



Volunteer Information Handbook & Nursery Safety Policy

Approved by the Board of Trustees 02/15/2019

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Thank you for volunteering with Forest ReLeaf of Missouri!

With a small paid staff, our organization simply could not operate without a cadre of dedicated community volunteers! Volunteers contribute thousands of hours of service every year and help fulfill our mission to grow and plant more trees. Our volunteers are important to us and we ask for your help to create a safe and meaningful volunteer experience. With that, all individual volunteers must review and acknowledge receipt of this Volunteer Handbook, outlining important organization policies and procedures. We truly appreciate your service!

About the Volunteer Handbook

This Handbook is designed to introduce you to Forest ReLeaf of Missouri and to provide a basic overview of the policies and procedures that provide all of us guidance and direction. As a volunteer staff member, you are provided with a safe work environment, necessary job training, supervision, evaluation and recognition. In return we expect you to honor your commitment to Forest ReLeaf, respect other staff members and fellow volunteers, and perform your assigned duties to the best of your abilities.

As our organization grows and changes, there may be a need to modify policies, practices and other information in this handbook. When such changes occur, you will be notified by an announcement or update. It is your responsibility to keep your handbook current and to be informed about policies and changes that affect you. If you have any questions or need any clarification of the information contained in this handbook, please contact the Programs Manager.

About Forest ReLeaf of Missouri

It all started with the planting of 10,000 trees along the Mississippi River on a single day, Earth Day's 20th Anniversary in 1990. Earlier that year, American Forests announced its Global ReLeaf campaign at a national urban forestry conference in St. Louis. Several local agencies came together as St. Louis Area Global ReLeaf, organized around the record-setting 10,000 tree planting event. Collaboration partners realized a more formal structure was needed to promote the benefits of community forestry and ensure the planting of trees in the region.

In 1993 Forest ReLeaf was incorporated as a nonprofit organization with a mission to bring volunteers together to plant trees in Missouri's communities. Founders envisioned the agency would serve as a conduit whereby neighborhood associations, municipalities, schools and other nonprofit groups could apply for and plant trees throughout Missouri and surrounding areas.

In November, 2004 Forest ReLeaf planted its 50,000th tree at Fairground Park in St. Louis, a red maple that joined more than 50 others planted in that park that year. Our 100,000th tree was planted in October 2010 in Peace Park, a newly established gathering place in the "College Hill" neighborhood in North St. Louis County. Our 200,000th tree was planted in April, 2018 at Fairground Park.

For more than 25 years Forest ReLeaf has been growing and planting free trees through two key distribution programs: Project CommuniTree and Priority ReLeaf. A seasonal tree sales program is also offered. An invigorated board representing local corporations, other organizations and the region are leading Forest ReLeaf with a focus on fundraising, community awareness and governance of the organization to better serve our clients and meet the increasing demand. ***We couldn't do it without you!***

Planting Trees and Enriching Communities

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Forest ReLeaf of Missouri's Commitment to Volunteers

We are committed to equal opportunity volunteerism. We coordinate a diverse community of volunteers from varied backgrounds and social identities, including, but not limited to: people of color, immigrant communities, people of all faiths and spirituality, people living with disabilities, lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender communities, and people of diverse ages. We are committed to working together toward creating a safe, supportive, and caring volunteer experience where we can learn from each other and grow in service to our communities.

Volunteer Hours & Schedule

Whether helping out at *CommuniTree Gardens* nursery, in the office, or staffing an outreach event, we depend on volunteers to help us carry out our mission. Forest ReLeaf tracks volunteer hours so it is important that you use the TrackitForward website to track your hours. The login for that website will be provided by the Programs Manager. Our scheduling process is very informal, generally handled via email. We do understand that, from time to time, certain situations may arise that prevent you from doing so. Please alert the staff person in charge of your volunteer service as soon as you know you are unable to volunteer. If needed, Forest ReLeaf of Missouri will provide a document confirming volunteer hours as community service.

Standard of Appearance

Dress appropriately for your duties. For example, physical work requires clothing that is comfortable and durable. Only closed toe shoes may be worn while working in the nursery. Staff will ensure that gloves are provided for nursery tasks as appropriate.

Volunteer Personnel Files

Volunteer personnel files are confidential and consist of written documents retained by the Programs Manager and can be reviewed only by the Programs Manager, Executive Director and the volunteer. This file contains the original Volunteer Application, basic contact information and records about your volunteer service with the Forest ReLeaf of Missouri. **Please inform us whenever there is a change in your information so we can keep your file up to date.**

Travel Reimbursement

Volunteers asked to travel on Forest ReLeaf-related business may be reimbursed for travel expenses. All such travel must have prior approval from the Executive Director. Reimbursement will follow standard IRS rates for mileage.

Ending Your Volunteer Service

You may resign from your volunteer service with the organization at any time. If you are serving as a regularly scheduled volunteer, we request that you notify the Programs Manager, ideally two weeks prior to your departure. You are welcome to provide feedback during an exit interview with the Executive Director at the time of your termination.

Problem-Solving Procedure

When a group of people work and volunteer together, problems may arise. It is important to all of us that such problems are solved as quickly as possible. Occasionally, however, it may be necessary to investigate certain problems in greater detail. Our problem-solving procedure provides you with the opportunity to have a review of any problem, dispute or misunderstanding that arises during the course of your volunteering. In situations where differences arise between volunteers or volunteers and staff, it is advised to first try to resolve these differences amongst the parties involved.

If a third party is needed, the Programs Manager is to be informed and involved. Under no circumstances shall differences be made public or involve other members of the organization. If the grievance is in regard to the Programs Manager, contact the Executive Director.

Disciplinary Practices

The following guidelines may be used in some instances at the sole discretion of Forest ReLeaf of Missouri:

- Step 1: Oral warning with documentation in the personnel file
- Step 2: Written warning to individual and copy to personnel file
- Step 3: Termination/Dismissal

These guidelines are based on cumulative infractions, regardless of whether the infraction is of the same general nature as a previous warning. The use of these disciplinary practices in no way alters the fact that your volunteering with the Forest ReLeaf of Missouri is "at-will".

Dismissal

Dismissal of a volunteer is a serious consideration. Before a volunteer is dismissed, attempts to reconcile the situation will be made, including a meeting between staff and volunteer involved, the Programs Manager and, if appropriate, the Executive Director. Dismissal of a volunteer may take place if a volunteer is unreliable, irresponsible, disruptive, demonstrates inappropriate behavior, or fails to adhere to the policies and procedures of Forest ReLeaf of Missouri.

Confidentiality Agreement

Volunteers are asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement statement. By signing this document you acknowledge that you agree to refrain from the unauthorized use or disclosure of any proprietary client or donor information.

Conflict of Interest

Volunteers should avoid conflicts of interest with employees, trustees and officers of Forest ReLeaf. As a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, Forest ReLeaf is subject to scrutiny by and accountable to governmental authorities as well as to members of the public. Consequently, there exists a fiduciary duty, which carries with it a broad and unbending duty of loyalty and fidelity. The Board of Trustees and management employees have the responsibility of administering the affairs of Forest ReLeaf honestly and prudently, exercising their best care, skill and judgment for the benefit of the organization. Forest ReLeaf's Conflict of Interest Policy extends to anyone who can influence the actions of the organization, including volunteers and donors. The Executive Director can supply a copy of the Conflict of Interest Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees in December 2004.

Smoking

In response to state and local laws and building codes, smoking is not permitted on the premises at the Forest ReLeaf offices, nor is it permissible at *CommuniTree Gardens* nursery.

Substance Abuse

The possession, use or sale of illegal drugs is never acceptable in our nonprofit business environment. Also, the abuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs and alcohol can compromise your volunteer job performance and may be grounds for dismissal.

Policy against Harassment

Forest ReLeaf of Missouri is committed to maintaining a work environment free of unlawful harassment. The Forest ReLeaf of Missouri prohibits harassment based on sex (including sexual harassment, gender harassment and harassment due to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions) and harassment based on race, religion, creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, sexual orientation or any other status protected under federal or state law or local ordinance or regulation. All such harassment is unlawful. The Forest ReLeaf of Missouri policy applies to all persons involved in the operation and prohibits unlawful harassment by any volunteer/employee of the organization including supervisors and co-workers.

Policy against Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual attention of a persistent or offensive nature made by a person who knows, or reasonably should know, that such attention is unwanted. Sexual harassment includes sexually oriented conduct that is sufficiently pervasive or severe to unreasonably interfere with an employee's job performance or create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. While sexual harassment encompasses a wide range of conduct, some examples of specifically prohibited conduct include:

- Threatening, directly or indirectly, to retaliate against a volunteer, if the volunteer refuses to comply with a sexually oriented request;
- Engaging in sexually suggestive physical contact or touching another volunteer in a way that is unwelcome;
- Displaying, storing, or transmitting pornographic or sexually oriented materials using Forest ReLeaf of Missouri equipment or facilities;
- Engaging in indecent exposure; or
- Making sexual or romantic advances toward a volunteer and persisting despite the volunteer's rejection of the advances.

Sexual harassment can be physical and/or psychological in nature. An aggregation of a series of incidents can constitute sexual harassment even if one of the incidents considered on its own would not be harassing. Volunteers are prohibited from harassing other volunteers whether or not the incidents of harassment occur on Forest ReLeaf of Missouri premises and whether or not the incidents occur during working hours. Sexual harassment can involve males or females being harassed by members of either sex. Although sexual harassment typically involves a person in a greater position of authority as the harasser, individuals in positions of lesser or equal authority also can be found responsible for engaging in prohibited harassment.

Volunteer Responsibility:

If a volunteer believes he/she has been subject to sexual harassment or any unwanted sexual attention, he or she should:

- Make their unease and/or disapproval directly and immediately known to the harasser;
- Make a written record of the date, time, and nature of the incident(s) and the names of any witnesses;
- All incidents of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual conduct must be reported regardless of their seriousness. Report the incident to the Programs Manager or Executive Director.

Volunteer's Code of Conduct

- All tree recipient clients and other visitors must be treated with patience and respect. If you are experiencing difficulty with a client, please call on the Programs Manager, or other staff person to intervene.
- Be courteous, friendly and cooperative with employees and fellow volunteers.
- Any injury, accident, or incident where you might have experienced harm while volunteering must be reported to Forest ReLeaf of Missouri's Executive Director.
- If you are asked to perform a task or have a volunteer situation that is uncomfortable for you, please talk with the Programs Manager.
- The following behaviors are not permitted. Individuals who exhibit any of these behaviors will be asked to leave and will not be allowed to volunteer in the future:
 - Offensive or derogatory comments or jokes, including epithets or slurs;
 - Yelling, intimidation or threats;
 - Pushing, hitting or any physical contact with a client, staff or other volunteers.

Volunteer Roles

Complete volunteer job descriptions are found in the attached Appendix. Volunteer roles with Forest ReLeaf of Missouri may include:

CommuniTree Gardens Nursery Volunteer

Volunteers at the nursery assist with the Programs Manager with overall care of the trees.

Nursery Docent

Docents are trained guides, leading tours of the nursery for visiting groups.

TreeKeeper Volunteer

TreeKeepers complete a six-week course taught by forestry professionals; those completing the course are required to provide a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer service at Forest ReLeaf or in their own communities.

Community Outreach Volunteer

Volunteers are trained to represent Forest ReLeaf at community events.

Forestkeeper

The Missouri Forestkeepers Network is a statewide program sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation and administered by Forest ReLeaf. Volunteers in the program monitor the health of the state's tree resources and complete other forestry-related activities.

Individuals with a Criminal Background

Before volunteering in any function with Forest ReLeaf, volunteers must complete the “Individual Application” (and parental consent if under the age of 18). In this form, interested volunteers must disclose if they have been convicted of a felony, the nature of the crime, date of conviction and the disposition. Conviction is not an automatic bar to volunteer service. Each case will be considered on its own merits. Volunteer applicants should also communicate any limitations or concerns they have about working with the various populations that Forest ReLeaf may come into contact with.

CommuniTree Gardens Nursery Safety Policy

The safety and well-being of our volunteers is of critical importance to Forest ReLeaf. Use of vehicles and/or equipment is strictly on a voluntary basis. No pressure will be put on a volunteer to operate any equipment they are uncomfortable with. The Programs Manager has the right to determine whether a volunteer is qualified or unsafe on any piece of equipment and to exclude them from further use of that equipment. Use of alcohol, drugs or other substances, including certain over-the-counter cold or allergy medications that in any way impair driving ability, is prohibited while operating equipment.

The Programs Manager must train volunteers before they begin to use any nursery equipment. A Volunteer Equipment Usage list identifies the equipment specific volunteers are trained to use. Both the volunteer and Programs Manager must sign off on permission to use the equipment. Supervising staff will provide verbal instruction and a demonstration of the equipment prior to the volunteer’s use. Operating manuals must be read before using equipment and the volunteer must demonstrate he/she has the skills necessary to use the equipment.

Equipment Requirements:

Sprayers

- Supervisor training and demonstration
- Read labeling for chemical information, proper use, etc
- Trial use with FPM oversight

Utility Vehicle

- Supervisor demonstration
- Trial use with FPM oversight
- Copy of valid driver’s license

Lawnmower

- Read manual
- Supervisor training and demonstration
- Trial use with FPM oversight

Track Loader

- Read Manual
- Supervisor training and demonstration
- Trial use with FPM oversight

Proper Lifting Techniques

Always bend at the knees when lifting materials, tools and equipment. If an item is too heavy to lift alone, get help. If you are concerned that you cannot complete a task or assignment, please inform your supervisor immediately.

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Emergency Evacuation at CommuniTree Gardens

Weather is often a factor in scheduling volunteer work days at *CommuniTree Gardens* nursery. The Programs Manager monitors the weather forecasts and makes a determination regarding a work day based on this information. Threats of incoming inclement weather while at the nursery will be monitored by listening to a weather radio and monitoring television weather reports. In the event of observed lightning, the work day will be canceled immediately and volunteers are sent home.

Emergency Evacuation at the Office

In the event that the emergency fire alarm system is activated at Forest ReLeaf's offices, all volunteers are to evacuate the building by following the procedures below:

- Staff, visitors and volunteers should exit the building, using the third floor stairway, by way of the exit in the building lobby.
- Once outside the building, walk to the parking lot of Schnucks Market at the corner of Lindell Boulevard and Whittier Street.
- The Executive Director or her designee will ensure that volunteers and staff are safely out of the building and give further instructions once they become available.

In the event of a weather emergency, staff and volunteers are to assemble in the first floor hallway adjacent to the lobby until receiving the "all clear" notice from the building manager.

First Aid

A commercial grade first aid kit is maintained onsite at *CommuniTree Gardens* nursery. Cuts and other minor injuries may be treated using remedies found within the kit. In the case of more serious injuries, the Programs Manager or the volunteer may call 911 for emergency assistance.

Volunteers may take a break at any time they feel it is needed; the Programs Manager may, as they see fit, ask a volunteer to take a break. The volunteer break room is air conditioned and heated and serves as a place to seek relief from extreme temperatures.

First Aid Kit and AED Locations

A First Aid Kit is located outside of the volunteer break room on the wall next to the door. An AED is located inside the nursery office. In case of emergency requiring the AED, the Programs Manager must be informed and all information regarding use must be documented.

Emergency Contact Information

Volunteers are required to complete Emergency Contact and Medical Information forms, so that staff can appropriately respond in the event of a medical emergency. These forms will be kept on file. This information will be kept confidential.

Phone

Your supervisor will always carry a cell phone for use in an emergency. We would encourage you to bring your personal cell phone (if you have one) as a backup.

Fire Extinguisher Locations

A fire extinguisher is located in the building near the entrance door.

Planting Trees and Enriching Communities

Incident Reporting

Any accident, injury, or incident must be immediately reported to the Programs Manager for proper documentation and follow up.

Medical Emergency

- Call 911, give location/ landmarks to direct emergency responders.
- Designate someone to watch for emergency response vehicles to direct help to the proper location.
- If supervisor is not immediately present, contact him/her or other FRM staff person using the important phone numbers list at the end of this section.
- Give appropriate first aid, if it is safe to do so. Do NOT put yourself in harm's way.
- When emergency responders arrive, inform them of the situation.

Health and Safety

Safety is an attitude and action that all employees and volunteers should demonstrate to eliminate hazards in work areas that could injure employees, volunteers, and the general public.

Eye Protection / Other Protection

On occasion, you may be assigned a task that requires eye protection or other safety equipment. The Programs Manager will provide you with the necessary equipment.

Exposure to the Elements

- Drink plenty of fluids, especially on hot days. Water and sports drinks are the best choices. You should avoid caffeine, as caffeine consumption can increase the risk of dehydration. Take rest periods when needed, preferably in shady areas. We encourage you to take water breaks.
- Wear light-colored, lightweight and loose-fitting clothing that is appropriate for warm weather conditions. Wear a hat or visor, sunglasses and sunscreen.
- If working outside during colder, wet weather conditions, dress appropriately and cover exposed skin to avoid hypothermia or frostbite. Take frequent breaks to warm up in the heated volunteer break room.

Identifying Hazards

If you notice any conditions that may be dangerous or cause injury to yourself or other volunteers, please notify your supervisor immediately. When working in inclement weather conditions, please watch for slippery surfaces on paths, roadways, and sidewalks.

Inclement Weather Plan

- **Earthquake**
 - If outdoors, find a clear spot away from buildings, trees, and power lines. Drop to the ground and do not get up until the quake has stopped.
- **Flash Flooding**
 - Move to higher ground away from water (lakes, streams, and rivers), low lying terrain and storm drains.
 - If your car stalls in rapidly rising waters, abandon it immediately and climb to higher ground.

- **Lightning**
 - If you hear thunder, then lightning is near.
 - 30/30 Rule- if visibility is clear and you see a flash of lightning, count how long it takes to hear thunder. If you hear thunder within 30 seconds after the flash, then the thunderstorm is within 6 miles and you should seek shelter immediately.
 - If you cannot get to shelter, go to a low-lying, open space that is not subject to flooding.
 - Stay clear of tall, isolated trees and utility poles.
 - Avoid wire fences, piping and railings.
 - If you are caught outdoors away from shelter, and you feel your hair stand on end, squat down, tuck your head as low as you can and cover your ears... do NOT lie flat on the ground, as this will make you a larger target.
- **Tornado**
 - If the tornado sirens sound or a tornado threat is imminent, seek adequate shelter immediately.
 - If no shelter is available, lie flat in a low spot, ravine or culvert with your hands protecting your head.
 - Avoid seeking shelter in a vehicle.

Name	Phone Number	Email Address
Donna Coble, Executive Director	314-533-5323	Donna@moreleaf.org
Tom Ebeling, Community Forester	314-533-5323	Tom@moreleaf.org
Liana Kopp, Programs Manager	314-533-5323	Liana@moreleaf.org
Adam Levin, Development and Marketing Manager	314-533-5323	Adam@moreleaf.org
Emergency	911	
County Park Rangers	314-615-8911	
Creve Coeur Park Office	314-434-7792	
Poison Control Center	1(800) 222-1222	314-772-8300



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I, _____ have received and read the Forest ReLeaf of Missouri Volunteer Handbook. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I have regarding the contents of the handbook.

Signature of Volunteer

Date

VOLUNTEER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I agree to hold in confidence all information I become privy to regarding clients of Forest ReLeaf of Missouri and its donors. I will not remove from the office of Forest ReLeaf of Missouri, any electronic or written records, or copies thereof, without express permission of Forest ReLeaf of Missouri or Forest ReLeaf of Missouri's client or donor. I accept full responsibility for maintaining the confidential nature of all records, contacts and information marked confidential.

I understand that I am personally responsible and fully liable for any violation of this agreement.

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Signature of Forest ReLeaf Representative

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I verify that the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge. I also give Forest ReLeaf of Missouri permission to contact the person listed as my emergency contact in the event of an emergency and to contact my current or past employer for a reference.

I understand that as a volunteer with Forest ReLeaf of Missouri, the nature of my volunteer activities may involve physical activity, contact with unidentified and unfamiliar persons, travel to and from various unspecified locations, and other potential risks of injury. With full knowledge of the risks associated with such volunteer activities, I hereby release, indemnify and hold harmless Forest ReLeaf of Missouri and respective employees, officers, directors, volunteers, agents, agencies, and funding sources from all liability and responsibility pertaining to any claims, demands and actions resulting from my participation in such volunteer activities, including claims, demands and actions resulting from injuries, physical or mental, or property damage (including any injury or damage caused by negligence).

I understand that volunteer service is considered to be "at will" and may be terminated at any time by either the volunteer or the organization. Forest ReLeaf of Missouri may conduct background checks on volunteers from time to time to ensure the safety and security of other volunteers and staff.

Forest ReLeaf of Missouri volunteers are often photographed during workdays. I understand that if there are extenuating circumstances and I do not wish to be photographed, it is my responsibility to let photographers know and to avoid the situation. Otherwise, I grant Forest ReLeaf of Missouri permission to utilize my likeness in any photographs or videos for publicity and other purposes without fee or any claim relating to such photographs or videos.

Signature of Volunteer

Please Print Name

Date

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