

# **GRACE HOME**

RESIDENT HANDBOOK

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Edition 8

**RESIDENT HANDBOOK**

## WELCOME

**W**elcome to Grace Home. Your Christian friends and family are all very glad to have you here with us. You are special and important to everyone associated with this ministry. We will all be assisting you in achieving God's highest potential for you and helping you make a smooth and successful transition from prison life back to supportive friends and family. Each person involved in this ministry is here because God has called us to be His servants in this work, and because we really care about your happiness and success.

But, to truly change your life, you must be willing and committed. Our Heavenly Father can make this easier as you open your heart and choose to walk with Him every day of your life. Along with providing a home for you, assistance with clothing needs, guidance in finding a job, and training in life skills, we will encourage and disciple you in your spiritual development. This Gospel of Christ is central to our efforts, and we will endeavor in every way to practice and promote the teachings of Jesus as we undertake our responsibilities in your spiritual development. According to the resident covenant that you signed, we understand that you will take advantage of every opportunity to get to know Christ better through home devotions, Bible studies, church involvement, and Christian fellowship.

We have provided house guidelines to make living with a group of diverse women a harmonious experience. The Grace Home Director is available to facilitate Bible studies, group fellowship & activities, and to assist with personal needs. You are encouraged to read this HANDBOOK carefully and refer to it when you have questions. We have provided this information to help you become settled and feel comfortable as soon as possible.

Christian values, confidentiality, and a commitment to a new life are the foundation of the program. The services provided here are for women who desire a Christian home environment and demonstrate their sincerity by cooperating with guidelines and suggestions by the Prison Aftercare Christian Ministries (PACM) Board of Directors and staff for enriching life experiences.

At various places in this document you will see references to the "Grace Home Manager", or simply "Home Manager". This role refers to a member of the PACM staff who resides on the premises at Grace Home along with Residents and works closely with the Grace Home Director. There may be times when this role is not filled for various reasons. So, whenever you see references to "Grace Home Manager" or "Home Manager" in this document, and there is no person fulfilling that role at that time, you may substitute "Grace Home Director" as the appropriate person.

## RESIDENT RIGHTS

Each resident enrolled in the program shall have all the basic rights as defined in the Constitution and Law of the United States and North Carolina.

In addition, Grace Home staff are expected to comply with the Grace Home Resident Privacy Policy to honor the privacy of information shared by residents.

If a resident believes that her basic rights are being violated, she should request an appointment to speak with the Grace Home Director or submit a written statement to a PACM Board member.

## GUIDELINES

The following sections contain a series of important guidelines to be observed during a resident's term at Grace Home.

### RESPECT

- Grace Home is your home, but it is also home for others. Residents are expected to treat other residents, the Grace Home Manager, and the Grace Home Director with respect and dignity in accordance with the commandments of our shared Christian faith.
- Grace Home is a ministry. Its operation is dependent upon volunteers and other supporters. Residents are expected to show respect for volunteers and for any visitors who may be invited into the home.
- As a resident of Grace Home, your actions reflect on the ministry of Grace Home. Whether at home or in public, you are expected to uphold the principles of the Christian lifestyle in your actions and your interactions with others.
- While you are at Grace Home, communication with the Grace Home Director and Grace Home Manager is essential. You will be expected to provide contact information for regular communication and to be responsive when program information is shared or requested. As a matter of respect, it should never be necessary for requests to be repeated in order to obtain responses.

## BOUNDARIES

- Mentors are the only volunteers whose relationship is dedicated to an individual resident. All other volunteers or staff are required to ensure that their activities with residents involve events or services that are openly offered to all residents equally. Do not make frequent requests of individual volunteers or staff in ways that would create significant imbalance in the time/attention given to your needs.
- Residents are expected to meet regularly with their mentors. Communication by telephone is permitted but not preferred. This should occur no less than once per week, but contact should not occur so frequently as to require an inordinate amount of time for the mentor.
  - Residents should have a pre-arranged time for regular meetings.
  - Residents should contact their mentor if they need spiritual or practical counsel due to an unusual event or circumstance.
  - Residents should not contact their mentor frequently just for the purpose of giving non-essential updates.
  - Residents should not contact their mentor for routine transportation assistance (e.g. work, church, regular appointments, etc.). An exception is permitted when the resident is attending the same church or Bible Study as the mentor.

## GIFTS

The Grace Home residence program includes budget counseling to assist residents in making healthy financial choices that will teach them how to live without financial dependence upon others. Gifts of monetary or material assistance may interfere with the process of facing important lifestyle choices. The following guidelines exist to support the budget and financial counseling objectives of the residence program.

- Volunteers and staff are not permitted to give money to residents. Do not make requests for monetary gifts or loans.
- Volunteers and staff are not permitted to give non-monetary gifts with a small number of exceptions of which they are advised. Do not ask them to purchase items for you.
- If residents have an emergency need for items for which they do not have funds, they should contact the Grace Home Manager or the Grace Home Director.

# GETTING STARTED

The first weeks of your transition are crucial. The sudden change of environment and routine can be confusing; and for some, the uncertainty of what will happen next can bring feelings of anxiety. You may also find that there are many people who want to help you; but experience has shown that being pulled in many directions by too many sources of assistance or social interaction in the early days of transition can be overwhelming. More important, this can be a significant distraction from your focus on creating a firm foothold for successful transition.

In order to ensure that you get off on the right foot, residents of Grace Home undergo a transitional period during the first several weeks of residency.

## FIRST WEEK OF RESIDENCY

In the first week, focus is on the most basic and most urgent transitional needs. During this time, you will be assisted by Grace Home staff with the following things:

- Initial clothing and hygiene needs
- Securing documents for personal identification
- Initial overall needs assessment
- Establishing sources for medical care needs
- Assignment of your personal mentor and initial meeting
- Prepare for StepUp Employment Week
- Establish connection with probation/parole officer if required

You will be paired with a mentor as soon as possible. Your mentor, as well as Grace Home staff will help you with the following:

- Connection with Churches for Sunday worship
- Connection with weekly Bible Study options
- Connection with required counseling programs (e.g. AA/NA/CR)

During this period, contact is restricted to family, Grace Home staff, and your mentor. In order to keep focus on establishing a strong foundation, relationships with people outside of this group will be limited to those associated with required outside activities.

## FIRST MONTH OF RESIDENCY

During the first month, you will be expected to focus on developing a strong foundation for your residence at Grace Home and to establish a consistent routine for a number of important things:

- Perform all required home duties
- Meet regularly with your mentor (at least weekly)
- Choose a church and consistently attend weekly services
- Attend a weekly Bible study
- Establish regular attendance of any required treatment and/or counseling programs
- Complete StepUp Employment Week and secure employment
- Sign up for StepUp Life Skills program (*requires a minimum of 30 hours/week employment*)

Contact and relationship limitations discussed under *First Week of Residency* remain intact until the items above are in place and a consistent routine is established.

### **ONE MONTH MILESTONE REVIEW**

At the end of your first month, Grace Home staff will meet with you to review your progress and your commitment to goals of the program.

### **SECOND MONTH OF RESIDENCY**

In the second month of residency, contact limitations are diminished. However, during this period, it is important that the degree of distraction not immediately shift to a high level. So it is important that individuals with whom you meet and spend a significant amount of time, other than people associated with required programs or activities, be supportive of your goals. If Grace Home staff members feel that you are overly distracted, they may ask for information about your contacts, and they may also ask to meet with them to brief them on Grace Home program and policies and to ensure their positive support..

### **SECOND MONTH MILESTONE REVIEW**

At the end of your second month, Grace Home staff will meet with you to review your progress and your record of commitment to the program. If you are on track and in good standing, visitor and out-of-town-visit privileges as described elsewhere in this handbook will be fully granted. Note however that Grace Home staff may require that you limit contact with individuals at any time if there is concern that the contact is significantly detracting from focus on program goals or otherwise having adverse effects on a resident's behavior.

# HOME LIFE

## MEALS

Residents will be provided with food for preparation of basic nutritious meals. Residents must pay for snacks and extras including food for guests. Residents must work together to plan menus, schedule shared responsibility for meal preparation and clean up, and do grocery shopping. Residents must get approval from the Grace Home Manager for mealtime guests and be responsible for cost, preparation of food, and clean-up. Foods are to be eaten in the dining room and kitchen. Residents are encouraged to eat together.

## ROOMS

Residents are to share bedrooms, closets, dressers, and an assigned bathroom. Beds are to be made and rooms left neat prior to going to work. All clothing is to be stored in dressers, closets, and hampers. Ironing boards are to be stored immediately after use. Rooms are subject to inspection by the Grace Home Manager and/or the Grace Home Director.

## DRESS CODE

Residents are expected to be neat and clean at all times. The following standards will apply when residents are in public. This includes all shared, common areas within the residence during daylight hours or during any times when visitors are expected.

- Skirts or dresses should be of a length that is decent and modest.
- Shorts should be no shorter than the fingertips when arms are hanging naturally at the side.
- Tops should not include low-cut necklines, exposed cleavage, exposed midriffs, or see-through materials.
- Clothing should adequately cover undergarments.
- Clothing should not display any images or language advocating or suggesting, inappropriate things such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs, sex, violence, or foul language.
- If residents feel that compliance with these standards is in any way uncertain or unclear, the Grace Home Director's judgment will be the final word.



## **RESIDENCE HOUSEKEEPING**

Residents are expected to share in household chores such as sweeping/vacuuming, dusting, dishwashing, garbage removal, etc.

Residents are expected to share in grounds maintenance activities such as mowing, raking, weeding, debris removal, etc.

## **CLOTHING AND PERSONAL ITEMS**

Quantity of items shall be limited to the space available for storage within the resident's assigned bedroom. This space must be equally shared between roommates. Residents will dress modestly and appropriately at all times.

## **CAR OWNERSHIP**

Car ownership by residents must be pre-approved by the Grace Home Director.

## **READING MATERIAL, MUSIC, TV, AND OTHER ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA**

All reading materials, music, TV shows, movies, social networking websites, or other forms of media brought into the home must be appropriate for a Christian environment. Consideration must also be given to other residents regarding what to listen to or watch.

There is internet, but no cable or satellite service.

Work schedules vary; so out of respect for other residents, bedroom lights should be out and the house should be quiet between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. to allow working residents to get sufficient rest.

## **SMOKING**

Smoking is discouraged, but may be permitted as an individual privilege so long as restrictions are observed.

- Smoking is never permitted inside of the home. This includes smoking out of an open window or door.
- Ashes, butts, and any other smoking-related debris must be placed in appropriate containers and not on porches, patio area, sidewalks, yard, or street. It is the responsibility of smokers to empty smoking-related containers regularly. Containers must be supplied by smokers.

If a smoker does not observe the restrictions, their smoking privilege may be further restricted or revoked entirely. If the smoker or smokers responsible for abuse of the privilege cannot be determined, it may be necessary to apply further restriction to all smokers.

## **COMPUTER ACCESS**

Residents will be provided with access to a computer for employment and educational purposes. Computers may be used for other purposes so long as usage is not inconsistent with Christian lifestyle. Computer access privileges will be suspended if a resident is found using a computer in an inappropriate manner.

The Grace Home computer resource may include laptop computers. When available, these may be loaned to residents for personal use. Due to high potential for theft, residents are not permitted to take laptop computers off of Grace Home premises without permission of the Grace Home Director.

## **CURFEW**

Residents are expected to be in the home by curfew unless attending approved activities. Residents are allowed an 11:00 p.m. curfew on Friday and Saturday night.

A 10 o'clock curfew is to be observed Sunday through Thursday with allowances for church activities and approved outings. Residents must, of course, comply with any curfew schedule established by their parole officer when such a schedule entails earlier curfew times than Grace Home policy.

After curfew, residents are to remain inside the home with doors locked until sunrise the next morning. Exceptions are allowed for medical emergencies or special situations that have been pre-approved by the Grace Home Director.

Since smoking is not permitted inside the home, smokers are permitted to use the front porch after curfew for the purpose of smoking. After curfew, each instance of smoking must be no more than ten minutes in duration and no more frequent than once per hour. Although smokers are permitted this after-curfew exception, it should be very clear that after curfew they are not permitted to leave the front porch.

## **MEETINGS**

Residents are required to attend all pre-announced house meetings.

## **RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES**

Residents are required to participate in a weekly Bible study. Weekly church attendance is required of all residents.

It is understood that there may be occasions when attendance is inappropriate, such as during illness, or difficult, such as need to care for a family member. Such cases are assumed to be infrequent.

Employment is another situation that could conflict with this requirement as well as requirements for StepUp participation or required treatment programs. Note that there are church attendance opportunities at non-traditional times at several churches in the area. And in many cases, employers will respect an employee's request for avoiding conflict with faith-related or other required activities. If it is helpful, a member of Grace Home staff or a PACM Board Member will meet with an employer to brief them on requirements of the program. Or, an official statement can be provided on PACM letterhead indicating enrollment in the program with required attendance times.

If a resident's employer is unwilling to cooperate, the resident will have to make the choice to remain with the employer and voluntarily leave the Grace Home program, or to find different employment that will be compatible with required activities.

If the resident chooses to seek different employment for this reason it is expected that the resident will remain with the current employer until new employment is secured. And, if so, limited church or Bible study attendance will be acknowledged during the employment transition. Up to one month will be permitted to find new employment. But once again, the resident should not quit their current employment until another job is secured.

## **TREATMENT PROGRAMS**

All residents will be required to complete their recommended treatment program for substance abuse, and mental and physical health issues.

## **OUT-OF-TOWN VISITS**

Residents are allowed one out-of-town visit per month after the first month of residency with joint approval from the Grace Home Director and the PACM Treasurer. The Grace Home Director will review overall compliance with program goals. Because visits entail expenses, the Treasurer will review status of budget including program fee payment. Residents must be in good standing with respect to program requirements, and they must have budgetary means to travel without impacting ability to meet financial obligations. Exceptions may be made in emergency situations. Before leaving town, residents must leave names and phone numbers with the Grace Home Director where they can be reached in case of an emergency.

Exceptions may be made in the first month for the purpose of reuniting with family.

## **VISITORS**

It is the responsibility of the resident to notify family members of the resident's location. If she prefers that her location not be made available, she is to let the Grace Home Director know. Residents are responsible for providing other accommodations for visiting family members. Male guests, including family members, are only permitted inside of the home when a PACM staff member is present. No guests may stay overnight unless approved in advance by the Grace Home Director.

All visitors entering the residence must be approved by the Grace Home Director and are required to abide by the house rules and guidelines defined in this document while in the home and in the company of the resident. No invited guests are permitted on weeknights after 11:00 pm without permission of the Grace Home Director. Visitors must leave the home when the resident leaves.

Visitors who remain outside of the residence are also expected to abide by the principles and guidelines defined in this Handbook

See the section on "Dating Relationships" for further information regarding male visitors.

## **UTILITIES**

Residents are encouraged to make every effort to conserve in the use of utilities. Increases in use of utilities may necessitate corresponding increases in program fees.

**HEAT & AIR CONDITIONING:** Adjustments to heating and air conditioning are to be made with consensus among residents and/or by consent of the Grace Home Manager. Fans may be used as needed. Windows may be opened only when heat or air conditioning is not being used.

**LAUNDRY:** Each resident will do her own laundry. Washers should be full and detergent used economically. Residents must work out a schedule for using the equipment that is mutually agreeable. Since the laundry equipment is shared, residents must remove loads from the machines promptly in order to free them for use by other residents.

**TELEPHONE:** A house telephone is available for use by all residents. In consideration of other residents, telephone calls are limited to 30 minutes. No incoming calls are permitted before 7 a.m. or after 11 pm .

# BUDGET & FINANCE

## MONEY MANAGEMENT

Inability to manage payment of financial obligations can lead to a wide range of problems in a person's life. One of the goals for the residents at Grace Home is that each woman becomes self-supporting during their Grace Home residence term of approximately one year after prison. To help achieve this goal, each resident is required to meet with a budgeting advisor and set up a personal budget and bank account. The budget advisor may request a review of the resident's spending activity at any time in order to provide counsel on financial decision-making.

Residents will also receive further training on budgeting and goal-setting as part of their required participation in the StepUp Life Skills education program.

## EMPLOYMENT

The transition program at Grace Home is for women who are returning to society and will be personally responsible for their own financial support. The program does not accept women who receive their primary financial support from another source. This means that all residents must be employable when they arrive and throughout their time in the program. If a resident's employability status changes, they must be transitioned out of the program.

Residents are to be employed full-time, preferably between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Exceptions are to be approved by the Grace Home Director. Residents are expected to secure employment within one month of arrival at Grace Home. Any resident unable to secure employment within this time will be referred to the PACM Treasurer to determine if extenuating circumstances warrant any further extension. If no extension is granted, the resident will be dismissed from the program.

## PROGRAM FEE

Each resident pays a program fee to help cover program costs and related expenses. Program fee rate and other details are defined in the Grace Home Program Participation Fee Policy. Delinquent accounts are reported immediately to the PACM Treasurer.

Time allowances may be made for the first payment for those who enter the home unemployed, or arrive with short-term circumstances such as illness.

As stated earlier, ability to maintain employment and effectively manage financial obligations is a key objective. Consequently, residents who are consistently delinquent in submitting program fee payments and/or are not willing to accept financial

counseling from an advisor will be reviewed to determine if extenuating circumstances warrant time extension or benevolence. If the review determines that the resident is not sufficiently committed to program goals, the resident will be dismissed from the program.

A security accrual may be accumulated from the resident at a rate of \$20 per week until an amount equal to one month's program fee has been collected. The accrued amount, or some portion thereof, will be returned at the discretion of the staff based upon status of outstanding program fee payment as well as any damages and clean-up when the resident leaves the home.

It is the responsibility of each resident to deliver their program fee payment on or before the due date to either the Grace Home Director or the PACM Treasurer. Payment may also be placed in the locked drop-box installed inside of Grace Home. It is not the Grace Home Director's responsibility to ensure that your payment is made on time.

Program fee payments may be made by money order, or cash (in order of preference). Personal checks are not accepted. Direct transfer services such as CashApp, Venmo, or Zelle may also be used.

## **DATING RELATIONSHIPS**

Dating relationships are not permitted while residing at Grace Home. Grace Home is designed as a transition time for residents to establish themselves in a job, church, and begin family reconciliation. Residents engaging in dating relationships will be required to seek other accommodations.

A *dating relationship* is defined as a relationship with an individual, other than persons with whom you are expected to have frequent contact (e.g. Grace Home staff, your mentor, family members, etc.), where the following characteristics exist:

- Contact, either direct (face-to-face) or indirect (e.g. phone, email, text, etc.) occurs several times per week and includes dialog of a very personal or romantic nature.
- Direct contact with the individual often occurs when no other friends or acquaintances are present.
- The individual frequently occupies your thoughts between the times when you are in direct or indirect contact.

The reason that dating relationships are not permitted for Grace Home residents is not because PACM is opposed to such relationships in general. It is because such

relationships do indeed occupy a significant portion of your energy and consciousness, and they can create a very strong emotional pull that can distract from or distort focus on the goals of the Grace Home program. It is most important during your period of transition at Grace Home that you focus on making yourself stronger spiritually, emotionally, and financially without having to endure the emotional rollercoaster that can come with these kinds of relationships. It is our hope that once you have completed the transition program, you will have developed a stronger foundation in many dimensions that will make you better prepared to engage in a healthy relationship. For this reason, we ask that you put this aside for the short time that you are at Grace Home and give your entire focus to making yourself stronger.

Frequent visits by the same male visitor, other than family members, will be taken as an indication of a dating relationship. Therefore, as an additional provision of the visitor policy, non-family male visitors are restricted to no more than two visits in a week with no single visit being more than twenty minutes in duration. In this context, a visit includes presence anywhere on the Grace Home property or in the immediate vicinity (e.g. on the sidewalk or by the street). It is the responsibility of each resident to ensure that any potential male visitors observe this policy.

## **SECURITY**

Residents are responsible for safeguarding their money and personal valuables. PACM will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items. Front doors are to be locked at all times. Anyone found leaving or entering after curfew will be subject to disciplinary review and possible immediate dismissal from home. Exceptions will be made for medical emergencies or activity pre-approved by the Grace Home Director.

Doors are to remain locked at all times unless you are remaining outside, but in the immediate area.

You will be provided with a key when you first arrive at Grace Home. Never give or loan your key to anyone. Making duplicates of your key is forbidden. If you lose your key, please notify the Grace Home Director to obtain a replacement. There will be a charge for replacing lost keys.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

Each resident may receive up to THREE (3) written disciplinary warnings for MINOR INFRACTIONS. A Board Member and/or the Grace Home Director will talk with the resident about the problem and document these warnings. In each case, the Grace Home Director will weigh overall behavioral history and level of commitment to program goals and requirements, to determine whether continuation in the program is merited. For up to two disciplinary warnings, this is a discretionary judgment made by the Grace Home Director. If, in the Grace Home Director's judgment, continuation is not merited, the Grace Home Director may refer the matter to the PACM Board of Directors with a recommendation to terminate enrollment.

After the third warning, a Board Member and/or the Grace Home Director will meet with the resident and/or refer the matter to The PACM Board of Directors for a decision on actions to be taken. In most cases this will result in dismissal.

**There is a NO TOLERANCE policy for illegal drugs and alcoholic beverages.**

All residents will be subject to random drug and alcohol screening by the Grace Home Director or any PACM Board Member. Test sample collection will be monitored by a female member of staff and results will be witnessed by the staff member collecting the sample and another member of staff or a PACM Board Member. Drug screening will be performed on the premises using a self-contained urine sample kit. Direct results of these tests will be used as determination of policy violation; no further laboratory testing will be pursued. Failure to cooperate with a request for drug screening will be grounds for dismissal from the program.

### **MAJOR INFRACTIONS:**

The following behaviors are considered major. Violation will result in immediate dismissal at the discretion of the Grace Home Director or any PACM Board Member. Given the nature of these violations, your residence privilege may be revoked immediately out of concern for the safety and wellbeing of other residents or staff.

1. Purchase, use, or possession of any of the following:
  - a. Illegal drugs
  - b. Alcoholic beverages
  - c. Cannabis or any derivative thereof which produces a positive indication of THC during testing
  - d. Prescription drugs without an active prescription
2. Refusal to cooperate with request for drug screen or alcohol test



3. Possession of a firearm.
4. Threats or acts of violence.
5. Sexual activity or lewd behavior
6. Stealing items from other residents or from Grace Home
7. Criminal activity of any type

### **MINOR INFRACTIONS:**

Residents are expected to abide by the following list of behavioral expectations and restrictions. Each violation will result in one warning and possible dismissal, considering the seriousness of the violation.

1. Residents are expected to abide by all requirements defined in this handbook.
2. Respect for all residents, staff, and guests is required.
  - a. Bad attitude and unwillingness to cooperate will not be tolerated.
  - b. Non-responsiveness to program-related communications from staff members will not be tolerated.
  - c. No disturbance of the peace within the residence or in the neighborhood.
  - d. No profanity or vulgar language at any time.
3. Curfew must be observed with exceptions only as defined in the “Curfew” section of this document.
4. Failure to pay program fees on time.
5. Failure to secure and continuously maintain employment or loss of employment due to poor performance or unreliability.
6. Failure to maintain enrollment in required StepUp programs and activities
7. Failure to attend any required substance abuse or mental-health related treatment sessions or programs as prescribed or recommended by healthcare professionals.
8. Failure to attend church and Bible study weekly with limited exceptions as noted elsewhere in this document.

## RESIDENT HANDBOOK

9. No visitors in the home or on the premises who violate the requirements defined in this handbook.
10. No smoking is permitted inside of the home by residents or guests.
11. All assigned home/yard duties are to be performed without reminders or complaints.
12. Rooms are to be kept neat, orderly, and uncluttered. Space must be shared equally among roommates.

### Note

Dismissed residents will be referred to the Helen Wright Center or Raleigh Rescue Mission with recommendations for appropriate treatment