

A. Individual Submitting Nomination Information:

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1. Explain your volunteer's significant depth of involvement.

From planning to set-up to reception line, through judging, early tours and bottom line, Melinda Moritz takes leading roles at every step of the Philadelphia International Flower Show. She has been the volunteer Flower Show Chair for the past three years, acting as ambassador to the region's garden clubs and other key audiences, and serving as a guiding light throughout the show itself.

Melinda's involvement with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the producer of the Flower Show, has extended far beyond the eight-day event at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. She began serving on the PHS Council – our board of directors – in 2002, and has been a major supporter of the PHS community outreach program, Philadelphia Green. The organization's trust in her judgment led to her selection to serve on the recent Search Committee for a new PHS president. Melinda has bolstered our ranks while on the Members Committee since the 1990s, actively promoting membership in the gardening community and leading acquisition and retention events. Her involvement has ranged from planning and supervising those events to serving food and washing dishes. Melinda also has led the Education Committee, helping to nurture the next generation of gardeners and environmental guardians.

2. Show specific examples of your volunteer's roles and responsibilities.

Like a company president who has labored and learned at each level of her organization, Melinda has an extensive history with the Flower Show. She was an exhibitor in the arrangements class in 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2003 and 2006. In 1992 and 1994, she also competed in the horticulture and orchids classes; in 1997 in the jewelry class; and in 2007 in the miniature settings.

Melinda took on the responsibilities of vice-chair of the arrangement classes in 1998 and 1999, and rose to chair of arrangement classes in 2000 and 2001. She moved up to vice-chair of all competitive classes in 2002 and 2003, and was named chair of competitive classes in 2004 and 2005. In 2008 and 2009, Melinda served as vice-chair of the Flower Show Executive Committee and vice-chair of the Flower Show. In 2009, when the sitting Flower Show Chair moved to another city, Melinda took on the top volunteer role. She continued in that position in 2010 and will be there again for the 2011 show. The year-round role of Flower Show Chair entails meetings with participating organizations and groups, visits to corporate and sponsor events, and working closely with the creators of the show on sustaining its high quality and audience expectations.

3. Describe how your volunteer has provided significant enthusiasm, organizational assistance and specific expertise.

Melinda brings an extraordinary set of skills to her tasks as Flower Show Chair. She has the ability to mobilize a wide network of volunteers from the horticultural community, who know her well and are eager to work with her. She is a creative, confident, energetic and entirely likable leader, who builds consensus and inspires cooperation by her own example and talents.

As a professional floral designer, Melinda brings valuable expertise to show planning and implementation. For example, she worked closely with Flower Show Designer Sam Lemheney in the creation of the New Orleans garden at the center of the 2008 show, and

she coordinated the team that built the 28-foot-high hot-air balloon, covered in nearly 80,000 dried flowers forming a map of the world, for the entrance of the 2010 show. “Melinda comes to every challenge with a can-do attitude,” Lemheney says, “and she always comes up with a better idea of how to accomplish something.”

4. Explain how your volunteer has shown initiative and leadership in his or her efforts.

When the Flower Show needed an infusion of new, young exhibitors, Melinda worked with potential designers, explaining how to exhibit in the nation’s largest and most prestigious indoor flower show. She put them at ease and helped them through the entire show process. Several of those exhibitors went on to capture top prizes in the show and, thanks to Melinda’s nurturing, they have remained as important exhibitors.

With the Education Committee, Melinda developed an annual flower-arranging symposium for PHS at which we presented world-renowned European designers. She organizes and runs the flower arrangers’ boutique at the event, utilizing her eye for exciting new designs and products that will appeal to participants. This skill has been honed through all of Melinda’s work within the artistic divisions of the Flower Show. The audience for the arranging symposium comes from around the U.S. and includes Flower Show judges and exhibitors, and raises funds for PHS’s community programs. Melinda has also raised donations for PHS by lecturing to members of area garden clubs.

5. Tell how your volunteer has exemplified his or her dependability.

The role of Flower Show Chair is defined differently by each person who fills it. For Melinda, it has been defined by a consistent participation at planning sessions and constant presence at the show, from hauling in tools and materials for set-up to breaking down exhibits and offices at show’s end.

Because of her experience as an exhibitor and her leadership of various committees, Melinda knows how to navigate any situation on the Flower Show floor. “She is the go-to

person for decision-making for the competitive classes,” explains Show Data Coordinator Elsa Efran. Show Designer Sam Lemheney relies on Melinda as an invaluable sounding-board for his ideas and as a source for solutions and ways to improve the show each year.

6. Describe your volunteer’s positive attitude.

Melinda gets people excited about being part of the Flower Show, explains Show Designer Sam Lemheney. “She is a wonderful show cheerleader.” Through the months of preparation, long hours of set-up week, and throughout the run of the show, Melinda keeps everyone smiling. When a jazz band’s twice-daily performances began to wear on the adjacent exhibitors, Melinda came up with the answer: gold-painted earphones that muffled the high notes and lifted the exhibitors’ spirits.

She is also “calm and calming” on deadline and under pressure. At the 2010 show, a last-minute media request for a Flower Show spokesperson to lead an online chat came at the busiest time for show representatives. So Melinda literally answered the call, fielding a variety of questions with humor and charm over the course of the 90-minute chat, building excitement for the show and its attractions.

7. Describe how your volunteer has made a difference to the festival or event. What impact has your volunteer had on your festival/event? What void would there be without him or her as a volunteer?

It is the goal of the Flower Show to grow and improve each year, and that has been Melinda Moritz’s greatest value to the event and PHS. Her colleagues on the planning committees, the exhibitors, and show staff all say that she looks for the next best way to do things, how to entertain and surprise visitors anew, and how to build on the success of the previous year. Her approach is ambitious but always in tune with the capabilities and resources of PHS, which she understands through her long association with the organization. In addition, Melinda’s experience with each element of the Flower Show gives her unique insight into how to keep them all working harmoniously.

“Melinda is the kind of volunteer we should all aspire to be -- no job is too big or too small,” says PHS President Jane G. Pepper. “Her enthusiasm and creativity are boundless. When Melinda commits to an organization, she goes full out. At PHS we have almost 3,500 volunteers involved in the organization and have been so fortunate to have Melinda as a star in our volunteer firmament for almost three decades.”