

YOUTH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Zoo Guides

Summer 2020

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium



Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium (PDZA) delivers many volunteer opportunities for local youth. As Zoo Guides, high school students have an opportunity to increase and share their knowledge of animals, conservation and the environment while gaining valuable volunteer experience in a zoo and aquarium setting. We are looking for responsible, dedicated and enthusiastic teens to volunteer during the summer. If you are interested in volunteering on a less frequent basis during the school year, additional opportunities may be available after you successfully complete the summer season. Please read the following descriptions and requirements carefully before submitting your application.

ZOO GUIDES WILL...

- Talk with and educate Zoo Guests about our animals, conservation, and environmental issues.
- Guide activities in animal exhibit areas to encourage both children and adults to think about their place in the natural world and the role they can take in its conservation.
- Interact with Zoo Guests of all ages in a FUN and EDUCATIONAL setting.
- Participate in community science and conservation action projects at PDZA and in the community.
- Have the option to be a Beach Walk Naturalist (additional training required).

Please Note: Youth volunteers (including Zoo Guides) DO NOT assist with animal care.

ELIGIBILITY

Zoo Guides must be at least 14 years old by June 22, 2020 and must be high school students, entering 9th – 12th grade during the 2020-2021 school year (or equivalent if Home School or Running Start student). Applicants must also be able to attend **ALL** of the training sessions listed in the following sections.

APPLICATION

Zoo Guide applications are available for download at www.pdza.org/connect/volunteer/high-school-volunteer or by contacting the Volunteer Office at volunteer@pdza.org. Returning Zoo Guides will be emailed a separate application. Do not fill out the application found online if you are a Returning Zoo Guide.

To be considered for the position, applicants are required to submit an application with one reference form (from an adult other than a relative) and attend both a large and a small group interview. Not all applicants will be interviewed or accepted. ***Applications must be received by 4:00pm on January 27, 2020.***

Following a review of all applications, selected applicants will be invited to attend one large group interview and one small group interview. Large group interviews will take place on Saturday, February 29 OR Sunday, March 1 from **1:00-4:00pm**. **Please indicate your preference of large group interview date on your application.** Small group interviews will be scheduled at the end of the large group interview and will take place in the following weeks. Absence from either interview without giving the Volunteer Office prior notice of your absence will result in automatic disqualification from the Zoo Guide application process.

Final team selections will be made in March and all Applicants will be notified no later than March 14, 2020.

TIME REQUIREMENT

Membership in PDZA Zoo Guides requires a significant time commitment not just through the summer, but also during the last few months of the school year. Zoo Guides are expected to serve a total of **97 hours** between Thursday, March 26 and Sunday, August 30, 2020. The total number of volunteer hours required from Zoo Guides during the School Year and the Summer Season are as follows:

School Year (March 26– June 21) – 34 hours total

Zoo Guides are required to attend 7 sessions of mandatory training totaling 28 hours during the months of March - June. The exact dates and times of these trainings can be found in the “Training” section below.

Zoo Guides must also complete 6 hours of mentoring shifts between Sunday, May 3 and Sunday, June 21, 2020. Zoo Guides are required to attend one mentoring shift in May and one mentoring shift in June. Mentoring shifts are three hours long and take place on Saturdays and Sundays.

Summer Season (June 22 – August 30) – 63 hours total

Summer volunteer shifts will begin for Zoo Guides on Monday, June 22, 2020 and will end on Sunday, August 30, 2020. During this 10 week period Zoo Guides are required to work one, 6 hour shift per week for a total of 60 hours. Zoo Guides will be able to indicate their preference for the day they would like to work and may be asked to work on a weekend day. Absences are allowed with prior notification to the Volunteer Office. Zoo Guides have the option to work additional shifts between Monday, August 31 and Monday, September 7, 2020 which marks the official end of the Zoo’s “Summer Season.”

Zoo Guides will also be required to attend a MANDATORY, three-hour, Mid-Season Meeting on **Thursday, July 23, 2020** from 5:30pm – 8:30pm.

Zoo Guides may complete more hours than required upon the approval of the Youth Volunteer Coordinator.

FAMILY MEETING

A MANDATORY meeting for all **Zoo Guides AND their Parents/Guardians** is scheduled for **Thursday, March 26, 2020 from 6pm-8pm**. This meeting will cover participation expectations and is an opportunity for Parents/Guardians to have their questions answered and to meet the Youth Volunteer Coordinators. A reminder of this meeting will be given upon acceptance as a Zoo Guide.

TRAINING DATES

Mandatory training will take place in March - June. The exact dates and times of training are as follows:

- Thursday, **March 26:** 6pm-8pm: Mandatory Family Meeting (Zoo Guide AND a Parent/Guardian)
- Thursday, **April 16:** 6pm-9pm
- Saturday, **April 18:** 2pm-8pm (please bring a sack dinner)
- Thursday, **April 23:** 6pm-9pm
- Saturday, **April 25:** 11am-5pm (please bring a sack lunch & afternoon snack)
- Saturday, **May 2:** 11am-5pm (please bring a sack lunch & afternoon snack)
- Thursday, **June 18:** 5:30pm-7:30pm

Zoo Guides **MUST** complete **ALL** trainings. Trainings will cover all the necessary topics and skills required for a Zoo Guide to be successful in their position. Absences from mandatory trainings are allowed **provided:**

- No more than 1 training sessions is missed. **No Exceptions.**
- The Volunteer Office receives prior notification of the absence.
- A make-up training and/or homework is successfully completed for the session missed.

Please Note: The inability to attend all trainings, provide advanced notice of an absence, or successfully complete an alternative training as outlined above will result in dismissal from the Zoo Guides.

Zoo Guides must also complete two, 3-hour mentoring shifts that take place in May and June.

OPTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Conservation Work Parties: Youth Volunteers will have the opportunity to participate in single-day conservation work parties throughout the summer. The projects could range from habitat restoration to enrichment making to organic gardening to community science surveys. Work parties will be scheduled occasionally throughout the year, advertised to all youth volunteers, and sign-ups will be operated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Beach Walk Naturalist: Do you love marine life? As a Zoo Guide you will have the opportunity to sign up to be a Beach Walk Naturalist and guide participants through their exploration of the beach at low tide. Additional training is required and as a Naturalist you must be able to commit to work 3 beach walks during the summer months. Dates and times will be available at the first Zoo Guide training.

ADMINISTRATIVE FEE

The Youth Volunteer Team requires a fee of \$40 to cover expenses including, but not limited to: a volunteer shirt, nametag, training materials, and social activities. Financial aid is available for qualified applicants. Applicants requesting financial aid assistance will need to submit a PDZA Education Department Financial Aid Application upon acceptance as a Zoo Guide. The Administrative Fee is due following acceptance as a Zoo Guide. Please **DO NOT** send your Administrative Fee or Financial Aid Form with your application.

APPLICATION AVAILABLE ONLINE at www.pdza.org/connect/volunteer/high-school-volunteer

Or you may contact the Volunteer Office at:

volunteer@pdza.org or (253) 404-3687.

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 4:00pm ON JANUARY 27, 2020.