



Pennsylvania
Historical & Museum
Commission

Ephrata Cloister

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Stepping Into The Past

Historic Ephrata Cloister To Host Community Day Program, Friday, May 18

EPHRATA, PA. – The picturesque grounds of the Historic Ephrata Cloister, 632 West Main Street, Ephrata, were bustling with activity as nearly 500 visitors attended the Community Day festivities in April. With such a good turnout in April, the staff members of the Historic Ephrata Cloister are busily preparing for the second Community Days program of the year.

Held on Friday, May 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Community Days is an educational program sponsored by the Ephrata Cloister Associates and geared towards school age children. Students can try their hand at writing with a quill pen, learn about colonial medicine, and make a stop at the bakery for a scrumptious snack of apple butter and rye bread, among other activities.

With the help of volunteer historical interpreters and Cloister staff, children can learn not only about daily life in Colonial America, but also about some of the celibate Brothers and Sisters they might have met at the Ephrata Cloister.

A former German religious community founded in 1732 by Conrad Beissel, the Historic Ephrata Cloister had both celibate members, as well as a supporting married congregation who lived in farms surrounding the Cloister.

A favorite of children the past Community Day was Mr. Wiggans, the school master of the Academy, used for the married congregation, around 1840. Mr. Wiggans stayed in 1840 character the entire event, which led one child to proclaim as he left the Academy, “He doesn’t even know who Barack Obama is! He thinks that’s a Latin word!”

The program is open to public and private school students, and home-school families, and is suitable for children ages 6 to 18. For groups over ten individuals, please reserve a space by calling the Visitors Center at (717) 733-6600 or emailing Andrea Glass-Heffner, Educational Program Coordinator, at c-glass-h@pa.gov. Walk-ins are welcome.

Community Days costs \$6.00 per student – with every ten students one adult will receive free admission – and \$8.00 per each additional chaperone. Please plan a minimum of one chaperone for every ten children. No discounts may be used during this special event.

For information on other educational programs offered and upcoming events at the Ephrata Cloister, please visit their website at www.EphrataCloister.org or www.Facebook.com/HistoricEphrataCloister.

Ephrata Cloister is state historic site administered by the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission with assistance from the Ephrata Cloister Associates, an incorporated non-profit community volunteer group.

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Caption: Students flocked to the Bakery for a taste of rye bread, a staple of the diet of celibate members at the Historic Ephrata Cloister. The Bakery is just one of the activity stations students frequent during Community Days. (Photograph Courtesy of Brandy M. Watts, PHMC)