



## FAMILY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

At Mission Central, our CORE values are Compassion, Open-Mindedness, Respect, and Empowerment. We work hard to embody these values as we work with volunteers, guests, students, and customers.

We know many families want to work with their children to help them learn how to embody these values in their lives as well. Because of the nature of our programs, our regular volunteer opportunities have age limits that exclude those younger than 15 years old. However, there are many other ways that families can support Mission Central while empowering their children to live with compassion, open-mindedness, and respect.

### **Family Work Days**

Periodically, Mission Central will host a Family Work Day. These are usually on a Saturday morning and will last about 2 hours. Families will help with various tasks around our building, including cleaning and helping organize our food pantry. On Family Work Days, we'll spend some time helping your children learn about issues that face those in poverty in our area.

### **Mobile Food Pantry**

Our Mobile Food Pantry takes place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of every month. The event takes place at the First United Methodist Church of Hurst and involves serving food to about 350 families. Volunteers are needed from 7:30 am – noon on these days. All volunteers under the age of 18 must have their parent's sign a release form to volunteer. Anyone age 15 and under needs to work side-by-side with their parent. For children under 12, we suggest that the parent visit the event before volunteering to decide if it is a suitable opportunity for their family. This very active event takes place in a parking lot and involves tasks such as taking groceries to guests' cars, handing out food, and handling various weights of boxes. Parents will need to gauge if their children can participate in a way that does not jeopardize their safety or the safety of others.

### **Lemonade Days**

During the month of July, families are invited to share a cold drink with our Village Pantry guests who are often walking to our location during this hot-weather month. This opportunity is available 10 am – 1 pm or 1 pm – 4 pm, Tuesday – Friday during the month of July. Your family will come to Mission Central's Village Pantry, set up a table outside our front door, and offer lemonade to our guests and others who pass by. Your family will provide the lemonade mix (in a new, in-date, unopened container), ice, and cups. Mission Central will provide the table and tablecloths. One family may work per shift, and you must make prior arrangements with the Director of Volunteer and Community Relations.

### **Lemonade Stand**

If our Lemonade Days don't fit your schedule, you could host a lemonade stand in your neighborhood. Your family can sell lemonade to your neighbors and friends and then donate the proceeds to Mission Central. In the winter, you could do this with hot chocolate as well!

### **Food for our Homeless Neighbors**

Mission Central's Village Pantry is set up to provide groceries to families who have cooking facilities. We often have guests, though, who are homeless and do not have a stove, microwave, or refrigerator available to them.

Your family can help us serve these guests by creating bags of food and toiletries that we can share with these guests. To create these bags, purchase some gallon-sized zip-top bags. Fill them with various types of foods that are easy to open and do not require refrigeration or cooking. Some examples are beef jerky, nuts/trail mix, peanut butter packets, peanut butter or cheese crackers, protein bars, dried fruit, or small pop-top canned goods. You may also want to add bottled water or sports drinks. Food should be the primary focus of the bags, but you could also add items like hand wipes, a toothbrush/toothpaste, socks, lip balm, sunscreen, or a comb. If the children would like to add a drawing or note of encouragement, they may do that as well. All items should be in-date, in good condition, and food items should be labeled with ingredients. Due to our storage constraints, please bring no more than 10 bags at a time.

### **Birthday Party in a Bag**

From time to time, our guests will mention that their child has an upcoming birthday and ask if we have a cake available to help celebrate the birthday. Sometimes, we can accommodate these requests and sometimes we can't. Your family could help make a child's birthday special by creating a "Birthday Party in a Bag." To create a birthday bag, fill a gift bag with a cake mix and frosting, candles, streamers or other wall decorations, plates, and napkins. Add in any other items your family thinks a child might enjoy: balloons, favors, cups, an age-appropriate book, or a card. You can create the bag with a theme (a cartoon or movie character) or make the bag more generic. All items in the bag should be new and in the original packaging. The cake mix and frosting should be in-date, with the labels intact. Due to our storage constraints, please bring no more than 5 bags at a time.

### **Scavenger Hunt for the Coat of Many Colors**

The Coat of Many Colors Resale Shop accepts gently-used clothing and household goods for resale to the public. The revenues from the store provide more than 60% of Mission Central's annual program budget.

Your family can go on a "scavenger hunt" in your home to find items for donation to the Coat of Many Colors. Look through closets, drawers, and the garage for items like clothes, shoes, toys, or sporting goods that can be brought to the Coat of Many Colors.

### **Food Drives**

Food drives are a great way for families to serve their neighbors. Mission Central needs canned and shelf-stable goods including peanut butter, jelly, canned meats, canned fruit, pasta, and rice. We also need toiletries such as soap, diapers, toothbrushes and toothpaste. If you're planning to host a food drive, you can choose from these items or you can give us a call to learn what our most critical needs are at that time. Some families enjoy getting creative with their food drives. Some children will ask others to bring canned goods to their birthday party in addition to or in place of a gift. You might wish to purchase extra diapers for Mission Central every time you purchase a gift for a new baby. You could even make a game by giving each child a set amount of money and see which child can purchase the most or best food for that amount of money.

**If you have questions regarding these opportunities, please contact Catherine Hollis at [catherine.hollis@missioncentraltx.org](mailto:catherine.hollis@missioncentraltx.org) or 817-595-0011 ext. 105.**