

Visitor Services Volunteer Orientation  
Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens



May 2026

# Training Agenda

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- Volunteer Logistics
  - Shifts & Scheduling
  - Volgistics Overview and Live Demo
- Engaging with Visitors
- Parking
- Responding to an Incident
- Educational Resources
- Next Steps

# Volunteer Logistics: Shifts & Scheduling Procedures

# VSV Shift Overview



## Timeframe:

- 4-hour shifts, offered from:
  - 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
  - 1-5 p.m.
- Serve 2-4 shifts per month equating to approximately 100 service hours annually.



## Atmosphere:

- Work in teams of 4-5 volunteers per shift.



## Location:

- Split time between the visitor center and mansion.



# Volgistics

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Hillwood uses **Volgistics**, an online volunteer management software, to track and manage volunteer hours, information, and schedules.

## **From Home:**

- ❑ Volunteers can access the online portal to **schedule** shifts, **enter** hours, **view** and print service history, and **update** profile information.
- ❑ Available through a secure online site from any device.

## **From Hillwood:**

- ❑ Volunteers can **record** arrival and departure time for a shift and **view** scheduled shifts and service history.
- ❑ Available via iPads located on campus and QR codes.

# Prior to Service | New VSVs Receive



Volgistics PIN & login credentials



Instructions to create a permanent password and complete profile



Details regarding on-the-job training once first two shifts are confirmed



Further study guide for new volunteers

# Self-Scheduling Procedure

Volunteers begin scheduling shifts **about one month in advance**. To ensure a fair and balanced system for scheduling shifts, volunteers follow the below procedures:

## Round 1



**Who:** Veteran volunteers assigned to a **fixed day/schedule**

**When:** Day 1 – 5

## Round 2



**Who:** Volunteers assigned to a **floating schedule**; shifts may vary week to week

**When:** Starting Day 6

## Round 3



**Who:** **Open to all volunteers** for additional shifts

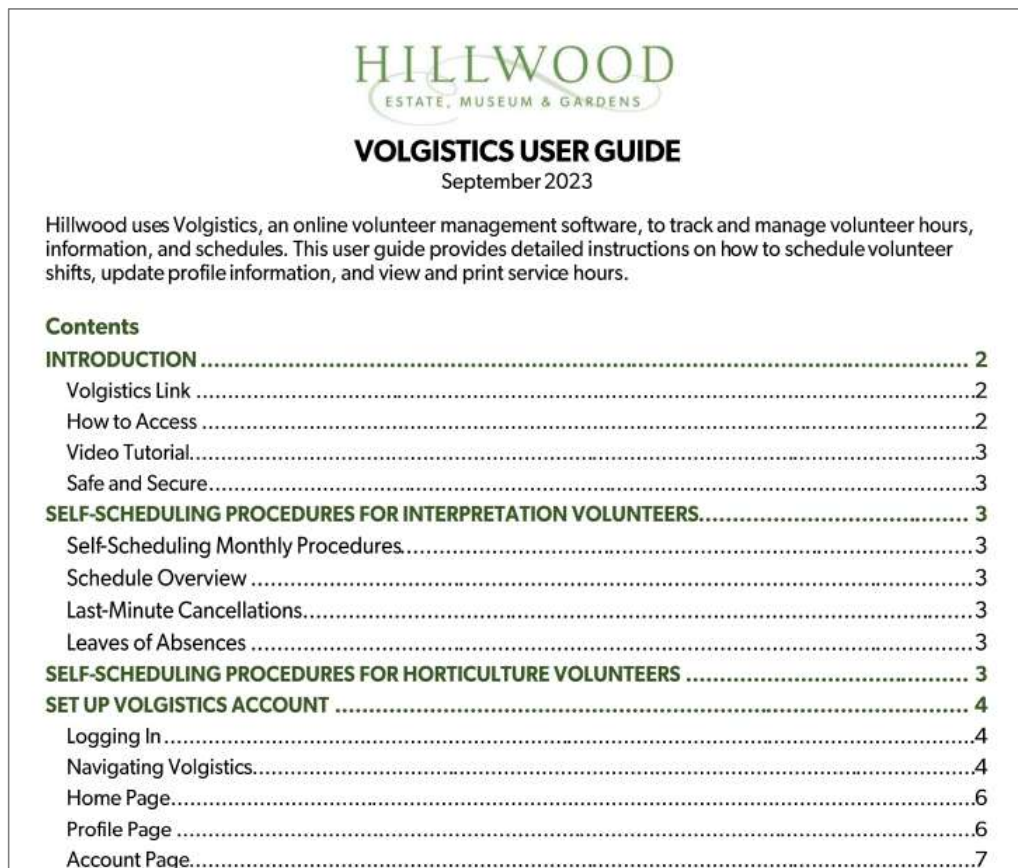
**When:** Starting Day 11



Email reminders with Volgistics links are sent for each round

# Volgistics User Guide

- Refer to Volgistics User Guide
- The guide offers detailed instructions for a variety of features in Volgistics, including:
  - Scheduling shifts
  - Canceling shifts
  - Updating your volunteer profile
  - Entering volunteer hours
  - Viewing and printing service history



**HILLWOOD**  
ESTATE, MUSEUM & GARDENS

**VOLGISTICS USER GUIDE**  
September 2023

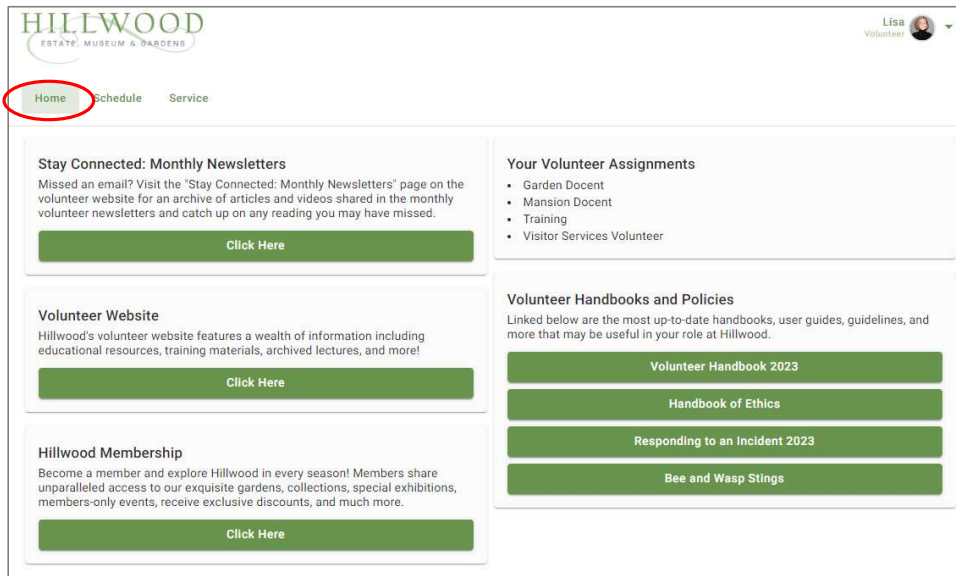
Hillwood uses Volgistics, an online volunteer management software, to track and manage volunteer hours, information, and schedules. This user guide provides detailed instructions on how to schedule volunteer shifts, update profile information, and view and print service hours.

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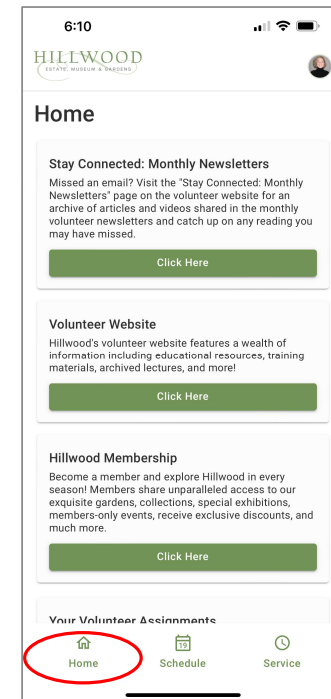
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# Home Page

**Desktop:** Use the tabs located at the top of the screen to navigate to the different sections.



**Mobile:** Use the tabs located at the bottom of the screen to navigate to the different sections.



# Volgistics Demonstration

# Last-Minute Cancellations

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All cancellations the day before or day of, please contact:

## **Volunteer Department**



**202.686.8528**



**[volunteers@hillwoodmuseum.org](mailto:volunteers@hillwoodmuseum.org)**

# Arriving at Hillwood

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Once you arrive at Hillwood, you'll start your shift by following these steps:

1

## Sign-in on iPad

Record your hours in real time upon arrival and departure using the iPads in the **visitor center kitchen** or **Butler's House volunteer lounge**. QR codes are also available to sign in/out on your mobile device.



2

## Review Volunteer Daily Schedule

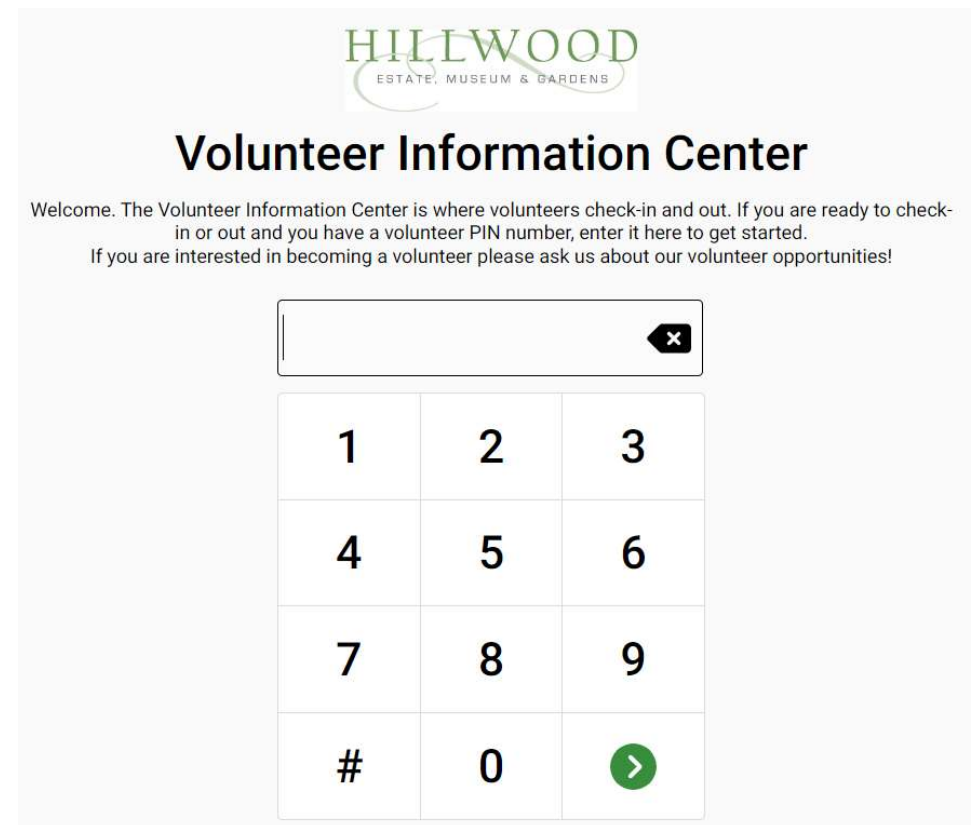
A detailed schedule noting volunteer shift times and locations, reminders for the day's activities, and scheduled groups can be found at the **tour desk** in the visitor center and volunteer lounge.



# Recording Hours On-Site

Sign-in iPads are located:

- ❑ Visitor center kitchen
- ❑ Butler's House volunteer lounge
- ❑ Greenhouse breakroom



The screenshot shows a digital sign-in interface for Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens. At the top is the logo with the text "HILLWOOD ESTATE, MUSEUM & GARDENS". Below the logo is the title "Volunteer Information Center". A welcome message reads: "Welcome. The Volunteer Information Center is where volunteers check-in and out. If you are ready to check-in or out and you have a volunteer PIN number, enter it here to get started. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please ask us about our volunteer opportunities!". Below the text is a text input field with a clear button (an 'x' in a black triangle) on the right. Underneath the input field is a numeric keypad with four rows of three buttons each. The buttons are labeled with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, #, and 0. The # button is on the bottom left and the 0 button is on the bottom middle. The rightmost button in the bottom row is a green circle containing a white right-pointing arrow.

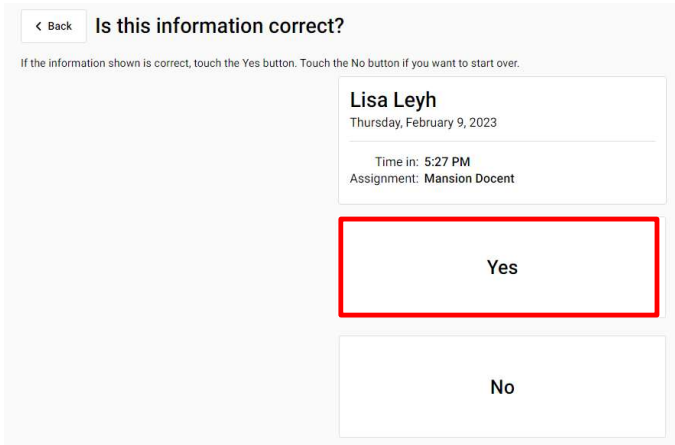
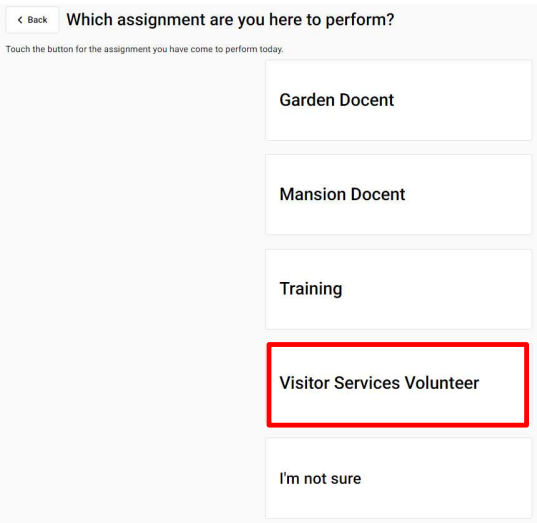
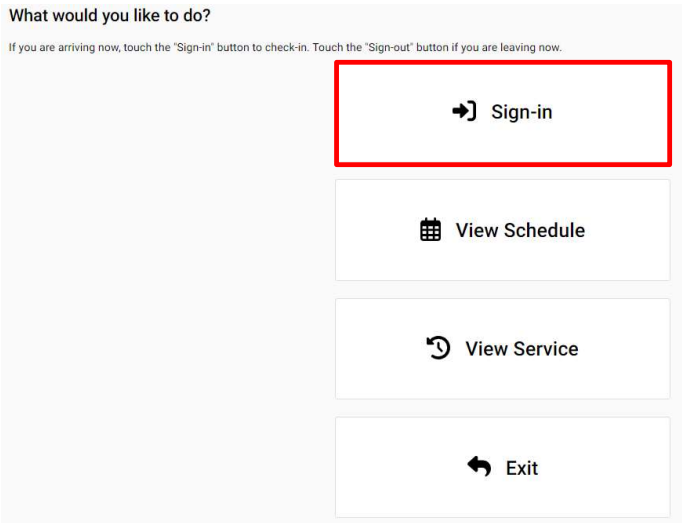
**HILLWOOD**  
ESTATE, MUSEUM & GARDENS

## Volunteer Information Center

Welcome. The Volunteer Information Center is where volunteers check-in and out. If you are ready to check-in or out and you have a volunteer PIN number, enter it here to get started.  
If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please ask us about our volunteer opportunities!

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
#	0	➤

# Sign in for a Shift



# Sign out for a Shift



## Volunteer Information Center

Welcome. The Volunteer Information Center is where volunteers check-in and out. If you are ready to check-in or out and you have a volunteer PIN number, enter it here to get started.  
If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please ask us about our volunteer opportunities!

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
#	0	➤

### What would you like to do?

If you are arriving now, touch the "Sign-in" button to check-in. Touch the "Sign-out" button if you are leaving now.

Sign-out

View Schedule

View Service

Exit

# Day-of Schedule Information

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## **Scheduling Documents:**

- Volunteer daily schedule
- Briefing notes
- Groups report



## **Locations Posted:**

- Visitor center tour desk
- Volunteer lounge
- Mansion coat check

# Daily Schedule

- Pre-registered visitors for the day
- Tickets available to distribute for the docent-led public tours



Laminated tour tickets

- Shift assignments for VSVs

Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens Interpretation Volunteer Daily Schedule Thursday, March 12, 2026				
Total number of pre-registered visitors for the day: 117				
Briefing Notes: Please see the "Volunteer Briefing Notes" sheet for more details regarding today's activities.				
Mansion Tour Ticket Availability & Docent Shifts				
11:30 a.m. mansion tour - 5 docents:		1:30 p.m. mansion tour - 5 docents:		
11 Holly Scanlon		0 group tickets		
3 Lisa Leyh		50 day-of tickets available		
36 day-of tickets available				
	From:	To:	Mansion Tours:	
Mansion Tours: (11:30 & 1:30)	11:00 a.m.	3:00 p.m.	A-	Volunteer Name
			B-	Volunteer Name
			C-	Volunteer Name
			D-	Volunteer Name
			E-	Volunteer Name
Visitor Services Volunteer Shifts				
	From:	To:	Visitor Center (Tour Desk):	Mansion (Coat Check/Roving):
Morning Shift	9:30 a.m.	11:45 a.m.	Volunteer Name Volunteer Name	Volunteer Name Volunteer Name
	11:45 a.m.	1:30 p.m.	Volunteer Name Volunteer Name	Volunteer Name Volunteer Name
Afternoon Shift	1:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	Volunteer Name Volunteer Name	Volunteer Name Volunteer Name
	3:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	Volunteer Name Volunteer Name	Volunteer Name Volunteer Name

# Briefing Notes

- Updates and reminders regarding the volunteer and visitor experience.
- Programs and events scheduled for the week.

## Volunteer Briefing Notes | March 17-22, 2025

Please do not throw away until the end of the week. Thank You!

### Hillwood Offerings

#### Mansion Tours:

11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.  
3:30 p.m., Friday-Sunday

#### Merriweather Café:

Tuesday-Sunday  
11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

#### Merriweather To-Go

Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

### Current Exhibitions

#### ***On Time: Giving Form to the Fleeting***

February 14-June 14  
*On view in the dacha*

### Hillwood Programs

#### **Gardener's Focus Tour | An Orchid-Filled Greenhouse**

**Wednesday, March 18**  
10:30-10:50 a.m. and 12:30-12:50 p.m.

#### **Onsite Orchid Repotting Workshops**

**Friday, March 20**  
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 2-4 p.m. (*tickets are now sold out*)

#### **Write Your Dreams to Life: Writing Workshops**

**Saturday, March 21**  
10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

### Exhibition & Display Updates

#### Mansion Display Changes

Several mansion display changes occurred during our January closure. Please see an overview provided below and consult the updated 2026 Exhibition Information & Mansion Display Updates page for more information:

- **Installations and Removals:** On Tuesday, February 3, several objects were temporarily removed from the mansion, and a number will be installed in preparation for the upcoming special exhibition *On Time: Giving Form to the Fleeting*. The removed objects will return to the mansion after the exhibition closes in the summer of 2026.

### Updates & Reminders

#### **Merriweather Café Full Menu & Tent Reopen**

The Merriweather Café tent was put back up on Monday, March 9, and the café resumed full service this Friday, March 13. For menus, visit Hillwood's website.

#### **Cherry Blossom Afternoon Tea**

Merriweather Café will be hosting a cherry blossom-inspired afternoon tea menu from Thursday, March 20 through April 26, Thursdays through Sundays. Reservations are required. For more information, visit Hillwood's website.

#### **Day of Horticulture Recording Now Available**

Enjoy four lectures by members of Hillwood's horticulture team from Day of Horticulture, an engaging program centered on the history and continued care of Hillwood's gardens. The recording and other volunteer education videos can be found on the 2026 Lecture Videos page of the volunteer website.

#### **March is Orchid Month!**

From March 3-31, Hillwood will be celebrating all things orchid in honor of Marjorie Post's favorite flower. Be on the

# Groups Report

Itinerary for scheduled groups and includes:

- Group name
- Group size
- Itinerary for visit
- Special notes

Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens				
HILL Group Itinerary Report			Page 1 of 2	
<b>Parameters</b>				
Event Code: GV20190615				
Event Start Date:				
Event End Date:				
List No.: (None)				
Name	Qty	Ticket Type	Perf Name	Order No.
<b>Arrival Date: 06/15/2019</b>				
<b>295150 Carlow University</b>				
	5	Group (1 Tour)	2019 General Visit	
	5	Total Visitors	<b>Balance: \$75.00</b>	<b>Order No: 216663</b>
		Arrival Time:	11:30 am	
		Cafe Reservation:	12:45 pm	
		Garden Tour Time:	N/A	
		Mansion Tour Time:		
		Program time:	N/A	
		Transportation Type:	Cars	
		Departure Time:	N/A	
		Notes:	pay on arrival	
<b>393974 Girl Scout Troop</b>				
	10	Girl Scout	2019 General Visit	
	20	Girl Scout Adult	2019 General Visit	
	30	Total Visitors	<b>Balance: \$50.00</b>	<b>Order No: 224539</b>
		Arrival Time:	10 am	
		Cafe Reservation:	N/A	
		Garden Tour Time:	N/A	
		Mansion Tour Time:	N/A	

Parking

# Volunteer Parking

## Back Railing

**Weekday:**

Un-number spaces



**Weekend:**

Open spaces (except 20-23)



Enter & Exit Upper Gate

3-point turn at Lower Gate

### Option 1: Back Railing

- **Weekdays:** volunteers park in the un-numbered spaces along the railing behind the C.W. Post Center.
- **Weekends:** volunteers park in any open spaces (except numbers 20-23 behind the Administration building).

### Option 2: Lower Gate Drive

- Volunteers park along the lower gate drive by making a three-point turn at the bottom of the road and then parking on the left side, facing uphill.

# Parking Images

Un-numbered spaces  
along back railing



Bus parking

Turn around on  
lower gate drive



Parking on  
lower gate drive



# Responding to an Incident

# Responding to an Incident



Please **report** incidents involving a visitor, fellow volunteer, staff member, or yourself to Security **immediately**.

An incident includes:

- ❑ Accidents, such as a trip or fall
- ❑ Medical emergencies, including wasp and bee stings
- ❑ Suspicious behavior, when safe to do so
- ❑ Lost visitor



VSVs can **contact Security** using the following means:

- ❑ In-person
- ❑ Call control at 202.686.8524

# Evacuations or Sheltering in Place

Please follow all directives given by Hillwood Security during an actual emergency, drill or false alarm.



## **Fire/Evacuation Protocols**

Mansion | Exhibition Spaces | Bulter's House:

- Evacuate to the Lunar Lawn

Visitor Center | Collections & Research Center:

- Evacuate to the Merriweather café parking lot, behind the Administration building.



## **Active Threat Protocols**

Hillwood Security will provide you with clear directions.

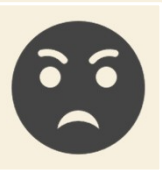
You will be directed to the appropriate location for your safety.

# Engaging with Visitors

# Welcoming All



**Unconscious bias:** Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.



**Microaggressions:** Everyday slights, insults, putdowns, invalidations, and offensive behaviors that people experience in daily interactions with generally well-intentioned individuals who may be unaware that they have engaged in demeaning ways.



**Micro-affirmations:** Simple, respectful behaviors that affirm the worth of our visitors and fellow volunteers and the fairness of our workplace.

# Customer Service & Communication

These takeaways are from the [Communication Skills](#) document, which can be accessed on the volunteer website:

- Be Welcoming
- Inclusive Comments
- Project Your Voice
- Positive Body Language
- Descriptive Language
- Transform Unfamiliar Words
- Sentence Structure
- "I don't know."
- Answer the Unspoken Questions
- Don't Overwhelm
- Say What We Mean
- Be Kind to Yourself

# Responding to Visitor Questions

- “That’s an excellent question. I’m not sure of the answer.”
- “That’s an interesting question. I am not sure of the answer, but what I do know is... (fill in the blank).”
  - Even if you don’t know the exact answer, you can often connect the question to a broader idea/theme or similar object.
- Can’t find the answer? Direct visitors to:
  - Submit their question to visitor services staff, who will forward their inquiry onto the appropriate department
  - Visit Hillwood’s website

# When you have to say “No”

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- Listen patiently
- Give them a moment to vent
- Empathize and offer an alternative

# Educational Resources

# Orientation Resources

## Volunteer Handbooks

- ❑ Volunteer Handbook
- ❑ Code of Ethics Handbook

## Volgistics

- ❑ Volgistics User Guide
- ❑ Volgistics Link
- ❑ Update Hours from Home

## Educational Resources

- ❑ Visitor Bill of Rights
- ❑ Hillwood Resources available for Volunteers
- ❑ Frequently Ask Visitor Questions
- ❑ Further Study Guide for New Volunteers
- ❑ Interpretative Approaches to Marjorie Post's Biography
- ❑ Audio Tour Script

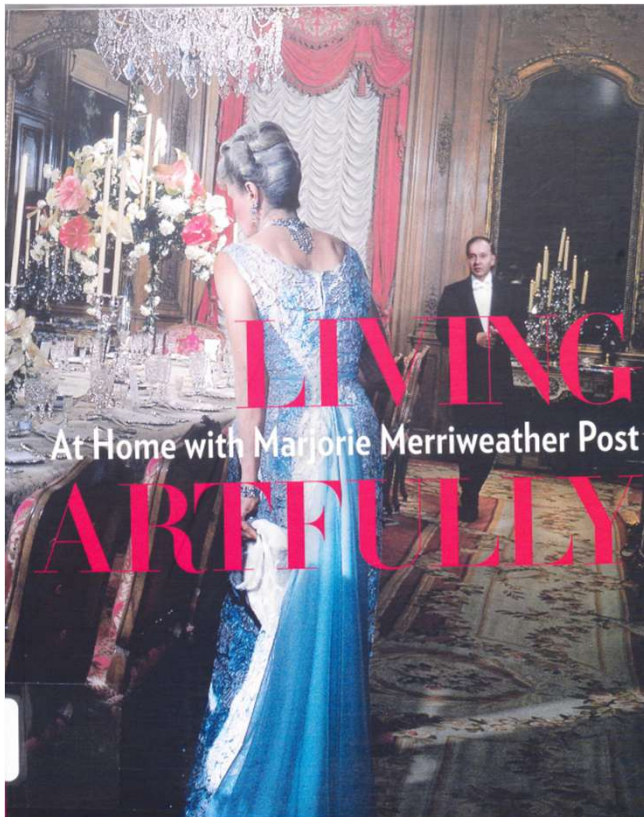
## VSV Guidelines & Procedures

- ❑ VSV Guidelines
- ❑ Sample Script for Visitor Orientation
- ❑ Communication Skills
- ❑ Welcoming All: Creating an Inclusive Visitor Experience
- ❑ Best Practices for Navigating Visitor Feedback and Concerns
- ❑ Responding to an Incident
- ❑ Mansion Coat Check Guidelines
- ❑ Mansion Coat Restroom Protocol



Volunteer website:  
**Onboarding Resources for  
Visitor Services Volunteers**

# Further Study Guide for New Volunteers



## Marjorie Merriweather Post: The Life Behind the Luxury

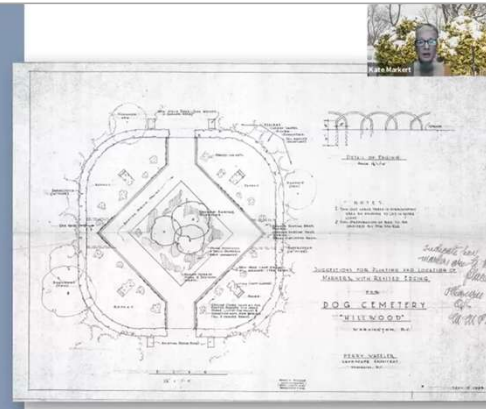


Estella Chung

October 29, 2019



Every garden at Hillwood was meticulously drawn and approved by Marjorie Post before it was installed



Bern Wheeler's drawing of the dog cemetery, September 17, 1959



Resources to extend your orientation and support your ongoing growth as a volunteer:

- ▣ Lectures
- ▣ Publications
- ▣ Reference documents

# Continuing Education

- Volunteer business meeting
- Curator-led lectures
- Horticulture-led lectures, workshops, and plant ID walks

## 2026 Projects (Goal 2 & 3)

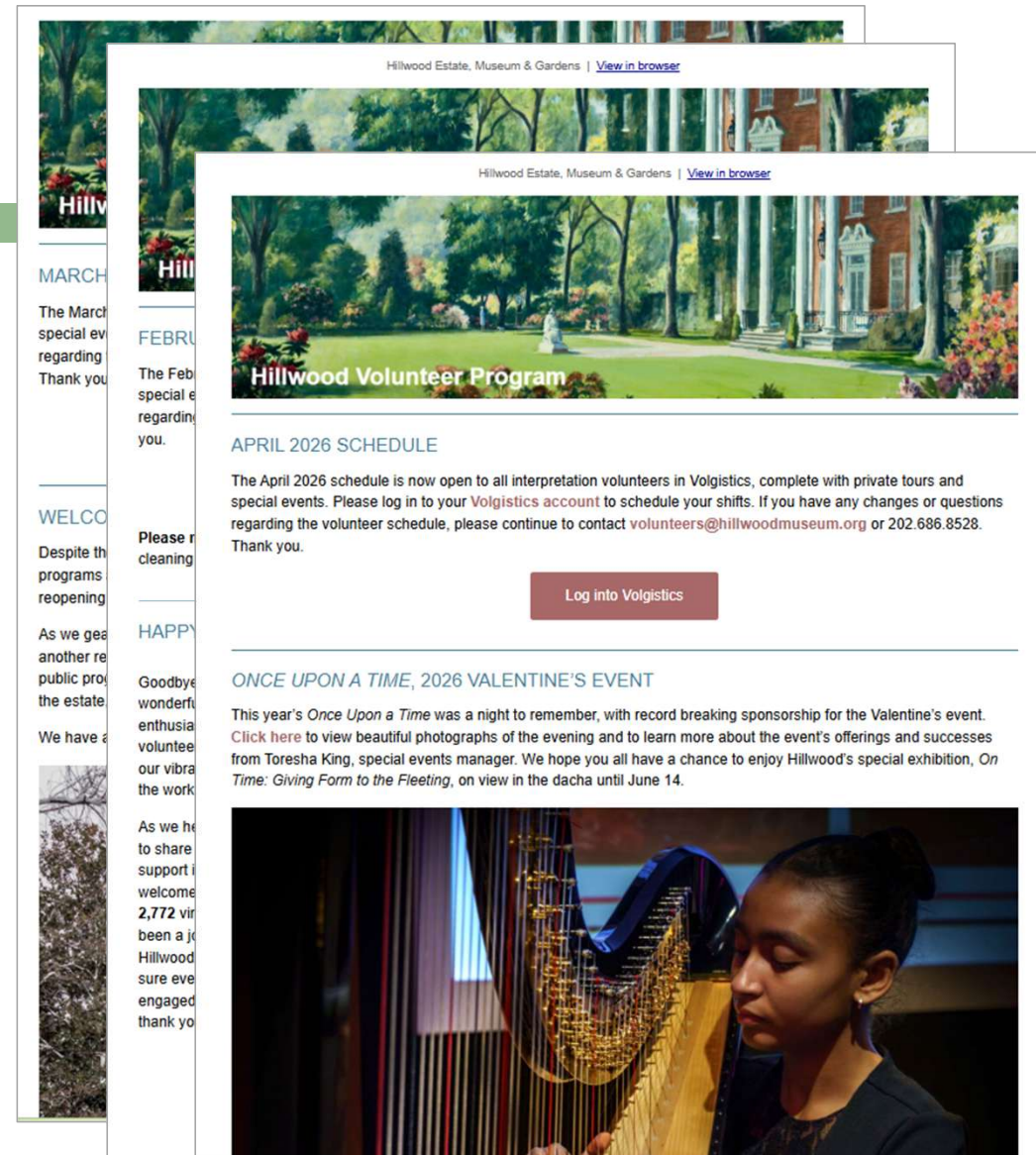
- Enhance displays in the mansion
  - Icon room
  - Conservation projects (textiles, paintings, sculptures)
- TMS database
- New publications – Fashion, and Art of Entertaining
- Fellows and visiting researchers
- Digitization projects
- Oral History Program and Institutional Archives
- Acquisitions and Loans
- Expansion of Exhibition Calendar through 2031 and contemporary initiatives



All volunteer lectures are recorded and available on the volunteer website.

# Volunteer Newsletter

- Emailed on the 11<sup>th</sup> of each month
- Features staff articles, news, reminders, and program updates
- Includes links to lecture videos and other resources
- Past issues archived on the volunteer website for anytime access



# Volunteer Website

**HILLWOOD**  
ESTATE, MUSEUM & GARDENS  
Volunteer Website

VOLGISTICS EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES ▾ ONBOARDING ▾ VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER ▾ LECTURE VIDEOS ▾ EVENTS

**We Want to Hear from You: Observations on Accessibility at Hillwood**

Erin Allen - February 19, 2026 - Welcome

Hillwood recently completed a comprehensive accessibility self-assessment with Open Door Arts to better understand how our spaces, services, and programs support visitors of all abilities. In this article by Meredith DeSantis,...

[Continue Reading >](#)

**Now Available: March 2026 Newsletter**

Lisa Leyh - March 11, 2026 - Welcome

Our March volunteer newsletter is now available! Catch up on important updates, upcoming events, and behind-the-scenes insights including: April 2026 Schedule, Open Once Upon a Time, 2026 Valentine's Event, Celebrate

**Search**

Search

**Recent Posts**

[Now Available: March 2026 Newsletter](#)

[Hillwood Reopens to the Public: Sunday, February 22](#)

[Hillwood Closed: Saturday, February 21](#)

[Hillwood Closed: Friday, February 20](#)

[We Want to Hear from You: Observations on Accessibility at Hillwood](#)

- Monthly newsletters
- Onboarding and training recourses
- Lecture recordings
- Exhibition and mansion information
- Garden touring information
- Docent training materials
- Helpful links

[volunteer.hillwoodmuseum.org](https://volunteer.hillwoodmuseum.org)



# Volunteer Lounge



Located in the Butler's House, adjacent to the cutting garden.



Explore educational resources in the non-lending volunteer library.

# Archives & Special Collections



Collections & Research Center Reading Room

- Located below the visitor center parking deck.
- View the library catalog at [library.hillwoodmuseum.org](http://library.hillwoodmuseum.org).
- Hillwood's collections are non-circulating.
- Researchers are invited to call 202.243.3953 and make an appointment.

# Follow Us Online!

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens website. At the top left is the logo for Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens. The navigation menu includes links for VISIT, MUSEUM, GARDENS, EVENTS & PROGRAMS, and EXHIBITIONS. On the right side of the navigation bar, it indicates the next opening hours as Friday 10:00am to 5:00pm, along with icons for location, search, and a MEMBERSHIP link. The main content area is divided into three vertical panels. The first panel, titled 'Estate', features an aerial illustration of the property and includes the text 'Founded by Marjorie Post' and a button labeled 'HOW IT ALL BEGAN →'. The second panel, titled 'Museum', shows an interior scene with a chandelier and furniture, with the text 'The mansion that became a museum' and a button labeled 'EXPLORE THE COLLECTION →'. The third panel, titled 'Gardens', displays a lush garden scene with pink blossoms and statues, with the text 'Thirteen Acres of Formal Gardens' and a button labeled 'SPRING IS FABULOUS →'.

**HILLWOOD**  
ESTATE, MUSEUM & GARDENS

VISIT MUSEUM GARDENS EVENTS & PROGRAMS EXHIBITIONS

Next open: Friday 10:00am to 5:00pm

MEMBERSHIP

## Estate

Founded by Marjorie Post

HOW IT ALL BEGAN →

## Museum

The mansion that became a museum

EXPLORE THE COLLECTION →

## Gardens

Thirteen Acres of Formal Gardens

SPRING IS FABULOUS →

# Next Steps

# Mansion Tour

- Continue your training by attending a mansion tour during the week of May 20.
- Attending a public tour is a great way to deepen your knowledge of Hillwood, explore the collection, and connect with fellow volunteers.

Photo: Erik Kvalsvik



# Next Steps

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**1**

Complete **Volunteer Acknowledge Form** emailed via DocuSign

**2**

Log into **Volgistics** to create a **permanent password** and complete your **profile**

**3**

Share your **availability** for **your 1<sup>st</sup> two shift** via the **survey**.

**4**

Complete your **on-the-job training** with an experienced VSV during your 1<sup>st</sup> two shifts

# Volunteer Department

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We're here to help!  
Send any questions or feedback about  
your experience to:



**202.686.8528**



**[volunteers@hillwoodmuseum.org](mailto:volunteers@hillwoodmuseum.org)**

**Lisa Leyh**

Head of Volunteer and Employee  
Engagement

**Erin Allen**

Volunteer Programs Manager

**Holly Scanlon**

Volunteer Programs Coordinator