

# Wine in the Woods

## FESTIVAL VOLUNTEER



## ORIENTATION HANDBOOK



Howard County  
RECREATION & PARKS



## Contents

Welcome.....	2
Volunteer Training.....	2
Volunteer Benefits.....	2
Free Admission .....	3
Festival Hours & Prices .....	3
About Wine in the Woods .....	3
Directions and Parking.....	5
Volunteer Check in .....	7
What to Wear and Bring.....	7
Safety and Emergency Information.....	8
Additional Information.....	8
Volunteer Job Descriptions .....	9
Review of Important Volunteer Information .....	10
Day of Event Contact Information.....	11



---

## WELCOME

Hello and thank you for playing such a critical role in supporting the Wine in the Woods Festival.

The Wine in the Woods Festival could not survive without each and every one of you, which constitute a volunteer team of over 400 people each year. Thank you so much for your dedication to supporting this fun event!

We can't thank you enough for your time and flexibility. With that being said, like any large event, things are constantly changing. We ask that you are flexible during your shift, as we may have to position you somewhere other than where you were scheduled if a new need arises. If this does occur and you are uncomfortable with the task assigned to you please let us know.

If you have questions about volunteering, please email or call Shawnté Berry, [sberry@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:sberry@howardcountymd.gov) or 410-313-4624.

For more information: [www.wineinthewoods.com](http://www.wineinthewoods.com)



---

## VOLUNTEER TRAINING

All volunteers, new and returning are requested to review this Festival Volunteer Orientation Handbook prior to the Wine in the Woods Festival. The Handbook and event updates will be emailed to you prior to the event. Things change every year and it is vital that you know the new information.

Specific volunteer assignment training will take place on-site when you arrive for your volunteer shift.

---

## VOLUNTEER BENEFITS

Volunteers are asked to commit to at least one 3.5 – 4 hour shift and receive:

- Free Wine in the Woods Volunteer T-shirt
- One complimentary admission wristband to the Wine in the Woods Festival which is good for either Saturday or Sunday.
- Admission includes one commemorative wine glass good for sampling wine from the many wineries in attendance at the Festival



---

## FREE ADMISSION

Volunteers will receive **one** complimentary admission wristband to the Wine in the Woods Festival, which is good for either Saturday or Sunday. Admission includes **one** commemorative wine glass good for sampling wine from the many wineries in attendance at the Festival.

If you are planning to attend the Festival on Saturday and you're volunteering on Sunday, please report to the Volunteer Tent to receive your complimentary admission wristband; **do not go to admissions**, as the admissions gate **will not** have your complimentary wristband. Should you plan to enjoy the festivities on **Saturday** and are scheduled to work on **Sunday**, please make sure that you report to your scheduled shift on **Sunday**.\*

**\*Please Note:** Volunteers will be billed by the County for the Day of - Wine Taster ticket price if he/she attends the festival using the complimentary admission wristband, but is unable to fulfill his/her volunteer shift. (Ticket prices are listed below)

---

## FESTIVAL HOURS & PRICES

**Saturday** - 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM (Gates will open at 10:30 AM for Advanced Ticket Holders Only)

Wine Taster Ticket – Visit [www.wineinthewoods.com](http://www.wineinthewoods.com) for current pricing

Non-Taster Ticket (Designated Drivers & Ages 3-20) - Visit [www.wineinthewoods.com](http://www.wineinthewoods.com) for current pricing

**Sunday** - 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Gates will open at 10:30 AM for Advanced Ticket Holders Only)

Wine Taster Ticket - Visit [www.wineinthewoods.com](http://www.wineinthewoods.com) for current pricing

Non-Taster Ticket (Designated Drivers & Ages 3-20) - Visit [www.wineinthewoods.com](http://www.wineinthewoods.com) for current pricing

(Wines sales will remain open an additional 20 minutes at the end of each day.)

---

## ABOUT WINE IN THE WOODS

Wine in the Woods is one of the premier events in the region and a source of pride for Howard County. The entire Department of Howard County Recreation and Parks has worked together as a team to produce this event. The Festival has been voted Best Outdoor event by Columbia Magazine in 1997 and 1998 and awarded Best Annual Festival in Howard County by Howard Magazine for the past five years. It has become a tradition and a mainstay for the local community and beyond, becoming a sparkling tourist attraction that brings visitors from far and wide. How did Wine in the Woods become this unique gem in Howard County?



In 1990 the success of the Carroll County Wine festival over its five years of operation inspired Paul Farragut, then a County Councilman for District 4 in Columbia, to convince colleagues that a Wine Festival might be a good tourism event for Howard County. This idea was shared with the Administration who then requested the Department of Recreation and Parks investigate the possibility of Howard County hosting a wine festival.

The first step was to make sure the appropriate legal channels were pursued. Legislation had to be passed regarding the sale and distribution of wine within the county, so the Howard County Delegation put together a bill that would allow a wine festival, featuring Maryland wineries only and its activities to take place in Howard County. Once this legislation was passed in April of 1991, the staff of the Department of Recreation and Parks began the planning for Wine in the Woods.

The next step was to select a date and location, so scheduling and searching for the right property was the next priority. There were several other events within the Department and around the county that had to be worked around to avoid conflicts and after some research and deliberation, it was decided that the weekend after Mother's Day would be the best time to hold this event. A venue that could park about 10,000 cars and hold a large number of people was needed. One location that could handle this kind of volume was the grounds outside Merriweather Post Pavilion - Symphony Woods,

The location of the festival was established along with the date, participating wineries, vendors and sponsors. The event still didn't have a name – yet. Since the location was at Symphony Woods, it quickly became clear that “Wine in the Woods” was the right choice.

After facing all the challenges, details, and planning it takes to put on this kind of event, there is one obstacle we can never escape from: Mother Nature. While spring in Maryland can often be the most beautiful time of the year, it has also become the most unpredictable. Native Marylanders know all too well that anything is possible in May: from hot and sunny to cold and rainy. The weather continues to be an unpredictable factor but we keep going year after year. After all, the show must go on!

In 1997, The Event attendance averaged about 7,500 people each day. By 2007 Wine in the Woods welcomed 20,000 people through its gates. Attendance since then has grown to 25,000+ and we continue to plan and prepare for the ever-increasing attendance each year.

As interest in the festival has grown, so does participation from the wineries. To help us facilitate the growing interest from the wineries, the Maryland Winery Association has played a large role in coordinating and serving as a liaison between the Department and the individual wineries. Participation from Maryland Wineries has grown from 10 wineries in 1992 to between 20-35 wineries currently. In addition to wineries, the event attracts almost fifty artisans, musicians on two stages and over twenty food vendors. It truly is a remarkable festival that has grown over the years to be a premiere event for wine lovers in Howard County and beyond!

We look forward to many more years of Wine in the Woods!



---

## DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

**Wine in the Woods is located at Symphony Woods- Adjacent to Merriweather Post Pavilion  
10475 Little Patuxent Parkway  
Columbia, MD 21044**

### FROM BALTIMORE:

695 to Rt. 70 west to Rt 29 South, to Exit 18 (Brokenland Pkwy.). Make a left at the first light; follow signs to festival parking.

### FROM WASHINGTON:

495 to 95 North. Exit at Rt. 32 West (Columbia) to Brokenland Pkwy. Take the right-hand exit onto Brokenland Pkwy North. Remain on Brokenland Pkwy (pass Rt. 29) and follow signs to festival parking.

### FROM POINTS EAST:

Rt. 100 West to Rt. 29 south to Exit 18 (Brokenland Pkwy) Make a left at the first light onto Brokenland Pkwy - get in your right-hand lane and follow the signs to festival parking.

### FROM POINTS WEST:

Rt. 70 to Rt. 40 to Rt. 29 South to Exit 18 (Brokenland Pkwy) Make a left at the first light onto Brokenland Pkwy - get in your right-hand lane and follow the signs to festival parking.

---

## PARKING

The Volunteer Tent is located on Little Patuxent Parkway- across from the office building on the JC Penney's and Food Court entrance of the mall. Look for the purple Volunteer Sign. The nearest parking area to the Volunteer Tent is the Columbia Corporate Center Garages (between The Columbia Mall and Symphony Woods). See sample map below. The star on the map indicates the entrance Volunteers should enter.

**Please Note:** If you are volunteering for the afternoon shift, you may need to give yourself extra time to find parking!

Be alert to new additional parking areas including satellite parking lots and garages off Little Patuxent Parkway. Signs will direct you to these lots:

- MedStar Parking Garage (New location)
- Columbia Corporate Center Garages (between The Mall & Symphony Woods)
- Century Plaza (Little Patuxent Parkway & Banneker Dr/Governor Warfield Drive)
- Sterrett Place North & South Lots

As a courtesy to The Mall in Columbia merchants & customers, please park at The Mall ONLY IF you will be patronizing their stores or restaurants that day.





# Site Map & Entrance Instructions

Note: The site map typically changes each year, however the volunteer entrance, parking tips, and location of the volunteer tent remain unchanged.

**VOLUNTEER & STAFF  
ENTER HERE**

**VOLUNTEER  
CHECK-IN TENT  
(Look for purple)**

**Where to Enter Site:** Volunteers should enter from the opening on Little Patuxent Parkway.

**Please make sure you bring your volunteer confirmation email or a screenshot of the confirmation on your cell phone.**

**Parking Options:** Parking garage across the street from the site and/or the Medstar parking garage on the corner of Little Patuxent and Broken Land Pkwy.

**Questions:**

**Contact Shawnté Berry at 410-313-4624 or [sberry@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:sberry@howardcountymd.gov)**

---

## ACCESSIBLE PARKING

The accessible parking entrance with accessible shuttle buses is located near the Medstar Parking Garage. Look for the Medstar Parking Garage (off of Broken Land Parkway & Divided Sky Lane) and you will be directed to the Handicapped Parking spaces for your convenience. Personal mobility devices used by individuals with disabilities are welcome at our event. Maximum speed of 3 MPH is requested.

---

## VOLUNTEER CHECK- IN

Please check in **before** and **after** each shift at the Volunteer Tent. During Volunteer Check-In we will verify that you are scheduled as a volunteer and provide you with a nametag and a Festival Volunteer T-shirt.

- Please plan to arrive 10-15 minutes early to receive instructions and to Check-In. (Admission gate volunteers will receive on-site training for scanner operations, so please arrive on time.)
- **Be sure to bring either a printed copy of your Volunteer Request Confirmation or have access to your Volunteer Request Confirmation via your mobile phone.** (You should receive a Volunteer Request Confirmation immediately after your online registration. Be sure to check your junk/spam mail if you do not receive an email.) This confirmation will be required to enter the festival gates.
- During Volunteer Check-In you may be required to show a photo ID.
- Every volunteer will receive a Wine in the Woods Volunteer T-shirt. This shirt must be worn while you are working at the Festival. Please do not make any alterations to your T-shirt while you are volunteering for Wine in the Woods. **Please Note:** Volunteer T-shirts cannot be worn while you taste the Festival's wine offerings. Bring an extra shirt to change into or turn your volunteer shirt inside out after your volunteer shift ends.
- Bottled water is available at the Volunteer Tent for all volunteers.





---

## WHAT TO WEAR & BRING

### Volunteer Attire

You will be given a Wine in the Woods Volunteer T-shirt to wear upon checking in for your shift. Please wear comfortable clothing and closed toe shoes as you may be standing and walking for your volunteer shift. Be prepared for all types of weather!

### Items to Bring

- Copy of your Volunteer Request Confirmation Email (print or accessible via mobile phone)
- Photo ID
- Food/Snacks – The Volunteer Tent will offer free bottled water to all volunteers. The Volunteer will be responsible for providing his/her own snacks and/or food. (Food vendors will be onsite during the Festival. Most food vendors take cash only.)
- Jacket, sweatshirt, coat, etc. in case it is cold or raining. (The held event is rain or shine.)

**Please Note:** There is no storage for personal belongings at the event. Please plan accordingly.

---

## SAFETY AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION

### First Aid

The Wine in the Woods Festival will have EMT onsite and the First Aid station will be staffed during all event hours. If you need assistance, please report to the First Aid Station. If you are having a life-threatening emergency, please dial 9-1-1.

### Lost and Found

All lost and found articles turned in will be located at the Information Desk.

### Emergencies and Lost Children

In the event of an emergency, please notify the first person you see in a Wine in the Woods staff shirt. In the event a parent notifies the Wine in the Woods staff that their child is missing, an announcement will be made over the loud speakers including a description of the child, age and name. If you spot the child, please bring them to the Information Desk.

### Weather

The Wine in the Woods Festival is a rain or shine event! In case of severe weather prior to the event, please call our inclement weather line at: 410-313-4452. In case of severe weather or an emergency during the event, please follow the instructions of your workstation leader/supervisor. Volunteers are not required to sign out at the Volunteer Tent if severe weather or an emergency situation occurs. Seek shelter and/or safety immediately.



---

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Unscheduled Absences

In the event that you are unable to attend your scheduled volunteer shift due to illness or an emergency, please contact Shawnté Berry at 410-313-4624 or sberry@howardcountymd.gov immediately, as she will be required to fill your spot.

### Admission Gates

See page 6 of this Handbook to view a tentative layout of the Wine in the Woods Festival. There are two main entrances for event ticket holders, Entrance # 1 (near Little Patuxent Pkwy) and Entrance # 2 (near the new Merriweather box office). Volunteers should note that a good amount of walking may be required to navigate from the Volunteer Tent to your assignment location. (Volunteer Runners/Assistants will assist in escorting volunteers to their workstations.)

### Restrooms

Port-A-Spots are located near the Volunteer Tent and near the Vineyard Stage. Restroom facilities are also available for use and they are located on Merriweather Post Pavilions property (look for the barn with the red roof as a landmark). Volunteer Runners/Assistants will assist volunteers with locating the restrooms.

### Customer Service & Volunteer Conduct

As a Festival Volunteer for the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, the lasting impression you make on those you serve reflects directly on all of us. Please be sure your words and deeds will help build our department and its reputation for quality.

In working as a Festival Volunteer, you must be unfailingly polite and mannerly. It is not your role or responsibility to handle unhappy guests. Should you find yourself in a situation where courtesy is becoming difficult, please refer the matter to the nearest Festival employee. Howard County complies with all laws about race, creed, and religion. Just remember, in your interactions with others, to treat them as you would want to be treated.

### Dismissal

Volunteers serve at the pleasure of the Appointing Authority or the Department and may be dismissed from volunteer duties at any time, with or without cause. A volunteer may not be selected for volunteer service. This determination may be made with or without cause.



---

## VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

### Admission & Wine Glass Assistants

Volunteers working here will interface with the public and should have a friendly, outgoing personality. Volunteers will be very busy working at the entrance to the festival greeting attendees outside the gates, handing out festival guide, checking ID's, scanning tickets, providing information to the festival goers or unwrapping and handing out glasses to attendees.

### Designated Driver Assistants (This tent has been combined with the Info. Tent)

Volunteers will provide non-alcoholic drinks to designated drivers and children attending the festival. Designated Driver volunteers may also be assigned to work at the Information Tent if backup coverage is needed. Customer service skills, a winning smile and flexibility are a must.

*Note: Also see duties for the Information Tent as these tents have been combined.*

### Information Assistants (This tent has been combined with the Designated Driver Tent)

Volunteers will assist at the Information Tent providing information and assistance to customers, alongside a staff person. Information volunteers may also be assigned to work at the Designated Drivers Tent if backup coverage is needed. Customer service skills, a winning smile and flexibility are a must. *Note: Also see duties for the Designated Driver Tent as these tents have been combined.*

### Parking Assistants

Volunteers will serve as flaggers / directional aid in the Satellite Parking Lots of the Festival. Volunteers should have good customer service skills and be good with directions.

### Wine Education Seminar Assistants

Volunteers will assist with setting up the tent for the presenters of wine demonstrations. Volunteers will also assist with distributing samples of wine for tasting and crowd control before and after the demonstrations. Customer service skills, ability to lift heavy material, a winning smile and flexibility are a must.

### Wine Glass Restocking Assistants

Volunteers will assist staff with preparing and delivering cases of wine glasses to the admission gates. Teamwork and the ability to lift heavy material is required.

(Note: Volunteer positions and the number of volunteers needed are subject to change from year to year. Volunteer recruitment for these positions depend upon the need.)

---

## REVIEW OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please arrive on time for your volunteer shift! It is a good idea to give yourself plenty of time to get to the event. Plan ahead for traffic and parking.
- Please make sure you check in at the Volunteer Tent before and after your shift.



- Please inform your workstation supervisor if you need a break. Please do not leave your designated volunteer area without letting your staff manager know if you need a break.
- Please return to the Volunteer Tent if you can't find your volunteer area of assignment. We'll help you get there.
- We're really counting on you! If you've signed up for one or more shift, please show up for your shift. We can't have a successful event without each and every one of you!
- Please only wear your Volunteer T-shirt when you are volunteering.
- Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed before or during your volunteer shift.
- If you are unable to volunteer, please contact us immediately!
- Great customer service is vital! Remember to smile and treat others how you would want to be treated.
- "Volunteers are not paid—not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless!"

Thank you for volunteering! It is because of your participation as a volunteer and commitment that the Wine in the Woods Festival is possible!

If you have any questions, please email or call Shawnté Berry, the Wine in the Woods Volunteer Manager, [sberry@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:sberry@howardcountymd.gov) or 410-313-4624.

