

October 2018



JACKSONS LANE CHRISTMAS DAY – INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. ABOUT THE EVENT

1.1 Event Summary

For over 40 years, Jacksons Lane has organised a Christmas Day party for elderly and disabled people who would otherwise be on their own. It is an all-day event, starting at 10:30 am and finishing at 4:30 pm. Up to 80 guests are provided with an excellent three-course turkey lunch, Christmas tea, a varied programme of entertainment, a Christmas gift and good company. The event is organised and run by volunteers and is provided free of charge. Admission is by invitation only.

1.2 Transport

All guests are offered transport to and from the Centre. Most are driven by volunteers in their own cars. Tail-lift minibuses are available for those who are too disabled to travel by car. Sadly, we can only cater for a limited number of wheelchair users who cannot transfer to a seat.

1.3 .Special Dietary Needs

Vegetarian or special diet meals can be provided, for both guests and volunteers, if booked in advance.

1.4 The Role of Volunteers

The event requires a team of well over 60 volunteers. Many are involved in the advance preparations – fundraising, shopping, preparing food, moving supplies and furniture, laying tables, decorating the hall etc.

On Christmas Day itself, most volunteers are allocated to specific tasks in advance. We are always looking for drivers, especially those who are available both in the morning and afternoon. We also need cooks and entertainers, as well as carers and assistants to look after the guests, and general helpers to prepare food, serve it onto plates, wash up and clear everything away at the end.

1.5 The Volunteer Recruitment Process

Every volunteer is required to complete a form. In late October/ early November, letters and forms are sent to everyone who has helped in the previous 2 years. At the same time, we start recruiting new volunteers by putting up posters in and around the Centre and by placing information on the Jacksons Lane website.

Please complete and return your volunteer form as quickly as possible. The sooner we know who is and is not available, the sooner we can identify areas where we are short of volunteers, and the better we can target our recruitment.

For Christmas Day general helpers, priority will be given to those who are available for the whole day and in particular those who are able to help with clearing up after 5 pm. If you are only available for part of the day, there may be a delay in getting back to you whilst we try to match you to an appropriate vacancy.

1.6 Contacts

For further information, or to request a volunteer form please ring Jacksons Lane on 020 8340 5226 or send an email to christmas@jacksonslane.org.uk.

Completed forms can be submitted in person, by post or by email to christmas@jacksonslane.org.uk.

Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

1 Advance Help Roles

1.1 Committee

We are always on the look out for volunteers who are willing join our committee and take on an organisational role. Specific Roles include Entertainment Organiser (1.2), Christmas Gifts Organiser (1.3), Shopping Organiser (1.4) and Fundraising Organiser (1.5).

1.6 The Sunday before Christmas Eve

Volunteers, especially those with cars, are required at 11:00 am to transfer equipment and supplies from various local storage locations to Jacksons Lane.

1.7 Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve, from 10:30 am, volunteers are required to move and set up furniture, lay tables, decorate the dining rooms and set up the Christmas tree. They are also required peel and prepare vegetables, wrap presents and find and move supplies and equipment in the correct locations ready for use. Drivers are required to do last minute shopping. The work starts at 10:30 am and, depending on the number of volunteers and the availability of the foyer, finishes at about 3:30 pm. A snack lunch is available for those who can stay on into the afternoon.

2 Christmas Day

2.1 Christmas Day Cooks

Vegetables, gravy and stuffing for well over 100 people are prepared in the Centre's kitchen by a small team of Kitchen volunteers. All the turkeys and potatoes are roasted, and the Christmas puddings steamed or microwaved, by volunteers in their own homes. Turkeys weigh about 17 lbs each. Potatoes are supplied peeled and weighed out into three pound bags ready for roasting. Food for home cooking can either be collected from the Centre on Christmas Eve afternoon or we can deliver it to your door in the early evening. Roasting trays and kitchen foil are available if requested in advance.

All home cooked food needs to be returned to the Centre **hot and ready to serve at 12:30 pm** on Christmas Day. Volunteers with their own knives will be recruited to do the carving.

2.2 Drivers

We rarely have enough drivers! Our main requirement is for drivers with their own cars who are willing to bring guests to the Centre for 10:30 am and collect them again at 4:30 pm. A few drivers are also required to be on standby throughout the day, to pick up late-comers, collect food, collect and return entertainers, and take guests home early. We may also have a few vacancies for morning only and afternoon only drivers.

We also need tail-lift minibus drivers to transport our increasing number of guests who are wheelchair users. Ideally, these drivers will have access to a tail-lift minibus through their work. If not, Jacksons Lane can hire a minibus, provided that the driver has a D1 license and is available to take a test

2.3 Christmas Day Entertainers

Over the years, a crucial factor in making the event a success has been our ability to provide a full and varied programme of entertainment. Every year we kick off at about 10:50 am with half an hour of carol singing led by members of two local choirs. After that, from about 11:30 am to 4 pm, we aim to mount a programme that will appeal to elderly and disabled people from a wide range of backgrounds. We are not necessarily looking for professional entertainers.

Past successes include Flamenco music and dancing, a fashion show, accordion music, ballroom dancing, and even a puppet show. Last year clowns were very popular. A good sing-along is always appreciated. There is no fixed performance length, but 30 minutes is about average. One of the challenges facing entertainers is to involve the whole audience when many people have no direct sightline to the stage area. The guests are

seated at tables in two rooms connected by double doors, creating an L-shaped space. The stage area is in the larger room near the double doors. The PA system is normally set up with speakers in both rooms.

With notice we may be able to arrange transport for entertainers and their equipment. The role of Entertainments Organiser involves greeting and looking after the performers and acting as compere.

2.4 Helping at the Centre on Christmas Day

On Christmas day there are three main roles for volunteers. Priority is given to volunteers who are prepared to stay on to tidy up after the guests have gone home at 4:30 pm.

2.4.1 Christmas Day Carers

A Christmas Day Carer is responsible for a group of about 8 guests, ensuring that they are comfortable and having a good time and that their care needs are met throughout the day.

Each carer will work closely with an allocated table assistant who will be responsible for helping with practical tasks such as fetching food and drink orders, helping guests to the toilet and any other tasks they are asked to do by the Carer.

To ensure continuity, Carers need to be available throughout the day (i.e. from about 10:15 am to 4:45 pm). Unlike other volunteers, Carers eat their lunch with their guests at 12:15 pm, so that they can be available to look after their guests while the table assistants attend the helpers lunch at 1:45 pm

2.4.2 Table Assistants

The role of a Table Assistant is to work closely with one of the Carers in providing practical support to a group of about 8 guests. Their main tasks include showing guests to their seats, waiting at table, fetching morning tea and coffee, serving lunch, fetching drinks from the bar, serving afternoon tea, helping guests to the toilet, talking to them, and any other practical tasks they are asked to do by the Carer. At the end of the day, they fetch a present and a doggie bag for each of their guests. They then collect coats from the cloakroom using the numbered cloakroom tickets. Finally, they remain with their guests until their driver collects them.

To ensure continuity, Table Assistants need to be available throughout the day (i.e. from about 10:15 am to 4:45 pm). They should be prepared to cover for Carers during their breaks.

2.4.3 Christmas Day General Helpers

General Helpers mainly work behind the scenes. On Christmas morning they meet and greet the guests. They collect coats at the door and issue cloakroom tickets. Where necessary, they help guests to their seats, ensuring that marked seats are reserved for carers and wheelchair users. They help serve tea and wash up the cups.

At Lunch time they plate up the food. They wash up and sort crockery and cutlery. After lunch is a particularly busy time. Apart from the on-going washing up, general helpers are required to put all the left-over turkey and other food in doggie bags for the guests to take home. They also need to prepare fresh sandwiches and set out cakes on plates for tea.

After the guests have gone home, General Helpers finish the washing up. They sort and pack away all the crockery, cutlery, cooking pans and other equipment. They take down all the Christmas decorations, clear away the furniture and clean the floors. Those who last out to the end help with transporting all the Christmas Day equipment out of the Centre.

2.5 Christmas Day Specific Roles

Individual roles include: Kitchen Organiser, Bar Organiser, Guest Register Manager (to maintain a register of guests as they arrive and leave the Centre and liaise with drivers), Photographer (to take photographs of the event and show a slide show of the previous year's photos to guests), Technical Manager (to look after the PA system), Entertainments Organiser, General Helpers' Organiser and Carers Organiser. Ideally, these roles will be filled from year to year by the same people. However, in case this is not possible, it is very helpful if volunteers can indicate on the form if they are willing to take on any of these tasks if a vacancy arises.