



**Miracle Hill**  

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**MINISTRIES**

**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

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## From our CEO

Welcome to the Miracle Hill Ministries family! We could not do what we do without the ongoing support and tireless dedication of volunteers across our ministry. We are so grateful that you have decided to join Miracle Hill through volunteering.

Perhaps you are already well acquainted with what we do at Miracle Hill, resulting in your choice to volunteer with us. We are blessed by this eternal investment of your gifts, talents, time, energy, and kindness.



If you are not familiar with Miracle Hill, I hope that by becoming part of our family of volunteers, you will see the beauty of what God is doing here in your time with us.

Our Thrift stores are a ministry in themselves to customers—offering encouragement, a kind word, or prayer. Thrift proceeds are turned into food, shelter, and miracles through the adult and children’s ministry divisions at Miracle Hill.

Lives are being changed on an ongoing basis in Miracle Hill’s shelters for those experiencing homelessness as well as our Christ-centered discipleship programs. Children and youth are given the opportunity to live in safe, stable, and loving homes through Miracle Hill’s Foster Care program.

I believe that I have one of the best jobs in the world in getting to watch God at work in such tangible and dramatic ways each day. I believe you will see the same life transformation as you move about the ministry, and I hope you will find volunteering with us to be one of the best ways you could give of your time and talents.

When you volunteer with Miracle Hill, you are a part of the compassionate services being offered to those most in need. Whether you are organizing clothes in the back room of a thrift store, sitting at a desk answering phone calls, serving a meal to guests, helping to beautify the outside of a facility, ministering directly to a guest through discipleship, or volunteering in one of the other countless ways available here at Miracle Hill, you are partnering with us to accomplish our Mission:

*Miracle Hill exists that homeless children and adults receive food and shelter with compassion, hear the good news of Jesus Christ and move toward healthy relationships and stability.*

I am grateful for your interest in caring for the least and the lost in the Upstate of South Carolina and thankful that you have decided to spend time serving with us. I trust that you will be blessed, even as you are a blessing to guests, staff, and other volunteers at Miracle Hill.

In recent years, Miracle Hill has had an emphasis among staff that as good stewards of God's grace in our lives, we use our gifts to serve one another (1 Peter 4:10-11). Thank you for using your gifts to partner with our staff by serving others! Thank you for sharing in His Grace at Miracle Hill.

**In Christ,**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan T. Duerk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ryan" being the most prominent.

*Ryan Duerk*  
**President/CEO**

# Directory

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# Who We Are

Miracle Hill Ministries is the largest and most comprehensive provider of shelter, food, and support services for homeless individuals and families in Upstate South Carolina. Founded in 1937, we are a Christ-centered nonprofit dedicated to serving the least and the lost through rescue missions, recovery programs, foster care, and workforce development. With a mission to help hurting people move toward wholeness through the hope of Jesus Christ, Miracle Hill transforms lives across a wide network of ministries and facilities.

## Our Programs

### ➤ **Rescue Missions (4 locations):**

- Greenville Rescue Mission
- Spartanburg Rescue Mission
- Cherokee County Rescue Mission
- Shepherd's Gate (for women and children)

### ➤ **Recovery Programs (2):**

- Overcomers (men's addiction recovery)
- Renewal (women's addiction recovery)

### ➤ **Family Ministry Center:**

Provides spiritual guidance, discipleship, and life skills to strengthen families.

### ➤ **Foster Care Community:**

A dedicated residential neighborhood offering safe, loving homes for children in foster care.

- **Foster Care Program:**  
South Carolina's largest private child placing agency, licensing and supporting Christian foster families.
  
- **Food Warehouse – *From God to You*:**  
Distributes food to residents in Miracle Hill programs and to community partners across Greenville County.
  
- **Thrift Ministry:**  
Ten thrift stores that serve as a ministry to the community while generating revenue to support the ministry and offer affordable goods to the public.
  
- **Transitional Homes:**  
Short-term, supportive housing for graduates of Miracle Hill programs as they re-enter the community.
  
- **Social Enterprises – Job Readiness & Revenue Generation:**  
Includes ventures like thrift stores, staffing agency and upcoming projects that equip program graduates with work experience while helping sustain the ministry financially.

***It's been said that "if you can't find a friend in the world, you can find one here."***

“For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger, and you welcomed me, I was naked, and you clothed me, I was sick, and you visited me, I was in prison, and you came to me.”

**(Matthew 25:35-36)**

# Our Mission & Vision

## Our Mission

Miracle Hill exists that homeless children and adults receive food and shelter with compassion, hear the Good News of Jesus Christ, and move toward healthy relationships and stability.

## Our Vision

Our vision is that each South Carolina Upstate County has adequate and accessible housing options for homeless men, women, and children. Compassionate services that point individuals to Christ and move them toward wholeness, stability, and healthy critical relationships.

- Miracle Hill plays a leadership and facilitative role, with local services shaped by and made possible through resources provided by like-minded Christians in the communities served.
- Miracle Hill is a catalyst for spiritual, emotional and physical health for those who serve as well as for those served.

## Our Volunteer Mission Statement

*Miracle Hill Ministries' volunteer program exists to connect people who have a desire to share their God-given talents with those in our care by offering personal opportunities that are meaningful to them and beneficial to the ministry.*

## We Need You

We are blessed to have many different partners (*individuals, churches, foundations, businesses*) that help us achieve our mission. The needs are many and we wouldn't be able to continue our services without the help of those around us.

# Volunteer Policies & Procedures

Miracle Hill Ministries recognizes the critical role of its volunteers, and is extremely grateful for the dedication, time, compassion and energy provided to guests across our ministries. Understanding and abiding by the following policies is critical in treating our guests in a manner that reflects biblical character, shows respect for the value and dignity of all people, recognizes the need for protection and well-being of all and is God-honoring.

***Violation of one or more of the policies described here on pages 9-14 can result in dismissal from volunteer duties at Miracle Hill Ministries.***

## 1. CONFIDENTIALITY

- a) Observe, maintain and protect confidentiality regarding our guests.
- b) Avoid sharing any information with others that may identify one of our guests.
- c) Any information shared with you by a child, sibling, roommate, or a staff member (for specific purposes of working with an individual child) must be kept **strictly** confidential.
- d) Do not share any personal information about our guests (children or adults) online, including social media outlets or with anyone outside of Miracle Hill Ministries.
- e) Refrain from taking pictures of our guests. No pictures or videos may be taken of children in our care at any time. You must have a signed waiver authorizing you to do so with adults.
- f) Never ask a staff member about the circumstances of a particular child. Our staff is bound by a confidentiality pledge and may not divulge information.

- g) For the emotional and physical protection of the children in our care, the SC Department of Social Services dictates with whom they may have contact and the frequency of that contact.
- h) It is not within the scope of a volunteer's responsibility to help a child contact family members or other previous caretakers. A volunteer should never agree to mail a letter for a child or promise to make a phone call for them.

## **2. APPROPRIATE ATTIRE**

- a) Volunteers are asked to maintain modest and respectful dress attire while serving.
- b) No sweats, spaghetti strap tops, low cut tops, yoga or tight-fitting pants, short shorts or skirts, torn clothing, or open-toed shoes (i.e.: flip flops)

## **3. AUTHORITY**

- a) The MHM staff member who is in direct care of our guests is the authority in charge.
- b) Please direct any questions or concerns you may have about our guests regarding needs, schedules, behavior, discipline, programs, etc. to the facility staff on duty.

## **4. PHYSICAL CONTACT**

- a) Avoid being alone with any guest (child or adult) at any time, unless otherwise specified. If the nature of the volunteer task calls to be alone with the guest, the volunteer should be in sight of a window, open door, etc.

- b) Your interaction with any guest (child or adult) is to take place in open common areas. Volunteers are not permitted to be in guests' bedrooms or bedroom hallways.
- c) Do not accompany children in our care to the bathroom. Do not change diapers, take a toddler to go "potty," give a resident a bath or help a child change clothes. The staff on duty will take care of any type of bathroom needs.
- d) Avoid initiating or asking for any physical contact with adult guests. Many guests have suffered traumatic situations and any physical touch (hugging, holding hands, etc.) can be an emotional trigger. Appropriate physical contact **is only permissible when initiated by the guest** (examples of appropriate physical contact are a hug from the side and holding hands during prayer).
- e) Avoid horseplay or tickling children. Avoid any situation where your intentions could be misinterpreted by a child.
- f) Do not allow children in our care to sit on your lap.
- g) Giving a child a hug is permissible with the child's permission, or initiation, but be very intentional to hug from the side with an arm around the shoulders.

## 5. INTERACTION WITH GUESTS

- a) Do not give guests your phone number or home address.
- b) There is no tolerance for romantic relationships with our guests or staff at any of our facilities.
- c) Refrain from offering medical, legal, or financial advice to any of our guests. Any requests for such should be referred to the director of the facility or staff member on duty.

- d) Do not transport any guests in our care without approval from a volunteer coordinator and appropriate background checks.
- e) A volunteer should never transport a child alone.
- f) Avoid engaging with current guests on social media.

## **6. PERSONAL CONDUCT**

- a) Miracle Hill Ministries is a faith-based organization and with training, volunteers are free to share the Gospel with our guests should the opportunity present itself.
- b) Because our ministry depends on volunteers to support our guests and services in many ways, it is critical that you perform your services to the best of your ability, arriving on time, and maintaining Miracle Hill's mission as your primary focus.
- c) If you are unable to fulfill your volunteer assignment at a particular time, please call the facility with which you are volunteering and inform them well ahead of your assigned time to arrive.
- d) Consistently act with compassion and professionalism.
- e) Maintain an environment free of harassment (physical, sexual, or verbal), discrimination, and unprofessional conduct.
- f) If you see any suspicious behavior or signs of abuse, please report it immediately to the staff member on duty. If the on-duty staff is the one in suspect, report it to the volunteer coordinator.
- g) Respect the cultural, religious, and political views of our guests. Refrain from getting into debates with guests about any such topics.
- h) Volunteers are expected to refrain from conduct that may be dangerous to others.

- i) When a volunteer uses their personal vehicle for MHM business, they have two options for recovering costs. Volunteers may choose between deducting actual gas and oil used or take a mileage deduction at the rate of .14 cents per mile on their annual IRS Tax Return. Volunteers may also add parking fees and tolls should those be incurred.
- j) Miracle Hill Ministry facilities are smoke and tobacco-free environment. Please do not smoke or vape while on the premises at any facility.
- k) If the time comes that you can no longer volunteer for your assigned task, please inform a volunteer coordinator. Do not turn over your responsibilities to a friend. Recommendations are welcome, but every volunteer must go through the interview process.

## **7. GIFTS**

- a) Do not give gifts or money to guests. Gifts should only be made through an organized giving program, such as a donation or church/corporate partnership.
- b) Do not accept gifts or money from guests for any reason.
- c) If volunteers see a need for a particular guest, they are to speak to the volunteer coordinator to legitimize the need and discuss the best way to meet that need.

## **8. GROUP VOLUNTEERING**

- a) Each group will need a designated leader who completes the full onboarding process and is responsible for communicating important information to the group.
- b) The group leader will send a list of all volunteer names to the appropriate contact the week prior to the volunteer workday.

- c) All volunteers serving are required to sign the Miracle Hill volunteer waiver.
- d) Chaperones for groups must maintain a ratio of 5 youth to every 1 chaperone.
- e) Chaperones must be representative of the gender(s) included in the group. (If there are boys and girls in the group, chaperones should be male and female.)
- f) Chaperones must always be present.
- g) Chaperones of the same gender must go with the students into the bathroom and stay with them until returning to the group.

## 9. VOLUNTEER AGE AND SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

### a) Individual Adult Volunteers (Age 18+)

Volunteers aged 18 and older may serve independently at any approved location, subject to orientation and role-specific requirements.

### b) Youth Volunteers (Ages 14–17)

- May volunteer with prior approval when accompanied by an adult chaperone, following a 1:5 adult-to-youth ratio.
- Parental or guardian consent is required.
- Youth (*ages 16–17*) may volunteer independently in Miracle Hill Thrift Stores to complete community service hours, provided a parental or guardian consent form is on file.

### c) Children (Ages 10–13)

- Children aged 10–13 may volunteer only when directly accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
- Volunteers wishing to bring children must receive advance guidance from the Volunteer Coordinator prior to arrival.
- Children must remain with the parent or guardian at all times while on the premises.

- Facilities may designate certain areas as off-limits for volunteers with children.
- Children under 14 may not participate in food preparation activities. This includes:
  - Cooking or baking in facility kitchens
  - Operating kitchen appliances or commercial equipment
  - Handling knives, raw meat, or hot surfaces
  - Serving from hot trays, steam tables, or open flame sources

#### **d) Children (Ages 9 & under)**

- Not eligible for volunteer service unless part of a pre-approved family service opportunity in limited roles (*e.g., donation drives or event-based service at designated sites*).
- Approval must be obtained in advance, and the child must be directly supervised by their parent or guardian at all times.

*Revised by Senior Leadership Team: June 2025*

## **10. TRACKING VOLUNTEER HOURS**

- Volunteers are critical to our ministry in many ways. Not only in helping to care for our guests, but volunteers create added value to all that we do. We are often asked by churches and other organizations to quantify our volunteer base and hours served. Sometimes this information is influential in our ability to obtain funds from grant sources and other entities. With multiple sites, various ministries and many willing volunteers, consistently tracking our volunteers is a challenge.
- Because we value volunteers, we want to ensure that we capture information from all who come to serve. We utilize an electronic database to store this information and accuracy is important. Volunteers are expected to **check in and out on the iPad or computer that is located at the facility where you are serving.** Please speak to the Volunteer Coordinator at each facility to learn where and how to check-in & out when you serve.

## 11. CHAPEL/DEVOTIONAL SPEAKER GUIDELINES

Your ministry of serving as a Chapel or devotional speaker at Miracle Hill is both a tremendous opportunity and an awesome responsibility. The homeless and/or addicted population of guests is a fertile field desperately needing the seeds of the Gospel and the principles of Biblical life change. You are one of God's special tools in helping that to happen. You are our partners, and we need your cooperation to maximize our ministry opportunities and minimize frustrations. The guidelines below will help multiply your effectiveness as you minister and assist the Ministry in its task to spiritually assist each guest.

- **LENGTH OF THE SERVICE** – Morning devotion / chapel services should last no longer than 20 minutes. The evening chapel service should be no longer than 30 minutes with the sermon lasting no more than 20 minutes. Since chapel is not optional, chapels are most effective if you keep the service **varied** and within 30 minutes. You, and the members of your group, are asked to be available before and after the service to take advantage of opportunities to interact with the guests.
- **PARTICIPANTS**---Chapel service participants should be mature, right-living, non-judgmental, mercy spirited, Bible-committed believers. Our preference is for experienced pastors to be the primary speakers. All Chapel speakers must be approved by the Facility Director or the director's designee in advance of the speaking date. A regular chapel speaker may find an emergency replacement on his/her own on a **one-time basis** but should never give up his slot on a regular basis to others. Should you have difficulties in fulfilling your obligation, our staff is more than willing to assist by finding a replacement on a temporary or permanent basis.
- **PREFERRED SUBJECTS**---Chapel speakers are encouraged to speak on the following: (1) Salvation, (2) Christian growth and discipleship, (3) Christian character, (4) addictive behavior and its remedies, (5) and healthy relationships. There is a wealth of material from God's word on these topics. We would love for chapel services to be primarily teaching, and even interactive. A real need is for Bible teaching on relationships. Surveys have shown that most or all our guests struggle with building, re-building, and/or maintaining Christ-honoring and healthy relationships. This would also include teaching about healthy ways of leaving behind unhealthy and dysfunctional relationships. Because MHM is non-denominational, not a church, and has a specific focus---the following subjects are **not** appropriate for chapel consideration: **(1) Bible translations, (2) details of eschatology, (3) denominational differences, (4) charismatic gifts, (5) theological differences, (6) controversial issues of separation (movies, TV, music styles), etc., and (7) political or racial issues.**

**The Bible versions available in our facilities are the ESV, NASB, NIV (1984), and NKJV.** Many would have their own copies of the NIV, or ESV. We also ask that you teach only from the Protestant canon (the 66 books in the above translations).

- **AUDIO EQUIPMENT**---A pulpit microphone is generally provided for use in each of the facilities if necessary. Some facilities have additional equipment for sermon notes and videos. To take advantage of these amenities please ask the staff to assist you in operating the equipment in advance of the event. The speaker may choose to bring their own audio equipment but should inform the staff in advance.
- **FOLLOW UP**---Life-changing decisions (e.g. salvation, surrender, etc.) need to be recorded on decision forms for MHM counselor follow-up. This helps us work better in partnership with you. These decision forms are generally behind the pulpit and, when completed, may be left on the pulpit or turned into staff or at the Guest Information Desk when you leave. Our staff will gladly follow up with them, but we need the information from you.
- **CHURCH ATTENDANCE**---While it is probably not a good idea to make blanket invitations for MHM guests to attend your church, there may be times when your church will be a good fit for some of our guests. Program guests will have some restrictions about attending outside church. You should check with the staff before inviting. In most cases, you would need to provide transportation and probably lunch since the lunch service time may end before the guest returns. You should keep in mind that in some cases our guests may be required to be in chapel here at times which might conflict with your local church services.
- **GENERAL DO'S AND DON'TS**
  - **Don't** give guests money for any reason. Don't do personal favors for them.
  - **Don't** give out your phone number or address to guests.
  - **Don't** get involved in guest disputes with one another or the MHM staff or rules.
  - **Don't** ask guests to provide any special music and/or testimonies in chapel. They are here to learn from our chapel guests.
  - **Don't** "talk down" to the guests. Words like "drunk," "bum," etc. are always inappropriate terms to use. Demeaning terms or sermons are always out of place. Screaming at or berating guests will never be tolerated. You forfeit your chapel slot should these occur.
  - **Do** remember that many of our guests "don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Visiting and encouraging them before and after the service works well.
  - **Do** respect guest privacy. Don't take pictures of MHM guests.
  - **Do** pray for guest needs you become aware of; but don't give out legal or counseling advice.
  - **Do** please enter and exit the building through the main entrance and **make sure** that you sign in the volunteer log before going down to the chapel. If you have a mixed gender group, please ensure their safety by staying together as a group. Some dorms have windows. Our guests are not always modest.

- **Do** please notify a staff member or leave a note at the desk of any problems you may encounter. Our guests are aware that they may not leave chapel (except in case of an emergency and as noted above), they may not disrupt chapel, and that they are to show respect to chapel volunteers.
- **Do** contact the facility during the day for scheduling issues, especially if something happens and you cannot come.
- **Do** be aware that occasionally Facilities may schedule a special event (film or concert) which may last longer than the regular chapel time slot.

***SAMPLE SERMON TOPICS NEEDED AT MHM, IN ADDITION TO  
THE GOSEL MESSAGE PRESENTATION***

Anger	Bitterness	Blame Shifting
Choices, Consequences	Conflict Resolution	Decision Making
Dedicated Life	Depression	Devotional Life
Fear, Worry	Finances	Forgiveness
Friendships	God's Will	Grief, Loss
Guilt, Shame	Heaven	Hope
Loneliness	Overcoming	Patience
Prayer	Priorities	Relationships
Self-Control	Sharing Your Faith	Temptation
Thought-Life	Time Management	Trials, Suffering
Trust, Faith	Vocation	Work, Ethics



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