



Volunteer Structure 2020

Mesker Park Zoo and Botanic Garden is committed to conservation of our wildlife and the environment we share. We seek engaging educational interactions with guests with the goal of enhancing their experience at the Zoo, and increasing their empathy and awareness about the environmental issues we all face. Volunteers have a significant role in that success.

Many people volunteer with their church, school, scout, work, or civic group to help with a special event or grounds project for a day, and **no special training is required** to do that. Others want to volunteer at the Zoo on a more regular basis, and should complete the training they need to serve in the roles they seek. There are a few types of volunteers at the Zoo...

Volunteers

There are many opportunities to volunteer at the Zoo, including special events, botanical projects, guest interaction, and educational programs for both the young and the young at heart. Our volunteer program is diverse and flexible to meet your needs. You can begin your volunteer path assisting with general projects and events on zoo grounds with minimal training, or advance to more skilled privileges like ambassador animal handling or educational programming with specialized training. The volunteer journey can begin for as little as 6 hours of training and 20 hours per year.

Docents

Docents are adult volunteers that interact with guests to enhance their zoo experience. Docents have completed specialized training to provide educational interpretation of exhibits, bio facts, and animals throughout the zoo to teach about wildlife, environment, and conservation topics. Docents also conduct programs to schools, scout groups, summer campers, senior citizens, and civic organizations in our community. Docents must be at least 18 years of age, a member of the Zoo, and complete training requirements that correspond with the type of privileges desired.

Zooteens

Young volunteers 13-18 years of age can become Zooteens, which help staff and adult volunteers with projects, educational activities, summer camps, and events. Our Zooteen program offers opportunities to interact with animals, meet like-minded teens, and gain beneficial experiences to help them find their paths as young ad

Volunteer today, your way!

See below for the new 2020 tiered volunteer structure, and on the reverse side for the 2020 volunteer class schedule. To find out more information, visit our website at www.meskerparkzoo.com. Register to become a volunteer by submitting an application, which can be found under "Volunteer Resources". Reservations are required to attend training classes, and classes must be completed in level order. Class size is limited, so early registration is advised. Questions? Contact the Education Department at education@meskerparkzoo.com or (812) 435-0809.

Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden Volunteer Program			Level 1 - Volunteer	Level 2 - Interpreter	Level 3 - Ambassador	Level 4 - Ambassador	Level 5 - Ambassador
Requirements	To Train	Class training & certification (hrs)	4-10	8-10	10-14		
		Animal handling certification (hrs)			6	12	12
	To Stay	Annual service requirement (hrs)	20	20	40	60	60
	Active	Annual interpretive activities requirement (# of events) **		4	6	8	8
		Annual animal handling recertification (2 required)			Yes	Yes	Yes
To Advance	Complete volunteer hours at current level (hrs)	10	10	20	20	20	
Levels		Complete volunteer time at the zoo (months)	2	6	9	12	24
		Complete cumulative hours at the zoo (hrs training & volunteering)	20	40	100	130	160
	Privileges		Level 1 - Assist on zoo grounds with general projects & events	•	•	•	•
		Level 2 - Interpret exhibits, biofacts, animal contact yard, & educational activities		•	•	•	•
		Level 3 - Interpret/ handle beginner level ambassador animals			•	•	•
		Level 4 - Interpret/ handle intermediate level ambassador animals				•	•
		Level 5 - Interpret/ handle advanced level ambassador animals					•

** Interpretive activities are educational public interactions about an event, exhibit, biofact, animal, or environmental topic.



Volunteer Classes 2020

Level 1 Class

Saturdays, Feb. 1 & Sept. 12; 9 am -4 pm

- Welcome/Introductions
- Your Zoo in conservation
 - Mission
 - Projects
 - How you can support your zoo
- Get to know the Zoo
 - Map orientation
 - Staff & Departments
 - Visitor service and FAQs
- Lay of the Land scavenger hunt
- LUNCH (12-1)
- Volunteer opportunities & training schedule
- Demo: how to sign up to volunteer on Volgistics
- Zoo policies & procedures
 - Policies -first aid, emergencies, radio use, dress, youth protection
 - Forms to sign - waiver & agreement
- Docent group meet and greet

Independent Study

- Read - "MPZBG History"
- Read - "MPZBG Docents By-laws"
- Login to Volgistics
- Take "Level 1 Class Quiz" - (online)

Level 2 Class

Saturdays, Apr. 4 & Nov. 14; 9 am -4 pm

- Conservation & Ecology
 - What is conservation?
 - Examples at the zoo
- Interpretation
 - What is interpretation?
 - Public speaking
 - How to speak kid
- Informal educational experiences at the zoo
 - Types & descriptions
 - Preparing for interpretation activities
- LUNCH (12-1)
- Tour: Intro to animal contact yard
- Intro to Biofacts
 - Biofacts inventory
 - How to use and display biofacts
- Demo tour: biofacts tables / presentations

Independent Study

- Read - "Conservation & Ecology" & "Interpretation"
- Read - Program descriptions
- Take "Level 2 Class Quiz" - (online)

Level 3 Classes

Wednesdays, Aug. 5, 12, 19, 26; 6 pm -8:30 pm

Class 3

- Intro to "Plants & Animals"
- Intro tour: all MPZ ambassador animals
- Breakout sessions: Level 3 animal introductions
- Independent study: read "Plants & Animals" & "Ambassador Animal Fact Sheets"

Class 4

- Animal welfare & ethics of use
- Stress / Enrichment / Zoonosis
- Forms to sign -zoonosis
- Breakout sessions: Level 3 animal introductions
- Independent study: animal welfare video

Class 5

- Animal handling policies & procedures
- Interpreting live animals
- Demo tour: animal encounters / presentations
- Breakout sessions: Level 3 animal introductions
- Independent study: read "Animal Handling Guidelines"

Class 6

- Formal programs we offer anywhere
- Program roles & responsibilities
- Demo tour: program activities
- Breakout sessions: Level 3 animal introductions
- Independent study: read "Appendix 2 -Lesson Plans" & "Level 3 Class Quiz"

Level 3 Animal Certification:

- Take 3 animal handling practice sessions - (with mentor)
- Take animal handling certification test - (with mentor)
- Take animal cert test - (online)

