



Rotherham Parents Forum Limited

Charity Number - 1147969

Volunteer Handbook

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Welcome and Introduction

A warm welcome to Rotherham Parents Forum Limited and thank you for choosing to volunteer with us.

We value our volunteers and want everyone to enjoy being part of our organisation. By donating your time, skills and experience you're making our services possible and enabling us to extend our support.

We want to do all we can to help you settle into your role and this volunteer handbook is designed to both introduce you to our organisation, give you some useful information about volunteering with us and to be of continuing use.

We ask that you read this document and familiarise yourself with the content as, in addition to setting out some of our policies in relation to your volunteer role, it also contains information on some of the main volunteer benefits that may be available to you.

If you require any clarification or additional information, please refer to your supervisor or our Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator in the first instance.

We would like to wish you every success during your volunteering and we hope that your experience of volunteering here will be positive and rewarding.

Thank you for your support.

Louise Graham
Operations Manager

About our organisation

Rotherham Parents Forum Limited operates on a day-to-day basis under two different service names as follows:

4. Rotherham Parent Carers Forum (RPCF)
5. Rotherham Adult Neurodiversity Support Service (RANSS)

Why we are here – Rotherham Parent Carers Forum (RPCF)

Rotherham Parent Carers Forum exists to work with parents and carers of children and young people (aged 0 to 25) with SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities) in our local area.

We aim to make sure that services in Rotherham meet the needs of disabled children and their families. We do this by gathering the views of local families and by working in partnership with local authorities, education settings, health providers and other providers to highlight where local services, processes and commissioners are working well, or when changes or improvements need to be made. Partnership working with Health, Education and Social Services creates a culture that ensures families are at the heart of policy that affects them whilst realistically creating the best possible outcomes with the resources available in Rotherham.

We also offer peer to peer support, advice, information and friendship to families of children and young people (aged 0 to 25) with SEND, creating opportunities for people to spend time together to reduce the isolation that is so often experienced.

We are members of the Yorkshire & Humber Network of Parent Forums and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF). The aim of these Networks is to ensure that good practice, knowledge and shared expertise about parent participation continues to grow and strengthen, and to develop a cohesive and coherent structure to sustain and develop the effectiveness of parent carer forums across England, individually and as a collective voice.

Why we are here – Rotherham Adult Neurodiversity Support Service (RANSS)

RANSS is a support service for neurodiverse adults (18+) with a Rotherham GP.

We offer person centred post-diagnostic support from Peer Support Workers with lived experience of autism or ADHD alongside group workshops. We also facilitate meet ups, activities and focused group discussions on neurodiversity related topics for adults with a new or historic diagnosis of autism or ADHD.

Our vision, mission and values

Our Vision

Working in particular, but not exclusively with children and young people and their parents, carers and families in Rotherham, our vision is that people with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not isolated and have equal opportunities to achieve their full potential in life and participate fully in society.

Our Mission

Our mission is to take positive action in Rotherham to promote social inclusion among disabled people and those with special needs and their parents, carers and families who are socially excluded from society or parts of it because of their disability. We will achieve this by providing forums, advocacy, workshops and general support and raising public awareness to ensure that individuals are recognised, heard and supported to overcome the inequalities they might face.

Our Values

Everything we do is underpinned by our values which when embedded strengthen TRUST

- We welcome and care - we are determined to create a community where everyone feels as though they belong.
- We value and include - we value difference and no-one is left out and we include each other, especially in the things that involve us directly.
- We communicate - we take time to understand each other, however we may communicate.
- We work in partnership - we bring people together to work in co-production, by sharing, learning, working and contributing together to achieve so much more

Our aims

We are committed to the following strategic aims to help us move closer to achieving our vision:

1. Individuals are less lonely and more connected with their communities
2. People are supported to develop their skills and confidence to achieve their full potential and access the services they need
3. Individuals are empowered to have a voice and work in partnership with service providers, sharing their lived experiences to have a positive impact on the delivery and development of local provision

Internal aims

4. To increase the number of people and services that we engage with through organisational development; investing in our processes, our staff and volunteer team and our premises.

Our history

Rotherham Parents Forum Limited was set up in 2009 by a small group of parents who all had children with a variety of disabilities. They were feeling incredibly isolated and struggling to navigate the world of Special Educational Needs. They came together to initially offer each other some peer support and as their numbers grew, they started to realise that as parents and carers in Rotherham there is a vital role to be played in shaping and developing services available to children.

We became an official parent carer forum in 2010 with the release of government funding from the Department for Education (DfE) and in 2012 the forum became a registered charity. Operating from someone's home originally and moving to a small base in 2014,

we had to move to our current premises in Rawmarsh in 2017 due to the need to expand our office space.

Through our years of experience, gained through working with parents and carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) we have established that people with SEND, and their families are the experts on what is required to live well and stay well, being able to achieve their full potential within a community that is accepting and understanding.

This experience led to us making the decision to expand our services in September 2020 to support neurodiverse adults and we successfully tendered and received funding to set up RANSS.

We currently employ 27 members of staff across our two services, all of whom have lived experience of SEND and we also have 45 registered volunteers (**information correct as of June 2022**).

Your volunteering

Volunteers are at the heart of Rotherham Parents Forum Limited and we'll do everything we can to make sure that you have an enjoyable and rewarding volunteer experience. Here's an overview of what you can expect while volunteering with us.

What can you expect from us?

- We will give you a clear and defined role profile.
- We will offer flexibility within volunteering opportunities and consider any caring and other commitments that you have.
- We will provide you with an induction specific to your role and give you the appropriate training and tools to carry out your role effectively.
- We will provide you with an ID Badge to identify you as one of our volunteers.
- Our staff are trained to support volunteers. A named supervisor will monitor your volunteering and discuss development opportunities.
- We will give volunteers a voice within the organisation – we'll ask for your views and ideas whenever we can.
- We will cover reasonable out of pocket travel expenses.
- We will have adequate insurance to cover you while undertaking voluntary activities authorised by our organisation.
- We will follow the policies, procedures and standards of the organisation in relation to volunteers.
- We will resolve any concerns promptly and fairly.
- We will provide references for people who have actively volunteered their time for us.
- We will operate within the spirit of equality, diversity and our values.
- We will celebrate your successes and recognise your achievements.

What do we expect from you?

- You'll engage with your volunteering to the best of your ability.
- You'll perform tasks and undertake training in line with your role.
- You'll support our values and show respect to your fellow volunteers, members and staff.
- You'll volunteer within the organisation's health and safety policies and the boundaries of your role.
- You'll respect the confidentiality of the organisation and its members.
- You'll keep staff informed about your voluntary work and feedback to us about your activity.
- You'll bring any comments or concerns you might have to the attention of your supervisor or our Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator.
- You'll maintain the good name and reputation of Rotherham Parents Forum Limited throughout your time as a volunteer.

How we will support you

Induction and Training

We want you to feel happy and prepared in your volunteering role. This handbook offers a warm welcome to our volunteering team, an induction to the organisation and answers many general volunteering questions. Some roles may require a more specific induction, and this will be offered through a tailored training programme. Your training will vary

depending on your role. As a minimum you will be expected to complete our mandatory training which includes the following units:

- Conflict Resolution
- Data Security
- Equality, Diversity and Human Rights
- Fire Safety
- Health, Safety and Welfare
- Preventing Radicalisation – Basic Prevent Awareness
- Safeguarding

This is accessed through an online learning portal called **elfh** ([Home - elearning for healthcare \(e-lfh.org.uk\)](http://elfh.org.uk)) which is a Health Education England programme in partnership with the NHS and professional bodies. You will be provided with your own login details to be able to access this and in addition to the mandatory training you can choose to access many other training units.

Ongoing training will be offered as appropriate to your role and your needs. As your volunteering progresses, we also offer relevant development opportunities for those who want them. Further training and guidance are also available should you feel unsure of what is required or how to fulfil your potential within a role.

Supervision and Support

Providing support and supervision to our volunteers is very important to us. We want you to feel comfortable and confident in your role and you'll have a named supervisor for ongoing support during your time with us. Your supervisor will be approachable and available if you have any needs, concerns, questions or ideas. This support can be offered in person, on the phone or online, depending on the nature of your role. There'll be opportunities for catchups with your supervisor at least three times per year, to review your volunteering and to update you on what's happening at Rotherham Parents Forum Limited. We'll also be staying in touch with regular emails and e-newsletters. An example of what will be discussed at your catch-up meetings is attached at **Appendix 1**.

The Essentials

When volunteering with us you'll need to be aware of the following policies and procedures. Please take a few minutes to give them a good read through and do get in touch if you have any questions.

What is a volunteer?

A volunteer is someone like you who registers with Rotherham Parents Forum Limited to take on a defined role and offers their time, skills and expertise free of charge to help with our work. These roles have been specially created as volunteering opportunities and we will not ask any volunteer to carry out a role which should be assigned to a member of staff.

Who are our volunteers?

We aim to recruit from all areas of society to ensure our voluntary team is as diverse as possible. Rotherham Parents Forum Limited is committed to equal opportunities and wants to ensure our opportunities, services and support are accessible to all.

Equality and Diversity is about recognising and valuing the contribution that individuals from different backgrounds, race, and cultures can make and enabling them to make this contribution without unfair discrimination, harassment or victimisation. By providing equal opportunities individuals can maximise their involvement and contribution to continue to make the organisation a successful, representative, and valued part of the community.

How we recruit?

All volunteers will be asked to complete a short application form which is available on our websites

Some roles require more specific skills or experience and may involve a longer application process, including an informal interview. We may also need to request references and you'll be notified during recruitment if this is required for your role. As some roles do require specific skills or experience, not all applicants will be successful. We will provide useful feedback and suggest alternative roles where possible to match your interests, skills and suitability. We will always aim to place volunteers into the role most appropriate for them.

A copy of the application form that you will be asked to complete is at **Appendix 2** or an online here can be accessed here - <https://forms.office.com/r/wBhnwqeuhi>

Your age

All our volunteers must be aged over 18. Should anyone under 18 wish to volunteer they must be accompanied for the duration of the opportunity by someone aged over 18 who will take on responsibility for the activity and all participants.

Security Checks

Some roles may require you to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This will be free of charge.

Any volunteer required to complete a DBS check will be notified in advance. Only relevant offences will be considered when evaluating an applicant's suitability and data obtained from DBS checks will only be available to appropriate members of staff. Please contact

your supervisor or our Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator if you'd like to discuss this further.

You will be asked to complete an online form from an organisation called Ucheck, we can fill this in with you if support is needed. You will also need to provide us with three forms of original identification which we will need to take photocopies of. The information on the gov.uk website will provide more information about the ID documents that you will need to provide [ID checking guidelines for standard/enhanced DBS check applications from 1 July 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Your expenses

Rotherham Parents Forum Limited believes you should never be out of pocket through volunteering. We will reimburse reasonable expenses when supported by receipts and agreed in advance. Expenses should be submitted to your supervisor within one month of you paying out.

We cannot contribute towards car insurance if used for your volunteering role. Please discuss this directly with your insurance company to see if your policy covers use as part of volunteering.

An example of the mileage claim forms that we use is attached at **Appendix 3** if you want to submit these on a monthly basis using a paper form or you can complete claims online - [Volunteer Time Sheet and Expenses Claim Form \(office.com\)](#)

Your commitment

Our roles are designed to be as flexible as possible to accommodate your other commitments.

If your role requires you to volunteer at a specific time it would be helpful if you could let us know in advance if you're unable to make the session. However, we understand that sometimes things come up at short notice and notifying us may be difficult. In these situations, we will look forward to seeing you at your next session and if there's anything we can do to help you manage your volunteering/life balance please do get in touch.

Confidentiality

During your volunteering, you may have access to confidential information relating to Rotherham Parents Forum Limited, its members and other people you may encounter through your volunteering. We expect you to keep this information confidential and not to disclose this information to anyone other than your immediate staff team during your volunteering or at any time afterwards.

If you should ever be concerned about another individual while you're volunteering it is important that you speak to your supervisor or our Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator.

Your privacy

We sometimes take photographs of volunteers for use in recruitment materials or to promote the work of Rotherham Parents Forum Limited. If you'd prefer, we didn't use your image, please make sure you let your supervisor know and we will respect your wishes.

Copyright and Data Protection

All copyrights and any other intellectual property rights in connection with your volunteering role belong to Rotherham Parents Forum Limited, unless otherwise agreed. Personal data about our volunteers is held in line with data protection legislation. All volunteers have the right to access any of their personal information that is held by Rotherham Parents Forum Limited.

Representing us

When carrying out voluntary work for Rotherham Parents Forum Limited you are also a representative for the organisation. You're responsible for presenting a positive image of us and must share our values. If you are ever unsure about what to say, write or wear while your volunteering, just ask your supervisor for tips and advice.

Some volunteering roles may involve access to branded email addresses or resources – Volunteers should refer to the **Code of Conduct**, the **Social Media Policy** and the **Communications Policy** for further information. Please ask your supervisor if you'd like a copy.

In the media

While we want you to share your personal experiences and tell others about Rotherham Parents Forum Limited, we would never expect you to be our spokesperson. No comments should be made to media organisations unless you've been asked to do this by a staff member. If you do receive any media or public speaking enquiries, please contact your supervisor who will then direct the enquiry to the relevant staff member.

Your health and safety

Rotherham Parents Forum Limited has appropriate types of insurance in place to cover our volunteers.

We are committed to ensuring your wellbeing and safety while volunteering for us. In turn we expect our volunteers to help maintain a safe volunteering environment for all. We expect you to take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and other people who may be affected by your actions. For some activities it is recommended that volunteers conduct a risk assessment or take out specific insurance to cover the event, these guidelines will be issued for the relevant roles. Please ask your supervisor if you'd like a copy of our 'Health & Safety Policy'.

Your achievements

During your time with Rotherham Parents Forum Limited you will keep us up to date with your volunteering by regularly filling out a simple feedback form. This information will help us share the impact volunteering can have. It will also enable us to feedback to you about the success of the volunteering programme, as well as your own individual achievements.

References

All volunteers can request a reference from their supervisor for use in applications for work, education or other volunteering opportunities.

Leaving

We understand that your availability can change over time, please speak to us if you would like to change your role or time commitment. If you do decide to leave or want to put your volunteering on hold for a while, all we ask is that you let us know as soon as

possible. You are under no obligation to serve a notice period and we thank you for the support you have been able to provide.

Resolving concerns

If you have a problem or concern about any aspect of your volunteering role it is important you speak to your supervisor as soon as possible for advice and support. If it feels more comfortable you can also speak to our Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator at any time. We take the concerns of our volunteers very seriously and will make every reasonable effort to resolve them at the earliest opportunity in line with our Volunteer Problem Solving Procedures which are available from your supervisor or our Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator.

Other ways to get involved

Fundraising for Rotherham Parents Forum Limited is another great way to help us keep doing what we do.

Fundraising Ideas

1. You could hold a coffee and cake morning with friends or at work with colleagues. Why not post about it on social media to spread the word? Don't forget to tag us in.
2. Challenge yourself, whether it's trekking, cycling or running a marathon, taking part in a challenge is a fun way to fundraise. It is also the perfect excuse to test yourself and finally take on that event you've always said you'd like to do. We can support you with linking to us on online fundraising platforms and provide you with branded materials such as sponsorship forms.
3. You could also be raising money for us every time you shop online at no extra cost to you. We are registered with the following and all you need to do is simply search for Rotherham Parents Forum Limited and choose us as your chosen charity.
 - Give As You Live - works with over 3000 online retailers to turn a percentage of every penny you spend into a donation for Rotherham Parents Forum Limited.
 - Amazon Smile – Shop at **smile.amazon.co.uk** and they'll donate to Rotherham Parents Forum Limited, at no cost to you. Same products, same prices, same service. **Amazon** donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to us.

Please speak to your named supervisor or contact our office on 01709 296262 to discuss anything in relation to fundraising.

Contact us

This Volunteer Handbook is intended to help volunteers to understand the way in which the organisation works and their role within it. If any of the above items are unclear or volunteers have any questions regarding this Handbook's contents, they should not hesitate to contact their named supervisor or our Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator using the information below.

By email – admin@rpcf.co.uk

By telephone – 01709 296262

Tell us your stories

If you have a special experience whilst volunteering, then please do let your supervisor or our Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator know. We often find the most uplifting stories about the impact of Rotherham Parents Forum Limited come directly from our volunteers.

We'd love to see photos of you volunteering too!

Appendix 1 – Example of form that is used in volunteer/supervisor catch up meetings



1:1 Volunteer form

* Required

1. Date completed *

Please input date (dd/MM/yyyy)



2. Coordinator Name *

3. Volunteer name *

4. Period covered *

5. teams/work streams *

Please list all the teams/work streams this volunteer has actively been involved with during this period.

6. 1:1 completed *

- ☐ Face-to-face
- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ Online

7. Notes - How are you finding your role? How do you feel at the Forum/RANSS? Are you happy with your role or would you like it to grow/develop? If yes, how? *

8. Is there any support/adjustments the Forum/RANSS can offer? If yes how?

9. Action for coordinator

10. Action for volunteer

11. Do you have any feedback, suggestion or comments?

12. By checking the following boxes, I agree the above is a true reflection of our 1:1 *

☐ Coordinator☐ Volunteer

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 Microsoft Forms

Appendix 2 – Example of volunteer application/registration for



Volunteer Application/Registration Form

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for Rotherham Parents Forum Limited in either Rotherham Parent Carers Forum or Rotherham Adult Neurodiversity Support Service.

Please contact a member of our team if you would like some support in completing this application and they can help you to fill this in.

You can contact our office on 01709 296262.

* Required

Volunteer Application

1. Can you please tell us how you heard about us ? *

2. Which volunteer role are you applying for ? *

Personal Details

3. Surname *

4. First name *

5. Address *

6. Post code *

7. Contact number *

8. Email address *

9. How do you prefer to be contacted? *

- ☐ Phone
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Post
- ☐ Text
- ☐ Other

Relevant Experience

10. Please use the space below to explain why you are applying for the role and how your experience (paid or unpaid), personal qualities and skills help to make you a suitable candidate. *

This may include hobbies, interests and past employment, volunteering or personal experience.

11. Driving licence (for positions that may require driving) *

Do you hold a full, current driving licence ?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Vulnerable People

All positions with Rotherham Parents Forum Limited may bring Staff or Volunteers into contact with vulnerable people and therefore please note that all employees of, and volunteers for Rotherham Parents Forum Limited are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service

12. Criminal Convictions - Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence ? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

13. Is the offence "spent" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 ?

To help you answer this question follow this link to the government website and search for Rehabilitation Periods - [GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

*

☐ Yes

☐

14. Do you have a criminal conviction which is unspent? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

15. Or pending against you? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

References

Please give details of two referees. These should be people who have known you for at least 5 years. We do not accept references from family members. Please supply email addresses for referees if possible. We will not contact either of your referees without your prior permission.

16. 1st Referee Name

17. 1st Referee Email and Telephone Number

18. 1st Referee Address

19. Capacity in which they know you ?

20. How long have you known this person.

21. 2nd Referee Name

22. 2nd Referee Email and Telephone Number

23. 2nd Referee Address

24. Capacity in which they know you ?

25. How long have you known this person.

DECLARATION

I confirm that the information given by me on this application form is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I understand that if such information was found to be materially incorrect Rotherham Parents Forum Limited would be entitled to terminate my voluntary

26. By ticking this box I am confirming that I understand the above statement.

☐ Tick to confirm

27. Volunteers Data Collection Information & Declaration *

Data protection: The information that you provide will be stored electronically by Rotherham Parents Forum Limited. The database will be used to keep a current record of our volunteers. The information you provide will not be disclosed, sold or rented to any third party, unless you give us explicit consent to do so ie, we may need to share your email address for you to access training.

NB If you tell us you no longer wish to volunteer with us then all personal information will be erased from the database <https://www.rpcf.co.uk/privacy-notice>

☐ *I give my consent to this information being stored in this way

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING FORM

The Equal Opportunities Policy of Rotherham Parents Forum Limited states that we will not unjustifiably discriminate against anyone on the grounds of age, race, colour, nationality, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation and marital status. In order that we can measure the impact of this policy, and continue to develop relevant personnel policies, would you please complete this form.

The information on this page is confidential and will be used for statistical monitoring purposes

28. Date of birth

Please input date (dd/MM/yyyy)



29. Gender

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

30. Marital Status

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Single
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

31. Religious Group

If you would prefer not to answer then leave this text box blank

32. Ethnicity *

- ☐ White-British
- ☐ White-European
- ☐ White-Other
- ☐ Black-British
- ☐ Black-Caribbean
- ☐ Black-African
- ☐ Black-Other
- ☐ British Asian
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Bangladeshi
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Other Asian
- ☐ Mixed British
- ☐ Mixed Caribbean
- ☐ Mixed African
- ☐ Other Mixed
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

33. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 regards a person to have a disability who has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability and if so please tell us the nature of your disability.

34. What is your current employment status ? *

- ☐ Employed Full time
- ☐ Employed part time
- ☐ Carer
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Disabled
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other

If you are successful in securing a volunteer role then we need to ask some additional questions, it would be helpful if you could provide this information now.

35. Emergency contact details 1 (please provide their name, contact number and relationship to you)

36. Emergency contact details 2 (please provide their name, contact number and relationship to you)

37. Do you have any health conditions and/or allergies that we need to be aware of, if so please provide all relevant information below.

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 Microsoft Forms

Appendix 3 – Mileage and Expenses Claim Form



VOLUNTEER MONTHLY TIME SHEET

Volunteer Name: _____ Area of Work: _____

Month/Year: _____ Supervisor: _____

Location of volunteering							
Date	Travel From	Travel To	Start Time	End Time	Brief Overview of Work Carried Out	Mileage	Total Hrs.
Monthly Totals							

Please submit details of any mileage claims on the form overleaf and summarise below

Date	Total Mileage (No of Miles)	Total Mileage Claim (£'s)	Other Expense Claims (£'s)	Please provide details and ensure receipts are attached to this form

Expenses may be claimed as follows

- **Travel costs** - (travel to and from the organisation and any prior agreed travel undertaken while volunteering) this will either be public transport rate or private car rates. Volunteers using public transport should attach all relevant tickets. Expenses will be reimbursed monthly by bank transfer, unless otherwise agreed. Anyone needing to use taxis will need to check with their supervisor first and these should only be used in exceptional circumstances. Private car rates are currently 0.45p per mile
- **Meals** - if volunteering exceeds 5 hours at any session, then volunteers will be reimbursed for meal expenses to the maximum of £4.50 per day. A valid receipt will need to be provided.
- **Childcare costs** - of dependents while volunteering (by prior agreement with the chair and the treasurer)
- **Training** - that is relevant to the volunteer role (by prior agreement with the chair and the treasurer)

All time sheets/mileage claims should be signed by the volunteer and their supervisor and submitted to the HR and Finance Assistant by the first Monday following the end of each month.

Volunteer signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor signature: _____ Date: _____

