

News

Free daily public access now allowed at Montgomery Place

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ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON — Historic Hudson Valley officials say pledges of \$675,000 over five years from unidentified philanthropists will allow free daily public access to Montgomery Place grounds and increase the number of paid tours.

The announcement was made in a press release Tuesday and included a request for volunteers to be trained as site guides and grounds upkeep assistants.

“There is great passion and fondness for Montgomery Place in our local community,” site director Raymond Armater said. “We seek to build on our local enthusiasm as our own best advocates for the beauty and importance of Montgomery Place as we expand programming and outreach to visitors.”

The historic site grounds, which had been open only once a week, are scheduled to have daily hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., while the main house will be open from May 15 to Oct. 31 for \$10 for a 45-minute tour.

“These financial commitments come after a very difficult year when the museum community faced exceptional financial challenges to steward and operate historic properties in the shadow of a remarkable national recession,” Historic Hudson Valley board Chairman Michael Hegarty said. “While we cannot yet thank our generous donors by name, as the process of formalizing their commitments is ongoing, we’re very pleased to share the news of the expanded program offerings that their gifts will make possible this year.”

Montgomery Place is a 434-acre property that was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 as part of work done by architect Alexander Jackson Davis. Other holdings of Historic Hudson Valley include Kykuit, the Rockefeller Estate, in Sleepy Hollow; Washington Irving’s Sunnyside, in Terrytown; Philipsburg Manor, in Sleepy Hollow; Van Cortlandt Manor, in Croton-on-Hudson; and Union Church of Pocantico Hills.

State Assemblyman Marcus Molinaro, R-Red Hook, on Wednesday said the change in hours is welcome news after spending much of last year seeking to have the Historic Hudson Valley respond to concerns that Montgomery Place would be sold.

“We’ll continue to work with Historic Hudson Valley to make sure that we all invest in the success of Montgomery Place and long-term protection of historic sites and the active farmlands that make it a very special landmark in the Hudson River valley,” he said.

“This is really what we’ve been working for,” Molinaro said. “We are hopeful this is a long-term commitment and I believe if Historic Hudson Valley invests attention, interest and focus on this particular landmark for the long term, there will be community commitment, public support, and those of us who have been advocating for Montgomery Place and serving this community in one capacity or another will do everything in our power to assure that it is a protected and successful historic site.”

Montgomery Place will have free hot chocolate 2 to 4 p.m. Sundays in February for neighbors and people interested in becoming site volunteers.

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