



Volunteer Orientation Package 2018





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 charity with a big dream is to transform a spent gravel pit (380 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 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.



On-call volunteers may also be interested in seasonal, specialty projects such as working on our willow den, maintaining and creating new features in our Music Garden and Enchanted Forest.

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 from County Coffee.

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

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!



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 year.

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

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 assist our education team with engaging our youth! 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!

Leaders in Training

Calling all youth between the ages of 14-16! New this year, we're providing opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills while assisting programming staff with the delivery of our Outdoor Kids Camp. Choose between July 16th-20th and July 30th-August 3rd to participate in the Leaders in Training Program. Application process required. Please contact cara@abbeygardens.ca. A great way to earn your Community Volunteer Hours!

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 2nd to June 13th (spring session) and September 12th-October 31st (fall session) from 10am-3pm.



Pre-Kinder Garden Program

Abbey Gardens offers a 6 week program in the spring and fall for toddlers (ages 2-4) and their caregiver to learn about vegetable gardening through stories, crafts, songs, games, planting and taste testing! We're looking for volunteers to assist our education team with the delivery of this program. This program runs every Thursday from May 24th to June 28th (spring program) and September 13th to October 18th (fall program) from 10am-11:30am.

Programming On-Call Volunteers

Interested in assisting with our educational programs but can't commit to an entire program session? Our programming on-call volunteers may be recruited to help with on-site school groups or may fill in for homeschool or pre-kinder garden volunteers who can't attend one of their weekly shifts. An email will be sent a week in advance of proposed programming dates.

Tours & Hikes

Opportunities

Drop-in Snowshoeing

Every Wednesday in January and February from 1pm-2:30pm, we offer guided snowshoe hikes of our property. If you love the winter, enjoy exercise and want to learn more about Abbey Gardens, a role as group sweep may be for you! The primary role of a sweep is to keep the group together! Snowshoe at the back of the group to ensure hiker visibility and inform the snowshoe guide of any issues that may arise within the group.

Hike Haliburton

Abbey Gardens is pleased to participate in the Hike Haliburton Festival and will be offering a few hikes 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! 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.

Salamander walk

Hike through the forest to search for salamanders! Participants will stop along the way to check underneath cover boards. Learn about our native salamanders, their habitat and more.

- Thursday September 20th from 10am-12pm AND/OR Friday September 21st from 1pm-3pm



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.

- Thursday September 20th from 1pm-3pm AND/OR Saturday September 22nd from 10am-12pm

Honey Hike

Learn all about honeybees and other pollinators as you walk through our gardens and trails. Visit our bee yard, stop by our pollinator-themed flower gardens and learn how you can support pollinators at your own home.

- Saturday September 22nd from 1pm-3pm

Trail crew

In addition to our guided hike sweeps, we're also looking for volunteers that are interested in hiking our trails on their own time and schedule to assess for downed trees, hanging branches, debris on the trails, signage issues and more. If you love to hike, this position may be for you!

We have 1km, 3km and 5km loops through the forest as well as a children's play area called the Enchanted Forest. Members of the trail crew may wish to choose to focus on the Enchanted Forest area, which requires more maintenance and check-in's than our other trails. The choice is yours!

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.

Food & Beverage Showcase (Wintergreen Pancake Barn): Saturday June 16th from 11am-4pm



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 to specify timing and other details for the event. In 2018 we are planning the following activities:

Haliburton County Garlic Grower's Association Garlic Festival: Sunday August 26th

Honey Week: Monday August 27th to Sunday September 2nd

Fall Festival, Saturday October 20th from 12pm-4pm

Winter Festival, Saturday December 1st 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 Garden Bucks 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.