



# Vibrant

## Volunteers

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# INSIDE THIS ISSUE



PG. 1

Volunteers: A Gift within Our Trustees Community



PG. 2

Staff Spotlight: Steve Schroth, Education Manager The Old Manse, Fruitlands



PG. 3

Tweens and Teens of The Trustees



PG. 4

Property Spotlight: The Old Manse



PG. 5

A Volunteer's Perspective



PG. 7

Happenings Around the State

## Volunteers: A Gift within Our Trustees Community

Although the holidays are behind us, we hope you will enjoy this beautiful and touching poem written by one of our newest volunteers, Donna Bielinski! Thank you, Donna!

#### A Day at Stevens-Coolidge Place

'Twas the week before Christmas and all through the garden Not a plant could be planted, for the cold ground had hardened. By the gateway the plants had been laid out with care, In the hopes that the volunteers would soon plant them there. Now the plan was to nestle them snug in a "bed" And wait for the spring to plant them instead; The "bed" was a cold frame to be covered with a "cap," And there they'd settle down for a long winter's nap. We were placing the pots in the trays with ease, Being careful to separate the varieties, When out on the path there arose such a clatter, We sprang from the ground to see what was the matter. Then we saw in what manner the plants were to go, A Gator UV with two carts in tow, And Kaela the driver so nimble and guick, She seemed to be channeling the soul of St. Nick. As we loaded the carts headed for the frame, Kaela sorted the plants and called them by name: "Now, primrose varieties, if you please: Candelabra, Drumstick, and Japanese, Now, iris varieties to be found: Geisha Girl, Moon Silk, Good Omen, Gold Bound." As leaves that before a nor'easter are blown And instantly end up in some other zone, So down to the cold frames the Gator it flew, With pots piled high and jiggling, too. We chose one cold frame, went straight to our work, And filled it entirely, then turned with a jerk, To question Kaela, "Will these plants survive? After a long hard winter, will they still be alive?" With a wink of her eye and a nod of her head, She gave us to know we had nothing to dread. We called it a day after ending that stuff, And away we all flew like goldenrod fluff, But to each we exclaimed ere we drove out of sight, "Happy Holiday to you!" And to the plants, "Sleep Tight!"



#### By Robin Grossman, Volunteer Services Associate



#### What brought you to The Trustees?

I was brought to The Trustees by the mission which is "to preserve, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts." I have had a passion both for natural and historic conservation since I had studied environmental history in college and graduate school. I attended St. Olaf College in Minnesota and Harvard University's Graduate School of Education where I earned my master's.

#### Can you define what is meant by environmental history?

I understand environmental history as telling the story of humanity's relationship to nature over time. Often this means telling the story of the landscape and how it has changed. For example, a very important work in environmental literature is a book called *Changes in Landscape* by William Cronin, who describes how the English and Indigenous people engaged with the land differently in New England during the 17th century. Sometimes, environmental history is a history of how people imagine nature and what nature means to them. This type of environmental history (which is a form of intellectual history, or the history of thought) is relevant to our sites when we talk about Transcendentalism and how certain people at a specific time and place thought about and related to the natural environment.

#### Tell us about your current role with The Trustees.

I am the education manager for both The Old Manse and Fruitlands. I develop and implement education programming for school groups, as well as church groups, senior groups and others. I also develop and implement public programs for children and families along with supporting general operations. I love to see how diverse groups take in the history our properties have to offer.

# As an education manager, how do you bring diversity, belonging, inclusion and equity (DBIE) into your programming?

I think about DBIE in programming in three distinct ways. The first is content. Are we telling stories that are varied, diverse, and representative of communities in Massachusetts? When we talk about the history of historic houses, whose history are we telling? Second, I think about how we teach. Are we teaching in ways that are accessible, culturally relevant, and engaging? Do we create opportunities for students to share their own ideas and have those ideas valued? Third, I try to think critically about whether we are teaching students to uphold or interrupt the systems of inequality that make DBIE necessary. I don't want to overstate our work because we are only with students a very short time, but that is something I think about and aspire to.

#### What has been your favorite day at The Trustees and why?

My favorite day was when fourth graders from Acton-Boxborough visited Fruitlands for a map-making program where they compared and contrasted historic and contemporary maps, and then explored Fruitlands to make maps of their own. They were extremely engaged and insightful, and the maps they created were beautiful. It was a wonderful day, and the hill was alive with young learners.



# What advice would you offer someone contemplating volunteering with The Trustees?

Be prepared to be flexible and have fun. We work with many visitors and we offer many activities and programs, so it's good to be on your toes!

What is something about you that might surprise your volunteer colleagues? I'm pretty goofy and I studied cello for 18 years.

#### What's a fun fact about you?

I make my own ice cream! My favorite flavor is Ben & Jerry's Oat of this Swirled. It's a brown sugar base with oatmeal cookie dough swirl and chocolate chunks. It's basically an oatmeal chocolate chip cookie in ice cream form.



#### If you had one superpower, what would it be?

The ability to learn and master any skill I wanted — immediately.



#### TWEENS AND TEENS OF THE TRUSTEES



No age group needs nature more than our youth. Studies consistently show that kids who spend time outdoors experience improved health

and cognitive functions, reduced stress, and enhanced social skills. This is especially imperative for youth who live in neighborhoods without much access to nature. Our current strategic plan, *Momentum*, has given us the opportunity to reach children of all



backgrounds in all communities and show them the wonders of the outdoors through structured programs, unstructured play and volunteer opportunities.

Throughout the state, our staff are encouraging our youth to get involved in a variety of projects at the property level. With the support of parents, guardians and staff, our tweens and teens are assisting with our expanded Island Education Initiative on Martha's Vineyard as well as with stewardship projects and livestock care statewide.

When we can encourage our youth to get outside, their natural curiosity and imagination are free to run wild. These early life experiences make them lovers of nature, better outdoor citizens, and the future stewards of our irreplaceable landscapes.





#### By Robin Grossman, Volunteer Services Associate

After visiting the grounds and gardens at The Old Manse in Concord several times last spring, I decided I wanted to come back to learn more about this historic home and its environs. Naturally, when Education Manager Steve Schroth invited me to explore the interior of the house with him, I was thrilled.

To be completely honest, I didn't know much about The Old Manse before. On my earlier visits, I had enjoyed walking through the grounds and crossing Concord's North Bridge, but I was eager to learn more.



Photo courtesy of Living Concord

Built in 1770 by Reverend William Emerson, the two-and-a-half story Georgian home was witness to the start of the Revolutionary War, the birthplace of American Transcendentalism, and home to many influential philosophers, writers, artists, and educators of the day, among them Rev. Emerson's grandson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, as well as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, and Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley.

I was fascinated to learn about the history associated with the property. Rev. Emerson watched from his fields on April 19, 1775, as colonial militiamen engaged with British soldiers on North Bridge in the first battle of the war for independence. Later, it was in the second-floor study of the house where his grandson wrote the first draft of Nature, the essay in which he laid the foundation for the Transcendental movement.

Step inside the home today and you will see a formal parlor and dining room running along one side of the first floor with a smaller parlor and kitchen on the other side. Visitors can take in the collection of period furnishings and easily imagine the rhythm of everyday life in the house. In the second-floor study, you can still see the window glass where Sophia and Nathaniel Hawthorne used her diamond ring to etch a brief verse. Nathaniel and Sophia Hawthorne moved in the home on their wedding day, July 9, 1842, and stayed there for three years. It was interesting to learn that Henry David Thoreau planted a vegetable garden on the grounds of the house to celebrate their wedding.

I was glad to be in the presence of such a huge part of American history as Steve led me on a tour of the entire house. I also feel lucky to volunteer with The Trustees and to be able to learn about so many captivating properties. I happen to love history, but even if you are not a history buff, The Old Manse offers much to learn and appreciate about the past.

I want to thank Steve for making the time to share The Old Manse with me, and ultimately, with all of you! People like Steve make me happy to be a part of The Trustees.

If you would like to visit The Old Manse, it is open Saturdays and Sundays during the winter months. Tours start on the hour from 11am to 4pm. <u>Learn more here</u>.



#### By Anne Bate, Volunteer Services Associate

Since joining The Trustees as a volunteer, I have been impressed by the diversity of volunteer opportunities that The Trustees offers! Not only do opportunities exist all over the state, but there are roles that utilize a wide variety of experiences and interests, meet various scheduling preferences, and engage volunteers in a vast array of environments. Whether you prefer working indoors or outdoors, by yourself or with others, according to a fixed schedule or with flexibility, there is bound to be something for you!



My volunteer engagement with The Trustees started several years ago. For many years I had enjoyed hiking at Weir Hill and Ward Reservation and been inspired by the gorgeous gardens at Stevens-Coolidge House and Gardens (SCHG), all beautiful Trustees properties in my area. After retiring from a career in education, I decided that it was time to explore volunteer opportunities with The Trustees. All it took was several searches in Volunteer Connect (The Trustees site for volunteers) and a chat with Eileen Small, the Engagement Specialist for Volunteer Services, and I discovered a perfect match! I quickly became a volunteer with the Volunteer Services' Remote Volunteer

Reporting Team and was thrilled to take on a position that utilized data management skills I had developed during my previous jobs and that offered the flexibility to fit into my personal schedule. In this role I perform a variety of tasks that include reporting of volunteer hours, creating training videos, and exploring and implementing data management tools to streamline some of our Volunteer Services processes. I love that I am always learning something new, and that I have a wonderful team to work with! And while it is a role that I can independently perform from anywhere and at any time, I also enjoy a weekly virtual meeting with my team, as well as occasional face-to-face gatherings. It is a role where I feel like I have a positive impact on The Trustees, and at the same time benefit from lots of mental stimulation, as well as a meaningful connection with an amazing Volunteer Services team as well as the wider organization.

My Trustees role is an ideal one for me... and yet, this fall I had an itch to experience what it is like to work in a more physically active role, interacting with fellow volunteers as we worked in the fields. I had read descriptions of so many interesting Trustees volunteer opportunities during my work and wanted to try out something new. As an avid gardener, hiker, and skier, I was very familiar with the exhilarating feeling from time engaged in outdoor physical activity. This time SCHG came to the rescue with some fall workdays that fit into my schedule and incorporated my love of gardening! During the process of pulling up annual plants that had



passed their prime, preserving and preparing remaining blossoms for drying, and washing SCHG produce to be donated to a local food pantry, I also enjoyed conversation with SCHG's dedicated group of gardening volunteers. Each day I came home tired, yet happy, having had an invigorating day as I worked alongside fellow



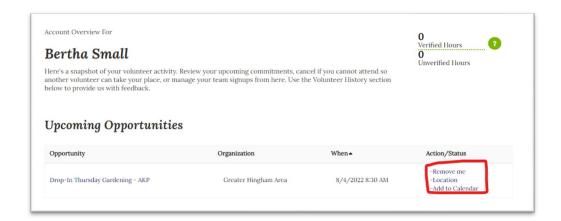
Trustees volunteers and staff, picked up some new gardening tips, and helped prepare for the gardens' winter rest while dreaming of the beauty that will fill the beds next spring. And I had a much better understanding of the volunteer commitment and camaraderie behind the data I help manage.

So now, what is my perfect match? Time will tell, but perhaps it's taking advantage of the diversity of opportunities The Trustees offers and working in two very different roles to broaden my engagement with The Trustees and enjoy a little variety. The possibilities are endless!

If you're interested in exploring an additional volunteer role with The Trustees, check out Volunteer Connect. You'll be amazed by the variety of volunteer opportunities throughout the state – both in terms of role and time commitment. Plus, many opportunities also offer flexible scheduling!

#### Don't Be a No-Show - Just Let Us Know!

We know people have busy lives. If you are registered for a volunteer shift and are no longer able to attend, please let us know as soon as you can. We design our shifts to accommodate a specific number of volunteers and our property staff depend on this additional support. You can remove yourself from an upcoming shift by logging into your <u>Volunteer Connect</u> profile. We also suggest that you email the property staff person where you will be volunteering and/or Volunteer Services at <u>volunteer@thetrustees.org</u>. The image below shows where to remove yourself from a shift on Volunteer Connect.





#### Want to know more about Volunteer Connect?

Join us remotely the evening of January 19<sup>th</sup> for a recap of previous volunteer trainings! We'll start the evening with a special presentation from our <u>Outdoor Experience</u> Staff followed by an overview of Volunteer Connect with plenty of time for questions and answers. To reserve your spot, follow <u>this link</u>.

Hope to see you there!



#### By Eliza Forman, Recruitment Specialist/Volunteer Services



Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion and Equity [DBIE] in ACTION!
In October, the Community Impact Team hosted two events for two of our new community partners: <a href="Gay for Good">Gay for Good</a> and the Boston Public School's <a href="ALANA">ALANA</a> (African, Latino, Asian, and Native American) Educators program.

Noel Dominguez, Diversity & Inclusion Program Manager; Bob Bowers, Director of Volunteer Services; and Eliza Forman, Recruitment Specialist, welcomed volunteers from Gay for Good for an evening of meet and greet at Symphony Community

Garden, one of The Trustees <u>Boston Community Gardens</u>. Gay for Good is an organization of LGBTQ+ and ally volunteers in more than 19 cities who promote diversity, foster inclusion, and seek to strengthen ties within their communities. Earlier in the summer and fall, Gay for Good members volunteered at Trustees events like the pollinator planting Stewardship Saturday at <u>World's End</u>. Our Trustees team was excited to get to know this group more, and we look forward to partnering with them for events in the future!

In October, Volunteer Services hosted ALANA Educators for a Meet Up at the <u>Bradley Estate</u> in Canton. We enjoyed meeting and getting to know the BPS Educators of Color community and sharing information about The Trustees. We are looking forward to continuing our partnership with the ALANA Educators Program!

These new partnerships are aligned with The Trustees diversity, belonging, inclusion and equity (DBIE) vision. Our overarching DBIE objective is to create inclusive spaces of belonging for



Trustees staff, members, volunteers, and communities across our organization and 120-plus properties. Our commitment to DBIE is deeply grounded in The Trustees' mission to protect and share Massachusetts' iconic places — for the simple reason that nature and culture can soothe the soul and improve our lives. This work includes creating more accessible properties and trails, providing expanded access to properties and cultural sites through free or reduced admission and public transportation, and inviting new audiences and communities to events and to visit Trustees properties. If you are interested in learning more about The Trustees' commitment to DBIE, you can learn about our vision and roadmap on the website <a href="here">here</a>.



#### Featured Winter Volunteer Roles

- Appleton Farms in Ipswich. Help with hikes or events!
- Chestnut Hill Farm in Southborough has several fun and educational upcoming events!
- Join staff & volunteers for a 2-part trails training! Part 1 is virtual date to be determined!

#### **Explore Volunteer Connect**

Check out the informative links on Volunteer Connect.

- Have you met our most recent volunteer spotlights, Mary Ann Richardson, Diane Ciuffetti Geis and Steve Kendall?
- Visit our <u>resources</u> page to view tutorials, archived newsletters and more

# **Help support Volunteer Services**

# Sock and Glove Drive in Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King

in Support of

# Friends of Boston's Homeless January 14<sup>th</sup> – January 31<sup>st</sup>

Donations must be new, never-worn socks and/or gloves, in original packaging

## **Drop-off Locations and Times:**

## **Appleton Farm Store, Ipswich**

10:00 am – 6:00 pm, Tuesday – Saturday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, Sunday

## Fruitlands Museum Store, Harvard

11:00 am - 4:00 pm, Weekends Only

### **World's End Ranger Station, Hingham**

7:30 am - Sunset, Daily

Friends of Boston's Homeless supports Woods Mullen Women's Shelter and Southampton Men's Shelter (formerly Boston's Long Island Shelter) in Boston's South End. These shelters serve over 800 people experiencing homelessness every day.