

NEWS

VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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Chore Program helps Bergen County Seniors and Disabled Persons

Since 1977, the Chore Volunteer Handyman Service of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, has been helping the increasing numbers of elderly and/or disabled people in Bergen County remain safe in their own homes by performing minor household repairs.

The Chore Service provides a crew of dedicated volunteers who perform these minor repairs, thereby avoiding costly and often unwanted institutionalization of the clients. Chore volunteers, who are retirees themselves, perform household repairs that clients can neither perform themselves nor, often, find anyone else to do for them.

Chore provides service without charge; the only cost to the client is for parts necessary to complete the repair. Chore's services include installing grab bars and railings, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; repairing leaky faucets or toilets, replacing broken door locks, installing weather-stripping, changing screens and storms, replacing light bulbs, fixing broken lamps and switches, installing simple electrical fixtures or replacing existing electric outlets and switches.

There are some jobs that are beyond Chore's capacity. Chore cannot service emergencies, and does not do outdoor work, painting, work requiring high ladders, tiling, door or window replacements, heavy lifting, new wiring or appliance repairs, nor cosmetic repairs or interior decorating.

Chore operates three vans, each with a crew of 2 to 4 people, that are on the road every business day year round.

Chore serves Bergen County residents who are at least age sixty (60) or who are disabled of any age. Chore's services are provided primarily to those who own their own homes. Services can be provided to apartment dwellers as long as the repairs are limited to personal items only and the task is not one that should be provided by the landlord.

Each year, Chore serves over 2,000 clients and completes over 4,000 repairs, and logs in over 10,000 hours of service.

The Chore Service assists in improving the quality of life of older people who are living independently. It is staffed by primarily senior volunteers, many of whom have been with the organization for over ten years. It provides a meaningful volunteer opportunity for people to share their skills by helping their neighbors. It is a model program throughout the state and the country and provides a vital service to the local community.

Chore volunteers are also needed. A Chore Handyperson volunteer goes on service calls one day a week from 9 am to 2 pm. Volunteers enjoy being part of a crew of one or two other volunteers plus a driver. Each crew is assigned 4 to 5 service calls each weekday.

Prospective volunteers should be able to perform minor household repairs such as those that able-bodied homeowners must do. Ideally, volunteers will be available on a regular basis so Chore can schedule a regular day with the same crew. While a majority of Chore volunteers are retired, the current roster of volunteers include younger people who are self employed, or have flexible schedules.

It's a great volunteer opportunity for retirees, or people who work second and third shift jobs. Back-up volunteer handymen and women are also welcome.

To schedule a repair, or become a Chore Service volunteer, or to make a monetary donation to Chore, call (201) 489-7790.

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