Kitchen Guidelines

Ronald McDonald House of Dallas is keeping families together, inspiring strength, and giving love and support to families whose children are receiving essential medical care. To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all families and volunteers, our kitchen is recognized as a commercial kitchen in the City of Dallas and therefore must follow all health and safety regulations that any other restaurant does.

Participation Requirements:

- **Group Size:** Each cooking group may consist of up to 12 volunteers.
- **Age Requirement:** Volunteers must be at least 15 years old. For groups that include minors, at least one adult (18+) volunteer must be present for every four minors.
- **Health and Safety:**
  - Volunteers must be free from illness and symptoms such as cold, flu, fever, or stomach virus. If you are feeling unwell, please refrain from volunteering.
  - Upon arrival, all volunteers are required to check in by presenting a valid driver's license and completing a health questionnaire.
  - Appropriate attire includes wearing gloves, closed-toe shoes, and having long hair tied up. Volunteers are expected to frequently wash their hands, change gloves regularly, and avoid touching their face, hair, or phone while participating.

Volunteer Expectations:

- **Respectful Environment:** RMHD is committed to providing a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive environment for everyone, including our families, staff, and volunteers. We expect all volunteers to demonstrate kindness, respect, and patience while on-site. Volunteers should be mindful of cultural and religious diversity and refrain from any behavior that could be disruptive or exclusionary.
  - **Please avoid any personal religious expression or actions that could make others feel uncomfortable or unwelcome.**
  - **We ask that you refrain from using crude, vulgar, or offensive language while volunteering.**
- **Photography:** You are welcome to take photos of your group during the cooking process. However, after taking photos or using your phone, be sure to thoroughly wash your hands. Please remember that taking photos or videos of RMHD families is strictly prohibited to ensure their privacy.
- **Personal Information and Solicitation:** Volunteers are prohibited from exchanging personal information or offering services to RMHD families. We ask that all volunteers respect the privacy of families and avoid engaging in any form of solicitation.
- **Smoke-Free Environment:** RMHD operates a smoke-free campus. Smoking is strictly prohibited anywhere on the property.

Kitchen Rules and Food Safety:

- **Cooking On-Site:** Volunteers will receive clear instructions and guidance from RMHD's Culinary Team to ensure the safe preparation, cooking, and assembly of food in the kitchen.
- **Hygiene and Safety Practices:** Volunteers must follow strict food safety guidelines, including frequent handwashing, preventing cross-contamination of raw foods, and wearing gloves. A Culinary Team member will be available to ensure food is stored and handled at the proper temperatures at all times.
    - **Handwashing:** It is required that all volunteers wash their hands before preparing food. The designated hand-washing sink is located at the back of the kitchen, next to the ice machine.
    - **Gloves:** Volunteers must wear gloves while preparing food. However, gloves must be removed when cleaning to ensure the kitchen remains sanitary.
    - **Hair:** If your hair is longer than shoulder length, please make sure to tie it back to prevent any hair from coming into contact with the food.
    - **Footwear:** Closed-toe shoes are mandatory in the kitchen for health and safety reasons. Sandals and open-toed shoes are not allowed.
    - **Jewelry:** For hygiene and safety, volunteers may only wear plain bands (metal or rubber) while working in the kitchen. Rings with stones can damage gloves and risk contamination of food.
    - **Aprons:** All volunteers must wear an apron while cooking. RMHD provides aprons, which can be found in the closet located at the back of the kitchen.
- **On-Site Dining:** The House dining room is open for families, but meal attendance can be unpredictable due to varying schedules related to patient treatment. Therefore, the number of people being served at any meal can fluctuate from day to day. Any food that is left over after serving will be individually packaged and placed in our Family Kitchen for guests to enjoy at a later time.
- **Clean-Up:** Volunteers are required to clean the kitchen thoroughly after the meal preparation. Cleaning instructions will be provided by RMHD staff, and volunteers must stay until the kitchen is completely cleaned to ensure a safe and tidy environment.
- **Knives:** Knives should always be washed by hand. Please do not place knives in the dishwasher or the 3-compartment sink, as this can cause damage or contamination.