Milwaukee Public Museum
 Volunteer Placement Description for Docent Trainee

Placement title: Docent Trainee
Department/division: Education
Department Contact: Volunteer Coordinator
Volunteer Contact: Docent Trainers
Length of Training: one 4-hour shift per week Sept-June
Length of Docent Commitment: multi-year commitment

Docents are the largest group of the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) volunteers. They support the educational mission of MPM by partnering with Museum Programs, specifically, the Education Department to (1) interpret MPM’s permanent exhibits/galleries for visitors; (2) provide tours for 1-3, 4-12 and adults; and 3) with Museum Programs assistance, design, research and coordinate the docents to staff the ALIVE! Events and other date-specific programs. After the training(Sept-Dec), doing research (Jan-May) and qualifying to be a docent (May-June), this volunteer sustains a multi-year commitment to MPM and a willingness to meet the ongoing changing needs of the Museum.

PURPOSE of a docent: Enhance visitor experiences and support the educational mission of MPM by providing exhibit interpretation and educational tours for visitors of all ages in MPM’s permanent galleries. Trainees learn how to do this as a representative of MPM—with curatorial accuracy for history and exhibit time period.

QUALIFICATIONS:
• To be accepted into the docent training program the individual must be an established MPM volunteer who has provided and recorded direct customer service (in traveling exhibit carts, Diorama Interpretation, Stop Spot carts, Bug Patrol, or Nickelodeon) for at least 24 hours in the past 6-months;
• have experience (paid or unpaid) that documents people skills, i.e. teaching, training, coordinating, speaking/presentation experience, interacting with general audiences.
• have the ability and availability to complete the year-long docent training program (Tuesday mornings) to learn interpretive techniques appropriate for varied age groups—first grade through adult--and impart accurate curator-approved museum facts.
• After the one year’s training, have the availability to sustain a multi-year commitment to MPM with a minimum of 12 four-hour sessions per year dealing with the public as an Exhibit Interpreter or giving group-tours for grades 1-3, 4-12 or adults.

RESPONSIBILITIES and HOURS for a trainee:
• Complete the 24-hour minimum requirement to validate your commitment prior to the first docent meeting when the trainees are introduced—the second Tuesday in Sept.
• Trainees will be onsite for a period of eleven (11) Tuesday mornings, 9:00-12:00 starting the second Tuesday in September at the docent meeting. Research & studying is done additionally at home. 2015 training dates: September 1, 15, 22, 29, Oct 6, 20, 27, Nov 3, 17, 24 and Dec 1. It is very important to attend all the sessions, because there are no make-up sessions.
• Docent Trainees are strongly encouraged to attend the monthly Docent Meeting – 2nd Tuesdays of the month from September-May. (Note: No trainings are scheduled on these dates.)
• Docent trainees will observe tour programs conducted by docents in addition to the Tuesday training sessions. Observation dates are posted weekly on the Docent Intranet Site.
• From January through June, trainees will choose one exhibit area that has an available curator that year (TBD) and meet with their docent mentor and curator to successfully complete a research outline in preparation for a final docent qualifying tour. The amount of time doing research depends on the trainee. The date of the qualifying tour is dependent on the trainee’s and the curator’s calendar.
• A docent trainee will work with their mentor and curator to develop research and conduct a themed gallery/exhibit tour. A written outline documenting your research will be given to the curator to attain curatorial approval before the qualifying tour is scheduled. Following the qualifying tour, the curator docent trainers and educational staff provide feedback and evaluation.
• Have a computer at home to record your time in Volgistics, an internet site. Learn to use the Docent Intranet Site at MPM and at home. Know how to conduct research and write a foot-noted paper.
As part of the docent training program, you’ll receive a picture ID and have access to the Docent Lounge and its computer and the MPM docent library.

Once qualified, you earn the right to wear a blue jacket and work as an exhibit interpreter and conduct permanent exhibit/gallery tours.

**HOURS for qualified docents:**
- Qualified docents must contribute a minimum of 4 hours per month (48 hours per year) in public engagement doing exhibit interpretation or conducting docent tours to remain active.
- You become part of a pool of docents. Docent Tours for school groups are conducted Monday-Friday; these tours are listed on the Docent Intranet Site and coordinated by a docent. Exhibit Interpretation is a seven-day per week opportunity; some are evening commitments for adult groups. Scheduling for exhibit interpretation is done on Volgistics, the internet site.
- Docents contact other docents to honor their commitment during an emergency.
- Attend docent meetings the second Tuesday of each month Sept-May. There is a May off-site field trip.
- Document hours on Volgistics.
- Be updated with continuing studies in your selected exhibit area. Peer reviews are conducted.
- If available, docents often qualify for multiple exhibit areas.

**DRESS CODE:** Business casual. Qualified docents wear the blue jacket denoting their earned role as an MPM Docent.

**BENEFITS**
- Benefits explained with the Volunteer MEMBER card after 48+ hours completed.
- For reduced parking in MacArthur Square, purchase a pre-paid $5 parking ticket at the admission windows before returning to your car. (Other options: surface lot on James Lovell & State; metered parking on the street—cash, Visa, MC.)
- When wearing your volunteer badge, get discounts in the café, coffee kiosk, and gift shop.
- Access to the Docent Lounge and library as well as the MPM library.

**SUCCESS MEASURES**
- Visitors have a better MPM visit because of you.
- Visitors gain a better understanding of MPM exhibits because of your interpretation or tour.
- Docents honor their commitment and become proficient in using the internet & intranet systems.
- Docents maintain communication with the docent trainers and, once qualified, the docent leadership.

**CONTACTS**

**MPM Volunteer Coordinator** will conduct interview/orientation to MPM, demonstrate Volgistics and how to sign-up for trainings—traveling exhibit carts, Stop Spot Carts, Diorama Interpretation, Bug Patrol or Nickelodeon. (Marge [volunteeroffice@mpm.edu](mailto:volunteeroffice@mpm.edu) 414.278-2717 opt 2). If you have questions or special considerations, contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

**Docent Trainers** coordinate the training schedule and maintain attendance. They are your primary contact for this position. (Names, phones, emails given at first training session.)

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**Commitment to become a Docent Trainee 2015 due 8-17-15:**

I have read this document and understand the requirements to become a Docent Trainee. I have completed 24 hours on a traveling exhibit cart, Stop Spot Cart, Diorama Interpreter, Bug Patrol, or Nickelodeon. I am willing and available to make a multi-year commitment to MPM at this time. (Mail to the Volunteer Coordinator, Milwaukee Public Museum, 800 W Wisconsin Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53233 by August 15, 2015.)

Sign: ___________________________ Date: ___________________