

AMATE HOUSE HANDBOOK

Guidelines and Philosophies

Amate House North
Amate House South
Amate House Little Village

2010-2011 Volunteer Year

ALCOHOL and other SUBSTANCES

Volunteer communities are encouraged to find an alternative to drinking alcohol while socializing and bonding with each other. Our experience as a staff is that “alcohol-izing” (i.e. using alcohol in conjunction with socializing) as a habit can become a “crutch” that prevents deeper intimacy and more genuine friendships among a community of Volunteers. We also ask you to be mindful of the fact that some individuals that you will be working with throughout the course of the year struggle with alcohol and other substances. In addition to that, there may be community members that are struggling with alcohol dependency or have family members who have struggled with it. As a way of practicing solidarity with those who are struggling and to be sensitive and supportive of the larger Amate House Community, we ask that you not abuse alcohol and other substances.

Any abuse of alcohol or any other substance can be cause for dismissal from the program. If you choose to consume alcohol, we expect that as adults you will consume it responsibly at all times.

Alcohol shall in no instance be given to any underage minor on Amate House property, nor shall any abuse of alcohol by an outside party be permitted at Amate House. Purchasing of kegs and using them on Amate House property is prohibited. Alcohol may NOT be purchased from Amate House/community money.

The use of illegal drugs by Amate House Volunteers or on the grounds of any Amate House property is strictly prohibited. Violation of this expectation will result in dismissal from the program and possible action by legal authorities.

There is a no alcohol policy for our three retreats (fall, winter and closing).

ALLOWANCE

You will receive your monthly personal living allowance checks (\$100) on the first Friday of each month, beginning in September. You will receive half of the allowance (\$50) for the months of August and June as you will only be working for half of those months. Volunteers are expected to personally commit to the challenge of sticking to their monthly allowance. This means thinking about how you will pay for your cell phone bill, public transportation and bus/plane/train tickets home on holidays.

AUTOMOBILES

Amate House has several vehicles for use by all Amate House program houses. They will be shared and distributed among houses as needed, by the decision of the Program Staff. We ask that Volunteers treat these vehicles with great care; we need them to last as long as possible! **All drivers of Amate House vehicles MUST HAVE A VALID DRIVERS LICENSE AND BE AT LEAST 21 YEARS OF AGE.**

Almost all of our cars have been donated to us. Some have little glitches, but all are thoroughly checked over and have all been deemed safe (i.e. brakes, tires, major components of car are in working order).

Cars are to be used first and foremost for transportation to and from work (this takes priority over any personal use). We ask that Amate House Volunteers utilize the public transportation systems available to them whenever possible. Volunteers from the Chicagoland area and surrounding suburbs should use the Metra to visit their families. Amate House cars are not to be taken more than one hour from the house and are not to be driven out of the city unless for Amate House purposes (recruiting or retreats) or otherwise allowed by the Program Staff.

Secondarily, Amate vehicles are a valuable shared resource for the community. They are community property and everyone is responsible for their care. Carpooling with Amate cars and CTA (Chicago Transit Authority) are important means of transportation to the Volunteer's work sites. Amate Volunteer Communities must work with each other to determine the most equitable and efficient use of vehicles during the year and everyone is required to assist in transportation of one another to work or to public transportation if need be.

For liability reasons Amate House cars are generally not to be used for transporting persons at a Volunteer's work site. If the site wishes to use an Amate House vehicle for an event, then liability waiver forms must be used for all persons riding in the vehicle. All minors must have parental consent. If a Volunteer uses an Amate House vehicle for work purposes, the site should reimburse (per mile) Amate House at the current federal mileage rate, per their agreement with our organization. Please see your House Coordinator to set up a system for payment from your site.

Each Amate House Community will designate a member who will be the "contact person" in the house regarding repairs, oil changes, etc. This is considered a household chore and will be discussed further at Orientation.

PERSONAL CARS: All Amate House Volunteers have committed to live a more simplified lifestyle while in Chicago. We challenge you to live without multiple vehicles at your disposal. Therefore, we ask that Volunteers not bring personal cars unless there is a compelling medical or personal reason. If you do bring a personal car with you, we challenge you to consider it a resource that is shared with the whole community.

CTA PASSES: Just like our vehicles, CTA passes purchased by Amate House should be considered a shared community resource. While some Volunteers will use CTA on a daily basis for their work commute, this does not mean that these individuals are entitled to exclusive use of a CTA pass. We expect the community to share these passes on weekends and weeknights when they are utilized for personal errands and trips.

AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENTS AND TICKETS

If you are involved in an accident with an Amate House car, **a police report MUST be filed for insurance purposes.** Call the police IMMEDIATELY to file a report. (Dial 311 for non-emergencies.) Immediately after that, call a staff member to report the incident.

Our insurance deductible for accidents and necessary repairs related to accidents is \$500. If you are involved in an accident with an Amate House vehicle for which you are at fault, we will ask you to contribute \$100 (for each accident) towards this deductible. This fee is charged in order to ensure responsible and careful driving in Amate House cars.

If you receive an automobile ticket (for parking, speeding, running a red light or any other moving violation), you are expected to pay for that ticket. Please be sure to notify someone from the Amate House staff if you receive a ticket with an Amate House car. We will make a copy of the ticket for our records. **Do not be so foolish as to think that if you ignore the ticket that WE will not receive a notice in the mail!** We are the registered owners and we receive in the mail, a copy of every ticket written out to one of our vehicles. If you plan on contesting the ticket, please inform your House Coordinator.

BUDGET

A budget will be provided at the beginning of the year as a guideline for food and household expenses for each house, also for transportation (gas and CTA passes), and other regular expenses. The first few weeks typically run

a bit higher in terms of food and other expenses, but each house will likely settle into a budgetary rhythm by the end of September. This budget is a guideline only. How you plan to split the money up between groceries and house items is up to you. If you are planning to spend money on things other than groceries and house items, you must clear it with your House Coordinator. Because the budget will be set in accordance with the desire to focus on a simple lifestyle, we ask you not to spend your budget on alcohol. The budget is subject to review and may be edited during the course of the year by Amate House Staff. Volunteers are encouraged to challenge themselves on budgetary issues and make informed decisions about their spending. A regular budget check-in will be a part of weekly business meetings at community nights.

Petty cash checks will be issued on the 1st and 15th of each month. If they fall on a weekend the checks will be issued the first business day after the weekend. All receipts must be turned into the Administrative Director by the 12th and 27th of each month. If they fall on a weekend the receipts must be turned in the first business day after the weekend. A community member will be in charge of your budget and balancing your cash. A more detailed job description will be reviewed at Orientation!

CELL PHONES

Many of our Volunteers have cell phones that they bring with them to Amate House. Having a cell phone is a privilege and should be used as such. We ask that you are mindful of the usage of your phone (including texting) in the evenings and on the weekends during your free time, as time on the phone takes away from time in community. We challenge you to share the house telephone and to only use cell phones in necessary situations. Part of this year is about learning to live in alternative ways to the cultural expectations of our times. Not having a cell phone or limiting your use of one by reducing your cell phone plan might be an opportunity to explore our culture's addiction to technology.

If you decide to have a cell phone while at Amate House, we challenge you to pay the bill from your monthly stipend and not to accept outside payment for your cell phone bill.

Cell phones should be **TURNED OFF** (not in silent mode) during community nights, community meals, retreats and other Amate House events. If it is turned off, you won't be tempted to text and you can avoid the distraction of a ringing/buzzing cell phone.

CHORES

Tasks for maintaining the house in clean and good working order will be determined for each Volunteer Community during orientation. We find it helpful to discuss this early, as working out house chores and jobs in a large community can be quite difficult! Participation by each person in the ongoing cleaning and maintenance of our "homes" is an essential dimension of a commitment to intentional community living. It is a way to actively practice hospitality and it helps us to maintain our residences for future Amate House Volunteers!

Note that the Amate House residences are expected to be cleaned and picked up on a regular basis, especially if a house is hosting a community night, a house mass, an immersion group or any other Amate House event.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Volunteers attend and participate in regular community nights, weekend liturgies, retreats, in-service days, theological reflection sessions, meetings, community prayer times, spiritual companioning sessions, benefit events, and other special events.

Wednesday Community nights are SACRED. You are expected to be present and to be on time (with a smile on your face!). All Volunteer Service Sites are aware of this commitment and should allow you ample time to return home in order to be present and relaxed for community nights. While we recognize the importance of your commitment to your site, you also have a commitment to Amate House and the community

nights that are planned well in advance, do not let your work keep you from getting home in time for community nights!

Generally, weekends remain free from Amate House commitments. However, there ARE some events planned during the year that take place on weekends. Please consult your house calendar (and your House Coordinator if necessary to check on the date) before making plans to be away. If you are planning travel, check the house calendar BEFORE you buy tickets or make arrangements to leave, and make sure you are not going to be missing any Amate House or work events. If there is a conflict in scheduling you must check with your House Coordinator before confirming plans that will cause you to miss a scheduled event. We ask that you make a conscious effort to plan any travel around your Amate commitments.

COMMUNITY LIVING

Your presence (or absence) on weekends has a significant impact on communal life. In order for relationships to develop, time and space is necessary. Please keep this in mind when making plans to be away. **Amate House recommends that you not leave on a weekend until Thanksgiving.** This is a suggestion encouraging communities to intentionally spend weekend time together at the beginning of the year so that they can focus on individual relationships within the community.

Your full presence in community may also be compromised if you choose to spend too much time on outside projects (i.e. graduate school entrance exams and applications). If possible, schedule these tests and complete these applications before you begin your Amate House commitment. If you plan to be working on these things during your Volunteer year, please be aware of the time you spend on them that may take you away from community.

It is expected that all Volunteers are well aware of the importance and emphasis placed on community living here at Amate House. Our goal is that the Volunteer year be the most fruitful, enjoyable and meaningful experience as is possible. Thus, it is expected that Amate House Volunteers make a sincere effort to develop and work at their relationships with other community members and staff, to relate with honesty and sensitivity with others, and to do what is necessary for the household and the program to function efficiently, effectively and lovingly during the course of the year.

DENTAL CARE

The Health Insurance provided by Amate House DOES NOT include dental care. In the past, we have been able to find pro bono dental care for Volunteers facing emergency situations. If such is the case for you, please let your House Coordinator know and we will assist you in obtaining the necessary dental services.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

For Police or Fire Emergency, call 911; for other non-emergencies you should dial 311. Instructions and staff phone numbers will be posted in your house next to the phone.

If there is an emergency situation involving a member or members of the community:

1. Call 911.
2. Call a Staff Member.
3. The Staff Member will contact the parents of the Volunteer.

If there is an emergency situation involving the house (i.e. fire or burglary):

1. Get out! Go to the rectory of the Church or someplace out of harm's way.
2. Call 911.
3. Call a Staff Member.

If trauma or an emergency situation results, the community involved will process the experience with an Amate House Staff member and if deemed necessary, a trained professional. If an individual needs to see a trained professional as a result of trauma, Amate House will assist the Volunteer in finding treatment through our insurance plan or through personal contacts.

EMPLOYMENT

Amate House Volunteer site placements are considered full time jobs. You are expected to treat this work as you would any other full time employment: respect for time of arrival/departure, consistent presence, properly communicated absences to employer, etc. If there is a conflict at your worksite, you need to speak with your Site Supervisor to try to resolve the problem before you come to Amate House Staff for assistance.

Failure to adhere to the expectations, policies and procedures of the Volunteer Site Placement can result in dismissal from the program.

Site Mediation and Termination:

In the event that there is a serious conflict with the Site Placement, the Volunteer must communicate with the House Coordinator and the Program Director and work through a mediation process with the Site/Site Supervisor. The Volunteer agrees, by signing the Letter of Service Agreement, to take all possible steps that may be deemed necessary in order to negotiate a solution. A mediation process and timeline will be worked out on an individual basis with the Volunteer, the Program Coordinator/Program Director and the Site Supervisor in the event of a conflict.

Due to the commitment you have made to volunteer service this year, simply not liking your job is not a reason to leave a site placement. Your departure from a Service Site will result in a budget deficit for both Amate House and the site. Termination from a site is taken very seriously.

Reasons to begin a mediation process would include:

1. A lack of direct service at the site. Amate House asks that the site provide a job description that includes 60% direct, face to face, contact with clients or students. A few sites may state up front (on their site listing), that 60% direct service is not provided. If this was stated in advance, it is not a reason for a Volunteer to terminate their commitment to the site.
2. The Job Description that you were provided with in August is not accurate and has changed drastically from what you committed to.
3. A lack of or inadequate supervision from the Site Supervisor.
4. Personal health or safety concerns on behalf of the Volunteer.

If a Volunteer leaves their site, they are required to meet with an Amate House staff member for an Exit Interview.

The Amate House Volunteer will select another site and interview from a limited list of available placements.

Because Volunteer service, community life, and other Amate House commitments take up a good portion of the day/week, **we prohibit any other employment outside of these commitments.** We also prohibit the Volunteers from taking classes, unless cleared with the Program Staff in advance. As a Volunteer, you also take on a vow of simplicity for the year, and earning and saving money can make that challenge more difficult. If you have an opportunity to work some extra hours at your site (for instance at an after school tutor program) for pay, we encourage you to either offer to do it without pay or use the money received to put back into the program or your community in some way.

ENVIRONMENT

The environment that we help to create within our Amate House homes can have a great impact on our mental and physical well-being. Volunteers are encouraged to find ways to make their homes (both inside and outside) warm, inspiring and welcoming, to create spaces which promote or encourage prayer and reflection, and to help keep a clean environment which promotes healthy, happy living. Please add your creativity to your new home here at Amate House!

FUNDRAISING

Amate House is an agency of the Archdiocese of Chicago. However, we have our own separate Board of Directors and must do all of our own fundraising each year. We do not receive any funding from the Archdiocese for our operating costs.

Volunteers are not asked to raise a specific amount of money in order to participate in the program, but we do ask that Volunteers help with our fundraising efforts during the year by writing fall and spring appeal letters to friends and family, as well as attending Amate Magic. Volunteers may also be asked to speak at parishes or other fundraisers for Amate House. We are a family that has to make ends meet. We appreciate your help in our endeavors!

GRIEVANCE POLICIES

Any and all grievances or complaints, large or small, related to a Volunteer's participation in the Amate House program or related to any other participant in the Amate House program, or against a staff or Board Member, should be handled in the following manner.

- 1) If any issue or complaint is related directly to an individual person, that person should be approached respectfully, communicated to directly, and allowed the opportunity to respond directly to the issue.
- 2) If the issue or complaint is not sufficiently resolved through direct communication with the individual, or such communication is deemed to be inappropriate, the Volunteer should report/discuss the matter with the designated House Coordinator and/or Site Supervisor.
- 3) If the issue/complaint is still not sufficiently resolved, the matter should then be communicated with the Executive Director.
- 4) After the Executive Director, if the matter has not been resolved in previous 3 steps, the President of the Board of Directors should be approached.
- 5) The Board of Directors will make final decisions related to any matters not resolved previously.

*AmeriCorps members are bound by the AmeriCorps Education Award Program contract and member handbook.

GUESTS

Please feel free to invite friends and family for dinner or as an overnight guest, but not as a permanent resident! Guests should use guest rooms and you should make sure to let your community know in advance if you are planning to have someone as an overnight guest. Inviting others over is a wonderful opportunity for you to practice hospitality. At the same time, all Volunteers should be aware that guests also affect the life of the community. Length of stay may become an issue that needs discussion with others. In addition, Community Nights are sacred, and are times for us to be together with our Community. Please ask your House Coordinator if it would be appropriate to have a guest stay for a Community Night.

HOSPITALITY

One of the challenges of community living – and one of the surest signs of a vibrant community – is the capacity to provide hospitality to guests, and make others feel welcome in your home.

Because hospitality is something we value at Amate House, we frequently host small groups or activities here such as: spring break trips, applicants interested in our program, and Amate House Board Meetings. It can be challenging for Volunteers to balance their own need for space with the desire to be available and hospitable to others. This is, we think, a wonderfully important tension from which to learn. Please take these opportunities to create and maintain a hospitable environment for others.

INSURANCE

Currently, our Volunteer health plan is covered by Christian Brothers Services (www.cbsservices.org). Health insurance coverage begins **September 1st and continues until June 30th**, and provides limited eye coverage. You must visit an “in network” provider for the visit to be covered by Christian Brothers. A Health Insurance session will take place at Orientation where you will fill out all the necessary paperwork. The Volunteer pays a \$5.00 co-payment at each doctor visit. Amate House also offers reimbursement for prescription costs. The Volunteer will pay up to \$8.00 for each prescription, and Amate House will reimburse the remainder of the prescription cost to the Volunteer. If a generic version of the prescription is available, we ask the Volunteer to choose it. If this is an option but the Volunteer refuses to pick generic, the Volunteer will be required to pay the full prescription cost. Prescriptions for birth control are not covered. Amate House stops subsidizing office visits and prescriptions as of the last day of the program year.

Health Insurance coverage is also available out of state. If at any point you need to visit a doctor or hospital while you are away from Chicago, you can visit www.phcs.com to choose a PHCS Network (PPO), which will provide you with a list to choose from.

*Please note that you will be here a full month before your Health Insurance coverage begins. This is typical of any other type of employment. **DO NOT GO UNCOVERED.** If, for any reason, you have to visit a doctor while uninsured you will have expensive medical bills that you will be responsible for.

Amate House auto insurance only covers our vehicles which can only be driven by Amate House Volunteers, Staff and Board Members.

INTENTIONAL LIFESTYLE

In solidarity with the people of Chicago whom we serve, and out of respect for the people who provide financial support for our program, Amate House Volunteers live a simple lifestyle, one in which we live as “good stewards” of what we have been given. Each year the Volunteer Communities will set guidelines and goals for themselves as to how this can best be achieved.

For any Volunteer with access to outside financial support, we challenge you to live on the monthly stipend provided. Use of credit cards during the year is discouraged, and we ask that you enter into any other debt obligations very cautiously and only in extreme situations.

We want you to spend time with friends and family and we are aware that travel costs money. Throughout the year you may be given money by your family in the form of a flight home. Please be conscious of the fact that the covering of travel expenses is a gift and should be seen as such. Others in your Community might not have the same luxury available to them.

Live intentionally! Community, prayer, reflection, service, choices for health, thoughtfulness towards others, meaningful conversations, social alternatives, etc... In every way, your Amate House year is what you make of it. No one else can or should be blamed for any shortcomings in your experience. You will have to make it happen... it won't happen on its own!

INTERNET AND EMAIL

Each of our houses is fortunate enough to have a DSL line for internet access. Quite purposefully, there is no wireless connection in the Volunteer Residences. Amate House provides internet access as a tool to communicate with friends and loved ones – but all in good measure. You are challenged to share the computer that is provided in the house. We realize that this can be difficult due to the number of people in your Community and encourage you to utilize the public library for your internet usage as well. Again, in living a more simplified lifestyle, **we ask that you do not bring a personal computer.** Personal computers (not to mention televisions and cell phones) take away from the challenge to be fully present in community, to share resources, and to be in solidarity with those who do not have access to technology.

JOURNALING

We highly recommend journaling during your year at Amate House. You will be presented with various journal questions and reflections throughout the year. These are designed to help you get the most out of your Amate House year! Any reflection or processing you do of your experiences will help you to learn, integrate and grow from them. There will be journaling time built into Orientation and the community night business meetings each week. Take the time to reflect on your experiences, don't let the impact of this year pass you by. Spend some time thinking about your life in Amate House and at your Service Site and the many things you are learning!

KEYS

Each Volunteer is given a house key. If you lose your key:

- 1) pray someone is home to let you in.
- 2) look very, very hard to find it.
- 3) get a copy made- using your own money.

DO NOT GIVE COPIES OF THE KEYS OF ANY AMATE HOUSE BUILDING to anyone who is not a current Amate House Volunteer unless you are directed to by a staff member.

LOAN DEFERMENT

Through the Catholic Network of Volunteer Service, our Volunteers are eligible to apply for the AmeriCorps Education Award. With this award, all AmeriCorps members are able to put all **Federal** loans into forbearance. This means that at the end of your grace period they can be put on hold until the end of your service year. Interest will accrue during this time, but AmeriCorps offers to pay it at the end of your service term. Becoming an AmeriCorps member is dependent each year on federal funding. We will go through all AmeriCorps paperwork at Orientation. Please wait until that time to inquire about federal loan forbearance. If you need to begin loan repayments before Orientation, you may contact the Amate House Staff to inquire about the process over the summer. We recommend that you **DO NOT** declare economic hardship in order to defer your loans. If you have questions about this, please contact an Amate House staff member.

Each private lender will treat the Amate House Volunteer experience differently. Please take the time to contact your private lending company, prior to arriving at Amate House, to determine what steps need to be taken (i.e. getting a letter from Amate House) before the situation becomes problematic. **You are responsible for your own loans and requesting any paperwork that you need from the Program Staff.**

MEDIATION & TERMINATION

The choice to terminate your commitment to Amate House is taken very seriously by our Staff, Board of Directors and Sites. We are very proud of our high retention rate from year to year. **It is a rare occurrence that a Volunteer decides to leave our program.** We attribute this to our highly supportive staff and community environment. We ask that any Volunteer discerning their commitment to Amate House discern this decision **WITH** their House Coordinator, the Program Director or the Executive Director. All discernment will be kept confidential at the request of the Volunteer.

Please note that your commitment to Amate House begins when you sign the Letter of Service Agreement upon acceptance to the program. **Any decision to terminate from the program has a major financial impact on Amate House and your Site Placement.** Your choice to terminate from the program affects our staff, our budget, your site, your clients, and your Community.

In the event that an Amate House Volunteer decides to terminate from the program and the decision is **NOT** mutually agreed upon by the Program Director, the following steps will be followed:

1. The Volunteer must give an explanation to their Community. This would entail a discussion and reflection led by an Amate House staff member. Time must be allowed for the community's reflections and questions regarding the situation. The Volunteer is asked to be open and honest with their Community. The Community is required to keep any information that is discussed in this setting confidential.
2. The Volunteer must make personal (face to face) contact with each staff member that they have been involved with in order to end the Amate House experience properly. This would include the Executive Director and the Program Staff.
3. In the presence of the Coordinator, the Volunteer is responsible for arranging a meeting to inform their Site Supervisor of their decision. This should include both an explanation and an apology for not fulfilling the commitment that they have made to the organization or school. The Site Supervisor should set the requirements for termination with the staff members at the site. The Program Director will contact the site regarding the contract that was broken.
4. The Volunteer will be immediately terminated from the Health Insurance Policy.
5. The Volunteer must reimburse Amate House for any education and training that was provided for them in order to perform their work (i.e. Teacher training seminars or language training). Amate House views these educational experiences as investments in our Volunteers. If a Volunteer chooses to leave the program, this investment is lost and should be repaid.
6. The Volunteer, in choosing to leave the Amate House program, will be released from their term of service in the AEAP. This termination means the member will receive no portion of the education award and may be ineligible to apply for future grants. If the Volunteer is leaving Amate House due to a compelling circumstance (see AmeriCorps handbook), they may be eligible to receive a prorated portion of their award.
7. The Volunteer is responsible for his or her own transportation home, and will not receive the \$500 end-of-year bonus.
8. The Volunteer must complete an Exit Interview process with the Executive Director.

These steps must be completed within a 5 day period or as deemed appropriate by the Program Director.

If reasons for leaving are mutually agreed upon and/or out of the control of the Volunteer, the Volunteer will work with the Program Director in order to end well with their Site Placement and Community.

In the event that Amate House decides to terminate the relationship with a Volunteer, the Letter of Service Agreement may be terminated within 14 days after notice is given to the Volunteer, and staff will continue following Mediation (which may involve the above steps).

MEALS

Community dinners are generally Monday through Thursday. We ask you to be present at community dinners four times a week. This is important as community will only develop to the extent that you are present to engage with others in a meaningful way... that requires sharing time and space. Do not let work or other personal commitments get in the way of this! Many of our alumni express regret that they did not make their community meals more of a priority during their year.

Weekend meals are generally left up to individual Volunteers, although sharing meals and the cooking during that time is highly encouraged.

Each Volunteer is expected to cook and clean at least once each week. Sign up is typically during community night business meetings. Menu selection at that time will aid the grocery shoppers.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Amate House Mission Statement reads: "Inspired by the social mission of the Catholic Church, Amate House supports and develops men and women rooted in faith, dedicated to service, and committed to building a more just and loving society." Amate House Volunteers are exposed to the philosophy of this mission statement on a regular basis.

We are a Catholic program and many of our community nights and other events are taken from the rich history of our Catholic tradition. We celebrate liturgy together throughout the year and Catholic Social Teaching provides a major foundation for much of our formation. Because Amate House welcomes Volunteers from all religious backgrounds we also work to celebrate the diversity of expressions of faith that exist within our program.

It should also be noted that Amate House is an agency of the Archdiocese of Chicago. As Volunteers, you are considered to be representatives of the Archdiocese both in your residence and in the public sphere, regardless of your religious affiliation.

NEIGHBORS

Please be considerate at all times of the neighbors; be it priest, parishioner or the general community. You are representatives of Amate House and the Archdiocese of Chicago, whether you want to be or not, therefore courteous and responsible behavior is expected whether at home or away, and especially with neighbors.

The outside of your home and your yard are your responsibility. Please make it a welcoming environment.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT POLICY *(adapted from CNVS manual)*

Discrimination of any kind on the part of Amate House Volunteers will not be tolerated. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful or harassing discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Amate House program.

Amate House will not tolerate harassment of any kind. Harassment includes threatening or insinuating that the refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect workplace or community relationships. Harassment may also include conduct such as unwanted sexual flirtation or touches; abusive or degrading language; graphic or suggestive comments; or displaying inappropriate objects or pictures. Any member who believes that he or she has been subject to harassment of any kind, or who has knowledge about harassment of others, should report their harassment to an immediate supervisor, and/or Program Director in accordance with the Grievance Policy. Any member who is found to have engaged in harassment will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including dismissal from the Amate House program and AEAP program.

RECYCLING

As part of our commitment to the principles of stewardship, we take seriously our responsibility to care for creation. Therefore, we encourage our Communities to recycle cans, glass, plastic and newspapers as well as plastic grocery bags.

Please see the City of Chicago website for all information about recycling in your neighborhood.

www.cityofchicago.org/streets

RELATIONSHIPS

Amate House is open to unmarried couples participating in our program. Because relationships can impede the process of intentional community, we place couples in different houses for the program year. The same applies for close friends who join the program together.

It is not unheard of for relationships to form while Volunteers are at Amate House, either with another Volunteer or with a person outside of the program. It is unhealthy and detrimental to community to keep these relationships a secret from your community or the staff. It is our hope that you are continually building a solid foundation of love and respect in your Amate House Community and that your relationships are respected and celebrated by your peers. However, during your time at Amate House, **your primary concern is for your Community** (see other sections on intentional community living) and for your work. We ask that you respect this commitment as it relates to all relationships (relatives, friends and significant others).

If a situation arises where a romantic relationship is beginning to form with another Volunteer within your Community, we encourage you to seek out your House Coordinator for support in how to move forward in determining what to communicate with your Community and the best approach to take in order to do that.

Cohabitation is not permitted in Amate House residences.

RESPECT

The basic ground rule for community living and for involvement in the Amate House program is respect for others. Our Catholic-Christian heritage firmly upholds the dignity and sacredness of the human person: that means your fellow community members, staff, and all those you encounter. Let us create a safe, sacred, and respectful space at Amate House.

SECURITY

Doors should be kept locked at all times. Cars should be locked at all times. No valuables should ever be left unattended in any vehicle. If all Volunteers are planning to be away from the house for a period of time (i.e. retreat, Christmas) special attention should be paid to making sure the house is secured- newspapers should be stopped, windows should be locked, and a light left on.

Volunteers should also respect fellow community members' feelings about safety and make sure that people are walked out to their cars or picked up from the eL station if need be.

SMOKING

Amate House buildings are smoke free. Courtyards provide an area for smoking. Please make sure to clean up all cigarette butts and garbage.

SHOPPING

Shopping should be completed in accordance with a commitment to GOOD STEWARDSHIP of resources, the health of your Volunteer Communities, and within budget! Please shop for your food thoughtfully and cost-

effectively, and with consideration to your housemates' dietary needs (i.e. vegetarian, vegan, allergies, etc.) Your house will be given a budget that you will work from in order to decide how, when and where to spend your money. Everyone in the community has a say in this issue, so we encourage the house to have a fair and inclusive conversation. It is a wonderful exercise in simple living, group decision making and conscientious purchasing!

SPIRITUAL COMPANIONS

Each Volunteer is offered the opportunity to meet with a spiritual companion for the year. The spiritual companion will accompany the Volunteer during the year through meetings once a month. Spiritual companions can assist the Volunteer in processing and reflecting on his/her experiences, and will encourage accountability to the spiritual journey of the year. They can also help a Volunteer with discernment about decisions and life choices.

Meetings with spiritual companions depend on the initiative of the Volunteer. Past Volunteers who have regularly utilized this support have found it immensely helpful to them. Please take advantage of this resource offered to you! Take the initiative to establish regular meetings, and schedule your next meeting before you end the previous one.

Additionally, counseling resources are also available through your health insurance and through resources provided by the Amate House staff. Please do not hesitate to talk to an Amate House staff member if you are in need of counseling. All conversations remain confidential.

SUMMER HOUSING

On occasion, Amate House is able to offer the opportunity for Volunteers to continue living in our community houses at a significantly-reduced rental rate after the volunteer year concludes in mid-June. This decision is made each spring and there is no guarantee that summer housing will be available every year. When available, it is typically offered from the third week of June to the third week of July. Volunteers who choose to participate in summer housing will be asked to sign a contract that stipulates the rules regarding paying rent, move out procedures, and cleaning. We expect all former Volunteers who participate in summer housing to work with us to ensure that our volunteer houses will be clean and in good working order for the next volunteer year.

TAX EXEMPT STATUS

Amate House is exempt from sales tax. There is a letter that you should bring with you when purchasing groceries or other items for Amate House with petty cash money. Misuse of this letter could cause the WHOLE Archdiocese to lose their tax exempt status, so please do not lose this letter or misuse it yourself.

UTILITIES

Amate House is financially responsible for the utility bills for our facility. We ask that you conserve energy. Turn off radios, TV, lights and fans when you leave a room. Do not use air conditioning unnecessarily. Please be sure that your use of utilities reflects your commitment to live simply and as a good steward of resources.

VACATION TIME

Each Amate House Volunteer may take up to 10 days of vacation time during the year. A vacation day is defined as "any weekday spent away from community, regardless of whether it is a site holiday." This time should be worked out around site, community and other Amate House commitments. Volunteers should clearly communicate planned vacation times with fellow community members, Site Supervisors and Amate House Staff.

It is expected that there be no additional vacation time beyond the two allotted weeks (10 work days). This is especially important for teachers and other Volunteers working in schools to be aware of. Because schools and some other sites that work with schools, often have set breaks and may even end early according to our prescribed volunteer "year," it is important that those Volunteers only take 10 days away from their

Community. Volunteers at such sites are expected to find other ways to serve and volunteer their time during added breaks or in the event of early completion of their volunteer assignment. Visiting and helping out at the site of another Volunteer is one possible and suggested way to make use of this time. Finding ways to contribute to the house (cleaning, organizing, planning, etc.) may be another. Amate House staff can often use additional assistance, and there are numerous additional volunteer options in Chicago. Please take the initiative to use such time wisely.

Please note that time away from work is vacation time; even if it is for a grad/med/law school or job interview for next year. In addition, remember that community nights are SACRED. If you are going away for Christmas, Easter, or any other holiday or weekend, make sure you schedule your travel around community nights.

Amate House Volunteers are permitted three sick days during the course of the year. Sick days are only used when you are SICK. They are not interchangeable with vacation days. Volunteers are also allowed 2 days away from work and community (with permission from the Site Supervisor) for recruiting purposes. Recruiting trips must be planned ahead of time with an Amate House Recruitment Coordinator.

WEEKENDS

You are generally free on weekends to use the time as you wish, depending on your work schedule. However, on certain occasions, there will be community events or Amate House functions on weekends. You will be notified of these commitments well in advance whenever possible.

*** Amate House recommends that you not leave on a weekend until Thanksgiving.** This suggestion is to encourage weekend community bonding. With busy work schedules, sometimes it is difficult to find community time during the week, which means that weekends are a vital time to build relationships. At the beginning of the year it is important to dedicate extra time to building community. **Please keep in mind that your presence and/or absence here has a big impact on communal life.**

If you have friends and family in Chicago, consider inviting them to Amate House, or else include some of your fellow community members in your outings with them. Furthermore, when you are leaving for the weekend, the general expectation is that you will leave after our Wednesday community night together. **This includes Christmas and Easter vacation time.**

Upon leaving for the weekend or going out with other friends, you should always let your community know where you are going, when you expect to return and how you can be reached, both for your own safety and out of respect for those you are living with.