



## **Education Department Volunteer Program**

Zoo Crew (ages 13-17)

### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The “Zoo Crew” program is a popular volunteer program for teens interested in animals, conservation, public speaking, education, and connecting with people! Zoo Crew members interact with Zoo guests and educates them about various topics, including wildlife conservation, animal diets and enrichment, and the animals housed at the Zoo. Zoo Crew members set up discovery stations throughout the Zoo and use bio-facts, props, interactive games, literature, media, and activities to help teach all zoo visitors.

### **AGE REQUIREMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Teens must be between the ages of 13 and 17 to apply for the Zoo Crew program and must undergo TB testing. This program is designed on a step ladder system, meaning that the longer teens are active in the program, the more activities they can become involved in. Depending on how long teens are Zoo Crew members, they will be able to provide discovery stations in new areas of the zoo, be trained to handle small animals, create new activities, attend outreach events, and participate in special field trips.

The Zoo Crew’s core schedule consists of working at a variety of stations to encourage visitors to learn about our animals, including:

- Providing interpretive animal information for the public using a variety of bio-facts and media at discovery stations;
- Painting faces while teaching about animals;
- Leading crafts and enrichment activities;
- Providing information at community outreach events;
- Assisting and entertaining guests during zoo birthday parties; and
- Directing visitors to special event booths or activities.

Zoo Crew members also help to maintain educational facilities and supplies through cleaning and organizing and support the zoo through fundraising and distributing flyers and information.

Zoo Crew volunteers are required to volunteer six (6) hours per month for one full year, or have accumulated 72 hours by the end of the one year term in order to receive recognition at the Volunteer

Appreciation Event and remain in the volunteer program. Volunteer progress will be reviewed on a quarterly basis and volunteers that have not completed at least 50% of their required hours by the third quarter will be issued a termination warning.

Zoo Crew shifts are typically 10am-1pm or 1pm-4pm on any week day or weekend day every day of the year except for Christmas. Some shift exceptions may arise for special events and outreaches or lack of staff availability.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

The Zoo Crew program is highly competitive and space is limited. As a result, Micke Grove Zoo has developed a rigorous application process in order to ensure that only committed candidates become a part of the program.

If a teen is interested in applying for the Zoo Crew program, the applicant and a parent or guardian must attend one of three mandatory information meetings held in April, August, or December. The information meeting is free and dates and times will be announced on the volunteer information page. Zoo Crew applications will only be distributed at the information meeting.

Applicants are also required to submit a 200 word essay in response to three questions listed on the application and must include two letters of recommendation: one letter from a science instructor and one letter from a teacher, career counselor, school administrator, or other adult who could recommend the applicant for this program. The application deadline will be two weeks after the mandatory information meeting has occurred.

Applications will be reviewed and if an applicant is considered for the Zoo Crew program, the applicant will be contacted for an interview. Teens that pass the interview must attend four mandatory training sessions before they can begin volunteering. Volunteer training dates and times will be announced when the dates for the information meeting are released and fees will be required.