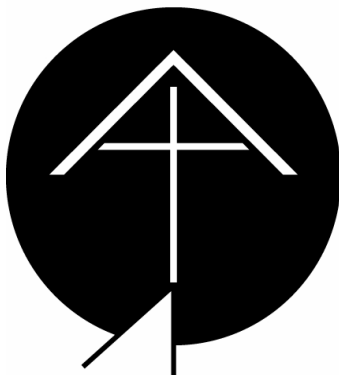


**Orientation Handbook**  
**for**  
**Medium and Long Term Volunteers**



*Mustard Seed Communities*  
Kingston, Jamaica

*January 2007*

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**MUSTARD SEED COMMUNITIES**  
Handbook for Medium- and Long-Term Volunteers

1. Welcome Message from the Executive Director

I want to welcome you to our family here at Mustard Seed *Communities*. We have a very important role in our mission to help those who are less fortunate than we are. I hope you will find your work fulfilling. I implore you to be respectful when dealing with others and to be tireless in your work at hand. The information in this document is designed to be a source of reference in preparation for your stay here at Mustard Seed *Communities* regarding your living arrangements, our personnel practices, and other pertinent information.

2. Packing for Your Trip

Following is a non-exhaustive list of items that we think you would need for your trip. Bed linen is provided so there is no need to bring your own.

A. Clothing

While the temperature may be warmer than what you are accustomed to, we expect a level of professionalism in attire. Business attire must be worn in the office. For men: trousers, jeans, collar shirts (no shorts and t-shirts). For women: skirts, dresses, pants, blouses – all of appropriate length and fit (no shorts or halter tops). Tank tops and “micro-mini” skirts are examples of inappropriate attire for the office. Volunteers working directly with the children (nurses, therapists, etc.) are encouraged to wear appropriate clothing (eg, scrubs).

For Mass or other special occasions, for males we recommend long pants and a short-sleeved polo or button up shirt; for females we recommend a casual dress, or slacks/skirt (of appropriate length) and blouses (no halter tops or tank tops).

B. Toiletries

Volunteers are expected to bring their own toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, hair accessories, body wash, etc.)

C. Miscellaneous

- i. An electronic bank card with the “CIRRUS” logo (sometimes difficulties are experienced when bank cards do not have the aforementioned logo).
- ii. Books, CDs and other such items which can be used during free time at evenings and on weekends.
- iii. An alarm clock.
- iv. A water bottle.
- v. A backpack with a small lock.
- vi. A camera.
- vii. Insect repellent
- viii. Bath towel

- D. Luggage Tags  
The address to be placed on your luggage tags is:

*Your name*  
Mustard Seed Communities – Sophie’s Place  
Gordon Town  
St Andrew  
Jamaica, West Indies  
Tel. (876) 702-1418

- E. Contact Information  
We suggest keeping the following information easily accessible:
- MSC Headquarters – 1 Mahoe Drive, Kingston 11, Jamaica; tel. (876) 923-6488
  - Randol James (Logistics Coordinator) – 389-2537 or 422-7357 (cell)

3. Arrival in Jamaica

- A. Immigration  
Here is where you would present your “Work Permit Exemption” approval (if applicable); your letter of invitation from Mustard Seed *Communities*, as well as your Visa (if applicable).
- B. Customs  
When going through Customs, be sure to get into the green “Nothing To Declare” line, unless of course, you do have something to declare (eg, fruits, plants, goods for resale, bulk medication)
- C. Airport Pickup  
All volunteers are met at the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston by the Logistics Coordinator and taken to Sophie’s Place. MSC Staff must have a clearly identifiable mark (MSC shirt; MSC welcome sign; MSC sticker on vehicle).
- D. Welcome and Orientation  
On arrival at Sophie’s Place volunteers are shown to their rooms and given a tour of the facilities, to include residents and staff, other volunteers, location of bathrooms, kitchen, laundry facilities, etc. The orientation will be conducted by the Chairperson of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee and the administrator of Sophie’s Place. The first week of a volunteer’s stay is allocated for orientation to the other apostolates.

4. Living as an MSC Missionary

- A. Residence  
All medium and long term volunteers live at Sophie’s Place for the duration of their stay. The following amenities are provided: semi-private room (shared with another volunteer); communal bathroom and shower facilities; and communal kitchen

facilities. Electrical sockets are installed in each room, as well as other areas throughout the retreat house. Apart from being home to volunteers, Sophie's Place also serves as the permanent home for 24 residents, and a weekly Retreat House for mission groups that visit throughout the year.

Part of MSC's spirituality is through private prayer. On Sundays, however, we worship as a community at the nearby Catholic Church along with some of the residents from Sophie's Place. We encourage volunteers to assist in taking the residents to Mass, as well as participating in Mass.

B. Food

Three meals are provided daily:

- i. Breakfast items are provided by Sophie's Place (volunteers are expected to prepare their own breakfasts).
- ii. Lunch will be provided at each volunteer's assigned place of work.
- iii. Dinner will be provided at Sophie's Place.

C. Laundry

All volunteers are expected to do their own laundry. A washing machine is provided at Sophie's Place for this purpose. We recommend doing laundry early in the mornings or later in the evenings, since the facilities are in constant use during the day.

C. Supplies

In addition to food items, the following are also provided as needed: toilet paper, paper towels, laundry detergent, and bleach. Each month volunteers should complete a requisition listing their needs for the upcoming month. This requisition is to be submitted to the Administrator, Sophie's Place.

D. Cleanliness/Maintenance

All volunteers are expected to keep their rooms and communal areas (kitchen, bathrooms, dining area, sitting room) clean at all times (eg, sweeping at least twice per week; mopping at least once per week). Leftover food that is not properly disposed of easily attract vermin such as cockroaches and ants. Please note that food should not be taken into the bedrooms. Volunteers should report any incidents of equipment malfunction to the Administrator, Sophie's Place using the prescribed form.

E. Water Restrictions

During the dry season the water in the government (main) supply is turned off periodically. A schedule is posted indicating the times when the water tanks will be turned on. Please adhere to the posted times.

F. Security

There is no security at Sophie's Place, as with the other apostolates. Therefore, volunteers are encouraged to be vigilant at all times. The gate is unlocked at 6:00 am, and locked at 10:00 pm by the Supervisor on duty. There are four keys and they are held as follows:

- i. the Supervisor on duty
- ii. Security Chief
- iii. Administrator's Office
- iv. Upstairs in the main house (***This key is not to be taken off the compound.***)  
If, for any reason, a volunteer will be off the compound after 10:00 pm, he/she should notify the Supervisor on duty as to what time he/she is likely to return, and arrange to have the gate unlocked.

G. Transportation

The Logistics Coordinator will accompany all medium and long term volunteers on at least three bus trips at the beginning of their stay at Sophie's Place to familiarise them with the public transportation system. Afterwards all volunteers must make their own transport arrangements. Volunteers working in Jerusalem!, can arrange to travel with MSC's vehicle that departs My Father's House at 7:30 am daily and returns from Jerusalem! at 4:30 pm.

H. Group Spokesperson

In cases where there is a group of medium and long term volunteers, it is suggested that one person be selected by the group to be its spokesperson for meeting with the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee. Meetings are presently held on the first Monday of each month at 9:00 am at My Father's House.

I. Evaluations

A series of evaluations will be conducted by each long term volunteer six weeks after arrival and every month henceforth. These evaluations will be discussed at the same time as the MSC's evaluation of the volunteer.

J. Chain of Command

If any problems should arise at Sophie's Place that affect medium and long term volunteers the Administrator of Sophie's Place and the Chairperson of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee should be simultaneously contacted.

5. Job Related Information

A. Job Assignment

On arrival at MSC each medium and long term volunteer will undergo one week of orientation conducted by members of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee. At the initial meeting the volunteer's job description will be reviewed and the volunteer will be notified of his/her job assignment, supervisor and relevant Apostolate.

B. Work Hours

All volunteers are expected to report for duty from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Mondays to Fridays. If, for any reason, he/she is unable to report for duty at his/her assigned apostolate, he/she is expected to notify his/her supervisor as well as the Administrator of Sophie's Place. If a volunteer is asked to work outside the normal working hours, the person(s) requesting the assistance should ensure that proper transportation arrangements are made for the volunteer to return to Sophie's Place.

C. Code of Conduct

All medium and long term volunteers will be treated as members of staff as it relates to MSC's "Employees' Code of Conduct".

This Code is as follows: "MSC has rules of behaviour which we must all observe as good citizens and good employees. Conduct which is immoral, unethical, or unlawful will not be tolerated. Violations may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including, discharge. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of unacceptable behaviour:

- (i) Insubordination
- (ii) Foul or abusive language
- (iii) Use, possession, or sale of intoxicants or drugs on MSC's premises
- (iv) Sleeping on the job
- (v) Fighting on the job or the threat of bodily harm to others while on the job
- (vi) Wilful or careless destruction or damage to MSC property or equipment or to that of another employee
- (vii) Unauthorized use or removal of MSC's or another's personal property
- (viii) Excessive unacceptable work
- (ix) Violation of safety or operating rules
- (x) Horseplay
- (xi) Carrying or possessing weapons of any kind on MSC's property
- (xii) Confrontation with donors or co-workers
- (xiii) Dishonesty
- (xiv) Excessive or unexcused absenteeism or tardiness
- (xv) Falsifying reports and /or MSC's records
- (xvi) Smoking or drinking of alcohol on the premises
- (xvii) Careless waste of materials or abuse of tools or equipment
- (xviii) Unauthorized disclosure, use or theft of MSC's confidential or proprietary information"

D. Appearance

As representatives of Mustard Seed *Communities*, all medium and long-term volunteers are expected to exhibit a neat, well-groomed appearance. It is important that your attire reflect professionalism. Circumstances may require you to work outside of your normal environment, and it is expected that you will consider such situations and dress accordingly. Exceptions to this dress code will be made in the case of special outside work assignments, inclement weather, or other unusual circumstances

E. Job Harassment

While it is not easy to define, some examples of harassment could include verbal (including improper joking or teasing) or physical conduct that belittles or shows hostility towards an individual. Any volunteer who feels that he/she has been subject to conduct that constitutes harassment must immediately report the matter to the Chairperson of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee. Every report of perceived harassment will be promptly investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. In addition, MSC will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report unwelcome conduct or who cooperate in the investigation of

such reports. Any acts of retaliation should be reported immediately to the Chairperson of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee and will be promptly investigated.

F. Job Performance Evaluation

A job performance evaluation of each long term volunteer will be conducted six weeks after his or her initial job appointment and every three months henceforth (every month henceforth for medium term volunteers). The evaluation will be conducted by two members of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee and the volunteer's supervisor. If the results of the evaluation are unsatisfactory, the volunteer may be asked to leave. If, on the other hand, a long term volunteer is dissatisfied with his or her stay at MSC (involving his or her job or other matters) he/she may leave voluntarily or request a meeting with the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee to discuss the matter.

G. Job Leave

All long term volunteers are entitled to job leave of two weeks (ten working days) every six months. If a volunteer chooses, and if the exigencies of the job allow, he/she may opt to take one week after three months. The relevant leave form must be completed and signed by the volunteer's supervisor as well as the Chairperson of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee.

6. Emergencies

In the event of an emergency (hurricanes, civil unrest, etc.) volunteers will be advised by a member of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee on what actions to take (eg, remaining at Sophie's Place, working at another apostolate). Volunteers must consider this advice as serious and must not leave Sophie's Place unless accordingly advised. Failure to comply with directives given by the authorised persons will be viewed as insubordination and could result in the volunteer being asked to return home.

7. Visits by Family and Friends

Family members and friends of long term and medium term volunteers may visit, but only at the end of a volunteer's stay (for medium-term volunteers) or during approved leave time (for long-term volunteers). If a visit should occur outside a long-term volunteer's approved leave, the volunteer will not be given leave to entertain the visitor. Also, for security and liability reasons, family members and friends of long and medium term volunteers are not permitted to stay at Sophie's Place or any other MSC facility during their visit.

8. Visits to Residents of the Children's Homes

Volunteers wishing to invite visitors to spend time (regardless of the length) with the residents must receive prior approval from the Administrator or his/her designate.

9. Visits to Hospitalised Residents

During a volunteer's time with MSC it is understandable that bonds would be formed with the residents. When residents are hospitalised and a volunteer wishes to visit the resident, this can only be done in the capacity of a visitor. Volunteers are prohibited from asking or responding to any questions (from the physician, nurse on duty, or any other hospital personnel) regarding the status of the hospitalised resident. Additionally, volunteers should never give their contact information to any hospital personnel; they should instead give the number(s) of the home, the administrator, the supervisor, etc. Only if the volunteer is in a specialised capacity (nurse, therapist, etc.) can he/she comment on the status of the hospitalised resident; and this can only be done with the explicit written permission of the Medical/Education Committee.

10. Interaction with Locals

During a medium or long term volunteer's stay at Mustard Seed Communities, he/she will interact with locals in many ways. Such social interaction is understandable and, indeed, encouraged because it is a part of the volunteer experience. However, intimate, romantic and sexual relationships with locals are strictly prohibited. If such a relationship occurs, the volunteer will be summarily dismissed from the volunteer program and asked to return to his/her home country.

No visitors are permitted at Sophie's Place without the prior consent of the Administrator or his/her designate. Visitors are not allowed to go upstairs the Retreat House or to be on the premises after 10:00 pm. The volunteer receiving the visitor should inform the Supervisor on duty that he/she has a guest.

11. End of Service

A. Evaluation Form

At the end of the period of service, each volunteer will be asked to complete a final evaluation of his/her time at MSC. An evaluation will also be prepared by the volunteer's supervisor.

B. Exit Meeting

At least two days before departure, each volunteer will be invited to attend an exit meeting with two members of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee. The volunteer is expected to bring the aforementioned evaluation form to this meeting. The evaluation from the volunteer's supervisor will also be discussed.

C. Departure Arrangements

i. Reconfirmation of Ticket

Each volunteer is responsible for reconfirming his/her return flight and advising the Chairperson of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee and the Logistics Coordinator of their departure date, flight, and time.

- ii. **Transportation**  
The Volunteers/Missionaries is responsible for making the relevant transportation arrangements to the airport.
- iii. **Handing Over of Job Related Information**  
All materials related to the volunteer's job (reports, tools, etc.) are to be given to the volunteer's supervisor or a member of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee.
- iv. **Accommodation**  
Each volunteer is responsible for cleaning his/her room at least two days before departure. This includes, but is not limited to, sweeping, mopping, removal of personal items. Items that are left as donations must not be left in the rooms; instead they are to be given to the respective individuals, or the relevant arrangements made by the volunteer to have them delivered.

Room keys, bus passes, and cell phones (if provided by MSC) must be returned to the Administrator, Sophie's Place or a member of the Volunteers/Missionaries Committee.

## Volunteer Programme

### REQUISITION

*(to be completed in Duplicate: original for Sophie's Place, copy for Volunteers Committee)*

Item	Quantity Requested	Quantity Supplied

Requisitioned by: .....  
*Name of Volunteer*
*Signature of Volunteer*
*Date*

Delivered by: .....  
*Name of Sophie's Place Staff*
*Signature of Staff*
*Date*

Received by: .....  
*Name of Volunteer*
*Signature of Volunteer*
*Date*

## Volunteer Programme

### REQUISITION

*(to be completed in Duplicate: original for Sophie's Place, copy for Volunteers)*

Item	Quantity Requested	Quantity Supplied

Requisitioned by: .....  
*Name of Volunteer*
*Signature of Volunteer*
*Date*

Delivered by: .....  
*Name of Sophie's Place Staff*
*Signature of Staff*
*Date*

Received by: .....  
*Name of Volunteer*
*Signature of Volunteer*
*Date*

## Request for Maintenance

*(to be completed by Medium/Long Term Volunteers)*

No.	Nature of Problem	Date Problem Identified
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Submitted By (Volunteer)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Received By (Sophie's Place)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

*Two copies to be prepared: (1) Sophie's Place; (2) Volunteers*

## Request for Maintenance

*(to be completed by Medium/Long Term Volunteers)*

No.	Nature of Problem	Date Problem Identified
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Submitted By (Volunteer)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Received By (Sophie's Place)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

*Two copies to be prepared: (1) Sophie's Place; (2) Volunteers*

Volunteer Evaluation of MSC  
*Initial Orientation*

Name of Volunteer: _____		
1. Were you appropriately prepared for your arrival and stay at MSC?	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____		
2. Was the initial orientation thorough and appropriate for your length of stay?	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____		
3. Did you feel welcomed by MSC?	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____		
4. Other:		
<i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____		

<b>Signatures</b>	<b>Date</b>
Volunteer: _____	_____
Committee Member: _____	_____
Committee Chairperson: _____	_____



Volunteer Evaluation of MSC  
*Living Environment*

<b>6. Interaction with Residents</b>	Excellent	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement
<i>Comments:</i> _____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
<b>7. Interaction with Staff</b>	Excellent	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement
<i>Comments:</i> _____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
<b>8. Other</b>	Excellent	Good	Fair	Needs Improvement
<i>Comments:</i> _____				
_____				
_____				
_____				
_____				

<b>Signatures</b>	<b>Date</b>
Volunteer: _____	_____
Committee Member: _____	_____
Committee Chairperson: _____	_____

Volunteer Evaluation of MSC  
Work Placement

Name of Volunteer:		
1. Was your role within MSC suitable to your skills and preferences?	Yes	No
<i>If no, where do you think you could have served better?</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____		
2. Did you accomplish your own and MSC goals as pertains to work placement?	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____		
3. Did you feel supported in your work from:	Yes	No
Your supervisor:		
Other staff:		
<i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____		
4. Was there flexibility in your work schedule to allow for optimal work efficiency?	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____		

Volunteer Evaluation of MSC  
*Work Placement*

5. Did your schedule allow balance for health, well-being, and spirituality?	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____		
6. Were there situations experienced in your work environment that were difficult to express?	Yes	No
<i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____		
7. Other:		
<i>Comments:</i> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____		

<b>Signatures</b>	<b>Date</b>
Volunteer: _____	_____
Committee Member: _____	_____
Committee Chairperson: _____	_____

**MUSTARD SEED COMMUNITIES**  
*Long Term Volunteer Application for Vacation Leave*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby apply for \_\_\_\_\_ (no. of days) official vacation leave from the period \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

Signatures	Date
Volunteer: _____	_____
Supervisor: _____	_____

**For Official Use Only:**

No. of days due:		No. of days applied for:		No. of days remaining:	
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*Long Term Volunteer Release/Discharge re Vacation Leave*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), hereby declare that I will be on official leave from Mustard Seed *Communities* for the period \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

I understand that during this time Mustard Seed *Communities* will not be liable for my personal welfare.

Signatures	Date
Volunteer: _____	_____
Witness: _____	_____
Committee Chairperson: _____	_____