



Plowshares

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Dear Friend,

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for Plowshares! Our volunteers are the “hands behind the plow” and without them we would not be able to feed and care for the many hungry and homeless people who come to us for help. Attached is our *Volunteer Handbook*, designed to provide you with:

- a brief background of Plowshares and our on-site programs;
- familiarity with our mission statement; and
- a summary of our expectations for Plowshares volunteers.

We hope that after you read through this information you will have a clear understanding of your role as a volunteer and how we can best work as a team to fulfill our common goals.

We welcome you to Plowshares, and thank you for taking your valuable time to consider the needs of the less fortunate. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either Rhonda, our Operations Manager, or myself, both at 462-8582.

We look forward to your help in caring for those in need in our community!

Sincerely,

Marlene Kurowski
Executive Director



Plowshares Mission Statement

That no one in our community go hungry

***To operate a community-supported facility
where services, advocacy, and education help
eliminate the causes of hunger and poverty***

***To maintain a supportive and consistent
environment where all are treated with
respect, justice and dignity***

What is Plowshares?

The basic mission of Plowshares Peace and Justice Center, founded in 1983, is "That no one in our community go hungry" and to treat everyone with respect, justice and dignity. Hundreds of thousands of hot, nutritious meals have been served to the hungry in our Community Dining Room, and over the years we have expanded to add various other programs and services for the needy. In January 2008 we moved into our newly built home at 1346 S. State, and in February 2009 we began serving both lunch and dinner, five days a week. Our current programs are as follows:

Description of Agency Services

The Plowshares **Community Dining Room** provides free, hot, nutritious meals prepared and served by volunteers Monday through Friday at lunch, 11:30 – noon, and dinner: 5:30 – 6:00 open to all.

The **Meals on Wheels** program delivers free hot, nutritious meals to disabled and/or homebound seniors in the Ukiah area each weekday.

Plowshares' **Homeless Services**, available during our regular meal time hours, include: haircuts, personal care supplies, use of a phone, a mailing address, message service, dog food, etc. **Outreach workers** from other agencies also provide HIV/Hep C testing, flu shots, mental health outreach and other services, information and connections.

Our **Food Share** program collects surplus groceries from area stores and businesses, and we then deliver what we cannot use to the Ukiah Food Bank.

Plowshares is a **worksite** for individuals performing court-ordered community service hours in lieu of jail time or fines. Please do not question other workers about this.

We are one of the frontline agencies for **emergency meals** in Ukiah if disaster strikes.

Our **peace and justice** philosophy focuses on addressing injustice and poverty through collaboration with other local agencies, media, and government.

We participate in **advocacy efforts** with our local, state, and national legislators on issues related to alleviation of poverty and hunger.

The **Plowshares Advocate**, our monthly newsletter, informs the public about the concerns of the disenfranchised, the work we are doing at Plowshares, and the ways in which the community cares for its own neediest members through our program.

Who's Who at Plowshares

On any given day you will find a unique mix of people working together to keep Plowshares running smoothly. Our **Executive Director** is responsible for overall administration, including finances and fundraising, writing our monthly newsletter, supervising staff, and overseeing the planning that supports Plowshares' mission. The director carries out the goals and objectives of Plowshares' **Board of Directors**, acts as a liaison with the community at large, and ensures that we are following our mission statement.

The **Operations Manager** oversees the kitchen and dining room to create and serve our wonderful and varied menus with the best use of available materials. This means scheduling and supervising volunteers and staff in food prep, dining room set-up, service and clean-up, Meals on Wheels delivery. The Operations Managers makes sure that everything runs smoothly, that our meals are safe and healthy, and that guests find a safe, welcoming atmosphere where they are treated with hospitality and respect.

The **Office Manager/Executive Assistant** manages the office, the bookkeeping and payroll, writing and publishing our monthly newsletter, assists the Executive Director and other staff with paperwork aspects of our programs, and helps guests and workers in other ways.

Program Assistants know how to get the work done, and where to find things! Your work may be supervised by these hardworking staff during your time here. The Program Assistants also oversee the distribution of mail, dog food, personal care supplies, etc.; assists with phone use, haircuts, and other services for the homeless; keeps the public areas clean and orderly; and acts as a supportive and welcoming contact person for the guests.

We have a different crew of **cooks and servers** for each meal every day, sometimes different crews on different weeks. We also have an ever-changing crew of **community service, rehabilitation, regular volunteers, and other program workers** who set up and clean up the dining room, do food prep, wash dishes and pans, etc. In our eyes they are all volunteers; please do not ask anyone why they are here or whether their work was court-ordered.

Outreach workers from other agencies sometimes use our site as a convenient way to disseminate information and make referrals. They visit with guests to build trust and awareness of programs for substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, etc.

Our guests are why we are here. Please treat them with confidentiality and respect.

A Word About our Guests

One of Plowshares' basic principles is to consider the recipients of our services as our honored guests, to be treated with the same respect we give to anyone else.

Our guests come from all circumstances and walks of life. Men, women and children of all ages, races and religions come to Plowshares for help, representing a variety of social and financial situations. Some are homeless. Some are individuals or families with homes who are struggling to provide food and meet other needs. Others are unemployed, or trying to live on a low-paying job, pension, disability, or welfare check. Seniors, veterans, single parents and even employed people all have need of a free hot meal from time to time. All are welcome, no questions asked.

Some of our guests struggle with mental illness. Others are living in the haze of drug or alcohol addiction. Many are illiterate. Working at Plowshares, you may be surprised, shocked or saddened by what you see here. You may experience strong feelings of pity, repulsion, anger or disdain toward a particular individual. These feelings are normal, and all of us have felt this way at times. Please do not let this prevent you from acting respectful at all times. Bear in mind that our mission statement provides the guiding principles for all interactions at Plowshares, and that treating others with respect, justice and dignity is as important as the hot meal and other services we provide.

We have developed certain policies regarding interactions between workers and guests to avoid relationships that create potential detriment to our guests or operations, a negative or unprofessional work environment, or concerns regarding safety, security, or morale. It is of the utmost importance to protect the safety and dignity of all who come to Plowshares. Please familiarize yourself with these simple common-sense guidelines:

Plowshares volunteers:

1. Shall not engage in any financial transactions with our guests. This includes:
 - Borrowing or lending money.
 - Buying or selling items of any kind.
 - Purchasing items for a specific guest.
 - Trading for goods or services.
 - Employing guests.
2. Shall not ask guests for personal favors, or grant them personal favors.
3. Shall not show favoritism toward individual guests.
4. Shall not espouse any political or religious doctrine to guests.
5. Shall not invite guests to their homes, or visit guests at their residences.
6. Shall not transport guests to or from the dining room.
7. Shall respect guest confidentiality at all times. *(Do not tell others who comes here.)*

Thank you for respecting these important guidelines.

A Word About our Neighbors

Plowshares has worked very hard to cultivate a positive relationship with our neighbors. Not everyone wants to live near a Community Dining Room, and we respect the concerns of our neighbors for the safety and quality of the neighborhood.

Our use permit contains guidelines regarding the hours we are open to the public. It is imperative that meals be served on time, partly so that hungry guests do not have to wait to eat, but also so that we can clear the premises in a timely manner after the meal.

Please treat our neighbors with respect. If you see litter on our street, pick it up. If you are aware of a neighbor with a complaint or concern, please inform our director or a staff member. We are committed to keeping our surrounding area a safe, pleasant place for the entire community.

A Word About our Board

Plowshares is a nonprofit organization governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Board meetings are held onsite on the third Tuesday of each month, from 4:00 to 6:00. The public is always welcome to attend, and there are occasional openings for new members. For more information about our board, please speak with the director.

How Do I Fit In?

Being a volunteer at Plowshares is like being an employee. We utilize basic rules of behavior that you would expect at any job - neatness, honesty, promptness and respectful behavior. We also ask that you dress modestly and avoid provocative clothing.

As with any job, there is a chain of command. It is important to remember that our paid staff is responsible for the safety and well-being of our guests and the organization as a whole. Please go to a staff member if you have a special request, need, conflict or problem. Occasionally staff may make a decision you do not agree with. We hope that you can continue to work together harmoniously in a cooperative environment. We ask that all volunteers agree to comply with the following:

- Be aware of and sympathetic with Plowshares' philosophy and mission.
- Work with staff, volunteers, and guests in a respectful, cooperative manner.
- Realize that all of our rules have a reason and a history, and please be willing to follow them even if they don't seem necessary; ask staff if you need clarification.
- Be willing to work with individuals of different socioeconomic levels, particularly the chronically poor and those in crisis.

Additional Volunteer Responsibilities

Be Dependable. Please notify staff if you cannot make your regularly scheduled shift. We can usually find a substitute if we are given enough advance warning. And since we work in close quarters with lots of people, please *don't* come in if you are sick.

Be Flexible. Sometimes we do not have enough positions to accommodate everyone's first choices. You may even be asked to shift your hours to give others a chance to volunteer. Or cooks may arrive to find the menu has been altered to include a special donation that just arrived. The overall needs of the agency are always foremost when we make changes to your daily routine. Please be patient with the little surprises and setbacks that can be part of daily life at Plowshares. We always try to make the best of ever-varying resources.

Be Safe. Accidents can happen easily if you are not careful. All of our volunteers are covered by volunteer accident insurance secondary to your own insurance coverage. Rather than dwell on insurance, however, we'd rather focus on safe practices to avoid accidents and contagion. Some simple guidelines:

- **Never** pick up more than you can safely lift. Use your knees to lift heavy things. When in doubt, get a staff person to help you with something heavy or difficult.
- **Never** use equipment you have not been trained to use.
- Report any safety hazards you may notice to staff at once.
- Wear comfortable, work-appropriate clothing and shoes (closed-toe).
- Take your time. Saving time is not worth risking injury.
- Report all accidents, however small, to staff immediately.
- Wash your hands before touching food, and use alcohol sanitizer in dispensers.

Let Us Know Your Needs. Our staff is here to help make your job easier. If you have questions about your responsibilities, check with staff and we will be happy to clarify any concerns you may have. We are here to support you in any way we can.

Preserve Confidentiality. It is essential for you to remember that Plowshares offers services with "no questions asked". It is not our place to judge, defend, convert or "improve" our guests in any way. Nor is it appropriate to reveal the identities of our guests to others outside the organization. Please treat our guests with the same respect with which you treat other volunteers and staff. If you have a concern or a problem about a particular guest, please let us know immediately and, again, we will be glad to help.

The path of dignity and respect is a two-way street. Guests, staff and volunteers should all understand the ground-rules for behavior at Plowshares, and we expect everyone to comply with our basic rules of conduct. Foul or abusive language, fighting and intoxicated behavior are not tolerated in or around our facility. If you or someone else feels threatened, abused or maligned in any way by anyone here, it is your responsibility to inform a staff person at once.

Thank you for helping keep Plowshares a safe and peaceful place, and helping us fulfill our mission statement to treat everyone with respect, justice and dignity.

Volunteer Job Description - Cook

The Plowshares cooks have the wonderful responsibility of preparing our daily meals for hungry and appreciative guests. Our meals include a hot main dish, vegetarian alternative, hot vegetable dish, green salad, bread, dessert and beverage. Cooks usually prepare the main dish, vegetarian entrée and hot vegetable; some crews also enjoy baking desserts or making salad dressings, special sauces, etc. if they have enough time. Other workers usually take care of salads, bread, desserts and beverages.

Lunch cooks work from 8:00 until 11 or 11:30, and cook for 60-100+ people each time. They also prepare enough food for about 125 Meals on Wheels recipients. (We always have fewer guests at the first of the month, when food stamps and checks arrive, and sometimes double that number at the end of the month, when more people need help with food.) You are always welcome to stay and eat after you finish cooking, if you wish.

The daily meal is planned ahead of time by the operations manager and the head cook of each crew. Staff helps estimate the quantities needed, and reserves the right to modify a menu to accommodate changes in our inventory. We have all the basics for delicious meals - please try to use food on hand rather than requesting that groceries be purchased for your meal. If you need any special ingredient, please ask staff in advance. (You may also request that an ingredient be placed on our newsletter wish-list, although it takes a month or so that way.) Just ask if you need help finding something, extra hands, or assistance in carrying or pouring hot or heavy dishes. Staff is there to help you!

Please wear an apron, **wash your hands often - anytime you touch a phone, doorknob, your hair or nose, etc.** - hair must covered and/or pulled back from your face (hair nets are available). Always use common sense for safety: **Don't lift more than you can safely handle; use care around hot ovens and open flames; and clean up spills or point them out to staff immediately.** You are welcome to make suggestions for improving a dish, and we encourage you to be creative. Please avoid very spicy dishes, considering children and others with sensitive digestion - or create an alternative for them. Recipe ideas are available on request. You are welcome to bring in your own recipes, or experiment with ingredients at home. Your head cook can offer guidance; we expect our crews to work cooperatively to produce our great Plowshares' meals.

Occasionally you may be asked to pre-cook some meat for the following day's crew. If this presents a problem for you, please notify the operations manager. Likewise, if your group needs something prepared in advance, be sure to inform the operations manager so that everything will be ready for you. It is the head cook's responsibility to plan the next meal with the operations manager, and to be sure the necessary ingredients will be here.

To make the clean-up crew's job easier, we ask that you use oil or non-stick spray in casserole dishes. Dirty pots and other items may be left to soak on the drain board of the pot sink - though our clean-up crew's love cooks who clean their own pans! You may leave the pots and pans for the clean-up workers, but please do clean your work area as you go.

Thanks for offering your skills to help us feed our less fortunate neighbors!

Volunteer Job Description - Server

General Guidelines

Servers are the personal link between Plowshares and our guests. We expect our servers to embody the tenets of respect and dignity in the Plowshares mission. Please treat guests with courtesy and sensitivity, and respect our policy of confidentiality. Put on an apron, **be sure to wash your hands**, use alcohol sanitizer, and put on disposable gloves, found near the serving line, if you are serving food. Hands must be washed, or gloves changed, any time you touch a phone, doorknob, hair, etc. Hair must be covered and/or pulled back from your face (hair nets are available). Please help us observe Health Department rules, and **never** eat or drink behind the serving line.

We usually need five servers - for salad, entree, vegetable, bread, and dessert, in that order. Another dining room worker will help children and seniors through the line with drinks, trays, high chairs, etc., replenishing beverages and watching for spills.

First Things First - Eat if You are Hungry!

Servers are always welcome to eat; our cooks always make a little extra for you. If you wish to eat, please arrive at the dining room 15+ minutes early so you have time to finish eating and wash your hands. If you do not wish to eat, arrive 5-10 minutes early.

Counting and Crowd Control

We have one seating at lunch (11:30-noon) and one at dinner (5:30-6:00) open to all. One worker carries drinks and trays for those who need help. If it's crowded, the door person allows in about ten people at a time, as seats become available. It's important for the door person to keep in contact with the servers, to allow time for replacing empty food inserts or cleaning up spills.

Quantities

Guests can tell you how much or how little they want, within reason. We almost always have plenty for seconds, so they can come back later for more if they want. Please help reduce waste - give children age-appropriate portions. Ask staff if you are unsure. There should always be a vegetarian entrée available.

Seconds

The door person and servers decide when to call "seconds" – sometime after everyone has had "firsts" and new arrivals have mostly stopped, as long as chairs are open and there is enough food remaining. The Health Department requires that we always use a fresh tray or bowl for second servings; never serve food into used dishes.

Finishing Up

If possible, please clean up food that spills on the line during serving – and stay if you can to help clean up the serving line after the meal. Staff can show you how. Be sure to place your used apron in the kitchen washing machine laundry basket, even if it does not seem dirty.

If we have leftover food that can't be used, you may take some home, with permission from staff. Please bring your own container from home for this purpose, and take only one serving per member of your family so that others can have some too. Do not use our Meals on Wheels containers; they are expensive.

Thank you very much for helping us feed our less fortunate neighbors!

Volunteer Job Description - Meals on Wheels Driver & Runner

The Meals on Wheels program delivers a hot meal five days a week to disabled and/or homebound seniors (age 60+) who are unable to prepare meals for themselves. Because you visit vulnerable seniors' homes, we require strong personal references before we let you go out on a Meals on Wheels route. Thank you for understanding this requirement.

The meals are cooked each weekday morning and packed for delivery. We have four routes, each with about 30 seniors, and each with a volunteer driver and "runner" who deliver meals to the seniors' doors. Meals are delivered between 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Route sheets are provided that guide you in driving the most efficient route to deliver the meals. Do not drive the route backward, as seniors know when to expect the meal, and often worry if it is late. Familiarize yourself with the route; maps are available if needed.

Since Meals on Wheels are delivered to seniors with trouble managing on their own, it is helpful as you make deliveries to observe the senior and their surroundings for possible safety issues and/or changes in their appearance or demeanor that might indicate a potential problem. If you suspect depression, abuse, self-neglect, etc. please tell our staff; it could make a life-saving difference. (A driver, for example, observed that a senior had all four burners of his gas stove on full blast to heat the apartment. Staff reported this to the apartment manager, who was able to provide a functioning heater at the apartment.)

All efforts are made to deliver meals personally to each senior on the route. If a senior does not answer the door, this could indicate an urgent problem. You may call their phone number on the route sheet. If you still cannot reach them, write "No Answer" on your route sheet. If you feel there should be immediate intervention, phone Plowshares at 462-8582. Otherwise, report the absence to the staff when you turn in your route sheet.

Never leave a meal out in the open, such as on a doorstep, ledge or in a box. Some seniors who are returning soon may arrange to have their meal placed in a secured, cool, insulated cooler so that it does not spoil or attract animals. **Only** do this if pre-arranged.

Please arrive at Plowshares by 10:45 a.m. Check your route sheet to be sure you understand the delivery plan. Observe address changes, which seniors will not be home that day, or any other special instructions; ask staff for clarification if needed. Check your cooler to ensure that the correct number of salads and desserts have been packed, and that the number of diabetic desserts match the counts shown on the route sheet. Milk is delivered on Mondays. Ensure you have the correct milk count, usually noted on a slip on one of the cartons.

If needed, you can help fill and put covers on the aluminum containers. When loading the meals into the insulated carriers, again be sure you have the correct count and that special meals are included and marked appropriately, i.e., veg, no fish, etc. Please read and observe the "Server" job description if you will be filling the trays with food.

Please be aware that your visit may be a senior's only human contact during the day, and the only way anyone can know if they need emergency assistance. The friendly social visit and welfare check, in combination with the meals, make the difference in most cases between living at home and going into an institution. You are a really important part of these seniors' quality of life! Thank you for helping us provide this vital service.

Ok, I Want to Volunteer!

First the Paperwork

We require all new volunteers to fill out a volunteer application, sign a volunteer agreement, and read a copy of this handbook. Please let staff know if you have specific ideas, interests or skills you want to offer. It is your responsibility to notify us if your address or emergency contact changes - your safety is important to us!

Scheduling

We try to accommodate volunteer preferences as well as we can, but sometimes the job selections and times are limited. If your preferred time slot is taken, we will notify you as soon as an opening becomes available. It is also possible to volunteer during holidays or for occasional special activities such as our monthly newsletter stuffing party.

Orientation

On your first day of work you will be shown around the facility, meet the staff and other volunteers, and be trained in your duties. Please don't hesitate to ask questions - at first it may seem like a lot to learn, but soon you will find your niche.

Checking In

We recommend that you leave purses and other valuable items at home or locked in your car. We also offer lockers in the Volunteer Closet by the office; we have padlocks for your use in the office, just sign one out and put it back when you go home. Plowshares cannot be responsible for your personal belongings. The Volunteer Closet also has a place for hanging coats.

Parking

If possible, please park in the alley that goes south from Wabash to our back gate. Meals on Wheels drivers may park temporarily in the delivery drive behind the building. Please do **not** park in the fire lanes, or in the front parking lot around mealtimes. If you need a taxi, you may use our phone to call Dial-a-Ride at 462-3881.

Phone and Equipment Use

You may make local phone calls from the kitchen phone. Simply pick up the receiver and dial. Volunteers are entitled to occasional use of other equipment such as the copy machine or kitchen items, with permission from a staff member prior to use.

Insurance

If you are hurt while volunteering, notify staff **at once**. Your injury will most likely be covered by our volunteer insurance policy, but you must file a claim with your primary insurance first. Delays in reporting your injury may result in denial of coverage. Please do update us of any changes to your emergency contact info. And most importantly, please observe common sense and health and safety rules at all times to avoid injury.

Checking Out

Please place your used apron in the in the kitchen washing machine. You may take leftovers home only with permission from a staff member, and if you bring a container from home for this purpose. Please do not take home any of our silverware, bowls or other kitchen items, or use Meals on Wheels containers, which are costly items for us.

If your schedule changes, if you cannot come in on a regularly scheduled volunteer day, or if for any reason you are no longer able to volunteer, please notify the operations manager in advance so that we can find a replacement for you.

Volunteer Appreciation

Every year we honor our volunteers with a volunteer appreciation event. You are welcome to bring a guest to this event, where we serve food, give special awards and announce our specially chosen, most extraordinary Volunteer of the Year.

Periodically we feature photos of volunteers, or writing by volunteers, in our monthly newsletter. You might like to write something about what it's like to volunteer here, or why you enjoy volunteering, or poems, little stories about things that happened here, your thoughts on hunger and poverty, etc. Please feel free to submit them to the director for consideration in the newsletter.

Saying Goodbye

Sometimes, as in any business, relationships between people don't work out. We attempt to resolve any conflicts to the satisfaction of all involved. We reserve the right to dismiss volunteers who do not respect our mission and follow our rules, or who cause problems for guests, staff or other volunteers.

Conversely, if volunteering at Plowshares is not your cup of tea, we ask only that you inform us of your decision to leave and, if possible, have an exit interview to tell our operations manager or director how we could have made your time here better. This may provide useful information to us on how we can improve the experience of our volunteers.

Thanks Once Again

Our programs would not happen without the kind generosity of the thousands of volunteers who have contributed their time over the years. In an average year, volunteers donate a conservatively estimated total value of about \$190,000! Your valuable time and skills make Plowshares' program possible, and we very much appreciate your assistance. We hope, in turn, that you will find the work rewarding and fulfilling, and meet new and interesting people that you may never come across in your usual routines.

We are often told that Plowshares is the best thing going. When we see the many different kinds of good-hearted people that come to help with our work, the many empty bellies that are filled every day, and sometimes the entire lives that are changed when people come to Plowshares for help, we have to agree. But we could never do it without the help of our volunteers.

Thank you for being part of Plowshares!