

# Volunteer Policy

## Terramar Museum Bonaire



# 1. Introduction

Volunteers form an integral part of the museum. Their dedication to the museum's mission allows the organization to succeed. Through the museum's volunteer program, the involvement and participation of the inhabitants of Bonaire in its activities is increased.

This document contains Terramar Museum's volunteer policy. It outlines all relevant aspects regarding the museum's volunteer program and all guidelines that both the museum and volunteers should adhere to. It also contains a description of the means utilized to enable volunteers to carry out certain activities for the museum as well as the conditions under which they are expected to do so. By outlining all these aspects, a clear working relationship between the museum and its volunteers can be established in which both parties agree to a set of predetermined standards and rules.

## 2. Selection

Opportunities for spending one's free time on Bonaire have never been so numerous and are steadily increasing. In order for the museum to compete with other activities, it recognizes the need to offer work to volunteers that is generally regarded and experienced as being meaningful. The museum has selected five types of meaningful work for which volunteers are needed:

- *Entrance area attendant*: welcoming visitors, providing general information, sales of admission tickets and gifts
- *Exhibition area attendant*: assisting visitors, providing information about the exhibition, observing visitors' actions
- *Tour guide*: providing guided museum tours for visitors (including school groups) in the regular exhibition area as well as during special events and workshops
- *PR and advertising*: promoting the museum and its activities online and in hotels, schools, tourist sites and activity centers, and other relevant places.
- *Project-based work*: helping with the development and execution of new exhibitions, events, workshops, lectures, etc.

The museum offers excellent facilities and guidance for carrying out these tasks. Potential volunteers are selected on the basis of an interview with the director. In the interview the abilities, skills, qualifications, desires, and goals of the volunteer will be discussed in order to assign fitting and relevant types of work. Whatever type of work is deemed suitable for the volunteer, it is important that he/she has excellent social skills and is willing to represent the museum in a professional way both during and outside of work times. A written volunteer agreement will be used to outline a volunteer's specific tasks, working hours, rights, responsibilities, and general working conditions.

### 3. Training

Prior to the start of work, volunteers may require training to carry out certain types of tasks. This will be determined during the initial interview and stated in the written volunteer agreement. The following positions require a training program followed by a practical assessment:

- *Exhibition area attendant*: basic knowledge of Caribbean and Bonairean history and archaeology is required in order to provide guests with additional information about certain aspects of the exhibition.
- *Tour guide*: extensive knowledge of Caribbean and Bonairean history and archaeology is required in order to provide additional information to the exhibition and present a coherent story. Background information is required in order to provide the visitor with a compelling story and to be able to answer questions not directly related to the exhibition. Tour guides must be able to use their knowledge and storytelling abilities to take the visitor experience 'to the next level.'

Training will consist of four elements:

- Getting acquainted with the exhibition by taking a tour (or multiple tours) with the director
- Background reading in the form of books, book chapters, and journal articles (tour guides will receive more specialized reading materials than exhibition attendants)
- Site visits to archaeological sites on Bonaire
- Practical assessment

## 4. Working

It is only after a successful selection process and completion of the training program that a volunteer is accepted to work for the museum. Working hours will be discussed and outlined in the volunteer agreement prior to the start of the employment period. It is important that the volunteer is reliable by adhering to the working hours agreed to and displays professional, friendly, and customer-oriented behavior during and outside of working hours. Volunteers are expected to wear work clothes provided by the museum at all times during working hours.

Volunteers can assume a consulting position regarding the policy and mission of the museum. Besides receiving information necessary to carry out their work, volunteers will be kept up to date regarding matters pertaining to the organization and external developments that may affect the museum's position. At the end of each year, volunteers receive a copy of the museum's yearly report.

In the event conflicts arise among volunteers or between volunteers and members of staff, the museum board or a board member will try to solve the conflict during a meeting with the relevant persons.

The museum retains personal information of the volunteer such as name, date of birth, address and contact information, and work schedules. This information will not be shared with other parties unless specifically requested by the volunteer.

The museum recognizes the fact that volunteers are passionate about history and archaeology and may want to collect artifacts for their personal enjoyment. While this is something the museum is not opposed to, in case the volunteer is planning to acquire an object that he/she can reasonably assume to be of interest to the museum, it is the volunteer's duty to consult with the museum director first to see whether the object can be a valuable contribution to the museum's exhibition or can be used during special events or workshops. If such is found to be the case, the museum will have the first option to acquire the object. Volunteers are strongly discouraged from looting artifacts from archaeological sites. Such practices are grounds for immediate dismissal and will be reported to the authorities.

## 5. Rewards

While a volunteer position is by definition unpaid, the museum recognizes the importance of volunteers and will reward them in several ways:

- Free admission to the museum and all special events and workshops for the volunteer and his/her family members
- 20% discount on all items in the museum gift shop
- Invitation to the museum's Christmas dinner

In addition to these rewards, the museum provides opportunities to advance one's knowledge about Caribbean and Bonairean archaeology and history by organizing training courses, workshops, and field trips. Volunteers are also able to combine their work with an internship if they are working towards a degree. Volunteers are also the first people to be considered should a paid position become available.