



Dennos Museum Center

Docent Handbook

2018-2019

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Welcome!

Thank you for participating in the Docent Program at the Dennon Museum Center. Without volunteers, the Museum would not be able to do what it does! As a docent, you will be a primary contact for students, teachers, professors, and adult groups that visit the museum for a tour. You will learn about the Dennon, its collections and exhibitions, and techniques for facilitating learning in the galleries. But you're not expected to be an expert, and much of the time you will be working on a team that can help you be the best docent you can be. The Curator of Education, Jason Dake, will serve as your leader and program manager. Please feel free to contact him at 231-995-1029 or jdake@nmc.edu with any questions.

Introduction to the Museum

Mission Statement

The Dennon Museum Center seeks to engage, entertain and enlighten its audiences through the collection of art, and the presentation of exhibitions and programs in the visual arts, sciences and performing arts.

History of the Dennon Museum Center

The Michael and Barbara Dennon Museum Center at Northwestern Michigan College opened on July 6, 1991. The original 40,000 square foot complex featured three changing exhibit galleries and a sculpture court; the "hands on" Thomas A. Rutkowski Discovery Gallery; the Power Family Inuit Gallery; and the 367-seat Milliken Auditorium, host to concerts and lectures throughout the year. In 2018, The Dennon opened its expanded permanent collection galleries, including the Diana & Richard Milock Wing and the Barbara & Dudley Smith Exhibition Wing for Inuit Art.

The Museum holds a collection of over 2,500 objects, of which over 1,600 are Inuit art from the Canadian Arctic. Our Inuit art collection is one of the largest and the most historically complete collections in the United States. In addition, our significant collection of outdoor sculpture by noted international and Michigan artists can be found on the campus of Northwestern Michigan College.

The Museum is a unit of Northwestern Michigan College and operates under a restricted budget with operating funds coming from endowment, fundraising, and earned income. The Museum seeks support for exhibition and educational programming, acquisitions, capital projects and endowment. The Museum serves over 60,000 visits per year.

Visitor Service Philosophy

Our Service Promise: Our visitors will receive responsible, friendly service while they enjoy quality products and great value. **Visitors:**

- Do us a favor when they call or visit
- Are individuals who deserve personal attention
- Are groups that walk in the door, rent our facilities, and/or those that visit our website
- Are customers who buy our services and keep DMC going
- Are deserving of our courteous and attentive treatment

Dennos Museum Center Education Department

Education Department Mission

The Education Department coordinates, produces, and implements educational programs for various audiences in accordance with the Museum's mission. Programs are engaging, accessible, and objective-based. **Programs aim to:**

- Increase understanding of and appreciation for the Museum's exhibitions and collections.
- Connect the arts and sciences with the daily lives of visitors.
- Be accessible to all audiences.

School Programs

Educational Tours*

The Dennos Museum Center offers guided tours in conjunction with current exhibits. Guided tours are interactive and give students an opportunity to analyze artwork, draw connections between the arts and their lives, and make informed decisions about artwork. An art project coordinated with a guided tour gives students the opportunity to create a work of art that relates to the current exhibit, demonstrating their understanding of the themes addressed in the tour and a mastery of tools, materials, and techniques. Dennos Museum Center K-12 educational programming aligns with Michigan Content Standards for Arts Education and the National Standards for Arts Education.

Inuit Cultural Tours*

A specialized educational tour based on the Museum's focus on Inuit art, Inuit Cultural Tours offer a unique opportunity for students to experience the art and culture of the Inuit through an interactive tour that includes playing Inuit games and completing a block print or stencil project.

Self-Guided Visits

Self-guided visits allow students to explore the museum at their own pace. Worksheets, gallery hunts, and other materials are available from the Museum Education Department upon request.

Educational Concerts*

The Dennos Museum Center offers educational concert experiences that align with music appreciation curriculum. Educational Concerts and Workshops vary by performer but generally include short performances, interactive sections with singing, clapping or other activities, and some discussion of the genre of music or culture of the performers.

***As a docent, you will have a role in these programs.**

Public Programs

Lecture Series

The Museum offers periodic lectures relating to the Museum's permanent collection and changing exhibits. Docents are encouraged to attend lectures as part of their continuing education and are given free admission.

Group Tours*

The Museum offers guided tours in conjunction with current exhibits. Guided tours are interactive and give visitors an opportunity to analyze artwork, draw connections between the arts and their lives and make informed decisions about artwork.

Workshops

The Museum offers periodic workshops with artists that relate to current exhibitions or the permanent collection. Workshops usually require registration and payment of fees.

Travel Opportunities

The Dennis Museum Center offers periodic travel opportunities as they relate to the Museum's exhibition and collection.

Other Programs*

The Curator of Education, Museum staff, and docents develop additional programs for a variety of audiences on a regular basis.

***As a docent, you will have a role in these programs.**

Docent Program Overview

Docent Definition

A docent is a volunteer trained to facilitate learning in the museum through a variety of activities and techniques.

Summary

More than anyone else, the docent represents the Museum to the students, teachers, and other visitors taking guided tours of the Museum. It is the docent who provides the personal touch and attention to what can be a person's first experience in a museum. As a docent, one has the potential to initiate lifelong interest and appreciation for the arts and sciences by providing interactive and engaging tours to our museum audience.

Recruitment

Diverse community representation is sought for all volunteers working in the Docent Program. When recruiting a new docent class, notice is given through a member's newsletter and via public service announcements to the press. The active docents are encouraged to invite interested friends and acquaintances to join. We provide information to all interested individuals and schedule interviews whenever possible.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY NOTICE: Northwestern Michigan College is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, disability, genetic information, height, weight, marital status or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions. nmc.edu/nondiscrimination

Requirements

In order to be a Denmos Museum Center docent and give tours, you must:

- Attend a Volunteer Orientation.
- Become a member. Membership to the Denmos Museum Center is strongly encouraged (please speak to the Curator of Education if financial hardship prevents you from becoming a member).
- Make an effort to attend all training sessions. Please notify Curator of Education if you are absent.
- Commit to two years with the Docent Program.
- Be available to provide or shadow a minimum of 2 tours per month during the months of September through May, or at least 8 hours per month including meetings. (Guidelines subject to change based on overall tour numbers.)

As a Member of the Docent Program, you may expect:

- Clear explanation of responsibilities
- Opportunity to expand one's knowledge and understanding of the arts and sciences
- In-depth education on Inuit Arts and Culture
- Opportunity to contribute solutions to problems that arise
- Recognition for service to the Denmos Museum Center
- Socialization opportunities
- Respect from staff
- Evaluation of performance and suggestions for improvement

In return, the Denmos Museum Center expects the following from you:

- Available to attend trainings and give tours September through May
- Dependable execution of responsibilities
- Constructive criticism in the form of concrete suggestions
- Professional attitude and conduct
- Openness to trends in art education and to various tour techniques
- Accountability for your responsibilities as a docent
- Respect for other docents, other Museum volunteers, and to Museum staff
- Commitment and dedication to your duties as a docent

Benefits

Docents receive various benefits, including:

- A 20% discount on purchases in the Museum Store (docent only)
- Free admission to artist lectures and exhibition openings (docent only)
- An annual volunteer dinner hosted by the museum in honor of your hard work (docent + guest)
- Occasional discounts on concert tickets and museum admission passes (docent + guest)

Docent Levels

Active Docent

Active Docents attend all trainings and are involved in giving tours. Please see requirements in “Docent Requirements” section. It is important that all docents giving tours are up to date with trainings to ensure a quality experience for teachers, students, and other visitors.

Provisional Docent

Provisional Docents are all new docents that are going through a new docent training class.

Emeritus Docent

Emeritus Docents are docents that find that they are unable to commit as much time and energy as they have in the past or are unable to give tours during the months of September through June. These volunteers are invited to social events but do not attend trainings or give tours. A minimum of 3 years’ service is required to obtain emeritus status.

Training/Meetings

Meetings

Regular meetings occur on Tuesday mornings, 9:30am to Noon. All docents are expected to attend the training meetings to ensure a quality experience for teachers and schools. If you miss training, you are responsible for making up the content of that training. *NOTE: If Traverse City Area Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, the docent meeting for that day will be cancelled as well.*

All docents may choose one day a week for which he/she will be responsible for tours. If there are no tours arranged, the docent is encouraged to study at the Museum, work on a committee, or otherwise help out the docent program. It is the responsibility of the docent to check ahead for tour information.

Provisional Docents

Provisional Docent training will occur September through December each year, based on new docent interest. Generally, special training will be held separate from Active Docents, although Provisional Docents can and should attend regular meetings. Training will include the background of Museum, history of art, basic elements of art, knowledge of Inuit Collection, teaching methods, child development, tour techniques, tour development, and observing experienced Docent lead tours.

In late November or early December, a final tour will be prepared and conducted by each Provisional Docent in order to be approved by the Curator of Education for Active Docent status.

Continuing Education

Docents are encouraged to take Art History to better prepare as educational tour guides. Classes are offered through Northwestern Michigan College’s Academic and Extended Education programs.

Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation throughout the school year involves peer review during training sessions, self-evaluation after tours, teacher evaluations, and year-end review.

Year-end review consists of a self-evaluation, an evaluation of the training program, and a one-on-one meeting with the Curator of Education. Each docent will be evaluated on his/her touring performance by observation as well as the teacher evaluation forms. In addition, attendance and commitment to the docent program is evaluated.

The docents are asked to evaluate the program at year's end. Comments are compiled regarding compliance with Docent guidelines for touring, logistics, and education. This input is essential for program planning. Each training session is also evaluated for continuous improvement during the year.

The Curator of Education holds to the right to remove a docent from "active" status at any time, and each docent holds the right to remove him/herself from duty at any time.

Docent Committees

Docents can participate in a variety of committees to provide input regarding tours, programs, and other resources. Committee membership is voluntary, but a two-year commitment is encouraged. Each committee appoints one member as the record keeper/contact person for Museum staff and other committees. Each docent may be the contact person for *only one committee* at a time, but is otherwise able to participate in multiple committees at their discretion.

This document provides a generalized purpose for each committee. Once convened, each committee can develop a specific objective and meeting schedule.

All reports and actions must be approved by Curator of Education before being reported to the docents at a general meeting.

Standing Committees

Committees will be undergoing changes in 2018-2019. Stay tuned for details and sign-up information.

Previous Committees include:

Technology Committee: Explores and develops training for iPads and other technology for use during docent tours.

Hospitality Committee: Coordinates food and beverage service for meetings, along with get-well cards and other messages for the docent “family.” (See next page for additional details.)

Library Committee: Organizes the educational library in the museum office.

Inuit Committee: Develops resource materials; reviews past and present tours; creates new Inuit tours.

Exhibitions Committee: Develops resource materials, tours ideas, etc. for future exhibitions, as based on schedule provided by Curator of Education.

Archives Committee: Reviews and organizes current resources for tours and exhibitions, as found in docent office files.

Art Project Committee: Develops art projects for exhibitions.

Programs & Tours Committee: Develops resources and ideas for general tours (K-12, adults, or other), as well as public programs (family day, drop-in tours, etc.).

New Docent Welcome Committee: Develops procedures for introducing and mentoring new docents (12-18 months) through the docent program.

Hospitality Committee

Responsibilities:

- 1. Coffee/ tea preparation and clean-up for weekly Docent meetings (45 minutes before meetings).**
 - a. Ensure the Dennos Museum Center entrance will be open 45 minutes prior to our meetings.
 - b. Prepare coffee (caffeinated and decaffeinated) as well as hot water with tea bags.
 - c. Set up cups and “additives.”
 - d. Bring an occasional treat for everyone!!!
 - e. Clean up kitchen at the end of the meeting

- 2. Coordination of monthly treats for social gatherings from 9:30 – 10:00 am during the first Tuesday meetings of October, November, January, February, March, April and May.**
 - a. Coordination of sign-up sheet for food and table decorations. Teams will consist of four members.
 - b. Reminders to team members one week prior to their chosen date.

- 3. Coordination of Special Events**
 - a. September orientation meeting treats (Coordinators provide these)
 - b. Holiday Party at the Dennos during our final December meeting.
 - c. A final Spring Picnic and celebration!!

- 4. Send cards to docents celebrating a special event or those who are ill and need our love and support.**
 - a. Cards to be purchased at the Dennos Museum Store and placed in the Dennos’s mailbox

- 5. Gifts of appreciation to those who have helped us succeed in our responsibilities to represent Dennos Museum Center as Teaching Docents.**

General Procedures

Substitution

Our programs rely on each Docent to be at the Museum on his or her scheduled day and time for tours. If a Docent needs a substitute:

- Arrange for a substitute as soon as possible
- Make certain that your substitute is qualified to take over your role
- Notify staff and lead docent of the substitution
- Record your substitute's name on the white board

Absences

Please notify the Curator of Education of planned travel time. Record your planned absences on the Docent board in the copy room area.

Volunteer Credit Hours

As a docent, it is ***extremely important*** that you record your volunteer hours in the Docent Hours Notebook. Each Docent will fill out a Volunteer Activity Report. There are blank sheets in the front of the Hours Notebook. All hours will be added in late June as our fiscal year runs July through June. These hours are used for grant applications and volunteer recognition.

Docents record all times spent preparing for, doing, or evaluating any work you do here at the museum, including tours, training sessions, workshops, special events, library, committee meetings, etc. These include but are not limited to:

- Docent Meetings (These hours are recorded by the Curator of Education.)
- Tour preparation and research
- Giving Tours
- Volunteering at special events or workshops
- Preparing training materials
- Preparing materials for the museum
- Committee meetings and related work
- Visiting other museums (this counts as research for tours and material preparation)
- Workshops at the museum that pertain to museum collections, exhibitions, and programs

Signing Up for Tours

- Each docent is assigned a day for which they are responsible.
- Each docent checks the white board between 9:15 and 9:30 on Tuesday morning training days.
- When there is a tour on their day, the docent signs up for the tour. Find the *Group Registration Sheet* in the folders near the white board.
- A lead docent (marked with an asterisk) takes responsibility for contacting the teacher and ensuring that communication among docents exists regarding the tour details.
- Docents keep their leave announcements current on the white board so that other docents know when people are out of town and need their day to be covered.
- If a tour is scheduled late, the Curator of Education will send out an email tour alert to the docents letting them know about the tour. They can sign up by emailing back or on the white board.

Tour Procedures

- Lead docents should do the following:
 - Ensure that enough docents are signed up for the tour
 - Go to the tour folders and find the reservation form for that day and specific tour. Make sure all the docents helping with the tour have their names written on the board.
 - If a packet has not yet been sent to the teacher, check with the Curator of Education to make sure one is sent out.
 - Using the *Teacher Contact Outline* as a guide, call or email the teacher and ask the questions on the form. Be sure to confirm the date, time and fee, as well as ask if there are any special needs or curriculum connections the teacher is looking for.
 - Check with staff to confirm that all necessary rooms have been reserved and tech support is available for the tour.
 - Contact all the docents for the tour and go over the tour goals, objectives, etc. and begin to formalize your tour.
- Show up for the tour at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the tour.
- Greet the teachers, students and chaperones.

TO START THE TOUR:

- Introduce all the docents
- Explain the importance of evaluation forms to teachers/hand out evaluations
- Review museum behavior in a positive manner (please refrain from using negative language)
- Inform group members of the locations of the bathrooms and coatrooms
- Remind students to stay with their group

- Tour: Prepare your tour so it covers the objectives of the teacher. Also make sure you pay attention to the goals on the *Teacher Evaluation Form*.
- Provide closing remarks; ask for summaries from students.
- Thank the group and invite them back.
- Fill out the *Docent Evaluation Form* with your team and put it in the Curator of Education's box.
- Send out a Dennis Museum Postcard as a thank you note for visiting us.

Forms

The following forms are used throughout the scheduling, touring, and evaluation process:

- Group Registration Sheet (white/tan) – found in the folders in the mail room by the white board.
- Teacher Contact Outline (gold) – to use when contacting a teacher to ensure accurate notetaking.
- Tour Outline (no color) – to use when planning your tour, providing helpful organization.
- Docent Evaluation Form (pink) – to fill out with your docent team immediately following tour.
- Teacher Evaluation Form (green) – for teacher to fill out following their tour.
- Postcard – to send to the classroom as a “thank you” for their visit.

Docent Resources

- i. *Top Tour Tips* – This resource is useful for planning tours, and will be discussed during training.
- ii. *Connections Worksheet* – To be completed during a training session, this form is used to familiarize docents with the current exhibitions and prepare for tours.
- iii. *Elements of Art & Principles of Design* – To be completed during a training session, this form is used to familiarize docents with vocabulary.
- iv. *Multiple Intelligences* – This resource is useful for planning tours, and will be discussed during training.
- v. *Principles for Interpreting Art* – This resource is useful for planning tours, and will be discussed during training.
- vi. *Museum Movement Techniques* – This resource is useful for planning tours, and will be discussed during training.
- vii. *Planning Tours* – This resource is useful for planning tours, and will be discussed during training.
- viii. *Tour Outline* – This resource is useful for planning tours, and will be discussed during training.
- ix. *Tour Shadow Form* – Each provisional docent must complete three tour shadow forms before approval for Active status.
- x. *Sample Tour Evaluation* – This form is similar to the evaluation for Active status approval.
- xi. *Teacher Contact Outline* – This form is used by docents when contacting teachers for follow up.