it intended to deliver professional mental health services; individuals with such needs should be referred to a counselor or long-term care provider

## **Confidentiality & Procedures for Intervention**

- YMCA volunteer chaplains provide prayer support for our staff, members and volunteers, but must use wisdom and discretion in knowing when a situation needs to be referred to someone else like branch executive director, their spiritual leader, a counselor, or the authorities
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of staff, members, and volunteers
- Chaplains may refer individuals and families seeking further spiritual guidance to a local church
- If a person has intent to harm self or others, the chaplain must report behavior to the executive director at your assigned branch and/or the police

## **Code of Conduct**

- We expect YMCA volunteer chaplains to behave in a caring, mature, responsible manner and respect the rights of others
- The chaplain is to make wise decisions utilizing YMCA Christian principles
- Chaplains should exercise sound judgment with regard to personal appearance, dress and grooming, enabling them to effectively and safely serve in the branch

## **Termination of Volunteer Chaplain Responsibilities**

- If the chaplain decides to end his/her service, it is required they notify their branch Executive Director and Director of Christian Emphasis immediately
- At any time a person may be asked to resign from the role of volunteer chaplain by their Executive Director