

Appendix D

Foundations of Practice for Living in Community at Grace Community House

The way we think about community directly affects our practice of living in community. The following principles reflect our values and provide an ethical framework for the participation of Grace Community House residents in the life of the Southgate neighborhood and the internal life of the house.

Intentional Community: Being intentional about participating in community requires availability, *i.e.*, spending real time with others. This has internal and external dimensions. Patterns of daily life must include spending time with each other in the home, and, on at least a weekly basis, residents must spend time with neighbors. This must be modeled by both RA and Mentor.

Accountability: In our practice of living together we will submit to one another, hold each other accountable, and offer each other encouragement and support.

Relational Ministry: In building relationships the emphasis is on being present to the other, not on creating programs or adhering to preordained schedules. Ours is a ministry of presence. Relationships deepen and community is built when people spend time listening to each others' stories. When people know about each others' lives, an awareness of needs will emerge naturally. Our intent is not to impose programs, but to come alongside each other and to care in ways we will only know from within the experiences of those relationships.

Mutuality: Our ministry goes beyond offering a cup of cold water. Though compassion for people with tangible needs may lead us to help others and is a legitimate expression of love, our ministry is characterized more by mutuality, a reciprocal giving and receiving in relationship. That means sometimes you are the one in need and sometimes you are the one to give to another who is in need. Hospitality often is not something one offers or does to another. Instead, it is the openness to receive what the other has to offer.

Justice: A deep concern for living justly and walking humbly with others will be nurtured at GCH through study of urban social justice issues, such as gentrification. In order both to hear the voice of Southgate residents and empower them, GCH residents will participate in Block Club meetings and activities.

Connecting Church and Neighborhood: Residents of Grace Community House act as God's agents as well as agents of the congregation. Regular communication with the congregation is needed in order for the church to be invested in the ministry. Hearing of life in the community will give the congregation opportunity for thanksgiving and naturally will suggest means by which those who do not live in the neighborhood can support those who do. In fact, it may prompt personal involvement in the life of the neighborhood by members of the congregation who do not reside in GCH.

Agility: Because the neighborhood is continually evolving, and the residents of GCH will periodically change, this ministry will need to be agile. Changing circumstances should not be viewed as a sign of failure, but they will present challenges to our ingenuity as we incarnate God's love in Southgate.

Amen