HIGH SCHOOL VOLUNTEERISM, STUDENT DOCENTS, AND THE SACRAMENTO HISTORY MUSEUM

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HIGH SCHOOL VOLUNTEERISM, STUDENT DOCENTS, AND THE SACRAMENTO HISTORY MUSEUM

A Project

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ABSTRACT

of

HIGH SCHOOL VOLUNTEERISM, STUDENT DOCENTS, AND THE SACRAMENTO HISTORY MUSEUM

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This project explores the implementation of high school volunteer programs in history-based museums. Museums are highly reliant on their volunteer corps, and high school students provide another source of valuable, long-term volunteers. Today, high school students are turning toward volunteer work to fulfill volunteer requirements, learn basic workplace skills, and distinguish themselves from their peers. High school volunteer programs in history-based museums provide a unique opportunity for teenagers to interact with local history and participate in community service. This project analyzes best practices for instituting a high school volunteer program in a museum, and then describes the process implementing the Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum. The project concludes that high school volunteer programs in history-base museums are worthwhile efforts, and museum staff should allocate time and energy towards developing these types of volunteer programs.

______________, Committee Chair
Dr. Lee Simpson

_________________________
Date

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Museums of all types and sizes rely heavily on volunteers, and volunteer programs are often a key component of the museum structure. From sitting at the front desk to cataloguing artifacts, museum volunteers assist in all aspects of the museum field. A volunteer is:

1. A person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task
2. A person who works for an organization without being paid\(^1\)

These people who take on all sorts of museum tasks without pay are an integral aspect of museum life, and without volunteers, most museums would be unable to accomplish many of their goals or give visitors the experiences they desire. Volunteering provides a reciprocal relationship between the volunteer and the museum: volunteer training programs or workshops educate their volunteers and give them a meaningful experience, while the museum gains free labor and a group of invested advocates for the museum’s mission. Due to the nature of volunteer work, these institutions tend to draw heavily from a population of retired people to comprise the majority of their volunteer corps; yet, by focusing primarily on this faction of the population these museums are missing out on a valuable group of people willing and able to volunteer – high school students.

Museums should focus more on volunteer programming directed specifically at high school students for a number of reasons. First, volunteerism is on the rise among high school students in the United States. Throughout the United States, many high schools and classes require that students participate in a volunteer program as a part of their curriculum or as a graduation requirement and museums provide a perfect venue for students to interact with their communities within an educational setting. Secondly, volunteering allows students to learn basic workplace skills, teaches them how to interact professionally with supervisors and peers, and gives them something worthwhile and interesting to put on their resumes. Next, museums can utilize high school volunteers to increase their educational programming for both high school students and the general public. Many museums have the ability to oversee large groups of volunteers, and offer a unique place for extracurricular learning. By tailoring an already existing adult volunteer program, museums can reach new audiences and foster an environment of lifelong learning. The use of high school volunteers allows museums to both educate these high school students and to reach out to visitors in greater numbers.

Teenage volunteer programs are not entirely new to the museum world; many science and art museums have strong teen volunteer programs.2 History-based museums, however, are less likely to provide volunteer programs aimed distinctly at high school aged students. History museums often do not seem as exciting and engaging to young people, and therefore young volunteers tend to gravitate towards museums with different

subject matters. By not actively reaching out to this younger population, history museums are missing out on an opportunity to excite and engage a younger audience about history and instill a respect for the past that can last a lifetime. Although developing and managing teen volunteer programs are time consuming tasks, the addition of this type of program will allow history museums to simultaneously increase their educational programming to an oft overlooked audience and possibly increase visitor attendance by providing additional museum interpretation facilitated by the teen volunteers.

The purpose of this project is to first demonstrate a need for increased programming for high school students in history-based museums, next to make recommendations for how high school volunteers can be used in history-based museums, and then to use the recommendations to help implement a Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum. History organizations interested in developing high school volunteer programs first need to understand why high school students volunteer, and then how they can use this knowledge to attract volunteers to their organizations. Chapter 2, therefore, explores the history of volunteerism in the United States and looks at trends for volunteerism among high school students. Chapter 3 explores the reasons why developing high school volunteer programs is a worthwhile endeavor, and looks at high school volunteer programs already in place both locally in the Sacramento area, and then regionally in California. By looking at the successes and drawbacks of high school volunteer programs already in place in museums, best practices for high school volunteer programs in history-based institutions can begin to be developed. Chapter 4 utilizes these
findings to outline the best practices recommendations for developing a High School Volunteer program at any history-based institution. Lastly, Chapter 5 documents the development and preliminary implementation of the Student Docent Program curriculum at the Sacramento History Museum. History museums can greatly benefit from the addition of high school volunteer programs, and it is the purpose of this paper to explore why and how this type of museum programming can be implemented.
Chapter 2

VOLUNTEERISM AMONG TEENAGERS IN THE UNITED STATES

Volunteerism existed in many forms in the United States prior to the country’s founding, and continues to be an important aspect of American life today. Volunteerism knows no boundaries, and people of all ages, genders, education, income, and backgrounds engage in volunteer activities of all types. Today, Americans are still consistently volunteering their time to others despite the economic recession, and over one third of American adults report volunteering once per month.3 Adult volunteers, however, are not the only people regularly contributing to volunteerism in the United States. Although most volunteer service is attributed to a middle age and older age groups, Gallup polls actually show that people from the ages of twelve to seventy-four volunteer regularly.4 Additionally, a survey conducted by the Corporation for National & Community Service in 2007 found that fifty-five percent of young people ages twelve through eighteen volunteered at least once during the year. This means that there are over fifteen million young people searching for volunteer opportunities in the United States.5

Teen volunteers are consistently looking for new and interesting places to spend their

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time doing community service, and museums offer a unique place for teenagers to participate in community service. What motivates American youth to volunteer, and how can history museums attract these types of volunteers?

**Youth Volunteers in the United States**

Although young people have always been involved in volunteering, a nationwide emphasis on youth volunteering steadily increased throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Voluntary organizations like the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, 4-H clubs, and YMCA programs attributed to much of the institutionalized community service work done by the youth in America during the first half of the twentieth-century. These organizations encouraged youth to get involved in service work in order to engage them in their local communities, and continued to place an emphasis on community service as an important aspect of their organizational mission. As youth volunteering became recognized as a way to reduce youth risks, promote positive development, and increase civic engagement, more and more organizations and government agencies spent time developing programs and policies to encourage community service opportunities for youth. By the social activist period of the 1960s, youth volunteering was a very popular topic.  

Youth volunteering became the center of attention among both government and private agencies during the 1960s. Americans began to give attention to the fact that volunteering not only showed positive effects among young people, but also that youth

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volunteers could engage positively in their communities. During this decade, a number of government policies encouraged youth to get actively involved in contributing to both their local communities and becoming ambassadors for social change. The early part of the decade saw the formation of the Peace Corps (1961) and VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America, 1964), both of which encouraged young adults to engage in service locally and abroad. In 1967, the National Commission on Resources for Youth (NCRY) was founded to promote service work done by children and adolescents. The New York City-based commission developed “Youth Participation” programs to actively encourage young people to get involved in their communities, and urged all Americans to “recognize the value of children and adolescents as contributors in their communities.”\(^7\) NCRY helped to promote programs that allowed young people to gain recognition for their valuable contributions to society, and demonstrated the value of service work on youth development. These types of programs demonstrate that policymakers and private organizations recognized the value of service work accomplished by youth and young adults.

Also during 1967, the term “service-learning” was coined by Robert Sigmon and William Ramsey at the Southern Regional Economic Board. The term was first used to describe “an internship program through which college students perform community service for academic credit and/or payment funded by the federal government.”\(^8\) Service was identified as a way to engage American youth in meaningful social activities, and to

\(^7\) Kenny and Gallagher, *Teenagers and Community Service*, 75.
\(^8\) Kenny and Gallagher, *Teenagers and Community Service*, 75-6.
combat youth apathy and alienation. As service-learning grew in popularity, the term expanded to include not only college students, but also high school and middle school service-learning programs taking place nationwide. In 2001, a National Commission on Service-Learning was formed to help promote education and civic engagement through service-learning in grades K-12. The National Commission on Service-Learning released a statement in 2002 calling for American schools to “use service-learning as a means for simultaneously building student skills in academics and citizenship.”9 Service-learning projects and programs maintain popularity among American schools today.

The emphasis on programs promoting youth volunteering and service-learning waned in the 1970s. Despite the decline in attention given to youth service work by politicians and academics, a popular California program aimed at protecting state natural resources and supporting youth development was formed. In 1976 Governor Jerry Brown established the California Conservation Corps (CCC), a statewide youth corps modeled after the national Civilian Conservation Corps enacted during the Great Depression. The program targeted “out-of-school youth who are looking for ways to improve their skills and educational opportunities through community and public service.”10 This service opportunity continues to attract young men and women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five to participate in environmental conservation and emergency relief; over 110,000 young people have completed the program to date.11

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9 Kenny and Gallagher, Teenagers and Community Service, 87.
10 Kenny and Gallagher, Teenagers and Community Service, 77.
Emphasis on youth volunteering became a hot topic again in the late 1980s, and was a popular subject during the 1988 presidential campaign. More than a dozen bills proposing a national service initiative were introduced to Congress in 1988 and 1989, and state and local governments spent over $124 million annually in stipends for young people to participate in community service projects. President Bush revealed plans for a program called “Youth Engaged in Service,” or YES, which aimed to attract teens and recent college graduates to participate in community service work. The program’s goal was to give young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to reap the benefits of service work. YES continues to match youth from all types of backgrounds to grassroots, faith- and community-based organizations.

During the 1990s, a large number of organizations and initiatives either promoting youth service work or providing youth service opportunities were formed. In 1993, Community Problem Solvers: Youth Leading Change was established to help adolescents assess the needs of their communities and embark in a service project. In 1994, AmeriCorps put 20,000 volunteers into service projects in more than 1,000 communities in exchange for post-service educational stipends. The President’s Student Service Challenge awards scholarships to select high school students who complete at least one hundred hours of service and demonstrate that their work made an impact in their communities. These and other programs actively encouraged adolescents and young

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adults to participate in service work in their local communities, where they could actually see the positive effects of their work accrue over time.14

The twenty-first century maintains an emphasis on service by all Americans, regardless of age. Programs like the Peace Corps, VISTA, the California Conservation Corps, YES, and others continue to receive strong support for their missions of service. As demonstrated, service does not just pertain to adults and college students, but adolescents and even children are encouraged to participate in community service. Youth volunteering has a long history in the United States, and the number of youth and teens participating in service activities continues to grow today.

**Motivations of Teen Volunteers**

The benefits of engaging in volunteer work during youth and adolescent years are numerous. Scholars Maureen E. Kenny and Laura A. Gallagher write that community service “can offer youth a way to connect with older generations, help them to understand their current experiences in a broader social and historical context, invite active participation in social problem solving, and create optimism for social change and a better future.”15 These reasons, however, do not underscore why teenagers choose to volunteer at a particular place, or even why they choose to participate in community service in the first place. Historical context helps to demonstrate the increased emphasis on youth service work during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but understanding the reasons that teenagers choose to volunteer is important for the

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development of a successful youth or teen volunteer program at any institution. Teens tend to volunteer for four main reasons:

1.) They are required to volunteer.
2.) They want to gain work experience.
3.) They want to diversify themselves from their peers.
4.) They want to participate in a cause that is important to them.\(^\text{16}\)

The most institutionalized reason for high school students to volunteer is a service requirement imposed by their school district, their high school, a specific class, a club, or a religious group. Kenny and Gallagher write that “community service is increasingly recognized by psychologists, educators, human service professionals, and policy leaders as an important vehicle for promoting development among teenagers.”\(^\text{17}\) In recent years, increased attention has been paid by educators, policy makers, and community programs to “service-learning programs” in schools. Service-learning, as defined by the National Commission on Service-Learning, is “a teaching and learning approach that integrates community service with academic study to enrich learning, teach civic responsibility and strengthen communities.”\(^\text{18}\) Service-learning initiatives are currently found in all fifty states, and it is used for all levels in education and a wide range of academic disciplines, including history. Research done by Learning In Deed, part of the Service Learning Commission, cites a number of benefits gained from student participation in service-learning programs:

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\(^{17}\) Kenny and Gallagher in Teenagers and Community Service, xi.

\(^{18}\) The definition of service-learning expanded over time to include all levels of education, and no longer pertains solely to an internship program for college students. Learning That Lasts: How Service-Learning Can Become an Integral Part of Schools, States and Communities, ed. by The Education Commission of the States (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, 2002), 9.
[Research] shows that service-learning increases academic performance. It is also the impetus for a lifelong participation in one’s community. Students’ social skills improve as a result of service-learning, and they are better prepared to enter the work force. In addition to these main components, service-learning helps students build self-confidence, connects schools and communities, and enhances the school environment.19

Since the goal of service learning curriculum is to allow “children to make connections between curricular topics and their application in community settings,” history museums offer a great place for a service-learning partnership.20 History museums have an inherently academic component to their mission, and their focus on history often connects the museum deeply with the local community. By building a relationship with a service-learning program at a local school district, an area high school, or with a specific teacher, the museum can ensure a continuous pool of high school volunteers and thus engage students in the field of history. In turn, students who participate in a service-learning program are more likely to become active citizens of their communities in the future.

More recently, however, high school students have turned to volunteer programs not just as part of a service-learning opportunity, but for more practical reasons. Mary Lynn Perry, Volunteer Coordinator at the Volunteer Center of Sacramento, writes that in the past decade “the overall downturn in the economy has forced older students and workers to take jobs that traditionally have been available to teens. Additionally, many summer jobs funded by federal grant programs for teens have been reduced or eliminated.

In other words, skill development and training that has occurred in the past in entry level jobs is more difficult to come by. The alternative is for teens to look at volunteering to gain some of those same skills.”21 Volunteering can teach young people many of the same skills that entry-level jobs have taught them in the past: punctuality, work-appropriate dress, working with others, following direction from supervisors, and other valuable workplace skills. Any volunteer program, including those at history museums, can encourage the development of basic workplace skills and professionalism alongside the more specific goals of the volunteer program. Volunteering in a history museum allows high school students to engage in an interesting educational setting while at the same time gaining valuable work experience.

Next, volunteering is a good addition to a teen’s resume and may lead to a valuable letter of recommendation. The college application process is extremely competitive today, and teenagers are looking for long-term service commitments that will help to distinguish them from other applicants, and volunteer experience is often cited as just as important as good test scores and a good grade point average. College Board, a non-profit that connects students to college success and opportunities, gives high school students the following advice: “You may have heard that volunteer experience is a plus on your college applications. Keep in mind, though, that colleges are not just looking for a list of organizations and dates. They want to see a complete picture of you, and real

examples of your commitment, dedication and interests.”\textsuperscript{22} Volunteering is a valuable addition to a high school student’s resume, but demonstrating commitment and interest in the subject matter is equally as important.

The number of high school students willing and available to participate in long-term volunteer opportunities is at a high in the United States, and history-based museums should take the opportunity to recruit these volunteers. By regularly volunteering at an institution, high school students can distinguish themselves from their peers and demonstrate to prospective colleges and potential employers that they are responsible, professional, and involved. Teenagers may also view volunteering in a history museum as a way to further their classroom education and better prepare them for college. History museums should not be ashamed to market their high school volunteer programs as giving students something interesting to put on their resumes and as having the potential for a positive and personalized letter of recommendation from the volunteer coordinator.

The final reason that teens choose to volunteer is to support a cause in which they believe. This motivation varies from individual to individual, but many teens choose to volunteer with a particular organization because they are interested in that institution’s mission and goals. Museums attract volunteers for very different reasons than soup kitchens, but this is not to say that museums do not give volunteers the opportunity to engage with their community. Museum volunteer programs give volunteers the chance to both learn and teach others, and history museums often allow their volunteers to engage

in local history. Finding a way to market a museum’s ties with the local community may help attract teens to a museum volunteer program.\textsuperscript{23}

**Benefits of Teen Volunteers in History Museums**

Scholars Sinclair Goodlad and Stephanie McIvor write that “volunteers can make an effective and personally fulfilling contribution to museum interpretation and that the support of volunteers can be crucial in releasing the creative energies of hard-pressed, paid museum professionals.”\textsuperscript{24} Although training teen volunteers takes some energy on the part of the museum, there is potential for teen volunteers to bring a new type of energy and programming to the museum. Teen volunteers often bring with them a greater willingness to learn and fewer presuppositions about their role in the museum than adult volunteers. Requirements from schools, churches, and clubs ensure that many teen volunteers commit and show up to serve their volunteer hours, and offer a continuous pool of teen volunteers from which to draw upon.

Volunteering in a history museum also has the added benefit of exposing teens to careers in the museum and history field, and gives them a chance to learn history in a hands-on manner that is very different from their classroom history education. History classes tend to be viewed as boring by many high school students, and by offering high school volunteer programs history-based museums are also offering students the opportunity to become engaged with history. In the early 1990s scholars Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen conducted a national survey asking American people

about their relationship with history and the past. Respondents to this survey commented that the history taught in history classes was alien to them. Rosenzweig and Thelen write that “most respondents said that history classes seemed to be shaped by remote bureaucrats, to cover subjects remote from their interests, and to feature memorization and regurgitation of senseless details.”

Volunteer programs in history museums give students the opportunity to relate more closely with history, and can help to make students feel more positively about the study of history in general.

Finally, studies show that adults who volunteered during their teenage years were much more likely to volunteer as adults. A survey conducted by Weststat Inc. for the Independent Sector found that “respondents’ involvement in charitable activities during their youth was significantly associated with their likelihood of contributing as adults.” The survey found that not only were adults more likely to volunteer time if they had volunteered in their youth, but they were also more likely to make monetary contributions to charitable organizations. Museums rely heavily on their volunteer corps, and high school students who volunteer in museums may be more likely to volunteer in museums during adulthood. This is a long-term process from which the institution offering the teen volunteer program may not directly benefit, but it does help to promote civic engagement in the future. As the number of paid staff members shrinks at many museums, the reliance on volunteers grows; giving young people the opportunity to volunteer in a

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museum during their teen years may encourage them to continue to donate much needed
time and money to museums during their adult years.
Chapter 3

TEEN VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS AT MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Before beginning a high school volunteer program at any institution, it is important to do a survey of similar volunteer programs. This type of analysis helps new programs to prevent major problems, avoid overlap with other institutions, and put the new volunteer program on the right track to developing a first-class volunteer program and successfully attracting high quality volunteers who are committed to the program.

Prior to the implementation of the Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum, a survey was taken of high school volunteer programs first locally in the Sacramento area, and then regionally in California. This survey helped to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the current volunteer programs offered for high school students in the region, and set the Sacramento History Museum’s Student Docent Program on the path of offering a unique type of volunteer program for Sacramento area high school students.

The survey of high school volunteer programs at Sacramento area museums and cultural institutions began by generally surveying the volunteer programs offered by these institutions in Sacramento County. This survey included twenty-two area institutions. Initially, institutions were categorized as either having an active volunteer program or not having an active volunteer program. Institutions with active volunteer

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programs were then asked whether or not they allowed youth or teen volunteers. Those that indicated that they allowed youth or high school volunteers were then divided into two groups: those that had teen or youth volunteer programs, and those that did not. Only four local institutions indicated that they currently have active teen volunteer programs. These institutions were then questioned in greater depth, and the results of those interviews are described in the following pages. Appendix A shows the results of this survey.

Currently, the Sacramento area institutions that have volunteer programs designed specifically for youth or high school volunteers are at the Sacramento Zoo, FairyTale Town, the Crocker Art Museum, and the Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum. Other area museums and cultural institutions may allow high school volunteers, but do not have specific programs dedicated to teens at this time. The aforementioned high school volunteer programs differ greatly in size and overall goals, yet they demonstrate that there is an audience interested in participating in high school volunteer programs at such institutions. The following descriptions provide details about the current high school volunteer programs at cultural institutions in the Sacramento region in order to demonstrate how teen programs have been implemented in Sacramento.

**Zoo Teens at the Sacramento Zoo**

Open since 1927, the Sacramento Zoo is an accredited institution with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and is a non-profit organization managed by the Sacramento Zoological Society. The Sacramento Zoo has the largest teen volunteer program in the Sacramento area, and employs one education staff member for the sole
purpose of working with teen volunteers. The Sacramento Zoo has two distinct programs for teens: “Zoo Teens,” which focuses on public education outreach during the school year, and “Camp Counselors,” which requires teen volunteers to assist with the Zoo’s summer camp programs for elementary school kids. Designed after Jane Goodall’s Roots and Shoots program, the Sacramento Zoo’s teen volunteer program is “a group of 13 – 19 year olds interested in animals, the earth, and our community who volunteer their time on weekends at The Sacramento Zoo. Zoo Teens will develop their own ideals, views, and passions, to help encourage zoo patrons to become better stewards of the Earth.” Each program attracted about seventy students to volunteer at the Zoo during the 2011-2012 academic year, with about a dozen students participating in both programs.

Potential student volunteers are required to undergo a three step process prior to becoming Zoo Teens or Camp Counselors. Students are first required to submit a paper application and a letter of recommendation from a non-family member to the Teen Coordinator, who then contacts all applicants for an interview. The interview serves as a way for the Teen Coordinator to meet the teens, and to eliminate any teens that do not want to participate in the program or who might pose behavioral threats. Applicants who meet the minimum requirements for the program, show up for the interview, and are accepted by the Teen Coordinator are then required to complete either an eight hour training program in May to become a Camp Counselor, or five days of training during the month of August to become a Zoo Teen. During training, teens participate in team-

building activities, are given clear direction about the guidelines and goals of the program, meet key Zoo staff, and learn about interacting with the public. Upon completion of training, Zoo Teens are required to volunteer eight hours per month for a minimum of eighty hours to complete the program, and Camp Counselors volunteer for four weeks of half day shifts and one overnight shift for ninety-six hours of volunteer time. Overall, the programs aim to teach volunteers more respect for the natural world, and about working with peers, supervisors, and visitors than it does about working in a zoo or with animals. Despite this potential drawback, the continuously high number of applicants for the Zoo’s teen volunteer programs demonstrates their popularity among area high school students.29

The Sacramento Zoo represents a long-term volunteer commitment for Sacramento-area teens. Since the Zoo is such a popular institution for teens to volunteer with, both the Zoo Teen and Camp Counselor programs have the luxury of attracting a large number of volunteers and selecting only the best teen volunteers for its program. Teens are required to commit to a significant amount of volunteer time over the course of one academic year, maintain passing grades in all high school classes, undergo periodic review by their supervisors, and if they do not meet the Zoo’s standards they can be released from the program. The Sacramento Zoo offers teens a unique volunteer opportunity and teens are willing to adhere to the various requirements in order to have a chance to work there. The program requires a significant amount of time on the Zoo’s behalf, and a staff member dedicated to administering the program, but this teen

volunteer opportunity is extremely popular with the local community and is therefore
worth the time and effort. Programs like this do not develop overnight, but when such
programs are successful they provide a great service to the community, the institution, its
visitors, and the teen volunteers.

**Fairytale Town**

Fairytale Town is a two and a half acre children’s park and outdoor children’s
museum. The institution seeks to inspire imagination, creativity, and literacy among
Sacramento’s youth, and provide a place where children are encouraged to exercise their
minds and bodies on the backdrop of their favorite stories.\(^\text{30}\) At present, Fairytale Town
has an active volunteer corps of about 600 volunteers, including teen volunteers. Since
the Fairytale Town volunteer group is so large, getting scheduled for volunteer shifts is
very competitive. The institution saw a need for a separate teen volunteer group, and
“Volun-teen” was started in January 2009.\(^\text{31}\)

Volun-teen is a program for volunteers between the ages of 13 and 18, and
requires volunteers to commit to a minimum of three hours a week for a three month time
period. The program is designed to teach young adults about working with youth and
literacy programs, and prepares them for the workforce with basic workplace skills.
Potential volunteers are required to submit a written application, maintain a grade point
average of 2.0 or higher, and attend a Volunteer Orientation. Since the program is so
popular, qualified applicants are placed on a waiting list. When openings in the program


become available, teens are invited to participate in a screening process with a volunteer supervisor. Volun-teen applicants are assessed based on their maturity levels, interests, and motivations behind volunteering as assessed through the written application. If accepted into the program, Volun-teens may work as Theater Assistants, Office Assistants, Ushers, Event Prep Helpers, Computer Tasks, and a number of other jobs. Volunteers are required to sign-in and observe a “chain-of-command” of volunteer supervisors while on duty. Teen volunteers must also attend a monthly meeting with their supervisors and peers. In addition to this program, teens may volunteer in short-term or special event volunteer opportunities.\(^{32}\)

The Volun-teen program at Fairytale Town is another successful Sacramento area long-term volunteer opportunity for teens in a cultural institution. The program is so popular that there is a waiting list, and like the Sacramento Zoo, Fairytale Town can select the highest quality teen volunteers for its program. Fairytale Town’s Volun-teen program attracts teens who want to volunteer in a fun environment, and working with young children is a natural starting point for teens to begin learning workplace skills.

**The Crocker Art Museum**

The Crocker Art Museum is the oldest public art museum west of the Mississippi. Begun as a project by Margaret E. Crocker during the late nineteenth century, the Crocker houses art of all types and the museum “is dedicated to promoting an awareness

of and enthusiasm for human experience through art." The Crocker Art Museum is the leading art institution in the Sacramento Valley, and has a history of working with both adult and teen volunteers. Previously, a large, full-scale teen volunteer program was in place at the Crocker Art Museum, but the program was scaled down in October/November 2010 due to a lack of available staff supervision.

Currently, the Crocker Art Museum offers high school volunteers two types of opportunities: one day experiences during Spring and Winter breaks, and a five week program during the summer. During Spring and Winter breaks, students typically participate in a one-day administrative or clerical project with a department that may be of interest to the student. The student is given a twenty to thirty minute presentation from a staff member about working in that particular museum department. The number of students involved in this volunteer program depends on interest and the number of short-term projects available. During the summer, the Crocker offers a five week high school volunteer program during which high school volunteers are given a more in-depth museum experience. High school volunteers may work with multiple departments or on multiple tasks. Twelve high school students participated in the summer 2011 teen volunteer program. The focus of both of these volunteer opportunities is on museum work and potential careers rather than on art and art history lessons. Although high school students remain interested in volunteering at the Crocker Art Museum, the

institution felt that teen volunteers required too much training and supervision to maintain a full-scale, year-round teen volunteer program at this time.\textsuperscript{34}

The Teen Volunteer Program at the Crocker Art Museum unfortunately demonstrates that such programs can get diminished when an institution is unable to properly support to it. Teen volunteer programs can require a significant amount of training and supervision, and some institutions may find that they do not have the resources to properly manage these types of volunteers. If an institution is considering beginning a teen volunteer program, it should also consider if the program can be maintained long-term.

**The Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum**

The Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum is the only history-based institution in Sacramento County that has a volunteer program specifically for youth volunteers. The Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum is a replica one-room schoolhouse in the Old Sacramento Historic District that aims to teach about education in nineteenth-century California. Originally built as a bicentennial project, the Schoolhouse Museum uses costumed schoolmarms and schoolmasters to teach drop-in visitors and school groups about these nineteenth-century educational practices. The Schoolhouse Museum operates almost entirely through the use of volunteer docents.\textsuperscript{35}

Beginning in 1995, the Schoolhouse Museum began allowing Junior Docents to be a part of their volunteer corps. The Junior Docent program is loosely structured, and

no formal training is provided to the Junior Docents. Under the guidance of adult
docents, middle school and high school students learn about working in a nineteenth-
century schoolhouse and participating in costumed interpretation. Junior Docents must
volunteer with an adult docent, and do not actually “teach” classes. Instead, youth
volunteers work primarily as aides to the adult docents, staffing children’s games, and
working as greeters during special events. Additionally, the Junior Docents participate in
two parades a year, during which they ride on a horse-drawn wagon to promote the
museum. Requirements for participation in the Junior Docent program are flexible and
vary from one-time participation to regularly scheduled volunteer shifts depending on the
interest of the student. The Junior Docent group at the Old Sacramento Schoolhouse
Museum acts primarily as a way to bring youth volunteers in to help interpret life in a
nineteenth-century schoolhouse. The volunteer program does not have the same
structure as the previously described programs, and can be either a short-term or long-
term volunteer placement depending on the interest of the teen.

**Regional Museums with Youth or High School Volunteer Programs**

The small number of youth and high school volunteer programs at museums or
cultural institutions in Sacramento County did not allow for the survey to reflect a decent
comparison of how such programs can be implemented in a history museum. Although
there is only one history institution that has a teen volunteer program in Sacramento
County, there are a couple regional institutions that offer such programs. A closer look at
these regional programs better demonstrates how such youth and teen volunteers have

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been used in history museums, and in part serve as models for developing the curriculum for the Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum.

**Pasadena Museum of History**

The Pasadena Museum of History is a museum dedicated to educating the public about the history of Pasadena which also includes the historic Fenyes Mansion, the Finnish Folk Art Museum, gardens, and a history center with a library and archives. The museum offers a unique volunteer program for middle school students (7th and 8th grade students), who are trained as Junior Docents to give tours of the Fenyes Mansion. The Junior Docent program seeks to help volunteers “develop skills in leadership, time management, and public speaking while at the same time making a significant contribution to the community.”

Volunteers are trained during seven, two-hour sessions during the fall, students then begin giving tours before Thanksgiving. Junior Docents begin by giving their first tours to their families, work alongside senior docents to learn how to give effective tours, and then graduate to giving tours to school groups. The Junior Docents act as tour guides for third and fourth grade school groups, with the purpose to help teens learn about local history and public speaking. This program also gives primary grade students a tour guide with whom they can more easily relate, since the Junior Docents are closer to their age and may have some of the same interests. The Junior Docents are available for tours on Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:30am to 12:30pm, and the program collaborates with

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area schools to allow the middle school students to participate in this volunteer experience. The museum works with local public and private schools to allow students to participate in the weekday program in place of class; the relationship between the museum and the schools varies. This program requires a long-term commitment, and is unique in that it only uses middle school students. The Pasadena Museum of History’s Junior Docent program demonstrates that with proper training and supervision, youth volunteers can successfully educate others in a museum setting.

**Rancho Los Cerritos**

The Teen Docent Program at Rancho Los Cerritos is another example of a successful teen volunteer program at a history institution. Rancho Los Cerritos is a historic site in Long Beach, California that interprets “the rich history of Spanish, Mexican and American California and…the families who helped transform Southern California from its ranching beginnings to a modern, urban society” from the 1860s to 1880s. Teen volunteers at the historic site learn about the daily life on a California Rancho, and learn how to present this local history to the site’s visitors.

Ranchos Los Cerritos initially began a teen volunteer program in 2003 to assist with a weekly summer camp program for elementary school students. In 2006, the summer camp program expanded to weekly history-based camps, and the teen volunteer involvement also grew. During the summer program, teens participate in five hours of training, and then work as camp staff under the supervision of museum staff. The teen

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volunteers are challenged with working with younger children, and learning to present history to an elementary school audience. In 2006, Rancho Los Cerritos also began a Teen Docent Program during the school year to complement Long Beach Unified School District’s required service hours for all high school students. Teen Docents are selected after filling out a questionnaire, and each year between eight and twelve teens are selected for the program. Teens first complete thirty training hours between October and December, during which they learn to lead a ninety-minute “Rancho Adventure tour” designed for elementary school children. The Teen Docents are required to volunteer for tours every Thursday between 4-6pm and on some weekends for special events. If there is a not a tour scheduled, the Teen Docents help to lead crafts or other activities for the site’s visitors. Overall, teens commit to around one hundred volunteer hours at Rancho Los Cerritos.39

Rancho Los Cerritos Teen Docent program demonstrates how a history-based institution can utilize teen volunteers to implement a labor-intensive educational program. By drawing upon a school district’s volunteer hour requirements, Rancho Los Cerritos was able to attract high quality volunteers who wanted an intensive, long-term volunteer program. Long Beach Unified School District, however, has suspended the volunteer hour requirement for high school students during the 2011-2012 school year, and it remains to be seen if Rancho Los Cerritos will still able to attract dedicated teens who want to commit one hundred or more hours to the Teen Docent Program.

As demonstrated from the previously described programs, teen volunteer programs vary greatly from institution to institution. Each program demonstrates that significant time and energy are required to implement a successful teen volunteer program, yet, when done correctly the results can be extremely rewarding for both the teen volunteers and the institution. The next section describes the development of the pilot Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum, and the long-term plans for the program.
Chapter 4

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CREATING A HIGH SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM IN A HISTORY MUSEUM

The purpose of a High School Volunteer Program at any museum should be twofold:

1) To serve as an educational program that educates student volunteers in the subject matter of the museum as well as in workplace skills, and

2) To utilize students as volunteers in areas where the museum needs volunteer assistance.

High school volunteer programs may vary based on the needs, size, and mission of the institution, but there are several basic tenets that help to make any volunteer program successful. This section explores the basic steps to creating a high school volunteer program in a museum.

The first step in creating a high school volunteer program is to determine the purpose of the proposed volunteer program at the institution. The purpose of the volunteer program should fit within the overall mission(s) of the institution. Jeanne H. Bradner, Consultant and Director of Programs for the Illinois Commission on Community Service, suggests that prior to recruiting for a volunteer program an institution must accomplish the following:

1.) Develop a strong and compelling mission statement for the program
2.) Conduct a needs assessment
3.) Create a climate of agency readiness for volunteers
4.) Prepare written job descriptions for volunteer positions

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The new volunteer program should fit within the mission of the institution, and should not put great financial or staffing strains on it. Institutions with existing volunteer programs may be able to easily fit a high school volunteer program within the scope of their pre-existing volunteer programs. For example, the Public Programs Coordinator at the Sacramento History Museum saw a need for gallery docents to help interpret exhibits and provide activities for visitors, and determined that a high school volunteer program could help fill in this gap within the museum’s volunteer programs. Other reasons for beginning a volunteer program specifically designed for high school students may include the desire to educate a younger audience, to increase volunteer participation at the museum, or to increase the public programs offered by the institution. The institution should prepare a written description of the program to help museum staff, volunteers, and potential new volunteers to understand the purpose of the new program. If the proposed volunteer program is approved by museum staff and/or the current Board of Directors, then appropriate outreach should then begin.41

Outreach

Outreach is a necessary aspect of recruiting volunteers at any type of institution, but it is especially important for a new volunteer program. A logical starting point for outreach for high school volunteer programs is to identify high schools with volunteer

41Written descriptions of volunteer jobs help both potential volunteers and museum staff to better understand the role of volunteers within the organization. Jeffrey L. Brudney writes that “the delegation of tasks among paid and nonpaid staff members should take into account the unique capabilities that each group might bring toward meeting organizational needs and goals.” Clear volunteer descriptions can help prepare the organization for a new volunteer program. Jeffrey L. Brudney, “Preparing the Organization for Volunteers,” The Volunteer Management Handbook, ed. by Tracy Daniel Connors, 37-59 (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995), 37, 54-6.
requirements for their students. These schools are likely to have a number of students who are searching for long-term volunteer opportunities where they can complete all of their required volunteer hours. High schools offering service-learning classes or clubs with volunteer requirements are also valuable resources for identifying potential volunteers. Letters, phone calls, and emails are all viable options for making initial contact with these high schools. Once initial contact is made, it is also worthwhile to see if area high schools have volunteer fairs or other similar events during the year which museum staff or volunteers can attend and reach a large number of potential volunteers at once. The Gallup Survey found that “people of all ages are three times as likely to volunteer if someone asks them.”\textsuperscript{42} Face-to-face outreach, therefore, tends to be a particularly worthwhile method of recruiting volunteers. If recruiting at a particular high school or with a particular club or class proves to be very successful, it is also worth forming a working relationship with the appropriate teachers or club leaders in order to maintain a steady group of potential volunteers for the museum’s high school volunteer program.

Another way to recruit new volunteers is to send out a “call for volunteers,” or a notice that alerts potential volunteers to the fact that the museum is actively looking for new volunteers. This call needs to include basic information about the museum, the new volunteer program, appropriate contact information, and a promotional message that

\textsuperscript{42} Bradner, “Recruitment, Orientation, and Retention,” 64.
states the purpose of the program. The first logical place to post such a call is on the museum’s website. Depending on how much traffic the museum’s website receives, this could be a very lucrative way to recruit student volunteers. If the museum is involved in other types of social media, the call can also be posted on such places as Facebook, Twitter, a museum blog, or even Craigslist. Ellen Hirzy of the American Association for Museum Volunteers writes that “a visible online presence helps sustain ongoing recruitment because information about opportunities, benefits, training, and application procedures is available 24 hours a day.” A call for volunteers can also be placed in the museum’s newsletter, where current members and volunteers may know young people interested in such a volunteer opportunity. Finally, information about the new volunteer program should be given to community organizations that help to spread the word about available volunteer opportunities. For example, in Sacramento the Volunteer Center of Sacramento assists pairing volunteers with volunteer programs that best suit their needs and interests. The Volunteer Center also compiles a Youth Directory of volunteer opportunities specifically for volunteers 18 and younger; during the 2010-2011 academic year, the Volunteer Center distributed over 800 youth directories. Other volunteer directories include local state volunteer centers (including local government), websites like Idealist.org, and the Youth Volunteer Corps of America.

43 Scholar Jeanne H. Bradner writes that “it is important that the promotional message emphasize the need your program hopes to remedy…and [it] should also speak to the needs of the people who could potentially be most effective in the job.” Bradner, “Recruitment, Orientation, and Retention,” 68-9.
45 Katrina Balcius, “Re: Jennifer Janes has sent you a message,” email to Jennifer Janes on August 25, 2011.
Depending on the size of the museum and the funding available for marketing it may be worthwhile to spend some time advertising for the new volunteer program. Advertising in local newspapers, magazines, or other local publications helps to build an image of a rewarding volunteer experience. Media coverage on local television or radio stations may be more difficult to ascertain but is a useful way to spread the word about the new volunteer program and the museum in general. The museum can also hold a recruitment session about the new volunteer program.\footnote{Hirzy, Transforming Museum Volunteering, 40.} For a high school volunteer program, this can help both students and parents to better understand the benefits of volunteering with the organization. The information session should introduce potential volunteers to the key program coordinators, the requirements, and open the floor for any questions potential volunteers may have. Marketing in these ways helps to build the initial volunteer base, but may not be a feasible option for all museums. As previously mentioned, volunteer recruitment should not put a significant burden on either the museum’s finances or staff.

It is important to remember that recruiting new volunteers may take time. It is not unusual for a pilot program to have only a handful of volunteers who are willing to act as the program’s “guinea pigs.” It is in the best interest of the museum to be flexible when setting up a new volunteer program. If time and care is taken to recruit high-quality volunteers for the pilot program, they can encourage other volunteers to participate in future training sessions, and help to make the program more successful by giving constructive feedback. In some instances, however, there simply may not be enough
interest in the volunteer program. If sufficient outreach is undertaken and there is still not
enough interest to warrant the volunteer program, then it may be time to re-format the
program or abandon the project. This is a difficult decision to make, but may ultimately
be in the best interest of the museum.

Once the museum has done enough outreach to attract student volunteers – and
the program is determined to be a viable addition to existing volunteer programs – a
selection process must be enacted. Students volunteering in museums should be selected
through a three-step process. Potential student volunteers should first submit a written
application for the volunteer program, then participate in an interview with appropriate
museum staff, and finally complete mandatory training. This process helps to ensure that
the student volunteer program has both the breadth and depth necessary to be successful.

Application

The museum should require that potential student volunteers submit an official
application for volunteering. The volunteer application often serves as the first record of
contact and information that museum staff members have about a volunteer, and
therefore needs to include information such as name, address, employment history, and
education. It is recommended that the application also require the students to answer a
few open-ended questions about his or her interest in working at the museum; these can
help the museum to determine the new volunteer’s motivation and expectation.47

47 Strict legal guidelines dictate what an application (for paid employment or volunteer work) can ask. Arlene Stepputat, Director of Marketing for Advocacy Press, reminds volunteer coordinators that “questions regarding age, religion, marital status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or anything that may be considered discriminatory are prohibited.” Arlene Stepputat, “Administration of Volunteer Programs,” The
ended questions also force students to put preliminary time and effort into their volunteer experience, and discourage those students who do not want to actually put effort into volunteer work from applying. Applications need to be available on the museum’s website, at the museum’s front desk, and should be sent to any students who inquire about the program. Program staff need to determine deadlines for volunteers to submit application (either one deadline if there is an annual training date, or multiple deadlines if training is held multiple times throughout the year), but flexibility may be necessary based on the number of applicants.

In addition to the basic information and the open-ended questions, it is also recommended the museum require students to submit at least one letter of recommendation from a non-family member. The process of acquiring a letter of recommendation is a valuable lesson for students, since this is a process they will likely be encountering for future school and job applications. The letter of recommendation also helps the museum to select quality volunteers for their volunteer program since the letters should be submitted by the recommender; the museum should request an honest evaluation of the student’s work, ability to interact with others, and any other relevant information that may help the museum in the volunteer selection process.48

Finally, the volunteer application for student volunteers needs to serve as a legal release. High school volunteer programs typically work with students who are younger than eighteen and the application, therefore, should serve as a legal release for parents or

legal guardians to allow their children to volunteer at the museum. It is recommended that the museum check with legal counsel to make sure that the application serves as a legal release. Since the application itself requires the signature of a parent or legal guardian, any volunteers selected for the program are able to begin volunteering immediately upon selection. An example of the Student Docent Program Volunteer Application, which also serves as a legal release for minors to volunteer at the museum, is shown in Appendix B.

**Interview**

It is recommended that an interview be a required part of the volunteer selection process. Scholar of volunteer management Arlene Stepputat writes that “the purpose of the interview is to further assess whether a match can be made between the organization’s needs and the volunteer candidate’s skills, talents, and wants. It is also an opportunity to review pertinent information that may be critical in helping both parties determine the suitability of the match.”49 Although student volunteer programs are less concerned with a potential volunteer’s already developed skills and talents, the interview does help the museum to select a strong group of student volunteers who are genuinely interested in the volunteer program’s goals and who are responsible enough to educate museum visitors. The interview process helps to weed out students who are not serious about the goals of the student volunteer program. Many students may fill out a volunteer application, but may not schedule or show up for an interview; the museum should only consider volunteers that complete an interview with museum staff. Additionally, as with any

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group of student volunteers, it is possible that parents may have forced students to apply for the volunteer program. An interview helps to mediate the behavioral issues that sometimes accompany students who are forced to volunteer by giving the museum the option of not admitting the student into the volunteer program.

The interview process next helps to set a tone of formality and professionalism. The interview process is a particularly valuable part of the volunteer experience for high school volunteers since it helps to prepare them for future college and job interviews, and therefore needs to be conducted in a way that helps the students to gain interview experience. During the interview, museum staff should clearly outline the expectations and requirements for volunteering at the museum. Although the student has applied for a volunteer position, students are expected to behave as if this position were a paid job. A professional interview with a member of the museum staff helps to convey that this volunteer position should be taken seriously, and that volunteers need to always act in a professional manner when working with visitors, museum staff, and other volunteers.50

Lastly, the interview begins a personal relationship between museum staff and the student volunteers. The interview should allow museum staff and potential volunteers to have a candid conversation about the goals and expectations of the program. Arelene Stepputat warns that “the interview is to be based on information exchange and mutuality. Too often, the interviewer can do too much talking during an interview and

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realize afterward that critical points may have been overlooked."\(^{51}\) Students should be given time to ask questions about the program, and time to share about their own interest in the program. If possible, students may also be given a tour of the museum during the interview time to help acquaint them with the museum’s layout and collection.

Unfortunately, not all volunteers are well-suited for a museum volunteer program. Prior to beginning the recruitment process, program staff should determine minimum standards for program volunteers. High school applicants may not demonstrate the maturity necessary to work with museum visitors, or may demonstrate that they pose behavioral threats that could compromise the volunteer experience for both their peers and museum visitors.\(^{52}\) Jeanne H. Bradner reminds volunteer coordinators that “to involve someone about whom one really has misgivings is not fair to the person and not fair to the program. Refer them to another job, another agency, or another volunteer center.”\(^{53}\) Although this can be a difficult decision, applicants that do not possess necessary qualifications for the volunteer program should be respectfully declined.

**Training**

Training is an essential part of a successful volunteer program. The length and style of training may vary from institution to institution, but it is a critical aspect of the

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\(^{51}\) Stepputat, “Administration of Volunteer Programs,” 170.

\(^{52}\) Ellen Hirzy recommends that museums “rely on the same standards that you would use when hiring a paid staff member.” Museums may relax their policies slightly for high school volunteers since this type of program is meant to be a teaching tool for younger volunteers. Museums, however, should maintain high standards even for their younger volunteers in order to teach them valuable workplace skills. A museum may institute a policy of requiring a minimum G.P.A., a letter or recommendation from a non-family member, or ongoing evaluations to ensure that high school students do high quality volunteer work. Ellen Hirzy, *Transforming Museum Volunteers* (Bloomington, IN: American Association of Museum Volunteers, 2007): 42.

\(^{53}\) Bradner, “Recruitment Orientation, and Retention,” 74.
development of the volunteer corps. Scholar Suzanne J. Lulewicz writes that “identifying what job knowledge needs to be acquired, what skills need to be developed, what organizational values need to be transmitted, and what volunteer motivation can be built upon or enhanced are the foundations of an effective volunteer training program.”

When working with high school volunteers, it is important to make them feel confident that they can accomplish the volunteer tasks at hand and feel motivated to do so. Many students may be attending volunteer training with little knowledge about the museum’s collection or subject matter. Many may have just a vague interest in working in a museum or in the field of history. Most will likely be looking for an interesting way to fill required volunteer hours or put a distinctive activity on a resume. It is, therefore, important that training first ease any fears that the students may have about working in an alien field, and then excite them about the subject matter and museum.

Since student docents will be interacting with museum visitors when they are participating in the program, they must be equipped with the knowledge and tools to best fulfill the museum’s mission. Museum educator Anna Johnson writes the following of docent training programs:

Docents have a critical function in the visitor’s experience at museums. They are often the primary people visitors interact with, and as such play key roles in the understanding and memories visitors have of the museum. Therefore, high-quality training programs are vitally important in developing effective docents who project a good image of the museum.

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While adult docents and student docents should have distinct and separate roles in the museum, training for student docents should be equally as rigorous as it is for all other docents. Docent training helps to not only educate the students in the museum’s mission and subject matter, but also to help bond the student docents to the institution. Training should not only impart that their roles as student docents demand commitment, but also that their participation as a student docent can also be extremely rewarding and fun.

Training allows the institution to demonstrate that it values the volunteers’ time and commitment. Museum educator Anna Johnson writes that during training “it is important that the docents recognize that there is a commitment on the part of the organization to effectively train them to be knowledgeable in their presentations and their interactions with the public.”56 By demonstrating that the museum cares enough to train its docents well, the docents are more likely to take their training seriously and fully commit to the program. It is also worthwhile for volunteer training to begin with a welcome from the volunteer coordinator, relevant museum staff, and, if possible, the executive director in order to thank the new volunteers for investing their time and energy into the museum. If volunteers do not feel valued, retention within the volunteer program becomes increasingly difficult.

Another integral part of volunteer training is an introduction to the museum, including its history, mission, collection, exhibit, programs, audiences, and any other relevant information about the institution.57 Museum staff should not assume that

57 Hirzy, Transforming Museum Volunteers, 50.
volunteers are already acquainted with the museum and its mission. Most people learn best through a combination of auditory and visual exercises, so in addition to a written handbook and classroom lectures, training should also include a tour of the museum. If a tour of the entire museum is not possible, a tour of the areas that will be most relevant to the new volunteer’s work will suffice. Tours can be led by other museum volunteers, which allows new volunteers to get a firsthand look at what they will be doing.

Training high school volunteers may also require more effort to motivate and excite them about their work at the museum. Unlike most adult volunteers, students tend to volunteer because it is either required or they want something interesting to go on a resume. Volunteer coordinators need to implement tools to combat potential apathy from the high school volunteers. During training, students should begin to form relationships with each other and the museum staff or adult volunteers with whom they will be working. Team building exercises, like get-to-know-you games and scavenger hunts, are good ways to get the high school volunteers to bond with each and learn the information necessary for their volunteer work.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation is an important part of volunteer management, and consistent evaluation of volunteer programs is beneficial for both volunteers and the museum. Scholar Kathleen McLean writes that “evaluation is the careful appraisal and study of something to determine its feasibility and effectiveness. In museum[s]…it is the systematic collection and interpretation of information about the effects of exhibitions
and programs on visitors for the purpose of decision making.” Evaluation is necessary to maintaining effective exhibitions, interpretation, and volunteer programs in any museum. New volunteer programs need to undergo frequent evaluation in order develop a successful, ongoing volunteer program.

It is recommended that the first phase of evaluation occur immediately after volunteer training. Post-training evaluation allows the newly trained volunteers to voice any praise of concern that they may have about the training program, and can help volunteer managers to make the changes necessary for the next phase of volunteer training. Volunteers should be asked whether or not they feel like they received the training necessary to accomplish their volunteer tasks, whether or not they understand their role in the museum, and if they know who to contact with any questions or concerns. Museum educator Anna Johnson comments that post-training evaluation “can be helpful in documenting positive reactions to the class and its effectiveness. It can also elicit many good comments about how to improve the class.”

Once volunteers are trained, they should be given the opportunity to evaluate the volunteer program on a minimum of an annual basis. Written or online surveys allow volunteers to give candid feedback, which allows the museum to show that it values the suggestions of its volunteers. Such evaluation also helps the museum to identify any strengths or weaknesses in the volunteer program. Evaluation forms provide a written

record of the progress of its volunteer programs, and demonstrate the museum’s commitment to quality volunteer programming.

The volunteer program manager also needs to periodically evaluate the progress of individual docents. Evaluation of volunteers must always be constructive. Evaluation is meant to help improve a volunteer’s work within the museum, yet without the proper finesse and constructivism, evaluation of a volunteer can do more harm than good. Volunteer managers can occasionally shadow a docent, and provide informal verbal feedback; the museum can also develop a standard evaluation form to provide written feedback for a volunteer. The volunteer manager needs to clearly inform volunteers of the evaluation process, and apply the same evaluation criterion to all museum volunteers. This type of evaluation should not be viewed as a report of what the volunteer is doing wrong, but rather as a way to praise the volunteer for his or her strengths, and suggest techniques for improvement. If the volunteer manager chooses to evaluate volunteers through written forms, the completed evaluation needs to be given to both the volunteer and kept on file at the museum. In the unfortunate event that a volunteer needs to be dismissed, a written record of volunteer evaluations can aid in the dismissal process. Volunteer evaluation must always remain confidential.

Following these general guidelines for developing a volunteer program for high school students at a history museum can help put the new volunteer program on a path towards success. It is important to remember that every institution is different, and that

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60 Stepputat, “Administration of Volunteer Programs,” 176-7.
museum staff must be willing to adapt the program based on the needs of the institution and the volunteers participating in the program.
The Sacramento History Museum is located in the Old Sacramento historic district in Sacramento, California. The museum’s mission states that the purpose of the museum “is to explore, interpret and display the region’s history from the days before the Gold Rush to the present,” and the museum’s exhibits highlight both city and county history. The museum is operated by a non-profit 501(c)3 called the Historic Old Sacramento Foundation (HOSF), and also receives support from the city and county. Collections are housed off-site at the Center for Sacramento History, which also serves as the city and county archival repository. Following the museum’s mission, the collection draws upon all aspects of Sacramento history, and museum exhibits range from the discovery of gold to the impact of diverse groups of people in the region to agriculture in an attempt to provide snapshots of many different aspects of Sacramento’s history.

Although not a large museum, the variety of the exhibits make the Sacramento History Museum a favorite among school groups. During the 2010-2011 school year over 400 school groups visited the museum, which is a very large number considering that the museum has only five full-time staff members, and four part-time staff members. In addition to school group programming, the museum also participates in Living History activities, hosts underground tours of Old Sacramento, and assists with planning the

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annual four day Gold Rush Days event. Public programs are a very high priority at the Sacramento History Museum.

The heavy schedule of school groups and other public programming make volunteers a vital aspect of the Sacramento History Museum. The museum currently has over 800 volunteers who assist in all aspects of the museum’s life; in 2010, volunteers donated over 14,000 volunteer hours. Most museum volunteers fall into five major categories:

1.) Volunteer Docents, who commit to long-term volunteer appointments to work primarily with school groups who visit the museum for special programs.
2.) Living History re-enactors, who lead walking tours of the Old Sacramento Historic District and participate in costumed interpretation.
3.) Underground Tour volunteers, who assist primarily with the museum’s Underground Tour program.
4.) Office volunteers, who assist with administrative projects
5.) Special Events volunteers, who participate in large special events (like the annual Gold Rush Days) and receive a limited amount of training

The volunteer program is coordinated and overseen by the Historic Old Sacramento Foundation’s Public Programs Coordinator. The volunteer corps is very active, and as the number of school groups who visit the museum increases, so does the number of volunteer docents involved. As of Fall 2011, the museum has about thirty adult

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62 Janessa West, conversation with Jennifer Janes, October 12, 2011.
63 The Public Programs Coordinator also oversees the Historic Old Sacramento Foundation’s Living History Volunteer program. Living History Volunteers participate in costumed interpretation for visitors, and although the program is under the tutelage of the same coordinator, much of their work takes place outside of the museum. The purpose of the Living History Volunteers is to adopt a historical character to interpret to visitors, and there is no real benefit to creating a distinct program for high school living history volunteers. Additionally, since the Living History Volunteers typically do not volunteer at the museum, this volunteer group is less relevant for the purposes of this project. At the time of writing, Janessa West is the current Public Programs Coordinator. “Living History,” Historic Old Sacramento Foundation, http://www.historicoldsac.org/volunteer/living-history.asp (accessed September 6, 2011).
volunteers who participate in the program and new docent training occurs bi-annually. The typical museum volunteer is retired, and the majority of volunteers are female.64

New adult volunteer docents are required to attend docent training that takes place during a three hour class once a week for a month, culminating in a presentation to the new docent class. The training introduces new volunteers to key museum staff, teaches them about interpretive techniques, and allows them to sit through all of the school programs offered by the museum. Some of the school programs offered by the museum include “Head West” which teaches students about traveling to California during the nineteenth-century, a Nisenan program to teach students about local Native American tribes; and an agriculture program to teach students about the impact of agriculture in California. Docents are given binders with historical context and interpretive materials for all of the galleries in the museum. Once formal training is complete, new docents are then required to shadow other volunteer docents until s/he feels comfortable with the program material. Once fully trained, docents attend monthly docent meetings at the museum, and commit to a minimum of thirty volunteer hours per year. Monthly calendars with scheduled programs are sent for volunteer sign-up, and most docents choose to become experts with one or two of the programs offered by the museum. The adult docent group is a dedicated group of volunteers who work hard to accommodate the large number of school groups who visit the Sacramento History Museum each year.65

Although adult volunteer docents are active and interact with museum visitors on a regular basis, there are very few docents who act as gallery docents, and the typical museum visitor does not benefit from the expertise of the docent corps. The Public Programs Coordinator determined that the museum could benefit from a regular group of gallery docents, and decided that a new volunteer program could fulfill this need. The mission of the Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum is to encourage high school students to creatively engage with museum patrons by introducing them to Sacramento history by acting as gallery docents who provide interpretation through crafts, games, talks, and activities. The Student Docent Program is designed to challenge high school students to think creatively about history. Students are given the tools to learn about an area of local history that interests them, and then asked to think of a creative way to present that information to museum visitors. Rather than asking Student Docents to recite historical information, the program is designed for students to work either independently or in small groups to come up with unique ways to teach history to museum visitors. Students choose an artifact, a theme, or a gallery, and become experts on their selected artifact, theme, or gallery. During training, Student Docents are given examples of crafts, activities, or discussion points that may help shape their interpretive ideas, and museum staff and adult volunteers help the students to come up with ways to interact with museum visitors that is comfortable for the individual Student Docent.

The most challenging aspect of beginning the Student Docent Program was attracting students. The first step in the recruitment process was re-writing the HOSF
Volunteer Application to require students to write a short answer essay about their interest in volunteering at the Sacramento History Museum and request a letter of recommendation from a non-family member. This application also included space for a signature from a parent or legal guardian, and was approved by HOSF legal counsel during 2010. A copy of the Student Docent Program Application is shown in Appendix B. This application was put on the HOSF website on the “Volunteer” page under “Student” volunteer opportunities.66 During the planning stages, Public Programs Coordinator Janessa West encouraged any volunteer inquiries from high school students to fill out an application for the Student Docent Program; most of these potential volunteers, however, were trying to fulfill volunteer requirements at the last minute and were not interested in a long-term volunteer commitment. Since interest in the Student Docent Program was initially slow, the Public Programs Coordinator relaxed requirements for the essay and letter of recommendation for the pilot program.

The next outreach step taken was to alert local area high schools of the new volunteer program through a letter campaign. During Spring 2011, outreach letters with additional materials about the Sacramento History Museum were sent to twelve local area high schools. HOSF sent letters to principals, the heads of History or Social Studies departments (if the information was available), or guidance counselors. The outreach letter encouraged schools to partner with the museum in order to identify high-quality student volunteers to participate in the program. While this letter generated some

interest, it was unsuccessful in finding a high school to partner with the museum. Appendix B contains an example of the letter sent to Sacramento area high schools. The third step to attract students to the new program was through on-site recruitment at a high school. Adult docent volunteer Jennifer Janes attended a volunteer fair at Natomas Pacific Pathways Prep Charter High School (NP3 Charter High) on September 1, 2011. Volunteer applications, FAQ sheets, and literature about the museum were distributed to students. This outreach event generated a list of about forty potential volunteers, and follow-up through phone calls and emails resulted in two volunteers for the pilot program.

Ideally, potential high school volunteers are required to submit a Student Docent Volunteer Application and a letter of recommendation from a non-family member to Public Programs Coordinator Janessa West in order to be considered for the program. Upon receipt of these materials, the potential student volunteer is then invited to come to an informational interview with Janessa West, and given a tour of the museum. However, the difficulty in finding students to commit to the Student Docent Pilot Program forced the museum to be flexible with these requirements for the first round of Student Docent Volunteers. For the Pilot Program, the museum was lenient with the letter of recommendation, and none of the new volunteers were able to participate in an informal interview. In the future, it is anticipated that the program will draw in a greater number of volunteers.

number of interested high school volunteers and that the museum can better uphold these Student Docent volunteer requirements.

After selection for the program, Student Docents are required to attend training, which is modeled loosely after the adult Volunteer Docent Program. Student Docent Training at the Sacramento History Museum is divided into three training days. The first two training days are overseen by the Student Docent Program Coordinator and involve the entire group of Student Docents, while the third required training day allows individual Student Docents to learn more about the subject matter that interests them and test out interpretive techniques. Students are encouraged to work with museum staff and adult docents until they feel comfortable with the material. If a Student Docent chooses to design an activity or craft, s/he must get the approval of the Public Programs Coordinator prior to using it with museum visitors. The training program seeks to help students find areas of local history that interest them and methods of interpretation to help teach others about local history. After training, Student Docents are required to volunteer at least five hours per month at the museum (and encouraged to volunteer as much as they want!), for a total of thirty volunteer hours during the academic year. Students are to record all hours volunteered in the volunteer binder at the museum, but must keep track of their own volunteer hours that fulfill outside community service requirements. Student Docent training may be applied towards the volunteer hours.

Training for the pilot program of the Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum took place on October 22, 2011 from 1pm to 4pm and October 29, 2011 from 1pm to 4pm. Student Docents came to the museum for their third, informal training
day on the following Saturday, November 5, 2011. The pilot program began with five area high school students (two freshmen, two sophomores, and one junior), all but one of whom are required to complete between 20 and service hours by their schools. None of the new Student Docents had previously been to the Sacramento History Museum. Public Programs Coordinator Janessa West and Adult Docent Volunteer Jennifer Janes ran the training program, while other adult docents assisted in teaching Student Docents about the museum’s galleries. At the beginning of training, Student Docents were given Student Docent Manuals, which included information recording volunteer hours, interpretation, and very basic information about each of the galleries. The handbook design was simple, so as not to discourage Student Docents; once students selected an artifact, theme, or gallery as their primary interpretive program, more information was made available to them. The Student Docent Handbook is available in Appendix C.

Training on Day One was designed to acquaint the new Student Docents with the museum, and introduce them to concepts like interpretation and collections. The schedule for Day One of Student Docent Training was as follows:

**Student Docent Training, Day One**

1pm – 1:15pm: Introductions
1:15pm – 1:45pm: What is a docent? And what does a docent do?
1:45pm – 2:45pm: Museum Scavenger Hunt
2:45pm – 3pm: Break
3pm – 4pm: Walking Tour of Old Sacramento

Training began with an introduction of volunteer trainers and all participating high school volunteers. The new Student Docents were then given a brief discussion on their role as docents in the museum and a basic overview of museum interpretation, which utilized
definitions from G. Ellis Burcaw and Freeman Tilden. A key goal of Student Docent Training was to acquaint the new volunteers with the concept of interpretation, and give them opportunities to experience different methods of interpretation firsthand. After the discussion of interpretation, Student Docents were given a copy of the Self-Guided Museum Scavenger Hunt to complete. This scavenger hunt, shown in Appendix C, is often used with school groups at the museum; the scavenger hunt served the dual purpose of showing the Student Docents a type of interpretive program used at the museum but also to better acquaint them with the museum and its collections. The final component of the first day of Student Docent Training was a walking tour of Old Sacramento, led by an adult docent volunteer. The walking tour gave the Student Docents an overview of Old Sacramento history, while also introducing them to another form of interpretation.

Student Docent Training Day Two was designed to further the new volunteers’ understanding of interpretive techniques. The schedule for Day Two of Student Docent Training was as follows:

**Student Docent Training, Day Two**

1pm – 1:15pm: Review
1:15pm – 1:45pm: How to relate to visitors
1:45pm – 2:45pm: Tour of Museum Galleries with Adult Volunteer Docents
2:45pm – 3:15pm: Practice Interpretive Techniques, and present a topic to the group
3:15pm – 4pm: Explore the museum

Day Two began with a review from the previous week, and repeated introductions of all high school volunteers and museum staff. Janessa West then led a discussion of how museum docents can relate to museum visitors. The discussion asked students to think of
ways to begin conversations with visitors, techniques for engaging visitors, and encouraged them to practice techniques to find ones that were more comfortable for them. Upon completion of this discussion, Student Docents were introduced to three Adult Docents and given a tour of each of the museum galleries. The Adult Docents shared interpretive techniques with the Student Docents, and helped to better acquaint them with the museum’s collections. After the tour of the museum with the Adult Docents, Student Docents were then asked to select a theme or artifact to present to the group, either in a group or as an individual, and were given thirty minutes to prepare a two to three minute presentation. The final forty-five minutes of training allowed the Student Docents to further explore the museum, and think about where they would like to become a gallery docent.

The third and final step in Student Docent training was to have the individual Student Docents select a gallery, theme, or artifact and prepare an interpretive activity for that gallery, theme, or artifact. Once the Student Docent selected their interpretive focus, s/he was asked to share with either Janessa West of Jennifer Janes for approval. Once approved, the Student Docent is free to volunteer at the museum at their leisure, as long as they commit to a minimum of one volunteer shift and five volunteer hours per month.

At the end of training, students were sent a short evaluation form to critique the application process and the Student Docent Program training. Evaluation was distributed via email in the form of a confidential survey that asked nine multiple choice questions and one open-ended question about the program. The survey was designed to allow the Student Docents to easily share their understanding of the program, their thoughts on
training, and provide any feedback that might help the program to grow in the future.

The evaluation survey can be found in Appendix D.68

Based on the survey and observation of the Student Docents during the first few weeks after training, it is recommended that a few adjustments be made to the format of the program. Firstly, the training program needs to involve more hands-on activities. The students indicated that they did learn from the training program, but the discussions on interpretation and gallery presentations by the Adult Docents fell a little flat. The Student Docents need to be better engaged in the material in order to bond with their peers and become excited about the museum. The more engaged they are in the program, the more likely they are to consistently show up for shifts and enjoy their work as Student Docents. Secondly, the Student Docents need a little more direction in preparing interpretive activities. Many of the students did not fully understand their role in developing interpretive programming for the museum’s galleries, and were shy when it came to testing out activities with museum visitors. In the future, training should include sample activities and participation in these interpretive activities as a group. Finally, there needs to be a greater incentive to sign up for volunteer shifts and to stick to the volunteer shift schedule. In the first few weeks of the program, Student Docents frequently emailed the Public Programs Coordinator to cancel a shift. As more students sign up for the program and act as models for the other students, it is anticipated that

68 Since only five students who participated in the pilot training program, responses to the survey have not been included to respect their privacy.
these problems will become less frequent. These adjustments will help to make the Student Docent Program more successful for the long-term.

Overall, Student Docent Training was successful. After the first training day, students were excited about the program, and asked staff about bringing friends to also become Student Docents at the Sacramento History Museum. At the end of the first month of the program, Student Docents still indicated that they were glad that they signed up for the program. Ideally, the program will grow to between ten and fifteen Student Docents per academic year, with two Student Docents present at the museum each weekend day. It is important that museum staff and Adult Docents continue to engage with and encourage the Student Docents in order to maintain an involved and group of high school volunteers. The Public Programs Coordinator, other museum staff, and volunteers must continue to participate in public outreach to make area high school students aware of this volunteer opportunity, and must perform periodic program evaluations to continually refine the Student Docent program better to ensure its survival and success. Although there are some adjustments that need to be made, the program is off to a positive start.
Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

High school volunteer programs in history museums are worthwhile educational programs. There are over fifteen million teenagers contributing over one billion service hours each year in the United States.\(^{69}\) These teens need interesting places to spend their time participating in community service, and history museums should take advantage of this growing group of volunteers. Museums offer interesting, community-based service opportunities, and often are already prepared to work with volunteers. A teen volunteer program at a museum allows the institution to reach an adolescent audience through a hands-on approach, and both the teen volunteers and the museum reap the benefits of this reciprocal relationship.

High school volunteer programs at museums may take a significant time and effort to develop, but organizations with the ability to develop a youth and teen volunteer program should make the effort to do so. Volunteers provide invaluable services to museums, and high school students bring a young and energetic group of people to the corps of museum volunteers. This type of volunteer program allows the history museum to educate high school students in an out-of-the-classroom setting, provide them with workplace skills, and instill a respect for both history and museums. If the resources are available to begin a youth or teen volunteer program, the museum should develop this type of program.

The Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum is in its beginning stages, and there is a lot of room for the program to grow. The program needs to be continuously evaluated until there is a stable corps of high school volunteers, and consistent outreach is necessary for the program to be successful. Ideally the Student Docent Program will attract ten to twelve high school volunteers each year, and the museum will offer a minimum of two program orientations per academic year. If the Sacramento History Museum continues to actively recruit and train Student Docents, it can successfully reach the program’s goal of maintaining an active corps of gallery docents made up of area high school students. As the Student Docent Program becomes a long-term component of the museum’s public programs agenda, new high school volunteers will regularly seek to participate in the program. It may take time to build a reputation as an exciting volunteer opportunity for Sacramento area high school students, but the Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum has the potential to become an extremely successful high school volunteer program.

In conclusion, the development of the Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum demonstrates that teen volunteer programs in history museums provides the museum with a new audience, a new group of volunteers, and an extremely hands-on type of educational program. The participating teens are in turn allowed to fulfill their community service requirements while the history museum is educating them about local and regional history. By following the practices outlined in this paper, history museums can develop a high school volunteer program that is mutually beneficial and therefore worthwhile.
## APPENDIX A

Survey of Sacramento County Museum Volunteer Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Museum Name</th>
<th>Active Volunteer Program?</th>
<th>Age Requirement?</th>
<th>Teen Program?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aerospace Museum of California</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18+ or 16-17 on occasion</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Automobile Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Foundry Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18 and up</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The California Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State Capitol Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18 and up</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State Indian Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18 and up</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State Military Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California State Railroad Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crocker Art Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18 and up; high school student for teen program</td>
<td>Yes: Teen Volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery Museum Science &amp; Space Center</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Don &amp; June Salvator California Pharmacy Museum</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairytale Town</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13 and up</td>
<td>Yes: Volun-Teen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folom History Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor's Mansion State Historic Park</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18 and up</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leland Stanford Mansion State Historic Park</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18 and up</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum of Medical History</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Sacramento Schoolhouse Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12 and up</td>
<td>Yes: Junior Docents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento Historic City Cemetery</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento History Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Flexible if volunteering with an adult</td>
<td>In progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento Zoo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15 and up</td>
<td>Yes: Zoo Teens and Camp Counselors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sojourner Truth Multicultural Arts Museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None specified</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutter's Fort State Historic Park</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18 and up</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells Fargo (Downtown/Old Sacramento)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

Outreach Material

Become a Student Docent....

Volunteer in
Old Sacramento!
Contact Name  
School  
Address Line 1  
City, State Zip Code  

24 February 2011  

Dear ——,

The Historic Old Sacramento Foundation is pleased to announce that we will be beginning a Student Docent Program for the 2011-2012 academic year. The program, designed for high school students, is a unique way for students to engage in Sacramento history and work in a museum setting. The Student Docent Program will give students an opportunity to not only volunteer in one of Sacramento’s most interesting museums, but to also get a behind-the-scenes look at how museums and non-profit foundations operate.

The Sacramento History Museum’s Student Docent Program offers students a number of valuable opportunities, including:

- Working with museum professionals  
- Learning about museum interpretation  
- Interacting with museum visitors  
- Developing public speaking skills  
- Receiving volunteer hours or internship credit  
- Increasing professional development  
- Learning about local history  
- Helping to preserve Sacramento’s history!

It is our goal to recruit responsible high school students who have an interest in both history and museum work. Students are required to submit an application along with a teacher recommendation; students selected for the program will be required to attend docent training, which includes shadowing an adult docent. Once training is completed students serve as gallery docents, where they will be responsible for independently interpreting a museum gallery to the public. Students are asked to commit to volunteering a minimum of once a month, which means that commitment to the program is 2 hours!

Historic Old Sacramento Foundation ~ 101 I Street, Sacramento, CA 95814 ~ www.HistoricOldSac.org
We are interested in pairing with ______ to identify students who want to be involved in this unique opportunity. We plan to begin the program in June 2011, and need your help in recruiting students to our program. _____’s commitment to education and the humanities makes your organization a great fit for partnering with our program.

Included in this letter is some additional information about our museum and some of the programs that we currently offer. Please do not hesitate to contact my supervisor, Janessa West (JWest@CityofSacramento.org) or me if you have any questions about the Student Docent Program or the Sacramento History Museum, or if you would like to set up a meeting.

We hope to hear from you soon!

Sincerely,

Jennifer Jones
Student Docent Program Representative
Public History Master’s Candidate
(916) 808-4980
Historic Old Sacramento Foundation
www.HistoricOldSac.org
Join the **Student Docent Program** at the Sacramento History Museum!

**What IS a docent?**
A docent is someone who helps to guide or teach visitors in a museum.

**What do Student Docs do?**

Student Docs are high school volunteers who become very knowledgeable about one of the galleries at the Sacramento History Museum. Student Docs talk to visitors and come up with creative ways to share history with others!

**Why should I join the Student Docent Program?**

The Student Docent Program is a great volunteer opportunity! As a Student Docent, you will get to:

- Learn what it is like to work in a museum!
- Work with museum staff!
- Help to educate museum visitors!
- Work on your public speaking and presentation skills!
- Gain professional work experience!
- Use your creativity to teach others about history!
- Get volunteer hours by doing something fun and learning something new!

**Do I need to know a lot about history to get involved?**

No! We will teach you everything you need to know, and help you pick a gallery that best suits your interests. The galleries at the Sacramento History Museum are varied in subject matter, and there is something to interest everyone. Even if you aren’t a huge history buff, you will find something that you find fun and interesting!

**What are the requirements for the program?**

- Attend Student Docent Training Saturday, October 22 and Saturday, October 29 (Yes! These count as volunteer hours)
- Shadow an Adult Docent to learn more about working with visitors
- Volunteer at least 3 hours per month at the Sacramento History Museum
- Attend all Student Docent meetings
- Come with a positive attitude, and be ready to have fun!

**How do I get involved?**

Pick up a volunteer application, and submit it by October 11. You will need a letter of recommendation from a teacher or non-family member, and a signature from a parent if you are younger than 18.

**Learn more about the Sacramento History Museum at www.historicsacramento.org**

**Other questions? Contact Janessa West at jwest@cityofsacramento.org or 916 808 4920**
Historic Old Sacramento Foundation
Volunteer Application
101 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Jwest@cityofsacramento.org
916-808-4980
Fax 916-808-5100

Application for Student Docent Program

☐ Name: ______________________________ Date: ____________

Mailing Address: ______________________ City: ______________ Zip: ____________

Phone: (h) ______________ (w) ______________ (cell): ______________

Email: ____________________________ what is the best way to reach you? ______

1. Are you under the age of 18? ______ If so, a parent or legal guardian signature is required on this application.

2. Are you over the age of 18? ______ If so, do you have a valid work permit? ______

Work experiences (list both salaried and volunteer experience):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Job Title/Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) __________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) __________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) __________</td>
<td>__________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please include a letter of reference from a teacher, coach, or a non-family member. This letter should be submitted with your Student Docent Program Application. Applications will not be considered without this letter of reference.

References (other than family members):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) _______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) _______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

May we contact your references? Yes ☐ No ☐
Are you currently enrolled in school or in a work study program? Yes ☐ No ☐
School/Program: __________________________ Grade Level: __________________
Training or degree: __________________________ Hours needed to fulfill assignment: ____________

How did you learn about our volunteer opportunities? __________________________

If brought on as a volunteer, would you require any assistance or accommodations to perform the volunteer duties of the position(s) which you have requested and which you may be assigned? ____________

Volunteer Application continued
Volunteers are asked to commit to attending all training sessions and volunteer a minimum of 4 hours per month.
Are you able to make this commitment? Yes ☐ No ☐

Circle the days of your choice and specify if you are available mornings or afternoons:
Morning: S M T W Th F S  ☐
Afternoon: S M T W Th F S  ☐

Hours available: ______ Per week: ☐  Per month: ☐
Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor crime? If you answered yes please specify the nature of the incident including date of conviction, but do not describe any misdemeanor convictions for which probation has been successfully completed or otherwise discharged, or marijuana-related convictions that are two years or older, or misdemeanor convictions that have been judicially dismissed.

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
Please describe your interest in participating in the Student Docent Program. Why are you interested in volunteering with the Historic Old Sacramento Foundation? What qualities make you a good fit for the Student Docent Program? What is your interest in history and/or volunteering in a museum?

Please use the space below to answer these questions; if more space is needed, please attach another sheet of paper.
Volunteers are chosen on an as-needed basis. Submission of this application will not guarantee a placement. Volunteers must attend an orientation and will be screened to determine their placement and eligibility for volunteerism. Screening may include reference checks, fingerprinting, background checks or other screening, depending on the placement. By signing below, you are granting permission to complete any and all necessary reference checks and screening required for assignment. Screening requirements are subject to change at any time.

I CERTIFY that all statements in this application are true and complete. I agree and understand that any misstatement or omission of material herein will cause forfeiture on my part of all rights to volunteerism.

I have read the above statements, certify that the above is true and correct (please sign and date below).

Signature: ______________________________  Date: ______________________________

Applicants under the age of 18 must also have this application signed by a legal guardian.

Legal Guardian Name: ______________________________

Signature: ______________________________  Date: ______________________________

Administrative Only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation Completed (date)</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handbooks Received (date)</td>
<td>Start Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Completed (date)</td>
<td>End Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Completed (date &amp; type)</td>
<td>Reason for Termination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Student Docent Handbook and Training Activities

70 Original formatting of the handbook was modified to fit within California State University, Sacramento Office of Graduate Studies margin requirements.
Expectations

- Students Docents are representing the Sacramento History Museum while on duty, and therefore Student Docents should act professionally at all times.

- Student Docents are expected to volunteer a minimum of 5 hours a month (but we encourage you to do more!). You should set up a schedule, and stick to it!
  - Example: 1st Sunday of every month from 11am-3pm; every Saturday from 2:30-4:30pm.

- Student Docents are expected to honor their commitment by arriving on time to their shifts and staying for the entire shift.

- If you are unable to make your assigned shift, you are responsible for either emailing or calling the Student Docent supervisor.

- Student Docents should dress professionally while volunteering: shirts should cover front and back; clothing should not contain any slogans that might be perceived as offensive; clothing should not be torn; shorts, skirts, and dresses should fall below the fingertips; hats, sunglasses, and athletic shorts are not to be worn while on duty.

- Cell phones and other devices are not to be used while on the museum floor.

- Friends, family, and others should not be brought with the Student Docent while on duty.

- Student Docents must use appropriate language at all times. Profanity and indecent language is not acceptable.

- Student Docents are responsible for signing in/out at the front desk and logging volunteer hours for every shift worked. Failure to do so may result in an inaccurate recording of hours worked.

- Student Docents are to show up to shifts with a positive attitude, and be ready to have fun!
Logging Your Volunteer Hours

It’s important to remember to log your volunteer hours every time that you volunteer at the museum. By following these 3 easy steps, you can make sure that all of your volunteer hours are being tracked!

1.) Sign in!
- There is a binder at the museum front desk. For safety purposes, every volunteer needs to sign in and sign out when s/he enters and exits the museum. This helps to keep track of who is in the museum!
  ○ Note: If you just sign in and out on this sheet, you may not get credit for all of your volunteer hours. Make sure to actually put your volunteer hours on the volunteer log!

2.) Record your hours!
- At the end of your shift, flip to the back of the binder. There is a sheet where volunteers can log the numbers of hours that they have worked during a day. Find your name and record the number of hours that you worked during your shift!
  ○ This is the sheet that we use to actually track your volunteer hours. If you have a volunteer requirement, we will use this sheet to verify how many hours that you have worked.

3.) Sign out!
- Make sure you sign out before you leave!

If you need paperwork signed to get credit for your volunteer hours, make sure you contact Janessa!
Other Important Information for Student Docents

Who should I contact if I have a question or concern?

We want to hear from you, and Student Docents are encouraged to talk to Janessa West about any questions or concerns that you may have. She can be reached via email at jwest@cityofsacramento.org or by phone at 916 808 4980. If it is something that needs to be resolved immediately during a volunteer shift, talk to museum staff on duty.

Where can I keep my stuff while I am volunteering?

There are lockers located in the docent break room, and Student Docents should put their belongings in the lockers for safe keeping. You may also use the fridge in the break room if you want to bring snacks.

I am old enough to drive myself to the museum. Where should I park?

Student Docents who plan to drive to the museum should contact Janessa for a parking pass. Please note that the museum cannot reimburse you if you park in the parking garage.

I need to submit proof of my volunteer hours. Who can sign my paperwork?

Contact Janessa if you have paperwork that needs to be signed. Remember: if you don’t fill out your volunteer hours in the Volunteer book for every shift you work, then you may not get credit for all of your volunteer hours!

I woke up, and I’m not feeling well on a day that I am scheduled to volunteer. What do I do?

Call the museum front desk at 916 808 7059 and let them know that you will not be able to make it to your scheduled volunteer shift. Front desk staff will let Janessa (or whoever is in charge of museum volunteers that day) know that you aren’t going to be there.
**Glossary of Museum Terms**

During the course of your training and as an active Student Docent, you may come across some terms and phrases with which you are not familiar. We cannot anticipate all of these terms, but, hopefully, this glossary will be a reference tool for you in many circumstances. If you need further information or definitions, please do not hesitate to talk with staff.

The following terms were taken from *Introduction to Museum Work* by G. Ellis Burcaw: (American Association for State and Local History, Nashville, 1975).  

**Accession**

The acquiring of one or more objects at one time from one source, or the objects so acquired.

**Artifact**

An object produced or shaped by human workmanship or, possibly, a natural object deliberately selected and used by a human being. For example, a shiny pebble picked up on the beach and carried as a good luck charm is an *artifact*. It is a cultural specimen.

**Art Gallery**

A commercial establishment for the buying and selling of art objects; or a separate exhibition room devoted to art in a general museum; or an art museum. The word “gallery” places the emphasis on the *displaying* of works of art, regardless of the ownership of the objects.

**Art Museum**

A museum devoted to one or more of the art fields (dealing with objects). The emphasis is on the *ownership and preservation* of important collections.

**Art Object**

An artifact of aesthetic interest. It need not necessarily have been intended to be an art object by its creator.

**Cataloguing**

Assigning an object to one or more categories of an organized classification system.

**Children’s Museum**

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A museum intended exclusively for young children, with everything scaled to their physical size and mental capacity.

**Classification of Collection**

The establishment of the major categories of the collection on the basis of anticipated use. This is a prior condition or prerequisite of good collecting. Art objects are collected primarily for their aesthetic qualities; as unique artistic creations. **Historic objects** are collected primarily with the intent of interpreting the past. **Science objects** are collected primarily to demonstrate and/or interpret science.

**Collection**

A unit of the collections, consisting of objects having something of importance in common. One may speak of the bird’s egg collection of a natural history museum or of the Eleanor McClatchy collection of printed materials.

**Collections**

The collected objects of a museum, acquired and preserved because of their potential value as examples, as reference material, or as objects of aesthetic or educational importance.

**Display**

The showing of objects, depending on the interest of the viewer in the objects themselves.

**Exhibit**

Of more serious, important, and professional connotation than “display.” It is the presentation of ideas with the intent of educating the newer or, in the case of an art exhibit, a planned presentation of art objects by an informed person to constitute a unit. As such, it might be an identifiable part of an exhibition.

**Exhibition**

An assembling of objects of artistic, historical, scientific, or technological nature, through which visitors more from unit to unit in a sequence designed to be meaningful, instructionally and/or aesthetically pleasing. Accompanying labels and/or graphics (drawings, diagrams, etc.) are planned to interpret, explain, and to direct the viewer’s attention. Usually an exhibition covers a large floor space, consists of several separate exhibits or large objects, and deals with a broad, rather than narrow, subject matter.

**General Museum**

A museum dealing with more than one discipline.
**Historic Building or Site**
A structure or location of significant historic connections, often associated with a famous person or event. It may include exhibits of pertinent objects.

**Label**
Written material in an exhibit to identify, to explain and to inform the visitor. Labels may also be called signs, titles, captions, text, etc.

**Museum Object**
An object in the collections of a museum. Usually, the object is collected for its historical significance, educational value, and/or aesthetics.

**Object**
A material three-dimensional thing of any kind.

**Preservation Project**
Preservation, restoration, or reconstruction of one or more buildings – so as to recreate the environment of a past time and place.

**Registration**
Assigning a permanent number for identification purposes to an accession and recording this number according to a system.

**Specimen**
Usually synonymous with museum objects but properly having the connotation of an example or sample; a representative member of a class of objects.

**Visitor Center**
A facility for the interpretation of a historical site or natural region, usually with a small auditorium, exhibits, and an information desk.
What *IS* a **DOCENT**????

“a person who is a knowledgeable guide, especially one who conducts visitors through a museum and delivers a commentary on the exhibitions” (dictionary.com)\(^{72}\)

“a person who leads guided tours especially through a museum or art gallery” (Merriam-Webster)\(^{73}\)

“a person who acts as a guide, typically on a voluntary basis, in a museum, art gallery, or zoo” (Oxford Dictionary)\(^{74}\)

For our purposes at the Sacramento History Museum, a docent is someone who helps to provide additional information to our visitors. You are an extra resource for our museum visitors. Docents are the “frontline” in the museum, meaning that you are some of the first people that our visitors meet. You can answer visitor questions, provoke visitors by asking questions, or even provide an activity that helps our visitors to learn. As a student docent you will become extremely knowledgeable about the information in one of our galleries, and enhance the visitor’s experience.

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Ok, so what do docents do?

Our job as docents is to interpret to visitors.

But what is interpretation?

This means that we help visitors to better understand the information that is presented in the museum. We help to get the visitors excited about history by asking questions, providing activities, and presenting additional information about the exhibits and artifacts in our museum. Interpretation seeks to cultivate and advance awareness, knowledge, and appreciation of the environment and the human interrelationships with our environment.

Here are a few definitions of interpretation:

“Interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”
- Freeman Tilden75

“Interpretation is a process or activity which strives for conception between man and his environment, that conceived being the enlightening knowledge of the environment and the part man plays in it.”
- Ben Mahaffey76

“…the art of explaining the place of man in his environment, to increase visitor or public awareness of the importance of this relationship, and to awaken a desire to contribute to environmental conservation.”
- Don Aldridge77

“It is an information service…a guiding service…an educational service…an entertainment service…a propaganda service…an inspirational service. Interpretation aims at giving people new understanding, new insights, new enthusiasm, new interests.”
- Yorke Edwards78

“ The helping of the visitor to feel something that the interpreter feels—a sensitivity to the beauty, complexity, variety and interrelatedness of the environment, a sense of wonder; a new desire to know. It should help the visitor develop a feeling of being at home in the environment. It should help the visitor develop perception.”
- Harold Wallin79

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76 Ben Mahaffey, et. al, *Environmental Interpretation*, Dept. of Recreation and Parks, (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University, 1971).
Definitions are nice…but how do we interpret?

To effectively interpret to visitors, docents must have a love of learning and teaching. We aren’t going to know the answers to every question, but we need to be excited about the information we are presenting and willing to learn more. A docent’s enthusiasm, dedication, skillfulness and flexibility are necessary for good interpretation. With proper training and fitting the pieces together, docents can learn and enrich their own lives along the way.

Freeman Tilden was a man commissioned by the National Park Service to write a handbook on interpretation in the 1950s. He did it so well that we still use his principles today. Here is what Freeman Tilden wrote about interpretation:80

1.) Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being described to something within the PERSONALITY OR EXPERIENCE OF THE VISITOR will be sterile.

⇒ This means that we as docents need to connect with our visitors. Visitors won’t learn or remember if you don’t connect with something to which they can connect. For example, you might not connect with the tractor in our ag gallery…but you do like to cook, so you connect with the kitchen tools in the same gallery.

2.) Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is REVELATION BASED UPON INFORMATION. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.

⇒ Think of all those times when you are sitting in class and your teacher is just listing off facts. It gets boring…and you don’t really remember anything. As a docent, you get the chance to make learning fun! We have objects and exhibits to help us teach visitors, and we don’t need to just list off boring facts.

3.) Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.

- Not a storyteller? Nervous about public speaking? Don’t worry – all interpretation takes practice and anyone can learn it! Just keep an open mind, continue your desire to learn, and you can learn to be a great interpreter!

4.) The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but PROVOCATION.

- Visitors don’t want to be lectured, and that’s not our job as docents. Instead, we want them to leave our museum asking questions and interested in something new. Your job as a docent is to provoke the visitor by piquing their interest.

5.) Interpretation should aim to PRESENT A WHOLE rather than any phase.

- Remember, you are in a museum with lots of exhibits and objects. Try to fit your interpretation in with the mission of the entire museum.

6.) INTERPRETATION ADDRESSED TO CHILDREN (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.

- Kids are smart! Don’t dumb down your presentation just because a child is present.
So… what makes a GOOD Interpreter?

There are certain traits that make people effective interpreters. Here are a few:

**ENTHUSIASM:** Rapturous interest or excitement.

Enthusiasm can help to minimize problems when difficulties arise. It requires inherent zeal and drive to produce desirable ends. Smiling easily and elaborating on ideas, the enthusiastic person is usually a “self-starter” requiring minimal supervision.

**SENSE OF HUMOR:** The quality of knowing what is laughable or comical

and **PERSPECTIVE:** The ability to see the relationship of aspects of a subject to each other and to a whole.

The two go hand in hand. Nothing is more deadly than the person who never sees the humor in a situation, or an individual who, when the joke is on him or her, perceives it as an affront. A sense of perspective helps remind one not to take oneself too seriously.

**ARTICULATENESS:** Able to speak clearly and skillfully.

Essentially this means that the interpreter should be able to communicate and express ideas clearly and smoothly, using phrases easily, with words in a pleasing and proper order. It is important to practice this during the course of your presentations, for articulateness has a strong influence on interpreter credibility in the eyes of the public.

**SELF-CONFIDENCE:** Confidence in one’s abilities.

Self-confident people instill this same quality in those around them. In addition they won’t have to be hand-led into new enterprises. They will instead look upon newness as a challenge and generally prove to be an asset to the agency as they successfully launch into new projects. One indicator of this trait is the person’s ability to maintain eye contact.

**WARMTH:** Conveying a feeling of sincerity.

Do you and the individual you are talking with feel comfortable during your conversation? Remember that people like people who like them. Presence of or lack of warmth is the single most important factor in the determination of how a visitor perceives the agency.
But, what if I don’t **KNOW** the answer to a visitor’s question!?!?!?!?

**THAT’S OK!!!**

No one expects you to know everything, and it is perfectly fine to say, “I don’t know – but I would like to find out about that!” It’s much better to admit to not knowing than to make something up. If possible, ask a staff member or other volunteer to help you find the answer.

Visitors often ask the same things, so it’s best to try and figure out the answers to tricky questions on your own time. That way, you won’t be caught without an answer twice.

Remember, being a docent is about learning…and not just about the visitor learning. One of the most rewarding parts about being a docent is that **you** are constantly learning new things!
**Museum Galleries**

As a student docent, you will be responsible for providing interpretation to visitors at a gallery of your choice. During orientation, you will be introduced to all of the galleries in the museum. Upon completion of orientation, you will select a gallery, artifact, or theme to learn about in more detail. This section of your binder provides an overview for all the galleries at the Sacramento History Museum.

As you are introduced to the different galleries in the museum, you should take notes and answer the questions about each particular gallery. Think about the artifacts in each gallery, and how you might use them to interpret to visitors. These exercises will help you to later decide which subject matter interests you most!
The McClatchy Gallery

The McClatchy Gallery is on the first floor of the Sacramento History Museum, and is the first gallery visitors are directed to. The gallery is named after Eleanor McClatchy, who was the president of the McClatchy Newspapers (including the Sacramento Bee) for 42 years. Eleanor took over the newspaper business at the age of 40. During her time running the company, she became interested in printing history, and dreamed of establishing a printing museum on the grounds of The Sacramento Bee. Unfortunately, Eleanor died in 1980 without the creation of such a museum. After her death, her nephews donated the newspaper and printing collection that she had acquired to the City of Sacramento.

The entry to the Eleanor McClatchy Gallery is composed of the actual vestibule of the old Sacramento Bee Building at 911 – 7th Street. This terracotta architecture was saved by Eleanor McClatchy when the building was razed in 1956 with each brick carefully marked, and put into crates to be stored for use as the entry to her museum. The photograph next to the entry of the print shop shows the Sacramento Bee building in the early 1900s.

The print shop is a working model staffed by museum docents. The docents demonstrate printing on the presses. The print shop includes a rare example of a Washington Hand Press, built sometime between 1852 and 1857 in Cincinnati, Ohio which uses the same technology as Johannes Gutenberg’s printing press of the 1400s. Other artifacts include a Chandler & Price job press, a linotype machine, type cases, and a model of a current newspaper printing press.81

How fast were newspapers produced using the Washington press?

How much might a printer expect to earn in a day?

Where do the terms upper case and lower case come from?

How did the docent best connect with his/her audience?

What types of objects did the docent use to teach about printing and newspapers?

The big “take-away” from the presentation was….
Lure of the Gold Gallery

The discovery of gold was instrumental in the development of Sacramento and the surrounding region in the mid-19th Century. The Lure of the Gold Gallery on the second floor of the museum explores the movement of people west to California and the impact of the Gold Rush on the region.

In 1847, John Sutter and James Marshall went into partnership to build a sawmill in Coloma, California. As James Marshall was surveying the region in January 1848, he discovered GOLD! Marshall, Sutter, and a few men who knew of the discovery wanted to keep the news a secret. Nevertheless, word that gold was discovered in California spread, and by 1849 the California Gold Rush was in full swing.

Argonauts (gold seekers) lured to California by visions of sudden wealth came by land and sea from all over the world. The quickest route to the goldfields was via Panama. The argonauts could leave New York by steamer, cross the Isthmus of Panama (a fever-ridden journey up the Chagres River followed by a mule ride overland to the Pacific, a total travel time of about three to four days), and then steam up to San Francisco. This trip would take approximately six to eight weeks. Most thought they would come to California, gather a pile of gold, and return home to their families. In reality, very few people struck it rich. Hard work and disease took a toll on the men. Many of those who remained in California did so because they failed to accumulate enough gold to even purchase a ride home.

Two major types of gold are found in California: Placer Gold and Hardrock Gold. Placer gold is found in the waters of the streams, rivers, creeks, and in ancient stream beds. Placer gold originates from hardrock gold that has been eroded from mountains or hillside deposits by rain or running
water. Because gold is heavy it usually is deposited under rocks, in holes, along sand bars, or bends in the water course. Placer is the gold that is commonly “panned.” **Hardrock gold** is found in mountains and hillsides, usually in veins or stratas. These types of gold were extracted in a few different ways:

**Panning**: This was the easiest method to extract gold. The miner would dig gold out of a stream with a knife, horn spoon, or shovel and “wash” it by swirling it around in a pan or bowl to separate the gold from foreign matter. The heavier gold would sink to the bottom while the lighter sand and gravel was washed over the rim of the pan.

**Rocker**: A rocker was an oblong open wooden box mounted on rockers. It was several feet in length and was placed in a sloping position. At its foot it was left open, without an endboard; at its head a sieve or hopper was attached. Cleats or “riffles” were nailed across the floor to catch the gold. When gold-bearing gravel was shoveled into the rocker, water was ladled or flowed in with it, so as to send the whole mass hurrying along the bottom, with the gold being caught by the riffles. This method required several men: one to rock the cradle and pour in water; one to haul the dirt and load the hopper, and one or more to shovel and dig.

**Sluice**: Used for large operation mining. The sluice box contains two sections of troughs that are strung together with a drop shaped like an inverse funnel. This method caught fine debris and small flakes of gold better than other types of mining.

**Hydraulic**: Means bringing in water under high pressure and aiming it, as if through a hose, at a hill that was believed to be underlain by an ancient river containing gold.

During the Gold Rush of 1849, small towns grew very quickly out of the mining camps. Placerville, Sutter’s Creek, Amador City, Grass Valley, and Columbia are but a few of the many foothill towns; some disappeared as
quickly as the gold in the nearby streams, but there are still many of them in existence. These smaller towns became district supply and service centers for the miners. Merchants ordered goods from large suppliers in Sacramento. Because of Sacramento’s location on the river, it became the supply and transportation for the upper Sacramento Valley and the northern mines. The real gold was in the retail business, not in the creeks, rivers, or hills.\textsuperscript{82}

Notes: ________________________________________________
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Who were the types of people that came to California for gold

What types of objects can be used to help visitors learn about the different types of gold mining?

Why did so many people end up staying here in California?

How does the history of the gold rush help shape California history?

May Woolsey’s Trunk

The Community Gallery contains a very interesting trunk of artifacts belonging to a young Sacramento girl named May Woolsey. May Woolsey was born in Sacramento on November 13, 1866 to Mary E. and Luther S. Woolsey. May’s life was fairly typical for a daughter of a middle class family of the period. She lived in a home at 916 E Street in Sacramento with her mother, father, and older brother William and his family. May attended Washington School in downtown Sacramento, where she did very well and graduated second in her seventh-grade class of twenty-eight. May had many hobbies, including crocheting, embroidery, and cross-stitching, and also kept a diary of her life. Like many young girls, she wrote of problems with her mother, of babysitting her niece, and tells about the parties that she attended.

From the letters and diary, we can tell that May probably had a lot of health problems during her short life. She writes in her diary that she was unable to dance at a party because of her health, and letters to her family lament that May was sick. In 1879, May died of encephalitis, which is the inflammation of the brain caused by a virus. She was only 13 years old. Her family was stricken with grief, and packed up all of her belongings into a trunk. They then placed the trunk in a closet underneath the staircase in the family home, which was later sealed over.
In 1979, the new owner of the house discovered the trunk containing May’s books, toys, clothes, and writings hidden beneath the stairs of the house where she had lived, untouched since the day her bereaved mother had put it there. He gave the trunk and its contents to the museum. Through the articles in the trunk, we can put together a picture of what life was life for May and for all middle class girls living in Sacramento in the 1870s. May Woolsey is buried at the City Cemetery in Sacramento, but we would have never known about her life if this trunk had not been discovered! 83

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What are some of the benefits of using artifacts (like the one’s found in May’s trunk) to teach our visitors?

What artifacts in May’s trunk can help teach us about Sacramento’s children in the 1870s?

What objects could we use from today’s children that might help people in the future learn about them?
Dunlap Gallery

Dunlap’s was a popular restaurant that served the Sacramento area for 38 years, from 1930 to 1968. The restaurant was frequented by Northern Californians, visitors to the area, as well as local Sacramentans. Easily recognized by its pink exterior, the Oak Park dining room was located in the Dunlap family home at 4322 Cypress Street (now 4th Avenue).

Born in 1884, George Dunlap began working for the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1906, where he got his start in the food business as a chef in the dining car. After working for the railroad for many years, George left in the 1920s to work for himself as the owner and operator of dining cars on the Sacramento Northern Railroad. At the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, the uncertainty of the job market caused George’s wife, Annie Louise, to suggest that the family convert the first floor of their Sacramento home into a dining room. The dining room, run by George, Annie Louise, and their daughters Audrey and Doris, become famed for its fine food, excellent service, and homey atmosphere.

Dunlap’s never used a menu, and most of the diners knew the entrees by heart. If someone needed assistance, daughter Audrey Dunlap would announce the menu: Chicken, fried or smothered; Baked Ham, served with candied yams; T-bone Steak, served with a pin-wheel fried potato. All orders were served with a fritter on the plate and a side dish of green vegetables. Meals were always served in the following manner: soup, salad, the entrée, and dessert. Typical desserts included Bavarian Crème, Lemon Icebox Cake, and Angel Food Supreme.

The restaurant closed in 1968 shortly before the death of Annie Louise Dunlap, but remains an important part of Sacramento’s history. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.84

How does the Dunlap gallery help us teach about diversity in Sacramento?

How would this restaurant measure up to restaurants today?

How might you use a restaurant/restaurant objects to teach our visitors about Sacramento’s history?
Native Americans in the Sacramento Region

Native people made the Sacramento region their home for more than 2500 years before the first Europeans arrived. The native cultures, known as the Nisenan, Miwok and Maidu, enjoyed a secure and prosperous life based on their skills in utilizing the region’s natural abundance. Each village was a separate community within its own territory, independent from its neighbors in government and social affairs. Their economy was diversified and adjusted to an annual seasonal cycle of productive events in nature. By fishing, hunting and gathering natural food plants, each village community harvested what was abundant in each season.

Most aspects of daily life were divided into distinct male and female roles. The women gathered the food and prepared it, while the men did the hunting. Women gathered items like acorns, which were a staple for the native diet in this region. Preparing acorns, which are bitter, was a time consuming task. The steps for preparing them were numerous: gathering, drying, pounding, sifting, winnowing, sifting, leaching, cooking, and of course, finally eating. The men hunted animals like deer, elk, rabbits, waterfowl, and salmon.

Aside from gathering and hunting, men and women also had different roles around the community. The women were responsible for the household, which included engaging in the highly developed craft of basketry. Women made intricate tools and baskets by weaving; willow was the most popular material, but baskets were also made from bracken fern root, redbud, and sedge root. Men, on the other hand, were responsible for conducting trade with other groups and supervising the community’s spiritual and ceremonial affairs. Social and
ceremonial events brought together people from separate communities to renew friendships, trade, exchange news, and play games and gamble to preserve traditions while reaffirming cultural ties.

The impact of contact with western culture (European settlers, etc.) was physical as well as cultural for the Native American peoples not only in the Sacramento region but all over Northern America. White settlers began trading with the native peoples, which forever changed the native trading patterns. The native peoples now relied on goods like cloth, metal knives, firearms, liquor, steel traps, sugar, and tobacco that were not a part of their societies pre-contact. Additionally, epidemics of newly introduced diseases into the Sacramento Valley decimated the local indigenous peoples. In the most extreme episode, 10,000-20,000 died of malaria during the summer of 1833. This epidemic forced the abandonment of numerous native villages. Many of the native tribes were weakened and unable to provide for themselves, and many became susceptible to the enticing offers made by Anglo and European settlers who offered a small measure of security to the surviving people through indentured service or employment at low wages. Finally, the California landscape changed with the contact of white settlers. White settlers began to cultivate the land for both crops and build cities to live in, using the land in a way that the native peoples of California did not. Whereas most native peoples had lived in tune with the natural landscape – taking only what they needed to survive– the white settlers exploited the landscape for profit. The cultures of the native peoples in the Sacramento region were forever changed by contact with white settlers, and it is important for museums like the Sacramento History Museum to help preserve native cultures.  

How can teaching about the Native American tribes of the Sacramento region help us to learn about our region’s history?

How can the baskets on display help us to learn about the Native American tribes?

How can we compare/contrast the native cultures to the people living in the Sacramento region today?
World War II

The Second World War deeply stirred community feelings and community activity. In the military services, Sacramento men and women traveled and saw action in every part of the war. Their experiences, filtered home in Victory mail (or V-mail) letters under the sharp eyes of military censors, filled parents and friends with pride.

On the home front, support for the war effort became the leading theme in community life. Food rationing, gas rationing, and the rationing of scarce materials such as automobile tires and shoes were only the beginning. Sacramentans joined in campaigns to sell War Bonds, collect scrap iron, grow victory gardens, and knit wool socks for service men. They organized a civil defense system, covered their windows at night with blackout curtains, and planned menus around meatless Thursdays.

McClellan Field, a training facility for the Army Air Force; Mather Field, an Air Corps repair depot; and after 1943, the Army’s Sacramento Supply Depot gave the region its most direct role in the war effort. Many people came to the Sacramento area from other parts of the United States to work in the war industry and on the military bases. Military payroll boosed the area’s economy, and the military people added to the variety of Sacramento’s cultural life.86

Japanese Internment

The Japanese community of the Sacramento area was greatly affected by the war. When the Japanese began immigrating to the United States in the 1880s, anti-Asian prejudice dating from the Chinese immigration of the 1850s greeted them. Nevertheless, by the turn of the century, about 25,000 ethnic Japanese lived in California. As early as 1905, efforts were underway to extend the Chinese Exclusion Act to include the Japanese. The Gentleman’s Agreement, signed in 1908, was a compromise which President Theodore Roosevelt negotiated with Japan in order to reduce the number of passports issued to laborers in exchange for not segregating ethnic Japanese from American children in California schools.

On December 7, 1941, Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor caused the United States to declare war. When war was declared, hundreds of thousands of Axis aliens, most of whom were of Japanese descent, were living on the West Coast. Because of the anger engendered by Japan’s surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and a general racial and economic animosity directed towards Americans of Japanese descent, there was a demand for the forced removal of these people from the coastal areas. Considered possible accomplices in Pearl Harbor, all the Hawaiian residents of Japanese descent in Hawaii were rounded up and interrogated. Inflammatory journalism, pressure groups, politicians, and the US Army fueled hysteria on the West Coast.

President Roosevelt, under political and military pressure, signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942, authorizing the placement of more than 110,000 Japanese Americans in internment camps in the interior of
the United States. One reason given for the removal of them to the interior was to prevent possible sabotage of defense industries and various installations in the West Coast. In Sacramento, residents of Japanese descent were notified on February 19, 1942 were given only seven days to report for detention.

Different types of facilities were created for the evacuation of the Japanese American community: assembly centers, relocation centers, and internment camps.

Japanese Americans suffered greatly. The resettlement communities that they thought they were being sent to turned out to be prisons. They lost their homes and businesses. Soon after the internment plan was implemented, thousands of internees were granted leave to join the labor force or to work as farm laborers, since many had farmed before the war. Many Japanese American sons lost their lives fighting for the same country that was imprisoning their families.

On December 17, 1944, President Roosevelt announced the revocation of Executive Order 9066, thus assuring the return of the evacuees to the West Coast within six months. The internees were allowed to move home beginning in January 1945. Many had to start all over because they had been forced to sell most of their assets before they were sent to the internment camps. The American Civil Liberties Union has called this forced evacuation “the worst single wholesale violation of civil rights of American citizens in our history.”

On August 10, 1988, after the internees had petitioned the US government for forty years, Congress passed Public Law 100-383. The legislation acknowledges that the interment was unjust, apologizes for the relocation and
internment of citizens and permanent resident aliens of Japanese descent
during World War II. Half of those 60,000 imprisoned had died before the bill
was signed into law.\textsuperscript{87}

Notes:________________________________________________________
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\textsuperscript{87} Adapted from adult volunteer docent handbook for the Student Docent Program. “Community Gallery,”
Docent Manual, 81-3.
Agriculture Galley

People flocked to California in the mid-19th Century to find gold, but many of them ended up staying to try their hands at a entirely different kind of work – agriculture. Farmers found that the land and environment in California yielded successful crops, and there was money to be made in cultivating California’s land. The majority of California’s farmers began in wheat production, but as technology improved and more farmers came to the region, farmers tended to focus on fruit and vegetable crops. These crops were more labor and time intensive, but such crop specialization made it possible for the region’s farm operators to survive and prosper in a highly competitive agricultural economy.

At first, Sacramento Valley crops went to market in wagons, and were sent to Sacramento, Stockton, and San Francisco on sailing ships and steamships. The opening of the railroad made it cheaper to bring orchard and field crops to urban centers for packing, processing, and canning, thus giving Sacramento a leading place in the emerging food industry. Railroads also carried the region’s fruits, vegetables, and canned goods for national distribution. After refrigerated cars came into use during the 1880s, even the more perishable goods could reach urban consumers in the Midwest and East. In 1914, the completion of the Panama Canal greatly shortened the sea voyage to the East Coast, Europe, and Africa. Shiploads of the region’s canned goods and citrus fruits, including many crates
of Sacramento area-grown oranges, entered a world-wide market. Local labels could be found on the grocery store shelves of five continents.

When men and women first started cultivating food, all crops were cultured and harvested by human muscle. As the centuries passed, animal labor relieved humans of the most strenuous chores. The development of metals such as copper, bronze, iron, and steel tools were fashioned to reduce the human effort and improved crop production capacity. California companies like Best and Holt developed innovative steamers that helped farmers to efficiently work the land. With changes in agricultural technology, humankind has been freed from being just hunters and/or gatherers to a higher standard of living along with having more time for social and technological development. In 1855 approximately 80 percent of the population of the United States lived on farms; by 1963 more than 85 percent lived in urban centers. Changes in farming technology have had a tremendous impact not only on the way people farmed, but also on societal development.

Most people did not come out of the Gold Rush wealthy; in fact, many were either too poor or too embarrassed to return home after the Gold Rush. However, there was wealth to be made in the newly developing agricultural industry in California. Californians harvested all types of grains, fruits, and vegetables, and put great time and effort into improving agricultural technology. Today California still produces many of the crops consumed by people all across the United States.88

How did/does agriculture influence California’s history?

How can the kitchen exhibit be used to teach about California’s agricultural history?

Why might we teach that the “real gold” in California was agriculture?
Sacramento History Museum Scavenger Hunt

BONUS question: Which of the delectable foods of the Dining Room would you order? Draw a delicious picture of it here.

1st floor: exhibits, museum store
2nd floor: concerts, wine tastings
3rd floor: exhibits

NOW, take the stairs back down to the ground floor, and you will find...

The Adjutant Gallery

Think it's a fruit or vegetable that you've never seen? Can you find it on a California menu or in the gallery?

What is the price on its label?

NEXT: Look up on the ceiling to see painted moving along on a mechanical causing line.

Name two things in the 1908 kitchen that you like something in your kitchen at home.

BONUS question: Is there an object in the 1908 kitchen that you've never seen before? Why do you think that was used for?

NOW, walk back toward the front entry of the Museum. To the right of the entrance, you will see...

Raising the Dams

Sacramento's history contains floods, floods, and more floods! What were two of the early methods that Sacramento used to hold back the water?

WHAT was the major building project that Sacramento finally turned to prevent its downtown flood, house, and government buildings from being flooded?

NOW, you have nearly completed your self-guided Museum Adventure.

Enjoy your time exploring the Sacramento History Museum Adventure.

These pages from your Museum Adventure are yours to hang on to forever and share with your friends and family. Thank you for your visit! Please come again!

Welcome to the...
APPENDIX D
Student Docent Evaluation

Student Docent Training Survey
Fall 2011

1. I was able to easily get information about the Student Docent Program at the Sacramento History Museum.
   □ Agree completely
   □ Agree somewhat
   □ Disagree somewhat
   □ Disagree completely

2. I clearly understand my role as a Student Docent at the Sacramento History Museum.
   □ Agree completely
   □ Agree somewhat
   □ Disagree somewhat
   □ Disagree completely

3. I felt that training was _____ to adequately learn the material and what was expected of me as a Student Docent.
   □ Too much time
   □ Just the right length of time
   □ A little too short
   □ Way too short

4. I thought that the Student Docent Handbook contained _____.
   □ Too much information
   □ Just enough information
   □ Too little information

5. I thought that the museum scavenger hunt was a useful way to learn about the Sacramento History Museum.
   □ Agree completely
   □ Agree somewhat
   □ Disagree somewhat
   □ Disagree completely
6. I felt that the walking tour of Old Sacramento was useful.
   - Agree completely.
   - Agree somewhat.
   - Disagree somewhat.
   - Disagree completely.
   - Did not go on walking tour.

7. I felt that meeting with the Adult Docents was useful.
   - Agree completely.
   - Agree somewhat.
   - Disagree somewhat.
   - Disagree completely.

8. I know who to contact at the museum if I have a question or concern.
   - Agree completely.
   - Agree somewhat.
   - Disagree somewhat.
   - Disagree completely.

9. I have volunteered at the museum since I completed Student Docent Training.
   - Yes
   - No

10. Please add any other comments that you may have about the Student Docent Program here.
    
    [Text Area]
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