

Volunteering in the kitchen

Thank you for your interest in volunteering.

Unless you have medical training, the main work for which we can make use of volunteers is in the Nkosinathi project for homeless people. We serve about 300 meals (breakfast and lunch), 5 days a week (on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays - though we usually have enough volunteers for Saturdays). Volunteers are needed from 8am to 1pm – though we quite understand if people can only come for part of this period.

The work involves helping serve tea and bread (around 8.30am), preparing a cooked meal (curry and rice or pap and stew), serving the food (around 12 noon) and clearing up afterwards. But simply spending time chatting with the homeless is also a part of the ministry! The work is supervised by our cook so you will always know what to do and there is security on site in case of any problems (which are rare). Although we ask everyone to be prepared to do anything, we quite understand if, for example, a volunteer would prefer not to handle meat. Don't be afraid to say so.

The homeless, as well as getting breakfast and a cooked lunch, also have access to showers, a laundry service, a free clinic, counselling, empowerment talks and job-related skills. The cost of running the programme is about R10 per person per day (or R3,000 per day) which is funded by generous donations of cash and food from local donors. If you want to donate anything like food or clothing, please do not just bring it but contact the co-ordinator Sr Cathy first and she can discuss if we can make use of the donation (cathy@denishurleycentre.org).

We are open to volunteers just turning up – though if we know that someone is coming in regularly on a certain day that helps us to plan. We also welcome small groups of volunteers (families, community groups, students, office outings) though these need to be scheduled in advance. Because of the work we are doing we do have a lower age limit – though not an upper one: we have volunteers in their 80s! Anyone over 16 years is welcome to volunteer but under 12s are not; for those aged between 12 and 16 it depends very much on the maturity of the young person and would be at the discretion of Sr Cathy.

You can sometimes park in the guarded Cathedral car park at a cost of R20 (which helps Cathedral funds). When that is full, and especially on Sundays, it is better to use the car park below Victoria Street market which is directly opposite our building and is only R12 for a few hours. Let us know if you need directions.

I hope that you will come and join us and feel free to bring a friend or two (it can make it more fun). We already have regular volunteers from the Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish communities and are very keen to be as multi-faith as possible (as part of Hurley's legacy!).