

Welcome to [Backpacks For The Street](#). Thank you for joining the BFTS to volunteer and help the homeless. Our mantra is simple: A person's circumstances does not diminish their value as a human being or make them any less deserving of kindness and compassion.

We treat people with dignity and respect. Something, as simple as a backpack can give a person a boost of hope and show them, they are not alone. That's why we do what we do.

We often say, we work at our day jobs to pay the bills. But this work, it nourishes our souls.

## **Who Are We**

Launched in 2018, Backpacks For The Street (<https://backpacksforthestreet.org>) is a nonprofit, grassroots movement to bring compassion and dignity to the streets, and helping to make the lives of the homeless a little bit easier.

You, our volunteers, are the heartbeat of this program. Without you, this could not happen. We want this to be a fun and exciting experience for you. To that end, we strive to create a safe space for everyone, volunteers and the people we help.

As a BFTS volunteer, please act with the highest standards of integrity, professionalism and ethical conduct. Treat all individuals with compassion, dignity and self-worth.

We have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to harassment and intolerance of any kind.

This includes unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical behavior of any kind that is unwanted, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient and violates people's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

We also have a zero-tolerance policy against any discrimination, bullying or harassment based on race, color, creed, gender identity, ethnicity, political affiliation, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status or status regarding public assistance. This goes for sexual harassment of any kind. Violation of this will result in the immediate dismissal as a volunteer with BFTS.

Please respect the privacy and confidence of the other volunteers and the people we help. There is absolutely no photo taking, video or audio recording of our clients/people we serve, without the prior consent of the executive directors, and a signed consent form.

You are welcome to take pictures of yourself with other volunteers, with their permission. Should you post them on social media, please tag us accordingly.

## **Attire and Conduct**

Be dependable, recognizing the commitment and responsibility to the team. If you are unable to fulfill your commitment, please notify one of the directors, or email the volunteer coordinator at [volunteer@backpacksforthestreet.org](mailto:volunteer@backpacksforthestreet.org), as soon as possible. You may also call our office at 212.652-2583.

If you are going out on the street with the team, please dress appropriately, and wear comfortable shoes. No flashy clothing or jewelry. Keep cell phones in your pocket. Leave any valuables at home, as we can't be responsible for people personal property.

Avoid conflict of interest situations and refrain from actions that may be perceived as such, especially when interacting with people living on the street. If you have an issue, or an issue arises, please talk with one of the directors immediately, so that it can be dealt with.

Please do not give your private information to any of our clients. We have premade cards with our phone number and site address, should someone need or want additional information or services.

We also have a zero-tolerance policy regarding the use of drugs or alcohol during your shifts.

## **Most Importantly**

Have fun, most importantly. As a BFTS volunteer, you have an opportunity to make a difference to people feel invisible, stigmatized and too often forgotten about. You are part of a movement to help those who can't help themselves and change their lives for the better. The impact you can make is greater than you can imagine. So many people who are homeless are longing for a kind word, a smile, a friendly face or someone to hold out their hand and tell them they are not alone.

We love what we do. BFTS is a labor of love in every possible way. And, we are truly grateful for your willingness to join the team and the movement to change the world, one backpack at a time.

If you have any questions, or we've left anything out, please let us know. Contact our President and CEO Jeffrey Newman at [jeffrey@togetherhelpingothers.org](mailto:jeffrey@togetherhelpingothers.org).

Please read the Rules of Conduct on the next page, sign and date.

Welcome to the team!

## Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a volunteer for the Backpacks For The Street (BFTS), your primary goal is to provide appropriate services and support for homeless persons.

In doing so, a volunteer must observe and comply with the Code of Conduct set forth in this document. If a situation is questionable, consult a staff member of BFTS. Any violation of this code is grounds for termination.

1. A volunteer shall treat all participants\*, volunteers, staff members and representatives with respect, courtesy, fairness and good faith.
2. A volunteer shall safe guard the participant's right to confidentiality within the limits of the law.
3. A volunteer shall report all conflicts with program participants to staff immediately and work with staff on resolving conflicts.
4. A volunteer shall demonstrate non-discrimination among all persons served, and among the employees, volunteers, and others involved with the program.
5. A volunteer shall report any personal complaint or grievances, and any program complaints or grievances reported to him/her, immediately to the directors.
6. A volunteer shall refrain from participating if they are impaired owing to the volunteer's physical and mental health due to use of medication, drugs or alcohol.
7. A volunteer shall refrain from going out alone, and only travel with another member,
8. A volunteer shall refrain from providing personal information (i.e. phone number & address) to a participant. A volunteer will speak to a director should they feel that doing so deserves consideration due to special circumstances.
9. A volunteer shall refrain from offering money or other gifts directly to participants. If a volunteer wishes to donate or get involved, they shall speak to a director.

Please let us know if you are comfortable being photographed for images that may be used on our social media channels. This helps others to both understand the work we do and encourage them to come out and be a part of BFTS. \_\_\_\_\_

If yes to above, and you wish to be tagged on social media, please include your Instagram or Facebook handle: \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature below means that you have read, understand and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct, and the rules set forth before on pages one and two.

You are also acknowledging that you have received a copy of this agreement.

Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_