

Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks & Recreation

# Youth Engaged in Service

## Volunteer Handbook

*Last updated 2/21*

Town of Tonawanda  
Youth, Parks & Recreation  
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## Table of Contents

Personnel .....	2
Who Does Y.E.S. Help?.....	3
Y.E.S. Volunteer Guidelines.....	4
Y.E.S. Code of Conduct.....	6
Tips for Success .....	7
Working with the Elderly .....	8
Dos & Don't's .....	8
Keys to Successful Visiting .....	8
Visiting a Blind Resident.....	10
Visiting the Hearing Impaired .....	10
Escorting Residents in Wheelchairs .....	10
Tips for Communicating with the Speech/Hearing Impaired .....	11
Speech Impairment.....	11
Physical Disability.....	12
Hearing Impairment.....	12
Transporting Guidelines.....	13
Confidentiality & Privacy.....	13
Face Painting 101 .....	14
Acknowledgement of Receipt of Volunteer Handbook.....	17

## Personnel

Carl Szarek, Councilman, Youth, Parks & Recreation Department

Mark D. Campanella, Sr., Superintendent, Parks & Recreation Department

Jeff Rainey, Assistant Director

Nicole Ruberto, Recreation Coordinator & Youth Bureau Director

Eva Boughton, YES Assistant Director

Part-Time YES Supervisors: Nick, Sam, Emily, Kaitlyn, Lindsey, Jake, Lisa, Laura, Grace

## Who Does Y.E.S. Help?

Y.E.S. helps the elderly, the handicapped, children, and YOU!

How Y.E.S. helps the elderly:

1. Provide companionship
2. Help with difficult tasks
3. Brighten their day with a smile or kind word
4. Make them feel useful by teaching you something
5. Being a good listener

How Y.E.S. helps the handicapped:

1. Help with difficult tasks
2. Seeing the person before the handicap
3. Making new experiences for them possible
4. Spending the time to get to know the individual
5. Encouraging a sense of self-worth

How Y.E.S. helps children:

1. Teaching new skills
2. Opening their minds to new ideas
3. Being a friend and positive role model
4. Creating fun activities
5. Accepting each child for who they are

How Y.E.S. helps you:

1. Teaches patience, responsibility, and consideration
2. Provides understanding for others
3. Meet new people and make new friends
4. Opportunity to give back to the community
5. Learn to relate to people different from you
6. Get to know your community
7. Learn about and find a passion for volunteering
8. Encourages you to be more thankful for what you have
9. Gain valuable leadership skills, self-worth, responsibility, confidence, understanding, problem-solving skills
10. Will help with college and career
11. Self satisfaction – makes you feel good!
12. Sense of accomplishment
13. Positive use of your time
14. Builds character

## Y.E.S. Volunteer Guidelines

### **Orientation/Trainings**

All new members must attend a mandatory orientation, scheduled monthly. Occasionally member meetings and trainings will be held, which volunteers may also be expected to attend.

### **Signing Up for Activities**

Every volunteer **must** sign up for an activity before showing up for it. Many activities are limited to a certain amount of volunteers, so the Director needs an accurate count of volunteers for each activity. If you do not sign up for the activity, you may not be able to participate.

### **Cancellations**

Remove your name from the sign up as soon as you know that you are unable to attend an activity that you have signed up for or contact the Director at least 24 hours in advance. If you miss an activity for any reason, please contact the Director within 24 hours after the activity. Three no-shows within a year will result in dismissal from the program.

### **Timeliness**

Volunteers should be on time at all activities and should never arrive more than 5 minutes before the listed start time or leave more than 15 minutes before the scheduled end time, unless otherwise directed.

Volunteers should be prepared to stay if an activity runs over. All volunteers must sign themselves in and out with the supervisor on site. Failure to do so may result in incorrect hours.

### **Participation**

Never sign up for an activity if you will not be willing to participate fully. For example, don't sign up for a face painting activity if you don't like to face paint. We reserve the right to withhold volunteer service credit if you choose not to help at your scheduled volunteer activity.

### **Conduct**

Volunteers should always act in a RESPECTFUL, MATURE, RESPONSIBLE, AND POSITIVE manner. They should keep in mind the best interests of everyone present. Smoking, alcohol, drug use, violence, swearing and vulgarity, and public displays of affection (PDA) are prohibited at all times.

### **Dress Code**

Volunteers must wear their Y.E.S. t-shirt to all events unless otherwise instructed. You will be provided with one t-shirt at orientation. Additional shirts can be purchased for \$5. Short shorts, revealing tops, tight or torn clothing, inappropriate slogans or lettering, pajamas, and baggy/saggy pants are not permitted while volunteering. If you arrive in inappropriate clothing, you may be sent home. Depending on the activity and the weather, you may need to bring items like a jacket, swimsuit, sunscreen, or sneakers. Please read the details listed on the sign up and use your best judgement.

### **Commitment**

All volunteers are expected to complete at least one activity a month and make a year-long commitment to the program. In order to remain an active member, you need to participate in at least one event every three months.

**Transportation**

Volunteers are responsible for their own transportation to and from events.

**Completion of Hours**

Requests for certification of hours must be received at least one week in advance. Please plan ahead.

**Bringing a Friend**

New volunteers are always welcome and you're encouraged to invite a friend. A friend may try out one activity before completing an application packet.

**Cell Phones**

Unless given permission by the supervisor on site, volunteers must put cell phones away during camp. Volunteers regularly found texting, making phone calls, and using social media on their cell phones may be written up, sent home, or not receive hours.

**Personal Belongings**

You are responsible for any personal possessions that you bring to activities that are lost, damaged, or stolen. We recommend you do not bring large amounts of money, expensive clothing, jewelry, accessories, or electronics.

**Eating**

Depending on the length and nature of the shift, breaks may or may not be given. Sometimes event hosts will provide meals for volunteers, but this should not be expected. Plan to eat before and/or after your shift so that you are able to volunteer to the best of your ability while there.

**Help Us Help You**

If you notice something dangerous or if you are uncomfortable with something, notify the supervisor on site immediately. Help us keep our area clean, orderly, and safe. If you notice garbage, please pick it up. If there is any down time at events, please ask your supervisor what you can do to help.

**Privacy**

Please respect the privacy of our partners, their families, and staff. Do not post pictures of people at events to social media, "friend" residents on social media or exchange personal contact information, or share information about their behavior, medical needs, or family life with anyone other than the necessary staff.

*Remember, you are representing yourself, your school, and the Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks & Recreation department whenever you are at an activity.*

Y.E.S. reserves the right to change policies or to add, amend, or delete rules at any time. Y.E.S. reserves the right to withhold hours or dismiss any person who does not comply with these guidelines, the direction of staff, or whose behavior is considered inappropriate. Inappropriate behavior may result in a call home, dismissal for the day, parent meeting, suspension, or removal from the program.

## Y.E.S. Code of Conduct

To ensure safety and comfort for all, we ask individuals to act appropriately while they are participating in our programs. This applies to staff, campers, and their parents. We expect people participating in Youth Engaged in Service to behave in a mature and responsible way and to respect the rights and dignity of others.

Our code of conduct does not permit language or action that can hurt or frighten another person or that falls below a generally accepted standard of conduct. This includes:

- Angry or vulgar language including swearing, name calling, and shouting.
- Physical contact with another person in an angry or threatening way.
- Any demonstration of sexual activity or sexual contact with another person.
- Harassment or intimidation with words, gestures, body language, or other menacing behavior.
- Behavior which intends to or results in the theft or destruction of property.
- Carrying or concealing any weapons or devices that may be used as weapons.

Please be responsible for your own personal comfort and safety. If someone's behavior threatens your personal comfort or safety, please ask that person to refrain. Staff are trained and expected to respond to any reported violation of our code of conduct. Please do not hesitate to notify a staff person if you need assistance.

Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks & Recreation will investigate all reported incidents. Dismissal from the program may result from any violation of the code of conduct.

## Tips for Success

1. Do everything with enthusiasm. It's contagious!
2. Be a team player.
3. Take initiative. Try new things.
4. Maintain a positive mental attitude no matter what the circumstances.
5. If in doubt, check it out! Many mistakes occur when people make assumptions or ignore their instincts.
6. Display a positive, "can-do" attitude.
7. Focus your attention on the people you are helping at all times. That's why you're here!
8. Safety first, always.
9. Smile a lot.
10. Have fun!

## Working with the Elderly

### Dos & Don't's

- Be dependable, following through with promises. Show up when you say you will or let the Y.E.S. Supervisor know ahead of time of changes in plans.
- Respect the resident's right to say "no." For example, if a resident does not want to visit, don't be offended. The resident may not feel well, may need rest, or may just want to be alone. Don't hesitate to return for a repeat visit another time.
- Talk to the Activities Director about concerns of the resident that you feel need further attention. On the other hand, if the concern is of a personal nature, respect the confidence of the resident and do not repeat to others what he/she has told you, unless he/she may be in danger.
- Do not offer food without the permission of a nurse, dietitian, or the Activities Director.
- Do not take a resident out of the building (or away from a nursing unit) without checking with a nurse; some residents have orders from the physician not to leave the premises. The resident's name must be signed at the nursing station upon leaving the building, or upon return from an outside destination.
- Do not feel you must bring gifts to residents. The best gift you can give is the gift of friendship.
- Do not seek favors from, or accept gifts or tips from residents.
- Report emergency needs of residents immediately by ringing the room call bell, asking for help from the nearest staff member or by reporting the problem at the nearest nursing station.
- Keep confidential any information regarding financial affairs, medical problems, family, or interpersonal relationships that are revealed to you by the resident.
- Do not try to move a resident who has fallen. Call for help and remain with the resident.
- Do not toilet a resident; ask the nearest nurse or nursing assistant for assistance.
- Do not always try to "cheer up" a resident. At times, the resident needs to express his/her honest frustrations and feelings to someone who is concerned and generous enough to take the time to listen.
- Do not remove a restraint for a resident or help a resident out of a wheelchair, chair, or bed. Ask a nurse or nursing assistant for assistance.
- Always address residents and employees by their correct title (Mrs., Mr., Dr., etc.) and last name, unless another preference is suggested.

### Keys to Successful Visiting

#### **How to Say Hello**

Introduce yourself, shake hands, or touch in some way if comfortable for you. Ask the resident's name and try to remember it for future visits. Use a title (Mr., Mrs., Miss) and last name when addressing a resident. Don't use a resident's first name unless the resident requests otherwise. Always treat residents with the dignity and respect their stature deserves.

#### **What to Talk About**

Admire hairdo, dress, shirt, or sweater. Comment on possessions displayed on dresser or table – remember, most residents have given up a house or apartment for half a room, and the things you see may be treasured momentos from the past.

Talk about current events – what’s happening in the world outside, your state, town, office, home. Such discussion with an interested listener gives residents valuable mental stimulation that can help them remain alert and involved. Don’t expect them to be sustained good listeners – that’s your job. Find a subject of mutual interest, perhaps music, books, art, travel, business, sports, children. Avoid controversial or depressing topics. Ask questions that require more than a yes or no answer (“Tell me about your childhood” rather than “Did you grow up in a small town?”). Be patient if the reply takes a while. Residents have many memories to sift through before finding the one that answers your question. Share a hobby, bring pictures (large size) of animals, flowers, travel scenes.

### **How to Talk**

Try to converse at eye level. Residents can become uncomfortable if forced to look up at you from a wheelchair or bed for any length of time. When addressing someone who is hearing impaired, be sure to let him or her see your face, or lean close and speak directly into one ear. Talk slowly and distinctly, you don’t have to shout. To avoid startling a blind person, speak as soon as you enter the room, don’t wait until you are right next to him or her. Say where you are going to stand or sit. If such a resident can walk, offer your arm for walking. Don’t ever come up behind a deaf or blind person sitting in a wheelchair and start moving the chair without warning; such unexpected motion can cause a real scare. A smile and touch can communicate your caring to residents who may not be able to speak to you or respond visibly in any way. Try to see through their disabilities and find the special individuals within.

### **How to Listen**

Be attentive, be patient with repetition. Encourage residents to share memories and experiences with you – the years of history they have seen provide fascinating stories which you can relive together by simply giving your undivided attention. Always respect the confidentiality of confidences.

### **How to Say Goodbye**

Watch for signs of fatigue such as labored breathing, lack of concentration, restlessness, drowsiness, inattentiveness, and be ready to leave when these symptoms occur. A 10 or 15 minute visit may be just right one day, while an hour might do another day. Use your own good judgment. A cheery goodbye and a promise to come again is an easy way to end a visit, but don’t make a promise that you can’t keep. Arrive when expected, and to avoid disappointment if you must cancel, be sure that a message reaches the resident awaiting your visit.

### **What to Do If...**

- A resident becomes ill or agitated? Call a nurse or nursing assistant immediately.
- A resident needs help getting to the bathroom, in or out of a wheelchair or bed? Call a nurse or nursing assistant. Though your intentions are good, you need to know the proper techniques for lifting and moving individual residents.
- A resident becomes upset or fearful during your visit because of a subject you feel uncomfortable with or are not qualified to discuss (death, financial matters, family resentment)? Do not attempt to advise a resident on such matters. Instead, notify a staff member who will see that appropriate follow-up or counseling is provided.
- A resident asks for sweets, cigarettes, alcohol, medication? Don’t offer any of these items without first checking with the nurse on duty. Some may be allowed, but others may be prohibited due to dietary or medical restrictions. Do not rely on what the resident may tell you regarding such items.
- A resident asks you to remove a vest or waist restraints? Do not remove. These restraints are protective devices that can be used or removed only as stated in a doctor’s order.

- You see something in the facility that you do not understand, or you hear something that causes concern? Talk all concerns over with the Activities Director or the nursing supervisor.

### Visiting a Blind Resident

- Always make your presence known; identify yourself when entering a room occupied by a blind resident.
- Be natural with a blind resident. Talk as you would to a person with normal sight.
- Use special care in speaking; your voice should be moderate. Don't talk to a blind resident as though he/she is deaf.
- In conversation, address the blind resident by name if he/she is the one expected to reply. Otherwise, the resident may not know the remark is being directed at him/her.
- Help familiarize the blind resident with their immediate surroundings; they are more at ease under these circumstances.
- Always leave doors open or shut as you found them; the blind resident remembers placement of items in a room for orientation when moving about alone.
- In guiding a blind resident, offer your arm and walk side-by-side; the movement of your body beside the resident will inform him/her when to step up or down.

### Visiting the Hearing Impaired

- Face the resident directly at the same level whenever possible.
- Do not talk from another room.
- Speak in a normal fashion without shouting or elaborately mouthing words.
- Recognize that the resident with a hearing problem hears less well, and therefore understands less, when tired or ill.
- Remember that your speech will be more difficult to understand if you are eating, chewing, smoking, etc. while talking.
- Keep your hands away from your face while talking.
- If the resident has difficulty understanding a particular phrase or word, try to find a different way of saying the same thing rather than repeating the original words over and over.

### Escorting Residents in Wheelchairs

- Always introduce yourself; be friendly, cooperative, and cheerful. Remember, the resident may be learning to cope with a disability and need encouragement and help in reaching a goal. Always announce your presence when approaching a blind resident, or one who is asleep.
- Check hand brakes. See that brakes are locked when wheelchair is not in motion. A resident may wish to perform this task.
- Before moving the wheelchair, ask the resident if he/she is ready. Tell the resident the destination.
- Make sure that the resident's arms are resting inside the armrests and are not hanging over the sides of the wheelchair.
- Check to see that the resident's feet are securely placed on the footrests.

- Always turn the wheelchair around so that the back of the chair is descending backwards when going down an incline or when entering an elevator. Two volunteers should be present when going over curbing or into a wheelchair van.
- Always stay with the resident until someone else has taken over, or you have notified the proper supervisor.
- Whenever a resident can propel the wheelchair (and supervisor has given permission), allow him/her to do so. Reassure the resident that you are available to give assistance if needed.
- Never lift or assist a resident out of a wheelchair. Ask a nurse or nursing assistant for help if a resident wished to leave the wheelchair. Volunteers must not assist residents with toileting or other personal care activities.
- Stay alert, unhurried, and be aware of traffic in passageways when moving a resident.
- Because many residents remain in wheelchairs a good part of the day, volunteers may ask periodically if the resident feels comfortable.

### Tips for Communicating with the Speech/Hearing Impaired

- Remember that communication is more than talking. People get clues from the situation, your tone of voice, and non-verbal communication. Please do not talk to the clients as though they are small children.
- Speak slowly, but naturally. Pause at intervals.
- Use shorter sentences with common words.
- Do not correct mistakes. Repeat or re-phrase the main idea.
- Ask one question at a time and give the person time to reply. Do not answer for him/her or pressure for an answer. Don't be afraid of silence.
- When talking, maintain eye contact. Talk face to face, stooping or sitting if necessary.
- Listen attentively to the person. Ask questions to clarify.
- If a client is non-verbal, find out how he/she communicates.
- Be accepting. Do not draw attention to how someone is saying something. It is the content that is important.
- Positively reinforce communication attempts by returning it with conversation or a smile. Do not ignore something someone wants to tell you, even if it is difficult to understand.
- Don't be afraid to tell someone you don't understand. Work with them or get someone to help you.

### Speech Impairment

#### FACTS

Speech impairments can result from cerebral palsy, deafness, paralysis, stroke, cleft palate, or injury. Speech therapy can often assist in restoring some clarity for communication. Techniques have been developed to compensate: language boards, sign language, manual alphabet, writing, etc.

#### SPECIAL NEEDS

Even though a person can't speak, or has difficulty speaking, they have the same need as everyone else to communicate. It is important that people recognize this, and also remember that persons with speech impairments are not intellectually impaired.

#### SKILLS FOR RELATING

1. People with speech impairments need time to communicate. Often it is difficult for them to form the words they are trying to say. Your ease in waiting with them helps them to relax and form the words more clearly.
2. If you do not understand, ask the person to repeat. People with speech impairments prefer being asked to repeat something several times, rather than having people nod their heads and still not understand.

## Physical Disability

### FACTS

Physical impairments can result from birth defects, disease, or accidents. Physical disability relates to muscular or neurological impairment. People with a physical impairment have the same range of IQ as the general population, though some people may have brain damage.

### SPECIAL NEEDS

1. Ramps, curb-cuts, wide-door restrooms, and other adaptations that insure accessibility for people who are mobility impaired.
2. For some people, an allowance of more time to accomplish tasks.

### SKILLS FOR RELATING

1. If a person is in a wheelchair, sit down near them and communicate at eye level.
2. Offer assistance but do not insist. The person will tell you what would be helpful.
3. Feel comfortable in talking with the person about their disability.
4. Do not “baby” or talk down to a person with a disability.

## Hearing Impairment

### FACTS

A person with a hearing impairment cannot hear or understand the sounds of speech used for communication in everyday life. For profoundly deaf persons, most sounds are totally inaudible. For a person who is hard-of-hearing, certain speech sounds are distorted.

### SPECIAL NEEDS

1. Hearing aids can amplify sound, but they cannot completely clarify it. Thus, hearing aids do not “correct” hearing the way lenses correct vision for many people.
2. Oral communication methods include the use of speech-reading, speech, residual hearing, and visual clues.
3. Total communication techniques supplement these methods with fingerspelling and sign language.

### SKILLS FOR RELATING

1. Be sure you have a deaf person’s attention before speaking.
2. Look directly at the person, speak clearly and at a comfortable pace. Do not exaggerate or overemphasize, as this makes speechreading more difficult.
3. If you do not understand a deaf person’s speech, ask them to repeat. This is much better than smiling and nodding when you really don’t understand.
4. If communication is still unclear, do not hesitate to use paper and pencil or rely on pantomime, body language, and facial expression.
5. Make an effort to learn sign language – it’s a sign you really care!

## Transporting Guidelines

- If a volunteer is unable or unwilling to comfortably and safely transport any individual, the volunteer should decline the request by speaking to the staff in private.
- Always approach the resident from the front. Make eye contact, introduce yourself, and explain what you are about to do. If the resident is hard of hearing, don't shout; simply lower your tone and speak clearly and distinctly. Residents may find it helpful to see your lip movement.
- Before moving the resident, check the following points:
  - The resident has shoes or sneakers on his/her feet. Sometimes, slippers are acceptable.
  - The wheelchair leg and footrests are secured and not swinging freely off to the sides.
  - The feet are securely placed on the footrests. If the wheelchair does not have footrests, ask the nursing supervisor whether or not footrests are needed. The resident may be able to pick up his/her feet until transported to destination.
  - The knees are covered. Lap robes are available for the residents' use when their own apparel is not long enough to cover.
  - The strap of catheter drainage equipment is not dragging on the floor. Seek help from the nursing staff to make necessary adjustments.
  - Arms (especially elbows) are placed safely inside the wheelchairs so they don't become bruised.
- Push only one person at a time and walk at a moderate rate of speed.
- Volunteers do not lift/transfer residents under any circumstances.
- Always back the wheelchair onto the elevator and push the wheelchair out.
- Wheel the wheelchairs backwards down a ramp. Stand behind the wheelchair with your back facing the direction you want to go. Walk backwards, holding the wheelchair and moving it carefully down the ramp. Glance back now and then to make sure of your direction and to avoid collisions.
- Lock brakes upon arriving at destination.

## Confidentiality & Privacy

- As a volunteer, you are exposed to a lot of information which must be kept strictly confidential. A resident may choose to tell you something about himself/herself. Because residents have the right to privacy, you cannot share any information about them. You must not discuss anything you have heard or seen, or discuss medical advice, diagnoses, or symptoms.
- Maintaining confidentiality of physical and personal information is mandated by New York State.
- Always knock before entering a resident's room. Even if the door is open, you should still knock. If you don't receive a reply after knocking, identify yourself verbally.
- Remember that the privacy curtains pulled around a resident's bed are for just that – privacy. Please do not peek behind the curtains.
- Do not wander throughout the building, enter rooms you are not authorized to, or look at files or paperwork.

# Face Painting 101

## Getting Started

- Practice makes perfect (or close enough to perfect for us)
- Make a sample of your best work
- Prepare your painting station

### What you need:

- ✓ Paints
- ✓ Brushes
- ✓ Water Bowl
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Paper Towels
- ✓ Mirror
- ✓ Sample Display (of your best art)
- ✓ Wipes
- ✓ Q-Tips
- ✓ Masking Tape

## Painting

- Help your customer get comfortable
- Plan the right size
- Stabilize your hand
- Paint the background first
- Rinse and dry between colors
- Add tiny details last

## After Painting

- Clean your supplies
  - Wash your brushes with warm water and soap (DO NOT SOAK THE BRUSHES)
  - Wipe down your paints
  - Empty and rinse your water bowl
  - Wipe down the area you were working at
- Keep practicing



## Youth Engaged in Service Volunteer Sign In & Out Sheet

Event Name \_\_\_\_\_ Event Date \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor Name \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Volunteer Name</b>	<b>Time In</b>	<b>Time Out</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>Signed Up Online?</b>



**Town of Tonawanda  
Youth Engaged in Service (Y.E.S.)  
Service Request Form**

Sponsoring Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Event Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Event: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of your Event: \_\_\_\_\_

Time YES students should arrive: \_\_\_\_\_

Time parents should pick YES students up: \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain what work assignments you would like the Y.E.S. students to complete:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How many YES students will you need: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate if there is anything they should bring/wear:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Is this a new event involving YES students?:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If no, when did they last participate: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed form at least one month in advance to:  
Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks & Recreation  
Attn: Nicole Fields  
299 Decatur Road  
Tonawanda, NY 14223

Contact Nicole Fields with questions or more information at 831-1001 or [nfields@tonawanda.ny.us](mailto:nfields@tonawanda.ny.us).

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## Acknowledgement of Receipt of Volunteer Handbook

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Town of Tonawanda Youth Engaged in Service Volunteer Handbook. I understand that it contains important information on policies and procedures and that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the materials. I agree to follow the policies of the program. I also acknowledge that the Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks & Recreation department may change, add, or delete any policies, procedures, or provisions in this handbook as it sees fit.

---

Volunteer Name (Print)

---

Volunteer Signature

---

Date

---

Parent/Guardian Name (Print)

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date

The volunteer handbook is yours to keep and reference.  
Please return this signed sheet within two weeks to the Youth, Parks & Recreation department:

Drop Off or Mail:  
Town of Tonawanda Youth, Parks & Recreation  
Attn: Nicole Ruberto  
299 Decatur Road  
Buffalo, NY 14223

Fax:  
831-1006

Email:  
yes@tonawanda.ny.us  
nruberto@tonawanda.ny.us