



ELLWOOD
HOUSE MUSEUM

420 Linden Place
DeKalb, IL 60115
ellwoodhouse.org



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

UPDATED 2024

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Welcome!

Thank you for being an Ellwood House Museum volunteer! Without you, the museum would not be able to accomplish all the great work we do.

As a volunteer, you serve as the public face of the museum. Visitors often interact with you more than they do with the museum staff! For this reason, we want to ensure you are fully prepared for your duties - whether at the front desk, on tours, or at special events.

We will work with you on training, procedures, and everything in-between. You will learn about the Ellwood family, their historic estate, and how to share all of it with visitors.

In the following pages, you will find details about our organization and important information for performing volunteer duties.

Let's get started!

Museum Overview



History

Given to the DeKalb Park District in 1965 by May Gurler Ellwood and her three children, the property is operated as a museum by the nonprofit Ellwood House Museum. The story of the Ellwood House reflects the central role of Isaac Ellwood in the development of the barbed wire industry in America. The magnificent estate is also a testimony to three generations of the Ellwood family whose tastes shaped the evolution of the house and grounds.

Mission

The mission of the Ellwood House Museum is to engage visitors with authentic examples of ingenuity and architecture by sharing the Ellwood mansion, gardens, and museum campus.

Vision

Our vision is for a dynamic museum campus, deep-rooted in our community, providing connections between past and present today, inspiring creativity, and sharing a sense of wonder.

Core Values

Integrity: Responsibly achieve our goals through historical accuracy and financial sustainability.

Stewardship: Preserve and conserve the historic structures, collections, and landscape entrusted to our care.

Education: Serve a diverse audience through engaging educational programs, tours, and exhibits.

Excellence: Provide an outstanding visitor experience which fosters a richer appreciation for and exploration of local history and the Ellwood House Museum campus.

Meet The Team

BUDDY AVILA

Historic Site Caretaker

avila@ellwoodhouse.org

ZACKARY BARAGLIA

Events Coordinator

baraglia@ellwoodhouse.org

BRIAN CORY

Collections Manager

cory@ellwoodhouse.org

AUDREY KING

Curator of Education & Interpretation

king@ellwoodhouse.org

ETHAN PETERMAN

Operations Manager

peterman@ellwoodhouse.org

IZZY PIENIADZ

Executive Director

pieniadz@ellwoodhouse.org

ANNA-MARIE ZURLINDEN

Exhibits Coordinator

zurlinden@ellwoodhouse.org

Visitor Center Phone: (815) 756-4609

General Email: info@ellwoodhouse.org

What To Expect

Role & Responsibilities

Ellwood House Museum docents provide information about the Ellwood mansion, Ellcourt ("Ellcourt"), the Ellwood family, and the barbed wire story. The goal of museum docents is to promote interest in the people, tastes, and events of the past. Ellwood House Museum docents also seek to promote an understanding of the eras represented by the site. Our volunteer docents are an integral part of our team and we strive to make you feel welcome, included, and appreciated. If you ever have any questions about your role as an Ellwood House Museum docent, please see the Curator or another staff member.

Qualifications

- Interest in People
- Interest in history and/or historic preservation
- Mastery of basic information about the museum site and volunteer roles
- Able to handle groups and work with visitors of all ages



Volunteer Expectations



Responsibilities & requirements

- Follow rules for safety and museum preservation
- Attempt to give at least two tour per month
- Report unanticipated absences to Curator of Education and Interpretation or other staff

Training

- Participate in training program
- Give mock tour to Curator and/or other staff members
- Review notes, handouts, and other resource materials
- Participate in ongoing evaluation and training

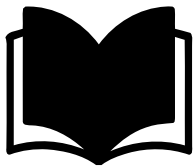


Benefits

- Invitations to special events and programs
- 10% off at Gift Shop and on museum rentals
- Free individual memberships for volunteers who give 20 or more service hours per year

Emergency Information

The emergency manuals have instructions on what to do in case of emergencies, including fire, injury, and more. Always use common sense. In the case of an emergency, call 9-1-1 then alert museum staff.



Emergency Manual Locations

Visitor Center reception desk
Mansion kitchenette on the first floor (inside door under stairs)
Ellcourt coat closet on the first floor



First Aid Kit Locations

Visitor Center reception desk
Mansion kitchenette on the first floor (inside door under stairs)
Ellcourt coat closet on the first floor



Flashlight and Emergency Radio Locations

Visitor Center reception desk
Mansion kitchenette on the first floor (inside door under stairs)
Ellcourt coat closet on the first floor



Emergency Numbers

In an emergency, dial 9-1-1
Ellwood House Visitor Center: (815) 756-4609
Non-Emergency Fire Department: (815) 748-8460
Non-Emergency Police Department: (815) 748-8400
Non-Emergency Nicor Gas Company: (815) 899-6129

Staff Emergency Contact List

Please only use staff phone numbers in case of emergency or when reporting unanticipated absences.

Description	Phone
Buddy Avila <i>Historic Site Caretaker</i>	(630) 991-8634
Zackary Baraglia <i>Events Coordinator</i>	(630) 373-8715
Audrey King <i>Curator of Education & Interpretation</i>	(810) 845-9017
Brian Cory <i>Collections Manager</i>	(630) 267-3368
Ethan Peterman <i>Operations Manager</i>	(210) 863-9011
Izzy Pieniadz <i>Executive Director</i>	(630) 935-3054
Anna-Marie Zurlinden <i>Exhibits Coordinator</i>	(813) 482-5916

Tour Logistics

Arrivals/departures

- All volunteers must record their sign in and sign out times. The sign in sheet is located at the Visitor Center reception desk
- Docents should arrive at least five minutes before their scheduled tour to check in with the museum staff or receptionist and to receive keys and any necessary information
- If there are no visitors at the scheduled start of the tour, volunteers are asked to wait 15 minutes for late arrivals, then they are free to go
- At the start of your tour, a staff member will introduce you to your tour group

Keys/nametags

- Before each tour, the docent will sign out a numbered set of keys and must sign them back in after the tour
- If there is any problem with keys, please let staff know or record the problem on the sign in sheet
- Nametags are available in a box at the reception desk. It is up to each volunteer to find their nametag and return it after each shift

Phone required

- Docents are required to carry cell phones while on a tour
- Please program the Ellwood House number – (815) 756-4609 – into your phone, as well as the cell phone numbers of staff.

Dress code

- There is no strict dress code, but aim for business casual if you are unsure. Wear shoes that you feel comfortable standing and walking in for an hour or more.

Unanticipated absences

- If an emergency or illness means you are unable to make your scheduled shift, please call 815-756-4609 or email info@ellwoodhouse.org.

Accessibility

- Staff will assist visitors who need the lift to enter the mansion
- After touring the first floor, visitors unable to climb the stairs can either wait in the conservatory or the main hall while the rest of the tour continues to the upper floors. Visitors also have the option of leaving the mansion via the lift or Conservatory stairs and returning to the Visitor Center (staff are available to help anyone who would like to return to the Visitor Center)
- The Ellcourt is accessible by ramp on the south side of the building

Signing Up to Volunteer

Each month, an email newsletter will be sent out to all volunteers with details on upcoming opportunities.

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Volunteer sign-ups are coordinated online through Sign Up Genius. To use the website, visit **signupgenius.com**. You can create your own account, or enter your information as a guest.

1. Click "Log In" at the top right section of the page. Either enter your information to log in, or scroll down to "Get Started" and click "Find a Sign Up."
2. Search for the current month's sign-up calendar using the sign-up creator's email: king@ellwoodhouse.org.
3. Once you access the Ellwood House Museum's calendar, select the dates and times you're available, click "Submit and Sign Up," and follow the instructions to complete the process.

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Having trouble signing up for a volunteer opportunity?

Call the museum at (815) 756-4609 or email king@ellwoodhouse.org.