

Working List of Volunteer Opportunities Across Nashville

Prepared by The Temple Clergy and Community Member Amy Eskind

In response to a divisive election season and the subsequent uptick in incidents of hate as reported by the ADL and the Southern Poverty Law Center targeting Jews, people of color, those on the margins including the indigent, immigrants, Muslims, and the LGBT community, as well as the challenges facing the environment, many have expressed concern for our community. Unsure of what to do, of how to respond, people have expressed an interest in participating in real action, to increase kindness, to combat hate, to stand with neighbors, to build bridges, and to care for our environment.

Together, we have compiled a working list of opportunities across Nashville to engage in meaningful work and volunteering. *This list is not exhaustive*; we are blessed to live in a community with many opportunities and pathways to engage. Likewise, we recognize not everyone is worried about the same issues. Nevertheless, we feel this is a good time to get involved. An hour a week can make a real difference. In some cases, it could save a life.

Isaiah 58, which Reform Jewish congregations read on Yom Kippur morning, contains the mandate to participate actively in the life and well-being of our community. “Isn't this the fast that I have been choosing: to loose the bonds of injustice, and to untie the cords of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter-- when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?”

Coupled with the many exhortations in the Torah to care for and love the widow, the orphan and stranger, we are reminded again and again to pay attention and protect those on the margins of society, financially, through acts of love and kindness, and through upholding justice. Our Talmud later teaches us, “At a time when the community is immersed in distress, a person should not say: ‘I will go to my home and I will eat and drink, and all will be well with me.’” (Taanit 11a) Rather, we must get involved, be a source of help, aid, comfort and justice.

Volunteers may reach out to many agencies directly to get involved and schedule times to work or drop off items. Additionally, HandsOnNashville provides volunteer scheduling for various agencies around town. It is easy to click on the time/ date you wish to volunteer at any of the listed agencies.

COMBATting HATE/ LGBT ISSUES AND YOUTH

Oasis Center with **Building Bridges, Camp Anytown, Just Us and Community Nashville** has a variety of opportunities for individuals and groups to volunteer – from tutoring and teaching to cooking or organizing the clothes closet – there are many ways to get involved and make a difference. Just Us at Oasis Center focuses on LGBT youth at risk in particular.

<https://www.oasiscenter.org/help/volunteering-at-oasis.html>

Launch Pad - a volunteer-based initiative to provide street free sleep to youth between the ages of 18-24 with a focus on being affirming and welcoming to LGBTQ youth. They are working in conjunction with Oasis and Room in the Inn

<http://www.nashvillelaunchpad.com/>

Nashville CARES - meeting the needs of those living with HIV/ AIDS – meal delivery, creating safer sex kits, transportation, helping with errands, food bags and more

<http://www.nashvillecares.org/volunteer>

WOMEN AND GIRLS

Planned Parenthood Middle and East Tennessee – help with data entry and office assistance, become a health center volunteer or a clinic greeter.

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-middle-east-tennessee/get-involved-locally/volunteer>

YW from Camp Counselors to Dress for Success stylists, many opportunities are available to help women seek employment, advocate against violence and abuse and feel empowered

<http://ywcannashville.com/get-involved/volunteer>

REFUGEE/ IMMIGRANT SUPPORT

Catholic Charities has ways to connect people with new immigrant/ refugee families either to become a household mentor or American friend to an Refugee Elder; to help mentor youth or help prepare for interviews, to do meal delivery or become an in-home English tutor, or offer transportation to new immigrants

<http://www.cctenn.org/volunteer.cfm>

Conexion Americas/ Casa Azafran - you can get involved with immigrant community: Teach an English as a Second Language (ESL) class; assist with childcare during Adult ESL classes and other workshops; help with middle-school and high-school programs as a tutor, speaker or mentor; work with their nationally recognized homeownership, taxpayer and small business development programs; interpret at workshops, meetings and special events; lead children's activities at our parent engagement workshops.

<http://www.conexionamericas.org/what-you-can-do/volunteer-and-internship-opportunities/>

Nashville Center for Empowerment - help by being a mentor, a tutor, ESL teacher for adults, help with childcare

<http://www.empowernashville.org/volunteer/>

World Relief Nashville – partner with refugee families or individuals in town. This is a Christian-mission-driven program that does great work and would love the help from members in the Jewish community as well.

<http://worldreliefnashville.org/volunteer-application-process>

ELDER CARE/ INDIGENT/ AT RISK COMMUNITIES

Jewish Family Service - Help the elderly or families in need with the Kosher Food Box program, Helping Hands matching volunteers with home-bound members of the community, or participate in Jacob's Ladder, a program to help elderly take care of tasks around their home.

<http://jfsnashville.org/support/volunteer/>

Catholic Charities works with geriatric homebound clients and people in transition from homelessness. Many have seen their food stamp dollars significantly reduced. Move-In programs, meal delivery, and more. You may contact Terry Korman directly at Catholic Charities in the Seniors program to provide groceries/ support for individuals/ couples in need 615-352-3087

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HOMELESSNESS

There are many agencies across Nashville that seek to find systemic solutions to Homelessness in Nashville. **Open Table Nashville** has done some great work, and is looking to the future with micro homes and more While monetary donations keep them going, in-kind donations of furniture, hygiene products, clothes, toilet paper, cleaning supplies, socks, towels, sheets, tarps, tents, water, and many other items. You can sign on to have Amazon Smile donate to them, direct your Kroger Community Reward program to their resources as well. Some other ways to help are creating move-in kits and donating gently used furniture for those in transition to housing. They have provided a Winter Outreach Needs List as well to deal with the upcoming weather.

<http://opentablenashville.org/portfolio-item/cold-weather-response>

Room in the Inn – donate supplies, knit a scarf, prepare a meal, to-go kit through The Temple or RITI directly.

<http://templenashville.org/index.php?id=59>

<http://www.roomintheinn.org/volunteer>

<http://www.nashvillelaunchpad.com/>

HUNGER ISSUES – hands on

Nashville Food Project has a wide range of volunteering opportunities from gardening, to cooking, to meal delivery and more.

<http://www.thenashvillefoodproject.org/give-time/>

Second Harvest – food bank food sorting and packing.

http://secondharvestmidtn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Volunteer_FAQ.pdf

ENVIRONMENT

<http://cumberlandrivercompact.org/about/our-work/>

Gardens with Nashville Food Project/ Urban Gardens-Urban Farms

<http://www.thenashvillefoodproject.org/the-gardens/>

Urban Green Lab resources to have a positive impact on the environment

<http://www.urbangreenlab.org/resource-page/>

MENTORING/ ENTREPRENEUR OPPORTUNITIES

Mayor Megan Barry’s office has several initiatives and ways to involve yourself with our community, youth and young adults to promote education, employment, mentoring and internships.

Opportunity Now - designed to combat the growing gap in opportunity and will become the much needed system for delivering employment and employment-like opportunities for young people. Employers help with “soft skills” needed for the workplace, opportunities to learn about different jobs, internships, summer work, and more.

<http://www.nashville.gov/Mayors-Office/Opportunity-Now.aspx>

Oasis VENTURE - Oasis Center seeks mentors from any profession for the 2017 Oasis VENTURE teen entrepreneurs. Advise a team of youth participating in a 16-week entrepreneurship training (1-2 hours on Thursday nights from late January to June). Mentor training January 12th, kickoff January 26th, Youth Pitch Day June 29th.

Also needed are presenters for Youth Empowerment Power Sessions, taking place monthly from January to April. Lead a 45-minute breakout session focusing on your expertise in business. Presenters are already lined up to teach podcasting, social media basics, and website development.

To apply as a mentor or presenter, contact: Carlee Smith csmith@oasiscenter.org

Other existing programs of note:

PENCIL Foundation – become a weekly Reading Partner for elementary/ middle school students; help mentor a student in your field or give back to the area teachers.

<http://www.pencilfoundation.org/volunteer>

Big Brother/ Big Sister of Nashville Mentor – a one-year commitment. Play sports together. Go on a hike. Read books. Eat a pizza with extra anchovies. Or just give some advice and inspiration. Whatever it is you enjoy, odds are you’ll enjoy it even more with your Little—and you’ll be making a life-changing impact.

http://www.mentorakid.org/site/c.fIKYIcOSIiJ6H/b.9192359/k.E243/Volunteer_to_start_something.htm

TN Promise Mentor – Governor Bill Haslam’s program encouraging people across the state to help students navigate the college admissions process and ensure they complete Tennessee Promise program requirements in order to receive the scholarship. Students may receive scholarships to community college and technical schools. Deadline for this year may have passed but it is an annual program.

<http://tennesseepromise.gov/volunteers.shtml>

Academies of Nashville – part of the Metro Nashville Public School Pathways program to make learning practical and experiences available. More information and contacts may be found at

<http://www.mnps.org/academies-of-nashville>