



AMERICAN ITALIAN HERITAGE ASSOCIATION & MUSEUM

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www.americanitalianmuseum.com

Volunteer Program

COME JOIN OUR TEAM!!!

Volunteers play a crucial role in the daily operations of the American Italian Heritage Association and Museum; whether it's providing one hour a month or twenty. We invite you to become a part of our volunteer program and join us in helping others discover the treasure that is our heritage. Come and investigate and enjoy the rich history of our ancestors and their sacrifices, struggles, and successes in their new country.

Every volunteer can be a part of our Museum by assisting in a variety of roles, whether working with the public or behind the scenes.

Training

Training varies depending on the volunteer job.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- **Front Desk** – Volunteers are needed to tend the front desk and greet museum guests as they enter the museum during normal museum operating hours. Volunteers collect admission fees and assist museum guests with any questions they may have about the museum and its facilities.
- **Gift Shop** - Volunteers are needed to run the gift shop during normal museum operating hours. With proper training, volunteers should be able to suggest and sell museum merchandise to museum guests, keep merchandise stocked in/on the display shelves in the gift shop, maintain the cleanliness and overall organization of the gift shop and operate the cash register in order to ring up the museum guests' purchases.
- **Museum Facility Maintenance** - Volunteers are needed to help maintain the overall

cleanliness and organization of the museum building. This entails dusting displays and bookshelves, setting up chairs in central conference area, sweeping/mopping floors, vacuuming carpet, washing windows, wiping down the kitchen counters, washing any dirty dishes in the kitchen, emptying trash bins throughout the museum building and restocking the restroom facilities with supplies (i.e. soap, paper towels, toilet paper, air freshener, etc.) as needed.

- **Administration** - Volunteers are needed to make copies, do miscellaneous filing, faxing information, updating mailing lists, stuffing invitations, stuffing gift bags, mailing out information, answering telephones, sending thank you letters to donors, cutting out newspaper articles for museum scrapbook, conduct internet searches of history for museum exhibits, research sources to add to the museum library, research new merchandise to sell in the gift shop.
- **Gallery Attendants** - Volunteers are needed to watch over the museum exhibits, displays and artifacts and report any problems to a museum staff member.
- **Tours** - Volunteers are needed to lead and/or assist with tour groups.
- **Special Events** – During the times that the museum hosts special events, volunteers are needed to help with the set-up of chairs and tables, running the registration table, greeting museum guests as they arrive, directing museum guests to the restroom facilities, watching over the museum exhibits, displays and artifacts, and answering museum guests’ questions about the museum (the building and the exhibits).
- **Thrift Shop**- Volunteers are needed to help during business hours to perform an array of duties such as unpack boxed and bagged contributions, and put them on display. Size and price clothing items, wait on customers-- Also needed are co-chairs to help run the thrift shop. Duties would include calling and scheduling volunteers and help set pricing on donated items.

Volunteers are an essential part of our daily operations. Without your participation and commitment we will not be able to open our doors and spread our message each day.

Checking-In:

Signing-in is important for keeping track of the hours each volunteer gives and also for the museum staff to know where volunteers are working. Please make sure that you sign-in into the volunteer book upon arrival at the beginning of each shift at the museum.

Museum Etiquette:

When volunteering at the museum, please use speech and manners of refinement. All volunteers should be poised and professional at all times. Volunteers are asked not to drink alcoholic beverages (if provided during an event) while serving at the museum. **Working with Museum**

Guests:

Please treat all museum guests just as you would like to be treated. Make the visitors to the museum feel as though they are important, like a guest in your home. Thank each guest for coming to visit the American Italian Heritage Museum. If a guest has a question that

you cannot answer, please refer them to a museum director. Please encourage all museum guests to fill out a visitor comment/suggestion form located near the front entrance as they leave the museum and invite them to come visit the museum again in the future.

Safety Procedures:

If there is a fire alarm, request that everyone stay calm. An announcement will be made with instructions on how to exit the building (if necessary) or if it is a false alarm. Museum staff members will be available to assist in this procedure. If a museum guest is injured or in need of medical attention, please alert a museum staff member immediately.

Lost and Found:

Place any lost or left behind items in the lost and found box located in the back staff office of the museum. If a museum guests reports that he/she has lost an item, get a description of the item and then go and check the lost and found box for the item.

Website:

Check out our web site at www.americanitalianmuseum.com.

It's a great way to learn about the museum, its history and upcoming events.

Training:

Our hope is that volunteers and all museum guests will learn something new with every visit to the museum. Above all, we want your volunteer experience at the Museum to be educational, exciting, rewarding and pleasant. If you feel the job you've been assigned to do isn't working out, please talk to the volunteer chair about getting a new assignment. Your suggestions and ideas are always welcome.

Policy Statement of Disqualifications for Volunteer Hire

AMERICAN ITALIAN HERITAGE ASSOCIATION AND MUSEUM POLICY STATEMENT FOR DISQUALIFICATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH CRIMINAL BACKGROUNDS

1. POLICY STATEMENT

– The American Italian Heritage Association and Museum (AIHAM) offers its visitors a true and complete historical perspective of the Italian Immigrants experience in America providing educational experiences through seminars, workshops, classroom visits and field trips. The AIHAM Board of Trustees reserve the right to disqualify any applicant who has ever been convicted of any disqualifying offense, been on probation or received deferred adjudication for any disqualifying offense, or had presently pending any criminal charges of any disqualifying offense before a determination of guilt is made, including any person who is presently on deferred adjudication.

2. DETERMINATION OF DISQUALIFYING CRIMES

- The determination of whether a particular crime involves moral turpitude, which results in the right to disqualify, shall be made by the museum's Board of Trustees in its sole discretion.

Without in any way limiting those crimes, which the AIHAM Board of Trustees may determine to involve moral turpitude, the following are examples of guidelines.

A. Crimes involving moral turpitude include **sex** related offenses, child related offenses, drug and alcohol related offenses, weapons offenses, felony robbery/burglary offenses, fraud related offenses and crimes against persons and property.

B. Crimes that do not involve moral turpitude include minor traffic violations if limited in number, shoplifting misdemeanors if limited in number, **and** **misdemeanor** matters arising out of organized civil disobedience activities.

3. GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING DISQUALIFICATION

- If the AIHAM determines that an applicant has a background of one or more disqualifying crimes, the AIHAM may in its discretion disqualify the applicant from all further association with the Museum Volunteer Program. The AIHAM recognizes that there may be instances where previous criminal conduct does not pose a threat and should not result in disqualification.

A. **AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFICATIONS** - Sex related offenses, child related offenses, murder, felony burglary/robbery offenses. These would result in automatic disqualification regardless of the existence of any extenuating circumstances.

B. All other offenses not described above may result in disqualification at the discretion of the Board of Trustees

Determining factors of disqualification would include the following:

1. The nature and severity of the criminal conduct
2. The length of time since the criminal conduct occurred
3. The age of the applicant at the time of the criminal conduct
4. Personal references
5. Job History
6. Standing in the community
7. Other factors the Board of Trustees may deem appropriate under the circumstances

4. PROCEDURES

- In order to screen prospective volunteers and docents to identify and disqualify those who have criminal conduct histories, the AIHAM shall utilize the following procedures:

A. **VOLUNTEER APPLICATION** - Must be completed by every individual applying to volunteer. This includes a disclosure in writing of any previous criminal history.

B. **REFERENCES** - Each prospective volunteer shall provide two or more character references and shall authorize the AIHAM to contact those references to make inquiry concerning the applicant.

C. PERSONAL INTERVIEWS - Each prospective volunteer may be interviewed by members of the Board of Trustees.

E. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS - Each prospective volunteer shall give written authorization for a criminal background check.

VISITOR PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The objectives of the tour program are to:

- Provide museum visitors with a comprehensive overview of the museum's exhibits and collection.
- Educate museum visitors on the many accomplishments and contributions of a multicultural group of people throughout the history the Italian Immigrants.
- Take museum visitors from "inspiration to action."
- (The tour program should inspire visitors to take the knowledge that they have acquired during their museum experience and share it with their family, friends, coworkers and other community members.)

UNDERSTANDING THE MUSEUM VISITOR

Museum Volunteers guides are a vital part of museum education. Museum Volunteers guides may be the only museum representative with whom visitors interact.

It is the image of the guide and the tour experience that visitors take away with them. The tour experience will determine whether or not a visitor will return to the museum in the future.

When working with groups, especially adults, it is important to remember that your tour group will be comprised of four (4) types of people:

- **Knowledge Seekers** – "I wanted to learn something new and I was very interested in the subject."
- **Socializers** – "My friend, relative or community group suggested that we participate in a tour together." (This group will participate in exhibit openings, gala events, etc.)
- **Skill Builders** – "I am over a department and I thought it would be a good idea to participate in a tour and a museum leadership class in order to become a more effective leader."
- **Museum Lovers** – "I wanted to be involved with the American Italian Heritage Association and Museum because of my heritage; an excellent addition to (This group will participate in museum related programs: gallery talks, lectures, demonstrations, etc.)

Here are the top ten (10) reasons why visitors participate in a tour and/or attend a museum program:

1. For the joy of learning
2. To pursue a long-standing interest or hobby
3. To meet people and socialize

4. To engage in creative activity
5. To pursue a new interest or hobby
6. To fill time productively
7. As part of a search for meaning and wisdom
8. To fill blanks in previous education
9. For community service
10. To help in a present job or to prepare for a new job/career

Tour Tips for Guides

- Guides should confirm the type of tour that is being offered with the Director or Curator. Where possible, guides can find out how much time the group has for the tour and if the group has a particular interest.
- Each guide should take the time at the beginning of each tour to introduce themselves. Then ask the group to tell about themselves, how they learned about the Museum and why they were interested in visiting the museum.

- A good explanation is really needed at the front entrance – how the museum came about, a good description of the history of the museum.

- For children groups, it may be helpful to have each child find something interesting in one of the exhibit rooms and ask a few of them (2 to 3) to tell what they found and why they found it interesting.

- Don't try to cover the entire exhibit in your "spill" – pick out several points to highlight each exhibit room. While guides are expected to know the exhibit content they are not expected to be the "authority" on everything. Guides should feel comfortable learning how to say, "I don't have that answer but I imagine that you can find it by...Internet research, etc. (If this is an important issue, notify the Director or Curator for follow-up.

- If a member of a tour contradicts something – **PLEASE DO NOT GET INTO A DEBATE.** Allow the visitor to speak and move on to the next topic. Be polite, pleasant and courteous...your role is to serve as a guide not a dictator – **REMEMBER TO BE FIRM BUT FLEXIBLE** when face with difficult or challenging situations.

- When offering adult tours, do not require every adult to participate in the tour presentation. It is quite possible that one or two may wander from the group – and other adults may join the group – Again, **REMEMBER TO BE FLEXIBLE.**

Guides Script

Hello and welcome to the American Italian Heritage Association and Museum. My name is _____ and I'll be your guide for today. The American Italian Association and Museum tells the story of the Italian Immigrant experience in America. In order to enjoy the exhibits without harming any of the valuable historical objects in the collection, there are a few guidelines that you should remember while on your museum visit:

1. No food, drinks, candy, or gum are allowed in the exhibition galleries.
2. Enjoy the museum but please do not take any pictures while inside the museum exhibit galleries. The bright light from flash photography is harmful to sensitive papers and fabrics.
3. Walk respectfully while in the museum. Never run or jump.
4. No roughhousing, pushing, shoving, climbing or throwing of any objects.
5. Talk in quiet indoor voices in order not to disturb other museum visitors.
6. Do not talk while the guide is speaking. If you talk while the guide is speaking, other people won't be able to hear. If you have questions or comments, raise your hand and the guide will call on you.
7. Treat the guides and volunteers with respect and courtesy like do with your teachers.
8. Be curious! Ask lots of questions. Sometimes the guide doesn't tell you everything there is to know. If you are curious about something, please ask. If your guide doesn't know the answer to your question, they will find out.

***Note:** The Group Leader and chaperones are responsible for keeping the group together and maintaining proper behavior.

VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOR:

If you become aware of any potentially dangerous and/or illegal situations regarding weapons, drugs, alcohol, fights, property damage, theft, etc., or have information regarding such, you are requested to report it to the Volunteer Coordinator or other staff person you are working with.

You are to maintain professional behaviors including refraining from profanity or vulgar language.

Damaging any Museum property will not be tolerated. Depending upon circumstances, a police report may be made. Parent or guardians will be liable to pay for damages for youth under age 18.

You are subject to immediate dismissal for possession of any firearm, knife, explosive or other dangerous object while on Museum property.

You are to treat everyone you encounter fairly and with respect, regardless of gender, size, race, age, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, and disability, or economic status.