

# SAFE PARKING PROGRAM

## Dinner Host Information and FAQs- Balboa Lot

**Thank you for your interest in hosting a dinner for the unsheltered families and individuals participating in the Safe Parking Program!**

The Safe Parking Program serves unsheltered families and individuals living in their cars most of whom have recently found themselves homeless for the first time. JFS understands that a vehicle is often a critical asset, allowing individuals and families access to resources, ability to look for employment (or get to and from a job), and/or to get to and from school. Focused on stopping the downward spiral of homelessness, the Safe Parking Program provides more than a dependable place to park at night. The program includes supportive services to help individuals and families stabilize and transition back into permanent housing.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

**Who does this lot serve?** The Balboa Lot hosts families, including children who are currently living in their cars. The families have access to a gated lot, indoor JFS space for dinners and other activities, as well as an indoor shower.

**How many volunteers are needed to serve dinner?** We recommend groups bring between **5-15 volunteers** so that everyone feels like they have a meaningful role. Volunteers should be at least 7 years old and volunteers ages 7-13 should be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

**What time is the volunteer shift? What time is dinner served?** We ask that volunteer groups arrive at **5:30pm and be prepared to stay through 8:00pm** to allow time for set up, dinner service, and clean up. Families begin to arrive to the lot as early as 6:00pm and can enter as late as 9:00pm. Dinner is generally served from 6:00-7:30pm.

**What should we bring?** The Dinner Host is asked to ensure that their volunteer group supplies everything for the dinner, including:

- Food (Please bring all food cooked and ready to serve as there is no access to a kitchen)
- Beverages
- Serving dishes
- Serving utensils
- Hot plates, if needed (with power and/or extension cords)
- Plates
- Napkins
- Cutlery
- Cups
- Tablecloths, if desired (for serving tables and/or dinner tables)
- Disposable packaging for any leftovers to leave for clients

**How many people should we prepare to serve?** We recommend preparing dinner for **50-60 people, including children**. While we host 60 cars (or about 110 individuals) nightly at this lot, not everyone chooses to participate in the community dinners and/or some arrive later.

**How do families know dinner will be available on the night we are scheduled?** We post the dates of all upcoming dinners on the Safe Parking Program community bulletin board.

**Are there any restrictions on the food we bring?** No, although we do encourage healthy choices. Groups have provided everything from lasagna, soup, salad or pizza to tacos. Some groups love to bring a sweet dessert, but we also welcome fruit. Some groups stick with water while others prefer to include coffee. Occasionally there are families who have dietary restrictions (i.e., vegetarian/vegan, kosher, or food allergies), but we don't always know in advance. Ultimately, the families appreciate your effort to provide dinner whether store-bought or home-made, a hot or cold meal.

**What does JFS provide for the dinner service?**

- **Indoor space** with tables and chairs for the families to enjoy their dinner in a communal setting
- **Four 6' tables** on which to set up your food and drinks
- **Serving gloves** for all volunteers to ensure safe food handling
- **Sink for washing hands** (Please note the sink does not have a food disposal system)
- **Trash cans and trash bags**

**What should volunteers expect to do?**

- **Set up:** Carry in food and materials to set up on serving tables provided before guests arrive
- **Serve dinner:** Volunteers can dish out the food, pour drinks, replenish supplies and bus tables
- **Socialize:** Beyond providing a meal, your group can provide company. We welcome you to sit and get to know the families. Some volunteers color, read a book or help kids with homework while others chat with the adults.
- **Clean Up:** After the dinner, we ask that you leave the room as it was found (i.e., clean up, package any leftover food, make sure any tables return to where they were initially placed, etc.)

**Are there any restrictions to volunteers' participation?** To respect our programmatic requirements and maintain a positive experience for all, *volunteers may not:*

- Solicit business from clients or staff,
- Promote or facilitate religious activities, including prayer with clients or staff regardless of faith tradition,
- Distribute literature that has not been preapproved by Jewish Family Service

**Can we take pictures?** We ask you to respect the privacy and confidentiality of our clients. Pictures are only permitted to be taken of your volunteer group. Additionally, while you may get to know some of the clients over dinner, please refrain from using any identifying client information (names, ages, places of employment/school, etc.) when sharing your volunteer experience with family, friends, or on social media.

**Can we bring any other donations?** Yes. Your group is welcome to bring additional donations when you come to serve dinner. Since the individuals and families have limited space in their vehicles, please reference the *Safe Parking Program Wish List* to ensure you are collecting needed items.

**Where is the Balboa Lot located?** The Safe Parking Program is located at Jewish Family Service of San Diego's Joan and Irwin Jacobs Campus at 8804 Balboa Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123.

**Where should volunteers park?** We ask volunteers to park in the JFS lot at the front of the JFS buildings along Balboa Avenue. The spaces between and behind our buildings are reserved for the Dreams for Change families.

**Where do volunteers check in?** At 5:30pm, we welcome you to check in at the rear entrance to JFS. When you walk all the way back between the two JFS buildings, you will see a door just off the patio on the left where a JFS representative will welcome your group.

**How do I sign up my group to volunteer?** Visit [www.jfssd.org/safeparkingprogramapp](http://www.jfssd.org/safeparkingprogramapp)

**Who can I contact with additional questions?** Carole Yellen at [caroley@jfssd.org](mailto:caroley@jfssd.org) or (858) 637-3395



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