



**MISERICORDIA**  
*Heart of Mercy in Action*

**Long-term Service Volunteer Handbook**

Driskill Home

# Welcome to Misericordia



Misericordia Heart of Mercy is home to 610 children and adults with developmental disabilities. Our mission is to provide a life worth living to God's most vulnerable people. As a Community of Believers, we thank God for the children, adults, and families who are Misericordia. They call us forth to be more loving and compassionate people. We strive to provide the highest quality of life for our residents and respect and appreciation for our staff. We fulfill our responsibilities with excellence. We bring a sense of joy, pride, and passion to our efforts, because we are touched by God's love and the mystery and miracle that are Misericordia.

In 2007 we began our Long-term Service Volunteer program with a single individual. Each year we have added to our numbers with the goal of having ten to twelve volunteers annually. Our volunteer program is Heart of Mercy in Action! The volunteers have an opportunity to provide real and meaningful service to our residents. This life of service, lived in community, enables each person to grow and learn personally and to be touched by the love of our residents. In giving, you will receive far more.

As Executive Director, I welcome you to our Community of Believers. I thank you for your decision to join us in this significant mission of doing God's important work.

*Sister Rosemary*  
Sr. Rosemary Connelly, RSM  
Executive Director

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## Welcome to Heart of Mercy in Action

Joe Ferrara, Administrator

Heart of Mercy in Action has provided volunteers over the years with a life changing experience. Participants have worked in a variety of residential areas coming to know and cherish our residents. Each volunteer has grown in sensitivity and awareness of persons with developmental disabilities, in self-understanding and maturation, and in the importance of service to others. We are grateful for your willingness to be part of our long-term volunteer service program. Welcome to this amazing community.



## Welcome to Driskill Home

Bob Myers, Director

Driskill Home was a gift from the Walter S. and Lucienne Driskill Foundation in 2010, supporting our Heart of Mercy in Action mission. Our beautiful facility provides an attractive environment for our volunteers. Our volunteers come from around the country, and we form a life together. This handbook provides you with an outline of how our Driskill community is built. We share meals, reflect on our work, and learn about and care for each other. We welcome you to Driskill Home and this volunteer ministry of Misericordia.



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# Heart of Mercy in Action Program

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## *Mission Statement*

Misericordia Heart of Mercy Center is a Community of Believers bound together in a common mission: providing the highest quality of life and care to God's most vulnerable people. We are pledged to provide a life worth living for each of our residents and to strive to be a loving community with them and with one another. Our Community of Believers invites our Heart of Mercy in Action volunteers to join us in our mission. The volunteers work in a variety of roles specifically selected to match their gifts with residents' needs. The work provides each volunteer an opportunity to experience a life of committed service among a dedicated professional staff. It also provides a reflective time to learn and grow as a person of faith. The Heart of Mercy in Action volunteers form their own supportive community exploring together how God's work touches each of us. We welcome interested persons who seek God's grace at work among our Community of Believers.



# Life at Misericordia

## *A Community of Believers*



We are a Community of Believers who celebrate the blessings of our life together. Our Community is diverse, composed of residents, parents, siblings, guardians, and friends, staff, donors; and volunteers. Four central values characterize our life together:

- **QUALITY OF LIFE:** The center of our life is providing the highest “Quality of Life” we can to our residents. They deserve a life, and a life worth living in their terms. We strive to ensure this happens.
- **CONNECTION:** A “Quality of Life” necessitates our being connected to our residents and to one another. Our work is not accomplishing tasks, but rather it is being fully present and connected to our residents.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** Each member of the Community of Believers accepts the challenge of responsibility. Our Community depends on a wide network of committed persons. When each of us understands and completes our responsibilities, the Community remains dynamic and energized.
- **SPIRITUALITY:** As a Community of Believers we are aware that the miracle of our life reflects the presence of God. Our passion for our mission is inspired by our awareness that something much bigger than we are is present here.

# Life as a Heart of Mercy in Action Volunteer

## Life of Service in Community

We invite our volunteers to join us in our life-changing mission. Our program brings interested college graduates to our campus for one year to experience Christian community. Each participant will provide direct service to our residents, live at Driskill Home, and form a life together in community. This experience offers a unique opportunity to grow in faith, to deepen self-understanding, and to awaken one's heart to the mysteries of God in our midst. We seek highly motivated participants eager to embody a life of service to our residents, share a life of reflection with others, and to live together in community. The year of service at Misericordia is a full time commitment. Having an additional job or taking educational courses would not permit one to be fully engaged in our program. We ask for full time involvement.



## Life with the Residents

The residents are our primary mission. Their well-being is our principal goal. Therefore, we arrive at work on time, rested, and ready to be fully present. We learn the scope of our responsibilities, and we complete them with excellence. We follow the directions of the Supervisor, Directors, and Administrators responsible for our area. If necessary, we are willing to work past our allotted time, and may, when needed, be called to service in emergencies. Each resident is a person, a gift from God. We connect to them honoring their dignity. Our work is the privilege of service to them. We help them grow into the full stature of their life. We pray for and work for them. All volunteers are responsible for conforming to the Misericordia Employees Handbook, a copy of which is kept at Driskill Home.

*“Each one is unique, a gift to us today, a loving and loved person made by God with a purpose in life —no matter how wrapped in mystery that purpose is. We believe, we accept, we love each person and we are a better person because they have touched our lives.”*

*- Sr. Rosemary Connelly, RSM*

## *Life of the Spirit*

Our Community of Believers lives a life in the Spirit. We are aware of God's blessing upon our residents and upon us. Each of us strives to embody this life with joy in our hearts and upon our countenance. We seek to be people who live, look, and are joyful. Smiling helps!

## *Life in Chicago*

Chicago is a world class city with amazing opportunities for exploration, adventure, entertainment, sports, culture, lake-front beauty, and worship. Volunteers can take advantage of these rich assets to learn, grow, and have fun.





# Life at Driskill Home: Being Together

## Living in Community

In addition to a ministry of service to our residents, participants return to Driskill Home for a life of Community. In keeping with our Community of Believers values, we expect each participant to strive to “connect” to others. Our participants begin as a group, but we intentionally strive to become a Community working to know one another on a journey of faith. Heart of Mercy in Action volunteers seek a unique experience – a life of service in the context of a Christian community. Living in Community has specific characteristics. Among others, these include:



- Intentional time for prayer, reflection, and presence to and with each other.
- Time for shared meals – one Community Dinner together per week
- Retreats – two annually, one to begin and one to close
- Respect for the person and dignity of others
- Willingness to share and to be open about our experiences at Misericordia
- Desire to grow in faith and personal maturation
- Commitment to participate in Community Life even when it is difficult

## Common Life

Volunteers share a common life in community which is conscientious and intentional. We respect the person, rights, space, and property of others. The use of other’s clothing, equipment, technology, etc. is with permission only. Each of us will have specific responsibilities for the operation and functioning of the house. These duties are decided upon together. Each volunteer works to ensure the high functioning of the house. You are asked to respect your roommates and those who live in other apartments within the building. We are role models for the residents and should be respectful of each other at all times.

## Common Space

Driskill Home is our residence. Like all Misericordia facilities and grounds it is maintained beautifully and lived in well. As volunteers at Driskill Home, each of us assists in ensuring the high standards are maintained.

Each level at Driskill Home has “common spaces” and “semi-private” spaces. Each volunteer is responsible for the cleanliness of her/his own “semi-private” space. All volunteers are responsible for the common spaces. This includes weekly dusting, vacuuming, and tidying. When the common space has been used for an event or activity and needs “refreshing” prior to the weekly cleaning, those responsible will see that the space is returned to proper condition.

From time to time, tours are given of Driskill Home. Our apartments are maintained to Misericordia standards. Inspections of the apartment can be completed at any time, but will definitely take place three days prior to the end of the live-in agreement. If professional cleaning is required based on the condition of the apartment, volunteers will be responsible for the cost of the professional cleaning.



Please report any needed repairs to the Administrator in a timely manner. Alterations to the interior design (paint, flooring, etc...) of the apartment are not allowed unless administrative approval is obtained. Live-in staff is free to bring in their own bedding, pillows, towels, or any interior decoration that would not be considered a permanent alteration to the apartment.

Lawn, gardening and window washing services are provided, but snow removal is the responsibility of the house. We keep our sidewalks clean and salted.

### Neighborhood

Driskill Home is located in a friendly Chicago neighborhood. It is very important that we are good neighbors. We respect the rights of our neighbors and seek to build strong relationships with them. When volunteers return to Driskill, a quick “police” of the sidewalks, parkways, and grounds removing trash is a helpful sign. During the summer, events held on the patio are mindful of our neighbors’ privacy and quiet. We live in an urban environment, and we need to be “street smart.” Be watchful and be vigilant of your surroundings as you walk about the neighborhood.

### Safety

**HEALTH** –Your health and well-being are important to you and to Misericordia. Please keep a healthy diet, necessary sleep pattern, and ample exercise. Each volunteer is responsible for his/her own health. You will want to find a doctor with whom you are comfortable and establish a relationship. If you need medical insurance, this should be discussed with the Administrator.

**HYGIENE** – Thorough hygiene helps reduce the incidence of illness. Please maintain personal and communal hygiene to ensure we all stay healthy. If you see issues, please report them to

either the Director of Driskill Home or the Administrator of Volunteers. Keeping the kitchen and bathrooms hygienic is critically important.

FIRST AID – The home will maintain a first-aid kit for nicks and scratches. In emergencies, call 9-1-1 or report to an emergency room or treatment center. When determining a course of action, the Director of Driskill Home can be available for assistance.

SICK CALL – If you are too sick to report for work, please notify (or have notified) your immediate work supervisor, so that your work site is made aware. It is also important to notify the Director of Driskill Home and/or the Administrator of the Volunteer Program.

FIRE – Fire extinguishers are located at each level in the kitchen. In the event of fire, call 911 and alert all members of the community.

### Guests

Guests are welcome to visit Driskill Home upon the invitation of a volunteer. No guests are allowed to spend the night without the permission of the Administrator. The accommodations of the guest are at the discretion of the Administrator. Proper conduct, of course, is expected from all guests and visitors. Guests may be invited to dinner.

### Away from Misericordia

If you will be out overnight, please inform the Director so that a proper building census can be maintained. This is imperative due to our strict guidelines with Chicago fire code policies.

### Transportation

Transportation from the Volunteer's home to and from Misericordia during the year is the responsibility of each individual. A vehicle is provided for transportation to and from Driskill house to Misericordia campus. Ample parking of personal vehicles is available on the street at Driskill. Parking on campus is at the appropriate lot near your work area.

### Security

KEYS – Keys are for your personal use and may not be shared nor duplicated. Loss of keys is reported to the Director of Driskill Home or the Administrator immediately.

DOORS – All outside doors are to be kept locked at all times. Floor level doors are also kept locked at all times. There is a security system installed in the house.

### Storage

In addition to ample closet space, storage facilities are available in the attic to house additional items such as suitcases, seasonal clothes, etc. This space is locked, and each Volunteer has a key for the appropriate storage area.

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## *Mail*

Mail is delivered to Driskill Home at 7050 N. Oakley Avenue/Chicago, IL 60645-3426. Once sorted, the mail will be delivered to each respective floor and placed on a table determined by the group. The nearest US Post Office is located at 1723 W. Devon Avenue. This is within walking distance from Misericordia. To get there, walk South on Ridge Avenue to Devon, go East (right) on Devon, and the post office is located about 3 blocks down Devon Avenue.

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## *Internet Access, Cable, Telephones*

There is wireless internet access available at Driskill Home for your personal computer. If you have any trouble accessing the internet, please alert the Administrator. Also, please note that Misericordia has a policy that staff and residents may not access social networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace on our campus computers. Some residents, however, belong to these websites outside of Misericordia. We ask that you do not request or accept friendship requests from any residents. We also ask that you do not post information or pictures about Misericordia or the residents on any social networking website. This policy is in place to protect the privacy of our residents. Cable TV is available in the common areas.

It is recommended that each volunteer provide their own cell phone for personal use. No common phone is available at Driskill.

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## *Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking*

DRUGS under the prescription of a medical doctor are allowed, but cannot be shared with others. “Over the counter” drugs are permitted for the treatment of colds, flu, headaches, etc. Absolutely no “recreational” drugs are ever allowed for any reason. Medications may be taken to the campus as part of personal medical treatment. Misericordia is a drug free/smoke free environment. Smoking is not allowed in Driskill.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES may be consumed on premises by those who are of age. Guests may be served alcohol as well, in keeping of standards appropriate to our Community of Believers. No one will be served alcohol if she or he is a minor or if doing so would occasion intoxication. No one will be served alcohol if they are driving. There is no alcohol served when residents are present.

Driskill Home, the garage, hallways, and grounds are a “SMOKE FREE” environment.

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## *Compensation*

Participants are provided accommodations at Driskill Home living in community with other volunteers. A stipend of \$250.00 per month is given for personal expenses. Each participant may apply for medical insurance. A transportation stipend is available for travel to one’s home following successful completion of the program. Eligibility for loan forbearance is granted by Misericordia following successful completion of the year.

# Life at Driskill Home: Working Together

## *Eating*

All are expected to participate in the one Community Dinner per week. All other meals are shared cooperatively in a schedule determined together with the assistance of the Administrator of the program. Guests may be invited to dinner with prior notification to the Administrator. In addition to the individual stipend for each Volunteer, a monthly food budget is provided for common use. The Volunteers will work together to make menus, purchase food, prepare meals, etc.



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**BUDGETING** - A specific amount is available per month, depending on the size of the group. The amount is calculated using Misericordia's standard for the residents. It is important to remain within this amount. It is equally important that each volunteer maintain a healthy diet.

**SCHEDULING** - The community will publish a monthly schedule of assignment of duties regarding food procurement, preparation, serving, clean-up, etc. The schedule will be posted.

**SHOPPING** - The community will decide how shopping will be accomplished. All volunteers can participate together, or individual assignments can be made as part of the scheduling process. Menus are prepared by the community prior to shopping to ensure everything that is needed is secured. A credit card is issued to the house for use by all Volunteers. This card is used to purchase food. Each Volunteer will sign a user's permit authorizing use. It is important to secure a copy of the rules for the use of the card and follow them.

**MEALS** - Breakfast and lunch are the responsibility of each volunteer. You prepare your own breakfast and pack your own lunch. Dinner is prepared for common consumption at a set time each evening. Each volunteer is expected to eat dinner with the others each night unless she/he has indicated absence. At the weekly Community Dinner participation is expected. The Community Dinner is a longer time together which includes dinner and reflection time & prayer.

**PREPARING** - The volunteer(s) responsible for food preparation will ensure the highest standard of hygiene is followed. The established menu is used, and the food presentation is made attractive. Food is prepared for each member of the home unless she/he has indicated absence for said meal.



SERVING – Dinner is served at the same time each evening. Volunteers will agree jointly upon what that time is to be.

CLEANING – Each volunteer participates in clearing the table and readying the kitchen for clean-up (putting condiments away, removing placemats, scraping one’s own plate of food, etc.) This assists those scheduled for evening clean-up to complete their duties more quickly.

SNACKING – Food procurement will include snacks which are nutritious and appealing.

KITCHEN – The kitchen is always kept clean. Dishes are rinsed and put in the dishwasher. Food is put away. The sink and counters are clean and free of food.

GARBAGE – There are no garbage disposals at Driskill Home; therefore, food needs to be put into proper, tightly sealed bags. To avoid attracting rodents, garbage is held in proper containers in the kitchen and removed when the bag is full to the containers outside the rear entrance of Driskill Home. These containers are moved the end of the driveway on Monday evening in time for the City of Chicago pick-up every Tuesday morning. Please get the garbage to the containers NLT Monday at 6:00 pm. Do not leave garbage in the hallways. Always place it in a container and ensure the lid of the container is tightly closed and sealed.

## *Cleaning*

CLEANING SUPPLIES – Cleaning equipment and supplies are provided by Misericordia and kept easily available on each level. Supplies include items such as garbage bags, paper towels, toilet paper, Kleenex, liquid dish soap, dishwasher soap, furniture polish, glass cleaner, and all-purpose cleaner. If you are in need of any of these items, please alert the Administrator. A broom, dust pan, mop, vacuum cleaner, and bucket are stored in the closet of the common area.

GROUNDS & GARDENS – The grounds & gardens are maintained by a contractor. Volunteers are asked to “police” the grounds each day to remove paper, bottles, debris, etc. from our residence. All Misericordia facilities present attractive and well maintained.

ENTRY – Visitors to Driskill Home draw their first impression from our grounds and entry. In addition to “policing” the grounds, each Volunteer is watchful about our entry. If it needs sweeping, please sweep. If it needs debris removed, please remove it. We want our entry to be attractive and well maintained.

HALLWAYS – The hallways and laundry area are cleaned by a professional crew.

SLEEPING SPACES (SEMI-PRIVATE) – Each Volunteer is provided with a semi-private sleeping space. This includes closet or armoire and dresser. Please respect the property and space of your roommate. Cleaning is determined by the pair. Remember, all of Misericordia facilities are



well maintained and attractive to visitors. Please bear that in mind as you set the standard for your room.

**BATHROOMS** – Bathrooms are maintained by the Volunteers of that floor. Since each bathroom is shared by others and by guests, they need to be kept both clean and presentable at all times. Please attend especially to toilets and floors.

**KITCHEN** – The kitchen is kept clean at all times. During the regular weekly cleaning the floor is scrubbed. The refrigerator is cleaned weekly, and the removal of stale and unfit food is removed. Food stuffs are tightly sealed to avoid rodent and bug problems.

**COMMON CLOSETS** – Common closets are shared by all the Volunteers. The group decides how to fairly distribute the space. The use of the closet maintains tidiness. Locked attic space is also available to Volunteers.

### Laundry

Two washers and dryers are located at the ground level. The Volunteers will establish a schedule of when the machines are available to each person. Times not scheduled for individuals are open times and may be used on a first come, first served basis. The dryers require cleaning the filter after each use. (The filters are small and need attention following every use.) The washers are for personal items. Large blankets or quilts are best washed elsewhere.



### Shopping

There are several stores located within walking distance of Driskill. The Driskill vehicle is available for shopping errands. Some of these include the following: Target 2112 W. Peterson, Dominick's 6623 N. Damen, and Walgreen's 6236 N. Western

### Maintenance

**CARING** – Our beautiful home is a gift. Each Volunteer helps ensure that our home is maintained well. Please report any broken or damaged equipment to the Director of Driskill Home as soon as possible.

**HEATING/AIR-CONDITIONING** – The heat and air-conditioning require a finely balanced setting of the thermostats. The Director of Driskill Home will set the thermostats according to the recommendation of the maintenance staff. Please do not change the settings without consultation with the Director of the home.

REPORTING – Report all matters of concern to the Director of Driskill Home or the Administrator of the Volunteer Program.

LAWNS & GARDENS – The lawns & gardens are maintained by a contractor.

SNOW REMOVAL – Snow removal is the responsibility of the Volunteers. Assistance will be provided if the accumulation is more than four inches. A snow blower & shovels are provided. Salt is available in the garage as well. Please remove snow prior to departure in the morning and upon return from work in the evening.



# Life at Driskill Home: Growing Together

## Church

Misericordia celebrates Catholic Mass every Saturday at 4:00pm in the Jean Marie Ryan Center. There is also a Mass or Prayer Service available Monday thru Friday at 11:00am in Our Lady of Mercy Chapel adjacent to the Jean Marie Ryan Center. Misericordia also offers Sabbath services on Fridays at 4:30pm in the All Faith Room.

## Conduct with other Staff

Heart of Mercy in Action volunteers are members of the Misericordia staff. Each of us strives to be fully present in our work, to accomplish our responsibilities with excellence, and to support one another for the overall mission.

## Conduct outside as a representative of Misericordia

As representatives of Misericordia, we conduct ourselves with professional poise on campus, at Driskill, and off campus.

## Director of Driskill Home

The Director of Driskill Home is a live-in staff member who is available to volunteers for conversation or reflection around issues of spiritual life or community. He can be reached via email or office phone 773-516-4392. He is also available for emergencies.

## Emergencies

When emergencies occur, the Administrator may alert us for the need to assist immediately for the well-being of our residents. Once the alert is given, each Volunteer is expected to report to the designated work area at once. Emergencies within Driskill Home are dealt with directly by the Volunteers and reported immediately to the Administrator or Director.

## Reporting

We believe that every observation of or interaction with one of our residents is a learning opportunity for both the residents and the staff. Therefore, we ask that you report anything that would be considered important or “out of the ordinary” to staff in a timely manner. We are also always looking for ideas for goals that the residents can work on – if you notice a



skill area that a resident would benefit from further training in, please talk to that resident's designated QSP.

### Retreats

Our opening retreat provides volunteers with an opportunity to become acquainted and to establish expectations of community for the year. Our concluding retreat provides an opportunity to reflect on the year and to share appreciation for one another.

### Community Dinners

Weekly community dinners enable the volunteers to share a meal together followed by theological reflection led by one of the volunteers.

