



Volunteer Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome Message

On behalf of the Words Alive board, staff members and fellow volunteers, I am privileged to welcome you to our organization.

It takes a partnership between the board of directors, professional staff and volunteers to create a strong organization, and we are pleased that you are joining the team. Thank you for taking the first step in getting to know Words Alive by reading this manual.

To ensure continued success, it is important that all volunteers understand our policies and procedures. This Volunteer Handbook will familiarize you with the various aspects of volunteering with Words Alive. Please use this as a reference document. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask me.

At Words Alive, volunteers are involved in every level. We attempt to build and maintain a broad-based structure that allows many opportunities for people to become involved and participate. Our goals are measured not only in dollars raised and clients served, but also in terms of leaders recruited, positions created and volunteer satisfaction.

We would like to thank you for your dedication, commitment to the mission, and time. Without volunteers, Words Alive would not be able to carry-out our important services in the community.

We sincerely hope this is a rewarding experience for you as we know that the efforts of Words Alive volunteers, staff and board members is invaluable to the clients we serve.

Sincerely,

Patrick Stewart
Executive Director
Words Alive

About this handbook

Welcome to Words Alive. Thank you for joining our cadre of over 200 Words Alive volunteers.

This handbook was prepared to give you some essential information about the policies and expectations of Words Alive. The handbook has been organized by topic to help you find information you need easily. You are also encouraged to contact the Words Alive Program Manager if you have any questions about the content of this handbook.

Words Alive reserves the right to modify the policies in this handbook without prior notice. The policies described in this handbook replace all prior policies, handbooks or policy guidance provided.

Thank you for giving your time and talents to help others. We hope that you find volunteering with Words Alive a positive and rewarding experience.

Words Alive Vision

Our vision is to create a community where:

- The passion for and sharing of reading provides a common language for all people;
- Individuals are widely encouraged to cherish the intrinsic value of reading;
- The varying elements of the community—political, social and corporate—use literature as a springboard for communication amongst themselves and between each other;
- People look to reading as a key to success in the social, educational and personal and career growth arenas; and
- Existing vehicles of communication and interaction—media, internet, civic groups incorporate literature and its lessons as a matter of course.

Words Alive Mission

Words Alive is a non-profit reading advocacy organization that inspires a commitment to reading and develops shared reading experiences for children, youth and adults. We accomplish this by creating and supporting:

- Targeted programs for underserved communities;
- Community learning forums;
- Community-wide reading projects;
- Model reading programs; and
- Networks for communicating about reading.

Words Alive Values

- We believe reading experiences offer opportunities for self-analysis and a vehicle through which to learn about the world at large;
- We are concerned about and committed to literacy;

- We want to help others overcome illiteracy; and
- We love to read and want to share our passion.

Words Alive History

Words Alive was established in May 1999 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization by founder Leslye Lyons, a voracious reader and professional book group facilitator. After scanning San Diego's literacy landscape, she found that while there were numerous programs providing one-on-one literacy tutoring teaching functionally illiterate individuals how to read, there were few programs that demonstrated that reading could be fun and enjoyable.

Lyons set about to create such a program, resulting in the development of Words Alive Adolescent Book Group (ABG), which was based on the traditional book club model of simply reading a book and then hosting a facilitated discussion with club members. She and team of volunteers took the initial concept and tested it with another local entity serving at-risk populations. After it proved successful, Words Alive then developed curriculum and training materials and piloted the program at Lindsay Community Day School, which serves pregnant and parenting teens. Today the program continues to be administered by highly trained, skilled book group facilitators and volunteers who use books and thoughtfully planned curriculum guides to reach at-risk teens.

The Early Literacy Intervention (ELI) program concept was created after a prospective volunteer visited an ABG site in the summer of 1999 and stated that they preferred to volunteer with a program serving preschool children. In September 1999, the ELI program was introduced at its first pilot site and has since expanded to three sites.

Initially, the goal was to expand both programs to four sites each locally, each for two years, in order to create model programs that could be replicated and introduced in other communities around the country. In 2001, Words Alive board of directors made the decision to continue adding ELI and ABG sites in a sustainable manner and to stay at each site indefinitely based on the positive response and community need.

In 2009, Words Alive began piloting new programs in an effort to increase its impact and provide a more comprehensive integrated approach. Between March and May, Words Alive Read to Me workshops were successfully piloted at Bay Point Child Development Center. In August, Words Alive became the only Raising A Reader affiliate in San Diego County and began piloting the program as part of a partnership with the County of San Diego. In fall, Words Alive began offering its Family Storytime program at the El Cajon Branch Library as part of a strategic partnership with the County of San Diego.

Today, Words Alive serves more than 1,000 at-risk, underserved, low-income children, teens and adults with its innovative, integrated programming approach. Our programs complement school curricula designed for children and youth who have become disengaged from school, are not learning in traditional school programs or do not meet public school performance guidelines. Programs also support parents and caregivers in their efforts to encourage a love of reading and books in their children.

Volunteer Policies

Commitment to volunteers, diversity and youth involvement

The achievement of the Words Alive goals is best served by the active participation of members in the community. To this end, Words Alive accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels of the organization and within all appropriate programs and activities.

Volunteers are viewed as our most valuable resource. They shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right to recognition for work completed. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the values, goals and procedures of the organization.

Words Alive is committed to diversity and inclusiveness. Our staff; volunteers; Board of Directors; customers; financial contributors; clients; suppliers and vendors should be representative of the diversity of the people residing in each local community Words Alive serves. We are committed to people diversity, program diversity and service diversity.

Youth Involvement

Youth volunteers are welcomed! However, as volunteers who have not reached age 18, youth volunteers must have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering. The minimum age to volunteer with Words Alive is 16. The volunteer work assigned to a minor should be performed in a non-hazardous environment and should comply with all appropriate requirements of California State child labor laws.

Youth are a vital link to the life of Words Alive and the future of this country. Words Alive is committed to developing youth involvement so that young people may better serve their community and become the leaders of tomorrow.

Definition of a Words Alive Volunteer

A Words Alive volunteer is an individual who, beyond the responsibilities of paid employment, freely assists Words Alive in the accomplishment of its mission without expectation or receipt of compensation.

Volunteer and Employee Roles and Relationships

Words Alive is an organization governed, supported by and primarily staffed by volunteers. Staff are enablers of, and not substitutes for, volunteers. When possible, principal management roles are filled by teams of volunteer and employee management partnerships working together and sharing responsibility.

Volunteers serve in governance, management, direct service, support service, consulting and advisory roles. Volunteers may be involved in all programs and activities of the organization, and serve at all levels of skill and decision-making.

What You Can Expect as a Words Alive Volunteer

Your responsibility as a volunteer:

1. Be realistic and candid in accepting your assignment, taking into consideration your interests, skills and availability, as well as the needs of Words Alive.
2. Learn your volunteer assignment as well as you can by completing all required training, asking questions and staying in touch with Words Alive staff members.
3. Contribute to Words Alive by being reliable and dependable in doing your job and working with your co-workers.
4. Follow all policies and guidelines of Words Alive, sign a Code of Conduct, observe confidentiality when needed, and engage in appropriate public behavior at all times.
5. Participate in the feedback process by letting the Words Alive Staff Members know how you feel about your volunteer experience and by giving constructive suggestions for improvement in any area.
6. Develop your skills as a volunteer by participating in training and development opportunities. Learn as much as you can to do the best job possible.

What You Can Expect Words Alive to Provide for You

1. A suitable assignment based upon your interests, skills and availability, as well as Words Alive's needs.
2. Orientation and training to help you perform your job.
3. The opportunity to work as part of a team, to contribute to the welfare of the community and the organization, and to be recognized for your contribution.
4. The support you need to do your job, including necessary equipment, supplies, workspace and helpful supervision.
5. The opportunity to give feedback about your Words Alive volunteer experience.
6. The chance to grow and develop as a volunteer through participation in other Words Alive activities, special training events, meetings and more responsible positions.

Dual Role of Words Alive Volunteers and Staff

At times, Words Alive staff members may desire to volunteer for the organization. Exempt staff may volunteer for Words Alive. However, because of the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, non-exempt staff may only volunteer for Words Alive in certain limited circumstances. Specifically, a non-exempt employee is not permitted to volunteer his or her time to Words Alive, except when *all* the following conditions have been met:

1. The service is entirely voluntary with no promise of advancement or penalty for not volunteering - that is, it is not coerced;
2. The volunteer work is sufficiently distinct from, and in a different capacity than, the work for which the non-exempt employee is paid. For example, a non-exempt employee who teaches any courses as part of his or her usual job functions may not “volunteer” to teach other courses; and
3. The volunteer neither expects to receive pay for the volunteer work nor receives any wages for the work.

Any employee who wishes to volunteer services for Words Alive must speak to his or her supervisor before performing any such volunteer service. Words Alive will require that the employee complete a volunteer application, code of conduct form, and intellectual property agreement.

Recruitment and Selection Policies

Role of Program Manager

The productive involvement of volunteers requires a planned and organized effort. The function of the Program Manager is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer placement within Words Alive, and to direct and assist volunteer and employee efforts jointly to provide more productive services. The Program Manager shall also bear responsibility for maintaining liaison with other volunteer programs in the community and assisting in community-wide efforts to recognize and promote volunteering. The Program Manager will be accountable for assisting staff in identifying productive and creative volunteer roles, for recruiting suitable volunteers and for tracking and evaluating the contributions of volunteers to the organization.

Volunteer Records, References and Privacy

Words Alive maintains personnel records of each volunteer which are the property of Words Alive and are used for internal purposes only. Volunteers are required to notify the Words Alive staff members of any changes in contact information (*i.e.*, emergency contact notification, information, home address, telephone number(s), email address) and to report any additional educational and skill training acquired after joining Words Alive.

Volunteers may review their personnel records. Volunteers must notify the Program Manager and schedule a time that is mutually convenient.

Recruitment and Equal Opportunity

Volunteers are recruited by Words Alive on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding volunteer involvement to assist in advocating literacy within youth, adolescents and adults.

Volunteers are recruited without regard to gender, disability, age, race or other condition. Volunteers are recruited based upon their skills, abilities and suitability to perform volunteer responsibilities.

Our volunteer intake process is as follows, the prospective volunteer needs to:

- Attend a Words Alive Volunteer Orientation
- Complete Volunteer Application, review and sign Words Alive Code of Conduct, Intellectual Property Agreement, and Release of Information form
- Complete a phone/in-person interview with the Program Manager
- Conduct a Site Visit (*if applicable*)
- Complete training as assigned

Recruitment of minors (parent/guardian release form)

Volunteers who have not reached the age 18 must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering. The minimum volunteer age at Words Alive is 16. The volunteer services assigned to a minor should be performed in a non-hazardous environment and should comply with the appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

Service at the discretion of the organization

Words Alive accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of Words Alive. Volunteers agree that the organization may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with Words Alive or to make changes in the nature of their volunteer assignment.

Nepotism and Fraternization

Words Alive permits the volunteer involvement of qualified relatives of staff as long as such volunteer involvement does not, in the opinion of Words Alive, create actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

For purposes of this policy, "relative" is defined as: a spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew or corresponding in-law or "step" relation – or other individuals the unit considers a "relative" such as a "domestic partner" or "significant other" with whom the volunteer has a relationship. Words Alive exercises sound business judgment in the placement of related volunteers in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Individuals who are relatives may work in the same Words Alive facility, as long as no direct reporting relationship exists. No volunteer is permitted to work within the "chain of command" of a relative such that the volunteer's work responsibilities or career progress could be influenced by a relative.
2. No relatives are permitted to work in any positions, in which Words Alive believes an inherent conflict of interest may exist.

This policy applies to all categories of volunteer assignments.

Note: family members are frequently involved as volunteers especially during episodic volunteer events. Youth volunteers may depend on parental involvement as drivers or chaperones. Family volunteer involvement should be encouraged as long as it does not create a perceived conflict of interest.

Reference and Background Checks

Words Alive strives to maintain a safe and productive workplace with honest, trustworthy, qualified, reliable and non-violent volunteers and staff who do not present a risk of harm to their co-workers or others. Words Alive may perform, or may request that third parties perform, reference and background checks at any time in the application or volunteer management process. All reference and background checks will be performed in accordance with applicable federal and/or state law. Volunteers who refuse permission for conduct of these checks will not be accepted.

Reference and background checks may include volunteer history and education verification, criminal history, social security number verification and sex offender registry review, where available. In conducting reference and background checks, Words Alive may use consumer-reporting agencies to gather and report information to Words Alive in the form of consumer or investigative consumer reports. All reference and background check results will be maintained in a confidential file.

Potential and current volunteers are expected to cooperate fully with reference and background checks. Cooperation includes, among other things, providing written consent to conduct a reference and background check and responding with truthful and complete information to inquiries made by Words Alive or third party investigators during the reference and background check process. Failure to cooperate in these respects, or any attempt to interfere with implementation of this policy, or Words Alive's efforts to obtain relevant information, may result in discipline, up to and including termination of volunteer involvement.

Emergency contact information

It is the responsibility of each volunteer to regularly update their personal contact information and emergency contact information. This update can be made by contacting the Program Manager.

Court-referred volunteers

Words Alive does not accept court-referred volunteers.

Clients and relatives as volunteers

Clients may be accepted as volunteers, where such service does not constitute an obstruction to or conflict with provision of services to the client or others. Relatives of clients may also serve as volunteers, but will not be placed in a position of direct service or relationship to members of their family who are receiving services.

Former staff as volunteers

Paid Staff who has terminated their employment with Words Alive may apply for volunteer positions. Each application will be reviewed by the Executive Director or Board President.

Supervision, Feedback, Training, and Miscellaneous Policies

Role of Volunteers' Supervisor

Each volunteer has a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. The supervisor may be a volunteer or employee.

The supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day management and guidance of the volunteer and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

The supervisor has the primary responsibility for developing suitable assignments for the volunteer, for involving the volunteer in the communication flow of Words Alive, and for providing feedback to the volunteer regarding their work.

A volunteer or employee who is assigned as a supervisor responsibility for volunteer(s) shall have this responsibility delineated in their position/job description.

Performance Feedback

Volunteers and their supervisors are encouraged to have informal, open and honest discussion on an ongoing basis about work performance and goals of the volunteer. A more formal performance review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the volunteer's supervisor. Performance reviews are intended to reflect the volunteer's effectiveness on the job. They allow the supervisor to measure the volunteer's work against the requirements of their positions, review results of negotiated business goals, and assess general performance behaviors.

Training for volunteers

Volunteers and staff should have equal access to training for equivalent positions. All volunteers must go through the Words Alive Volunteer Orientation. Volunteer development is a collaborative effort between Words Alive, supervisors and volunteers to align individual goals with the overall direction of Words Alive. Development efforts are focused on building the capabilities of all volunteers. Developmental activities may include both hands-on projects and formal training.

Leaving your volunteer assignment and exit interview

A volunteer may decide to end his or her service with Words Alive at any time and for any reason. Notice of the volunteer's decision to separate should be communicated as soon as possible to the volunteer's supervisor and/or the Program Manager

Separation from Words Alive Volunteer Involvement -

Voluntary separation from Words Alive occurs when a volunteer dies, resigns or retires. Volunteers are encouraged to give Words Alive at least two weeks notice of intent to resign in a written resignation letter stating the reason for leaving and the intended last day of work. A volunteer who does not report to work for two consecutive assignments without contacting his or her supervisor may be considered to have abandoned the position and voluntarily resigned from volunteer involvement.

Involuntary separation occurs when a volunteer is discharged or when the position comes to an end.

On or before the volunteer's last day of work, an exit interview may be scheduled, at which time all Words Alive property must be returned. This includes all Words Alive property, identification badges, keys, and metered cards. Settlement of volunteer obligations (e.g., advances) must also be completed at the time of termination/separation.

The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving, suggestion for improving the position and the possibility of future volunteer involvement.

Awards and Recognition

Words Alive is committed to recognizing its volunteers and staff. As a Words Alive volunteer you are eligible for a number of awards. Words Alive awards a Volunteer of the Month as well as hosts a Volunteer Appreciation Event annually.

Reimbursement for approved expenses

Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking business for Words Alive. Volunteers should check with their supervisors regarding specific reimbursable items. Prior approval must be sought for any major expenditure.

Tracking volunteer hours

Words Alive does track volunteer hours of service. Hours notated by the volunteer are recorded in the volunteer's electronic file in Gift Works. Events attended by volunteers are also tracked when sign-in forms are collected and given to the Program Manager. Volunteer hours and/or events attended are used to determine volunteer activity status within the chapter.

Holidays

Words Alive observes 9 holidays each year. The office will be closed on these days. The holidays observed are:

Holiday	Date Observed
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr., Day	3rd Monday in January
President's Day	3rd Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Thanksgiving Day	4th Thursday in November

Day After Thanksgiving

Day After Thanksgiving

Christmas Day

December 25

When a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, it is usually observed on the preceding Friday or the following Monday. However, Words Alive may close on another day or grant another day off instead of closing. Holiday observance will be announced in advance.

Safety & Security Policies

Workplace Safety and Security

In order to provide a secure, safe and healthy work environment for volunteers, Words Alive periodically provides information to volunteers about workplace safety, health, and security issues through regular internal communication means such as meetings, emails or other written communications.

Volunteers are discouraged from bringing large amounts of cash or other personal valuables to work unless absolutely necessary. Words Alive is not responsible for volunteers' personal items that are lost or stolen.

Some of the best safety improvement ideas come from volunteers. Those with ideas, concerns or suggestions for improved safety and security in the workplace are encouraged to bring them to management's attention so that the safety and welfare of all volunteers can be improved. Volunteers should feel free to report, without fear of retaliation, any condition that they believe poses a safety, health or security risk in the workplace. Words Alive will investigate such reports promptly and thoroughly and take appropriate corrective action. Further, any comments or jokes regarding threats of violence will be taken seriously, and dealt with appropriately and promptly.

Each volunteer is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Volunteers must immediately report any unsafe condition to their supervisor. Volunteers who violate safety standards, cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including separation.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, volunteers should immediately notify their supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance benefit procedures.

Injuries while volunteering

All volunteers are expected to follow appropriate safety guidelines while volunteering. However, even under the best circumstances, an accident may occur.

If a volunteer is injured, even slightly, the volunteer is expected to immediately stop the activity that caused the injury and seek first aid or medical attention if necessary. The volunteer must inform his or her supervisor or Words Alive staff about the incident and complete an incident report form. If the volunteer is unable to reach the supervisor, then the volunteer must contact the Program Manager. The volunteer should not resume the activity until treatment has been provided and/or he or she has been given the approval from a supervisor to continue the activity.

[Refer to Insurance for Volunteers Section included in this handbook]. Volunteers who become unable to work because of a volunteer related illness or injury must inform their supervisor as soon as possible.

Whistleblower Policy

Words Alive encourages the Board of Directors, volunteers and staff to raise good faith concerns, complaints, reports or inquiries about illegal practices or serious violations of the organization's policies, including illegal or improper conduct by the organization itself, by its leadership, or by others on its behalf. If any board member, volunteer or staff reasonably believes that some policy or practice of Words Alive is in violation of law, a report should be filed with the Executive Director. Appropriate subjects to broach under this policy would include financial improprieties, accounting or audit matters, ethical violations, or other similar illegal or improper practices or policies.

Words Alive Property

Words Alive works to prevent property loss of any kind. All property used to conduct business belongs to Words Alive. Words Alive assumes no liability for personal property brought into the workplace.

Conduct Policies

Code of Conduct

Words Alive is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to promoting literacy and reading for fun in children, teens, and adults. Words Alive has traditionally demanded and received the highest ethical performance from its employees and volunteers. In an effort to maintain our high standards and enable the organization to continue to offer its services, Words Alive operates under the Code of Conduct outlined below. All employees and volunteers are required to sign the Code of Conduct form, certifying that in delivering Words Alive services and in all other Words Alive activities, they shall meet the following standards of conduct

Compliance Requirements. All employees and volunteers are required to comply with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations and with Words Alive policies and regulations.

Actions Prohibited by the Code of Business Ethics and Conduct. No employee or volunteer shall engage in the following actions:

- a. **Personal Use.** Authorize the use of or use for the benefit or advantage of any person, the name, emblem, endorsement, services or property of Words Alive, except in conformance with Words Alive policy.
- b. **Financial Advantage.** Accept or seek on behalf of or any other person, any financial advantage or gain of other than nominal value offered as a result of the employee's or volunteer's affiliation with Words Alive.
- c. **Words Alive Affiliation.** Publicly use any Words Alive affiliation in connection with the promotion of partisan politics, religious matters or positions on any issue not in conformity with the official position of Words Alive.
- d. **Confidentiality.** Disclose any confidential Words Alive information that is available solely as a result of the employee's or volunteer's affiliation with Words Alive to any person not authorized

to receive such information, or use to the disadvantage of Words Alive any such confidential information, without the express authorization of Words Alive.

- e. **Improper Influence.** Knowingly take any action or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of Words Alive in such a way as to confer any financial benefit on any person, corporation or entity in which the individual has a significant interest or affiliation.
- f. **Conflict of Interest.** Operate or act in a manner that creates a conflict or appears to create a conflict with the interests of Words Alive and any organization in which the individual has a personal, business or financial interest.
- g. **Retaliation:** Retaliate against any employee or volunteer who seeks advice from, raises a concern with or makes a complaint about fraud, waste, abuse, policy violations, discrimination, illegal conduct, unethical conduct, unsafe conduct or any other misconduct by the organization or volunteers.
- h. **Contrary to the Best Interest of Words Alive.** Operate or act in any manner that is contrary to the best interest of Words Alive.

Confidential Information and Intellectual Property

Words Alive has sole entitlement to any intellectual property that is conceived or developed by volunteers and employees during the course of service to Words Alive. All registered volunteers and employees are required to sign a Confidential Information and Intellectual Property Agreement as a condition of volunteer service. Intellectual property includes inventions, discoveries, and original works of authorship as defined by US patent, trademark, and copyright law.

This Confidential Information and Intellectual Property Agreement (“Agreement”) is made as of the date of signature (“Effective Date”), by and between Words Alive and the undersigned (“I,” “me” or “my”).

Reasons for Agreement

I desire to volunteer or to continue to volunteer with Words Alive. I acknowledge that I may, in the course of my service to Words Alive (“Volunteer Service”), have access to or create (alone or with others) confidential and/or proprietary information and intellectual property that is of value to Words Alive. I understand that this makes my position one of trust and confidence. I understand Words Alive needs to limit disclosure and use of confidential and/or proprietary information and intellectual property. I understand that all restrictions are for the purpose of enabling Words Alive to fulfill its humanitarian mission, to maintain donors and participants, to develop and maintain new or unique products and processes, to protect the integrity and future of Words Alive and to protect the employment and volunteer opportunities of Words Alive. THEREFORE, I agree to the following:

1. Definitions.

“Confidential Information” shall include but not be limited to:

- (i) information relating to Words Alive financial, regulatory, personnel or operational matters,
- (ii) information relating to Words Alive participants, beneficiaries, suppliers, donors, employees, volunteers, sponsors or business associates and partners,
- (iii) trade secrets, know-how, inventions, discoveries, techniques, processes, methods, formulae, ideas, technical data and specifications, testing methods, research and development activities, computer programs and designs,
- (iv) contracts, product plans, sales and marketing plans, business plans and
- (v) all information not generally known outside of Words Alive regarding Words Alive and its business, regardless of whether such information is in written, oral, electronic, digital or other form and regardless of whether the information originates from Words Alive or Words Alive agents.

“Intellectual Property” shall include but not be limited to:

- (i) all inventions, discoveries, techniques, processes, methods, formulae, ideas, technical data and specifications, testing methods, research and development activities, computer programs and designs (including improvements and enhancements and regardless of patentability),
- (ii) trade secrets and know-how,
- (iii) all copyrightable material that is conceived, developed, or made by me, alone or with others,
- (iv) trademarks and service marks and
- (v) all other intellectual property.

2. Obligation of Confidentiality. Except as may be required for the performance of my duties during my volunteer service, or unless specifically authorized in writing by Words Alive, I shall not use or disclose, for my or for others’ benefit, either during or after my volunteer service, any Confidential Information.

4. Ownership and Return of Material. All materials, including but not limited to business information, files, research, records, memoranda, books, lists, computer disks, hardware, software, cell phones and other wireless devices, documents, drawings, models, apparatus, sketches, designs and any other embodiment of Confidential Information or Intellectual Property received by me during my volunteer service, and any tangible embodiments of such materials created by me, alone or with others, whether confidential or not, are the property of Words Alive. I shall return to Words Alive all such materials, including copies thereof, in my possession or under my control upon termination of Volunteer Service for whatever reason or upon the request of Words Alive. The return of such materials shall take place within twenty-four (24) hours of notice of termination or upon request of Words Alive, whichever comes first.

Harassment Free Workplace

Words Alive is committed to a work environment free from unlawful harassment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity while working, while on Words Alive premises, while traveling on Words Alive business, or at Words Alive social functions. Words Alive has zero tolerance for unlawful harassment.

Unlawful harassment is defined as harassment based on any characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law including race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, veteran or disability status, which is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to alter the working conditions of a volunteer or employee. Examples of conduct prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to:

1. Verbal or physical conduct that harasses a volunteer on the basis of a category protected by applicable federal, state or local law and that is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to create an intimidating, threatening, offensive or hostile environment.
2. Sexual displays or publications, or other verbal or physical conduct, where a volunteer is told either explicitly or implicitly that he or she must submit to the conduct to remain involved as a volunteer or where his or her reaction to the conduct is used as a basis for a management decision, such as evaluation, advancement, assigned duties, disciplinary action, or any other condition of volunteer involvement or career development. Examples of prohibited verbal or physical conduct include-
 - Unwelcome sexual advances;
 - Stalking, dating violence, date rape or sexual assault;
 - Persisting with romantic advances despite the rejection of the advances;
 - Requests for sexual favors, whether or not accompanied by promises or threats with regard to the employment or volunteer relationship;
 - Sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; comments about an individual's body, sexual prowess, sexual activity or sexual attractiveness; and
 - Leering, whistling, or touching; insulting or obscene comments, sounds or gestures; displays of sexually suggestive objects, cartoons or pictures.
3. Words, actions or visual matter that demean or show hostility toward an individual or group because of any characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law.

Waiver and Release of Liability

In connection with my voluntary involvement in activities undertaken for, and / or with the participation and support of Words Alive, I, the undersigned, hereby agree, for myself, my heirs, assigns, executors, and administrators to release and discharge Words Alive and its nonprofit partner agencies, its officers and directors, members, partners, funders, employees, agents, and volunteers ("Releasees") from all claims, demands, and actions from injuries sustained to my person and / or property as a result of my involvement in such activities, whether or not resulting from negligence. I agree to release and hold Words Alive and its Releasees harmless from any cause or action, claims or suit arising there from. I hereby attest that my attendance and involvement in such activities is voluntary, that I am participating at my own risk and that I have read the foregoing terms and conditions of this release. I agree that I will perform activities that I am comfortable performing and will follow all instructions.

I hereby confirm, represent and warrant that I have never been convicted of, or charged with, a violent crime, child abuse or neglect, child pornography, child abduction, kidnapping, rape or any sexual offense, nor have I been ordered by a court to received psychiatric or psychological treatment in connection therewith.

Dispute Resolution

Words Alive is committed to a work environment where all persons are treated with respect and dignity. Words Alive has therefore adopted the Dispute Resolution Policy to establish a comprehensive method of resolving volunteer concerns that builds trust and produces prompt and fair resolutions. The Dispute Resolution Policy may be used to resolve issues regarding any condition of volunteer involvement or the application, meaning or interpretation of any volunteer resource policy or procedure that affects the work activity of a volunteer.

Volunteers are strongly encouraged to follow the steps listed below to discuss any concerns with their Supervisor.

Step One

The volunteer should promptly report a concern to his or her supervisor, who will investigate the matter and take appropriate action. Any supervisor who receives a concern alleging a violation of the Harassment Free policy will notify the Program Manager immediately. The Program Manager may ask the volunteer to put the concern in writing and provide appropriate documentation.

If the concern the volunteer is having involves his or her supervisor, the volunteer should report his or her concern to the next level of management who will review the situation.

Step Two

If the problem is not resolved in Step One, the volunteer is encouraged to seek assistance from the Executive Director. In an effort to resolve the problem, the Executive Director will consider the facts, conduct an investigation, review the findings and recommendations with the Board President and respond back to the volunteer.

Step Three

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Director, he or she may prepare a written summary of the concerns and request that the matter be reviewed by Words Alive's Board President. In these instances the decision of the Board President is final.

No volunteer will be retaliated against for acting in good faith to report a potential issue or for assisting in the investigation of a possible issue. If at anytime during the process or investigation, Words Alive concludes that a volunteer has filed a claim in bad faith, has refused to cooperate in an investigation of an issue, or has provided false information regarding an issue, disciplinary action up to and including termination may be taken. Words Alive reserves the right to continue or suspend review of an issue if the volunteer raising the issue files a charge or complaint with an external agency or terminates volunteer involvement.

Progressive Discipline

Words Alive has adopted rules and standards to ensure productive, harmonious operations. The best interest of Words Alive lies in ensuring fair treatment of all volunteers and in making certain that discipline is prompt, fair and uniform.

Words Alive endorses a philosophy of progressive discipline in which it attempts to provide volunteers with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve whenever practical or reasonable. Volunteers' performance and conduct is evaluated on an ongoing basis, with feedback provided when necessary. Informal discussions may be used to ensure that volunteers know and follow rules and standards. These discussions should focus on clarifying expectations, providing appropriate training and development and coaching volunteers.

In some cases, formal disciplinary action may be deemed appropriate. Progressive discipline steps may include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, written warnings, suspension and separation from service. Words Alive retains the right to administer discipline in any manner it deems suitable and any of the steps listed above may be skipped. Separation from service may occur at any time without any progressive discipline steps having been taken.

Non-Solicitation/Distribution of Literature

Approaching fellow volunteers or staff in the workplace regarding personal activities, organizations or causes, regardless of how worthwhile, important or benevolent, can create unnecessary apprehension and pressures for fellow colleagues.

In the interest of maintaining a proper business environment and preventing interference with work and inconvenience to others, volunteers may not distribute literature or printed materials of any kind, sell merchandise, solicit financial contributions, or solicit for any other cause in the workplace during working time. The workplace includes Words Alive buildings, parking lots and driveway areas and work areas in which Words Alive work is regularly performed. This policy also prohibits solicitations via Words Alive E-mail or other telephonic communication systems. Furthermore volunteers may not distribute literature or printed material of any kind in work areas at any time.

Solicitation or distribution by non-staff is prohibited on any Words Alive property, including buildings and surrounding parking, patio, and driveway areas. Any requests from outside persons or organizations to sell merchandise, solicit contributions, distribute literature, arrange displays or use Words Alive facilities are to be referred to Staff Development Department.

Drugs and Alcohol

Words Alive maintains a workplace that is free from the effects of drug and alcohol abuse. Words Alive will not tolerate any abuse of drugs or alcohol that imperils the health or well being of its staff or the customers it serves, threatens its operation, or compromises the safety of its products and services.

Words Alive reserves the right to establish drug and alcohol search and screening procedures consistent with applicable laws, as deemed necessary. Implementation of search or screening procedures will be established only with the joint and prior approval of the Executive Director.

While on Words Alive property or while performing Words Alive business off premises, volunteers are prohibited from unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, sale or dispensation of illegal drugs or alcohol. Such conduct is also prohibited during nonworking time to the extent that it violates laws, negatively affects Words Alive activities, or adversely affects the reputation of Words Alive.

Volunteers who use legally prescribed drugs during work, and have any reason to expect that such use may affect their ability to perform work, should report this fact to the Program Manager.

Volunteers who are convicted of any drug- or alcohol-related offense, including pleas of no contest, are obligated to inform the Program Manager within five days of said conviction or plea. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in disciplinary action up to and including separation.

Smoking

Words Alive provides a smoke-free work environment. Smoking is permitted in exterior designated smoking areas only. Smokers have a special obligation to keep outside smoking areas free of litter and to dispose of all smoking materials in proper receptacles.

Representing Words Alive

Prior to any action or statement, which might significantly affect or obligate Words Alive, volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval from the appropriate Words Alive staff member. These actions may include but are not limited to, public statements to the press, collaboration or joint initiatives or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the organization as specifically indicated within their position/job descriptions and only to the extent of such written specifications.

Dress for Success

Appropriately dressed staff adds to the overall credibility of Words Alive and display a sense of confidence to the community. In an effort to project a professional appearance Words Alive chooses to take a conservative stance on staff dress code. It is expected that Words Alive staff will comply with the dress code, and dress appropriately for work in which they are engaged. The appropriate dress for most activities in the office is "Business Casual".

It may be appropriate on some occasions such as special events, community events, classes, warehouse work or cleaning days to wear casual clothing. If the staff member is engaged in this type activity during a part of the workday, they must bring a change of clothes.

The appropriate dress for those events includes:

- jeans (not ripped, dirty, or with holes)
- walking shorts
- sneakers or sandals
- Words Alive hat

If a staff member's attire for the day is deemed inappropriate for the particular responsibilities and requirements of their duties or if the attire presents possible safety hazards, the immediate Supervisor may send the staff member home and direct him/her to return to work in proper attire.

Staff members wearing Words Alive personal identification or official attire bearing Words Alive name or emblem is expressly prohibited under the following circumstances:

- While engaged in any activity that may bring discredit on Words Alive, including public drinking of alcoholic beverages or illegal use of controlled substances.
- While engaged in any political activities.
- During disaster relief assignments, any off-duty activities which are unrelated to Words Alive.

Regardless of the staff's capacity within Words Alive, when they meet the public they ARE Words Alive. The image our staff presents should be one of Words Alive professionalism.

Acknowledgement and Receipt

Receipt and review of policies form

Signature on this receipt acknowledges that you will review Words Alive Volunteer Handbook on Words Alive website (www.WordsAlive.org). Please sign and date the receipt.

Volunteer Handbook Statement of Certification

I, _____, certify that I have been informed to review Words Alive Volunteer Handbook online at www.WordsAlive.org.

I further understand that, by signing this statement as required I am indicating that I will review the Volunteer Handbook and understand its contents, or will discuss questions I have with the Program Manager. I also realize that this statement will become a permanent part of my volunteer personnel file.

Volunteer's Name (Please Print)

Signature

Address

Date

Please return to:
Volunteer Program Manager
Words Alive
5111 Santa Fe Street, Suite 219
San Diego, CA 92109