



## 20 Tips for Nurturing Communal Life

1. The community has common prayers, of its own style, at least 3 times a week.
2. The community members have common meals together at least three times a week.
3. The community designates one night a week as "community night" when all members are committed to being present interpersonal sharing, reflection on Christian living, spirituality, social justice, simplicity etc. Community night is also time for "play" and fun. Not every community night has to be about discussion and reflection.
4. All members of the community participate in the maintenance of the community.
5. The decision-making process in the community encourages active participation of all members.
6. Community business meetings occur weekly. Business meetings occur on a **different night** than the designated community night. Frequently business meetings can be attached to a community meal.
7. XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM Local Coordinators/Support people will ordinarily be present on community nights as resource persons, facilitators and as the community develops over the year, as participants.
8. Each community organizes periodic evaluations of its lifestyle (with assistance of local support person ad well as volunteer/mission program staff).

9. The following roles are crucial to community living:

- Convener
- Household coordinator
- Spiritual life coordinator
- Treasurer
- Social Activities coordinator
- Contact person for volunteer/mission program (could be same as convener)

10. Sponsored retreat/renewal programs for its membership:

1. A summer community-building program (and initial **orientation** for new and renewing members)
2. A fall retreat/workshop in mid/late October.
3. A winter get-together/renewal program in late February, early March.
4. A late spring retreat in either May or June. And/or a reorientation at end of the Volunteer cycle.

11. "Friend In Ministry" or Xyz Volunteer/Mission Program "Companions"

12. Religious or sponsoring organization Contact Community (Mfcc)

13. Guidelines about:

relationships, hospitality, social justice, simplicity of life, responsibility and initiative,

14. Suggestions for How to run Community Business meetings

15. Creating a list of suggested "Community Development" topics for Community nights or having community member brainstorm what they'd

like to focus on learn or more about throughout their volunteer mission experience. Along with such brainstormed topics, the Program may want to make sure that a few topics essential to program values are covered during the volunteer commitment.

16. Program provides some household resources for prayer, simplicity and social justice. Program also suggests local resources (people, organizations, etc.)
17. Program Newsletter
18. Lots of honest information up front about the expectations, challenges and benefits of communal life; this means in the recruitment materials and initial conversations, volunteer policies and handbooks, orientation and retreats, etc.
19. Signed covenant (different than the placement agreement)
20. Volunteer/missioners have a say in the design and implementation of their community experience. Program provides initial guidelines and expectations, as well as resources and accountability. However, if the volunteer/missioners are to grow through this experience they must claim it as their own. The claiming begins with the Hope form homework that is "pre-orientation" which is then discussed at the orientation (see worksheet for Community decisions) and then continues through the volunteer/missioners service year
21. Other:

The remaining pages in this packet either give further details about or illustrate the above mentioned tips or provide additional resources for communal understanding and reflection.

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*Community COVENANT*

*Volunteer/Missioner promises to:*

*Pray with the community at least three times a week.*

*Participate in community meals at least three times a week.*

*Participate in a community night once a week which includes meetings, prayers and the on-going spiritual/personal development program.*

*Strive to live a simple life style, experience living with less and share whatever is received from family or friends with the community.*

*Give priority to social and leisure time activities together during the week.*

*Participate in community and MVSC-sponsored retreats.*

*Support the other members of the community through affirmation, listening and concern.*

*Call the other members to community by showing leadership in community development and by seeking solutions to group problems in the community.*

*Signed:*

*Date:*

# Community Living

## The Myths:

- That there will never be any conflicts
- That you will receive 100% support 100% of the time
- That I will be close to everyone
- That all will happen as I dream it to be
- That community just happens and requires no energy or involvement or vulnerability on my part

### 2000 volunteer/missioners

- No cliques
- Everyone will get along and pull their weight
- Agreement
- All be best friends
- Spend free-time together too
- Easy and it happens on its own
- Homogenous group = no problems
- Faith-sharing and prayer A LOT!

Handpicked disciples were not exactly in harmony with each other (or Jesus) most of the time plagued by backbiting, suspicion, confusion, dissension and controversy (see Mark and St. Paul's letters) as with so much of Christian life, this history reminds us not to give up. God clearly call us into community via pour baptisms into the Body of Christ, but living together is difficult and perhaps it was never meant to be easy.

### 2000 volunteer/missioners

- It is difficult and there is conflict
- We all have different expectations
- Nothing is perfect
- We all have bad days
- Personalities can clash or click
- Initially, everybody tries to be nice
- Takes effort and patience
- More fun than expected
- People will surprise you (positively as well as negatively)

## The Realities:

- I will get to know and hopefully enjoy the people I live with and learn from
- I will learn more about my weaknesses and strengths
- I will experience the support of others whose values differ from mine
- I will learn the creative love of AGAPE in diversity - wanting good for the other although I may not necessarily like them.
- I will learn about the value of accountability that authentic community provides
- I will experience the joy of cooperation which may force me to "slow down" or even "cramp my style"

## The Process:

- Presence* (be present and invest time in others)
- Care* (genuine care in the daily tasks of living)
- Respect* (for each other's uniqueness and integrity; have patience with other's limitations while remembering your own)
- Honesty* (communicate around what you are doing, feeling or thinking, etc.) and don't expect others to second-guess you
- Affirmation* (don't constantly look to criticize)
- Cooperation* (be willing to negotiate)

*2000 volunteer/missioners on Process requires: balance priorities of self and community, Compromise (includes desire to solve problems). Communication, Initiative to bring about vision, Creativity, Flexibility, Supportive, Time and Effort*

# LIFE IN THE "XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM"

Policies and programs for healthy, wholesome, demanding simple and communitarian Christian living after Orientation.

**ABOUT LIFE IN COMMUNITY:** As a program founded by the ???????, and growing out of the \_\_\_\_\_ Charism, the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM values and emphasizes community life. We look to the \_\_\_\_\_ RULE OF LIFE which calls vowed \_\_\_\_\_ religious to a community life that is inspired, lived and shared as a guide for the significance of community within the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM. \_\_\_\_\_ receive the difficult task of forming a vibrant community life among different ages, sensitivities, personal backgrounds and ministries as an inspired gift. We are open to this gift by looking to the person of Jesus, present among their faith-communities, to energize each person's efforts to live the Gospel. When community is acknowledged as a gift, we are then challenged to live community and to become community - bringing with us our unique talents and contributions, as well as our weaknesses and brokenness and offering them to each other in community and mission. The life of community finds its grounding, energy and support in shared time together and in prayer.

This LIFE IN THE XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM document has been created to provide a common understanding among members of the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM of their voluntarily chosen life of community, simplicity, service and justice awareness.

## **PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS OF COMMUNITY**

The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM Staff has the following expectations for each of the communities:

- 1) The community has common prayers, of its own style, at least 3 times a week.
- 2) The community members have common meals together at least three times a week.
- 3) The community designates one night a week as "community night" when all members are committed to being present for interpersonal sharing, reflection on Christian living, etc.
- 4) All members of the community participate in the maintenance of the community.
- 5) The decision-making process in the community encourages active participation of all members.
- 6) Community business meetings occur weekly. XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM staff recommend that business occur on a different night than the designated community night.

XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM Local Coordinators will ordinarily be present on community nights as resource persons or facilitators.

Each community organizes periodic evaluations of its lifestyle. The first should be at the end of October and after that every three months. The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM Coordinator(s) can help in designing the evaluation so that it helps to build the community in a positive, constructive manner. The community will determine dates for periodic community lifestyle evaluations.

## **ROLES IN COMMUNITY**

The following roles are crucial to community living. Persons in each house take on the different roles described below:

CONVENER: This person gathers agenda from community members and Staff for the community meetings. This person facilitates the meetings, sees that decisions of the community are of a consensus nature and are clear to everyone, and supports follow through. The Convener also acts as the communicator to the community of information from the PROGRAM Staff, the MFCC and others.

TREASURER: This person manages the house bank account, collects a monthly room and board fee from each person and pays community bills. The treasurer makes occasional reports to the community on its financial situation.

PRAYER COORDINATOR: This person organizes the community prayer life seeing to it that agreed-upon times for prayer are prepared by members of the community. The Prayer Coordinator can also contact the Local Coordinator about procuring prayer resources for the community. The Prayer Coordinator can also make arrangements for a Home Liturgy if the community wants to have one.

HOUSEWORK/MEALS/MAINTENANCE COORDINATOR: One person in the community coordinates the housework and meal preparations (puts up lists, maintains a calendar etc.). This person also communicates needs for preventive and remedial maintenance to the community, the landlord and the local coordinator.

Other suggested "roles" that the community should consider negotiating include the community shopper, the VINE contact person (a community member willing to coordinate the community's contribution and input into the Volunteer newsletter), and a social activities coordinator.

These roles can be regularly rotated among community members or they can be adapted to the community style.

## COMMUNITY FINANCES

The finances for each XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM House should be set up in the following manner:

1. Each community has a house treasurer, selected by the community.
2. Each community should have a bank account set up in the community's name. One of the signers on the house account should be the local XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM coordinator. At the end of the
3. There should be some petty cash available for house purchases of food, cleaning supplies, etc.
4. Each community member pays the house treasurer a monthly amount determined by the community, which goes to food, community transportation, kitchen, house supplies and other community expenses.
5. Community members pay for their own personal expenses, LD phone and transportation to work.
6. At the beginning of the volunteer year, each volunteer will pay \$25.00 general fee, which is placed in the XYZ
7. VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM appliance contingency fund. The primary purpose of the fund is to cover repairs, maintenance and replacement of basic appliances and equipment, namely washer, dryer, stove, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner. The Local Coordinator should be contacted concerning such repairs or purchases. The community is responsible for basic up keep of the house (i.e. cleanliness and household purchases) as well as any repairs on luxury items such as a community television, stereo, microwave, etc. with the landlord being responsible for house related repairs.
7. Community members should have their own bank account separate from the house bank account.

## ROLE OF THE "XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM" LOCAL COORDINATOR(S) (i.e. part-time staff)

Local Coordinator(s) are resource persons to the volunteer/missioners and act as the prime support persons. They are present to the communities on a regular basis through attending the weekly community night and providing on-going spiritual and personal development. They are also available to individuals in the communities as the need arises. They are available to help communities or individuals work through job difficulties, learn how to prepare common prayer, mediate discussions, help people find some specially-needed service or resource, etc. The Local Coordinator arranges for each volunteer to have a "Friend In Ministry". They can help you as a volunteer, to find a spiritual director if so desired. The coordinator's presence on community night is to aid the community in its deliberations and participate in its worship and its fun. In determining community night, the community should keep in mind the availability of the coordinator.

## **TWO MONTH AND MID-YEAR REVIEW**

After an initial two months in the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM, the Local Coordinator will initiate a meeting with each one of the volunteers in their locale for the purposes of evaluating the volunteer's current situation as regards their placement, their community and their participation in the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM. The first two months of your volunteer experience are a trial period to determine appropriateness of continuing the program. You are free to set up a meeting with the Local Coordinator at any time but the two month review is a time when all the new volunteers will be formally meeting with the Coordinator.

The Director or Associate Director will also contact each volunteer at the end of September or the beginning weeks of October to determine how the service placement is going, according to job descriptions and agreed upon duties.

The mid-year review occurs when the Directors visit each community sometime during the months of December, January, and February. Again, this is a time for you to reflect on your experience in community, at your placement as well as look at any other significant personal or communal issues that are affecting your XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM year of service and community.

## **PROGRAMS DURING THE YEAR**

The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM currently sponsors the following retreat/renewal programs for its membership:

1. A summer community-building program (and initial **orientation** for new and renewing members) held in AUGUST and titled "ACTS II."
2. A fall retreat/workshop in mid/late October.
3. A winter get-together/renewal program in late February, early March.
4. A late spring retreat in either May or June.

The above programs are for all of the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM members. In addition, local communities are encouraged to plan their own retreat weekends or nights. The beginning of the liturgical seasons of Lent or Advent can be an ideal time for a local community retreat. The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM contributes \$100.00 to each community towards the cost of one local retreat (at least one overnight with communal prayer, and theme/sessions/community development). XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM recommends that the coordinator attends the local retreat. XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM Directors are also available to participate given enough advance notice.

In addition, you are encouraged to attend to your personal needs for prayer and solitude. In each of our cities, there are religious communities or other facilities that would provide the necessary "personal space" at little or no cost.



## **RELATIONSHIPS**

The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM recognizes that as a volunteer/missioner it is important for each volunteer to develop and maintain friendships of support during the volunteer year. XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM asks each volunteer to be aware that your relationships (romantic or otherwise) do have an impact on both your community life and your ministries. Your relationships and how you express them are also opportunities for spiritual growth. Reflection on and prayer about your relationships can teach you things about yourself and God and can also provide insights about how your actions and relationships affect others. If you're not quite sure how to connect your prayer life with issues like sexuality or relationships, you might want to ask the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM Directors, your Local Coordinator, "Friend in Ministry" or (if you have one, your) spiritual director for suggestions.

While dating is certainly not discouraged, we must ask you to remember that as a volunteer/missioner you represent the \_\_\_\_\_ religious order as well as the Catholic Church and its values even when you are not "working." We respect your privacy and your right as adults to make your own moral choices, especially in regard to very personal issues like sexuality. However, when you are in an XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM house we insist on certain standards and respect for the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM's values. Thus, we ask that you do not have your romantic partner overnight in your bedroom in an XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM house. If you have any questions or want to talk to us about this, please let us know.

Beyond this requirement, it is important to note that romantic involvement with a client or any person to whom you are ministering is absolutely unacceptable and can be considered grounds for dismissal from the volunteer program. People to whom we minister may frequently be in a vulnerable position or may naturally experience some attraction to those who are in caregiving roles. It is essential to maintain professionalism at all times, especially in regard to relationships.

## **HOUSEGUESTS / HOSPITALITY**

We value the quality of Hospitality. Mary, as mother of Jesus and first disciple, models simplicity and hospitality in both the action of God in her personal life and the action of God as demonstrated in the community. She is example and radical sign of hope in our world. As participants in the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM program, we hope your communities can embody this aspect of the charism throughout the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM year. We have, however, realized, that the temporary nature of the program requires some guidelines regarding hospitality.

Volunteers are encouraged to have friends and family visit during the year. Please use common courtesy and check with your community members in advance when you plan to have guests visiting; it is important to remain sensitive to the inconveniences that even the best houseguest might create. As a "general rule", the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM recommends that guests stay no longer than 7 days in the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM community. After such an amount of time community dynamics, finances, and duties are affected. If a volunteers plans to have a houseguest visiting for longer than that, you must not only discuss it with your community but also with your local coordinator and possibly the directors as well. A "Room and Board" contribution would be expected of a houseguest staying for more than 7 days.

Occasionally, volunteers have felt called to extend Christian hospitality to the homeless or others in need. This is a sensitive issue at all levels of the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM community/program. While this type of charity is admirable, please remember that it affects more than just your immediate household (it also affects the volunteer program, the Marianists, etc.) Such an offer cannot be made to anyone without discussion as a community and permission from the local coordinator/XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM directors.

## **SIMPLIFYING ONE'S LIFESTYLE**

As a volunteer/missioner, you are choosing by the stipend that you receive, to live in voluntary simplicity. We ask you, as a volunteer, to live within your stipend and to share among each other any gifts you may receive from family or friends. Volunteers, community and staff members regularly evaluate their stewardship of the goods of our earth, the quality of their relationships with God and others and their commitment to live a Gospel lifestyle which challenges the values of our consumer society. All call each other to reflection on lifestyle in a Gospel manner.

XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM volunteers receive the monthly stipend from the placement agency. The stipend will then cover room, board food, common telephone and other common expenses. Just as living in low-income neighborhoods allows volunteers to become more aware of the daily realities of those with whom they work, so does the communal and personal responsibility of finances enhance this awareness. The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM believes such exposure to neighborhood location, financial responsibility, etc., is a necessary first step in living a lifestyle of responsibility, a consciousness of poverty, and an attitude of awareness around the use of time, talent and money.

As challenging and, sometimes, as difficult as that can be, XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM staff believe that there is merit in striving for voluntary simplicity. A year of voluntary simplicity can release volunteers from our consumptive American lifestyle to enjoy simple pleasures, conversations and creativity. We anticipate that the end result of a simplified lifestyle is a freer, more loving person who centers values in Christ, and who seeks the Kingdom first.

## **CHANGING JOBS / WITHDRAWING FROM THE PROGRAM / DISMISSAL**

The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM and its placement agencies expect you to honor the departure date of July 31. The Placement Agreement you sign in August gives this as the closing date of the contract and it is important to keep this commitment. Should this commitment be broken before July 31, this may be mentioned in any reference given by the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM concerning your time as an volunteer/missioner.

Should you find your job placement unsatisfactory for any reason, you should consult with your local coordinator and the Director or Associate Director before reaching a final decision. If, during the course of the year and after dialogue/discussion with your placement agency and the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM Directors, you decide to leave your placement, then it will be your responsibility to secure another placement according to XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM guide-lines and expectations. The Directors can assist in the finalization of the new placement. It is recommended that you remain in your original placement until another one is found.

A placement agency may determine it necessary, after several warnings, to terminate your "employment" as a volunteer. Being fired affects the ability of the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM and volunteer to find another position. If it is determined by the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM directors in consultation with the local coordinator and your volunteer community that this is a matter of "mis-placement", then you can seek re-placement or other remunerative work. Otherwise dismissal from the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM may be necessary. Volunteers will be held responsible for the increased financial burden placed on the community in the case of full dismissal because of agency termination.

You may feel that you should withdraw from the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM. If you decide to leave the program before the end of your commitment you will assume responsibility for the increased financial burdens thereby placed upon remaining members of the community. Refer to "Steps for Voluntary Separation from XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM" for procedures for withdrawal.

As indicated in the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM policies: Poor job performance, sexual misconduct, inappropriate behavior on the job or in the community, violent behavior, theft/illegal actions, misrepresentation on your application and failure to live up to the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM covenant are possible reasons for dismissal from the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM.

## **PERSONAL-COMMUNAL DEVELOPMENT / JUSTICE AWARENESS**

Throughout the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM year the local coordinators (in consultation with the volunteer/missioners community and the Directors) are asked to facilitate dialogue on topics regarding spirituality, personal growth, justice awareness and action, communication/group dynamics, simple lifestyle, etc. Each volunteer and each community is also asked to be intentional in this development. Much of this occurs in the foundation of prayer and community nights the community sets aside on a weekly basis. This also occurs during non-community time: attending talks on relevant topics; group participation in a weekend service project or event; sharing information with each other, etc.

Through your own experiences and those of your community members, you are exposed to the pains and complexities of the injustices faced by the poor and oppressed. The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM year provides you with an opportunity to reflect on and even examine the causes of injustice in the United States as well as an opportunity to seek creative solutions and faith-filled responses. The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM hopes that you can come to a fuller understanding of the injustices you encounter, including the attitudinal, practical, institutional and systemic causes.

The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM also strives to be a place of personal justice and responsibility. So, you are asked to be aware of and attempt to be just in your own attitudes, language and actions.

## **EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM / STUDENT STATUS**

A volunteer may not take on other employment or student status without discussion with the local coordinator and the consent of the Director. Living within the stipend is an important element of XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM life (see "Simple Lifestyle"). Student status can interfere with the life of the volunteer community and should be an exception only. If student status is permitted, the community participation and placement work schedule of the volunteer will have to be taken into consideration when determining the number of classes taken.

## **STATEMENT REGARDING SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

If the policy, as stated in the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM Policies & Procedures & Dismissal Handout, regarding **alcohol or substance abuse** has been violated, the extent of the problem will be assessed and appropriate action will be taken. This action may include the following: insistence on assessment/or intervention, follow-through on a treatment program, and dismissal of the volunteer from the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM. All therapeutic information should be released, with the consent of the volunteer, to the local coordinator and central XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM staff. Staff as well as the individual's community will be asked to be as supportive of the recommended treatment program as is possible. Such support may include: education about alcohol/substance dependency or abuse, community involvement in Al Anon, etc. Whenever therapeutic intervention is chosen, a release of information needs to be signed by the volunteer.

Please note: Dismissal is automatic in cases where illegal drugs or any other substances that alter sensory motor functions are transported, bought, or sold by the volunteer. If it is a placement related violation, the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM will honor placement agency employee policies.

### **ON THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF ALCOHOL:**

XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM is increasingly aware of the large number of people whose lives are adversely affected by the abuse of alcohol. While the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM recognizes alcohol as a substance that can be used for enjoyment in a social setting, we also acknowledge that its abuse is a significant issue in American society and thus to XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM. Responsible drinking has particular significance to XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM as an organization of people striving to live out a commitment to Christian community, social justice, spirituality, and simple lifestyle. Alcohol abuse by volunteer/missioners interferes with and is inconsistent with the mission of the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM.

As a response to this concern, the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM staff has attempted to become educated about responsible drinking and about alcohol abuse through consultation with professional counselors and by reading available literature. XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM is committed to modeling the responsible use of alcohol during retreat/formation weekends that we host, within individual Marianist volunteer communities, and among the staff. The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM staff is also committed to addressing problems that arise as a result of alcohol abuse during the volunteer year in the larger XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM community, in local volunteer communities, or with individual persons.

The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM staff is neither qualified nor inclined to provide therapeutic treatment; however, we undertake the responsibility of addressing an individual or community for whom the issue of alcohol abuse may be a problem, making appropriate referrals when necessary and encouraging recommended treatment.

Therefore, it is the expectation of the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM that the volunteers and staff join in an effort to promote responsible drinking and that together we see responsible drinking as a position consistent with the mission of XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM.

## **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

Society has grown acutely and painfully aware of the tragedy of child sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. The trauma and damage such abuse causes its victims, their families, and the community are compounded when the abuser is a trusted member of society. Similarly, great harm is done whenever a person connected with the church or a service organization is guilty of sexual misconduct of whatever nature, involving either children or adults, which is connected to his/her role of trust and responsibility as a minister of service to those in need. In these situations, not only the victims and their families, but also the sponsoring organizations are seriously compromised and jeopardized.

Therefore, the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM, along with the **\*\*sponsoring organization or religious order\*\***, commit ourselves to make every reasonable effort within our power to prevent the occurrence of any such activity by any volunteer/missioner or XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM staff member. Further, we commit ourselves to deal promptly and effectively with any allegations which may arise.

XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM has procedures in place to assist in addressing such accusations. All volunteers will review and sign the risk management procedures at Orientation. XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM reserves the right to modify or replace these procedures at its discretion and commits itself to review them periodically. When legally possible, XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM/Society of Mary will seek to move quickly and with compassion to attend to the needs of the victims and their families and to protect against any further misconduct, while respecting the rights of the accused.

If necessary, such procedures can be modified to apply to cases of alleged physical abuse or sexual harassment.

## **SUPPORTS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM:**

A year of voluntary service and communal, simple living is not only rewarding, growthful and enjoyable, but can also be challenging, frustrating and difficult. The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM recognizes these diverse aspects of the volunteer year. Consequently, the program staff members are greatly concerned that the time spent in the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM is personally growthful for you so that you are able to deal creatively and constructively with the problems and stresses you encounter, able to see your vocation as a Christian more clearly, and are reflective about the ways God is speaking in your heart through the day-to-day events of your life. There are several built-in supports available to each volunteer/community:

### **Xxxx FAMILY (associates, third order, etc.)**

The \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are two religious communities which are part of a larger network of communities called "xxxx". In each city that we are in, there are lay community groups in the xxxxx tradition which meet for prayer and fellowship on a regular basis. We invite you to consider participation in these groups as an additional means of support and growth and a way of being part of the xxxxxx tradition in a fuller way.

Volunteer/missioners are "part of the Family" and the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM Staff hopes you feel welcome among xxxxt religious and lay people alike.

### **FRIEND IN MINISTRY/XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM COMPANIONS**

Each XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM location has built up, over the years, a network of capable and skilled people (former volunteers, Brothers, Sisters and lay people; other people of faith and service) who are available to support the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM community or each volunteer in various ways. Depending upon your own needs and concerns, a "Friend in Ministry" or "XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM Companion" can be selected by each volunteer (in consultation with the Local Coordinator) from among this network. You could meet with someone who is experienced in the area of service and community and who could provide personal support in your adjustment to a new community, simple lifestyle and work in social service. See "Friend in Ministry" handout for more details.

### **MARIANIST FAMILY CONTACT COMMUNITY (MFCC)**

Similar to the "Friend in Ministry" but on a community basis, the MFCC (either a vowed xxxxx or lay xxxxxx community or both) "adopts" each volunteer community on a yearly basis. This can help provide you with a sense of the larger "XXXXt Family" and a more personal sense of the Charism. This also allows for individual xxxx religious to feel connected with your work as volunteers. Together, this provides an opportunity for reflection about the ongoing experience of community and ministry. See MFCC handout for more details. 1

## **XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM STAFF 1998-1999**

List

## **COMMUNITY NIGHT**

In the XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM, we are required to have a weekly community night. The night is really a time for us to spend together, to care for ourselves as a community. Community Night is a chance for prayer, using our household prayer book, or some other resource we come up with on our own. This time is a chance for us to share interpersonally on issues or concerns or to reflect on our Christian life together. Community Night is an opportunity to celebrate a special occasion, or to mourn a loss. Community Night is a chance for the LC to implement development program topics. One important suggestion for community night is to:

- take advantage of the community topics/resource lists/articles included in the orientation notebook, or use your own imagination to create community nights that are productive for the life of your community! Let this be quality time together, and enjoy it as gift, not a chore!

## **BUSINESS MEETINGS**

The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM recognizes that we have community business (especially about money, house management and scheduling matters) that will need tending, possibly every week at first but less frequently as we have become more comfortable with each other. The XYZ VOLUNTEER/MISSION PROGRAM recommends that community business/meetings occur separately from the weekly community night. Here are some guidelines for the weekly meeting:

- have a place to write down items you would like to discuss at the meetings, either on the bulletin board, the refrigerator, a suggestion box, etc.
- at the start of each meeting, ask if there are any additional items to be talked about at the meeting.
- have someone act as secretary to keep track of community decisions, etc. One suggestion is to use a community journal for record keeping. This can also be handed down to later communities.
- you may prefer to set time limits on how long to spend on each item on your agenda.
- keep the meeting prayerful, either prayer at the start and end, or prayer as a quiet focusing time at points during the meeting.
- listen to each other, to yourself. Be willing to compromise, be willing to take initiative when something needs to be done, be responsible for the household chore you have chosen, be responsible for the health of your community.
- ask for help if you are dissatisfied or having trouble with your meetings.

## Some random thoughts about Community life:

- It's great to have homecooked and even vegetarian meals to sit down to eat with others on a daily basis.
  - Get lots of variety in your meals 'cause different people cook on different nights of the week.
  - Vegetarian cooking is harder to screw up than other kinds of cooking, so it's pretty much always good, even if someone has an off day.
- Since you don't have to cook as often if you're sharing cooking responsibility, you can afford to be take more time when you do cook
  - So you can afford to do things like: Make Bread, Make Tofu, bake a cake (from scratch), Enchiladas, Lasagna, etc.
- Hang out with a bunch of cool and interesting people whom you might otherwise never meet, and learn all about them, what their interests are, etc.
- Sharing household responsibilities makes housework much easier and faster (when everyone participates that is)
- A group of people to pray with
- Save money by buying things in bulk. It's cheaper to buy a case of rice, than it is to buy just a few ounces.
- Pooling your resources makes many things easier. For example donating a 25 lb bag of rice to a soup kitchen costs less per person than the price of a matinee.
- Celebrate life in prayer and play - good food, good company, etc.
- Stay to the wee hours of the morning talking to people about **Life**.
- Plant a garden with help from lots of other folks, 'cause they're your housemates.
- Eat big group dinners outside in the summer time.
- Watch "West Wing" together.
- Recycling and reusing together
- Have continual, zealous discussions about poverty, service-related issues, God, feminism, sexism, racism, faith and religion, politics, the meaning of life, crumbs on the breadboard, and how could someone put an empty milk carton back in the fridge.
- There is always someone around to go to the movies with.
- There is almost always someone around to talk to, especially if you're having a bad day....
- Play cards.
- Tell stories to each other.
- Invite other community houses over for dinner and get invited to other houses for dinner
- and so much more.....

# Some Reflections About Christian Community Life



God calls us to the circle of Community because that is where God is.  
Deborah Smith Douglas "Called into Community", The Other Side Magazine,  
September-October 1991, pp. 9-12.

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Community is not something controlled or managed, but as a creation of the holy Spirit it is something we live and are transformed by. Deborah Smith Douglas "Called into Community", The Other Side Magazine, September-October 1991, pp. 9-12.

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[Community] is more than mystery, more than paradox: this is opportunity. If Christ is present among us as one we do not know, and if the real reason for community is the chance to discover the hidden Christ, then surely we are called to penetrate that disguise, to find God in each other. Which means we must be together, to stay together... It seems true that God is waiting to be revealed, not only in mystical experiences, but also in relationships, ordinary, everyday human relationships. Deborah Smith Douglas "Called into Community", The Other Side Magazine, September-October 1991, pp. 9-12.

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Community is a question of loving those whom God has set beside us today. There are some we are drawn to -those who are like us and build us up in our similarities. Others, who differ from us, challenge us and we draw back from them. Yet, each are signs of God. We personally, may have chosen others, but there are the ones chosen for us. We are called together, just as we are, to create unity. The impossible becomes possible and the kingdom is present. (unknown)

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It is hard for two people who are afraid of each other (who have built walls or blocks against disclosure or sharing) to discover (uncover) their mutual qualities. All we can do is try TO NOT follow those inclinations, which makes barriers within community. (unknown)

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When asking the "why" of common life, we need to always talk about our expectation and what we want "to do" and "to be" together. Forgiveness of self and other is important as a sign of hope in our lives together. And most important, we should always ask the questions, "How can we best respond to the call of God and the poor?" (unknown)



## On Community

Forming Community challenges volunteers. We often learn the best and worst about ourselves Here are a few of the observations I've accumulated from giving nine orientations and visiting over twenty different communities. All names have been changed to protect the guilty.

Few people like washing their own dishes.  
Even fewer like washing another's dishes.

When new volunteers walk into a house for the first time, it looks like they are just carrying in their luggage with them. Wrong. They are also bring in "baggage" -- usually in the form of parents, siblings, heavy expectations, hidden heartaches, an assortment of faces, a hunger to be loved, a hope to be linked, a recent and highly inflammable argument, and a rich history worth listening to.

The baggage is usually brought in after the luggage, during the night perhaps. No one knows for sure. All of a sudden, about a month into community life, everyone realizes that the house is really crowded, and they start trying to get their parents to move out.

Everyone has their own side of any story.  
Everyone thinks they are right.  
Everyone is wrong (cuz they should consult me first).

Most communities appreciate a scapegoat. And there is often one volunteer whose behavior suggests an effort at that position and title. Let that person have it. People are primarily responsible for their own life and relationships. Program staff gets blamed at times for housemates' behavior.

Some of us spend our energy blaming instead of getting on with our lives, changing ourselves, or creating within our circumstances. We get busy being angry about not getting exactly what we wanted. (Hey! Who wouldn't be mad? They promised *The Sound of Music* then tell you to "Whistle While You Work.")

In fact, it takes a few years to reap the harvest that the volunteering year can produce.

There are many tests of Christian maturity. In community, some of these are found in how one handles the proverbial toothpaste cap, varying standards of cleanliness (or lack of them), honest admittance of uncomfortable feelings (Yes, Suzy, it really does bother me the way you floss your teeth at the table), making dinner for six when two show up, sitting through another meeting.

Realizing that "My grace is sufficient" and "my power is perfected in weakness" --- are parts of the terrible beauty of coming face-to-face with one's own immaturity and need for growth. We grow when we don't confine God to the safe world of ideas, but give God permission to excavate our being.

Sharon May, Associate Director  
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1980-1985

