

HRH & HHOOT MEMO

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HRH & HHOOT's – Do's & Donte's for Street Ministries

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FROM:

Don E Hawkins, Founder & CEO

TO:

Volunteers, Helpers, and Church's working on a Street Ministry Program

Effective – Immediately

Proposed Guidelines for Our HELPERS / Volunteers Working with the Homeless

1. Suggested – That you “Can or Should Do”:

1. Give them your time and tell them Jesus loves them, and so do you
 - a. If you are a Christian
2. Always show patience, kindness, and especially respect. Remember, they may have lost their home but did not lose their dignity.
3. Always try to talk them into going to a safer location, such as shelters, friends, family, etc.
4. Advise them on the hazards of living on the street: bodily harm, health, weather, harassment, etc.
5. When visiting the camps, always have plenty of good heavy-duty trash bags (don't buy the cheap ones, they burst) with you at all times. Ask if there is one person “in charge” or someone who keeps that location “picked up,” and make sure they have extra trash bags. We know they use trash bags to store their stuff, but we would rather have them keep their things in trash bags than have them blown or scattered all over that area.
6. If you are part of a “group food serving team,” ensure you always take your trash with you and leave the areas cleaner than when you first started.
7. Always try to do a “group food serving team” at a central location, Church, community center, community park, downtown parks, etc.
8. Always encourage them to keep their areas neat, clean, and picked up at all times, considering their circumstances. They need to know that if the area they live in is full of trash that is blowing up and down the streets, the neighbors and the business owners start calling the police and the Mayor's office.
9. Always carry your personal ID with you at all times
10. Always leave your money and your purse or wallet (if you have one) in your car
11. Always carry your cell phone for emergencies
12. Always take some hand sanitizer with you at all times, or at least leave some in the car that you can use when you return to the vehicle. It would be best to use it as a safety and sanitation precaution as often as possible.
- 13.

2. Suggested things you “Can Not or Should Not Do”:

1. Never, never, never “go out” by yourself
 - a. Try to keep into groups of two, three, or more, if possible
 - b. Never let yourself be separated from your group for any reason
2. Female HELPERS – Never take anyone, anywhere, by yourself
3. Male HELPERS – Never take a female homeless person anywhere in your car alone
4. Never do a door-to-door “group food serving” (set up tables where they live). Please try not to do a “group food serving” at a location where several homeless live. Neighborhood associations do not like it, and it is bound to cause problems that eventually get people experiencing homelessness kicked out of that area or neighborhood. You may start serving just the people at that location, but others will begin visiting that location in time. That’s when things start getting out of hand, and neighbors and business owners will start complaining.
5. Never take your children with you to where people experiencing homelessness live. Several of the homeless are registered or non-registered sex offenders, and some are prone to violence. Remember, some of them, but not all of them, are constantly using drugs or alcohol. DON’T TAKE CHANCES. Please leave your children at home when visiting the camps.
6. Never wear or display expensive jewelry.
7. Never flash the amount of Cash you have with you.
8. Do not smoke or take medications around people experiencing homelessness. They will ask you for one of whatever you are smoking or taking.
- 9.

Please note: There is such a thing as getting too personal or too comfortable with a homeless person to the point that you may let your guard down. An example is when you think you are just going to visit someone for a specific purpose, and they are not there for some reason. You may be confronted by another homeless person in that area who does not know you as a friend to people experiencing homelessness. That person may not be as friendly toward you as the person you are looking for. To them, you are now intruding into “their territory” or invading what they consider “their space.” Unpredictability can be a disaster when dealing with people experiencing homelessness, so never go out alone and always be prepared.

3. **“DO” GIVE the homeless:**

1. Information on where they can get goods and services they may need
 - a. CHIP’s Handbook of Help
 - b. Information on Connect2Help and 2-1-1 as well as 9-1-1 for emergencies
 - c. HRH’s Brochure or HRH’s Emergency Poster
 - d. Other information on where they can get shelter, food, and clothing
 - e. Bibles and religious materials
 - f. Other service providers’ brochures that you deem necessary for that individual.
2. Food (hot meals from a central location only)
3. Food (hot or cold from a fast food place)
4. Food (sandwiches, packaged or canned with pop-tops – most don’t have can openers)
5. Food (unopened nutritious snacks)
6. Food (junk – chips, candy, cookies, etc. can do, but not preferred)
7. Water or juices in plastic bottles or cans – No glass containers, please
8. Clothing (pants (long or short) & shirts)
9. Underwear (socks, shorts & T-shirts)
10. Insulated underwear in the winter
11. Sleepwear or pajama-type clothing
12. Coats, Jackets & sweatshirts (with or without a hood)
13. Hats, scarfs, gloves & Hand Warmers
14. Backpacks or duffel bags
15. Shoes, boots & belts
16. Self-heating gloves, pads, etc.
17. Bedding items – warm blankets & sleeping bags
18. Cigarettes and Tobacco (not recommended)
 - a. If you give in and do give them Tobacco and/or cigarettes, do not give them very much at one time. Sometimes, they sell or trade them for illegal drugs or alcohol, and sometimes, that makes them a target for thieves who need and want cigarettes.
19. Trash bags w/ties – Do not buy cheap, thin trash bags. They burst easily and sometimes cause more problems than they are worth. Please get the ones with the ties built in.
20. Flashlight & batteries
21. Newspapers, Books & magazines
22. Writing paper or notebooks, pens & pencils
23. Coupons for food and clothing. – Examples: Goodwill coupons for clothes and fast food coupons for food
24. Chap Stick
25. Soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, mouthwash (non-alcohol)
26. Toilet paper, paper towels, napkins
27. Combs, hair brushes
28. Disposable Razors, Shaving cream
29. Can & bottle openers
30. Personal first-aid kits with Band-Aids
31. Landry detergent (small individual sizes)
32. Bath towels and washcloths
33. Pet food, if they have pets

4. “DO NOT” GIVE the homeless:

1. Your personal contact information such as your home address or your home phone number – Cell phone numbers and your business phone numbers are usually ok
2. Door-to-door service – when giving to several people at one time, try to get them to a central location safe for all sides.
3. Money/Cash (unless you take them to dispense with it yourself, such as a fast food place, Goodwill, etc.
 - a. Especially do not give money to “Panhandlers” because most are not homeless. CHIP has an excellent program if you want to give your Cash or regular credit card donations to the homeless
4. Drugs or Medicine – Do not give them prescription drugs of any kind – legal or otherwise – Some drugs may seem to be legal to you, but they may not be legal for them to have and could cause them problems you cannot foresee
 - a. If you give them pills like aspirin, Tylenol, Excedrin, etc., do not give them too many at one time – they may try to sell or trade them.
 - b. If they are sick, they need to go to a clinic or Horizon House and be seen by a professional to decide what they need – Please do not try to diagnose any of their health problems.
5. Beer or alcohol products of any kind
6. Food that needs to be cooked, or is not cooked, and/or needs to be refrigerated
7. Food that requires a can opener. Some have seriously cut themselves trying to be creative in opening cans.
8. Firewood, fire logs, or anything they can start a fire with (unless they have something to contain the fire in, drum, fireplace, etc.)
9. Kerosene, gasoline, or other flammable products
10. Candles (big ones in a container that cannot fall over)
11. Butane or Bunsen burners
12. Grills, charcoal, or charcoal lighters
13. Mattresses, other than the blow-up type that they can take with them when they have to move
14. Pets
15. Anything that can be used as a weapon, such as knives, guns, straight razors, etc.
- 16.

Remember, when giving to people experiencing homelessness, you are responsible for what you give them, and you can or may be liable if they misuse what you give them.

Senders
Signature:

Date
Signed: