



Living History  
Farms Volunteer  
Handbook

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## Acknowledgement of this handbook

This Volunteer Handbook is an important document intended to help you become acquainted with Living History Farms.

Please read the following statements, check to acknowledge each statement, and sign and return this page to the Director of Community Engagement:

\_\_\_\_ I understand that the policies, rules, and benefits described in this Handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of the President of Living History Farms at any time.

\_\_\_\_ I further understand that my volunteering is terminable at will, either by the President of Living History Farms, or myself, regardless of the length of my volunteering.

\_\_\_\_ I am aware that during the course of my volunteering, confidential information may be made available to me. I understand that confidential information must not be released within or outside of Living History Farms.

\_\_\_\_ I expressly accept and assume all the risks inherent in these volunteer activities. My participation is purely voluntary, and I elect to participate despite the known and unanticipated risks. I understand that Living History Farms has taken steps to mitigate these risks, but such risks simply cannot be entirely eliminated. I further understand that I am not covered under workers compensation or any other employee insurance policies of Living History Farms as a volunteer and verify by my signature that I have personal insurance or resources to cover any such injuries that may occur while a volunteer.

The terms of this Volunteer Handbook are not contractual in that Living History Farms retains the right to vary from or change the provisions at any point in the future with or without notice.

I understand that my signature indicates that I have received this copy of the Handbook and that I agree to read it and abide by all the policies and procedures contained in it. This Handbook will serve as a guide; it is not the final word in all cases.

X

Print Name

X

Sign and Date

## Welcome!

We are so glad you have decided to volunteer at Living History Farms.

Every volunteer at Living History Farms (LHF) brings their own set of interests, experiences, and backgrounds. Each volunteer is therefore an exciting addition to our organization. Our operation depends on you, and we appreciate you!

The Volunteer Program offers the structure and foundation for volunteers to contribute to the mission of Living History Farms. Volunteers complement, assist and partner with the staff in virtually every facet of operations. We recognize that volunteers can provide LHF with a unique resource of talent. We value this contribution, and hope to offer to each volunteer a satisfying, productive and rewarding experience.

Through the Volunteer Program we offer:

- An opportunity to contribute talents and skills through active participation in programs and events at Living History Farms.
- An exciting educational resource for further study in historical areas.
- An opportunity to grow both personally and professionally.

Living History Farms will implement these opportunities for you through:

- The services of a supervisor who will help you prepare for service, increase your knowledge, and help provide guidance and support.
- Written materials such as: this Handbook, volunteer position descriptions and interpretive study materials (if needed).
- Learning sessions such as orientation meetings and individual site training.

We strive to have the volunteer experience be one that provides a mutually beneficial experience for both the volunteer and the museum.

Let me know if there is anything we can do for you, and do not hesitate to contact me with any suggestions or ideas.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stacie Hooker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sincerely,  
Stacie Hooker  
Director of Community Engagement  
shooker@lhf.org  
515.278.5268 ext. 158

## **Fair Labor Standards Act**

The FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) recognizes the generosity and public benefits of volunteering and allows individuals to freely volunteer in many circumstances for charitable and public purposes. Individuals may volunteer time to religious, charitable, civic, humanitarian, or similar nonprofit organizations as a public service and not be covered by the FLSA.

Individuals generally may not, however, volunteer in commercial activities run by a non-profit organization such as a gift shop. A volunteer generally will not be considered an employee for FLSA purposes if the individual volunteers freely for public service, religious or humanitarian objectives, and without contemplation or receipt of compensation. Typically, such volunteers serve on a part-time basis and do not displace regular employed workers or perform work that would otherwise be performed by regular employees. In addition, paid employees of a non-profit organization cannot volunteer to provide the same type of services to their non-profit organization that they are employed to provide.

## Introduction to the Museum

### Mission Statement

Living History Farms is an interactive outdoor history museum, which educates and connects all people to the many stories of Midwestern rural heritage.

### Vision Statement

Cultivating our future by experiencing our past

### Goals

- Cultivate a community of life-long learning with robust programming
- Create a richer, more diverse and dynamic visitor experience.
- Build meaningful connections with the community as a cultural heritage destination.
- Preserve the legacy and financial stability of Living History Farms

### Core Values

- Hands-on experiences
- Inter-generational learning
- Authenticity
- Community engagement
- Diverse rural/agricultural histories
- Fun



## Funding of Living History Farms

Living History Farms is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. It is a private educational, historical foundation and is not owned or operated by any governmental entity. It is important to know this because many people have the misconception that Living History Farms is fully funded by their tax dollars. Funding comes from the following sources:

### Earned Income:

- Admissions and memberships
- Programs such as historic dinners, Day Camp, Historical Enrichments, Outreach Programs, Workshops, Special events, Adult Education Classes and Barnyard Readers
- Retail sales from the MarketPlace Museum Store and General Store.
- Rentals of the Walnut Hill picnic shelter, Church of the Land, Murray Conference Center, Visitor Center, the Flynn Barn, and the area south of the Visitor Center complex
- Interest earned from Investments and Endowments

### Donations:

- Individuals, corporations, and foundations
- Competitive Grants – for example from Prairie Meadows and Bravo Greater Des Moines (Hotel/Motel Tax appropriations)

## **Volunteer On-Boarding Process**

### **Recruitment**

Recruitment shall be designed to attract volunteers from the entire population in response to the needs of the museum.

### **Interviewing and screening**

An application and interview process are required for specific volunteer positions. This process helps determine how the desires, skills and capabilities of the volunteer relate to the needs of Living History Farms. This process also includes a criminal background check and checks on the National and Iowa Sex Offender Registry. In addition, there is a Release & Waiver of Liability that must be completed and signed by all volunteers (and a parent or guardian if the volunteer is under 18 years of age.)

### **Selections and Placement**

Volunteers shall be selected and assigned to volunteer duties that will best meet the needs of the museum.

### **Orientation and Training**

All volunteers must attend the yearly Orientation and Training. The Director of Community Engagement conducts this orientation and training which includes a history of LHF, our structure, educational programs, policies, procedures, and emergency guidelines. When applicable, materials are provided for volunteers to study in preparation for their assignment. Your supervisor will provide training for specific site and situation needs.

### **Motivation**

Recognition shall be an integral part of the volunteer program. Benefits offered to each active volunteer include:

- Complimentary admission to tour the day of your shift
- Opportunities for social and educational interaction with other staff and volunteers (the Volunteer Enrichment Series and Book Club).
- Events and trainings exclusively for volunteers

### **Evaluations**

End of season evaluations will be done for all volunteers.

### **Feedback**

We value your suggestions and comments. Feel free to share those with your supervisor, the Director of Community Engagement, or the President.

## Living History Farms Policies

Respect and dignity to both volunteers and staff is necessary for a healthy organization to thrive. To that end, it is important to have policies and procedures in place for both the volunteer and staff.

### Confidentiality & Privacy

LHF shall exercise care not to disclose any personal or confidential information without prior consent by the individual or unless required by policy or law. Access to confidential or privileged information is reserved for employees only.

### Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

“History nurtures personal and collective identity in a diverse world. People discover their place in time through the stories of their families, communities, and nation. These stories of freedom and equality, injustice and struggle, loss and achievement, and courage and triumph shape people’s personal values that guide them through life.” Living History Farms welcomes diverse opinions and voices as part of our interpretive experiences. We believe this culture of inclusion supports our mission to educate, entertain and enrich all our guests and helps us to better serve the community.

Like the beautifully stitched historic quilts in our collection, Living History Farms staff, volunteers, interns, and guests are people from diverse backgrounds, upbringings, and experiences, each of whom brings their uniqueness to our museum, making it the best visitor experience possible. Together, we are truly greater than the sum of our parts.

### Mutual Respect Policy

Living History Farms is committed to providing an environment of mutual respect. Conduct will not be tolerated if it:

- Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment
- Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s performance
- Adversely affects an individual’s volunteer opportunities without basis or justification

Common examples that will not be tolerated may include racist or sexually explicit jokes, slurs, hostile acts, pranks, negative stereotyping, and threats.

We determine incidents on a case-by-case basis, considering whether the conduct was unwelcomed, the nature of the conduct, how the conduct would be perceived by a reasonable person under the circumstances and the totality of the circumstances.

Employees and volunteers are expected to treat one another, and visitors, with respect. Behavior that may not rise to the level of unlawful activity but may be considered offensive or inappropriate for the workplace, is not acceptable in our environment.

If you feel you are the victim of inappropriate behavior, you may choose to personally confront the behavior by letting that person know that it is unwelcome.

If the matter is not resolved or you are not comfortable confronting the behavior directly, you should immediately report your concerns. If you are a target or are aware of other employees or volunteers who are being targeted, it is your responsibility to report this matter to the Director of Community Engagement, the Finance Director and/or the President.

Your concerns will be handled as sensitively as is practicable under the circumstances. Allegations are acknowledged, heard, investigated, and appropriately resolved. When you voice a good faith complaint or in good faith aid in an investigation, you are protected from retaliation or negative treatment for your involvement in the process. If you are found to have acted inappropriately or retaliated, LHF may end your status as a LHF volunteer.

This policy applies to all employees, board members, customers, volunteers, vendors, and guests. Non-Farms persons working at or visiting our facilities should be made aware of our policy as the situation warrants. A Code of Conduct is posted at each public entrance to LHF. Allegations of harassment by non-Farms employees or visitors should be reported immediately to the Director of Community Engagement, the Director of Finance, or the President. It is all about respect. Think before speaking or acting, especially before telling a joke. Imagine how other people might feel. When in doubt...do not say or do it!

### Sexual Harassment Policy

It is the purpose of this policy statement to clearly communicate that Living History Farms will not condone sexual harassment and will take appropriate actions to ensure that all employees and volunteers are protected from sexual harassment.

Any unwelcome sexual advance, any request for sexual favors or any other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment when submission to such conduct is made the basis for employment (or a volunteer position) or promotional decisions. Such actions are illegal and will not be tolerated.

Any sexual contact, actions or speech which results in a work environment that is hostile, offensive, or abusive may also be construed as sexual harassment and will not be condoned or tolerated.

If you believe that you have been subjected to sexual harassment, immediately notify the Director of Community Engagement, the Director of Finance and Administration and/or the President.

Retaliation against anyone who files a complaint will not be allowed and should such an occurrence take place, disciplinary action will be taken.

All complaints of sexual harassment will be taken seriously, and an investigation will be conducted in as confidential a manner as is possible. The President will appoint two people to investigate (one male and one female) within seven days after the complaint is filed.

If you believe that the response to your complaint is inadequate or the harassing conduct continues or resumes, contact the President so an additional investigation may be conducted and, where warranted, corrective action may be taken. If your complaint involves the President, your complaint should be brought to the Chair of the Board of Directors Audit Committee.

Employees or volunteers will not be subjected to retaliation for good-faith reports of harassment. False reports may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal as a volunteer.

Non-Farms persons working at or visiting our facilities (vendors, delivery persons, construction workers, etc.) should be made aware of our policy as the situation warrants. Allegations of harassment by non-Farms workers or visitors should be reported as soon as possible to the Director of Community Engagement. A code of Conduct is posted at each public entrance to LHF. Allegations of harassment by non-Farms employees or visitors should be reported immediately to your Department Head, the President or Director of Finance.

## Drug Free Workplace

In compliance with the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, it is the policy of Living History Farms to maintain a safe workplace free from the use, abuse or effects of alcohol or drugs and controlled substances. LHF volunteers and employees have the right to work in an environment that is free from drug or alcohol abuse or misuse. Working under the influences of drugs or alcohol may adversely affect you, your co-workers (whether employees or volunteers) and the public as well. Therefore, you are prohibited from the following:

- Reporting to volunteer while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance.
- Illegal or non-prescribed use of controlled substances during time volunteering.
- Unauthorized manufacture, possession, sale, purchase or transfer of any controlled substance or alcoholic beverage while volunteering.
- Consuming any beverage containing alcohol on LHF premises except during special LHF-sponsored functions (Board of Directors reception, donor recognition event, etc.).

Engaging in any of these prohibited conducts or activities may result in dismissal as a volunteer.

Living History Farms recognizes that drug and alcohol dependencies are treatable illnesses. Such dependencies can cause major health problems as well as safety and security problems. If you need help dealing with such problems, you are strongly encouraged to seek counseling and/or treatment.

## Non-Smoking Environment

In accordance with Iowa law, smoking is not permitted - LHF offers a smoke-free environment for all volunteers, employees, and visitors. Receptacles are provided outside the Visitor Center for disposal of tobacco products before entering. If you see someone smoking on the grounds, please use discretion and courtesy, and remind visitors of our smoke-free environment. This policy includes all tobacco products and electronic cigarettes.

## Social Media

Living History Farms understands that social networking web sites, blogs, multi-media, and wikis have become a prevalent method of self-expression in our culture. We respect your right to use these mediums during personal time; however, if you choose to identify yourself as a Living History Farms employee, volunteer, or associate, you must adhere to the following guidelines:

Be transparent. If you choose to comment or post about your work at Living History Farms, use your real name, identify that you work for the organization and be clear about your role, while keeping confidentiality around proprietary information.

When expressing your views and opinions, always include the disclaimer "the views expressed are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Living History Farms" and never claim nor imply that you are speaking on behalf of the organization.

Do not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to Living History Farms, including non-public information about security, sales, company performance, marketing or advertising, payroll or internal policies.

Use good judgment when using social media, including personal or non-personal web sites or blogs, and discussing Living History Farms, employees, volunteers, guests, or others related to the organization. As a volunteer, your comments reflect on the organization.

In your role as a volunteer, you may become aware of information protected by the attorney-client privilege. Accordingly, you must be cautious about commenting about legal matters, litigation or any parties Living History Farms may be in litigation with. These matters generally are confidential.

Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and Living History Farms. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so pause and consider the content carefully before posting.

Failure to comply with the Living History Farms Social Media Policy may result in disciplinary action and/or dismissal as a volunteer.

## Emergency Procedures

Emergency Procedures are printed on brightly colored laminated sheets and kept at each site for easy reference. These procedures will assist you if an issue arises.

## **Period Clothing Policy and Guidelines**

“Period clothing” is a standard term for reproduction clothing and accessories for staff in museums. This designation avoids the term “costume” which can refer to theater garb and “historical” which is used to describe original clothing in museums and private collections.

Volunteers who commit to at least five (5) hours of volunteer service per week (May-October) for a total of 130 hours per season will be issued period clothing to wear during your volunteer shift. All period clothing assigned to you is property of Living History Farms and must remain at Living History Farms. Volunteers who are issued period clothing will receive their assigned garment bag of clothing the day of their shift. Volunteers should plan to arrive 15-20 minutes before their scheduled shift to get dressed in the basement of the Tangen house. All LHF property, including Period Clothing, issued to volunteers must remain on the property at all times. The Textile Supervisor will launder and mend clothing before your next shift, if needed.

Any volunteer who would like to wear their own personal period clothing, must have this clothing approved by the Textile Supervisor prior to your volunteer service beginning. Only the approved period clothing will be allowed on site while volunteering.

All volunteers will receive a blue LHF Volunteer shirt to wear while they are volunteering. You may choose to wear your assigned period clothing or your blue LHF Volunteer shirt.

If at any time your issued period clothing needs repairs, or you have questions, please contact the Textile Supervisor or Curator.

## **On-Site Policies and Guidelines**

TURN PERSONAL CELL PHONES OFF. These and modern purses, lunch and beverage containers, backpacks and other impedimenta do not belong in the 19th century and should be kept out of public view. Your supervisor will show you where these things can be stored. If you need to carry modern objects during the day, please use the satchel or basket with cover that has been provided for your site. These containers are assigned to each site and must remain there at the end of your day or shift for others to use. You may use modern bags to carry your things to and from site at the beginning and end of your shift.

To avoid confusing the public and interrupting your lunch time, please enjoy your lunch at the appropriate designated area at your site.

## Appendix

### The History of Living History Farms

Living History Farms Foundation was chartered in 1967 to keep alive the traditions of Midwestern agriculture. The founder of Living History Farms, Dr. William G. Murray, saw that the essence of farming includes living things – crops, livestock, and people. While many museums preserve farm machinery and artifacts, Dr. Murray’s view was that agricultural history can never be adequately interpreted through static exhibits of inanimate objects alone. Therefore, he envisioned a “living history” farm. Dr. Murray died in October 1991, but his dream lives on.

Dr. Murray’s dream became a reality in 1969 when LHF purchased 335 acres of land in the northwest corner of Des Moines along a combined section of 2 major interstate highways. . Programs began in 1970 with the construction of a log house and the establishment of a working 1850 Farm where interpreters use hand tools and ox power to raise three acres of crops. In 1970, the first event at Living History Farms, a Grain Harvest Festival, attracted more than 5,000 visitors. Also in 1970, LHF purchased an additional 25 acres that included the 1871 Martin Flynn House and Barn, both of which are listed on the National Register. In 1975, the 1900 Farm was added to demonstrate the tremendous impact the industrial revolution had on agriculture during the last half of the 19th century. The 1900 Farm’s horse-drawn machinery provides a stark contrast to the oxen power at the 1850 Farm. LHF continued to purchase land and by 1979 LHF holdings totaled 556 acres. The largest crowd that ever gathered in the state of Iowa assembled at LHF on October 4, 1979, when Pope John Paul II gave a homily to 340,000 people regarding man’s stewardship of the land. During this same period, LHF began construction of the 1876 town of Walnut Hill near the Flynn Farmstead to show the interdependence between farm families and townspeople. Today, Walnut Hill has 15 historic sites. The town includes a general store, pharmacy, working print shop, millinery, drug store, blacksmith, broom shop, cabinet maker shop, schoolhouse, vet clinic, farm implement warehouse, and middle-class residence, in addition to the Flynn Mansion & Barn. In 1978, LHF added the Henry A. Wallace Exhibit Center to bring the story of Midwestern agriculture into the 20th century including a 1950s kitchen. Interactive exhibits and outdoor crop plots featuring modern crop varieties are also featured at the Exhibit Center.

Recognizing that Iowa’s agricultural history began long before the arrival of European settlers, LHF used a grant from the Iowa Humanities Board to assemble a distinguished advisory committee, including members of the loway tribe, to research and construct gardens, bark lodges and work areas of a 1700 loway Indian Farm. The new site opened in 1982 with historical interpreters in modern clothing using Native American techniques to grow historic varieties of corn, beans, and squash. In 1983, the National Federation of State Humanities Councils named the 1700 loway Indian Farm as one of the most outstanding humanities projects in the nation.

In 1997, LHF opened the newly restored 1871 Flynn Barn and a new 8,000 square-foot Visitor Center with modern amenities and 500 paved parking spaces. In 1998, LHF built a 1,500 square-

foot State of Iowa Welcome Center as an addition to the Visitor Center. The Welcome Center closed December 19, 2008.

Today, LHF includes 500 acres and attracts more than 50,000 visitors annually, including visitors from every state in the nation and, dozens of foreign countries. Each year, tens of thousands of school children from a majority of Iowa's 99 counties and five neighboring states participate in LHF's educational programs.

LHF has been a pioneer in the use of "living history interpretation" and is the only living history museum in the nation that interprets three centuries of agriculture by means of chronological comparisons. In 1996, Dr. G. Terry Sharrer of the Smithsonian Institution, praised LHF as "the best agricultural museum anywhere" for its "broad view over the history of ideas about how things grow and how to grow them."

LHF has received numerous awards and accolades since our inception. A current listing of Accolades can be found on the LHF website.

## Sources of Information

**Interpreter's Resource Center** - The Interpreter's Resource Center is a collection of reading materials that have been compiled for use by all those who work or volunteer at LHF. Included in the library are books, articles, reports, diary accounts and other materials that relate to topics interpreted at LHF. The Center is in the 1928 House just west of the Flynn House. Please contact the Director of Community Engagement for access. Any volunteer, regardless of assignment, is welcome to use this resource during museum hours.

**Site Interpretive Materials** - Available through your Supervisor or the Co-Director of Programming.

**Printed Media Materials** - Copies of press releases; brochures, mailings and other printed materials are available at the Administration Office.

**Films/Slides** - The film, "Seeds of Survival," that was filmed at Living History Farms, as well as over 15,000 slides, are available to schools, group, and volunteer staff members. The 13-minute video "Unlocking the Fertile Prairie: A Video Tour of Living History Farms" is also available from the Administration Office.

**Web Site** – go to [www.LHF.org](http://www.LHF.org) for information on the museum sites, special events, job openings, education programs, etc.

**Trello** – All volunteers will have access to the LHF Volunteer Trello website. This is where important daily announcements and information will be posted. Please check Trello regularly to see what is happening at LHF.