AAMV Collaborates with AAM to Present Volunteer Management Webinar

In collaboration with the American Association for Museum Volunteers, the American Alliance of Museums has created an exciting new educational opportunity. Planning or Transforming Your Museum Volunteer Program Infrastructure—a live 90-minute webinar on Wednesday, December 5—is designed exclusively for museum volunteer program managers, supervisors, directors, and anyone who wants to take a closer look at what works, what needs improvement, and how to maximize strengths and opportunities.

Two expert presenters and AAMV board members—Debbie Young, director of volunteer services, Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, and Robbin Davis, director of visitor services, Oklahoma History Center—will guide participants through analysis of a volunteer program and frame the strategic plan, goals, and metrics for continuous advancement. You’ll learn how to plan or update infrastructure, make purposeful changes, be more efficient and effective in managing volunteers and the programs they serve, and assess the impact of your program and volunteers across museum functions.

Produced and sponsored by LearningTimes, the webinar will feature text chat, audience interactivity, Closed-Captioning, and access to presentation handouts and other resources. All Alliance (formerly American Association of Museums) webinars are recorded and archived for later on-demand access.

The webinar is scheduled for 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Eastern time. Registration is free for staff of the Alliance’s Tier 3 museum members; $25 for staff of Tier 2 museum members, individual members, and AAMV members; and $50 for staff of Tier 1 members and nonmembers. Register today at http://aam-us.org/resources/online-learning/museum-volunteer-program. For more information, contact registration@aam-us.org or 866–226–2150. To register as an AAMV member, use the code AAMV.
In recent weeks I have been reminded of what I value about my AAMV membership as I have followed a great exchange of information on our listserv about training: the pros and cons of putting training online and how to ensure that volunteers get the best training for the roles they will be performing. These days we have some incredible resources that can make it easier for volunteers to access all sorts of information electronically, and sometimes using this technology can help us with training and orientations when dates we set are impossible for the busy lives of volunteers who need to attend.

But as participants in the listserv exchange so wisely point out, training volunteers for most tasks in a museum cannot be done simply by asking them to log on to a computer and read something or watch a video. And there is no how-to book or online session that will give volunteers the skills they need to work with the diversity of people who come through their museum’s doors. In addition, how we use technology, design training classes, or foster on-the-job training will depend on the resources and needs of our individual museums.

Every time I visit the listserv, I am impressed by the depth of experience AAMV members bring to the discussions. And the voices of docents as well as volunteer program managers can certainly add to the different perspectives on any topic. So keep up the discussion, do not be shy about throwing out an idea or a question, and use this valuable and lively online community to network with your colleagues throughout the country in all kinds of museums.

If you are not yet on our listserv or have trouble accessing it, please contact the administrator, Steven Dugan, at s.dugan@homesteadmuseum.org. He will be happy to help you join in the dialogue.

Lois Kuter
AAMV President,
Volunteer Coordinator, Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University,
Philadelphia, kuter@ansp.org


This AAMV publication stimulates creative thinking about finding, training, supervising, and supporting volunteers in a changing environment. Purchase your copy for $29.95 at www.authorhouse.com, or visit the AAMV website at www.aamv.org for more information and a link to order the book.
Social Media and Volunteer Management: An Uneasy Relationship

Social media have untapped potential to promote the valuable bridge-building work of volunteer program managers, according to recent research. In “Bridging Between Organizations and the Public: Volunteer Coordinators’ Uneasy Relationship with Social Computing” (http://bit.ly/T5ac9o), authors Amy Voids, Ellie Harmon, and Ban Al-Ani offer strategies for using platforms like Facebook and Twitter to build connections and community among volunteers while reaching out to new demographics, especially younger people. Conducting broadcast-style recruitment via social media doesn’t serve the needs of most nonprofits, but deepening volunteer engagement has long-term promise.

Museums that take a community-building approach to Facebook include the Minnesota Children’s Museum (MCM) in St. Paul and the Family Museum in Bettendorf, Iowa. MCM uses Facebook to recognize volunteers, promote museum events, and share resources. This fall, a college-age social media intern is developing and managing Facebook content. Of the museum’s nearly 1,200 volunteers, 200 to 300 have joined the Facebook group. “We’re pretty successful, but we could do better,” says volunteer services manager Jay Haapala. At the Family Museum, Facebook is a forum for volunteers to connect with each other, share information, and hear news from volunteer coordinator Kristina Bouxsein. She handles updates, posting several times a month. Neither museum recruits on Facebook, except occasionally for a special event.

Both museums see Facebook as a way to reach younger volunteers—and at MCM, that means most of the volunteer corps, since 82 percent are 25 or younger. The advantage, Bouxsein says, is having an easy way to communicate. “It really doesn’t take much time, and it’s a fun tool to have.” “You have to break a few eggs to make the cake,” Haapala says. “If you’re focused and creative, and if you target the content to your volunteers’ interests, you can have a good return on the investment.”

On Facebook, search for Minnesota Children’s Museum Volunteers and Family Museum Volunteers.

Museum Volunteer Wins Statewide Honor

Volunteering has been a lifelong, rewarding pursuit for Richard Small, who enjoys bringing his diverse knowledge and interests to organizations in and around Indianapolis. For 28 years, he has been a dedicated volunteer at the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis, where he has contributed more than 5,000 hours teaching young visitors. This year the 87-year-old retired research toxicologist received Indiana’s Golden Hoosier Award, which honors seniors for outstanding service to their communities.

Small’s wide-ranging interests make him a versatile volunteer throughout the museum, most recently in the All Aboard! exhibit, where he portrays the conductor and introduces visitors to an 1890s steam-powered locomotive.

“It is hard to measure the impact someone like Richard can make over the course of a lifetime,” says Debbie Young, director of volunteer services. “He sets an outstanding example to anyone, young or old, about what you can do with your life, and he has touched the lives of thousands in the community.”

Museums Make Us Happy

Visiting a museum contributes to people’s happiness, according to recent data on cultural participation in England. The national Taking Part study from the Department of Culture, Media, and Sport reports that “engagement with a wide range of cultural activities, including heritage, arts, and museums and galleries was . . . associated with significantly higher levels of subjective happiness.” This ongoing survey also asks about motivations and barriers to engagement and collects valuable demographic information. The happiness finding is consistent with what Britain’s Museums Association is hearing through Museums 2020, its nationwide future-of-museums initiative. And it’s certainly consistent with what volunteers and staff hope visitors will feel after spending a few hours in their museums. For more about Taking Part: http://bit.ly/W0YDRb.
Why Volunteering in Museums Is Amazing!

Seth Kaplan  
Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University

As you read this, there’s a man driving a 1937 trolley in Maryland. There’s a woman in Washington cleaning fossils from the Mesozoic era, while a teen in Boston teaches local school children about Matisse. There’s a girl in Philadelphia caring for venomous insects, while another in South Dakota is helping anthropologists dig up Sioux artifacts. These jobs and people may sound wildly different, but they are all museum volunteers.

The following list of volunteer roles is a sample from just several dozen of the thousands of museums in the U.S. and Canada. While some jobs are found in nearly all museums, others are uniquely suited to a particular type of institution. The diversity of roles volunteers play reflects the diversity of museums and our creativity in engaging volunteers in our work.

Administrative Volunteers: General office assistance (answer phones, filing, etc.).
Aquarium Interpreter: Teach visitors about marine wildlife using live aquatic animals.
Archaeology Project Volunteer: Assist in the various aspects of archaeological surveys and excavations.
Assessment Facilitator/Visitor Survey Taker: Help find out what visitors like most about the museum.
Aviation Restoration: Assist with the restoration of antique aircraft like a Piedmont Airlines DC-3.
Audiovisual Assistant: Assist in the setup and breakdown of audiovisual equipment for public presentations.
Birthday Buddy: Help organize, set up, and host children’s birthday parties.
Butterflies Volunteer: Teach visitors about various species of butterflies and moths in a live butterfly garden.
Café Assistant: Assist with the operation of the restaurant: serving food, restocking supplies, washing dishes, etc.
Carousel Carver: Help restore and maintain antique carousels by carving new animals and decorations for them.
Concierge: Provide visitors with information about the museum and its surrounding area.
Culinary Volunteer: Cook or bake various treats for museum programs, community events, and food donations.
Curatorial: Assist with the maintenance, repair, and storage of collections and records.
Docent: Provide guests with information about the exhibit or museum and/or give tours of the exhibit or museum.
Education Assistant: Schedule tours, respond to public inquiries, and provide administrative assistance.
Forensic Anthropology Lab Volunteer: Provide visitors with information about forensic anthropology using hands-on activities.
Glassblowing Studio Volunteer: Help instructors give lessons in the art of glassblowing.
Group Greeters: Meet group leaders when they arrive to provide information, and escort them to their destination.
Historical Reenactors: Give tours in period costume and character.
Horticulture: Assist in the maintenance of a living botanical collection by working in a greenhouse, potting, planting, and weeding.
Interviewer/Transcriber: Interview World War II veterans and record their stories for future generations.
Live Animal Center Volunteer: Help care for a variety of exotic animals, and assist in feedings and cleaning of cages.
Maintenance and Restoration Crew: Help restore the streetcar collections, structures, and operating equipment.
Mascot and Mascot Assistant: Become your museum’s mascot; assist the mascot in travel.
Motorman/Engineer/Driver: Operate antique cars, streetcars, and trains for public tours and rides.
Insect Zoo Volunteer: Teach visitors about various insects using live ones as learning tools.
Paleo Lab Volunteer: Assist in fossil preparation by cataloging, organizing, and cleaning.
Photographer: Preserve the museum’s collections on film, and create a portfolio of the collections, exhibits, and programs.
Performer: Perform for special groups, parties, and events, either as a solo musician or part of a larger ensemble.
Public Affairs: Assist with the preparation of press packets; help with special events, media relations, and general office work.
Registrarial Associate: Assist with the preparation of incoming and outgoing loan requests; make transportation arrangements for loans and new acquisitions.
Retail Assistants: Assist with the cleaning, ordering, organizing, inventory, and sales of merchandise in the museum shop.
Sail and Maintenance Crew: Help build, sail, and maintain replica ships from the late 18th and early 19th centuries.
Security Volunteers: Assist museum security department; monitor cameras, patrol museum interior on foot, perform various administrative and special projects.
Seamstress: Assist by sewing, weaving, and knitting to create reproduction clothing and home furnishings.

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**Storytime Reader**: Read stories to visitors; use props and puppets for younger audiences.

**Street Team Volunteer**: Represent the museum at local community events and schools, speaking about the museum’s educational programs and events.

**Translator**: Interpret various languages to discuss exhibits with non-English speaking visitors.

**Website Maintenance**: Maintain the museum’s website, keep it updated with new information, and make sure it is attractive and easy to negotiate.

_Seth Kaplan was the volunteer program assistant at the Academy of Natural Sciences museum in Philadelphia. As a co-op student from Drexel University for six months, he was engaged in a number of research projects as well as everyday operation of the volunteer program._

**Leveraging Volunteer Data**


By collecting and analyzing volunteer demographic data, you can create usable tools for evaluation, decision making, and planning, says nonprofit blogger Shawn Kendrick. You’ll learn more about your volunteer base so you can capitalize on their strengths, and you’ll also be able to develop more effective recruitment strategies.

**Volunteer Engagement Secrets from Burning Man**


Volunteer activity drives the success of Burning Man, considered the largest participatory cultural event in the nation. Robert Rosenthal lists nine engagement tips every volunteer program could use.

**How One Museum Uses Pinterest**

http://bit.ly/T50ELw

Creative use of Pinterest streamlines day-to-day tasks for the Museum of Art and History at the McPherson Center in Santa Cruz, CA. Pinterest’s boards have become a virtual community where the small staff and more than two dozen interns share ideas and invite feedback.

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**Calendar**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small Museum Association</td>
<td><a href="http://www.smallmuseum.org">www.smallmuseum.org</a></td>
<td>February 17–19, Ocean City, MD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Association of Children’s Museums</td>
<td><a href="http://www.childrensmuseums.org">www.childrensmuseums.org</a></td>
<td>April 30–May 2, Pittsburgh, PA</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Alliance of Museums</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aam-us.org">www.aam-us.org</a></td>
<td>May 19–22, Baltimore, MD</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>American Public Gardens Association</td>
<td><a href="http://www.publicgardens.org">www.publicgardens.org</a></td>
<td>May 20–24, Phoenix, AZ</td>
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<tr>
<td>Association of Midwest Museums (AMM)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.midwestmuseums.org">www.midwestmuseums.org</a></td>
<td>July 14–17, Madison, WI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Association of Zoos &amp; Aquariums (AZA)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.aza.org">www.aza.org</a></td>
<td>September 7–12, Kansas City, MO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mountain-Plains Museums Association (MPMA)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mpma.net">www.mpma.net</a></td>
<td>September 30–October 3, Lincoln, NE</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)</td>
<td><a href="http://aaslh.org">http://aaslh.org</a></td>
<td>September 18–21, Birmingham, AL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums (MAAM)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.midatlanticmuseums.org">www.midatlanticmuseums.org</a></td>
<td>October, dates TBA, Washington, DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Museums Association (WMA)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wstmuse.org">www.wstmuse.org</a></td>
<td>October 9–12, Salt Lake City, UT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.astc.org">www.astc.org</a></td>
<td>October 19–22, Albuquerque, NM</td>
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<tr>
<td>New England Museum Association (NEMA)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nemanet.org">www.nemanet.org</a></td>
<td>November 13–15, Newport, RI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.semcdirect.net">www.semcdirect.net</a></td>
<td>Dates TBA, Savannah, GA</td>
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What is AAMV?

There are more than one million volunteers and volunteer program managers in all categories of museums in the United States. Founded in 1979, the American Association for Museum Volunteers (AAMV) is America’s only national association dedicated to the paid and unpaid museum staff who work together. AAMV is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

Who are AAMV Members?

We are volunteers, docents, and paid museum staff who bring a wealth of experience and ideas in promoting volunteerism in museums and in starting or improving museum volunteer programs. We welcome members from zoos and aquariums, botanical gardens, historic houses, and other cultural organizations with an educational mission.

What does AAMV do?

• Promotes professional standards of volunteerism
• Provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and information
• Offers opportunities for continuing education through panel discussion and workshops at local, regional and national conferences
• Encourages volunteers and volunteer managers to become familiar with project and programs both locally and nationally
• Informs and supports museums and volunteerism in advocacy for legislation at local and national levels
• Accomplishes these goals in cooperation with museum directors, staff and boards of trustees

Membership Benefits …

• Participation in a vibrant Members-Only listserv
• Quarterly newsletter
• Access to information to create and sustain a museum volunteer program
• Opportunities to take part in workshops and presentations at state, regional, and national meetings
• Access to state and regional representatives as well as a nationwide network of volunteer management professionals and experienced volunteers
• Advance notice of AAMV publications, such as Transforming Museum Volunteering, plus workshops, presentations, and meetings

Become an AAMV Member Today!

Name ____________________________ Institutional Affiliation ____________________________ Date __________

Mailing Address ____________________________

Phone ____________________________ Fax ____________________________ E-mail ____________________________

Volunteer ☐ Staff ☐ Title (if staff) ____________________________ Department ____________________________

Check here if you would like to be added to the listserv ☐

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>$35</td>
<td>Make checks payable to AAMV. (Membership by PayPal is available online at <a href="http://www.aamv.org">www.aamv.org</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Group*</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>If you have any questions about your membership send an email to Lois Kuter at <a href="mailto:kuter@ansp.org">kuter@ansp.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor **</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>*Allows 3 individuals from same institution access to AAMV listserv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Contribution</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>**Individual membership plus $65 deductible contribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Send membership applications to: AAMV, P. O. Box 9494, Washington, DC 20016