



Kingston
General
Hospital

Volunteer Services Handbook

We are a community of people dedicated to transforming the patient and family experience through innovative and collaborative approaches to care, knowledge and leadership.

Strategic directions

Four strategic directions focus our energy, action and resources each year, moving us closer to our aim of Outstanding Care, Always. We are:

- Transforming the patient experience through a relentless focus on quality, safety and service
- Bringing to life new models of interprofessional care and education
- Cultivating patient-oriented research
- Increasing our focus on complex-acute and specialty care

Guiding principles

- Respect
- Engagement
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Value for money

Welcome to KGH

From our front doors to our inpatient floors, volunteers play a vital role in helping KGH meet the many needs of our patients and their families every day.

As a new volunteer to our hospital, we extend a warm welcome to you. We are pleased you have chosen to provide KGH the benefit of your service, time and talents. You can be assured that your commitment is highly valued.

You are joining KGH at an exciting time. Our aim is to deliver Outstanding Care, Always and we are on a journey to transform the patient and family experience through innovative and collaborative approaches to care, knowledge and leadership. To help us get there, we have been busy over the past few years partnering with our patients and families at every opportunity. In fact, Patient- and Family-Centred Care has become a defining feature of our hospital and is now attracting national and international attention.

Our dedicated team of volunteers have been helping us with this transformation every step of the way. Volunteers are an integral part of the patient care team and deliver patient- and family-centred programs and services throughout the organization.

Volunteers also foster a caring and compassionate environment and develop positive relationships within the community. When you come to volunteer, your warm smile and cheerful presence will be appreciated beyond measure.

Again, we welcome you to the hospital community and sincerely hope that your volunteer experience will be thoroughly rewarding!

Leslee Thompson
KGH President and CEO

Jill Holland-Reilly
Director of Volunteer Services and
Corporate Accessibility



Volunteer Services Team Members

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Preparing you to become a volunteer

As part of your welcome to KGH, the Volunteer Services Department has created special training to help you thrive in your new role.

Based on feedback from volunteers and hospital employees, we have improved some of our existing training programs and also created some new ones.

Step 1: Self-directed Learning

Pre-orientation e-learning course

Accessibility e-learning course

Step 2: Volunteer Orientation Session

Be Real—KGH Code of Behaviour

Privacy/Confidentiality

Infection prevention & control

Emergency Codes

Wheelchair 101

Tour and Next steps

Step 3: Specific volunteer training & on-going learning

Area specific training will be provided by a volunteer mentor, or a staff member at a mutually convenient time. In most cases, training involves shadowing an experienced volunteer. The Volunteer Services Department is committed to the continuous pursuit of knowledge.

Of course, we are always aiming to improve what we do, using the principles of Continuous Quality Improvement. As such, we recognize the people best equipped to identify improvements are those carrying out the tasks and those receiving the services. Therefore we encourage input from our volunteers through attendance at meetings, education sessions, completion of surveys, and by taking advantage of our “open door” policy to discuss ideas and suggestions.

Maintaining confidentiality

As a volunteer, you are required to sign a declaration of confidentiality, as are all other hospital personnel. This means that any information you may acquire regarding the identity, diagnosis or treatment of any patient must be held in strict confidence, and never referred to inside or outside of the hospital. This is of the utmost importance. Breaches of confidentiality will result in termination.

Respecting the privacy of staff is also extremely important and in return, we respect your right to privacy. Volunteer Services will only give out your name, telephone number or email address to other volunteers regarding trading shifts or other volunteer matters. Please let the Volunteer Services Office know if you would prefer not to have your information shared. Do not give out your telephone number or address to patients.

Also, be aware that volunteers are not here to judge staff or the quality of patient care. If you have concerns about patients, their care, or any other matter, please talk to Volunteer Services staff or the staff person in charge of your area.

Boundaries and limitations

All volunteers, by virtue of their position in the health care system, are in a potential position of power over patients. This position must never be abused. Patients must be able to trust those with whom they interact and situations which could lead to harmful interactions must be avoided.

In order to maintain acceptable volunteer and patient relationships, volunteers should be aware of some of the warning signs that indicate they may be overstepping acceptable boundaries.

Warning signs may include

- Sharing or asking for patient information beyond “need to know” requirements
- Bringing personalized gifts into the setting
- Spending extra time with one specific person, beyond therapeutic needs
- Changing an assignment to visit with one specific person
- Dressing differently when seeing one specific person
- Giving out a home phone number or email address
- Stepping outside the normal setting to visit the person
- Varying “Volunteer Assignment Guide” to serve the patient’s needs
- Getting involved in parental or family conflicts. Family issues should be brought to the attention of staff.

Tips and Gifts

It is not appropriate to accept tips or gifts from patients. If a patient insists on giving money, explain that it will be handed in to the Volunteer Services office as a donation to the KGH Auxiliary. If possible, the donation should be accompanied by the name and address of the patient so it can be acknowledged. If a family member wishes to make a donation, they should be directed to the Volunteer Services & Auxiliary office or to the Foundation office.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on KGH property except in “designated smoking shelters.”

Cell phones

Cell phones may be used in lobbies, visitor waiting areas and private offices. You should not use cell phones while on duty. Please be discreet and turn off your phone when on duty.

Elevator use

Be observant of the hospital protocol for the use of elevators. Please use the staff/visitor elevators to allow for expedient patient transport.

Insurance

All registered volunteers are covered by hospital insurance while volunteering. You are not covered by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) and therefore must not put yourself at risk of physical injury.

Uniform

A volunteer uniform must be worn at all times during your shift. This helps identify you to other staff, patients and their families.

You may purchase a volunteer uniform in the Volunteer Services office (Connell 1) or borrow one from Volunteer Services at the beginning of your shift and then return it to the office laundry hamper afterwards.

You are reminded to dress in a suitable fashion for the hospital environment. Cleanliness, neatness, and safety considerations are important.

Extremely casual attire and ball caps are inappropriate.

Shorts are not permitted.

Do not use any scented products including perfumes, colognes, lotions, deodorants and hairspray. KGH strives to enforce a scent free environment for the safety of all staff, patients and volunteers.

Safe Footwear Standard

In accordance with the Occupational Health & Safety Act, all staff and volunteers are required to wear appropriate footwear based on the hazards present in their work environment. Footwear should be in good repair, fit well and be comfortable, and be of sturdy construction with a maximum heel height of 2.5 inches. Beach flip flops, sandals and footwear with high heels/platform soles greater than 2.5 inches are prohibited on KGH property.

Note: Beach flip flops are open-toed with a flat sole held loosely on the foot by a Y-shaped strap that passes between two toes and around either side of the foot. They may also be held to the foot with a single strap over the front of the foot rather than thong.

Closed toe and heel/heel strap with flexible non-slip soles are required for staff in patient care and where environment or duties pose a risk of injury or exposure.

Identification

When on duty, you must wear a uniform and security badge at chest level. This identifies you as a KGH Volunteer. When you resign from service, your I.D. badge and any subsequent cards (i.e. swipe access, parking) must be returned to the Volunteer Services office.

Personal Belongings

Please avoid bringing valuables with you. The hospital will not be responsible for any losses. Lockers are accessible to you in the Volunteer Services offices and locks may be available for temporary use.

Supervision

If you are uncertain about any task, always seek guidance. The staff will be happy to help you. If you are requested to perform a task which is not mentioned in your assignment guide, please check with the Volunteer Services staff before proceeding, or if appropriate, with the person in charge of your volunteer area.

Transportation of patients

It is important you never leave a patient alone in a wheelchair. Ensure that patients are always delivered directly to their destination and inform staff when they arrive. To ensure everyone's safety, please follow these rules:

- Permission from a staff person must be obtained prior to moving an inpatient from his or her unit.
- Volunteers may only transfer inpatients for socialization purposes. You are responsible for returning the inpatient safely to their unit.
- Obtain assistance from staff to transfer patient to wheelchair.
- Make sure the brakes are on - on both wheels – before you allow the patient to be seated and before you allow the patient to get up from the wheelchair.
- Make sure the foot-rests are up before you seat the patient. When patient is seated, put the foot-rests down and encourage the patient to keep their feet on the steps while the chair is in motion to avoid injury.
- Always cover patient's lap and knees with a blanket or sheet while transporting them within the hospital, and do not allow it to become tangled in wheels.

Taking patients in wheelchairs into elevators

Always back into the elevator so that the patient is facing forward.

Moving empty wheelchairs

Always fold up the chair by lifting the seat upwards to help make the wheelchair easier to move.

Parking

Paid parking options are available through Volunteer Services during the shift times you volunteer, however we encourage volunteers to carpool, have someone drop you off, walk, or take a bus whenever possible.

Paid parking options include:

- St. Mary's of the Lake off Union Street, with free shuttle to KGH. Shuttle schedule is posted in the volunteer office or at <http://gomccoy.com/hospital/>
- Queen's University Underground Parking on Stuart Street

Bus tickets are available for volunteers who use Kingston Transit or the Access bus.

Before or after your shift, if you choose to have lunch, visit a patient or have a clinic appointment, there is a parking recovery box located in the volunteer office. By placing your share of the parking fees in the box you will contribute to the costs incurred by the hospital.



Attendance

Dependability is as important in volunteer positions as it is in employment. When you anticipate you are going to miss your assigned volunteer shift always report your absence. Please see shift absence reporting on the next page. Please inquire at your area training about any additional program specific shift absence reporting procedures. Several absences, problematic tardiness and/or leaving your shift early are not acceptable and can lead to dismissal.

If you are ill, we would prefer that you stay home and get well quickly!

You should NOT volunteer if you have the following:

- Communicable diseases such as chicken pox, mumps, rubella
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Respiratory infections such as colds, flu, sore throat, or cough
- Infections on the hands such as boils, dermatitis, scabies
- Eye infections
- Fever

Should you injure yourself or become ill while on duty, please report to the person in charge of your area and to the Volunteer Services office.

Extended Absence

If you are away for a prolonged period of time, Volunteer Services will attempt to fill your position on a temporary basis. If the assignment is permanently given to another volunteer, you will be re-assigned when you return.

Change of Service

A change may be as good as a rest! Contact Volunteer Services if you would like to participate in an additional service or if you would like to be reassigned.

Shift Absence Reporting

Consistency of service is vital in helping us achieve Outstanding Care, Always. If something conflicts with your regularly scheduled shift, please discuss your need with the Coordinator in Volunteer Services.

Access your Volgistics Online Profile through the link below or by using the Volunteer Services sign-in computer.

- <https://www.volgistics.com/ex/portal.dll?FROM=10703>
Log-In Name: enter the email address we have on file
PIN: First-time users will be asked to set their PIN.
- Click on the “My Schedule” tab and you will see your shifts in print.
- Click on your shift and hit “Remove Me” when the next screen opens up.

To pick up vacant shifts

Click on the “Help Wanted” symbol on any date(s) you are available to see which shift time needs to be filled. Click “Schedule Me” if you want to book the shift.

Request a Break in Service

Taking a Leave of Absence (LOA)

Volunteers can request a leave of absence if they plan to be away from their regularly scheduled shift for more than four weeks but are planning to return.

Request to Become Inactive

If you are not planning to continue volunteering, let us know. If you decide to return and at least three months have passed, volunteers need to submit an updated Criminal Reference Check with the vulnerable sector search. You may also need a one-step TB test.

For breaks in service of longer than two years, the applicant will need to complete a new application.

Requests for Confirmation of Service

Two weeks minimum advanced notice is necessary.

Verification can include a letter, email or phone reply stating:

- Start date of volunteer placement
- Resignation date (if applicable)
- Total number of service hours completed to date
- Brief description of placement and tasks performed

Letters of Reference

Four weeks minimum advanced notice is necessary.

Prior to requesting a letter of reference please take the following into consideration:

- Part of the minimum eligibility criteria for requesting a reference is that the volunteer has contributed a minimum of six months and/or two terms of involvement.
- Review the questions being asked by the requesting body (school, employment, etc.). Do they fit with what we know about you?

Before we agree to provide a reference, you need to provide us with a copy of the questions being asked. We will advise you which questions we can comfortably answer in support of your application. Then, you can make an informed decision whether our reference will meet the needs of the requesting body and confirm your reference need.

A letter of reference contains all the items mentioned in the Confirmation of Service, plus some or all of the following:

- Performance
- Responsibility and Motivation
- Interpersonal and Communication skills
- Leadership qualities/potential

While we maintain full computer records of volunteer service for three years after you become inactive, it is in your best interest to request a letter of reference within one year of your last day of active participation. KGH may not be able to complete a letter of reference after one year.

KGH Code of Behaviour

Kingston General Hospital is one of the first hospitals in Ontario to adopt a policy, and a learning program, which specifically promotes healthy interpersonal communication at work. It defines the expectations of behaviour for everyone who works, learns or volunteers at our hospital. The goal is to make our Code of Behaviour a “living” code - taking the four principles of respect, equality, accountability and leadership and putting them into our thoughts, our actions and our words.

By working together we can create a better environment for everyone.

Respect

We treat ourselves and others with respect and dignity at all times. Respect means consideration, politeness and courtesy in what we say and write and in our actions. Even when we may disagree with the ideas or beliefs of another person, we strive to understand the differences in perspective. We use the power of our words and actions to demonstrate our commitment to the hospital's values.

Equality

Everyone in our hospital is equally valued no matter what their position in our organization. We strive to create a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of each person so they feel part of our organization. Diversity is valued (i.e. differences in race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability). We promote equality and the acceptance of people from diverse backgrounds, communities and cultures.

Accountability

We are each accountable for demonstrating appropriate and professional behaviour. We take responsibility, are prepared to answer for our actions, and act with integrity and honesty. We build trust and teamwork by doing the right thing and resolving problems in which we have played a role.

Leadership

We lead by example. No matter what our role in the hospital, each of us takes the lead in modeling respectful behaviour even when those around us may not be doing the same. We have the courage to ask to be treated fairly ourselves, to stand up for others and to bring incidents of disrespectful behaviour to management's attention.

Self-Care

Volunteering to be part of our hospital community can be very rewarding experience. Still, working in an acute care setting can be stressful at times and it's important to remember to take care of yourself! Here are some warning signs to watch for:

Burnout and Stress

People experiencing burnout feel a deteriorating enthusiasm with no attempt to regain that enthusiasm. Some warning signs include:

- Believing you are NOT essential to the organization
- Negative thinking about your role and people you work with
- Being overly emotional
- Thinking about work all the time, you can't relax
- Fatigue
- Depression





Stress is a reaction to both positive and negative events and is a necessary and normal human experience. To ease stress, consider taking the following steps:

- Deep breaths
- Physical break—take a walk or do some stretches
- Mental break—visualize your favourite place
- Avoid caffeine
- Talk about your concerns

There is also a Wellness Centre on Connell 8 available for breaks and other Healthy Workplace initiatives that you may be interested in. For more information, inquire at Volunteer Services. If you think you are suffering from either burnout or too much stress, please let someone in Volunteer Services know. Remember, the staff are available to support you!

Back Safety

Along with taking care of your mental health, it's important to take care of your physical health as well while volunteering. A common injury is for people to hurt their backs. Here are some tips to help avoid back strain:

- Lifting: Get assistance when a load is too heavy or large.
- Standing: Keep your knees slightly bent, pelvis tilted forward and avoid slouching.
- Bending: Kneel down on one knee— bend your hips and knees, not your back.
- Reaching: Reach only as high as is comfortable for you.
- Pushing/pulling: Stay close to the load that you are pushing.
- Sitting: Sit in a chair that allows both feet to be flat on the floor.

Staff Discount Program

KGH participates in a staff discount program through Venngo called *Workperks* and it is available to all current employees as well as volunteers.

Through Venngo, hundreds of brand name companies and local businesses offer special pricing on a wide range of products and services.

Visit this link and enter your last name and volunteer sign-in code to create an account and access the list.

www.kingstonhospitals.venngo.com

Please note that it may take up to a month from your start date for your account to be accessible once you've created it.

KGH Auxiliary Services

An essential member of the Kingston General Hospital team for over 100 years, the Auxiliary team is over 250 members strong.

Auxiliary members:

- Organize fundraising events and manage services that generate funds to purchase medical equipment and provide patient comforts
- Contributed over \$450,000 last year for patient care
- Provide on-site accommodation for families of critical care patients
- Provide palliative care patient service

How can you assist the Auxiliary?

- Buy your lunch in the Auxiliary Café
- Shop in the Auxiliary Gift Shop
- Buy your lottery tickets at the kiosk next to the Auxiliary Tuck Shop
- Pick up a snack or coffee at the Auxiliary Tuck Shop
- Have your hair cut in the Auxiliary Hair Salon at KGH
- Support the annual Teddy Bear Campaign during the Christmas holidays
- Support other fundraising events
- Donate magazines and novels
- Knit, crochet or sew for oncology or pediatric patients
- Become an official member – ask at the Volunteer Services and Auxiliary office for more information or call the KGHA Assistant at ext. 6352.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at KGH!
We sincerely hope that your volunteer experience at
Kingston General Hospital is rewarding and positive.



Volunteer Services

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