

## **Duties Laundry**

### **Overview**

Laundry volunteers typically wash linens (blankets, sheets, pillowcases (not pillows), washcloths and towels) owned by SOS that are used during our guests' stay at BUC. One (or more) volunteers do any necessary laundry that's accumulated by midweek; a larger team (7) goes to a Laundromat on Sunday morning. Designated members of the team pick up the laundry from BUC on Sunday (between 7:30 & 8 am) & return it there once it's clean.

The goal of the Sunday team is to provide clean, dry linens, sorted into large trash bags based on type (towels, sheets, pillowcases, and blankets or blanket like items such as comforters), back to BUC before the next church's truck arrives (approx. noon). Historically, the laundry has gotten to BUC around 11:30 or earlier.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are identified from the signup sheets at BUC. People can sign up to help with the midweek laundry or the Sunday laundry or both. In addition to participating in the Sunday wash, the leader is responsible for contacting the laundry team prior to Sunday to solicit volunteers to bring items required for the wash, and to remind the team of the schedule.

We have some volunteers who sign up for this task but who do not attend BUC (see general volunteer list with Paul Plante). Sunday volunteers do not have to work all 3 hours. The busiest time is between 9:30 and 10:30, folding the dry laundry. Guests are asked to strip their beds when they wake up.

### **Midweek Laundry**

Volunteers sign up to be available as necessary to do laundry during the week. This saves work on the final day, and also helps to keep the stock of items such as blankets and towels from being depleted. The coordinators look at how things are going on Tuesday or Wednesday and decide whether to request any midweek washing. If called, the volunteer comes to BUC to pick up whatever needs to be washed, and returns the laundry to BUC within 24 hours. Typically, a volunteer gets 2 or 3 loads of wash, which is done in the home.

### **Sunday Laundry**

#### **Resources required:**

- Laundry detergent (The pod form works great!). About 15 total loads. One pod/load, whether 60 or 80 lb washers, the amount of detergent should not increase with size of the load.
- Dryer sheets, unscented
- 1 box of at least 25 (more is better) strong, self-tying plastic lawn bags for clean laundry; cheaper laundry bags are helpful for getting dirty clothes from the church to the Laundromat.

- 1 pad “Post It” notes or a roll of colorful masking tape.
- \$150 in quarters (you may need to order from your bank ahead of time; it’s wise to bring some kind of unbreakable container for them that is easy for workers to reach into)
- (*Optional*) 1 doz. bagels, cream cheese, & 1 qt OJ, plus paper cups
- 2 drivers per trip to collect & return laundry (need large vehicles)
- Volunteers may wish to wear plastic or latex gloves while they work; Leader should remind volunteers to supply their own if they wish.

### **Location:**

We have been going to the Laundry Palace, 140 S Main St, Clawson, MI 48017 (one block South of 14 Mile Road) for several years. The Palace gives us back 10% of what we spend as a donation to SOS. They accommodate large groups taking over part of their place. Other SOS hosts use them also. The owner is a great source of “how to” knowledge on large laundry tasks.

### **Timeline:**

**2 weeks prior:** Leader contacts volunteers from the email list collected from BUC. Others can be added up until the last minute – the more the merrier to find out who would like to bring what. Note: the bringer(s) of the laundry detergent and quarters should be at the Laundromat when the laundry arrives.

**1 week prior:** Reminder note re: whatever people have volunteered for & a request for resources as yet unassigned.

**Sunday 7:30 am:** Drivers arrive at BUC and collect laundry and a blank volunteer signup sheet. Usually the laundry is not already bagged, so the drivers must work with the teardown crew and residents to identify and bag laundry.

**8:00:** Arrive at Laundry Palace, greet volunteers, confer with Laundry Palace staff, load & start washers. Throw away the plastic bags in which the laundry was brought.

### **Best practices & other information:**

- Concentrate on getting the maximum use from the biggest machines (even if that means some of the washing starts after the drying starts) vs. using both small and larger machines. Laundry Palace has four 80 lb. machines & approximately 8-10 60 lb. machines (every 10 lbs. equals 1 standard load of wash).
- The staff asked us to leave one each of the 80 lb. & 60 lb. washers free.
- In retrospect, we would have done better to load our machines more slowly and fully – in our haste, we may not have utilized them as fully as we could have.
- If you are using laundry detergent pods, only 1 pod is required per machine, even the 80 lb. machines.
- As you start the machines, put tape or a post-it on each machine so you can tell which machines are being used by BUC volunteers vs. other patrons.

- If a machine declines to accept your quarter, verify it is an American quarter. Although we had quarter rolls from a bank, we had approx. \$1CDN in quarters among the rolls.

**While the washers churn:** Eat the bagels, & chat with your fellow volunteers. Get people to sign the sign up sheets with estimated hours. Patrons may ask you what you're doing & about our church, by the way.

**Once the washers start finishing:** 1 person unloads a washer and heads off for the dryers; another fills the washer with any waiting wash.

**Best practices and other information:**

- Remember to concentrate on getting the washers as full as possible, and on using the 80 lb. ones before the 60 lb. ones.
- Remove tape/post-its from any washers we no longer need
- Remember to throw away the bags in which the laundry was transported

**As you fill the dryers:** Use only the 2 largest types of dryers. Be sure the bedding is separated by type. Initially put in enough money for 30 min. & select the hottest temperature.

- Don't forget to put post-it notes/tape on the doors of all dryers we're using.

**As the dryers stop:** Check items for dryness as you remove them. Dry items can be folded; undry items go back in the dryer. Start mentally thinking of dryers as containing semi-dry & less dry items as you are tossing items back in, and apportion the drying time accordingly (1 quarter's worth for semi-dry vs. 2 for less dry). This is the busiest time of the day, & requires the team to be constantly folding, sorting, checking dryers, and bagging what's dry, folded, & sorted.

**Best practices and other information:**

- Hot items seem dryer than ones that have cooled, so accept that you may discover imperfectly dried items while folding.
- All items must be fully dried to be bagged, however (because even slightly damp items mildew away in plastic bags), so whenever undry items are found, they must be returned to a dryer.
- Sheets dry most quickly, then towels, then comforters & blankets. Wool blankets are the worst. The cording in some comforters remains damp long after the comforter is dry. When in doubt, dry it more.
- Don't forget to check BUC-marked washing machines until the last of them is finished, its post-it is removed, and its contents sent to the dryers.
- Do the folding a bit away from the dryers themselves. Try to remember that we are not the only folks in the laundromat & leave room for others to pass, etc.
- Once there's a sufficient stack of an item, e.g., blankets, bag it. Your goal in bagging is to get the bag as full as possible while keeping the bag intact. Tie the bag closed, but be sure people peeking in the top can see what's within.

- Once you have 2 or more bags, start loading the vehicles that will go to BUC. Generally, one driver (probably not the leader) is happy to leave first, so get one car loaded up first, & then load up the second one.

**At the end:**

- Go through the laundromat looking for & disposing of any remaining post-it notes on dryers or washers (hope there's none!), any used dryer sheets, or any other trash we may have generated while working.
- Pack up any supplies people brought (preferably send them home with the purchaser) or donate them to the laundromat, as you like.
- The leader needs to settle with the Laundry Palace staff re: the money. If you know you started out with \$150, count what's left (including any Canadian money) & then you can calculate what's spent. The staff will give you 10% back in cash, which you need to take to BUC as a donation for SOS.
- A receipt is not available. Calculate the cost to providing volunteers and submit this to the BUC Coordinator (Paul Plante) for reimbursement.
- The leader should collect the sign up sheet, & return it to BUC along with the laundry & the donation.

Author: Carol Jackson

Concur: Paul Plante

Pgp/Duties Laundry 11/25/14