



LAMOILLE NEIGHBORS

## Volunteer Handbook

**Lamoille Neighbors**

**[www.lamoilleneighbors.org](http://www.lamoilleneighbors.org)**

**802-585-1233**

### Welcome to the Lamoille Neighbors Volunteer Community

Lamoille Neighbors is based on an innovative national movement that will help connect us to our community allowing those of us who want to stay in our own homes to do so as long as possible. Lamoille Neighbors is a local non-profit made up of members and volunteers who are committed to helping each other thrive.

As Members age and can no longer drive or do the simple tasks around the house, remaining at home becomes more of a challenge. Our Volunteers make a difference. Our capacity to accept Members is directly linked to the number of available Volunteers. The more Volunteers we have, the more Members we can serve.

Currently we are accepting Members from Hyde Park and Morrisville and in the future can add other towns in Lamoille County.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and all the Members of Lamoille Neighbors, we want to welcome you as a Volunteer, and are delighted to have you join our village full of remarkable human beings. Together, through shared experiences, we intend to make life easier and more enjoyable.

Thank you for your time, commitment and the talent you bring to Lamoille Neighbors.

Sincerely, Lisa Dimondstein, Board President

Volunteer Coordinator, Joan Greene 443-433-8750

**Our Vision:** Lamoille Neighbors aims to change the culture of aging. We believe that age is a season of growth and meaning. We can find contentment and purpose in our older years through both giving and receiving volunteer service. We can continue life-long learning and maintain wellness and find new friends. We can remain in the homes we love with support from our neighbors.

## **Volunteer Guidelines and Procedures**

Volunteering is crucial to supporting Members needs. Lamoille Neighbors Volunteers complete an application form and are vetted and trained before performing tasks. Auto insurance information is confirmed for those who are transporting Members.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Volunteer drivers provide local (primarily Lamoille County) door-to-door transportation. They may accompany members to appointments or help carry and put away packages. A driver with limited physical strength may still be able to drive Members who don't need additional assistance.

Volunteers must use their own vehicle to transport Members.

Typical destinations can be one time only or regularly scheduled and might include:

- Grocery, pharmacy or other stores
- Bank
- Post Office
- Medical Appointments (these could be outside Lamoille Co. )
- Vet Appointments
- Library
- Hairdresser or barber
- Social or educational event
- Visits to friends
- Church/Synagogue or other places of worship

### **PERSONAL ERRANDS AND SERVICES**

- Run local pick-up and delivery errands within the service area to grocery stores, banks, post office, library, pharmacy, etc.
- Prepare and deliver meals to Members who are temporarily incapacitated, for example post-surgery
- Be a walking buddy, help with exercise
- Walk a dog on a temporary basis
- Friendly visits to Member's home to provide conversation and companionship, to read, play a game, or share a hobby or special interest
- Daily phone check-in
- Take notes for a medical appointment (Med-Pal)

## **IN HOME ASSISTANCE**

- Assistance with occasional light housekeeping or light gardening chores
- Assistance with home chores such as: replacing a lightbulb, batteries, hanging pictures, putting up or taking down screens, etc.

In home Volunteer assistance is not meant to substitute for a regularly scheduled housekeeper or gardener.

## **TECHNICAL AND HOME OFFICE SUPPORT**

- Using computers, popular software programs, and/or the internet more effectively
- Setting up e-mail
- Programming and using electronic devices such as DVD players, cell phones, radio alarm clocks, programmable thermostats, TV remotes

## **MORE WAYS TO SERVE**

- Be a call manager three hours/week
- Help with administrative tasks. An example might be to help Volunteers get vetted and organize a training for the volunteers.
- Become a member of a Lamoille Neighbors committee so we can continue to support the growth and future development of Lamoille Neighbors.
- Help research and /or write grants or participate in other fundraising activities
- Let us know of an area of expertise you would like to share with our Members or the organization

## **VOLUNTEERS CANNOT**

- Administer medications, treatments or provide any type of medical care or advice to a Member
- Attempt to lift someone who has fallen
- Attempt to lift someone even if they haven't fallen
- Accept gifts of value; however, tea, coffee and small food items are acceptable

- Accept money for any reason including for gas, or allow a Member to pay for a meal
- Drive or use the member's vehicle for transportation
- Perform any Volunteer duties while under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs
- Accept Members' requests for volunteer services (these should go through the Lamoille Neighbors website or phone and not a Volunteer directly).
- Refer Members to contractors/paid providers (requests should be made through the website or phone#)
- Make judgments about a Member's worthiness for particular services
- Perform hands-on or other intimate personal services for the Member.
- Offer legal or financial advice
- Cash checks for a member

### **PAID CONTRACTORS**

If a member has a need that exceeds the capabilities or availabilities of volunteers, they should give Lamoille Neighbors a call. We will maintain a list of contractors/paid-providers who have undergone a screening process. Please don't connect a member to a contractor or paid-provider as a volunteer. If you have suggestions for the list please let us know.

### **GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF A LAMOILLE NEIGHBORS VOLUNTEER**

- Adhere to the rules and policies of Lamoille Neighbors as outlined in this Volunteer Handbook.
- Treat all Lamoille Neighbor participants with respect and with cultural appropriateness.
- **Respect all Members' privacy. What you see and learn when you visit a Member must remain confidential.** However, please notify Joan Greene, Volunteer Coordinator at 443-433-8750 of any changes in a Member's condition, or behavior but do not share that information with others, even at your own home.

- Say “NO” to an assignment that you are not comfortable performing.
- Attend Volunteer Training and ongoing training classes.
- Notify Lamoille Neighbors if you decide to pause or discontinue your volunteer work.
- **Do not expose the Member to any contagious diseases. Notify the Call Manager immediately so that alternate arrangements may be made.**

## **ACCEPTING VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS / PROVIDING SERVICE / FOLLOW-UP**

- Volunteers will get an e-mail if a Member puts in a service request. However, you will only get an e-mail in regard to the services for which you have signed up. If you want to accept a request, click on “I can do it”. A confirmation will come to your e-mail with the Member’s phone number and asking you to call within 24 hours. After you have completed the service you will receive an e-mail with a short follow up form.
- Call the Member the night before your shift (and sometimes also the morning of) to coordinate with the Member the details of your time together.
- Be sure to take the Member’s address and phone number with you.
- Be on time.
- Dress appropriately.
- It is always a good idea to carry a phone with you while on a service request. Silence your mobile phone during your visit. Please do not make or respond to personal calls or texts while directly providing service to a member.

- Do not wear perfume, aftershave or smoke while interacting with a member. A scent may trigger an allergic reaction or unpleasant response.
- Notify the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible when unable to report for a scheduled assignment. Canceling a Member service due to adverse weather conditions is at the discretion of the Volunteer. If weather warrants cancellation, the Volunteer must notify the Member and the Call Manager as soon as possible. Safety is always the most important priority
- In case of recurring visits, schedule them through Lamoille Neighbors website, not directly with the Member.

## **GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL VISIT**

- Keep in mind that asking for “help” can be very challenging for many individuals. Be respectful and sensitive to this, and make sure that you follow the Member’s lead during your time together.
- Be respectful, patient and non-judgmental. There is no right or wrong way to live life or take care of your home.
- Leave behind your assumptions about the ability of the person you are assisting. As you spend time together you will both learn each other’s strengths and limitations. Keep an eye out for where assistance is needed before assuming it is needed, or simply ask.
- Plan to be a very good listener. Unless you are asked, don’t start talking about yourself, and please never share personal frustrations or problems. Do your best to keep your interactions positive, and change the subject if the conversation becomes challenging.
- Listen respectfully if Members talk about their spiritual or political beliefs. Don’t disagree. Change the subject if it is uncomfortable for you. Keep in mind that any conversation should end as positively as possible.
- Let Members talk about problems, but do not feel you have to come up with solutions. You can empathize by saying something like “that sounds like it is hard for you.”.

- Do not assume you know the Member's needs. Ask if you're in doubt. For instance, ask whether he or she needs assistance in walking. Does he or she need to hold your arm for support?
- Always allow sufficient time. It is sometimes difficult for older people to rush or to be under pressure if time is limited. Allow extra time in bad weather to ensure the safety and comfort of the Member.

### **Maintain a professional boundary**

We have done a lot of work to protect our Volunteers as it relates to liability and risk through liability insurance and extended auto insurance. But, any service or interaction between a Volunteer and a Member which has not been scheduled through the Lamoille Neighbors system is NOT covered by our insurance.

The following are signs of crossing a boundary as a Lamoille Neighbors Volunteer;

- Making commitments to a Member that have not been scheduled through Lamoille Neighbors.
- Agreeing to a request that is beyond the services provided by Lamoille Neighbors.
- Offering counseling/advice.
- Engaging in sexual or financial exploitation

### **Guidelines for interacting with Members with disabilities**

It is important to engage in appropriate etiquette and behavior when relating to a Member with disabilities. The following tips should help.

Treat adults as adults. Always be courteous. Don't patronize or assume familiarity by touching a Member you don't know well. Use the same good manners in interacting with a Member who has a disability as you would with anyone else (e.g., offering to shake hands or making introductions when another person joins the group).

If you have a question about what to do, how to do it, what language or terminology to use, or what assistance to offer, ask the Member.

Speak directly to the Member. Please do not consider a companion or interpreter to be a conversational go-between.

Be considerate of the extra time it might take for the Member to get things said or done. Let the Member set the pace in walking or talking.

Please do not pet or otherwise distract service dogs; they are working and must remain focused.

Be alert to the possible existence of architectural barriers in places you may want to enter with the Member.

Relax! The most important thing to remember when interacting with Members with disabilities is to be yourself. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions that seem to relate to disability (e.g., walk, see).

You have a right to set limits on what you can and cannot do. If you are unable to assist with something that has been asked of you, explain this to the Member.

### **Vision Impairments**

- Identify yourself when speaking with the Member who is blind. or visually impaired.
- Announce yourself whenever entering or leaving a room.
- Offer your arm for support and guidance.
- Identify steps or obstacles in the way.
- Avoid glare and poorly lighted areas. Communicate your willingness to help and ask how you can help them.

### **Hearing Impairments**

- Face the Member when speaking.
- Face the light.
- Lower the pitch of your voice and speak clearly.
- Speak calmly, slowly and distinctly.
- If there is a need to clarify, rephrase what you just said.
- Do not over-articulate.
- Do not shout.
- Stand or sit between three and six feet from the Member.

- When conversing with the Member, keep your hands or other objects away from your face so the Member can read your lips.

### **Mobility Challenges**

- Move slowly and deliberately.
- Ask how you can best assist the Member to get into and out of a chair or a car.
- Avoid sudden changes in motion, pace, or direction.
- Members who have had strokes may be slow and unsteady.
- Always be patient, and communicate your desire to help.

### **Wheelchairs**

- Do not lean on a Member's wheelchair.
- A wheelchair is an assistive device or mobility aid, not furniture.
- When speaking to a Member in a wheelchair, sit or squat in order to be at eye level. This not only helps the Member feel included in the conversation as an equal, but can help you avoid neck strain.

### **• Speaking Difficulties**

- Give whole, unhurried attention to a Member who has difficulty speaking. Don't pretend to understand the Member when you do not.
- Don't be afraid to let the Member know that you do not understand.
- Listen carefully for the Member to finish.
- Clarify what the Member said; paraphrase what you think you heard and let the Member respond.
- Ask short questions that can be answered by yes or no or by a nod or shake of the head. Note: Someone who does not speak is "nonverbal" or "without speech," not "mute."

## **Signs of Potential Problems**

As an outsider, a Volunteer may be the first to notice a Member's uncharacteristic behavior, unkempt appearance or unusual expressions. Marked personality changes are not a normal part of aging and could be indicative of a simple or a serious problem. Always call the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as you have any concerns. The following are some examples to be on the lookout for;

- Changes in mood
- Confusion/disorientation
- Changes in physical health
- Neglect of environment
- Neglect of personal hygiene
- Suicidal thoughts
- Signs of bruising or injuries

If you have any concerns contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **EMERGENCY GUIDELINES**

If an emergency occurs when you are providing a service for a Member, it is important that you remain calm. Focus on helping the Member and on notifying the proper authorities that can provide appropriate assistance. When in doubt, always call 911. As soon as possible please let the Volunteer Coordinator know of the situation.

## **IF A MEMBER DOES NOT ANSWER THE DOOR**

- Look around the premises / in the window, and call the Member on the phone.
- If you are comfortable, check to see if the door is unlocked and give a holler.
- If you get no response after repeated attempts, call the Volunteer Coordinator. If no one answers, call the Sheriff's department at 911 and ask for a safety check.
- Follow your instincts in regard to whether it is appropriate to call 911.

## **IN THE CASE OF AN ACCIDENT**

- If a Member falls while with you, or you find them on the floor when you arrive, resist helping them get up! If appropriate, pull a chair over for them to use to get up on their own, but if they cannot get up on their own, call 911 for assistance.
- If a Member is unconscious, do not try to move him/her, except in a hazardous situation, such as a fire. Call 911 immediately for emergency assistance.
- Always call the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible to report the situation.

## **DRIVING GUIDELINES**

Volunteer drivers must be approved with an acceptable driving record, proof of insurance and a valid driver's license. The driver's vehicle must be in good repair, kept clean and tidy inside and free of the smell of smoke. Appropriate winter tires (seasonally) should be on any vehicle used to transport a Member when needed. Only use your own vehicle for transportation, never the Member's vehicle.

Volunteers driving to, from, or during a service request for Lamoille Neighbors are required to follow these guidelines:

Drive in a courteous and safe manner and observe all traffic laws. Lamoille Neighbors does not accept responsibility for any parking or traffic violations while completing a Volunteer assignment.

Ensure seat belts are worn by all vehicle occupants at all times during any trip.

Do not bring other adults, children, or pets on the service request, unless it's part of an approved request.

### **If you are in an accident while driving with a Member**

In the event of an automobile accident, the Volunteer's insurance will provide the first line of coverage. Volunteers will be responsible for paying the deductible for their personal insurance policy. In the case of an accident, follow local and state laws.

Stop immediately; however, do not leave the vehicle in a place where it is illegally parked or can create a traffic hazard.

Check to see whether anyone is injured. Assist if appropriate and call 911.

Call the police to report the accident. Identify yourself as a Lamoille Neighbors Volunteer and state that you are driving as a Lamoille Neighbors Member.

Courteously respond to questions and exchange appropriate insurance information with other parties involved. Do not discuss the details of the accident except with the police or the Call Manager.

Obtain copies of any written accident reports from the law enforcement officer.

If you damage a parked vehicle or other property and cannot immediately locate the owner, always leave your name and contact information in a secure but conspicuous place where the owner of the property or vehicle can find it.

NEVER leave the scene of an accident without attempting to identify yourself and provide the necessary information.

Carefully assess your vehicle to determine whether it can be driven. Contact the Call Manager to report the accident and, if necessary, to alert them that they might need to provide alternative transportation for the Member.

## **VOLUNTEER DISMISSAL**

Lamoille Neighbors will reassign or dismiss Volunteers when it is in the best interest of Lamoille Neighbors, the program, the Volunteer, and/or a Member. Possible reasons for dismissal may include: Failure to adhere to any Lamoille Neighbors policy, guidelines or procedure or for any inappropriate behavior.

## **PRIVACY POLICY**

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining Members' privacy as well as their own and other Volunteers' privacy. No confidential information should be shared outside the organization. If Volunteers have questions regarding whether or not personal information should be shared, the Volunteer Coordinator should be consulted.

## **Thank you!**

Thank you again for your interest in belonging to this exciting new organization. We expect that your participation will make life easier and more joyful for many in our community. Please communicate openly with us regarding your experience, and with any thoughts or ideas. Our village's success depends on all of us!

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Volunteer Coordinator - Joan Greene 443-433-8750

Call Manager - 802-585-1233 Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10-4. Currently the Call Manager is a Volunteer

In an emergency or with concerns when you can't reach the Volunteer Coordinator call Lisa Dimondstein, Board President 802-233-4179