

LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Lower East Side Tenement Museum

Welcome to the **Lower East Side Tenement Museum–(LESTM) Educator Training Program**. You will find the job of an educator to be both challenging and rewarding. We are pleased that you have joined our team and are committed to raising awareness of the LESTM its mission and programs. The purpose of the LESTM Educator Manual is to provide you with general information about the museum and to prepare you for your work as an educator.

Consider this Manual a text book that will accompany the monthly training meetings that each educator is required to attend every third Wednesday of the month. The monthly training meetings will feature speakers, every other month, that will present information that educators will be evaluated on during one of the twice a year evaluations. On the months that there will be no speakers, we will have workshops that will incorporate practical applications of the topic addressed by the speaker. There will also be time for educators to formally communicate with the education department and each meeting will feature a section from the educator manual to review and tips about group management. Each meeting will feature minutes that will be published in the educator newsletter. Meetings will begin promptly at 6pm and end at 7pm. Each session is open to the public and Educators will be paid for one hour.

Our Mission is:

“To promote tolerance and historical perspective through the presentation and interpretation of the variety of immigrant and migrant experiences on Manhattan’s lower Eastside, a gateway to America.”

Significance of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum

Located in the heart of Manhattan’s Lower East Side, which has been an immigrant portal for almost 200 years, the Museum’s tenement at 97 Orchard Street was home to an estimated 7,000 immigrants from more than 20 countries between the years 1863 and 1935. In 1998, concluding that it was the best site in the United States from which to interpret the urban, working class, immigrant experience, President Clinton and Congress designated the Museum a National Historic Area affiliated with the National Park Service, twinning the Museum with the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. That same year, the Museum’s humble tenement building joined the ranks of the homes of James Madison, Woodrow Wilson, and Frank Lloyd Wright to become the 20th featured property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In 2001, the Museum hosted over 83,000 public and group tour visitors, representing all 50 states and over 45 different countries, marking a 100% growth in attendance in a period of four years.

EDUCATION AT THE LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM

The role of education at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum

Education is the cornerstone of the Tenement Museum. Our educational philosophy and techniques are specially designed to activate history as a resource for considering the present, helping people to confront difficult issues, and engage people in dialogue with each other around these issues. These are extremely challenging tasks, ones that not many Museums have taken on. These programs set the standards for a new international model for museums, and a new role for historic sites in civic life.

The core visitor experience is a guided tour of 97 Orchard Street lead by a trained educator. The educator is the embodiment of the museum's commitment to a meaningful educational experience. The education programs are the most important places where the Museum carries out its educational philosophy.

LESTM Educational Philosophy

- **All visitors are learners-** All visitors to the Tenement Museum are capable of learning and in turn, all persons who lead tours are educators.
- **All learners should be respected-** All learning should be respectful to all learning styles, backgrounds, learning levels and to the individual.
- **All learning is centered around the learner-** All learning is based on a constructivist learning approach. *Constructivism is an educational theory that emphasizes the learner's ability to make their own meaning out of knowledge.*
- **All learning supports the mission of the museum-** Visitors should be given the opportunity to hear multiple perspectives on historical and contemporary experiences and issues, and should be given the opportunity to voice multiple perspectives and have those perspectives be respected by the educator and other visitors.

The Role of the Educator at LESTM

Educators present LESTM to the visiting public, providing factual, engaging information to help the visitor gain a reasonable understanding of the history of 97 Orchard Street, and an awareness of the Tenement Museum, its mission and programs. The role of the educator is to further the mission of LESTM through creating a meaningful experience for the average 90,000 visitors each year. Educators work frontline as staff, always being mindful of the ongoing safety of visitors, the many artifacts on exhibit, and the building itself at 97 Orchard Street. You are asked to continue your efforts in learning by using this resource and various other materials all with the aim of providing the best possible experience to the visitor.

Responsibilities of a Lower Eastside Tenement Museum Educator

- To deliver quality tours and educational programs
- To be creative and resourceful in presenting programs
- To be respectful and courteous with all visitors
- To provide historical perspective on contemporary issues and engage visitors in dialogue around them.
- Communicating directly with the Museum visitors: the general public. Maintaining an attitude of respect for all visitors, regardless of sex, age, race, or physical and/or intellectual abilities. Service to the visitor is the docent's priority function.
- Interpreting the Museum's Tenement to visitors in a clear, personable and knowledgeable manner. The information provided to the visitor should be accurate, as well as convey an appreciation of 97 Orchard Street's historical, social and architectural significance.
- Representing the LESTM to visitors, informing them of the Museum's goals, programs and needs for financial assistance and selling memberships.
- Protecting the site, building and the museum's collection.
- Ensuring the safety of the visiting public. Educators should respond calmly and professionally to emergencies.
- Assisting with special programs including but not limited to, special events, often held on evenings and weekends.
- Participating actively in guide training or enhancement programs in order to perfect communication and interpretation skills, expand their knowledge of the history of the site, its architecture and the history of its former residents and its current collection.
- Educators are required to update or modify their tours as new or relevant information becomes available.
- Educators must participate in periodic performance reviews. [See Evaluation Sheet & Reference sheet](#)
- Educators must respect and function at all times within the policies of the museum.

Who is an educator at the Tenement Museum?

- A person who uses inquiry-based learning to help the learner discover their fullest potential, add to pre-existing knowledge, and apply it to their understanding of the world. Inquiry based learning is learning that emphasizes the learner's ability to make meaning out of knowledge through asking questions designed to engage the learners pre existent knowledge.
- A person who uses a predetermined learning structure, i.e. lesson plans.
- Is an effective team player.
- A person who has the ability to be articulate, enthusiastic and engaging.

- A person who has the ability to facilitate meaningful group discussion on sometimes sensitive issues, providing and respecting multiple perspectives
- A person who has the ability to effectively manage groups of all sizes.
- A person who is sensitive to the educational needs of all groups.
- Most importantly, any good educator is an effective storyteller. Story telling is an important and effective way of communicating concepts and ideas in an entertaining and personal way. Every educator should be able to connect with the visitor, through the stories of the families that lived in the tenements, in a way that makes the visitor feel comfortable in sharing their own opinions and experiences.
- All educators must have at least a high school degree, GED, or relevant experience.

What makes a good storyteller at the Tenement Museum?

- We begin with a comprehensive and definite beginning. Like stories, our programs have a definitive beginning, middle and end. All educators should begin by explaining the subject matter and its goals clearly. They should then move through the process of presenting the subject matter, emphasizing those goals and conclude with the goals completed at the end.
- We interact with audiences in positive ways. We do this by respecting all views that are expressed and treating each learner with respect.
- We encourage participation and feedback through active dialogue
- We discuss change over time from multiple perspectives and help visitors to make their own conclusions about the past.
- We tell stories that provide perspective on contemporary issues

All of the stories that are interpreted in the museum are important not only to us as educators, but are also important to the visitor. The stories are intended to interpret the past in a way that makes that audiences feel connected to it. The key to any good story is to provide the facts and let each person make their own meaning out of the story. A successful tour is one in which the audience has been fully engaged through dialogue. The educator is the main link between the subject matter and the visitor, so it is important the story be told in a way that encourages active learning.

How the Museum Evaluates its Programs

With each program, there are informal surveys that participants can fill out. Each survey is reviewed by the museum to continuously improve our programs with the visitors needs in mind. Aside from program evaluations, each educator is required to be evaluated twice a year in the fall and in the spring to insure the quality of the tours. The evaluation is conducted by members of the Museum's program team and they are based on the following criteria:

- Group management
- Storytelling (Voice, Appearance, Transitions, etc)
- Grasp of information (Accuracy and consistency of information)
- Civic engagement goals (Was it engaging? Were the objectives met?)

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM

(Also see [Employee Handbook and Disaster Plan](#))

- All Educators work under the direct supervision of the **Visitor Services Coordinator, Rebecca Hinde** or on the weekends, the appropriate weekend coordinator. Respect and flexibility is required in all relationships with peers and staff.
- The interpretation of the tenement to visitors must be of the highest quality possible. The visitor must be provided with an enjoyable educational experience.
- Educators are responsible for the security of the museum's historic resources (the building, collection and grounds). Visitor access is important, but must in no way compromise or endanger the building or collection.
- Arrive on time for all assignments. Educators must arrive no later than 15 minutes before the scheduled time of the program. Consistent late arrival is not acceptable and is grounds for dismissal.
- Educators must sign in upon arrival at 90 Orchard Street. Sign in forms are provided for this purpose behind the counter in 90 Orchard Street. Educators will be given a key to 97 Orchard Street upon signing in. At the end of the day all educators must sign out and return keys to 90 Orchard Street.
- Educators must leave the tour route in shape for the next tour. This includes closing doors, putting handouts and folding chairs back in their proper place.
- Educators are required to lead all tours as assigned. If the educator cannot fulfill an assignment he/she is responsible for finding a substitute educator. (A list of all Educators and their information can be found at 90 Orchard Street) The educator must notify their supervisor of the date and time of substitution and the substitute's name. If the educator cannot find a substitute their supervisor should be alerted immediately.
- Educators are required to attend all educator training programs available every month. If the educator cannot make these programs their supervisor should be alerted immediately. If the educator misses more than three programs within one fiscal year, that person may be removed from the schedule.
- The visitor services coordinator should be notified of any long-term changes in personal commitment or status, which will affect the ability to meet assignments.
- While there are exceptions, every educator is expected to give tour that is one hour in length. Educators are expected to start and end all tours on time. If the educator has not been told before hand to end the tour later, then it should be assumed that the tour should end at the scheduled ending time.

- Staff, volunteers, and interns must be neat and sober, reflecting a respect for the visitor and the families whose stories we tell. They must also make sure not to wear shorts, blue jeans, sneakers, flip flops, t-shirts, military garb, revealing clothing, ball caps, sunglasses, or clothing bearing large or excessive slogans, advertisements or commentary.
- The room in 97 Orchard Street that is right across the hall from “Victoria’s” apartment, along with the front kitchen (the room that is across from the white classroom), is available for educators to take breaks and hang out in. There is a refrigerator, sink and other things for your comfort. Please remember to clean up after you have used the space. To access the space, you should use your key to go into the basement and through the back to access the kitchen from the back door entrance. Should you not choose to use the space, please remember that if you are in 90, you should help out the Visitor Center staff by greeting visitors and assisting with their questions.
- All educators are to make sure that the front and back doors are closed and locked after you have used them

OPERATIONS

In an effort to introduce you to the system of governance at the museum and to familiarize you with the museum staff, the following section provides an organized list of names, job titles and designated responsibilities.

Board of Trustees

Chartered by the New York State Board of Regents, the Museum is governed by a board of 21 trustees, elected for a three-year term, renewable once. After two terms, a trustee may be reelected following a year off the board. Trustees are selected for their ability to contribute specific skills, networks and funds to the Museum and for their willingness and ability to connect the Museum to diverse constituencies whose history the Museum addresses. Both of New York's senators and the district's Congressional representative are honorary members of the Museum's board, as are its state senator and its city council member.

The role of the board is to "act on committee recommendations; discuss and set Museum policies, support the work of the Museum by making contributions and encouraging others to make contributions." Board meetings are held quarterly. Officers are: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

Each trustee is expected to:

- Contribute (or facilitate, through corporate contacts or friends) a minimum of \$5,000.00 to the Museum's annual fund.
- Attend all meetings.
- Introduce the Museum to at least one major donor a year.
- Attend at least one Museum program during the year.

Staff

The Museum was founded and currently directed by **President, Ruth Abram**.

The full time staff is divided into three "teams":

Program Development, PR & Marketing and Administration.

Administration

- Senior Vice President, Renee Epps
- Executive Assistant, Marcie Gitlin
- Capital Campaign Manager, Jim Thesing
- Operations Manager, Britta Graf
- Financial/Administrative Manager, Georgina Acevedo
- Assistant for Public Affairs, Properties & Administration, Harry Swartzman
- Accountant, Joe Gallo
- Auditor, David Grant & Grant Grossman Fixier

- Office Manager, Frances Pena
- Administrative Assistant, Peter Tran
- Curatorial Maintenance, Secundina Santana
- Maintenance, Piotr Maj
- Maintenance, Paciencia Lopez
- Maintenance, Andy Vargas
- Web Producer, Jeff Tancill
- Director of Enterprises, To be hired
- Associate Director of Retail Operations, Nicole Heater
- Shop Associates, John Davis, Amy DeSalvo & Jennifer Miller

Programs

- Vice President of Interpretation, Liz Sevchenko
- Program Associate, Lisa Chice
- Vice President of Collections and Education, Steve Long
- Education Coordinator, Jon West-Bey
- Visitor Services Coordinator, Rebecca Hinde
- Education Assistant, Maria Velez
- Immigrant Programs Coordinator, Maggie Russell-Ciardi
- Collections Manager, Natalie Moran

Public Affairs

- Vice President for Public Affairs, Katherine Snider
- Director of PR and Marketing, Alexandria Mann
- Group Marketing Coordinator, Meredith Taubkin
- PR & Marketing Associate, Benjamin Trimmier
- Group Scheduling Associate, Anissa Graham
- Director of Development, Amory Sharpe
- Development Coordinator, Bill Fink
- Development Assistant, Caron Pelletier
- Development & Membership Assistant, Anna Raddatz

The Tenement Museum also employs a fluctuating part-time staff of more than 20 people, and a volunteer network of more than 30, who act as educators on tenement tours. The Tenement Museum also has an ongoing partnership with the City College of New York's Museum Studies Master's Degree program. The first program of its kind, students enrolled the program participate in internships at the Tenement Museum, where they learn about the diverse urban environment.

Staff, volunteers, and interns associated with a team (Program Development, PR & Marketing, and Administrative) meet regularly to review goals and discuss progress. Team leaders are responsible for performance reviews, for members of

their respective teams and for being sure the team meets its goals. The Museum President meets with each team quarterly, sometimes more when necessary. The organizations goals and objectives are developed annually at carefully planned meetings. Once completed, they are presented to the trustees for adoption. The resulting, detailed document is used to measure progress at quarterly intervals. In the past the Museum staff has also participated in formal internal one on one interviews with a management consultant to help the Museum review and re-think its mission and goals.