



HISTORIC CHARLESTON
FOUNDATION



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



TABLE OF CONTENTS

03

History, Preservation, & Education

05

Meet the Team

08

Festival Overview

09

Volunteer Positions and Duties

10

Additional Information

HISTORY, PRESERVATION, & EDUCATION

Since 1947, Historic Charleston Foundation has established a legacy of preserving the historic landscape of Charleston and the Lowcountry and contributed significantly to the management of our region's growth. Embracing the unique fabric and culture of Charleston from our easement program to advocacy supporting African American settlement communities and beyond—the Foundation remains a significant voice and authority in the broader Charleston community.

As we look forward to the future, Historic Charleston Foundation will strengthen its focus on resilience, sustainability, and affordability, while advocating for common-sense development that reflects our community's values. With events throughout the year, we hope you will join us in our mission-driven work with a renewed commitment to honor Charleston and its people.





HISTORIC CHARLESTON
FOUNDATION

WHAT WE VALUE

Charleston's buildings and waterfront setting create a deep sense of place. Their beauty and scale inspire and connect us to our past while helping shape our future. We believe preservation ensures that Charleston maintains a balance between its role as one of America's most important architectural resources – and as a real, vibrant city with a great quality of life for its residents.

Charleston's economic success depends upon the stewardship of both its historic downtown and rural landscapes. In fact, we believe that as a city and a culture, our region has thrived because of our collective care for who we are and what we're made of: an incomparable historic downtown nestled in a beautiful network of rivers, forests, beaches, and farmland that's home to communities of richly diverse, vibrant people.

As preservation evolves from its traditional role of saving historic buildings into addressing broader quality of life issues like affordable housing, mobility and transportation, and tourism management, lead the movement to embrace change. When we advocate for all of our neighborhoods, historic buildings, parks, gardens, and share everyone's stories can we understand who we truly are – and make the vital decisions that move us all forward.

MEET THE TEAM



WINSLOW HASTIE

President/CEO

Collaborates with the Board of Trustees to set the vision and strategic direction of the organization; serves as HCF's public face and spokesperson and is proactive in the community; primarily responsible for the organization's fundraisers, cultivating new and established donors and continuing to grow productive partnerships with business, cultural and academic entities.



ROUALEYN DE HAAS

Director of Marketing

Supervises the marketing and communications staff; provides oversight of HCF public programs: the Festival of Houses and Gardens, Illumination Charleston, and additional programs throughout the year in collaboration with the Preservation and Philanthropy departments.



LIZA HOLIAN

Marketing and communications manager

Manages HCF's overall print, broadcast, digital, and social media communications and strategy to effectively disseminate the organization's mission and programs to the public and key constituencies to generate support; directs communications of special events and programs.

MEET THE TEAM



SHELLEY KEITH

Volunteer Coordinator

Manages a Volunteer Program including recruiting and scheduling for Festival of Houses & Gardens, Illumination Charleston, and other educational programming; trains new volunteers, develops training materials, maintains a database of volunteers and manages rewards and appreciation programs for volunteers and homeowners.

JEAN SA

Ticket Office Manager

MEET THE TEAM



RUTH SMITH

Events Manager

Plans, administers and evaluates the Festival of Houses and Gardens, serves as principal staff liaison to Tours Committee; leads in the acquisition of houses, gardens, and all other properties for Festival tours. Coordinates educational experience for Morning History Walk, Food for Thought, special tours and virtual lectures



ANNE BLESSING

Chair of Houses and Gardens Festival Committee

Oversees the Tour Committee helping to coordinate the selection and procurement of homes and gardens for the Festival.

THE CHARLESTON FESTIVAL

Historic Charleston Foundation's largest fundraiser

OVERVIEW

The Festival includes house and garden tours which allow guests to explore Charleston from a rare vantage point. These educational tours highlight three centuries of historic architecture as well as exquisite private gardens, buildings from Charleston's prosperous Colonial Days through the reconstruction period into the 20th century. Docents are stationed at each site to provide information as guests enjoy these private properties. Festival programs also feature luncheon lectures, musical concerts, demonstrations, and social events.

WHERE THE FUNDS GO

The vital support the HCF receives from the Festival enables the organization to fulfill its mission-to champion the historic authenticity, cultural character, and livability of the Charleston region through advocacy, stewardship, and community engagement.

HCF tackles issues including livability, affordable housing, sustainability, and managing the region's growth. From our easement and covenant program, to our work supporting African American settlement communities, Historic Charleston Foundation is a trusted and significant voice in preservation and advocacy in the greater Charleston area.



THE CHARLESTON FESTIVAL



Volunteer Positions

STREET CHAIR

Our street chairs handle the organizational aspect of each street tour. They are the liaison between the volunteer coordinator, the homeowner, and the senior docents. They assign each volunteer to a specific property, pick up and return the supplies from 40 East Bay Street, and patrol the tour.

HOUSE DOCENT

House docents are assigned to a specific home on tour. They will receive a room assignment along with talking points about that room. As our guests tour, the docent will educate them on the specific architecture, furniture, art, or other design features. They will adjust the quantity of the information based on the wait lines of the home.

SENIOR DOCENT/SENIOR GARDEN DOCENT

Senior house and garden docents contact the homeowner and compile the information about the house and/or garden. They walk through the property with the homeowner ahead of time to understand talking points for each area that will be on tour. Senior Docents assign docents to areas and provide the house history to them.

SENIOR STREET MARSHAL

The senior street marshal will be given the list of street marshals for the day by the street marshal chair. They will map the route and decide the best location for each street marshal. The senior will pick up and return the street marshal bags and hats from 40 East Bay Street.

FESTIVAL OF HOUSES AND GARDENS

Volunteer Positions

GARDEN DOCENT

Garden Docents are assigned an area of garden on the tour. They will point out plants and features and discuss the historic and design significance of their section. Based on guest levels, talking points may need to be adjusted.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The Festival has several non-tour volunteer opportunities ranging from Gullah spirituals to wine tastings. Volunteers may be asked to help set up food, clean up after an event, or check admission tickets. We do ask that initially you only sign up for two of these shifts to give everyone an opportunity to participate.

RECEPTION 40 EAST BAY

Reception Volunteers will assist office staff with general office duties. They will answer phone, answer Festival questions, greet Food for Thought guests, and assist with other office help as needed.

STREET MARSHAL

Street Marshals dress in khaki pants and a button down shirt for men and a dress or dress pants for women. Also wearing a straw hat so they are identifiable. They are placed at street corners along the tour route and give directions to our guests. They also help to control crowd levels by suggesting homes with shorter lines.

TICKET OFFICE

Ticket office volunteers will help assemble ticket packets, distribute tickets, and answer questions during pick up. Our ticket office area is small and most volunteers will be asked to stand just outside the ticket window.

STREET CHAIR GUIDELINES

VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENTS

- Use Sign Up Genius and the Volunteer Assignment Sheets to assign volunteers to each site on your tour. Be mindful of volunteers who want to work together, work at a specific property, and those who are only working one day of your tour. We have estimated the number of docents you will need per site based on previous years' house histories.
- Make a "master" Volunteer Assignment Sheet for each tour site.
- Fill in the senior docent and docents for that site with their contact information.
- Email the assignment to Shelley Keith and the senior docent. Include the house history for the senior docent.
- Explain to the senior docent that the homeowner contact information is not to be shared with the other docents assigned to the location.
- Let us know when you think your tour is "full" (you have enough docents).
- If you do not have all your spaces filled by the first training, don't worry! We will be working on it! Just distribute assignments to the volunteers that you have.



Senior Docent Selection

- Identify senior docents and call or email to introduce yourself within a week of receiving their names from the volunteer coordinator.
- Only give the senior docent the homeowner's contact information.

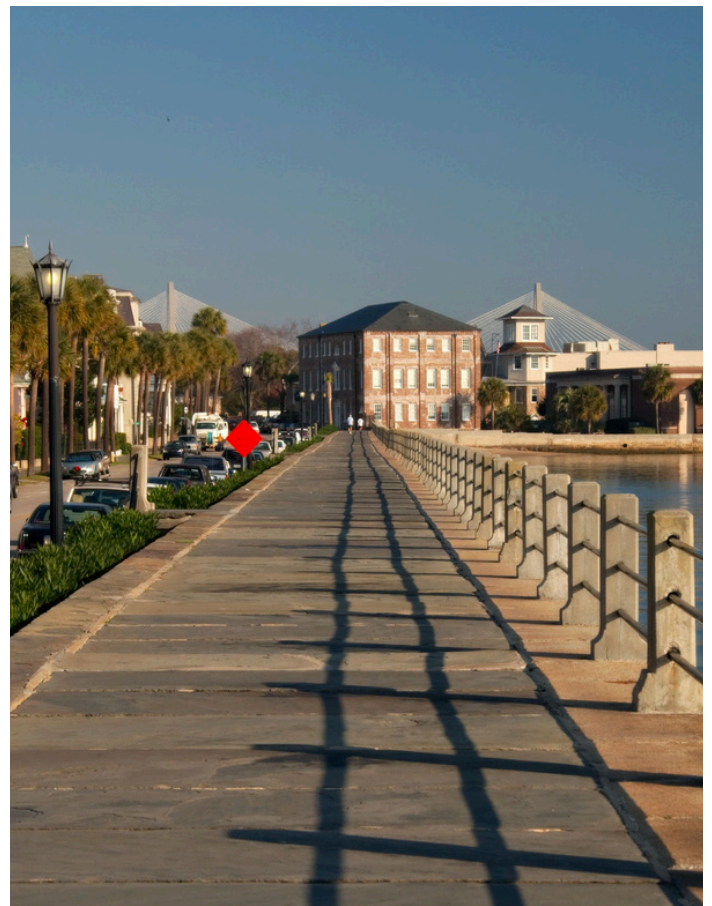
STREET CHAIR CONTINUED

HOMEOWNER (SITE) VISITS

- Ask senior docents to call their homeowners 2-3 weeks before your first tour to schedule a site visit at the homeowner's convenience, usually during the week before the tour. This visit is strongly recommended for all docents.
- You may attend homeowner visits to aid the senior docents, helping with room or garden assignments, traffic flow and need for props/equipment
- Have the senior docent leave a docent list and house history with the homeowner, which includes the telephone number of the senior docent
- At each homeowner visit, make sure that the senior docent compiles a list of tour props (carpet runners, etc.) for the site (on the props sheet) and forwards the information to you so that you will know what to take on tour days.

OUR PROPS

- The first day of your tour, pick up props from 40 East Bay Street and distribute to the appropriate sites. Ideally, you will leave these items at the site until the end of the second tour, unless they are needed for an intermediate tour (I will contact you if so), then return them to 40 East Bay Street. Keep counts of the supplies (bags, flags and runners), and return everything you took promptly!



TOUR DAY RESPONSIBILITIES

- On the first day of your tours, arrive on duty at least 1-2 hours before the tour begins.
- Drop off props at each site (help senior docent to use yellow tape to mark caution spots).
- Remain on duty throughout the tour, checking sites continuously, to reassure docents with your presence and availability.
- Leave props at site for the second tour day, unless you have a property that is only on tour for one day.
- On the second day of your tours, arrive 1 hour early to make sure that houses are open and docents are in place.
- Remain on duty throughout the tour, checking sites continuously, to reassure docents with your presence and availability.
- After the tour is over, pick up all props and return to the 40 East Bay Street immediately after the tour or the next day.

SENIOR DOCENT

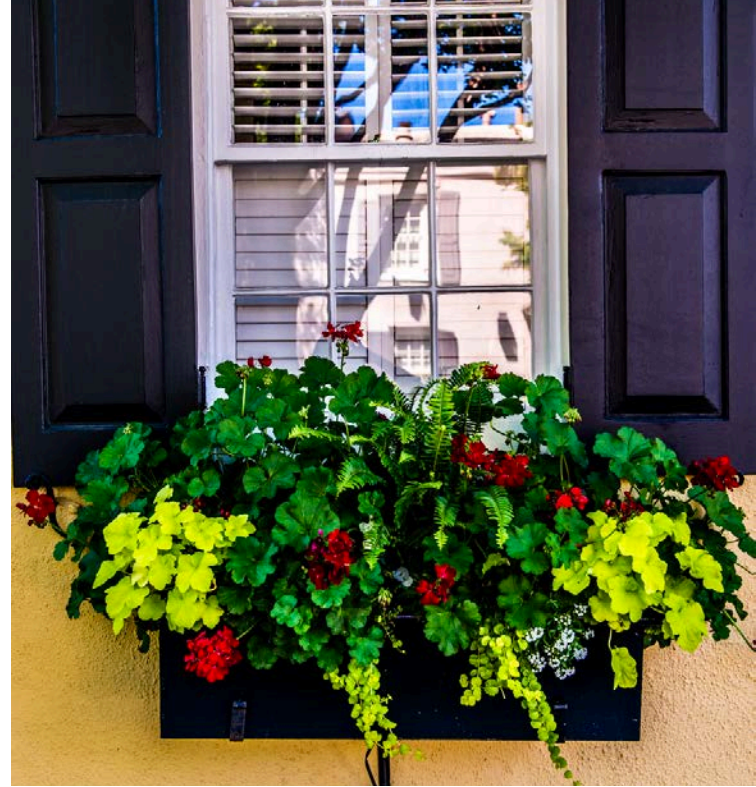
Visitors will carry a Festival Passport for every tour, which they should show you to gain admittance to the tour sites. Maps and property listings will be in the visitors' Festival Programs, and you will have a copy of the correct page. There will be an "HCF" stamp next to each tour they will be allowed to attend.

Assignments and Materials

- Your Street Chair will provide you with the name of the Homeowner and the list of Docents for your site along with the property history.
- Upon receiving the names of the Docents assigned to your site, reach out to them to confirm their assignments before the contact by date on your assignment sheet.
- Do not share the Homeowner's contact information with the Docents as you are the designated liaison.
- Report any Docent changes or cancellations to your Street Chair immediately.

Homeowner Visits: Arrangement

- Call your Homeowner immediately to schedule a site visit at his or her convenience, usually during the week before the tour.
- Strongly encourage your Docents to attend the visit.
- Also tell your Street Chair when the site visit will be as he or she may wish to attend.
- A Homeowner may choose not to have a visit. In that case, ask the Homeowner how many carpet runners the site will need, and if any of the carpets/rugs are light colored. Inform your Street Chair of these needs.
- Give the Docents their room assignments ahead of the tour.
- Conduct the "Homeowner visit procedures" immediately before the tour.



Homeowner Visits: Procedure

- Thank the Homeowner.
- Give the Homeowner your contact information (cell phone number and email address).
- Thank the Docents and assign each to a room. Make sure that he or she is comfortable relating the information in the house history to the room.
- Agree on the route the tour will take through the house and on overall procedure, including the hand signal for "hurry-up" procedures for the Docents in the event of long lines.
- Decide with the Homeowner about the use and placement of tour props (runners, ribbons, etc.)
- Inform the Street Chair of any runner needs prior to the tour, and they will deliver props to the site.
- Review all tour flow, security, and emergency procedures with the Docents. With the Homeowner, identify an appropriate location for Docents to store their folders, jackets or other personal items during the tour. Ask if there is a restroom that Docents may use.

SENIOR DOCENT CONTINUED

Tour Day Procedure

- The Street Chairman will bring the tour runners and/or supplies you need before the tour begins.
- Yellow tape to caution visitors to be used outside on bricks, stone or concrete only! With the help of the Docents, hang the HCF flag outside and arrange the ribbon, etc.
- Conduct a pre-tour meeting, and briefly review Docent Guidelines, tour flow, emergency procedures, security and hand signals. Also ask if Docents have any questions.
- You are the official host. Please greet all guests as you stand at the front door or gate of the site.
- Have all visitors show you their correctly stamped Festival Passport (their admission ticket).
- All children 6 and over have their own Passports. Children under 6 should not be on tour. Call the On-Duty staff should you have any problems in this regard.
- Parents may “switch off,” one visiting the property while the other waits with an infant. Allow the second adult to join the very next group without waiting after the switch. Both adults must have their own Passports. Strollers, children strapped to adults and backpacks are not permitted inside houses or gardens.
- Service animals are permitted on tour. No other animals are permitted in the houses or gardens.
- Provide a brief overview of the site from the house history to visitors.

- Guests want and need to know what is expected of them:
 - 1) Remind everyone that photography, food and drink are not allowed inside houses or gardens. Water bottles are permitted, and are to remain closed while inside the house.
 - 2) Ask visitors to turn off their cell phones and cover their camera lenses, if necessary.
 - 3) On rainy days, have visitors leave wet umbrellas outside while they are inside the house.

- Oversee all Docents:
 - 1) Be mindful of safety.
 - 2) Again scan for potential hazards, like a slippery step, especially in bad weather. Have Docents alert visitors to such hazards without alarming them.
 - 3) If lines occur, please hand signal Docents to abbreviate the information they are providing immediately.
 - 4) Thirty minutes before the tour ends, if there is still a line, inform the Docents and then the visitors that the tour will now be a walk-through. Docents must stay in place until the end of the tour for security and to answer questions. End the tour promptly at 5 p.m. or 8:30 p.m.

- On the conclusion of the first day of the tour, have the Docents help to gather the props and leave them in the location previously indicated by the Homeowner so they can be quickly set out again at the beginning of the second day of the tour.
- After the second tour day, collect all props, especially the flag and carpet runners. Leave them in a place agreed upon by you, the Homeowner and the Street Chair, generally on the sidewalk by the front or piazza door. They will be collected by the Street Chair immediately following the tour.

DOCENT GUIDELINES

Assignments

- If you have an emergency and find it necessary to change your assignment, please notify your Senior Docent and your Street Chair(s) immediately.

Homeowner Visit

- At the homeowner's request, your Senior Docent may arrange a pre-tour visit at your assigned address and will call you to invite you. Your attendance is strongly encouraged.
- At the pre-tour visit each Docent will be assigned to a specific room/area.
- Review your house history on site with the homeowner.
- Discuss potentially hazardous steps, pathways or situations. Be prepared to caution visitors.

Tour Day: Personal Appearance

- Daytime dresses or business suits and low, flat-heeled shoes for women.
- NO spike heels, flip flops, or jeans please.
- Coat and tie for men.
- Dress suitably for weather conditions. Please do not wear historic costumes or sports attire.

Tour Day: Preparation

- Upon arrival at your site, assist with the placement of tour props, such as carpet runners and be certain that the tour route is clear of impediments before the tour begins.
- Place your personal items out of sight in a location designated by the homeowner, including cell phones.
- The Senior Docent will let you know the location of a restroom that volunteers may use, if there is one available. Please remember the visitors are to be directed to a public restroom.
- Please try to carpool and allow sufficient time to find parking in the Historic District.



Tour Day: Narrative Interpretation

- Welcome visitors to your room/space and briefly relate two or three items of interest, including one architectural detail in two minutes or less.
- Project your voice and enunciate your words.
- If unable to answer a question, say "I'm sorry, I don't know."
- Do not lean on walls or furniture, sit, or touch any items in your area during the tour. Your actions encourage visitors to do the same.
- Do not share personal information about the homeowners.
- Refrain from sharing negative opinions about any tour site or item.
- Do not eat or drink in front of visitors.

DOCENT GUIDELINES CONTINUED

Tour Day: Procedure

- Stand in a position that allows you to see the entire group in the room, as well as the rooms in front and behind you, if possible.
- Be aware of the needs of other Docents and mindful of the hand signals that will help you move the visitors through the site. It is very important to maintain a steady flow of traffic.
- Guests should be advised of abrupt changes in floor levels or other impediments.
- Do not allow visitors to photograph the interiors of tour sites, including gardens.
- Thirty minutes before the tour ends, if there is still a line, the Senior Docent will indicate to you and the visitors that “walk-through tour” procedures are now in place. Stay in your location until the tour ends for security and to answer any questions visitors may have. Each tour will end promptly at 5 p.m. or at 8:30 p.m.
- When the tour is over for the day, assist the Senior Docent with removal of props. On the last day of the tour, please help the Senior Docent place the props outside for pick-up by the Street Chair.



EMERGENCY: USE GOOD JUDGMENT AND COMMON SENSE IN RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY. CALL '911' ON THE NEAREST PHONE IF NECESSARY, THEN IMMEDIATELY INFORM THE SENIOR DOCENT OR STREET CHAIR. HE OR SHE WILL CONTACT HISTORIC CHARLESTON FOUNDATION STAFF.

GARDEN DOCENT

Assignments

• If you have an emergency and find it necessary to change your assignment, please notify your Senior Docent and your Garden Chair(s) immediately.

Garden Owner Visit

- Your Senior Docent may arrange a visit between the Garden Docents and the Garden Owner at your assigned site.
- Garden Docents should bring their garden notes at this time as you will be assigned to a specific location in the garden.
- You will have an opportunity to review your notes on site and may meet the Garden Owner, who will be helpful in assisting you with the garden notes and in determining the best tour route for visitors through the garden.
- Discuss emergency procedures with the Senior Docent.

Tour Day: Personal Appearance

- Daytime dresses or business suits and low, flat-heeled shoes for women.
- NO spike heels, flip flops, or jeans please.
- Coat and tie for men.
- Dress suitably for weather conditions. Please do not wear historic costumes or sports attire

Tour Day: Preparation

- Bring and use your own insect repellent and sunscreen.
- Arrive by 1:30 p.m., or the time designated to you by your Senior Docent.
- Please try to carpool and allow sufficient time to find parking in the Historic District.
- Upon arrival at your site, assist with the placement of tour supplies and be certain that the tour route is clear of impediments before the tour begins.
- Place your personal items out of sight in a location designated by the Garden Owner.
- The Senior Docent will let you know the location of a restroom that volunteers may use, if there is one available. Please remember the visitors are to be directed to a public restroom.



Tour Day: Narrative Interpretation

- Choose two or three plants or design themes from your copy of the garden notes to talk about, rather than reading the information or reciting it word for word during the tour.
- Welcome visitors to your area and briefly relate the two or three items of interest.
- Project your voice and enunciate your words, as some visitors may have impaired hearing or there may be background noise.
- Try to talk about your space specifically, and point to the items you are describing, if possible.
- Please refrain from eating, drinking or chewing gum.
- If unable to answer a question, you may simply say, "I'm sorry, I don't know." Or if time permits, ask other garden docents at your location.
- Do not divulge any personal information about the Garden Owner.
- Refrain from sharing negative, personal opinions about any tour site or garden out of respect to the Owners.

GARDEN DOCENT CONTINUED

Tour Day: Procedure

- Be aware of the needs of other Garden Docents and mindful of signals that will help you move the visitors through the site.
- Be certain that the tour route is safe. Guests should be advised of abrupt changes in ground or path levels or other impediments, and yellow tape should be used on brick, stone or concrete surfaces only.
- Guests are advised by the ticket office, marked in the Festival program, and reminded by the Senior Docent, that limited photography is allowed in certain gardens during the Glorious Gardens tours. These gardens are clearly marked before entrance, and photos are NOT allowed on the rest of the Glorious Gardens tour.
- Ask visitors to turn off their cell phones and cover their camera lenses, if necessary.
- For security purposes, stay on location and in position for the duration of your tour assignment. A Garden Docent should not visit other sites during a tour.
- If it is absolutely necessary for you to leave your position for emergency or personal reasons, please signal the Senior Docent.
- When the tour is over, assist the Senior Docent with removal of props and leave your papers and nametag in the designated spot
- Guests may not smoke, bring pets or food into the garden. Beverages in a plastic bottle with a closed cap are ok.



EMERGENCY: USE GOOD JUDGMENT AND COMMON SENSE IN RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY. CALL '911' ON THE NEAREST PHONE IF NECESSARY, THEN IMMEDIATELY INFORM THE SENIOR DOCENT OR GARDEN STREET CHAIR. HE OR SHE WILL CONTACT HISTORIC CHARLESTON FOUNDATION STAFF.

SENIOR STREET MARSHAL PREPARATION

- Two weeks prior to the tour, and using the Street Marshal list provided by your Street Marshal Chair, contact your Street Marshals to confirm their participation and provide them with the time and location of the pre-tour Meeting. You'll be using the First Contact Email Template for this task.
- One week prior to the tour, confirm that you have received an affirmative response from all Street Marshals assigned to the tour. Use the Follow Up Contact Email Template to reach out to anyone who did not respond to your first contact email.
- One week prior to the tour, reach out by email to your Street Marshal Chair to advise them of the status of Street Marshals for your tour. If you are short Street Marshals, additional resources will be secured if at all possible.
- Prior to the day of the tour, review the tour map again, this time focusing on the prioritized Street Marshal placement locations and determine Street Marshal placements based on the number of confirmed Street Marshals for the tour.

Tour Day

During this meeting, you will distribute hats as needed, maps, emergency contact information, and name tags.

- Bring list of Street Marshal names and cell numbers with you. Call anyone who is late for an ETA.
- Prior to the Pre-Tour Meeting, collect hats, name tags, emergency contact sheets and maps from the shed behind the Nathaniel Russell House, 51 Meeting Street.
- Give hats, maps, emergency contact info, name tags, location assignments and final instructions to Street Marshals during the Pre-Tour Meeting at the designated location 30 minutes before the tour begins.
- Pass out hats to those who need to borrow them or have brought an inappropriate hat to wear.
- Point out important locations on tour map including public restrooms and locations of all Street Marshals working the tour.
- Ensure that all Street Marshals have your cell phone number programmed into their phones. Encourage your team to reach out to you should they need relief for a bio break.
- Make sure all Street Marshals understand the emergency procedures and have the cell number for the Staff Person on Duty.



SENIOR STREET MARSHAL CONTINUED

TOUR DAY: DURING THE TOUR

- Visitors will be carrying a Festival Passport stamped for each tour they are attending, which will serve as their tickets. Tour maps and property listings will be in the visitors' Festival Programs.
- Remain on duty throughout the tour, until 5 p.m. or 8:00 p.m., checking streets continuously. If possible, make one round of the entire tour route each hour, providing property line updates and ensuring Street Marshals are assisting in keeping guests from clustering on streets or blocking safe passage on sidewalks when possible.
- Contact the Staff Person on Duty immediately if there is an emergency.

Tour Day: Immediately Following the Tour

- Collect all Street Marshal equipment and have those who borrowed a hat, initial the sheet so we know it has been returned.
- Please return all Street Marshal bags back to 40 East Bay Street unless a Marshal is working again that week.

EMERGENCIES: YOU WILL BE GIVEN A SHEET OF PAPER WITH EMERGENCY NUMBERS AND THE CELL PHONE NUMBER OF RESPONSIBLE TOUR STAFF. THE STAFF PERSON ON-DUTY SHOULD BE YOUR FIRST CALL IF THERE IS A SITUATION/EMERGENCY THAT DOES NOT REQUIRE YOU TO CALL 911.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, CALL 911 FIRST THEN THE HCF STAFF PERSON LISTED ON YOUR EMERGENCY SHEET. USE THE NEAREST PHONE TO MAKE EMERGENCY CALLS. IF POLICE ARE NEARBY, LET THEM KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON AND, IF NECESSARY, ASK THEM TO CALL IN EMERGENCY PERSONNEL.



DAY AFTER EACH TOUR DATE

- Inform Street Marshal Chair of volunteers who didn't show up, didn't perform the Street Marshal duties as outlined or didn't return a hat.
- If you experienced an unusual situation or issue, please advise the Street Marshal Chair. Use the Post-Tour Email Template for this task.
- Additionally, if there was a Street Marshal who went above and beyond during the tour, inform the Street Marshal Chair. That volunteer may receive special recognition for their efforts.

STREET MARSHAL

Preparation

- The Senior Street Marshal will inform you where the Pre-Tour Meeting will occur via email.
- Check your email inbox on a regular basis during tour season so you can read and respond to messages from HCF, Street Marshal Chair and/or the Senior Street Marshal in a timely manner.
- Familiarize yourself with the neighborhood, peninsula and general directions prior to the tour.
- Plan your parking location in advance. The public parking garages are clearly indicated on the tour map.

Equipment

- Hats*, name tags, emergency contact sheets and a copy of the tour map will be distributed at the Pre-Tour Meeting thirty minutes before the tour begins.
- *Hat: If you choose to wear your own “Panama” hat during the tour, you are more than welcome to do so. See reverse side of this sheet for hat “dos and don’ts”.
- The Senior Street Marshal will collect hats and name tags after the end of each tour.
- Program the name and cell number of the Senior Street Marshal into your cell phone prior to the tour. Please call the Senior Street Marshal if you will be late.
- Water: Please bring your own.
- Insect repellent: Please bring your own.
- Flashlight: For evening tours only. Please bring your own.



Duties and Responsibilities

- Do not wait for visitors to ask for help. Approach people on tour and ask if you can assist them.
- Give directions, interpret tour maps and answer general questions.
- Tickets are purchased at the Festival Ticket Office at 108 Meeting Street, open Mon.-Sat. from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sunday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Direct visitors there if they still need to purchase tickets or call the staff person on duty.
- Encourage visitors to go to the sites with shorter lines first. Reassure them that they may visit the sites in any order they choose.
- If you notice tour guests gathering on the streets or blocking sidewalks, diplomatically guide them to form a line on the sidewalk so others can safely pass.
- Smile and enjoy yourself! Often our guests are just looking for a little navigational help and a friendly face.

EMERGENCIES: YOU WILL BE GIVEN A SHEET OF PAPER WITH EMERGENCY NUMBERS AND THE CELL PHONE NUMBER OF RESPONSIBLE TOUR STAFF. THE STAFF PERSON ON DUTY SHOULD BE YOUR FIRST CALL IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY THAT DOES NOT REQUIRE YOU TO CALL 911.

TICKET OFFICE

Guidelines

- Please remember you represent Historic Charleston Foundation and are often a guest's first encounter with the organization.
- Greet guests with a warm welcome and smiling face.
- Please familiarize yourself with the tour maps so that you can answer questions from our guests.
- You may initially register for two ticket office shifts. Once everyone has had an opportunity to select shifts, then you may select more if available.



- NO Refunds PLEASE
- Refer exchange questions to the ticket office staff.
- Please refer exchanges to HCF staff.
- Remind visitors to refer to map for parking, bathrooms, etc.
- If the visitors do not have their confirmation email, ask to see I.D. that has the same name as on the order. If they do not have anything ask the ticket office staff to conduct a search for possible misspelling.
- Please do not leave your station unless it is manned by someone else.
- No incoming or outgoing calls will be received in the Ticket Office except for emergencies.
- Try and be as helpful as possible during the daily rush of the Festival. Typically, the busiest hours are on tour days between 11am and 2 pm.
- When giving stamped passports and programs to our guests, please make sure the map is open to the tour purchased.

SPECIAL EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Guidelines

- Special event shifts will be limited to two shifts per volunteer initially.
- Special events include but are not limited to:
 - Music Series
 - Food for Thought Luncheons
 - Lectures on Location
 - Bubbles and Blooms
- Volunteers will check guests in and welcome them.
- Be prepared to assist staff as needs arise.
- Volunteers may need to be able to lift and move items.
- Volunteers may be asked to clean up post event including wiping down tables or sweeping.
- Please check with the staff on duty when you arrive to obtain your name tag.
- Staff on duty will provide you with a registration roster. If a guest's name is not on the list please refer them to staff on duty.
- Please do not leave your station unless it is manned by someone else.
- If a problem working your designated time arises, please inform Shelley Keith so she can arrange a substitute.



VOLUNTEER TRAINING AND BENEFITS

Training

All newer volunteers are invited to participate in our training event. This will take place towards the end of February. Historic Charleston Foundation believes trained volunteers are vital to a successful Tour. The training will include breakout sessions specific to House Docent, Garden Docent, and Street Marshals. This is a great night to meet other volunteers you will be working alongside. This training is very helpful but not required.



Festival of Houses and Gardens 2024 Benefits

- 4 hours volunteers will receive a 20 % discount on purchases at Shop Historic Charleston in the Market through December 31, 2025
- 6 hours of volunteer time the retail discount plus a complimentary annual pass for two to both of our house museums, The Nathaniel Russell, and The Aiken-Rhett Houses.
- 8 hours of volunteer time the retail discount, the house museums passes and admission to a Glorious Gardens or Street Tour for one.
- Volunteers that register for two shifts of a Street Tour and/or Beyond the Garden Gate Tour will receive the Landmarks Pass good through the end of May. These will be mailed to you by the start of Festival.

Senior Docents and Senior Street Marshals will receive the full benefits package at 8 hours of active service plus an additional tour.

All benefits must be used within the current year.

Process for Picking up Earned Tour Tickets:

A volunteer who has earned a tour ticket must email skeith@historiccharleston.org or call 843-723-8292 at least 24 hours prior to the tour you wish to take. The ticket will be at the reception desk at 40 East Bay Street within 24 hours of request. No tickets will be given without prior notification. No Volunteer tickets will be given out at our ticket office.

COMMUNICATIONS AND REGISTRATIONS

All volunteer communications will come from one of four sources Mail Chimp, Signup Genius, Paperless Post, or a Historic Charleston email address. Please add these to your "safe senders" list so emails are not blocked or sent to your junk/spam folders.



Tips for easy communication and registrations

- Make sure you subscribe to Historic Charleston Foundation on our website.
- Register with an email that is unique to you. It is best practice not to share an email with a spouse.
- Create a free Signup Genius account, as this allows you to easily edit your sign up.
- Make a habit of checking your junk or spam email folders periodically .
- Signup Genius will automatically send you reminders of your volunteer shift.
- Automatic emails and alerts will also be sent if a new volunteer opportunity opens.

EXTRA RESOURCES

HOW TO PRONOUNCE IT IN CHARLESTON

- LEGARE LA GREE
- DESAUSSURE DES SUH SORE
- HUGER “U” - “G”
- PORCHER PA SHAY
- PRIOULEAU PRAY LO
- VANDERHORST VAN DRAWS
- BEAUFAIN BU FAIN
- GERVAIS JER VAY
- GAILLARD GIL YARD
- HORRY O - REE
- HUGUENIN HUE GUH NIN
- MANIGAULT MAN I GO
- STOLL’S ALLEY STALL’S ALLEY
- HASSELL HAZEL



Please visit our volunteer page for more training materials specific to Charleston Gardens and Architecture.



HISTORIC CHARLESTON FOUNDATION

40 East Bay Street

skeith@historiccharleston.org
www.historiccharleston.org