



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Volunteers are the heart of Naper Settlement

April is National Volunteer Month and Naper Settlement is celebrating with a new exhibit that explores the contributions of volunteers from the Naperville Heritage Society's founding in 1969 to today.

Twelve volunteers started the Naperville Heritage Society in 1969 with the purpose of saving Naperville's history and historic buildings for future generations. The group moved its first building, St. John's Episcopal Church, in June 1970 to the future site of Naper Settlement. The church, built in 1864, was completely restored and renamed Century Memorial Chapel.

As buildings continued to be saved and moved onsite to create a museum village, now known as Naper Settlement, volunteers donned period clothing and talked about the history of the buildings and the community as the institution continued to grow. The junior volunteer program was started in the 1980s for children in grades 4-7, who wanted to share history with visitors, and it is still going strong.

Today, there are 1,200 volunteers who serve in a variety of roles including the board of directors representing the Naperville Heritage Society; members of the Naper Settlement Museum Board; building interpreters who staff the historic homes and businesses; volunteers who welcomed over 9,000 guests at special events; those who help with the preservation and conservation of our collection of over 60,000 objects; gardeners who help beautify the grounds; and our youngest volunteers known as junior interpreters. The new exhibit in the Heritage Gallery will highlight many of those roles. The exhibit will be on display until July 2016.

In 2015, volunteers contributed more than 35,000 hours of their time, which is the equivalent of 17 full-time employees.

"The success of our museum depends on our volunteers' passion for history and their dedication to the community," said Director of Organizational Resources Josh Chartier.

Naper Settlement has partnered with the White House to become a certifying organization for the President's Volunteer Service Awards, a national program

recognizing Americans who have demonstrated a sustained commitment to volunteer service. Naper Settlement recognized 39 individuals with an award this year.

The Presidential Volunteer Service Award recipients are Nancy King of the Weed Ladies, who received the Gold Award for volunteering 648 hours last year. Silver Category recipients include Lynn Rogala, Lydia Render, Alberta Kobialka and Cathi Schumacher of the Weed Ladies and Greg Merriam, Building Interpreter. The Bronze Category recipients include Margaret Strohl, Diane Carson, Diana Kasper, Lana Depcik, Janet Taylor, Valerie Solon, Sharon Wisinski, Kathy Gleason and Barbara Smart of the Weed Ladies; Margaret Mingione, History Connector; Deisi Silva, Organizational Resources; Debbie Beaty and Lee Quillinan, Curatorial; and Barbara Rimmer, Ruth and Charles Dow, William Smith and Barbara Diehl, Building Interpreters. The Bronze Category for teens and children includes Jessica Olson, Learning Experiences, Claire Svehla, Building Interpreter; Trinity Filut and Maddie Rambissoon, History Connectors; and Juniors Evan LeMaster, Genevieve LeMaster, Camille Ellebrecht, Kaylee King, Tristan Carlson, Sophie Newcomb, Allie Skelley, Alexandra Horwitz, Alyssa Mead, Isabella Gilstrap and Genna Boffa.

About Naper Settlement

Naper Settlement is a nationally accredited, award-winning outdoor museum set on 12 magnificent acres in the heart of Naperville, where history comes to play and community comes to connect. For more information, visit www.napersettlement.org or call (630) 420-6010.

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