



WELCOME TO THE SPARK CENTRAL VOLUNTEER TEAM!

The Spark Central staff strives to facilitate an enriching experience for our volunteers. We value the time and energy you contribute to making Spark Central a welcoming, safe space for creative exploration!

As a Spark Central volunteer, you are a key part of what it takes to achieve our mission: **To ignite the creativity, innovation, an imagination necessary for people to forge the path to their best future.**

Thank you for sharing your time, skills, and energy with your community in this way.

At orientation, you completed a Volunteer Registration form. By signing that form, you acknowledge our **Pledge and Media Release**, and authorize us to conduct a **background check**. This handbook has been developed to help acquaint you with your volunteer role, so please read it carefully and keep it for your reference.

SHARING OUR MISSION

You are an ambassador for Spark Central, so please represent us well. The best way to explain our mission to patrons is:

*“Spark Central is a nonprofit that breaks barriers to creativity by offering **transformative programs, access to technology, and a welcoming creative community**—all free thanks to community support from people like you.”*

Make sure patrons know our membership, youth programs, and community programs are all **free of cost**.

During regular open hours, they can access creative resources like:

- Technology, including high-speed internet, computers, tablets, robotics, and more
- Our collection of books and DVDs
- Educational toys for creative play
- A friendly and supportive atmosphere where learning can blossom

OUR SPACE

Spark Central is a public space and patrons can be in the station without becoming members. Anyone can use the space during open hours to work quietly, read, play, or chat. People must become members to borrow an item, use our computers, creative kits, or leave youth age 8+ unattended. We ask volunteers to persuade as many patrons as possible to become members since membership data helps us apply for grant funding.

- **Front Desk:** The hub of Spark Central's **Station**, where patrons can sign up for membership, check out items, and get information.
- **Maker Station:** A community-operated workspace for projects and experimentation.
- **Engine Room:** A private office to allow our staff to focus without distraction. When the door is closed, please respect the staff's time by sending non-emergency questions in an email or leaving them a sticky note.
- **Children's Area:** A space for infants, toddlers, young people, and their parents. This doubles as the **Performance Stage** during performance events.
- **Tech Wall:** Desktop computers, data ports, and study spaces.
- **Literature Station:** Books and DVDs and comfy chairs in which to read.

PROGRAMS

Youth programs for grades K-12 have a distinct aesthetic: playful, hands-on, and community-oriented. 100% free, our youth programs focus on playful themes that engage youth with literacy, the arts, technology, and the community. Through meaningful play, students grow in their interests, imaginations, and ability to express themselves.

Community Events such as family programs and Creative Circle events are open to the public with no registration required. Focused on creativity, innovation, and imagination, each community program encourages us to inspire one another, spread ideas, and celebrate the talent among us.

EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS

We depend on you! If your schedule changes or you cannot make it to your scheduled shift or program, please let a staff member know right away. It deeply affects our programs, patrons, and staff team when a volunteer doesn't show. After two no-shows, you will be removed from our volunteer list.

STATION SHIFTS, HUMAN LIBRARY, & DROP-IN PROGRAMS:

Wilson Faust wilson@spark-central.org

COMMUNITY EVENTS & PUBLIC YOUTH PROGRAMS:

Leah Dawdy leah@spark-central.org

LEVEL UP:

Deseure DeBerry deseure@spark-central.org

Dress Like You Work Here

The dress code for Spark Central is casual. The way staff and volunteers dress reflects the expertise and professionalism of Spark Central and the services we provide. Please do not wear items with generally offensive statements, slogans, or inappropriate language or images.

Attitude & Customer Service

Please treat our station and our patrons like they are guests in your home. Smile, greet everyone who walks in with a welcoming and respectful attitude, and be eager to help with what they need. Stay visible and make yourself available to help.

Confidentiality & Privacy

As a Spark Central volunteer, you may have access to sensitive and private information. Please protect this information and do not share this information with others. Names, records, files, and personnel materials are confidential. Do not reference this confidential information unless specifically authorized by Spark Central staff.

Resignation

Please inform your designated staff if you leave your volunteer position. We appreciate your feedback at all times and ask that upon leaving, you give us your feedback on how we can improve the experience for future volunteers.

Volunteering as a Minor

If you are under the age of 18 years old, we will need signed permission from your parent/guardian. If you are under the age of 15, we will need a parent/guardian to volunteer alongside you. Youth 15 years old and older can volunteer on their own, but volunteer opportunities may be more limited than for adults.

WAYS TO VOLUNTEER

STATION VOLUNTEERS

Library Volunteer (*Library Training provided*)

Library volunteers commit to working for 2 to 3 hours a week in Spark Central's Creative Station. They welcome patrons, answer our Help Desk telephone, describe what Spark Central is to adults, offer free membership to new guests, and learn our library software so that they can check in and out books, technology, and creative kits. Library volunteers may also assist with maintaining technology or cataloguing and supporting staff with inventory, data entry, and cleaning.

Human Library

Everyone has a passion—something that fires up their creativity, innovation, and imagination. The volunteers in Spark Central's Human Library make themselves available to share these passions with others and expand our creative community! If you need supplies, we'll purchase them (within our budgetary constraints); supplies for all Human Library volunteers will be purchased once per month. To be part of the Human Library, you should be:

- excited about bringing your skills or passions to Spark Central's creative community
- available consistently for 2 or more hours weekly or bimonthly (e.g., every Tuesday from 2 to 4, or on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 2:30 to 4:30)
- comfortable having your passion and a photo shared on Spark Central's website and Facebook pages

Be accountable and dependable. Know what shifts you have volunteered for and be on time. Let our Station Master (info@spark-central.org) know as soon as possible if you can't fill your shift so they can find a sub.

PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Program volunteers get to dive right into the fun by helping set up and run our many dynamic programs. Youth programs and community events are the two program types that require program volunteers. If you're interested in becoming a program volunteer, contact our Program & Volunteer Manager at volunteers@spark-central.org about the types of programs you're excited about.

Youth Program Volunteers

Youth Programs range from camps during school breaks (winter, spring, and summer) to Girls Rock Lab or any structured youth-focused program. Volunteers are expected to arrive 30 minutes early and plan to stay 15

minutes afterward to debrief and help clean up. Please let programs@spark-central.org know as soon as possible if your plans change so we can find a sub.

- Youth Programs can range from 1 to 4 days depending on the program. Youth programs are (usually) two hours that involve imagination or creativity. Each youth walks away with something they created, even digitally.
- Volunteers can guide and lead activities depending on experience and are known as Lead Volunteers as they take on a teaching role. Volunteers generally assist with keeping youth engaged and on-task, provide encouragement to students, and support while they work on their creative projects.
- Community events are usually weekday evenings or Saturday mornings/afternoons. They target various age groups, but usually youth and families. Each event requires 2-4 volunteers to set up chairs or activities, run activities, pour drinks (adult events), answer questions, act as hosts and ambassadors of Spark Central, clean up afterward, vacuum, and put chairs away.

Our teaching approach:

- Look for unengaged students and engage them.
- Teach by asking questions.
- Be flexible.
- Discipline with unruly kids is **NOT** your problem. If you cannot redirect them, get a staff member.

Level Up

Level Up programs at neighborhood schools publish youth voices via books, publications, graphic art, music, code, and more. Level Up mentors commit to 1-4 days a week for 2.5 hours for 10 or more weeks during the school year. Occasional absences due to illness, planned vacations, etc. are OK! Level Up mentors:

- Work with a consistent group of 2-3 elementary school students in grades 3-5. You'll hang out and support students as they work on projects like writing a newspaper article or creating a legend. We welcome our Mentors to add their passions and wisdom to the program.
- Volunteers are expected at either cohort from **2:45-5:15** and can choose to volunteer between **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays or Fridays** each week. Mentors who can volunteer Tuesdays and Wednesdays or Thursdays and Fridays will get to work with the same kids two days a week!

Fundraising Events *(training depends on event)*

Fundraising events are special programs that are aimed at making sure we can continue to offer our regular programming free/low cost to patrons. They are usually invite-only. We always need help with set up, attendee greetings support, serving alcohol, food prep, and clean up. Plus you get to meet awesome people from the community and learn more about what makes Spark Central so unique.

- Each event requires 2-4 volunteers to set up chairs or activities, run activities, pour drinks (adult events), answer questions, act as hosts and ambassadors of Spark Central, clean up afterward, vacuum, and put chairs away.

OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Help us with media projects, office work, IT support, outreach tabling, hosting special events, or other jobs that make our work possible. Whatever your talents, whatever your time, we'll appreciate you and your generosity. Training depends on projects.

PARTICIPATE IN SPARK CENTRAL'S CREATIVE COMMUNITY:

- Get to know the other volunteers
- Come to our Creative Circle events
- Share knowledge – teach and be taught
- Invite others to join you at Spark, as guests or volunteers, and invite your friends to follow us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram
- Start conversations with and get to know our visitors. Learn the names of regulars and ask how they are doing when they come in. Engage any rowdy kids in games or puzzles

WORKING WITH KIDS

As you may be interacting with children and teens (minors), it's critical you understand how to keep them safe and to protect yourself as well.

- **Do not be alone with a minor.** There's no reason for this, ever.
- Do not buy gifts or food for minors. Spark Central provides healthy snacks for kids!
- If a child brings food, make sure they are the only ones eating it due to food allergies. Peanuts are not a good idea! If providing a Spark Central snack to kids during station hours, ask if they have allergies before letting them choose from the snack bin.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to transport young students to and from Spark Central. Never offer children or teens rides. Never escort them home.
- We want our volunteers to build supportive, mentoring relationships with children and teens. That said, there is a line between being friendly and being a friend. Hanging out with minors outside of Spark Central is a BIG no-no unless you know the family personally and a legal guardian has given permission.
- Do not give a minor your personal contact information.
- Do not take any pictures or video of minors for personal use, as only Spark Central has media release forms from parents/guardians.
- Do not touch a child or teen except gentle, positive touch in the safe zone of the arms/hands (i.e., light touch on the arm to get attention, high-five). **NEVER TOUCH A CHILD WHO IS UPSET OR FRUSTRATED** as this can be misinterpreted as assault. If a child is not responding to your words, get a staff member.

Please also be trauma-sensitive: *(see the section titled "Understanding Trauma" for additional training on this topic)*

- Exercise compassion. Remember that kids who are rude or angry may have had a rough day, be afraid, or be responding to emotional issues. Do not take this personally and verbally empathize.
- Always maintain a calm and steady demeanor. Never raise your voice at a child, as this can escalate the situation. Tell a staff member if you need a break to cool down if a kid upset you.
- Redirect a misbehaving or argumentative kid to a new task or engage them in a game if you can.
- Kids do not know you and therefore do not know if you are safe. Never assume they should be familiar with you. Many have been taught (or learned) to be distrustful of adults.
- The more excited and positive you act, the more positive the student will be.

UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

an in-depth guide for volunteers

Sometimes children will become excessively emotional and engage in behavior that seems disruptive, manipulative, or defiant without any apparent reasonable cause. These behaviors are often rooted in trauma they have experienced, poverty, significant family conflict, or physical or verbal abuse. Trauma immensely affects children's brain processes and behaviors. While we don't know the full history of each patron that comes to Spark, many of our youth members likely experience some form of trauma.

Traumatic events cause the brain to change the way it processes the environment. Under severe stress, the rational parts of the brain shut off to allow the instinctual and emotional parts to take over; often, the resulting behavior is what we call **fight or flight**, responses of anxiety and heightened vigilance that involve either aggression or avoidance (as the names suggest). A different, more passive response a person can have to a traumatic experience is to **freeze**, which involves a shutdown of action and additional brain functions.

While experiencing trauma, our brains encode many of the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings we are experiencing into our memory. Even in an apparently safe and "normal" environment, people can be subconsciously reminded of the traumatic experience through **triggers**. Triggers can be as innocuous as a shirt someone is wearing or a song on the radio, so they are often hard to detect. Exposure to certain triggers can cause the brain to return to the stressed state it was in during the trauma and respond through fight, flight, or freeze. When this happens, the person is responding to a non-threatening trigger as if it was actually dangerous. It is important, then, to be mindful that children you interact with at Spark Central may be stressed by unexpected triggers in the environment and respond accordingly.

Trauma also has a general effect on children's concepts of self and, more evidently, their behavior. Traumatic experiences teach children that the world is dangerous, that they are not worthy of love, and that they should expect pain and suffering over joy and success. While adults have generally developed enough to process and articulate these complex thoughts and feelings, children have not yet achieved this milestone. Their feelings of rejection, grief, anger, and confusion because of their trauma are often expressed through disruptive or defiant behavior. They need to let their pain out rather than keep it inside, and sometimes this looks like disobedience, raised voices, name calling, or physical aggression. In fact, a lot of behavioral disorder diagnoses – like ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder – are addressing symptoms of underlying trauma.

In response to these trauma-based responses, we must focus on showing that the value of a child is not dependent on their behavior. Inappropriate behavior must be addressed separately from the

child and their feelings. They should be shown validation and affection as much as possible to address their need to feel loved.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Personal Autonomy

- Give kids the freedom to make their own choices, even if that means doing things “wrong” sometimes. Mistakes are great for learning and growing!
- Maintaining a relatively hands-off approach with children rather than directing them to do what you think is good or right allows them to develop their own creativity and problem-solving.
- Autonomy is linked to trust – giving kids freedom signals that we trust them! This is good for developing maturity and the skills they need to be self-sufficient.
- Give guidance when necessary or when asked, but be as minimal as possible.

Behavior-Specific Feedback

- When giving praise, focus it on a specific action or attribute rather than speaking generally.
 - ▶ General praise: “Good job!”
 - ▶ Specific praise: “I like the colors you chose for your drawing” or “I appreciate you putting the game away.”
 - ▶ Please note how the specific praise examples point to a concrete element of the child’s actions. This helps children clearly understand the cause and effect relationship between their actions and the responses of others.
- Behavior-specific praise reinforces the child’s positive behavior and promotes self-confidence and personal growth more than general praise. It’s easier for children to comprehend and remember in the future.
- Apply this for negative behavior, as well, making constructive comments rather than general criticisms of a child who is acting out.
 - ▶ “It was inappropriate when you raised your voice” is better than “stop that” because it gives the child something specific to modify.
 - ▶ General comments can send kids a message of “you’re bad” rather than “you did a bad thing.”

RESPONDING TO DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR IN THREE STEPS

When dealing with disruptive behavior from children, try to maintain the order of these three things. Before talking about/moving forward from a situation, the child should be relatively calm. Before trying to calm a child down, you need to communicate that you care about them.

1. Show unconditional positive regard for the child

- Separate the child's actions from their sense of self. They are not their poor behavior; they are good and valuable no matter what!
- Give behavior-specific feedback to identify the inappropriate behavior. **Address behavior with a child in private if possible.**
- Follow this with an affirming statement such as, "I want you to be here with us at Spark."
- Help the child use words to express their feelings and explain the root issue. Children will often struggle to articulate themselves when in distress.
- **Listen** before you try to help or fix a problem; children want to feel understood! Prompt children to tell you about what has been happening.
- Belonging and feeling welcome are incredibly important – isolation from others can make things worse, so be present with the child whose behavior you are addressing.
- Model positive coping skills! Use a calm and empathetic tone of voice. Think about the ways that help you calm down when you are feeling upset and share them.
- **VALIDATE** their feelings! It is okay to be upset and express emotions, no matter your age.
- Maintain an accepting, nonjudgmental attitude; if children sense disapproval from you, they will feel rejected and will close off from you.
- **Do not punish children for feelings** of anger, dismay, etc. Be firm about boundaries (no yelling, no hitting, no harmful words, etc.) and show that you still care about them.

2. "Ground" the child, returning them to the present moment and helping them calm down

- Guide the child to feel the floor beneath their feet, the table in front of them.
- **Ask the child to explore the five senses:** "What do you see/smell/taste/touch/hear right now?"
- Suggest one simple task that the child can do with their hands or body, like drawing, shaping Play-Doh, dancing, building with LEGOs, or walking around the room. Because children haven't developed the capacity to articulate their emotions well, using their hands and body can help them to redirect their anger and aggression in a healthy way.

3. Structure (problem solving/moving forward)

- Communicate and enforce clear boundaries.
- Provide options rather than open ends. For example, you might ask a child who has been agitating others, "Do you want to sit here and draw or return to the group calmly?" This is helpful because in a state of heightened emotion it can be difficult to make decisions.
- Explain the logical consequences of the child's actions.
 - ▶ "If you call them names, their feelings will be hurt."

- ▶ “Once you can treat others respectfully, you can return to the group.”
- Build on the conversation by asking, “What can you do differently next time?” or “What was helpful for calming you down?” This helps to establish future thinking and set them up for improvement the next time they become upset.

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Remember: children are still developing their self-control! As you get to know children, become familiar with their patterns so you are more able to anticipate their behaviors rather than respond after they happen. Higher-level thinking is difficult under the influence of intense emotions, so validate feelings before asking questions, help children through deep breathing, and do not try to argue with them (their capacity for reason is limited).

It is NEVER okay to deny a child food or drink as punishment, especially because there may be children at Spark who don't have a stable supply of food at home. Food is a source of nutrition and energy and therefore should be treated as such. Withholding food from a child communicates that their basic needs are met on a conditional basis. We **INSTEAD** want to return to **unconditional positive regard**, communicating that they are valuable and deserve resources (like food) regardless of their behavior.

Take breaks outside of Spark Central or a program site if you are feeling emotionally stretched! It is better to step aside for a few minutes to regain some energy than to push yourself too far and lose patience with a child as a result. If you feel like you are becoming frustrated, anxious, or impatient with a child, tell them, “I need to calm down before we keep talking. I'll be back to talk with you some more soon.” Then ask another volunteer or staff member to monitor the child until you have had a chance to return to a calm emotional state.

MANDATORY REPORTER

Spark Central asks volunteers to report any evidence suggesting youth may be suffering abuse, neglect, or abandonment to an employee. These next few pages define some—not all—types of abuse and describe warning signs you should bring to a staff member’s attention. Spark Central can provide a printed copy of detailed Mandatory Reporting documents upon request.

Physical abuse: non-accidental infliction of physical injury or physical mistreatment of a child.

- **Consider the possibility of physical abuse when:**

- **The child*

- ▶ Has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones, or black eyes
 - ▶ Offers conflicting explanations as to how the injury occurred
 - ▶ Has fading bruises or other marks noticeable after an absence
 - ▶ Is frightened of the parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
 - ▶ Shrinks at the approach of adults
 - ▶ Reports injury by a parent or another adult caregiver

- **The caregiver*

- ▶ Offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child’s injury
 - ▶ Describes the child as “evil” or in some other very negative way
 - ▶ Uses harsh physical discipline with the child
 - ▶ Has a history of abuse as a child

Sexual abuse: committing or allowing to be committed any sexual offense against a child as defined in the criminal code. The intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or allowing, permitting, compelling, encouraging, aiding, or otherwise causing a child to engage in touching the sexual or other intimate parts of another for the purpose of gratifying the sexual desire of the person touching the child, the child, or a third party.

- **Consider the possibility of sexual abuse when:**

- **The child*

- ▶ Has difficulty walking or sitting
 - ▶ Suddenly refuses to change for gym or to participate in physical activities
 - ▶ Reports nightmares or bedwetting
 - ▶ Experiences a sudden change in appetite
 - ▶ Demonstrates bizarre, sophisticated, or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
 - ▶ Becomes pregnant or contracts a venereal disease, particularly if under age 14
 - ▶ Runs away

- ▶ Reports sexual abuse by a parent or another caregiver

**The caregiver*

- ▶ Is unduly protective of the child or severely limits the child's contact with other children, especially of the opposite sex
- ▶ Is secretive and isolated
- ▶ Is jealous of controlling with family members

Negligent treatment or maltreatment: an act or failure to act, or the cumulative effects of a pattern or conduct, behavior, or inaction, on the part of a child's parent, legal custodian, guardian, or caregiver that shows a serious disregard of the consequences to the child and creates a clear and present danger to the child's health, welfare, or safety.

• **Consider the possibility of neglect when:**

**The child*

- ▶ Is frequently absent from school
- ▶ Begs or steals food or money
- ▶ Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations, or glasses
- ▶ Is consistently dirty and has severe body odor
- ▶ Lacks sufficient clothing for the weather
- ▶ Abuses alcohol or other drugs
- ▶ States that there is no one at home to provide care

**The caregiver*

- ▶ Appears to be indifferent to the child
- ▶ Seems apathetic or depressed
- ▶ Behaves irrationally or in a bizarre manner
- ▶ Is abusing alcohol or other drugs

Abandonment: when a parent or guardian who is responsible for the care, education, or support of a child deserts the child, leaves the child without the means or ability to obtain one or more basic necessities of life (i.e., food, water, shelter, clothing, hygiene, and medically necessary health care), or forgoes for an extended period of time parental rights, functions, duties, and obligations despite an ability to exercise such rights, duties, and obligations.

• **Consider the possibility of emotional maltreatment when:**

**The child*

- ▶ Shows extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression

- ▶ Is inappropriately acting like an adult (parenting other children, for example) or inappropriately infantile (frequently rocking or head-banging, for example)
- ▶ Is delayed in physical or emotional development
- ▶ Has attempted suicide
- ▶ Reports a lack of attachment to the parent

How should I respond to a child who reports being abused or neglected?

- Remain calm. A child may retract information or stop talking if they sense a strong emotion.
- Find a private place to talk without interruptions.
- Put the child at ease by sitting beside them, not behind a desk.
- Ask permission before touching the child. Touch may be associated with physical or emotional pain in children who have been physically or sexually abused. Remember to use touch only in the safe zone—the outside of the arms or top of the shoulders.
- Reassure the child that they are not in trouble.
- Use the child’s vocabulary.
- Let the child know what you will do: “We need to tell [name of Spark staff]. They know how to help children and families.”
- Support the child: “I’m sorry this happened to you.”
- Do what you can to make certain the child is safe from further abuse.
- Do not press for details or ask “why” questions. These require children to explain actions that they may or may not understand.

Why should I report Child Abuse and Neglect?

The purpose of mandated reporting is to identify suspected abused and neglected children as soon as possible so they can be protected from further harm. CPS cannot act until a report is made. Mandated reporters like Spark Central staff members play a critical role in preventing any future harm to children.

Who must report?

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect can, in good faith, report. Spark Central staff are identified as mandated reporters, and are required by law to report your concerns to the local Children’s Administration office, Child Abuse Hotline, or law enforcement.

When should I report?

You should report to Spark Central employees at the first opportunity, providing every detail observed or communicated by the child. For example, if you are volunteering at a program and observe signs of abuse, neglect, or abandonment, you should pull an employee aside if possible or report to them immediately after

the program. If you know the identity of the person accused of abuse, neglect, or abandonment, you must share that when you report.

Who can I make a report to in addition to Spark Central staff?

Volunteers may report to the Children's Administrations office of CPS in addition to Spark Central staff at their discretion. CPS intake staff receive reports either by phone, mail, or in person, and assess these reports to determine if the report meets the legal definition of abuse or neglect and how dangerous the situation is. CPS would find it helpful if you were present for the report to provide any additional information the staff member may not know.

CPS offers several ways to report abuse:

- 1-866-EndHarm || 1-866-363-4276
- During daytime hours, a local CPS office can be located on the following link: <https://fortress.wa.gov/dshs/f2w03apps/caofficespub/offices/general/OfficePick.asp>
- During nighttime hours or weekends, call the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-866-363-4276. This is WA State's toll-free, 24-hour, 7-days-a-week hotline for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect.

What information will Spark Central provide in a report to CPS?

- The name, address, and age of the child and caregiver(s)
- The nature and extent of the child abuse or neglect
- Any information about previous incidents of abuse or neglect
- Whether the caretaker(s) are of Indian ancestry (these parents have special rights and protections)

Spark Central may also provide information related to:

- Extended family members
- Family strengths that can help the parent(s) care for and protect the children
- Parental resources and family strengths
- Previous history of mental health disorder
- History of substance abuse
- Parental response to interventions, etc.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Your safety and well-being are very important to us. This handbook should not be considered a substitute for informed decisions and common sense. Emergencies come in many forms and may require a number of different actions.

Fire and Medical Emergency

In case of fire or any emergency, or if you see a crime in progress, call 911. If appropriate, direct patrons to the nearest exit to leave the station and do the same yourself. Become familiar with the three exits in Spark Central: two in the front and one in the back. A fire extinguisher and the fire evacuation route are located near the bulletin board.

First Aid

Take action within your ability and scope of training. Use common sense and contact 911 in any medical emergency. First Aid supplies are available in the back closet and a mobile kit is also available.

Disruptive Behavior

When an individual or individuals become disruptive, the guidelines below should be implemented. Safety is the first priority of our staff, volunteers, and members. Safety for self and other should govern all decisions.

Out-of-Control Behavior

When an individual becomes disruptive but is not physically aggressive, a staff member should attempt to intervene by speaking calmly and firmly with the disruptive person. If there is more than one disruptive person, another staff member or volunteer should attempt to speak separately with the other. Disruptive individuals should be moved as far from each other as possible, but staff and volunteers should remain in the main section of the Station. The conversation should attempt to defuse the situation and restore calm. If the staff or volunteer feel physically threatened or the situation is escalating, Crisis Response should be called at 509.838.4428. The Crisis Response program is part of Frontier Behavioral Health. Their response may vary depending on the situation. At times, they speak with the disruptive person and ultimately may call 911 themselves if they feel that is most appropriate.

Physical Aggression

Any person demonstrating physical aggression, including physical threats, should be asked to leave. 911 should be called immediately if the person refuses to leave or if they damage property or make any physical attacks. Volunteers should handle the situation as they are able and notify staff of the incident in writing (if

staff not present) as soon as possible after the situation is resolved. Persons who cannot calm down or are physically aggressive will be banned from Spark Central for a period of 30 days or longer.

Sexual Harassment or Misconduct by Staff Members

If you experience harassment or inappropriate behavior from a Spark Central staff member or observe such inappropriate behavior, please report this immediately to our executive director at **admin@spark-central.org** or to our board president at **board@spark-central.org**. We take all reports of sexual harassment or misconduct seriously!

STATION CLOSURES

Inclement Weather

Spark Central recognizes the inclement weather decisions made for the Spokane School District. We will make every effort to notify you when the station has an unscheduled closure on a day you are scheduled to volunteer. Contact **volunteers@spark-central.org** if you have concerns.

If there is inclement weather, please check appropriate news and school closure information in the event that we are unable to reach you.

Holiday Closures

Spark Central is closed on:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day & the day after
- Christmas Day & the day after
- New Year's Eve

Please initial each line below to indicate that you have read and understand each of these parts of the volunteer handbook. Please detach this page and return it to Spark Central along with any questions.

Name: _____ Date: _____

_____ Expectations for Volunteers

_____ Working with Kids

_____ Mandatory Reporter

_____ Emergency Procedures

_____ Understanding Trauma