



Queens County Farm Museum Streamlines Reservations and Improves Reporting

Doubleknot makes it easier for New York City museum to serve hundreds of thousands of students year-round

About the Queens County Farm Museum

The Queens County Farm Museum dates back to 1697 and occupies New York City's largest remaining tract of undisturbed farmland. The farm encompasses a 47-acre parcel that is the longest continuously farmed site in New York State. The site includes historic farm buildings, a greenhouse complex, livestock, farm vehicles and implements, planting fields, an orchard, and an herb garden. The mission of the Queens County Farm Museum is to preserve, restore, and interpret the site, its history and owner's lifestyles. The farm is owned by the New York City Department of Parks, operated by the Colonial Farmhouse Restoration Society of Bellerose, Inc. and is a member of the Historic House Trust of New York City.

Challenge

Queens County Farm Museum serves all of New York City with year-round farm and agricultural programs for youth, families and adults. The farm museum serves hundreds of thousands of students every year and may host as many as 18 different classes from multiple schools a day during busy periods. The farm museum's program spaces include traditional classrooms as well as outdoor areas that can be used as classrooms to accommodate group and program requirements. Because program spaces are so flexible, the staff requires up-to-date availability information about every area so they can accommodate groups of different needs and sizes.

Since 2008, the farm museum had managed reservations with a custom-built Microsoft Access® database that was only accessible to program staff. Teachers had to call during business hours to reserve visits for their students, creating several days of "crunch time" at the beginning of every season. The farm museum sought a new solution that would:

- Make it easier for teachers and other group leaders to book reservations
- Simplify reservations management and schedule planning for staff
- Empower the executive director and financial staff to locate and extract exactly the data they need

"We knew we wanted to have more capabilities to pull up reports and information," says Ali Abate, Director of Education at the Queens County Farm Museum. "There was no easy way for finance staff to pull financials from the database as it was set up."

Solution

When the Queens County Farm Museum began the search for a new reservations system, Abate researched vendors thoroughly online and reached out to other museums and similar organizations for suggestions. After a period of evaluation, the farm museum chose Doubleknot. Says Abate, "When we compared each program's features with what we wanted, Doubleknot hit all the marks."

According to Abate, implementation went well, and the new system was ready when the peak reservations period opened. She says, "We booked more visits on the first day than we had ever booked before because the online calendar is always up to date. And, everyone appreciates that teachers now have the option to pay for their reservations online."

Results

Other benefits to the Queens County Farm Museum include:

- **Streamlined schedule planning:** Doubleknot's flexibility in locating, manipulating and extracting information has made planning daily schedules much easier for staff.
- **Improved reporting:** "The reports and reporting features have been fabulous for us," says Abate. "Executives and financial staff can log in and run reports themselves instead of asking me to pull the data for them."
- **Easier reservations process:** Teachers and group leaders appreciate the ability to submit reservation requests online at their convenience instead of calling during business hours.
- **Expansion capability:** The museum looks forward to expanding Doubleknot's solution to manage reservations and requests for their busy birthday party and wedding calendars.

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