

**The Zoo Crew has gone virtual for the 2021-2022 class.** Due to COVID-19 precautions, we have made the decision to host the teen volunteer opportunities virtually. The following information will answer some of your questions and will help you decide if the program is right for you.

### **Who can volunteer?**

This program is for youth entering 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade; applicants must be at least 14 years of age or entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the Fall of 2021. Those who have graduated high school or are 18 years or older may qualify for the Zoo's Adult Docent program.

### **What does a teen volunteer do?**

Zoo Crew volunteers focus on educational aspects of conservation. Since the program is virtual, instead of educating guests in person, teens will work on creating their own education content for social media. They will participate in citizen science projects, write letters to companies about sustainable resources such as palm oil and seafood, and complete conservation actions like watching documentaries, bird surveys, or reducing their plastic use.

Exceptions to virtual volunteering include helping out on grounds at special events. Special events include Boo at the Zoo and Zoo lights, and teens may be asked to help the front gate during these events. Duties may include directing guests to the proper line (online vs paper ticketing), directing guests to the next available window, or stationed in the Zoo to help guests find their way around. Due to COVID-19, volunteering for events is optional. You will receive notice about the availability of on grounds options about two weeks in advance. Volunteering on grounds will not replace the online assignments but there may be a hybrid option where teens can choose to complete both in person and online assignments. If you are only interested in the on-grounds activities, please do not apply to the Zoo Crew program this year as we cannot guarantee on-grounds activities will be available.

### **What DOESN'T a teen volunteer do?**

Zoo Crew volunteers will NOT be volunteering on grounds at the Reid Park Zoo with some exceptions for special events. When on grounds opportunities arise, Zoo Crew members do not work with habitat animals, Zoo Keepers, or behind the scenes.

## **How much time is required?**

Zoo Crew volunteers must complete assignments every month from July 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022. **This is not a summer only program.**

Participation will be assignment-based instead of a minimum hour requirement. Assignments will be on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, and completion of the assignment equates to volunteering the traditional Zoo Crew requirement of 6 hours per month. Assignments will range from completing conservation activities like doing a trash audit, bird watching, and watching documentaries to more interpretive based assignments like creating animal fact sheets and educational videos.

Additionally, the Zoo Crew program has Zoom meetings every Saturday at 12:15 to talk about what is happening at the Zoo, construction updates, and discuss the volunteer assignments. Meetings are not required but it is highly recommended that teens attend at least 1 meeting each month to stay current on Zoo news.

## **What training is provided?**

A mandatory training course is provided once each year. There is a \$35 training fee, which includes training materials, a Zoo Crew volunteer shirt, and a name tag. The course is taught via Zoom by Volunteer and Education Department staff and will be a mixture of lectures and group assignments. Due to the intensity and importance of the training, only one absence is allowed. There are no makeup days and any missed material will need to be reviewed on your own. The 2021 training course will take place virtually, via Zoom, on the following days:

- Sunday, May 30 from 12:00 to 3:00pm
- Tuesday, June 1 from 10:00am to 1:00pm
- Friday, June 4 from 10:00am to 1:00pm
- Sunday, June 6 from 12:00 to 3:00pm
- Tuesday, June 8th from 10:00am to 1:00pm
- Friday, June 11 from 10:00am to 1:00pm
- Sunday, June 13 from 12:00 to 3:00pm
- Saturday, June 19 from 10:00am to 1:00pm - Parents are recommended to attend this day

## **How are teens selected?**

All applications must be received by March 31, 2021; incomplete applications will not be considered. The Zoo Crew volunteer program is competitive and, based on applications, select teens will be scheduled for an interview. Please note that due to the volume of applications all applicants may not be interviewed. The teens chosen for this year's program will be selected

based on their demonstration of maturity and ability to adapt to virtual learning environments, as well as their commitment to wildlife conservation and education.

### **How do I apply?**

Applications, including an uploaded letter of recommendation, are submitted through the online portal on the Zoo's website. We will contact you after receiving your application to confirm your submission. If you have any questions or have issues submitting your application, please email: [Sierra.Horsey@reidparkzoo.org](mailto:Sierra.Horsey@reidparkzoo.org).