Racine Zoo Volunteen Program

The Racine Zoo is proud to provide a volunteer program that is designed for young adults ages 13 to 19 years old. This is perfect for those who are considering a future career with animals, zoos, education, or for those just looking for a fun volunteer opportunity! Volunteens gain valuable experience and learn skills to help them in their future careers, including responsibility, public speaking, how to work well with others and, of course, lots of knowledge about animals! Most people who work in zoos or related fields started off their career with volunteering. Volunteens are often the first to hear about new internships and other opportunities at our Zoo. Those who are still interested after they turn 18 can also transition into our adult Volunteer Program.

Those that wish to participate in the Volunteen program will have to submit an application along with a letter of recommendation from a teacher or group leader on professional letterhead and a personal paragraph about why they want to be a part of the program. Individuals that are selected to move along in the on-boarding process will also participate in group interviews and a training session.

To be a Racine Zoo Volunteen, one must be a dedicated, mature, and responsible individual. Once training is completed, the Volunteen may begin to sign up for shifts. Volunteens will use the online volunteer tracking program called "Volgistics" to schedule their shifts and track their hours. **During the "high season" months (April through October), Volunteens must work at least 10 hours a month. During "low season" months (November through March), hours may be limited and we will do our best to accommodate all Volunteens. However, it is expected that Volunteens work at least two hours per month.** Volunteens will also be invited to attend meetings a few times throughout the year to get to know other volunteens and learn about updates at the zoo. These meetings are optional but will count as volunteer hours. The Racine Zoo Volunteen program is divided into levels that are described below. Please note promotions to higher levels are based on merit in addition to hours served, and promotions will be invitation only. Higher level tasks may also require additional training sessions.

Volunteen:

All Volunteens start off at this level. Volunteens will work with other Racine Zoo volunteers and staff to enhance the experience of Zoo patrons. These tasks help build communication and public speaking, how to interact with a diverse group of people, and give them confidence in working independently. They will assist with:

- Interpretation: Volunteens will interact with guests in the Discovery Center, Main Building, and at other exhibits. They may use fact sheets and biofacts to teach zoo guests about the animals, exhibits, and conservation topics.

- Events & Hospitality: Volunteens will assist with Zoo events. This could include set up, cleanup, helping run a craft/game/snack station, taking tickets, or anything else that pops up depending on the zoo event!

- Zoo Beautification: Volunteens will assist our facilities department in keeping our Zoo looking beautiful! This could include picking up trash off the grounds, weeding/gardening, or other similar tasks.

- Zoo Camp Helpers: Volunteens will assist camp counselors with keeping kids together, leading games and activities, helping with crafts and snack time, grabbing supplies, etc.

Conservation Education Department Volunteen:

A minimum of at least **50** hours and a variety of shifts completed is required before becoming a CED Volunteen. Those who have completed enough hours and have proven themselves responsible, trustworthy, and able to interact with Zoo guests in a positive way may be invited to be trained on this task as spots become available. Volunteens will assist staff in the Conservation Education Department on programs which could include passing out hand sanitizer to guests, helping with crafts, games, and activities. For those who are comfortable, CED Volunteens may be allowed to teach part of a class or tour. They also are able to help the CED with office work such as organizing or preparing craft supplies and grading post-tests after programs. Hours vary based on CED Department programs and needs.

Commissary Volunteen:

A minimum of at least **50** hours and a variety of shifts completed is required before becoming a Commissary Volunteen. Those who have completed enough hours and have proven themselves responsible, trustworthy, and detail-oriented may be invited to be trained on this task as spots become available. Volunteens at this level are able to participate in commissary tasks with the Animal Care department. They help prepare daily animal diets in addition to cleaning dishes, doing laundry, walking the Zoo dog, and completing other work place cleanliness tasks. These important and sensitive tasks challenge the volunteens sense of responsibility and professionalism. They will have the opportunity to gain a more detailed understanding of working within a Zoo and network with staff. Commissary shifts are usually in 2 hour shifts in the late afternoon, varying by season.

Zoo Choo Train Conductor Volunteen:

A minimum of at least **50** hours and a variety of shifts completed is required before becoming a Zoo Choo Train Conductor Volunteen. Those who have completed enough hours and have proven themselves responsible, trustworthy, and able to interact with Zoo guests in a positive way may be invited to be trained on this task as spots become available. Volunteens must also be at least 16 years of age in order to drive the train. Train Conductor Volunteens are responsible for driving the Zoo Choo express, handling tickets, getting guests on the train, and putting the train away/taking it out. Zoo Choo Train shifts are broken into half-day shifts whenever the train is running (every day in the summer, weekends only in the Spring/Fall). Due to the complexity of scheduling for this task, Volunteen must be able to commit to a consistent weekly schedule (example: every Thursday morning in the summer).