TOPSHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
a community center for all ages

VOLUNTEER MANUAL

Our Mission:

Libraries are places of lifelong learning that are directly tied to a community's quality of life.   The Topsham Public Library provides residents of all ages with books, informational resources, technology and services to stimulate personal growth and enrichment while serving as a center of study and community activities.

Over-Arching Service Objectives:

- To provide a center for reading, writing, study and discovery

- To provide an opportunity for learning with informational resources in a variety of formats for all community members

- To provide an educational resource supporting lifelong learning

- To connect patrons to the Internet through public access

- To promote literacy and encourage an interest in reading

- To be a community center for exhibits, programs of interest and meetings

- To provide library reference services

Our History

The first library facility in Topsham was established in 1803 as a "social library for the purpose of promoting knowledge." In 1931, the first public library was incorporated by a group of community-spirited women who established The Topsham Public Library on the second floor of the Androscoggin Firehouse. In 1941, following that tradition, Sarah Whitten bequeathed her family home at 8 Pleasant Street, which became the library's location for the next sixty years.

As Topsham's population grew from 2,000 to near 10,000, increasing demands were placed on the town's library. It became apparent to the staff and Board of Trustees that the Whitten home had become inadequate, and a new library facility became an important item in Topsham's long range plan. In 2000, the library moved to a temporary location at the Navy Annex. The Board of Trustees began in earnest to plan for the new facility.

Today, Topsham Public Library continues to serve the community as a vital center for meeting, learning, cultural enrichment and dissemination of information. The Volunteer Program will adhere to the Library's Equal Opportunity Policy.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who performs tasks for the Topsham Public Library without wages, benefits, or compensation (including travel expenses) of any kind. An average volunteer shift is usually 1 to 2 hours, one day a week. Volunteers must be 12 years or older.

Application and Selection

There is a standard application process for selecting volunteers for volunteer service. The process reinforces the importance and value of volunteer service and the need to select the best volunteer for the job at hand.

- **Complete the volunteer application form** – Prospective volunteers must complete a Volunteer Application available at the library as well as online. Applicants must possess the qualifications established for the position, must be competent and physically able to perform the specified duties.

- **Be interviewed** – The Volunteer Coordinator will hold an initial interview with each prospective volunteer to determine whether a match exists between the applicant's skills and the positions available to volunteers. Applications will be kept on file for three months. If there is a suitable available position, the offer of such will be made.

- **Sign forms as needed**, including but not limited to: Background Check Agreement, Liability Release, Confidentiality and Library Volunteer Agreement.

- **Training** – Each volunteer will receive specific training on how to do their job. Some positions will include on-the-job mentoring from an experienced volunteer or staff person. Be sure to ask any questions you have. Don't assume anything! We want you to be successful.

For those desiring a very short term volunteer opportunity, of no more than a few hours, please contact the volunteer coordinator.

Background Checks

In order to maintain a safe public space for staff, volunteers and members of the public, background checks are required for all volunteers over the age of 18.

Confidential Information

All library patrons have a right to privacy and confidentiality regarding the collection of personal information and the use they make of the library facilities, collections and website. We have an obligation to our customers to maintain their confidentiality and respect their privacy. As you work with the staff, you may be exposed to information of a confidential nature. Such information is not to be shared with anyone else, including family, friends or acquaintances. No one is permitted to remove or make copies of any records, reports or documents. Noncompliance will be subject to immediate dismissal and/or possible legal action.

Attendance

Once accepted and placed in a volunteer assignment, it is important that the volunteer report for duty on time as scheduled. We recognize that life happens and there will be times when you are unable to report for a shift. We ask that you communicate with the library as soon as you know of planned absences by emailing tplstaff@topshamlibrary.org so that we may find a substitute. Keep in mind that 100% of our shelving and shelf reading is performed by our dedicated volunteers. Because we rely so heavily on our volunteers, prolonged or frequent absences may result in loss of position.

Volunteer Performance Concerns

To ensure continuous and successful operation of the library and the Volunteer Program, and to minimize disruption and conduct that interferes with library functions, certain expectations of performance, rules and policies are in place. Inability to perform assigned tasks may result in reassignment or loss of position. Infraction of rules or policies may result in dismissal as a volunteer. All decisions regarding dismissal are final.

References

The Volunteer Coordinator will provide references for volunteers upon request.

Issues or Concerns

If any issues or concerns come up, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Coordinator.