

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer at Belle Grove Plantation.

Belle Grove is a great place to learn about Shenandoah Valley History, meet new people, and serve the local community all while having fun! Located just south of Middletown, Virginia near the intersection of I-81 and I-66, Belle Grove Plantation is both a National and Virginia Historic Landmark and a Property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It is also a non-profit partner in the Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park.

Constructed between 1794 and 1797, the Manor House boasts authentic Jeffersonian architecture, an impressive decorative arts collection and sweeping views of the Blue Ridge, Allegheny and Massanutten Mountains. The plantation holds popular annual events and is open for daily touring from late March through October, weekends in November, and on selected days in December for Christmas tours.

Being a docent allows you to meet people from all areas of the United States and the world, and to focus on the varied interests of these visitors. Docents also enjoy potluck socials, attend lectures, and participate in occasional bus trips to historic sites.

Elaine Davis, Docent Emeritus

What are the Benefits of Belonging to Belle Grove's Docent Guild and Service League?

1. The opportunity to become a member of Belle Grove and receive all of its membership privileges.
2. A 20% discount on all non-consignment items in the gift shop.
3. Monthly membership newsletter to keep you informed of opportunities and events.
4. Complimentary admission to events when you give a few hours of volunteer time.
5. Passes to bring guests to visit Belle Grove during regular touring hours.
6. Invitations to participate in all Belle Grove lectures and workshops, and meetings and events.
7. The chance to meet new people, be an integral part of Belle Grove's family, provide meaningful community service to Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley, and to participate in programs and trips to learn about history, archaeology, the decorative arts, and preservation.
8. The satisfaction of knowing you are providing an extra measure of support to Belle Grove through your generous gifts of time, energy and special expertise.

336 Belle Grove Road
P.O. Box 537
Middletown, VA 22645
(540) 869-2028
info@bellegrove.org
www.bellegrove.org



BELLE GROVE
PLANTATION



**Volunteering at
Belle Grove:
Docent Guild
& Service
League**

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Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Birthdate _____ (month/day only)

Emergency Contact:

Name _____

Phone _____

What is the best way to contact you?

by phone by cell phone by email

Please indicate your all areas of interest:

- Docent
- Adult Tour Group Guide
- School Tour Group Guide
- Admissions Desk
- Maintenance Tasks
- Gardener/Flower Arranger
- Helping out with special events

Days you would most like to volunteer:

- Sunday Thursday
- Monday Friday
- Tuesday Saturday
- Wednesday

Please detach this form and mail to:

Belle Grove Plantation

P.O. Box 537, Middletown, VA 22645

Belle Grove's Docent Guild & Service League



What is a Docent?

According to Noah Webster, the word "docent" comes from the Latin *docui* (to teach, instruct, informs, show and tell). Belle Grove's Docents are the ambassadors who welcome visitors from across America and throughout the world. They conduct tours of the Manor House to interpret Belle Grove's heritage and bring to life its unique history through its architecture, decorative objects, family stories, preservation efforts, and research.

Why are Docents important to Belle Grove?

Belle Grove's docents are its major link with both the local community and visitors. Their time, energy and interest support the work of the staff and Board of Directors to make Belle Grove's house a home and its story a compelling educational experience for all who visit.

Who qualifies as a Docent?

Docent Guild volunteers pledge to participate in an initial training program, attend annual educational sessions, and give an average of nine hours per month.



What is a Service League Volunteer?

Service League volunteers work as house sitters, office and maintenance volunteers, workers for special events, and a host of other necessary jobs that help keep Belle Grove thriving. The Service League welcomes visitors and are often the first person a guest meets at Belle Grove, at the Admission's Desk, at an information booth, or being a host in a room of the Manor House during special events ("house-sitting"). Their "behind-the-scenes" work helps to bring to life Belle Grove's heritage and history and maintain the smooth operation of the museum and its programs.

Why are Service League Volunteers Important to Belle Grove?

Belle Grove's Service League Volunteers are vital to the overall work of the museum. Their special skills and interests enhance the work of the docents, and Belle Grove's staff, and the Board of Directors.

Who Qualifies as a Service League Volunteer?

Service League volunteers pledge to attend initial and annual training sessions, and to give an average of nine hours per month working in the museum offices, admissions area, shop, or garden, helping with maintenance, or assisting with special events.



More Frequently Asked Questions!

What are the different types of volunteer positions? There are a wide variety of volunteer positions here at Belle Grove. They range from Docent, Tour Group Guides, Admissions Desk or helping out in the garden, helping with an afternoon tea, help with maintenance, help with special events and many more.

What are the regular hours at Belle Grove? The 1797 Manor House is open Monday thru Saturday from 10am until 4pm and Sunday 1pm until 5pm, mid-March thru October. In November we are only open on the weekends. In December the Manor House is decorated for the holidays and we re-open for regular daily hours.

What are the shifts that the volunteers cover? Monday thru Saturday the Front Desk and Docent shifts are 10am until 1pm or 1pm until 4pm. On Sunday the shift is 1pm until 5pm, a Front Desk volunteer and two docents that work together.

How do you schedule volunteer shifts at Belle Grove? One big advantage to volunteering at Belle Grove is that you choose when you want to work. For example, you don't have to obligate yourself to be here every Tuesday for the first shift. You fill in the dates on the master calendar that work for you. It could be only twice a month or as often as twice a week. You might want to only work on the weekends, whatever fits your lifestyle.

Am I required to wear a costume? No, costumes are not required. Our volunteers are asked to wear smart casual attire. There are opportunities to dress in period costume if you desire.

What kind of Docent training is involved? You will receive a book and materials about Belle Grove to study. Training is done at your own pace with the materials that are provided. After you have reviewed the materials you would "shadow" a current volunteer. We recommend that you follow different volunteers to get an idea of how tours are conducted. When you are ready, you are encouraged to step in and conduct part of the tour yourself. We also provide you with "crib cards" to help refresh your memory when you first start out. Someone is always available if you have any questions.

If you are interested...

Call us at 540-869-2028, email info@bellegrove.org or complete the contact and interests form and return it to us. We look forward to meeting you!