



Strategic Plan 2013 – 2018

FOREWORD

This Strategic Plan for Highfield Hall & Gardens is the result of a planning process spanning several months. It represents hard work on the part of the Strategic Planning Committee which was comprised of staff, trustees, volunteers and donors. In large part, the process was undertaken as a result of experiential growth in the organization and the addition of new assets – the gardens and an education department – which have substantially increased opportunities for public engagement.

A vision for the future emerged that has been endorsed by a broad base of constituents. The plan is designed to position Highfield Hall & Gardens as a regional leader in the cultural economy. As part of the planning process, a comparison of museums, historic sites, and cultural organizations in the region was undertaken. The vision and mission that have emerged as a result of this process recognize the unique historical, natural, and cultural resources that the Highfield property has to offer residents and visitors to Cape Cod. This plan attempts to ensure that those resources receive the care and stewardship they deserve and that they are used for the highest benefit of the Cape Cod community.

The Board of Trustees approved this plan on December 16, 2013. The document is intended as a flexible strategy to guide the future and as a framework for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the property. Each year, the plan will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and will be used to create annual goals and work plans for board, committees and staff.

MISSION

The mission of Highfield Hall & Gardens is to preserve Cape Cod's preeminent historic estate by offering an engaging environment to experience the arts, explore nature, and appreciate history.

VISION

Highfield Hall & Gardens is a dynamic and unique museum providing opportunities for education, entertainment and inspiration. The natural, historic, and cultural assets of Highfield Hall are creatively used to their fullest potential enabling residents and visitors of all ages to experience the arts, explore the natural environment, and value history. As a compelling and engaging destination, Highfield Hall & Gardens plays an increasingly important role in the cultural economy of Cape Cod, thus ensuring the long term sustainability of the organization.

CORE VALUES

Visitor Experience

We create unique, compelling and enjoyable experiences for our visitors.

Education

We provide the highest quality educational experiences by utilizing our extensive cultural, natural and historical resources in innovative ways.

Cultural Enjoyment

We present high-quality programming for the pleasure and edification of our audience.

Stewardship

We ensure the long-term viability of Highfield Hall & Gardens through meticulous care and maintenance of the property, an abiding appreciation for donors, members and volunteers, and the commitment to an outstanding professional staff.

Collaboration and Community

We collaborate with other organizations and institutions to achieve mutual educational, cultural, community, and economic development goals.

GOALS AND ACTIONS

The goals and actions of our strategic plan will lead us to achieve our vision and ensure our core values define our activities.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Goal One: Highfield Hall & Gardens will be an inviting and dynamic Cape Cod destination that engages and inspires the public.

Actions:

1. A visitor brochure and map will be created.
2. Interactive activities will be developed for adult and family visitors.
3. A picnic area will be identified with picnic tables and trash receptacles.
4. Increased emphasis will be placed on Beebe Woods as an attraction for visitors and, working with The 300 Committee, trail maintenance and signage will be improved.
5. Working with the Town of Falmouth, a plan will be created to link the Shining Sea Bike Path and Highfield Hall.
6. Aggressive marketing will position Highfield Hall & Gardens as a tourist destination.
7. Weekend hours will be expanded to ensure the mansion is accessible to our audience.

8. An increased emphasis will be placed on the training of visitor service volunteers (VSV) and their importance to the organization as front-line staff will be acknowledged and cultivated.
9. Staffing for the management of operations and visitor experience will be increased to a level that ensures consistent coverage.

Goal Two: The gardens and grounds will become a focus for engagement, programming, and capacity building.

Actions

1. The gardens and woods will be a featured element for marketing, interpretation and visitor experience.
2. An institutional philosophy on the landscape and its history will be developed and followed.
3. The master landscape plan will be reviewed, modified as necessary, and implemented.
4. Possible outdoor education areas will be identified.
5. Signage, labels, and other interpretive materials will be developed and will be linked to interpretation of the Hall with a possible permanent exhibition in the mansion.
6. Donation boxes will be installed throughout the grounds.
7. Appropriate care and supervision of the gardens will be ensured by creating a staffing plan that specifies the roles of existing staff, volunteers, and landscape contractors. Ultimately, a part-time horticulturalist will be hired.
8. An accessible garden storage facility will be constructed or identified.
9. Public programs will be created to draw attention to the gardens and woods.
10. A maintenance plan for the gardens will be created.

EDUCATION

Goal One: The ability of Highfield Hall & Gardens to serve as a unique educational resource for children and families will be expanded.

Actions

1. Programs will be structured around the exceptional resources of the Highfield campus (gardens, history, art, nature, music, culinary), creating educational opportunities that cannot be offered elsewhere in the community.
2. Strong collaborations will be developed with the local schools (public and private).
3. Targeted family programs will be hosted to integrate parents into our base of support.
4. Program growth will be planned through careful and controlled expansion.

5. Federal, state, and foundation grant support to fund innovation and expansion will be identified.
6. Other school program models will be researched to develop a fee strategy.
7. All programs will be developed with specific outcomes in mind and evaluation will be completed and correlated to inform future programs and initiatives.
8. Documented curricula and educational platforms will be created for educators, volunteers and future staff to utilize with ease.

CULTURAL ENJOYMENT

Goal One: Embrace a holistic approach to programming that utilizes the extensive resources of the Highfield campus to differentiate us from local competitors and strategically ties programs to growing the capacity of the organization.

Actions

1. Seasonal audiences will be targeted and incorporated into programming plans.
2. Core programming areas (music, culinary arts, exhibitions, children & family programs, and gardens/nature) will be the focus of staff efforts.
3. Programs will be integrated with each other, as much as practical, and designed to ensure revenue generation.
4. Programs will be strategically linked to membership and development efforts.
5. A program enrollment goal of 80% will be adopted for all programs.
6. Programs that are offered free-of-charge must be strategically linked to a larger goal. Large-scale free community programs must have corporate or foundation support.
7. Rigorous program evaluation will be undertaken to achieve identified outcomes.
8. Cost effective physical modifications to increase capacity for performances will be considered.

Goal Two: Develop an innovative exhibition program that will garner regional and national attention.

Actions

1. Exhibitions will be chosen to distinguish Highfield Hall & Gardens from local competitors and utilize the unique attributes of the property, including outdoor spaces.
2. Exhibitions will be created that are innovative and high-caliber, attract regional and national artists, and utilize the seasonality of the Cape for maximum impact.
3. Grant funding and corporate support will be identified to underwrite exhibition program expenses.

4. Local artists will be involved to complement regional and national exhibitions and ensure local support and engagement.
5. As visitor experience and exhibition goals are attained, and infrastructure put into place, an admission charge will be implemented.
6. Staff will be added for peak summer loads to ensure quality visitor experiences.

STEWARDSHIP

Goal One: Complete the Endowment and Landscape Fundraising Campaigns to ensure the long-term viability of Highfield Hall & Gardens.

Actions

1. Development needs will be identified and appropriate staff hired.
2. The present comprehensive campaign fundraising plan will be revised and updated.
3. An aggressive endowment campaign will be launched to ensure goals are met.
4. An aggressive marketing strategy for planned giving will be outlined and implemented to ensure future support.

Goal Two: Broaden support and build capacity through a robust Annual Fund and membership base.

Actions

1. A new annual case for support will be written.
2. Development focus will be placed on a targeted campaign to expand Highfield Circle membership with a goal of having 100 Highfield Circle members by 2018.
3. A membership campaign will be designed with a goal of having 1,000 members by 2018.
4. A methodology for involving trustees, members and volunteers in the membership campaign will be created.
5. Membership sales opportunities will be exploited at events and programs through use of staff sales and creative print pieces
6. Membership engagement will be fostered and strengthened through thoughtful member communication and activities.

Goal Three: Make maximizing the impact of volunteers a priority for the organization.

Actions

1. Funding for a Volunteer Coordinator will be identified and this new staff position will oversee volunteer engagement, communication, tracking, training, and recognition.

2. Volunteer recognition will be a priority for both board and staff: an annual volunteer recognition strategy will be created to include, at the least, an annual luncheon or party
3. Volunteer awards will be offered and recipients will be recognized in member and constituent communication
4. Regular communication with the volunteers will occur through email and other means.
5. Volunteer roles will be defined and refined to create more meaningful participation.
6. An internship program will be designed to engage and utilize young volunteers, specifically high school and college students.

Goal Four: Insure active management and protection of the physical plant.

Actions

1. A Disaster Plan will be prepared.
2. A 5-year capital plan will be developed.
3. Funding will be identified to hire a part-time janitor/sexton.
4. Excess operating revenues will be used to fund depreciation and build the capital reserve.
5. The maximum endowment draw will be taken every year. Funds not needed for operating and capital will be placed in the capital reserve to fund depreciation.
6. Listing on the National Register of Historic Places will be achieved.

Goal Five: Hire and nurture the finest professional staff that our budget allows.

Actions

1. Opportunities for advanced education, training, and personal growth will be encouraged.
2. Focus on revenue production and fundraising to ensure consistent and competitive salaries.

Goal Six: Marketing is acknowledged as the foundation for success to implement our mission and goals and ensure long-term stewardship of the property.

Actions

1. Appropriate resources will be ensured to provide for adequate marketing time and expertise on staff. This is, at minimum, a half-time marketing position that should grow to full-time as budgets allow.

2. Continue to implement the present holistic marketing/programming plan as outlined in March of 2013
3. Interns will be utilized for social media, blogs, and other online posting work.

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY

Goal One: Highfield Hall & Gardens will be a leading partner in the cultural and economic development of the region.

Actions

1. Highfield Hall & Gardens will participate in the effort to create a cultural district in the Town of Falmouth.
2. Highfield Hall & Gardens will actively participate in the Highfield Drive partnership, Arts on the Hill.
3. Highfield Hall & Gardens will strengthen our working relationships with government officials and other major stakeholders in the economic development of the region and participate in initiatives that are congruent with our goals.

Goal Two: Highfield will actively partner with schools and local organizations to serve its growing audiences.

Actions

1. Partnerships will continue to be fostered that expand educational programs and tourism initiatives in accordance with our vision.
2. Alliances will be fostered with local organizations to achieve the goals outlined in this plan.