

Being A Volunteer At The Great American Beer Festival

by Laura Lieff

If you are a Cherry Creek Valley resident the most inexpensive and fun way to attend *The Great American Beer Festival* is as a volunteer. With over 400 breweries presenting booths and vying for medals, the Beer Festival is the largest commercial beer competition in the world. In short, it is the Super Bowl of beer contests. Breaking all

of its previous ticket sales records, the Beer Festival sold out five weeks in advance to thirsty people eager to try approximately 3,000 different beers under one roof.

Attracting 151 beer judges from 10 countries, brewers have the chance to win prestigious gold, silver and bronze medals in 79 beer categories. If you want to take part in this three-day beerapalooza then you'll



Huge Turnout: Approximately 50,000 people from all over the country attended this year's Beer Fest which took place at the convention center. Photos by Jason E. Kaplan



Ready To Drink: With thousands of beers to choose from, excited (and well-prepared) beer lovers wore snack necklaces to prevent any overindulgence issues.

have to be willing to pay \$55 a night — unless you plan ahead and find a way to volunteer. When I signed up to volunteer I didn't know what to expect but figured it might resemble wine festivals I've attended in the past, but in fact it was much better.

The Beer Festival takes place in the Colorado Convention Center to accommodate thousands of people who are ready to drink. (And also so the big blue bear can

watch in awe). While some attendees have a very short distance to travel, such as the rowdy locals who take the light rail, others travel from states such as Nevada, California, Texas, etc. for the ultimate weekend of boozing. With the number of attendees closing in on 50,000, Beer Festival-goers start getting in line early but as the time creeps closer to 5:30 p.m. the line has wrapped around the Convention Center and down two blocks. As a volunteer, not only do you not have to pay to get in but you also don't have to wait in that horrifying line. Instead, volunteers get their own entrance and get to waltz in without any hassle. Once inside, the fun begins.

Each volunteer is part of a team and is assigned to a brewery. My job was to pour different kinds of beer for people from all walks of life. While some attendees were very polite others felt the need to bang their one-ounce glasses around as they demanded to taste as many beers as possible. There were also people in costume, whether it was groups with matching t-shirts that featured clever sayings like "I don't get drunk, I get awesome" or candy-colored hats and glittered Elton John-type glasses. People were excited to be there and ready to drink.

That being said, getting too wasted at the Beer Festival is a rookie maneuver whether you're an attendee or a volunteer because if someone sees that you are too drunk to function they will escort you out. Team captains watch to make sure volunteers only pour the allotted tasting amount and make sure no one is getting too tipsy. A popular way to avoid getting kicked out of the Beer Festival is to wear necklaces made up of snacks like pretzels, cheese, sausages, crackers and whatever else can be put on string. Not only is it festive but it's very smart. As we all know eating is key when drinking is involved.

One of the best parts about volunteering is that upon arrival you automatically feel like you're part of a group, as there is instantly a high level of camaraderie. All the volunteers are incredibly social, there to have a good time and everyone is very friendly. Also, volunteers are extremely important because without us, people will not get their booze.

All and all my first Beer Festival experience was great and there is no question that volunteering is the way to go. I met a lot of fun people and talked to brewers from all over the country. In addition to tasting good beers, the people-watching was one of my favorite aspects of the event. Beer lovers from across the nation gather to taste their favorite libation and have a good time — it's really something to see. Given the opportunity I will definitely volunteer again next year because being part of the event while participating in the event is definitely the best option. Plus, it's nice to get to do everything for free.

The Great American Beer Festival is listed as one of the top 1,000 places in the U.S. to visit before you die and now I can see why. Next year is the Beer Festival's 30th Anniversary so there will be even more to celebrate. I recommend marking Sept. 29-Oct. 1 on your 2011 calendar now and signing up to volunteer sooner rather than later.



GLENDALE SPORTS CENTER
AT INFINITY PARK

Dance

Ballroom & Latin Dance Group Lessons

Ages 16 to Adult

Thursdays 7:30–8:30 PM

Sessions: October 28–November 18 (4 weeks)

GLENDALE RES./GSC MEMBER: \$32/Session

NON-GLENDALE RESIDENT: \$60/Session

Private Dance Lessons

All Ages

45-minute session (singles or couples)

GLENDALE RES./GSC MEMBER: \$75/Session

NON-GLENDALE RESIDENT: \$75/Session

Zumba®

Ages 14 to Adult

Tuesdays 6:30–7:30 PM

Wednesdays 12:00–1:00 PM

Thursdays 6:30–7:30 PM

Fridays 9:00–10:00 AM

GSC MEMBER: FREE

NON-MEMBER: \$10 drop-in fee

Zumba® Gold

For Beginners & Senior Citizens

Wednesdays 10:30–11:15 AM

GSC MEMBER: FREE

NON-MEMBER: \$10 drop-in fee

Music

Exploring the Voice

Ages 16 to Adult

Instructor: Jill Schroeder, Vocal Instructor

All levels of experience are welcome!

Mondays 7:30–8:30 PM

Session: October 25–November 22 (5 weeks)

GLENDALE RES./GSC MEMBER: \$30/Session

NON-GLENDALE RESIDENT: \$60/Session

Beginning Guitar

Ages 11 to Adult

Instructor: Greg Tyler

Mondays 6:30–7:30 PM

Session: October 25–November 22 (5 weeks)

GLENDALE RES./GSC MEMBER: \$30/Session

NON-GLENDALE RESIDENT: \$60/Session

Beginning Guitar II

Ages 11 to Adult

Instructor: Greg Tyler

Mondays 7:45–8:45 PM

Session: October 25–November 22 (5 weeks)

GLENDALE RES./GSC MEMBER: \$30/Session

NON-GLENDALE RESIDENT: \$60/Session

Intermediate Guitar

Ages 11 to Adult

Instructor: Greg Tyler

Thursday 6:30–7:30 PM

Session: October 28–December 2 (No class on Thanksgiving)

GLENDALE RES./GSC MEMBER: \$30/Session

NON-GLENDALE RESIDENT: \$60/Session

Private Guitar Lessons

Mondays 5:00–5:45 PM

Thursdays 5:00–5:45 PM or

7:45–8:30 PM

\$40 PER CLASS

Art Classes

Drawing 2

Ages 14 to Adult

Instructor Benjamin Hummel

Wednesdays 6:30–8:00 PM

Session: October 27–November 24 (5 weeks)

GLENDALE RES./GSC MEMBER: \$20/Session

NON-GLENDALE RESIDENT: \$60/Session

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YMCA Program Release for Participants: I have been advised of and fully understand the inherent risks associated with the YMCA programs and events. On behalf of me, and our respective heirs and assigns, hereby release, and agree to hold harmless, the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver, The City of Glendale, instructors, subsidiaries, affiliates, directors, officers, employees, owners, and all agents (collectively, the "Released Parties") from any and all claims, liabilities, and losses that relate in any way to any injury (including death) to my person or property. I give my permission (without any compensation) to use any photographs, film footage, tape recordings which include me or my child's image, voice or likeness to promote YMCA programs. This Release shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the internal laws of the State of Colorado. I (i) have read this Release, (ii) understand its content, (iii) am over the age of 18, (iv) sign this Release voluntarily and intend for it to be legally binding.

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