

Jan Peek Volunteer Overview

This document overviews the Jan Peek volunteer opportunity. A more detailed document is emailed to all volunteers once they sign up.

History and Background

Jan Peek House is a shelter that provides food and support for a few dozen homeless men and women in Peekskill, NY. It is one of the non-profit programs run by CCHOP (Caring for the Hungry and Homeless of Peekskill (<https://www.chhop.org/>)).

Homelessness is a major social issue with many different causes. Most Jan Peek house residents are recovering from substance abuse (alcohol and/or drugs). Many experienced abuse and abandonment throughout their lives. Some have simply hit financial rock bottom and have no family or support system to help. About 85% of the residents are men, in the range of 30-40 years of age. Residents stay from 5 or 6 months up to a year. Although mandated only to provide shelter, the Jan Peek House offers a program that teaches life and job skills. Rules and a supportive structure help most residents obtain their own housing and provide a path to re-entering society.

Because the shelter's food service does not operate on weekends, and the on-site kitchen is too limited to prepare regular meals, the House relies on volunteers to prepare and deliver weekend evening meals. Along with other area churches, the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown was deeply involved in creating the Jan Peek House meal program in 1988. Since then, FPCY has been responsible for serving meals on the fourth Saturday of each month.

Bud Coccodrilli served as Jan Peek House coordinator from 2003 to 2015. Pat Prauda assumed that role from Bud in 2015 and served through the end of 2021. Jeff Kephart has served as coordinator since that time.

Jan Peek is truly thankful for the help it receives from our church. As the Director explains, "When groups come to serve meals, it means more than anything you could give to our clients. Nothing builds self-esteem more than when they finally realize people care. And when we care about them, they learn to care about themselves — that's the beginning of being healthy".

What does a Jan Peek volunteer do?

The main responsibilities of volunteers are:

1. **Sign up.** Visit the Genius Signup at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050e45aea62fa1fb6-janpeek1> to select a month and a slot (either Coordinator or Preparer). There are slots for 3 families, but more can split the effort if desired. FPCY is responsible for the fourth Saturday of each month.
2. **Plan.** In the weeks before your chosen date, you will decide with the other volunteers what to make and who is responsible for what portion of the meal. You'll also decide where to prepare the meal. Many people choose the church kitchen because it's fun to work there with the other families.

3. **Shop for the food.** The number of clients is typically 35-40. BJ's or some other store that sells food in bulk is a good place to shop.
4. **Prepare.** On Friday or Saturday, prepare the portion of the meal for which you are responsible, either at home or in the church kitchen.
5. **Deliver and (optionally) serve.** At 5:45pm on Saturday, one or more of the families will deliver the meal to the Jan Peek House, located at 200 N. Water St. Peekskill NY. It's about a 15-minute drive from the church. You can either serve the dinner to the residents, or just drop it off there.
6. **Get reimbursed (optional).** If you wish to be reimbursed, just save all your receipts and email them to the Mission Commission chairs and the treasurer.