



**Volunteer Orientation
Package 2016**





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,

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Welcome to Abbey Gardens

Abbey Gardens is a not-for profit charity and our big dream is to transform a spent gravel pit (300 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:

Online

Fill out a volunteer sign up form online at www.abbeygardens.ca/get-involved/volunteer-programs/ and our volunteer coordinator will reply.

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 team volunteers to commit in preparing garden beds, planting this season's produce and maintaining gardens in our 2 acre, organic garden throughout the spring and summer season. Sign up to be a part of a weekday team from 9:30am-12pm, May 16th- July 18.

Harvest & Weeding Teams

Those carefully planted and cared for seeds are now ready for harvesting and you may want to be a part of this! Harvest & weeding team volunteers will be picking and processing (washing and bundling) vegetables from our 2 acre, organic garden throughout the summer and fall season on a weekly basis. Sign up to be a part of a weekday team that meet every week from 9:30am-12pm, July 18-October 10.

Flower garden team

Interested in flower gardening? We're looking for 3-4 team members to meet on a weekly basis every Tuesdays from 8:30am to 11:30am from May to October to plant, prune, mulch, weed, split perennials, decorate for special occasions and create fresh flower arrangements.

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 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 (July-August) 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.

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 Lacroix pony (coming onto 3 years old) and his pasture mate, a Miniature Blanket Appaloosa. Maple 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-12pm all year round.

Community Living

A small group of 4-6 volunteers from Community Living come every Wednesday from 9:30am-12:00pm and carry out various garden related activities. The group is scheduled to start May 18 and will be on-site every Wednesday until September 30. 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. One volunteer would meet every Wednesday at 9:00am to 12:00pm.

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!

One Plant, Two Plants, Three Plants ... Garden!/Earthwalk



- Grade 1 & 2's from Stuart Baker Elementary School will be coming for a day long program for their third year on June 14 and June 17
- Approximately 70 children in total: 30-40 each day
- 2 programs will run simultaneously from 9:30-3pm

Junior Gardeners Program

The Junior Gardeners Camp is an outdoor children's program that explores the plant world, gardening and our food through fun educational activities, games and crafts! So register your children, or grandchildren, and these young outdoor enthusiasts will have a "growing" experience. We will need a volunteer each day to assist the education coordinator with each day's activities. The camp runs from Monday August 1st-Friday August 5th from 12pm-3pm. Sign up for one day or all 5!

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 4th-June 22nd for the spring session and September 14th-October 26th in the fall from 10am-3pm.

Special Projects

From time to time throughout the year Abbey Gardens take on special projects to expand our activities on the property. Many of these are weather dependent with dates to be determined. Volunteers for special projects would be informed of the dates/times at least a week or two in advance.



Events

Throughout the year, Abbey Gardens hosts various events open to the public. For these events help is needed for parking cars, supervising Abbey Gardens' tables, general support, special food sales, kids activity stations etc. To successfully deliver, events require 3-4 volunteers. 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 2016 we are planning the following activities:

Spring Festival, Saturday May 28th from 12pm-4pm

Wintergreen Food & Beverage Showcase, Saturday June 18th

Stanhope Heritage Day, Saturday July 16th

Fall Festival, Saturday October 1st from 12pm-4pm

Winter Festival, Saturday December 3rd 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, juice and baked goodies (courtesy of our kitchen staff) while volunteering 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.