

# Volunteer Communication Survey Results

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In response to Hillwood's closure and subsequent phased reopening due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hillwood deployed a weekly volunteer email to better deepen volunteer engagement during this time of social distancing. Naturally, we were curious to understand how effective the new emails were for volunteers. Hillwood conducted a survey over the summer to learn what worked well with this new approach and what suggestions volunteers had for future communication. A review of the survey results is below:



*In the Gardens*, one of the most popular links featured in the volunteer weekly email

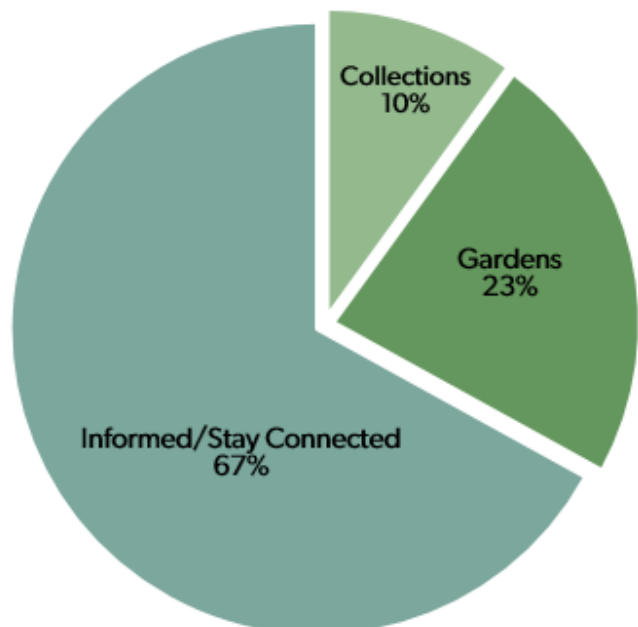
From mid-August through mid-September, 128 volunteers (42% of the volunteer cohort) participated in a survey regarding Hillwood's volunteer communication. Of those who took the survey, we heard from volunteers in roles across campus, from horticulture to interpretation to administrative. We saw overwhelmingly positive responses in regards to the content and format: 98% rated the weekly emails informative or very informative and 100% rated the design layout easy to read and navigate.

The weekly emails featured new, educational content covering horticulture, collections, volunteer spotlights, general news/updates, and videos during a 16-week period in the spring and early summer of 2020. Across the board, the article topics ranked high regarding volunteer satisfaction. The most popular articles and videos were the *Zoomside Chat with Executive Director Kate Markert*, *In the Gardens with Drew Asbury*, and the volunteer spotlights. The survey responses support what we have seen in email usage. The engagement rate (the number of volunteers who have clicked on a link in an email divided by the number of emails opened) increased 12% compared to volunteer emails sent in 2019.

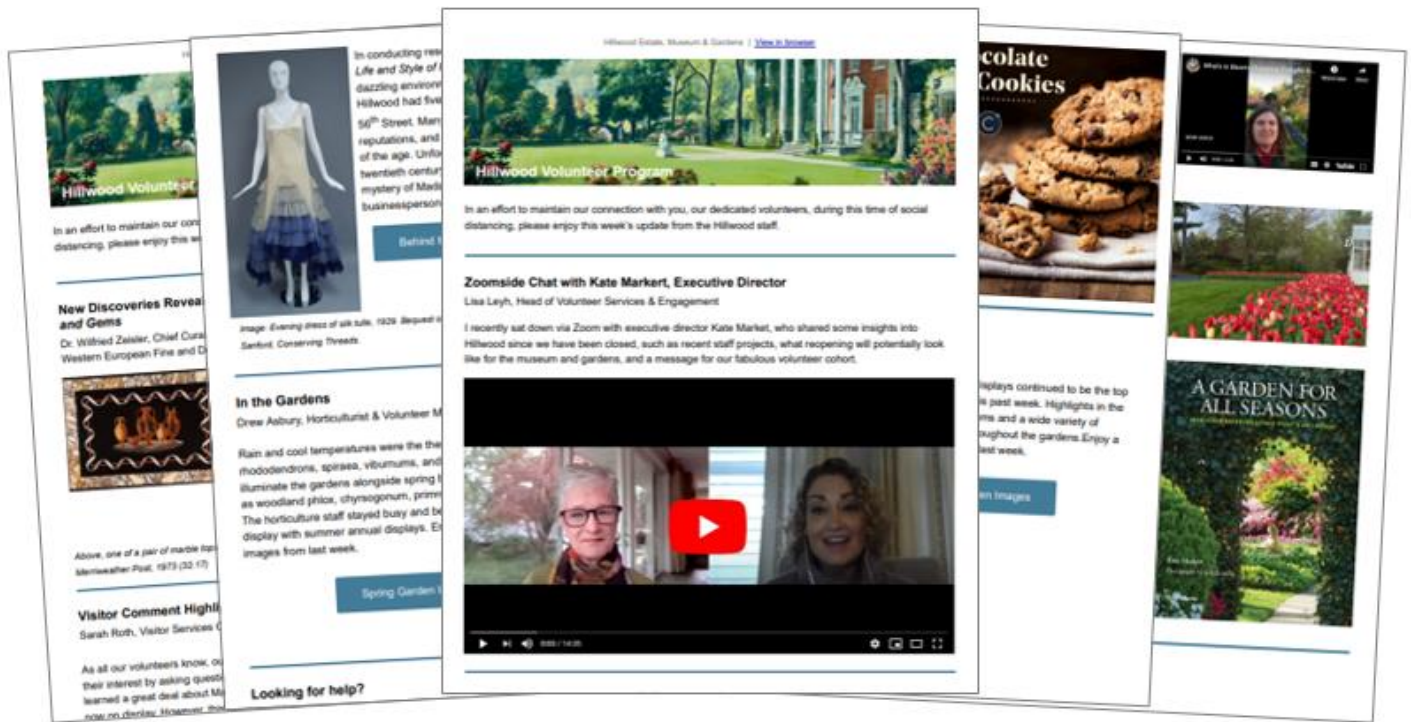
There were a number of "keeps" in response to what volunteers enjoyed the most about the weekly emails, such as the beautiful garden images and educational collection articles, but the biggest take away for volunteers was staying informed and connected to Hillwood with 67% of the volunteers citing this benefit. Repeatedly, volunteers shared comments similar to the examples below:

- "To be honest...still feeling a connection to Hillwood was most important and then the fact that Hillwood was really stepping up and reminding its volunteers how much the museum cares about those who are essential to its continued success...both inside and out...especially during this very difficult time!"
- "I enjoyed being kept 'in the loop' and the news seemed so current. Staff worked very hard to keep things fluid and interesting for anyone who wanted to stay involved with Hillwood during our absence from the campus and I did stay involved!"
- "Learning that there still was life beyond the walls of my house in spite of the difficult COVID situation."

What did you enjoy the most about the weekly volunteer emails?



The survey also helped capture suggestions and expectations for volunteer monthly communication moving forward. Overall, the volunteer suggestions reiterated the desire to keep the same range of topics with requests for tips for seasonal arrangements from the gardeners, continued staff department spotlights, frequent updates on Hillwood's operations, and more collection related articles from the curators.



A sampling of weekly volunteer emails, featuring articles, videos, and news.

Your insight has been tremendously helpful as we continue to hone our volunteer communication efforts. We are eager to begin incorporating your feedback in the volunteer emails in the months to come. Thank you for participating in the survey and taking the time to share your thoughts with us. Though the survey has officially closed, please feel free to continue to share feedback with us at [volunteers@hillwoodmuseum.org](mailto:volunteers@hillwoodmuseum.org). Until we can be back together again in person, we look forward to connect with you online.

### Missed an email?

Visit [Stay Connected: Volunteer Email](#) on the volunteer website for an archive of articles, images, and videos shared in the volunteer email and catch up on any reading you may have missed.