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**Volunteer Handbook**

**Effective January 7, 2022**

Welcome to the Food Literacy Project!

Dear New Volunteer,

I am thrilled you have chosen to volunteer with The Food Literacy Project. Support from our community volunteers allows The Food Literacy Project to achieve our mission, and I appreciate your commitment to our organization.

Volunteers contribute to our work in many ways, including serving on the Board of Directors, assisting our Farm-based Education programs, maintaining our Youth Learning Garden, staffing community outreach events, working on special projects, and offering administrative support.

I hope that you find the duties of your volunteer description to be fulfilling and that your experience with us is rewarding. The following information folder includes details about our organization, the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers, and important policies and procedures. Welcome and thank you!

Gratefully,

Carol Gundersen Executive Director

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# Purpose & Overview of Volunteer Handbook

You are crucial to The Food Literacy Project’s (FLP) outreach in the community and our success at fulfilling our mission. Your energy, enthusiasm, wisdom, and care are an inspiration to staff and promote a spirit of service for our participants and community.

This Handbook is designed to give you an introduction to the work, history, and mission of FLP while also outlining responsibilities and expectations. These policies are designed to ensure that everyone in the organization is treated consistently. You are encouraged to voice any concerns regarding the handbook and suggest additions or modifications. We want our volunteers to have an engaging and rewarding experience, so your feedback is very welcome. Now to mention a few important distinctions and technicalities.

Volunteers are not employees of FLP. This Handbook is not a contract, expressed or implied, guaranteeing a term of service for any specific duration. Volunteerism with the Food Literacy Project is at the sole discretion of FLP, and either party may terminate the volunteer relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice. Should you decide to move on permanently from volunteerism with the Food Literacy Project, we ask that you inform the volunteer coordinator.

The Food Literacy Project may alter or modify any of the policies in this Handbook at any time. No statement or promise by a supervisor may be interpreted as a change in policy, nor will it constitute an agreement with a volunteer. The Executive Director has the authority to interpret, modify, suspend, or cancel all or part of the policies laid out in this Handbook, with or without prior notice, to the extent allowed by law.

**Equal Opportunity**

The Food Literacy Project emphasizes diversity in both our programs and our staff, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or status as a veteran in accordance with applicable federal laws.

# Organizational Overview

**Mission**

Youth transforming their communities through food, farming, and the land.

### Vision

A healthy and equitable community where people and places thrive.

### Core Values

ENERGY: We are bold and inspired by our community.

ROOTS: We are grounded and purposeful, connected with people and dedicated to sustainably addressing community needs.

DISCOVERY: We embrace the joy of learning by doing.

CULTIVATION: We bring great care to our work and relationships; we nourish growth in our community, and in turn, are nourished ourselves.

ABUNDANCE: We leverage our community’s diverse assets to achieve personal and social change.

JUSTICE: We pursue fairness and equity.

# The Beginning of the Food Literacy Project

The Food Literacy Project began as a serendipitous meeting of education and farming in 2005. Since 2004, Field Day Family Farm and farmer Ivor Chodkowski have cultivated 8½ acres of fresh, organic produce on a sliver of Oxmoor Farm between Oxmoor Country Club and Interstate 64. Due to the farm’s unique rural setting in an otherwise suburban area, a local teacher approached Ivor, asking to bring her students to the farm for a hands-on experience. At the time, Food Literacy Project Executive Director Carol Gundersen was a farmhand on the Field Day Family Farm, and, with her previous experience in outdoor education programs, she took the lead on this new idea of food and farming education for local youth.

That season, the farm staff facilitated monthly education programs for school classes, public school faculty summer institutes and summer camp groups. After the 2005 pilot project was met with great success and positive feedback, the Food Literacy Project as a non-profit agency was born in 2006, inviting youth and families to engage in authentic, life-changing experiences with fresh vegetables and farming at our outdoor classroom.

# Becoming a Food Literacy Project Volunteer

Prior to official placement as a volunteer, there is an admissions process. This process helps ensure a good fit between our work and the volunteer.

### Volunteer Admission, Placement & Orientation

**Application Phase**

1. Contact the volunteer coordinator.
2. Complete volunteer application and any other necessary forms.
3. A background check is required for **all** individuals who will be working directly with youth program participants.
4. Groups will provide the contact information of all volunteers to the volunteer coordinator and read this volunteer handbook prior to orientation.

**Orientation Phase**

1. Formal orientation with a Food Literacy Project staff member. This will cover the mission and core values, history, strategic vision, and program content as well as what is expected from the volunteer and what can be expected by the volunteer from the Food Literacy Project to maintain the relationship.
2. Tour of farm and facilities
3. Discuss FLP’s Emergency Procedures, and complete relevant training on volunteer activities.
4. Sign a liability waiver prior to any work.

# Volunteer Guidelines

### Expectations & Professional Conduct

Volunteers are an essential part of the organization and often act in roles where they are representing our brand and core values. Because of this, volunteers are expected to always act in a professional manner including toward other volunteers and Food Literacy Project staff, program participants, chaperones, and the public. Employees and volunteers are expected to dress appropriately, use appropriate language, and otherwise conduct themselves in a professional manner. Volunteers are expected to read and sign the anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policy form, which can be found at the end of this document. Professional conduct includes but is not limited to:

**Constructive Feedback**

FLP volunteers should ask for and give constructive feedback among themselves, about each other's and the organization's performance. Abuse or criticism that is not constructive is not acceptable.

**Trust**

Trust is essential among a small network of volunteers. Each volunteer is expected to earn that trust, however, by communicating honestly with other volunteers and staff members and by fulfilling responsibilities and meeting deadlines.

**Conflict Resolution**

If volunteers have problems with each other, they should communicate directly with each other. If resolution does not follow, then the volunteer should go to his/her supervisor for resolution. The supervisor may consult with the Executive Director who, if the problem cannot be resolved, may refer the matter to the Executive Committee of the Board. Direct communication is expected prior to corrective action.

**Report gross misconduct**

If a volunteer or staff person has any direct evidence of gross misconduct, she/he has the responsibility to notify the Executive Director immediately. In the case of the Executive Director’s gross misconduct, staff must notify the Board President immediately. Gross misconduct includes, but is not limited to: willful destruction of property; violence or threats of violence; excessive tardiness and unexcused absences; being under the influence of alcohol or drugs; dishonesty including theft; physical abuse or harassment; misrepresentation of facts related to one's employment; gross and flagrant insubordination; criminal acts; intentionally falsifying timesheets, reports or records; failing to follow professional standards of conduct with co-workers, volunteers, program participants or other visitors to the farm, colleagues, and/or neighbors; behavior detrimental to the integrity of the Food Literacy Project; and other serious offenses in violation of the purposes and objectives of the organization.

**Appropriate Boundaries**

Employees of the Food Literacy Project are all in a position of influence over our stakeholders, many of whom are children. All volunteers are expected to present themselves in a manner that will represent the agency well and be role models for the youth and families we serve.

Volunteers should never put themselves in a position to negatively influence a program participant or other stakeholder. Volunteers shall avoid any instance of dual relationships with program participants. “Dual relationships” occur anytime an employee has a relationship with a client other than in his or her

professional role, including a social media relationship. “Participant” means any individual currently receiving services from the Food Literacy Project.

**Confidentiality**

It is the expectation of the Food Literacy Project that all volunteers will respect the need for confidentiality. Information regarding staff, volunteers, persons served, etc. will be shared internally (among staff) on a need-to-know basis only.

**Media**

No volunteer is to address the media (television, radio, news reporters, bloggers, etc.) or speak on behalf of the Food Literacy Project unless authorized to do so by the Executive Director. If the media contacts you, notify the Executive Director, prior to giving a response.

**Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy**

It is the Food Literacy Project’s policy to create an environment free of drugs, alcohol and tobacco for employees, volunteers, and visitors to the farm.

**Weapon-Free Zone**

No firearms, weapons or ammunition are allowed at Food Literacy Project sites or events. A gun permit does not authorize staff member, volunteer, or visitor to bring firearms onto the premises under any circumstances. Exception is made for police officers and civil law enforcement officers.

**Anti-harassment and non-discrimination**

The Food Literacy Project expressly prohibits unlawful employee harassment of any kind, including harassment based on race, sex or gender, religious affiliation, or sexual orientation.

Sexual harassment may include a range of subtle and not so subtle behaviors and may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Depending on the circumstances, these behaviors may include, but are not limited to: unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors; sexual jokes and innuendo; commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies; leering, catcalls or violating someone’s “personal space”; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display or circulation in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures (including through any electronic means ); and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature; and any other behavior deemed inappropriate by the Food Literacy Project.

Any employee observing an incident of sexual or other unlawful harassment should promptly report the matter to his/her supervisor. If their supervisor is unavailable, or if the employee feels uncomfortable, the employee should report the incident to the Executive Director. Claims involving the Executive Director can be reported to the Chairperson or an Executive Committee member of the Board of Directors. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Supervisors at all levels are responsible for ensuring that the work environment is free from sexual and other forms of harassment, and all reports of violations of this policy will be taken seriously. Employees who learn of harassment, whether through an individual employee complaint, personal observation, or any other source, have an obligation to report such information to their supervisor or the Executive Director; all employees should report observed harassment. All incidents will be investigated, and efforts will be made to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of any incidents reported. Any

employee engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### Social Media

Social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for appropriate use of social media:

**Be respectful**

Always be fair and courteous to fellow volunteers, co-workers, clients, or other stakeholders. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or supervisors than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using content that could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparages clients, co-workers or stakeholders, or that might constitute harassment or bullying.

**Be honest and accurate**

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched.

### Post only appropriate and respectful content

* Maintain the confidentiality of Food Literacy Project clients, trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trade secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, procedures, know-how and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business-related communications.
* Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the Food Literacy Project unless expressly authorized to do so. If the Food Literacy Project is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the organization or its stakeholders. It is best to include a disclaimer such as “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Food Literacy Project.”

**Consider the Risks**

Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow associates or otherwise adversely affects employees, program participants, partners, supporters, or other stakeholders may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### Use of Company Equipment

All organizational files, equipment, and work-related material – including all electronic files and electronic communications – are the property of the Food Literacy Project and no volunteer, upon separation of volunteerism, may remove them from the organization’s possession. No company equipment should be used for any purpose other than the work of the organization. Volunteers

should not assume privacy of anything they create, store, send or receive on the Food Literacy Project’s computers.

**Organizational Files & Materials**

All organizational files and work-related material are the property of the Food Literacy Project, and no volunteer may remove them from the Food Literacy Project’s possession.

### Health and Safety

Health and safety for all parties is a priority at the Food Literacy Project. FLP has established emergency procedures for each of our sites. You will receive instruction as to these procedures as part of your orientation. If you are subject to a volunteer-related injury, please report it to the volunteer coordinator immediately. Volunteers, according to Kentucky statute, are not covered by worker’s compensation but rather by their own personal health insurance.

### Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

**Volunteer Rights**

As a Food Literacy Project volunteer, you have the right to receive:

* An assignment based on your skills, interests, and availability as well as the needs of the Food Literacy Project
* Adequate orientation, observation, and training to provide a valuable volunteer experience.
* Treatment as a member of a team committed to carrying out the Food Literacy Project’s mission
* Staff support and resources necessary to be successful in your position
* A meaningful and rewarding volunteer experience
* Recognition of your contribution
* An opportunity to give and receive feedback
* A chance to grow and develop as a volunteer through participation in special training events, meetings, and positions with more responsibilities

**Volunteer Responsibilities**

As a Food Literacy Project volunteer, you are expected to:

* Accept a position that is realistically based on your interests, skills, and availability as well as the needs of the Food Literacy Project.
* Adhere to the Food Literacy Project’s Volunteer Guidelines, Mission and Core Values.

**Farm Volunteer Expectations**

**Access to the Farm**

* The farm can be accessed anytime between dawn and dusk during the growing season. Please do not be on the farm after dark.

**Farm Security**

* It is the responsibility of the volunteers to ensure the storage container and the gate are locked when leaving if there are no other FLP volunteers or staff on site.

**Farm Safety**

* Volunteers should not use any equipment or tools that they have not been trained or given permission to use.
* Dress appropriately for the work. Closed-toed shoes are required, and please bring anything you need to be comfortable outdoors (hat, gloves, bug spray, sunscreen, etc.).
* Bring a water bottle and drink plenty of water while working on the farm.
* Do not bring valuables to the farm. FLP cannot be responsible for any lost, damaged, or stolen items. We do not have a place to lock up your things.
* In the case of severe weather (thunderstorms, tornado watch or warning, etc.), volunteers should leave the farm and find a safe place to wait until the storm passes.
* Volunteers younger than 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.
* Do not smoke or consume alcohol on the farm.
* The speed limit is 15 mph or slower.
* Always keep an eye on children.

**Farm Etiquette**

* This farm is shared by many growers. Please stay on clear pathways as much as possible.
* Do not harvest any produce without training and permission from the program manager.
* All operations on this farm follow organic practices. Please do not use non-organic pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers.
* Please take all trash with you.
* Do not bring pets or other animals to the farm unless given permission. Service animals are welcome with proper documentation.

**Farm Volunteer Responsibilities**

* All volunteers must complete an orientation to the farm and sign a release form prior to working on the farm.
* Volunteers must sign in and out using the Volunteer Sign-In Sheet.
* Do not use fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, or other soil amendments.

If any questions or problems arise, please contact the volunteer coordinator.

## **FLP Contact Information**

The Food Literacy Project

9001 Limehouse Lane

Louisville, KY 40220

Office Phone: 502-491-0072

Email: [info@foodliteracyproject.org](mailto:info@foodliteracyproject.org)

Website: [www.foodliteracyproject.org](http://www.foodliteracyproject.org/)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TheFoodLiteracyProject](http://www.facebook.com/TheFoodLiteracyProject)

Instagram: @foodlitproj\_lou

# Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received the Food Literacy Project Volunteer Manual (Effective January 7, 2022). I understand that it is my responsibility to read it, be familiar with and adhere to the procedures, rules and requirements contained in this policy. I recognize that it is my responsibility to bring to the attention of the volunteer coordinator any concerns, questions or issues needing clarification.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_