

Discovery Your Story Tours

Guidelines for Lead and Assistant Docent

As you may already know, Discover Your Story tours will always have two docents assigned – one as lead with an assistant. Each docent will receive two credits for the tour because of the set-up and take-down time required to make each tour as successful as possible. It is too much to ask one docent alone to move this tour through the museum – safely. If a participant needs to have a bathroom break – the assistant – knowing the lead’s route – can break away from the group and rejoin without stopping the whole group for 5 or 10 minutes. (Remember – you need to have either a staff member or family member accompany the individual to the restroom.) If you need to take two groups up the elevators – each group has a docent. You can determine if you want to split the presentations up – but keep in mind “simpler is better” with this group.

As with any other tour – the LEAD will be in charge of contacting the health facility. Paula and Jennifer are attempting to get as much information as possible from the contact person/staff member at the facilities during their initial conversation – but it isn’t always possible to have all of our questions answered at that time. Many times the staff isn’t sure which residents they will be bringing along for that particular tour, due to mood and health concerns on the tour day – so it’s important that the Lead Docent start from scratch in eliciting information. Here are some things you want to talk with your contact about:

Questions for Contact at Memory Care Facility – Lead Docent

1. When you make the call to the contact, who may or may not be the activity director at the center, please let them know that they will need to supply one “official” staff member (not volunteer) from the facility per 5 residents. It would be great if they could also supply additional volunteers – but the staff ratio is by far the deal breaker. You can tell them that we’ve found that especially with the mid-stage clients – a one-on-one ratio is important for a positive tour – it helps to lessen the client’s anxiety level allowing them to truly enjoy their time at the museum. So if they can invite family members or other volunteers along for the tour that would be great! If that isn’t possible the LEAD docent can contact someone (calling or emails) from the list of Friends Volunteers who are interested in helping out. You can find that list in the office and online. (We are in the midst of working on a collaboration with the University of Minnesota’s Med and Gerontology Schools to use students as partners/volunteers with these tours and will let you know more when this is finalized.) Please let the contact know that we’re counting on them bringing the number of clients that were originally confirmed
2. Ask your contact if they know whether the resident is early or mid-stage? Thus far – we’ve seen mostly mid-stage from these facilities – but it doesn’t hurt to ask.

3. Ask your contact if they need the museum to provide wheelchairs, and if so, how many. If wheelchairs are required – it means we need a volunteer/staff member to push them. If the facility and or LEAD can't find the volunteers – you need to let the facility know so that they can adjust their numbers accordingly. If the client declines the wheelchair, inquire whether or not the participants can stand for one hour. Let them know we can provide folding chairs.

4. What is the general level of verbal ability in the group?

5. Would they like us to provide listening devices for any members of the group?

Note: Please check with Michael at the Information desk to make sure the devices have been charged and are set on the correct channel. We currently have both an older and new set of devices – please make sure you have the corresponding transmitter and receivers. It's always a good idea to check the listening devices out with your assistant docent before the tour. When your group arrives – please hand the listening device to the caregiver and have them turn it on and adjust the volume before they give it to the client.

6. Ask your contact if they have any residents that like to wander? If so, we could use a heads-up on whom those participants are and would ask the staff member from the facility to keep an eye on them.

7. Some times it's difficult to determine who the client is – especially when the facility brings along additional volunteers – so it would be very helpful to have nametags already on the client – just their first names – so we know who's who.

8. If your contact knows their residents or clients well, ask them to have an idea of how to break them into groups before they arrive at the MIA. It can helpful to group higher functioning clients in one group, so that we can adjust the tour to fit their needs.

9. Let your contact know that their tour is entering through the Stevens Avenue (new Target wing) entrance. This has been very confusing for many homes. Let them know that along with their tour confirmation is a map of the museum with this entrance marked. Telling them to look for the loading docks has been helpful for the drivers.

10. Please confirm drop off and pick-up time. Since this is a locked entrance it becomes a problem if they arrive too early.

Day of Tour – Lead and Assistant Docent

Updated 9/2011

Get the evaluation forms/postcards/props/nametags from the office. We have two large umbrellas and dry clothes in the black museum bags near the prop box if it's raining.

Pick up any listening devices from Michael at the Information Desk – make sure they have been charged and are on the correct setting. There are two sets of listening devices, which have been color-coded. Make sure you pick up the matched set of transmitter and receivers. When you're in the Target Entrance area – please do a sound check on each receiver to make sure they're working.

Check to see how many wheelchairs are at the Target entrance. The Visitor and Member Services staff usually insures the wheelchairs are where we need them in advance, but on rare occasions you might have to wheel additional chairs over from the Link coatroom if museum staff are busy. The yellow chairs in the coatroom at the Target entrance are for our tours. You can wheel them upstairs on the handcart and set them up in front of the art works you will be touring. Then store the cart in one of the computer rooms – not in a hallway. We know that participants, if they are not in a wheelchair, need to use the yellow chairs since the stools are not stable enough. You can use the stools for caregivers/family members and volunteers to sit alongside their partners during the tour.

Preset yellow chairs in galleries you will be using if your group requires them. The LEAD and ASST. can use the handcart to wheel them up on the elevator and cluster the chairs in front of the works you'll be viewing. Please store the handcart in one of the computer rooms – the guards will call you out if you leave it in a hallway.

Set out gallery stools in the Target Lobby for partners to grab and put on the back of the wheelchairs. (The yellow chairs are for tour participants since the gallery stools aren't stable enough.)

It's important that the LEAD lets the ASSISTANT know their route incase the assistant needs to break off with a resident (and staff or family member) for a bathroom break. The ASSISTANT needs to be aware of keeping the group together and should be at the tail end of the tour group to keep straggler moving along.

Confirm with the lobby guards that there will be a captain to open the door – they're suppose to get an advance request – but it doesn't always happen. It's a good idea to ask the guards to call over to the Link entrance and ask them to keep their eyes open, just incase the memory care facility's bus ends up at the wrong entrance.

Once the bus arrives a lead docent can go out and meet the bus to find out whether or not they require wheelchairs brought out to the bus or if the residents can walk in with assistance.

If you have enough volunteers, it would be great to ask them to partner with a resident right from the start. They can introduce themselves and tell the client that they will be right along side them for the entire tour. This helps to cut down on the newness and resulting anxiety of entering the MIA for these people.

When the residents enter the Lobby, someone can take their coats and get them a nametag with just their first names on it if they aren't wearing one. During the winter months – it's a good idea to label their coats since it can be confusing to get them back to their owners. If the memory care staff can help you divide them into groups it would help to cut down on the chaos.

Ask the staff if anyone needs a bathroom break? If so, staff needs to take them to the bathroom – not a volunteer from the MIA.

If anyone is using a listening device – hand it to the volunteer first and have them do a sound check and then fit it on the resident.

Once your groups are formed the LEAD Docents should take the time to sit down introduce themselves and welcome the participants to the museum. Nothing elaborate – keep it simple and brief but remember repetition is good. Tell them again where they are and that someone will be with them at all times – they needn't worry. You may need to do this several times throughout your tour to reassure the participants.

If you are wearing a transmitter – either turn it off or move the mouthpiece up and away from your mouth while you are moving your group around the museum. We've been told it's confusing for the client who's wearing the receiver to hear your voice when you're not in front of them.

When boarding your groups on the elevators – someone needs to hold the button inside the elevator - otherwise the doors close too quickly. Try to break up the group so that there is a docent in each elevator.

During the tour – invite the partner to sit alongside the resident. We encourage the LEAD docent to sit as well; it seems to work better for eye contact with the group participants.

SLOW DOWN - listen actively and let them tell you their stories.

Check in with your group several times during the tour to make sure they can all hear you.

Please remember – many of these individuals can clearly remember events from 20 or 30 years ago but won't remember what you said at the last object. It can be

frustrating for the participant if you refer back to something that happened a short time ago – keep it in the moment.

Occasionally one individual will dominate the conversation. You can try to get down in front of them making eye contact and thank them for sharing. Then tell them that you are going to share what they’ve said with the rest of the group. Good idea to redirect and ask another participant - by name – a different question to get the conversation going again. You can also ask the partner to talk quietly with the gregarious individual.

On the other side of the coin – you may have a very quiet individual. In this case – after making sure that they can hear your voice – you can sit and make eye contact with them and ask them something addressing them by name. By talking to them individually and inviting them to comment we’ve found many of the quieter participants will open up. If they choose not to participate – you can try a “turn and talk” and invite the dyad to work on a question together.

At the end of the tour, please remember to give the residents a postcard/brochure and an evaluation form to the staff member in charge.

Once again, find a guard to open the door.

We have been told that helping to load the bus is greatly appreciated by the memory care staff – so if possible – walk or wheel the residents out and say good bye.

Please remember to go pick up the yellow chairs if they were used during the tour.

THANK
YOU!!