



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Emily Dickinson Museum Opens March 31, 2010

AMHERST, MA - The Emily Dickinson Museum opens for the 2010 season on Wednesday, March 31. While most of the Homestead, the poet's home, remains closed for a few more weeks to complete ceiling repairs, the Museum will open the tour center, museum shop and The Evergreens (home of the poet's brother) to begin the season. Hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., with extended hours during the summer months, June through August, of 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission fees range from \$4 to \$10.

Entry to the Homestead's parlors, bedchambers and other spaces is delayed this spring due to the collapse of the plaster ceiling in the Homestead's front parlor in late October 2009. Immediately after the incident, the Museum discontinued tours of the Homestead and closed the building to the public. Tours of the Evergreens continued until the end of the season. A thorough inspection of the building revealed that support for the parlor's heavy plaster ceiling was inadequate and that most other ceilings in the house were constructed at the same time (in 1916 when the Homestead was sold out of the Dickinson family) and in the same manner. "With these findings," said executive director Jane Wald, "it was clear that we needed to replace all the affected ceilings to prevent another similar incident and to remove any doubt about safety for visitors, staff, and collections." Ceiling removal began in January after the Museum closed for the season. New ceilings are currently being installed so that the Museum can open this spring.

By mid-April the Museum will open the Homestead and resume its standard schedule of two guided tours. "Emily Dickinson's World" is a 90-minute guided tour of both the Homestead and The Evergreens with an in-depth focus on Emily Dickinson's life and family and the major influences on her writing. "This Was a Poet." a family friendly 40-minute guided tour of the Homestead, introduces visitors to Emily Dickinson and her poetry, and concludes with informal readings of poems. Also available is the self-guided audio tour, "Grounds of Memory." Former poet laureate Richard Wilbur narrates an exploration of the Dickinson grounds and explains the poet's fascination with the natural world.

In addition to tours, the Museum offers engaging programming throughout the year. In 2010, programming will include popular annual events such as Emily Dickinson Poetry Walk & Open House, May 15, at 1 p.m. The day will include poetry readings at historic sites in Amherst significant to the poet's life. This year's theme is landscape and nature poetry. On July 10, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., the Museum brings a nineteenth-century children's circus to town with "Creatures of Bliss and Mystery." Families can enjoy a summer day filled with amusements Emily's niece and nephews would have loved.

Programming highlights also include collaborations with the Jones Library and Museums10. On April 10 the museum will join the Jones Library in "Celebrating Emily Dickinson's Words" with a day full of readings, activities, and discussions about Emily Dickinson's poetry. The Museum will also offer a bus trip to the New York Botanical Garden on Tuesday, May 11. The trip will include a visit to the garden's new exhibition "Emily Dickinson's Garden: The Poetry of Flowers." The exhibition runs from May 1 - June 13 and offers a re-creation of Dickinson's flower garden in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. On display will be a replica of the Homestead and the Evergreens, including the pathway connecting the homes. In the fall, the Museum will also present a new exhibit, "The Dickinsons and Dining" in participation with the Museums10 "Table for Ten" collaborative exhibition and program schedule.

For general information about the Museum's schedule, tours and hours, please visit [www.EmilyDickinsonMuseum.org](http://www.EmilyDickinsonMuseum.org) or call 413-542-8161. For information about Museum programs and events, please visit the website or call 413-542-8429.

The Emily Dickinson Museum, comprising the Dickinson Homestead and The Evergreens, is devoted to the story and legacy of poet Emily Dickinson and her family. Both properties are owned by the Trustees of Amherst College. The museum is overseen by a separate Board of Governors charged with raising its operating and capital funds. The Homestead was the birthplace and residence of the poet (1830-1886). The Evergreens was the 1856 home of the poet's brother and sister-in-law, Austin and Susan Dickinson. The official museum website is [www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org](http://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org). Regular museum hours are Wednesday through Sunday 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. March 31 through December 31, 2010 with extended summer hours 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. June through August. The Emily Dickinson Museum is located at 280 Main Street in Amherst, Massachusetts.

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