



Volunteer Orientation Package 2017





Welcome to Abbey Gardens!

Thank you for your interest in our volunteer program! Much of the work we do at Abbey Gardens wouldn't be possible without the dedication and support of our volunteers. Volunteer support is invaluable to this organization! Volunteers provide us with new insight, fresh perspective, enthusiasm, energy and skill.

This orientation package was designed to familiarize you with Abbey Gardens and all of the work we do. Enclosed you will find information about our mission, volunteer requirements and policies and procedures.

On behalf of Abbey Gardens Community Trust, thank you so much for your interest in Abbey Gardens and our volunteer program.

Sincerely,

Heather Reid
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Program Coordinator
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Welcome to Abbey Gardens

Abbey Gardens is a charity with a big dream is to transform a spent gravel pit (350 acres) into a green space that provides economic and recreational opportunities for our community. Everything we do on site helps further our mission to create opportunities to learn about living more sustainably. If you want to learn about local food, gardening, energy, sustainable construction techniques, heritage agricultural animals, land restoration or cooking techniques, this is the place to visit! Our site features local food shopping opportunities through our Food Hub, interpretive trails, heritage breed displays, programming and event spaces, picnic areas and kiosks.

Getting Involved

Registering as a Volunteer

There are two ways to register as a volunteer:

Phone or email

Call 705 754 4769 or email cara@abbeygardens.ca to get started!

In-Person

Come on out to Abbey Gardens and meet the staff! We will collect all of your contact information and sign you up as a volunteer.

Your Volunteer Shift

Upon arriving for your shift, one of the managers (Garden, Kitchen, Food Hub, Programs) will greet you and outline the tasks for the day and the location of any necessary tools/equipment you may need. If you have any questions, please ask us! All of the staff are so grateful for your time and efforts and are here to help.

Please use the form provided to track your volunteer hours throughout the season. At the end of the season, please submit your form to the volunteer coordinator.



Volunteer Program Opportunities

The Gardens

Our gardens feature food and flower varieties, permaculture gardening techniques, and interesting ideas in sustainable agriculture. We currently have 2 acres of vegetable gardens, an education garden, backyard composting demonstration, pollinator gardens and hoop houses. All of the vegetables grown in the garden are sold fresh on the Food Hub shelves or processed in the kitchen into value-added products. Visitors are welcome to explore the garden rows while learning about gardening through our interpretive signs.

Opportunities

Do you love gardening? Spending time outdoors? Meeting new people? If so, Abbey Gardens has a volunteer opportunity just for you!

Planting & Weeding Teams

We are recruiting planting, weeding and harvesting team volunteers to commit to preparing garden beds, planting this season's produce and maintaining gardens in our 2 acre, organic garden throughout the spring, summer and fall season. Sign up to be a part of a weekday team from 9:30am-12pm from June to September. Choose whichever weekday morning works best for you! Join us every week, or when it suits your schedule.

Flower garden team

Interested in flower gardening? We're looking for 3-4 team members to meet on a weekly basis every Wednesday and/or Saturday from 8:30am to 11:30am for July and August to plant, prune, mulch, weed, split perennials, decorate for special occasions and create fresh flower arrangements. Join us every week, or when it's convenient for your schedule!

Garden On-Call Volunteers

Interested in volunteering in the gardens but can't commit to a weekly shift? Then this may be the perfect opportunity for you! Our garden on-call volunteers may be recruited to help with special garden work-bees or may fill in for planting, harvest or flower team members who can't



attend one of their weekly shifts. An email will be sent a week in advance of proposed gardening dates.

The Food Hub

The food hub was built by the Sustainable Building and design crew at Fleming College in 2012 and officially opened in 2013. The purpose of the Food Hub is to create demand for and provide easy access to local food. We classify local as any product grown (vegetables), made (preserves) or packaged (coffee) within a 200km radius of the Food Hub.

In the hub, we sell fresh vegetables from our own garden and neighbouring farms, homemade salads and preserves, fresh-milled grain products, organically raised meats, dairy and locally made products. We also sell coffee and breads from County Coffee and Into the Blue Bakery.

All of the vegetables from our garden are either sold fresh on the shelves or are brought into the kitchen for processing into salads, spreads, pies, preserves, pickles etc. We also have an Austrian stone, grain mill to grind Red fife wheat-a heritage grain first grown in Lakefield Ontario. We mill it fresh to sell in bulk, but we also make pancake mix and muffin mix.

The Food Hub operates as a social enterprise, so any profits go directly back into the project to help support educational programs and facilities.

Opportunities

Market Team

Are you passionate about local food and want to help Abbey Gardens share our products with the community? Then join our market crew! Market team members work alongside staff to help sell our wares and educate consumers at the Haliburton Farmers' Market throughout the summer and fall season on Tuesdays from 11:30am-4pm. Team members alternate so that they volunteer every other, to every third week. These positions may require the use of your personal vehicle to drive from the markets to Abbey Gardens.

Food Hub

In the summer season, the Hub & Gardens become very busy with activity. For Abbey Gardens' staff it is even more important that we stay connected through weekly staff meetings. The Food Hub volunteer would come in on Wednesdays from 3:30pm-5pm (June-September) to help manage the Hub while the Hub staff joins in on this meeting. Tasks will involve helping customers in the Hub purchase items and may also involve restocking inventory or packaging products. Product and till training provided.



Programs

We are passionate about sharing experiences about gardening, ecology and cooking through workshops, volunteer opportunities, tours, field trips and day programs for children and adults. Our 5 acres of natural program area, developing trail systems, gardens and Food Hub create the perfect canvas for experiential learning!

Opportunities

Pony Pals

Do you have experience training and working with equines? Love spending time outdoors? If so, Abbey Gardens has a volunteer opportunity just for you! We are recruiting pony team volunteers to help train our heritage, Lac La Croix ponies and their pasture pal, a Miniature Blanket Appaloosa. Maple, Sammy and Flapjack enjoy attention and that is what we want! Volunteers will work on grooming, leading exercises and basic manners training throughout the year. Work alongside our experienced equine trainer. Our pony pals meet on Mondays and/or Fridays from 11am-12:30pm all year round. We're prepping our ponies to be teachers for our new A.P.P.L.E. (Abbey Gardens Pony Powered Learning Experience) program launching this fall.

Community Living

A small group of 4-6 volunteers from Community Living come every Wednesday from 10:30am-12:00pm and carry out various garden related activities from June to September. Volunteers would assist a staff member by helping to set up for the morning activity and supervising the group during their visit at Abbey Gardens.

Children's programming

Want to become involved with volunteering but can't commit to a weekly role? Do you like to work with people, particularly children, who have an interest in being active and learning? Become a Programming volunteer at Abbey Gardens and our assist the education team engage our youth at Abbey Gardens! Volunteers will help set up, support participants and clean up during specific programs. See the listing below and sign up to be a part of our "growing" commitment to education!

Outdoor Kids Summer Camp

The Outdoor Kids Camp is a children's program that explores the plant world, gardening and our food through fun educational activities, games and crafts! We will need a volunteer each day to assist the education coordinator with each day's activities. The camp runs from Monday



July 17th-Friday July 21st and Monday July 31st- Friday August 4th from 10am-3pm. Sign up for one day or all 5!

Country Day School visit

- Grade 7's from Country Day School will be coming for a day long program on October 4th
- Approximately 75 children in total split into three groups of 25
- 3 programs will run simultaneously from 9:30am-4:30pm

Homeschool Program

Abbey Gardens offers an 8 week program in the spring and fall for homeschooled children ages 6-12. Led by an experienced educator, our group learns about gardening, cooking and nature through games, activities, crafts and much more! We're looking for a volunteer to assist our education coordinator from May to the end of June for the spring session and September to the end of October for the fall session from 10am-3pm. Our homeschool children are split into two groups based on their age. The juniors are ages 6-9 and seniors are 10-12. Choose the program and age group that appeal to you!

Tours & Hikes

Abbey Gardens is pleased to participate in the Hike Haliburton Festival and will be offering a hike this season. If you'd like to learn more about Abbey Gardens and our property while getting some exercise, a role as group sweep may be well-suited to you! The primary role of a sweep is to keep the group together! Walk at the back of the group to ensure hiker visibility and inform the hike leader of any issues that may arise within the group.

Beyond the gardens

Hike from the Food Hub, through the gardens, along the Transition Trail and into the forest to explore. This hike will involve diverse and some hilly terrain, and there may be even a few wet spots along the way. One highlight will be a stop at Haliburton Highlands Brewing to sample Abbey Ale and other tasty micro-brews. Before or after the hike stick around for a special local treat in the Food Hub.

- Friday September 22nd from 10am-12pm



Events

Throughout the year, Abbey Gardens hosts various events open to the public.

Off-site Festivals

Throughout the summer season, Abbey Gardens attends events and festivals to help spread the word about our organization! If you like meeting new people, are comfortable selling food & drinks/handling cash and speaking about Abbey Gardens, these opportunities may be right for you! Carpooling available.

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (Minden Fairgrounds): Saturday July 1st from 5pm-10pm

Baysville Arts & Crafts Festival: Saturday August 12th from 9am-5pm AND/OR Sunday August 13th from 8am-5pm

Bobcaygeon Craft Beer & Food Festival: Saturday August 19th from 11-8

On-site Events

Events at Abbey Gardens are lively and fun! We anticipate anywhere from 300-1500 people depending on the event. Help is needed for parking cars, supervising Abbey Gardens' tables, general support, special food sales, kids activity stations etc. Emails will be sent out one to two weeks in advance to those interested in helping to specify timing and other details for the event. In 2017 we are planning the following activities:

Haliburton County Garlic Grower's Association Garlic Festival: Sunday August 27th

Fall Festival, Saturday October 21st from 12pm-4pm

Winter Festival, Saturday December 2nd from 12pm-4pm



Rewards Program

Volunteer support is invaluable to Abbey Gardens and we'd like to say thanks!

- For every hour of time you donate to Abbey Gardens, you will receive a \$1 coupon to spend at the Food Hub
- End-of-season luncheon celebration
- Free coffee & tea while on site

Conflict resolution

If a conflict occurs, volunteers are asked to discuss the problem directly with the staff or volunteer involved. If a solution isn't reached, or the volunteer doesn't feel comfortable discussing the complaint with the other party, then volunteers are asked to meet with the volunteer coordinator (Cara Steele). The coordinator will then speak with the people involved to discuss possible solutions to the problem.

If the volunteer would prefer to speak to the Operations Director (Heather Reid) then they have the option of making an appointment.