



## **Blacksmith Volunteer Program Overview**

**2025**

## Welcome to Storrowton Village Museum

In 1926, Helen Osborne Storrow was decorating a temporary structure to depict an early American kitchen during the annual fair (now known as The Big E). An active trustee of the Eastern States Exposition and chairwoman of the Home Department, she dreamed of moving the handicraft exhibit to an actual home on site – a building with its own kitchen!

Storrow discussed the possibility with friends and eventually was introduced to Arthur Gilbert, Commissioner of Agriculture for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, who told her about his 18th century summer home. She purchased the farmstead for \$200 and moved it from West Brookfield, Massachusetts, in 1927. After that, additional antique buildings were purchased, dismantled, and reconstructed here to create The Old New England Village. By 1930 nine historic buildings were moved to the Eastern States Exposition property and the area was renamed Storrowton Village Museum.

Today, Storrowton Village Museum offers hands-on educational programs and guided tours to share the history and traditions of New England with audiences of all ages. Our programs could not be successful without the support of volunteers and volunteer trade demonstrators.

About every two years Storrowton Village Museum invites a new class of Blacksmiths to join our volunteer team to learn the artistry, trade, and historic significance of blacksmithing. Interested volunteers must be a minimum of 18 years of age (if under 18, please see information about Teen Leadership Experience at [www.StorrowtonVillage.com](http://www.StorrowtonVillage.com)), must be willing to talk and interact with the public, as well as be comfortable dressing in 19<sup>th</sup> century costume, and be able to follow safety guidelines. Additionally, new volunteers must be able to meet the expectations listed in the time commitment section below. This is a two-year program, and blacksmiths are encouraged to continue to volunteer with us after their two-year program commitment.

There are many opportunities for our volunteers throughout the year to be involved in a variety of aspects of our museum. If you have interests outside of blacksmithing, we invite volunteers to participate in gardening, Yuletide decorating, facilitating guided museum tours, and proposing new ideas for programming and events. We are family-friendly and invite you to engage your entire family with our programming. A full list of opportunities is shared with volunteers at the start of the calendar year and include such incentives as free and discounted admission to Village events for you and your family/friends, volunteer-only workshops, social events with other volunteers, free admission to all 17 days of the fair, and much more! SVM proudly has a crew of 65+ volunteers whom our museum could not function without!

Thank you for your interest in Storrowton Village Museum and our blacksmithing program!



Jessica K. Fontaine  
Director of Storrowton Village Museum

## **YEAR ONE**

### ***Is there a cost to participate?***

Participation is \$500 for the year; this covers basic supplies, instructor fees and secures a commitment to the experience; this equates to approximately \$19 per two-hour class. We are able to offer this course at a *significantly* discounted rate, because it is also supplemented by your volunteer time. Failure to complete payments will result in suspension from class participation and could ultimately result in removal from the program. Payments are non-refundable.

<b>2025 Fee Schedule</b>		
Payment 1 Due	Upon acceptance to the program	\$100
Payment 2 Due	April 1	\$100
Payment 3 Due	May 6	\$100
Payment 4 Due	June 3	\$100
Payment 5 Due	October 7	\$100
Total:		\$500

### ***What is the time commitment?***

- Regular attendance in classes (approximately 20 classes March – mid-August, 6 classes October – mid-November) – classes for first- and second-year students are on Tuesdays from 7-9pm
- Participation in at least one special event, program or tour annually
- Volunteer for a minimum of 6 shifts during The Big E

### ***What will you learn?***

In your first year you will learn the basics of blacksmithing (if no experience), fire safety and safety within our shop, demonstration techniques and working with the public, historical information about the Clark Blacksmith Shop and Storrowton Village Museum.

Once you have mastered basic skills you will learn additional skills and begin working on projects for the Village (either for consumer purposes in our retail areas or tools/fixtures to enhance our programming). You will be given access to a variety of online resources and if there are specific techniques you are interested in learning you'll have an opportunity to request instruction in those areas.

### ***When will I begin volunteering? What is the requirement outside of classes?***

All volunteers must commit to six shifts during the Big E (at minimum). Shifts are daily during the 17 days of the fair and blacksmith volunteers work together to ensure all shifts are filled. Shifts are 10am – 2pm, 2pm-6pm, and 6pm-9pm.

First-year program blacksmiths must volunteer for at least one additional shift outside the Big E and numerous options are available – school field trip facilitation (various weekdays in during the academic year), guided tour demonstrations (varies throughout the year), summer youth program facilitation (occurs the last week of July and first week of August), Blacksmith Day (first Saturday in November), and Yuletide (early December). Shifts are at a variety of times, weekdays and weekends, depending on the program or event.

You will be issued a period costume prior to your first volunteer shift. Additional training for specific programs and events will also be provided.

## **YEAR TWO**

### ***Is there a cost to participate? What is the time commitment?***

No! There is no longer tuition after your first year. In your second year the commitment remains the same, but the fees are waived.

- Regular attendance in classes (approximately 20 classes March – mid-August, 6 classes October – mid-November) – classes for first and second year students are on Tuesdays from 7-9pm
- Participation in at least one special event, program or tour annually
- Volunteer for a minimum of 6 shifts during The Big E

### ***What does second-year learning look like?***

Your second-year learning will continue to be driven by the experience you desire to have. Some smiths become so engrossed in the program that they decide to build their own home forges and work on their skills independently while others focus on mastery of the basics and historical interpretation solely during their Tuesday classes. Class projects will continue to be utilized to enhance skills and create projects supportive of Village needs.

## **YEAR THREE AND BEYOND**

### ***I've completed the program, now what?***

After you've completed your two-year commitment, we'd love to have you continue to volunteer with us! You will be shifted out of Tuesday classes so we can have a new class of blacksmiths begin, however you'll then be able to continue to attend drop-in classes on Wednesdays from 7-9pm. There is no obligation to attend classes regularly, however if you attend any drop-in classes throughout the year you must commit to continuing to volunteer for at least 6 shifts during the Big E.

Some blacksmiths opt to not attend classes at all after their second year, but remain on our list to call upon to fill Big E shifts as needed – refresher classes and training August required for all Big E volunteers. Our drop-in blacksmiths alternate between class projects to support the Village and creating their own items (must purchase your own stock).

## **TO APPLY**

Fill out an application online. Museum Director, Jessica K. Fontaine will follow-up to discuss the commitment (typically via an in-person or Zoom meeting) and will refer you to our Master Blacksmith to see if it would be a good fit. Once approved by the Director and Master Blacksmith, you will complete a participation waiver and submit your first tuition payment; the Master Blacksmith will advise on when to begin attending classes (weather dependent).

To apply fill out the form at [www.storrowtonvillage.com/volunteer](http://www.storrowtonvillage.com/volunteer). Applications are open until filled. There are 6 new student spots available for 2025.

*Sampling of Village Blacksmith Projects*

