



Love in Action

Children's Home

Dear Volunteer,

I am thrilled that you have chosen to volunteer with Love in Action Children's Home. Volunteers are a vital part of achieving our mission to provide Christ-centered holistic care to abused, abandoned and orphaned children. LIA volunteers have played a key role in a number of activities including acting as tutors and mentors, preparing and serving meals, helping with maintenance projects, performing administrative duties, serving in the bazar and throwing birthday parties! I hope that you find the Love in Action community to be welcoming and your volunteer experience with us rewarding.

The following information in this handbook is meant to provide you with the support that you need in order to partner well with Love in Action in healing and equipping our kids. It includes details about our organization and the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Love in Action's Volunteer Coordinator, Vicky Zamora at contreraszamoraeduwiges@gmail.com. Once again, welcome and thank you!

Sincerely,

Anabel Frutos

Founder

Love in Action Children's Home

LOVE IN ACTION

Mission, Vision and Values

Our mission at Love in Action is to provide Christ-centered, holistic care to abandoned, abused and orphaned children.

Holistic care means that we physically care for our children by bathing, clothing and feeding them as well as providing medical and dental care; mentally we provide vocational and educational programs that intellectually empower them; emotionally we provide on-site psychological support through group and individual therapy; spiritually we encourage our children in the love of Christ through daily prayer, scripture, and fellowship; and socially we engage in numerous activities in a diverse community.

Our vision is to raise up children who will overcome their past to realize their potential, breaking the cycle of violence and positively impacting the nation for generations to come.

We believe that we have an opportunity to not only make a difference for these children here and now, but believe also that equipping these children with the tools to live healthy and successful lives will positively impact their own families and the communities that they will live in...perhaps they may even join us in the fight against injustices that once touched their own lives.

Our values are love, respect, compassion, thankfulness, honesty, courage, forgiveness, generosity, faith and hope...but the greatest of these is love.

These values are not only the guiding principles that govern the organization but are also the principals that we use to guide our children. These values provide a foundation that we can all operate from, and more importantly, a foundation that will be a platform that these children can stand on for the rest of their lives.

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Strategic Plan Summary

The Board, administration, staff and volunteers will pursue the following goals in order to support the direction of Love in Action:

1. Program; We will provide proven, child-focused programs and activities to meet the holistic needs of our children either on-campus or via community institutions and structures to allow access to vital services.
2. Communication; We will expand the messages and methodologies utilized to present information on and opportunities for partnership with LIA resulting in enhanced and increased exposure and support.
3. Resources; A sustainable and broad foundation of financial, commodities, and in-kind support will be in place to allow for the execution of the programs and activities.
4. Institutional Development; A Capital Facilities Master Plan will be created and utilized, in addition to fully developed operational policies and procedures and total community training to address current and future program and activity requirements.
5. Governance; We will be recognized for our superior integrity and ~~stewardship~~ for our vibrant and participatory Board, and our certification with internationally recognized financial accountability group(s), respectively.
6. Family Services; To research, evaluate, collaborate, train and ~~supervise the placement~~ of children within families.

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Who's Who?

Government Leadership

Love in Action is under the authority of the Mexican government who, through various offices, provide regulations, supervision and support. LIA is regularly inspected for soundness in business practices, maintenance of the buildings and grounds, safety and sanitation. In addition, investigations and interviews are conducted with the children and staff to ensure that the well being of the children is being appropriately administered.

Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF): a public agency serving the welfare of the people, responsible for human services in families.

Consejo Estatal de Familia: an extension of DIF which deals directly with children; our children are under the protection and supervision of Consejo Estatal de Familia.

Procuraduria Social del Estado de Jalisco: provide legal advice and assistance to needy persons, investigate the welfare of persons and inspect public and private institutions. Many of the children removed from their homes because of abuse are removed by Procuraduria.

Instito Jaliscience para la Asistencia Social (IJAS): public agency, which aims to promote, coordinate, support and monitor the health services performed by persons and institutions, involved in private social assistance.

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Communication

Love in Action is continually striving to improve communication within the LIA community. In order to broaden our communication methods we utilize our website: www.loveinactioncenter.org; our Facebook page: Love in Action Center.

As a volunteer, your immediate contact person is the LIA Volunteer Coordinator, Vicky Zamora, contreraszamoraeduwiges@gmail.com, you may also contact LIA during business hours at 376-765-7409.

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Hours of Operation

If you have donations or other administrative business our office is open **Monday through Friday from 9am until 5 pm.**

Volunteers are welcome during their scheduled activity only, or if invited to an LIA event. Please help LIA to create a calm, orderly environment by adhering to scheduled volunteer hours.

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Emergency Information

Posted in each home on the refrigerator or next to the door is a list of emergency phone numbers for LIA staff, utility companies, police and medical professionals. Please save these numbers in your phone, especially if you are a volunteer who is cleared to take children off campus.

There is also posted an LIA campus map with emergency exit routes and emergency gathering spaces; please familiarize yourself with this information.

Report all incidences to the appropriate LIA Director which results in harm to LIA children, staff or volunteers; or that results in damage to property; or that results in a call being placed to emergency services or utilities services.

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Campus Guidelines

As a member of the LIA community you have a responsibility to create an environment where everyone, especially the children, feel comfortable and safe.

Smoking, alcoholic beverages, and recreational drugs are prohibited on the LIA campus and or in the presence of the children of LIA if they are in your care while off campus. Many of our children have experienced the abuse of these substances in their past and we would ask that you be cognizant of the fear that may be associated with smelling or seeing these substances and act accordingly by never interacting with the children having recently partaken of any of these substances.

Please do not wear clothes that inappropriately exposes cleavage, midriff or buttocks. Many of our children have experienced sexual abuse and or prostitution and this may be triggering for them.

Due to the very generous nature of visitors and volunteers, we have unintentionally created a culture of entitlement that is damaging to the psyche of the children. Please do not give **anything** to the children. This includes gum, candy, money and toys. If you would like to make a donation of this sort, you may give to the office and LIA will see that the gifts are given appropriately; for parties, as rewards and on special occasions. Remember that the greatest gift that you can give directly to a child is that of human eye contact, appropriate touch and verbal encouragement.

For the protection of both the children and the adults, adults are never to be alone with children in areas where they cannot be seen by others (in bathrooms, rooms without windows, behind buildings, etc.) If you need to assist a very young child in the bathroom please do so with the door open and another adult as witness.

For the well being of the children, never ask them about their past.

If they choose to tell you about it on their own accord, it is acceptable to listen and validate them but please do not tell their story for them. For example do not say: "Your mother probably gave you up because she was young/addicted/crazy/etc." And do not say: "Your mother loved you very much and I am sure she misses you all the time." Simply listen, and if the child asks about something like their mother, say that you do not know, and ask them what they think...then validate their thoughts and feelings.

Children with attachment difficulties or who have been abused often demonstrate inappropriate touch or indiscriminate friendliness. Please greet children that you do not have a relationship with verbally and at eye level and allow them to offer their hands for handshakes if they would like.

Please treat all children equally! Favoritism hurts everyone, perhaps especially the favored person.

Please do not enter any of the homes without permission from the house parents. This is their home; please honor that as you would anyone else's home.

Those that donate to Love in Action do so for the benefit of the children. Because of this, please don't help yourself to the food or beverages in the pantry and/or refrigerators unless invited to partake by a director.

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Attachment Practices for Volunteers

In alignment with our mission and vision, Love in Action is focused on creating a community of people who are able to engage with the children of Love in Action in such a way as to bring about healing in their lives and equip them for their futures.

Love in Action utilizes the works of many professionals in the fields of attachment, trauma, healing and learning in children in order to teach a way of being at LIA that will most benefit our kids. Our primary resource is the work of world-recognized specialists Dr. David Cross and Dr. Karen Purvis from Texas Christian University and their Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) practices.

From TBRI resources we have developed a “tool kit” comprised of key words, ideas and practices that we would like all LIA volunteers to use. Using these tools will create a common and consistent way of speaking and being that the children will recognize and understand, and which will help to build a safe environment that the children will then be able to engage, grow, play and heal in.

Love in Action mandates that all volunteers must participate in training regarding who our children are and how we can best help them. Please go online to www.empoweredtoconnect.org and utilize the many video, audio and written resources available in order to better equip yourself and in preparation for LIA training workshops.

Regardless of what the children are engaging with in the classrooms: reading, sewing, cooking or drawing; every class, every teacher, every volunteer needs to be focused on creating a safe and fun atmosphere while teaching the children principles that will in part create the foundation on which healthy relationships are built.

We are very grateful for your interest in being a part of a community that values and respects the individual journey of each child; a person who is willing to walk patiently and compassionately alongside the child as they discover their own preciousness; and who is willing to be personally committed to doing what is best for the child.

Thank you.

The Love in Action Team