



FAMILY HOUSE

Group Volunteering FAQ

How can I volunteer as a group?

Family House has many opportunities for community groups to get involved. Group volunteers sign up to prepare dinners, bake treats, create snack bags, host pantry/hygiene item drives or create their own unique events.

Past volunteer events include hosting a movie or trivia night, putting together an outdoor cookout, or sponsoring a festive seasonal event.

How do I schedule a date to volunteer?

To schedule a dinner, fill out our [Dinner Volunteer Sign Up](#) form.

To schedule a baking, drive, or other event, fill out our [General Group Volunteer Sign Up](#) form.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your proposed event, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@familyhouse.org or call (724) 485-9210.

What time should I come to volunteer?

We ask that dinners are served between 5pm and 6pm. You may arrive as early as 3pm to prepare the meal you are cooking for our guests.

For other events, your group is welcome almost any time of the day! Simply fill out the [General Group Volunteer Sign Up](#) form to let us know when to expect you.

When would my event be most impactful?

Family House occupancy fluctuates throughout the week, with most guests staying with us from Sunday to Thursday. Scheduling your event for one of our peak occupancy days will increase the impact of your volunteerism.

Can I volunteer on a weekend?

Absolutely! While weekend occupancy is lower than during the week, guests are always appreciative of those volunteering their time.

How many people can I bring to volunteer?

We recommend a maximum of 15 volunteers per event. If you plan to have more than 15 volunteers, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator to discuss your options.

How many people would my group cook for?

Your group should prepare to cook for 60-90 guests, unless otherwise specified by the Volunteer Coordinator.

What facilities does Family House provide?

Family House is equipped with multiple appliances and helpful supplies as well as a large multi-purpose room for unique events. This includes:

- a five-station kitchen (five ovens, five stovetops, and five prep spaces)
- Three outdoor grills
- Large refrigerators (for leftovers)
- Several pots, pans, and kitchen utensils
- We have limited food storage containers for volunteer use. Please plan on bringing disposable aluminum pans for serving dinners.

If your group is coming in to prepare dinner, all ingredients and food elements must be supplied by the group. We also ask that you provide paper products such as plates, napkins, and utensils.

What are my responsibilities as a volunteer?

Our dinner volunteers are responsible for:

- Crafting a well-balanced meal for 60-90 guests
- Bringing all the ingredients necessary for your meal
- Providing paper products and utensils (we have limited dishes and silverware)
- Preparing and serving dinner
- Post-meal clean up

Our baking volunteers are responsible for:

- Creating yummy treats for approximately 60-90 guests
- Supplying all necessary ingredients
- Post-baking clean up

Additionally, please wear gloves when you serve meals to prevent the spread of germs. Many of our guests are hospital patients and may have compromised immune systems.

A large part of the volunteer experience is taking the time to interact and engage with our guests. Please encourage your team to do so. Chatting with volunteers is a much-appreciated change of pace outside of the typically high-stress situations guests experience in the hospitals.

Each of these responsibilities are extremely important to the success of your volunteering and how it impacts our guests here at Family House. We want your group to enjoy serving our guests as much as they enjoy the food you provide for them!

What are some recommended menus to prepare?

Whatever you plan on making, it should be a well-balanced meal that is relatively easy to prepare for 70+ people. We do ask you ensure your food is not too spicy.

Some successful meals in the past have been breakfast for dinner, stir fry, chicken with veggies, pasta with veggies, chili, sliders, sloppy joes, a taco bar, and 'themed' dinners such as Polish, Irish, etc.

Can I make food at home to serve guests?

You can only bring prepared food if it is prepackaged or prepared by a professional facility. You could bring Chips Ahoy cookies or rotisserie chicken from Giant Eagle... but not a lasagna from home. However, you are welcome to make your special homemade dishes using our house facilities!

Should I bring beverages?

Totally up to you! Family House is equipped with coffee, tea, water, and vending machines for our guests, but volunteer provided beverages are always welcome.

****Please note that Family House does not allow alcoholic beverages inside our facility****

What do I do about leftovers?

Leftovers can be stored in the community refrigerator. Stored food is great for our guests who couldn't make it back from the hospital in time for dinner.

Do I have to be concerned about dietary restrictions?

We do not require you to make gluten-free, vegetarian, or other restricted diet options. However, you are welcome to provide alternative diet options if you would like.

What is the address for the house?

5308 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15224

Where can I find parking for my group?

With limited parking, our facility cannot accommodate volunteer vehicles.

Metered street parking is available nearby and is free after 6pm. Additional parking can be found at the UPMC Shadyside Hospital Parking Garage at **520 S. Aiken Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15232**. We can offer your group \$5 parking vouchers for the Shadyside garage upon your departure.

You are welcome to pull under the portico in front of our main entrance to unload any food or other items before parking your car.

I'm feeling a little sick the day I'm meant to volunteer. Should I stay home?

If you or a member of your group are sick the day you are meant to volunteer, please do stay home. Some of our guests have compromised immune systems and are more at risk to catch symptoms from outside sources. The safety and health of our guests is our priority.

Unanswered questions?

You may contact our Volunteer Coordinator at volunteer@familyhouse.org or by phone at 724-485-9210.

Thank you for all you do as a volunteer! Our volunteers provide our guests with comfort, laughter, and a true “home away from home” experience.