

Jersey Coast Chapter

Youth Council

Volunteer Handbook



September 08

## Introduction and Purpose:

“The American Red Cross is a humanitarian organization, **led by volunteers...including America’s youth...**”

The mission statement of the Red Cross highlights the importance of volunteers in the leadership of the organization as well as the youth vision statement to help empower our youth to be role models in their community.

### **American Red Cross Mission Statement**

The American Red Cross is a humanitarian organization, led by volunteers, that provides relief to victims of disaster and helps people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies. It does this through services that are consistent with its congressional charter and the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

### **Youth Vision Statement**

The American Red Cross educates, encourages, and empowers youth to be role models in their communities so that as current and future leaders, they can further the mission and fundamental principles of the Red Cross and touch more lives nationwide and around the world.

## Welcome to the Jersey Coast Chapter, Youth Council:

Dear Youth Council Member,

This handbook is written to help acquaint you with the Jersey Coast Chapter Youth Council, programs, activities, events, procedures and support.

The Jersey Coast Chapter Youth Council, was founded in March of 2003, with 8 members and has grown into a wonderful council of many intelligent, bright, hard working individuals, such as yourself.

We truly hope your experience with us will enhance your leadership abilities, help you realize your full potential, help you take a positive initiative towards your future and be positive role models.

We lead and support Red Cross units by promoting the importance of and the respect for youth and youth involvement through;

- ❖ Advocacy
- ❖ Guidance
- ❖ Youth development and program expertise
- ❖ Training
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Partnership opportunities
- ❖ Resources

We hope you find this manual informative and that it helps you become the best that you can be.

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## Getting Started:

The first step in getting started with the youth council is turning in your application. Once we have received your application you will be invited to attend an orientation session to acquaint you with our council and programs. Upon completion of orientation you will attend regular meetings and events.

### Application:

The American Red Cross requires all volunteers to have a volunteer application on file. All council members **must have** the Volunteer & Parent Permission form signed and turned into the chapter **before** you can attend a function and/or meeting. If your application is not on file, your parents will be called to pick you up.

### Orientation:

Youth Orientation is designed to provide you with an overview of the American Red Cross and all the tools you will need to work with the council; such as a volunteer kit (binder), which will contain your calendar of events, time sheet, applications, etc.

Orientation is held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month from September thru May at 5:00pm

### Council Meetings:

Our youth council meeting is a general meeting held monthly. During this time we discuss new ideas, current projects and important information you will need to better the council. Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month from September thru June from 6:00pm-7:30 pm.

## Programs and Events:

In this section we offer a brief description of all the programs offered and achieved in the past. These programs may or may not appear on the calendar for any given year. As our council grows, new projects, programs and events may be inspired by our council and become part of our future achievements.

### Bagging for Birds –

Council members meet at a local supermarket and bag groceries for donations. The donation money earned is used to purchase turkeys to be given to our local service members families.

### Blood Drives –

Youth Council members volunteer at local community blood drives. Our favorite is the Six Flags Great Adventure Fright Fest blood drive. Youth can volunteer in registration, refreshments and as escorts. Training is available at no cost. You must be 14 years or older. 17 years old and up are eligible to donate blood.

### Celebrating the American Red Cross –

On May 21 of each year the youth council sponsor an open house informational night to celebrate the years of service the American Red Cross has provided.

### Flea Market –

Each year the youth council sponsor a flea market for the Community, held at our headquarters. Vendor sells their wares along with staff and volunteers. We also provide community awareness on our Red Cross services

### Fundraisers –

Throughout the year the Youth Council participates in various fundraising projects. In the past we have worked on the following: Pizza's, Cookies Dough, car washes and bagging groceries with great success. We are always looking for ways to raise money and are open to new ideas.

Make a Difference Day –

We believe charity begins at home. Council members volunteer 4 hours of their time and energy to their parents and/or grandparents in making a difference at home.

Measles Initiative –

Is an initiative designed for the youth to make a difference. For every one dollar (\$1) we raise we can help inoculate one child in Africa against the number one killer “The Measles.”

Operation Santa Run –

Youth Council members and the local community donate and collect toys for children who lost everything due to a disaster, then deliver the toys in time for the holidays.

Overnight Shelter –

Youth Council members participate in a real life overnight shelter. They start out by taking the following courses for responding to a disaster: Fulfilling our Mission, Mass Care Overview, and Shelter Operations. These courses are provided free of charge. The final course is a Shelter Simulation where our council runs an actual shelter. Once completed the youth can help in the event of an actual disaster.

Read Across America –

Spend the day reading about our International Red Cross, Red Crescent founder Henry Durant and the vision on how the Red Cross came about.

Reassurance Program –

Youth Council members come into the chapter weekly to work with our senior clients on the Life Line Reassurance Program. We make calls to our subscribers to wish them Happy Birthday, Happy Holiday etc., but most of all to make sure their units are working properly.

Rock-n-Ride –

Is an annual fundraising event sponsored by the chapter. Bicyclists tour the entire island of Long Beach Island in Ocean County. As a council we help support the activities for the day such as: comfort & first aid stations, registration tables, lunch tables and the start and finish lines. Some of us even ride in the 40-mile tour.

Summer Volunteering Activities –

Although we do not hold council meetings in the summer there are always opportunities to volunteer. Check with your Advisor for available projects.

Thank-a-Thon –

Youth Council members come into the chapter twice a year to thank our financial donors.

Thank-A-Volunteer –

During the week of National Volunteer week council members make phone calls to the entire chapter of volunteers thanking them for their time and energy and support to the American Red Cross.

Volunteer Recognition –

The chapter sponsors a volunteer recognition annually. Volunteers are recognized for their outstanding support to the Chapter. We recognize our youth achievements and the Youth Volunteer of the Year at this event.

## Rule and Regulations:

The Council has set the following rule and regulations.

### Applications –

The American Red Cross requires all volunteers to have an application on file. This means if your application is **not on file** you will not be allowed to attend meetings and functions.

### Attendance –

In order to receive credit for your volunteer hours, attendance at all scheduled events is required.

Awards – We value and recognize hard work and achievements. Volunteers are awarded accordingly.

### Behavior –

When volunteering for the American Red Cross you represent the American Red Cross organization and we ask you at all times to act accordingly. At no time will we tolerate horseplay, disruptive behavior, fighting, etc. Violators will be given an oral request to stop for the 1<sup>st</sup> offense, for 2<sup>nd</sup> offense, a written request to stop and the 3<sup>rd</sup> offense, removal from the council and organization.

### Calendar of Events –

A yearly calendar is provided to each member. The calendar is dated with scheduled events, meetings and programs for your convenience. Note: *Date and times are subject to change, you will be notified of any changes via email and at our monthly meetings.*

### Code of Conduct –

The American Red Cross requires all volunteers to have a signed Code of Conduct on file.

#### Commitments –

We understand that volunteers are very busy people. We ask that you commit to the entire event, activities and meetings. If a full commitment can not be made, please notify your advisor in advance so arrangements can be made to ensure that activities and events have enough coverage.

#### Community Services –

We at the Jersey Coast Chapter support you with your community commitments. We will provide letters for National Honor Society etc., provided you are a member in good standing. *See section on letters of recommendations*

#### Conventions/Trips –

At times opportunities arise for members to attend conventions and special trips. Only members who are in good standing will be given the opportunity to attend such functions

#### Dues -

The youth council requires each council member to pay \$10.00 yearly in dues. This allows us to provide council members with the tools to be volunteers as well as dinners, lunches and snacks when necessary. Dues should be paid by October 15<sup>th</sup>, or the following month's, meeting after joining the council.

#### Emails -

**Please reply to emails promptly!!!** 95% of our communication is done via emails. Emails should be checked daily in case of emergency cancellations and for spontaneous volunteering opportunities. Make sure your **name** is on your email when replying. For every email that is sent to Maureen Buehl-Ungar's computer you will receive 15 minutes of volunteering time whether you are replying to one received or starting one of your own.

#### Hours –

Youth Council members are required to keep track of their own volunteered hours for the year. A volunteer hour sheet will be provided. We track hours for college applications, National Honor Society, community services and for awards. All hours recorded must be signed by a supervisor for the activity.

#### Housekeeping –

Council members are required to clean up after themselves at all functions, events and activities prior to departing.

#### Intellectual Property Agreement –

Youth Council members are required to have an Intellectual Property Agreement signed by both the youth volunteer and their parent.

#### Letters of Recommendations –

Any request for letters of recommendation will be given provided you are a member in good standing. **All requests** must be made in writing ,within 7 business days of date due. All requests for letters of recommendations must include who the letter should be addressed to and the address for where it is to be sent such as colleges, business, organizations, etc .

#### Members in Good Standing –

In order to be a member in good standing you must attend ½ of all functions, meetings, events and programs.

#### Officers –

The Jersey Coast Chapter Youth Council is run by our elected officers. To become an officer you must be a member in good standing. The following positions are available for a one-year term: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Historian. Nominations are held in April and elections are held in May of each year.

Phone Roster –

A phone roster is provided to the council with the following Information: Name, address, phone, cell phones, emails and parents name. Please utilize this resource for car pools, etc.

R.S.V.P. –

Council members are required to **respond to emails**, invitations and requests whether they plan to attend or not,. This is necessary to ensure we can plan appropriately, but most of all it is necessary for emergencies.

Tardiness –

We believe that punctuality is an important personal trait. When tardiness is permitted it transmits a negative message on the importance of respect and is disruptive to others in the council. It is expected that every effort will be made by you and your parents to **be punctual for meetings and events when being dropped off and picked up.**

Youth Volunteer of the Year –

Each year one youth council member is nominated by his peers, as the Youth Volunteer of the Year. In order to be nominated, you must be a council member in good standing.

## Volunteering With The Council See How It Is Done:

### Questions & Answers:

Question: Can I bring a friend to a meeting or event?

Answer: Friends are welcome, however they must attend an orientation and submit an application before attending meetings or events.

Question: What is the age limit for volunteering with the Youth Council?

Answer: Youth Council members are between the ages of 11 years to 18 years or completion of High School.

Question: What counts as American Red Cross volunteer hours?

Answer: Any time you volunteer for the American Red Cross. Activities such as time at the chapter, time at home, time on the computer or time at your school counts as volunteering with us.

Question: Who signs my hour sheets?

Answer: If you are volunteering at the chapter, your Youth Advisors or designated supervisor signs your sheet. If you volunteer at home, one of your parents signs off that the project was complete. If you volunteer at your school, then a school official needs to sign your sheet.

Question: What happens if I forget to have my volunteer hour sheet signed?

Answer: We can not credit you for any unverified hours.

Question: What does R.S.V.P. mean?

Answer: R.S.V.P. stands for a French phrase, "répondez, s'il vous plaît," which means "please reply." The person sending the invitation would like you to tell him or her whether you accept or decline the invitation. That is, will you be coming to the event or not? "R.S.V.P." came about as a polite way of reminding people of something that they should already know: If you receive an invitation, you should reply.