



Happy New Year!

As many of us are breathing a deep sigh of relief to be leaving 2020 behind, we wanted to take this moment to thank you for your steadfast dedication during these trying times. The many challenges brought by this pandemic has been easier to tackle with the unwavering support of our incredible volunteers. Through your kind words, socially distant visits, gracious financial support, and new virtual volunteer roles, you have helped maintain Hillwood's mission in serving our community. On behalf of the Hillwood staff and board, thank you for being there for us. With you by our side, we will continue to respond to the challenges COVID has brought with grace and positivity.

Please enjoy reading this month's volunteer email, featuring news and updates from the Hillwood staff.

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## EARLY CLOSING

As a public health precaution in response to COVID-19, Hillwood closed to the public on December 24. This early closing has led into our annual January closure, during which we complete a thorough cleaning of the collections that allows Hillwood to maintain the standards expected by our visitors.

We greatly appreciate your support during this time and have sought to be a place of respite and rejuvenation. We are monitoring the situation closely and will notify all volunteers regarding any changes in our operating status. We hope you will continue to [stay engaged with Hillwood from home](#) through our comprehensive digital offerings, including the extensive online collections, educational video library, immersive mobile app, and virtual programming.

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## VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMMING

This winter offers a variety of exciting virtual education and programming for volunteers. Please mark your calendars and join us online for these upcoming sessions this month and next.

### **Virtual Volunteer Business Meeting** **Wednesday, January 27 (3:30 p.m.)**

Please join us for the Virtual Volunteer Business Meeting on Wednesday, January 27 at 3:30 p.m. Hosted virtually via Zoom, the meeting will provide volunteers with the opportunity to learn about

Hillwood's new strategic plan, important updates, and major projects for the year ahead. The meeting is scheduled to run about 1 hour and 20 minutes and will include time for volunteers to submit questions via the Q&A feature.

A Zoom link with the meeting instructions will be emailed closer to the program date. The business meeting will be recorded and the video link shared via email and posted on the volunteer website.

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## Flowers in February

**Tuesdays, February 2, 9, 16 and 23 (10:30 a.m.)**

Please note this program has been updated with a **new start time of 10:30 a.m.** Immerse yourself in flowers this February and join Drew Asbury, Hillwood's horticulturist and volunteer manager, for a four-part webinar series focused solely on flowers! Utilizing Hillwood's cutting garden as the inspiration, learn about some of Hillwood's favorite cool season and warm season flowers and be inspired to design your very own garden full of flowers. Each week, we will dive deeper into the world of flowers and Drew will answer your questions in real time while he shares lessons learned from his ever-evolving approach to managing Hillwood's cutting garden. All volunteers are invited to attend and more details and a Zoom link with the meeting instructions will be emailed closer to the program date.

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## Hillwood Huddle

**Wednesday, February 24 (3 p.m.)**

During this 30-minute informal session, volunteers and staff will have the opportunity to reconnect virtually with one another over Zoom and share their passion for all things Hillwood. Participants will be divided into smaller breakout rooms. Halfway through the 30-minute program, the breakout rooms will be "reshuffled," allowing volunteers to mix and mingle with a larger number of volunteers.

Advance registration is required. [Click here to RSVP for the February 24 Hillwood Huddle](#). Once your registration is confirmed, you will receive via email the Zoom link and meeting instructions.

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## 2020 VISITATION RECAP

In 2020, Hillwood welcomed 34,847 onsite visitors, with October being our busiest month. Thanks to the hard work of our staff, we quickly and safely shifted our on-site operations to include social distance best practices once we reopened our gates in June and launched a variety of virtual programs to engage with visitors at home. [Read more to learn about our visitation recap from 2020 and feedback from the visitor experience.](#)

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## STAFF UPDATE

The theme of 2020 has been "pivot" and as we have all shifted our work, these pivots have created new opportunities for growth. Join us in congratulating the following staff members who are expanding their roles and pivoting in new directions in 2021.

**Brian Greenfield, Sr. Head of Engineering and Sustainability:** Brian's new title recognizes the important work he has been driving as part of Hillwood's "Green Team." The improvements Brian has been able to enact have led to dramatic reductions in our energy usage year over year and his focus on supplemental recycling programs have helped us all keep more waste out of landfills. Brian will continue to keep sustainability at the forefront of all Hillwood's projects and help us better utilize our natural resources.

**George Sokol, IT Supervisor:** Last year, the IT Team quickly jumped into action to support Hillwood's work from home program. Showing great initiative and creativity in finding new solutions for us all as we all practiced social distance, both on site and off, George has given his all and has been instrumental in improving IT operations and finding new ways for everyone to stay connected. George has demonstrated great leadership during this time and will be using those leadership skills as he oversees the IT technician role.

**Erin Lourie, Head of Adult Audiences:** In 2020, Erin has reinvented adult programs, taking them from on-site events and transforming them into relevant, engaging virtual experiences. She oversaw all aspects of this transformation to virtual programming. She built upon her partnerships with horticulture and curatorial staff to determine with them what stories to tell and activities to do online, and how best to execute these new endeavors. She mastered new technologies, ranging from Zoom to Photoshop, and helped others do the same. All the while, she was also developing new "broadcaster" skills, as the MC for virtual programs, to engage virtual visitors during programs. Erin is currently recruiting a diverse pool of speakers and performers for 2021's program offerings.

**Rebecca Singer, Head of Youth Audiences:** Rebecca revamped youth programs last year, immediately recognizing the writing on the wall with the shift to stay-at-home work and school, children would need to be engaged virtually. She quickly created three virtual field trips, initiated Hillwood's partnership with the DC Collaborative's Arts and Humanities for Every Student to reach DCPS teachers and students (with whom the museum had had only limited engagement with in prior school years), and, by the end of the fall semester, had led almost 30 virtual field trips for over 500 DCPS students. She also experimented with how best to serve Hillwood's family audiences by moving a variety of family programs online, creating art-making tutorials and coloring pages and leading virtual family art tours and programs. Rebecca successfully launched Spooky Pooch Howl-o-ween Dog Costume Contest as a virtual program, creating new content and keeping Hillwood's pet enthusiasts engaged. Along the way, she developed skills to teach from screen to screen, rather than in-person.

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WEDNESDAYS WITH WILFRIED

Join Wilfried Zeisler, chief curator, as he explores objects in Hillwood's collection. Learn about a presentation box featuring miniatures of Nicholas I and Alexandra Feodorovna.



*Click above to watch the video*

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## IN THE GARDENS

Winter seems to have officially arrived this past month and it greeted us with a light coating of snow in the gardens in mid-December. Despite the wintry and cold conditions, there is still plenty of excitement to see and admire when walking through the gardens. [Please enjoy a few recent photos from the gardens.](#)



*Cattleya orchids blooming in the greenhouse*

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## STAFF HELP & RESOURCES

Thank you for being a part of the Hillwood community. Our "virtual doors" are always open. Feel free to reach us at [volunteers@hillwoodmuseum.org](mailto:volunteers@hillwoodmuseum.org).

-The Volunteer Support Team

Lisa Leyh, Drew Asbury, and Samantha Hernandez

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## HILLWOOD FROM HOME

You can continue to enjoy the museum and gardens through our comprehensive digital offerings, including the extensive online collections, educational video library, immersive mobile app, and virtual programming.

[Explore >](#)

## STAY CONNECTED

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.

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