

The background is a collage of three photographs: a person in a canoe on a lake, a large brick house with a porch, and a group of people sitting at a picnic table in a garden. Overlaid on these are large, semi-transparent geometric shapes in shades of teal, blue, and orange. A large, faint 'ACT FIVE' logo is visible in the upper right.

ACT FIVE RESIDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026



Welcome to Act Five!

Greetings from the Head of the Lake!

As the Act Five staff team, it is a pleasure to be able to invite you to join us for a year (or more!) of living in community, practicing the way of Jesus in Hamilton, and journeying with us through some incredible opportunities. We believe this experience will shape you and inspire you into whatever lies beyond this year. We are eager to get to know you over the course of our time together.

This document will prepare you for 8 months at Act Five, where you will:

- *live with 15-20 people in downtown Hamilton*
- *wrestle with new ideas and experience new challenges*
- *grow in your relationship with God as a follower of Jesus*
- *experience mentorship and opportunities for spiritual formation*
- *practice rhythms and routines that shape you toward a life with God*

Please read through this document carefully as we want to set you up as best as possible for a great year. Life in community while you work or study, getting to know a new neighbourhood, and all the layers that this year will entail – it will shape you in significant ways. This handbook will prepare you to enter into this adventure with us!

We are excited for all the possibilities ahead, and we're glad you've chosen to be here.

Sincerely,
The Act Five Team



Table of Contents

Mission & Goals	4
Act Five Contacts	5
Program Expectations - Community Life & Policies	6
Mentorship & Rule of Life	6
On-Call	7
Worship	7
House Rules & Expectations	7
Cooking, Cleaning, & Being Good Neighbours	7
Curfew	7
Guests	8
Technology	8
Romantic Relationships	9
Mental Health Supports	9
Substance Use	10
Discrimination & Harassment	10
Consequences for Failing to Adhere to Expectations	10
Residency Program Retreats	11
Trips and Opportunities for Learning	11
75 Blake St - Details for the home.....	12
Use of Space	12
Furniture and Decorations	12
Renter's Insurance	12
Other Info	13
Bikes, Personal Vehicles, Laundry	13
Payment Information	13



Mission & Goals

All of what you find in this handbook is related to the following Mission and Goals:

Act Five's Mission is to offer young adults (that's you!) a year of transformative experiences that shape your faith, learning, character and future pathways.

Within this, you will

- *Reflect on your story and grow deeper in your Christian faith*
- *Imagine the world around you with fresh eyes*
- *Practice getting to know & love your neighbours*
- *Prepare for what lies ahead*

The goal of the Act Five Residency Program is to provide a formative community living experience for young adults who are pursuing study or work in the city of Hamilton through shared participation in the Act Five learning community. This is embodied through meals, times of prayer, recreation, practicing hospitality and community rhythms, joining for program events & outings, and more.





Act Five Contacts

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**For a full list of Act Five staff, visit the [MEET THE TEAM](#) page on our website.*



Program Expectations – Community Life & Policies

Remembering the mission and goals of Act Five and flowing out of our commitment as followers of Christ to

- ▶ *love the Lord with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength and*
- ▶ *love our neighbours as ourselves,*

we have laid out the following expectations:

MENTORSHIP & RULE OF LIFE

All residents will be mentored by an Act Five staff member, meeting monthly throughout the year. These meetings are a place for reflection, encouragement, personal growth, and goal-setting. Residents and their staff mentor will also use the space for discerning future pathways, and navigating conflicts and dynamics within the Act Five community as these things arise. Throughout the year, Residents work out a Rule of Life within Act Five's shared rhythms and values that will go with them into life beyond Act Five, and staff mentors support this process.



ON-CALL

Residents have the opportunity to spend two weekends per term (or more if desired) on-call for the Act Five Gap Year Program. This allows our Resident Leaders to take weekends off and gives the Residency Cohort opportunities to connect with gap year students, leading them in Saturday fun activities in the city and Sunday morning rhythms. They also act as the first response to needs within the home, alerting Act Five staff or emergency services if necessary.

If being on-call is something you are not interested in, please speak with the Program Manager early in the year to take your name off the list. All residents who participate in the on-call schedule will be trained appropriately.

WORSHIP

As a community, we are committed to regular times of prayer and worship. On Sunday evenings, Act Five holds a small prayer time in the home called 'Evensong' that involves song, prayer, scripture and reflection. Residents are expected to attend Evensong weekly on Sundays at 8pm. On Long Weekends, it happens on Mondays.

Church: Residents are encouraged to commit to meaningful engagement in a local church congregation. Act Five is part of the True City Network in Hamilton and will readily help you get connected to a church within the network, or beyond it. Sunday mornings, the community eats breakfast together before church. The Resident on-call is in charge of encouraging community members to join for breakfast and attend church.

HOUSE RULES & EXPECTATIONS

As part of setting expectations for Act Five, the Residency cohort will take part in forming a Community Covenant with all members of the household near the beginning of the year. This will involve commitments to how the community will seek to live together well.

Cooking, Cleaning, & Being Good Neighbours

As a community, we are committed to caring for the Act Five home. This includes making meals together, cleaning and maintaining the home and living as good neighbours on and around Blake St. Residents are expected to do their assigned chores to the best of their ability, and cook meals for the community on their assigned cooking day. Cooking days will be established early in September based on student and resident availability and schedules.

Curfew

Good rhythms of sleep and rest are important for our own personal wellness and for the health of the Act Five community. Therefore, the house will be quiet by 11pm.

Guests

Act Five loves having guests visit! Given the unique discipleship opportunity that comes with living in community, there are times when having guests works best. The best times for guests to join for a meal is Spaghetti Wednesday and weekends. Residents may have guests visit outside of these times, seeing that they inform members of the community ahead of time, and that the guest's visit does not impede programming that may be occurring in the home.

Anytime a guest stays overnight, please inform the Residence Manager and community members, as a courtesy to all residents.

When the Gap Year cohort is away, Residents are able and encouraged to invite guests more freely and outside of suggested hours.

TECHNOLOGY

The Act Five experience is greatly enriched when we carefully and intentionally choose how and when we use our personal devices and other technologies

Specifically, we believe our decisions around technology use impact our ability to

- ▶ form deep relationships
- ▶ learn to communicate and listen well to others
- ▶ learn to rest, be creative and listen to God's voice in our life.

In light of this, the expectations for Residents include:

- ▶ Residents are strongly encouraged to participate with Gap Year students in Tech-Free Wednesdays, with exceptions made for work or school that requires the use of a computer. If computer use is desired or required, the expectation is that the individual will use these devices in resident-only spaces (3rd floor or bedrooms) to honour those who are participating in the Tech Free day.
- ▶ Meal times, and all trips and retreats that residents participate in will be fully tech-free.
- ▶ Internet in the home will be turned off from 11pm to 6am each night.
- ▶ Residents are encouraged to periodically assess their screen time and tech habits and reflect on their impact on personal well-being, relationships, and the overall community

* **"Tech"** in Act Five refers to all electronic devices with screens (i.e. cell phones, smart watches, laptops, tablets, tv, video games, etc.) and does not include technology that does not have a screen (mp3 players, walkman, home phone, walkie talkie, toasters, bicycles, etc.)

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Act Five recognizes that romantic relationships are good and can have an important place within Christian community. At the same time, Act Five's Gap Year and Residency Programs are intensive experiences that require a high level of commitment and engagement. Therefore, romantic relationships between two residents at Act Five are discouraged in order to avoid distractions and prioritize the communal experience.

A Resident engaged in a romantic relationship outside of the home is encouraged to bring their partner into the fold of the Act Five community where possible. Romantic relationships that form both inside and outside of the home must maintain clear and respectful boundaries within the community to avoid creating discomfort for others. Residents should prioritize their commitment to the Community Covenant, ensuring that their relationship does not negatively interfere with their responsibilities to and participation in Act Five.

If a relationship forms between two residents, one person will be asked to move out at the next term interval (April, August, or December). Romantic relationships between residents and students are prohibited under all circumstances.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

All residential and leadership staff at Act Five are equipped to respond to mental health challenges as they arise.

While Act Five is committed to supporting all program participants, it is not unusual for young adults to benefit from further professional support along the way. Act Five will cover the cost of up to 4 sessions of anonymous, confidential and professional counseling services (either in-person or virtual) through Shalem Mental Health Network.

A collection of health resources is accessible to all in the Act Five home, in a binder titled "Act Five Health Resources". Residents will be informed of the location of this binder upon move-in.

Shalem Mental Health Network

To set up counselling appointments in Hamilton, contact [Shalem](#):

- ▶ By phone at 905.528.0353 or 1.866.347.0041
- ▶ By email at office@shalemnetwork.org
- ▶ By text (to initiate the process) at 289.335.3543

SUBSTANCE USE

The Act Five home and all program events, including free time and weekends, will be free of all illicit drugs and alcohol. Off-use prescription drugs are also unacceptable. Smoking or vaping of tobacco or cannabis is prohibited during the entirety of the Act Five program. This includes cigarettes, cigars, pipes, electronic cigarettes, and any other smoking or vaping devices.

Residents, as members of the Act Five community, are encouraged to consider their conduct and act responsibly during their time away from the home.

Note: Act Five does not treat substance use, abuse, or addiction as a moral issue, and does not expect perfection. Act Five recognizes that individuals may face challenges and struggles related to substance use. Residents using any of the aforementioned substances who desire support are welcome to reach out to an Act Five staff member who can walk with the individual towards wholeness and well-being. Act Five strives to create a space where students and residents feel safe to seek support in addressing substance-related concerns.

DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT

In the spirit of respect and care for each individual, discrimination and harassment of any form are not tolerated. A resident who feels they may have experienced discrimination or harassment within the Act Five community is encouraged to speak with any member of the Act Five staff team so that appropriate actions may be taken.

CONSEQUENCES FOR FAILING TO ADHERE TO EXPECTATIONS

We hold high expectations for shared life at Act Five. Our staff respond as a team when a student or resident fails to adhere to community expectations. We operate under a progressive discipline model whereby we:

- ▶ Clearly articulate the expectations and identify the breach
- ▶ Work together with the individual to find restoration
- ▶ Schedule regular follow up check-in's and create a plan to move forward

In the event that an issue persists, and in certain, rare circumstances where it is no longer in the best interest of a resident or the community to remain in Act Five, they may be asked to move-out at the end of the term.

RESIDENCY PROGRAM RETREATS

December 4-5 and April 18 are important retreats designed specifically for the Residency Program. These will be times for reflection, community-building, and learning together. Locations for these retreats will be communicated well ahead of time.

TRIPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

Throughout the year, there are opportunities for Residents to join the Act Five Gap Year Program on various trips and learning activities at an added cost. More information on each trip can be found on our website.

Oct 16 & Nov 4	Day Trips to Six Nations for Indigenous Learning
Oct 30-Nov 1	Trip to Windstone Farm
Nov 12-16	Trip to Manitoulin Island
Nov 26	Listening Prayer Retreat
Dec 2-4	Amazing Race
January dates TBD	Trip to North Carolina with World Renew Disaster Response Services, or to Thunder Bay with Living Hope Native Ministries (TBD according to interest)
Feb 20 & 21	True City Conference
Feb 25-28	Coldwater Canada Winter Camping Trip
Mar 20-22	Russet House Farm
Apr 6-11	Coldwater Canada Backpacking Trip in Virginia

**there may be sessions, lessons, or other opportunities for learning throughout the year (e.g. Winter Learning Series, public storytelling nights, etc.) that will be presented to Residents as they arise.*



75 BLAKE ST – DETAILS FOR THE HOME

Notes about Use of Space

1. **Physical Space** – The hope is that each cohort of residents will leave the Act Five home in better shape than when arriving.

As part of the program deposit, residents pay a damage deposit of \$100. Should rooms or common spaces be damaged or unclean upon move out, part or all of this deposit will be withheld.
2. **Personal Space** – With ~20 people living in one home, we will be committed to protecting times for residents to have their own personal space. This will be established through scheduling and setting up distinct rooms for quiet, as well as trusted spaces away from the home that residents can retreat to for nights or weekends if necessary. There will also be chunks of time when the gap year cohort is away, leaving residents with substantial quiet space in the home.
3. **Male/Female Accommodations** – Male and female residents and students reside on different floors of the Act Five home, and residents are asked to respect each other's privacy by refraining from entering other residence spaces.

FURNITURE AND DECORATIONS

The home is fully furnished with beds, desks, dressers, closet space, tables, chairs, couches, coffee tables, bookshelves, kitchenware and cleaning supplies.

Please do not bring additional furniture (couches, chairs, mattresses), pets, air conditioners, firearms/weapons of any kind, or candles/incense.

You may not nail or drill holes in the wall, or add room accessories with permanent hardware.

You may not change any permanent features of the home unless given consent from the Residence Manager.

RENTER'S INSURANCE

Renter's insurance covers your personal belongings in the event that they are stolen or damaged (each policy will state how and what they will cover). Act Five does not have insurance that covers the property of residents, and recommends that residents obtain their own.

OTHER INFORMATION

Bikes – Act Five encourages the use of PRESTO cards (bus passes) or SoBi bikes for getting around Hamilton’s urban centre. Act Five has storage space for personal bicycles.

Personal Vehicles – If you wish to bring your own vehicle, you are welcome to do so but must inform Act Five staff ahead of time. Some parking is available at the Act Five home, as well as limited street parking.

Laundry – There is easy access to laundry machines in the Act Five house, as well as local laundromats.

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Rent prices are standardized, and then negotiated with each tenant according to room size and number of roommates. Monthly rent payments can be made to Act Five Initiatives with online banking, Credit Card, Pre-Authorized Direct Debit (PAD), debit, or cheque. Payments must be made by the first of each month.

For all new residents, a \$100 damage deposit is required by August 1.

This can be paid at <https://actfive.ca/tenants-deposit/> or by e-transfer to finance@actfive.ca with a note that says “Damage Deposit – Residency Program”.

Residents will receive a lease agreement to be signed prior to move-in, as well as a monthly invoice for payment.

Questions regarding payments can be directed to finance@actfive.ca.





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