



Learning | Growing | Sharing

Hope *for the* Hungry

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



WELCOME TO HOPE HOUSE!

WHO ARE WE

Hope House is a local outreach ministry of Hope for the Hungry, a global ministry that has been serving communities for over 40 years. Our vision to "Share the Bread of Life with a Starving World" drives us to meet physical, educational, and spiritual needs—empowering people to rise above poverty and transform their communities. Above all, we believe true hope is found in a relationship with Jesus.

OUR PURPOSE

Hope House exists to share the love of Christ with children and families in our community.

Our goals are to:

- LEARN about God's love
- GROW in our love for Him
- SHARE His love with others

We pray that every child and family who walks through our doors experiences God's love through the kindness of our volunteers.

We are excited you have chosen to partner with us at Hope House! Volunteers are the heartbeat of our ministry, and your presence speaks volumes to children and families who often feel unseen. As a volunteer, you play an irreplaceable role—building trust, offering hope, and sharing the love of Christ in ways no one else can. You're desperately needed to share the Gospel with the ones the Lord places before you. Thank you for answering the call!

Jen Sutton

Director of Children's Ministries

Hope for the Hungry

jen@hopeforthehungry.org // 254-913-1953

QUICK LOOK

Ministry Seasons:

- Fall (August - November)
- Spring (January - April)
- Summer (June - July)

Operating Hours:

- Fall/Spring: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:30-6:00pm
- Summer: Tuesdays only, 4:00-5:30pm

Location:

- 730 Saunders
- Across from Southwest Elementary

Closed on school holidays and closures

Contact Information:

- jen@hopeforthehungry.org / 254-913-1953

OUR KIDS

Kindergarten – 6th grade

- Weekly ministry program (**enrollment required**)

7th grade & up

- "Hope House Next Gen" program
 - Provides serving opportunities during our weekly program
 - Only available to older students that have been involved in our ministry in the past.

WHAT WE DO

Hope House is a local outreach ministry serving children and families in the Belton Housing community. We offer a safe, fun environment where kids can play, enjoy snacks, and learn about God's love.

SNACK TIME

Each ministry time will start with a snack bag. This will consist of a sandwich, something salty, something sweet, and a fruit. Occasionally, we will offer a more substantial meal. Please help us remind kids to throw away their trash.

HOMEWORK

Ask kids if they need any help with school work before they play. If they are struggling in a class, try to add teachable moments into what you're doing. {Count jumps out loud, explain how things work or are made, cut playdoh into fractions/shapes, etc.}

FREE PLAY

After a long day at school, students will have supervised free play. During this time, they will have access to board games, puzzles, arts & crafts, etc. They can also play games and play in our backyard.

BIBLE STUDY

To learn more about God's love, we will go through a Bible study, which includes table question time. We will have craft projects and games to reinforce our lesson.

SPECIAL EVENTS

- Family Dinners will occur on the last Thursday of each month. This is a time for families to join us at the Hope House from 6:00-7:00 to enjoy a meal together. It is also a time for the children to share what they have learned during the month.
- There will be other special events, such as field trips, movie nights, park days, and family nights throughout the year. We encourage each of our families, and volunteers, to attend these fun events.
- We also offer various benevolence programs, which allow us to share the Gospel as we meet needs in our community. ("Coats for Kids" and other community events)
- If you hear of a need a family has, please let us know!

WHO WE SERVE

SNAPSHOT OF THE COMMUNITY: SOUTHWEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- 87% of students are economically disadvantaged
- 66.8% are considered “at-risk” of dropping out
- 70.5% of the student body is Hispanic
- 33.8% of students are enrolled in bilingual and English language learning programs
- 82% of students scored below level for math
- 70% of students scored below level for reading

KEY CHALLENGES FOR OUR KIDS:

- Lack reliable adult support and/or supervision at home
- Live in overcrowded or unstable housing
- Raised by someone other than a parent
- Live in high-crime areas
- Impacted by poverty, unsafe environments, or lack of consistent care
- Participate in or experience bullying
- Lack consistent access to resources and support
- Have learning struggles, or emotional challenges
- Feel excluded, misunderstood, and unloved

Poverty consistently predicts a wide range of life outcomes, including long-term effects on both physical and psychological health.

WAYS TO PRAY:

For Children to:

- know Jesus and grow in faith
- understand their worth
- succeed in school
- build healthy relationships

For Families to:

- feel safe and supported
- have basic needs met
- know and serve Jesus
- thrive together

PARTNERS NEEDED

We're looking for volunteers who can serve consistently. Your steady presence allows families to encounter God's love through meaningful relationships rooted in Christ.

ALL VOLUNTEERS

- Build connections by playing games and having fun
- Encourage kids to participate
- Look for and include the outliers
- Engage in conversations
- Participate in activities together
- Support table leaders during Bible study time
- Assist interns as needed
- Help clean up

**** All volunteers and staff members must go through training and pass background checks ****

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

- Serve on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis
- Sign in and wear a name tag at all times.
- Space is limited. Leave valuables in your locked car.
- Dress modestly. We will be bending, reaching, playing with chalk on the sidewalk, etc. so make sure you are appropriately covered to allow for these activities.
- Please do not excessively use your phones during ministry times. They may be used to take photos, videos, or for homework purposes.
- If you are made aware of a need a family has, let Jen know.

TABLE LEADERS

- Facilitate table questions
- Assist with noise levels
- Lead prayer time
- Keep track of and follow up on prayer requests

ROOM SUPERVISORS

- Serve as trusted authority figures
- Maintain a positive environment
- Reinforce rules and offer gentle guidance
- Help reduce noise levels
- Support interns as they lead.

FAMILY DINNER SPONSOR

On the last Thursday of each month, we invite our ministry families to gather and share a meal together. We're looking for churches, businesses, or small groups to sponsor each month by providing dinner for 70 people, along with a team of 8-10 volunteers to help with setup, serving, and cleanup.

VOLUNTEER'S ROLE



BE TRUSTWORTHY

Trust is measured by consistency and commitment. Many of our kids have never experienced faithful family or friends. If you aren't able to attend, please make a habit of spending time in prayer for our ministry during outreach time.



BE PRESENT

Our actions speak louder than words. Take every opportunity to demonstrate love and Christ-like attitudes as you play and teach. Strive to make kids feel loved and important. Listen when the child speaks and find ways to further connect. Use one-on-one time as an opening to pray, either with them or to yourself.



BE A ROLE MODEL

Your presence introduces our kids to college students and adults who encourage them to do well in school. Share about your school experiences. Many of our kids have never thought about finishing high school, much less attending college. Try to open their minds to possibilities. Ask them about their future goals and ambitions and encourage them in their interests.



BE AUTHENTIC

Be prepared to demonstrate a "real" relationship with Christ so our kids can see a difference in your life and want to know why. Be confident to share the Gospel not only through actions, but also in words.



BE A CHEERLEADER

Many times, the only interactions parents have with authority figures are negative. If you see parents, let them know how much you care for their kids and tell them about a POSITIVE attribute you have observed about them. Share with them one story from the day that will make them smile.



BE THE DIFFERENCE!

Studies have shown that it only takes one caring adult to change the direction of a child's life. Compared with peers identical on all background characteristics, children with mentor were 73% more likely to volunteer, 12% more likely to get frequent exercise, 11% more likely to stay calm and controlled, 10% more likely to show interest in learning or participate in after-school activities, and 28% less likely to feel depressed.

HOPE HOUSE RULES

Follow School Conduct

Children must follow BISD's Code of Conduct. If it's not allowed at school, it's not allowed at Hope House.

Dress for Play

Children should wear clothing that allows them to move freely and participate in activities. If not dressed appropriately, they may be sent home.

Stay Until Closing

Children may only leave early if a parent arrives or sends a written note. Ministry ends at 6:00pm, and walkers will be dismissed at that time.

Come Healthy

If a child misses school because they are sick, they may not attend Hope House. Visibly sick children will be sent home.

Put Electronics Away

Phones and devices must stay in backpacks while at Hope House.

Visitors Welcome

Parents and family members are welcome to visit. All guests must follow Hope House rules or they will be asked to leave.

Attendance Policy

If a family is not attending regularly, their children will be removed from the roster and replaced with someone from our waitlist.

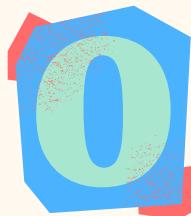


S.O.A.R. TO SUCCESS AT HOPE HOUSE!



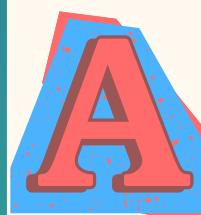
Stay Safe

- ✓ Run and play outside only
- ✓ Keep doors closed
- ✓ Stay visible and on property at all times
- ✓ Look both ways before crossing the street



Obey Our Volunteers

- ✓ Listen the first time
- ✓ Cooperate and show respect
- ✓ Follow rules with a good attitude
- ✓ Do not leave until it's time to go



Always participate

- ✓ Keep phones in backpacks
- ✓ Pay attention during lesson time
- ✓ Take part in all group games
- ✓ Be a good example for others



Respect others, ourselves, and Hope House

- ✓ Use kind words and actions
- ✓ Choose kindness, even when it's hard
- ✓ Keep Hope House clean and tidy
- ✓ Do not climb on furniture or handrails

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

VOLUNTEER SAFETY GUIDELINES

To protect both children and volunteers, Hope House follows strict safety protocols. These guidelines are non-negotiable and must be followed at all times.

Never Be Alone with a Child

- Volunteers and staff must never be alone with a child for any reason.
- Do not follow a child into the bathroom.
- If you leave the Hope House property, take at least one other person with you.

Appropriate Physical Contact

- Side hugs, high fives, handclapping games, arm around shoulder
- Unacceptable contact includes front hugs, sitting in laps, kissing, or any contact with private areas

CHILD SAFETY & REPORTING POLICY

Protecting children is our highest priority. Physical punishment of any kind is strictly prohibited. If a staff member or volunteer witnesses or hears a report that a child has been harmed—whether at Hope House or elsewhere—it will be reported immediately. All staff and volunteers are mandatory reporters and are legally required to report any suspicion of abuse / neglect to Child Protective Services. To ensure reports are handled properly, Jen will assist in submitting reports.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS & 3-STRIKE POLICY

At Hope House, we're committed to creating a safe, welcoming, and fun space for every child. To help maintain that environment, we use a 3-Strike policy to guide behavior.

For minor issues, a gentle reminder is usually all it takes. These quick check-ins help children recognize their actions and give them a chance to reflect, reset, and grow- while ensuring consistent boundaries.



Given when a child continues to break a rule after being warned.



A staff member, intern, or room supervisor steps in. This level is used for moderate violations or when earlier behavior hasn't improved.

Interventions may include:

- A "do-over" to practice the correct behavior
- A leader initiated conversation with the involved peer to resolve conflict
- A change of activity or location
- Sitting out from playtime

Table leaders will supervise the child for the remainder of playtime. Parents will be informed of the incident.



The child must go home for the day. Parents will be contacted and informed of the situation. The child will be suspended from the program for one week.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP!

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS,
PLEASE CONTACT:

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