

Teen Volunteer Program Application

Thank you for your interest in the Little Rock Zoo Teen Volunteer Program!

As volunteers with a conservation organization, you are partners in promoting conservation awareness and providing fun, fascinating, and inspiring activities for our guests. Our Teen Volunteers are an incredibly helpful and valued part of the Little Rock Zoo team, and we aim to provide them with useful experiences as they serve with us.

We will do our best to provide you with a variety of fun, social, and educational opportunities as well as valuable experiences. We hope you will grow as leaders in conservation and community, and that you will make the most of the opportunities that lie before you.

The Education Office number is **(501) 661 – 7220**.

You can email questions about the program to **mgates@littlerock.gov**.

We look forward to serving the community with you. Please let any of us know if there is anything we can do to make our time together even more enjoyable!

Michael Gates
mgates@littlerock.gov
(501) 661-7220

Once you have completed your application, mail it to:

Little Rock Zoo

Attn: Conservation Education Department
(Michael Gates)
#1 Zoo Drive
Little Rock, AR 72205

You can also scan it and email it to the email above.

Once your application and recommendation forms have been received, they will be reviewed and you will be contacted for an interview. In light of the response to COVID-19 we will likely conduct a phone or Zoom interview.

By submitting an application you agree that you have reviewed and will follow all of the following expectations and policies of the Teen Volunteer Program.

Mandatory Program Requirements

The Teen Volunteer Program is not a small commitment.

- You must reach 100 volunteer hours per year (June 1st to May 31).
- You must attend at least 6 monthly meetings per year.
- You must complete at least one (1) Conservation Start Something Project per year.

Start Something Conservation Project

Conservation is defined as the preservation, protection, and/or restoration of the natural environment and of wildlife. The Little Rock Zoo is a conservation based organization and many of the volunteer assignments that you will do as part of the Teen Volunteer Program help us are based in conservation and conservation education. However the Education Department wants to empower you to be a conservation leader and a student leader in our community, which is where the Start Something Conservation Project comes in.

Your assignment is in the name, start something! Your project can be anything that supports the Little Rock Zoos mission of conservation and inspiring people to conserve. You will learn about examples and complete a brainstorming activity at the Teen Volunteer Kick-off (typically in June).

Project Guidelines:

- You may work alone or with a small group (up to 4).
- Your project must somehow support conservation or otherwise relate to conservation and have a measurable impact (dollars raised, likes/views received, number of people reached, etc.).
- Your project does not have to be carried out at the Little Rock Zoo, it can be at your school or in your community.
- A project idea and outline will be due by the August monthly meeting.
- Your project must be carried out enough to present at the Teen Volunteer Program End-of-Summer event, the (1 year after the above August deadline).

Little Rock Zoo Mission, Vision, and Values

Little Rock Zoo Mission:

To inspire people to value and conserve our natural world.

Little Rock Zoo Vision:

We envision a world where nature is in balance and all living things thrive.

Little Rock Zoo Value Statements:

We share a future with animals and our fate is linked.

Our work creates meaningful change.

We engage guests to conserve, learn and care.

Little Rock Zoo Standard of Conduct

The Little Rock Zoo is a proud member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and aims to uphold excellence in guest service and environmental care.

As Teen Volunteers, you represent the Zoo and are expected to follow the Zoo's high standards of behavior.

- 1) **Be friendly and polite to all Zoo guests.** Your behavior reflects on all other Zoo team members. Zoo volunteers are expected to treat the public, staff, and other volunteers with courtesy and respect. You are expected to refrain from cursing, discussing topics inappropriate for children to hear, or discussion of illegal activities while you are at the Zoo. This rule still applies even on your lunch breaks!
- 2) **Be respectful of all Zoo property.** This includes walking along paths (not in flower beds, landscaped areas, etc.) and picking up litter on the walks. This also means not damaging Zoo property, including any props, biofacts, etc. that you use. A Teen Volunteer is never to enter "Employee Only" areas without permission from an authorized Zoo staff member (NEVER assume that because you have had permission in the past, you can enter "Employee Only" areas in the present without renewed permission). Under no circumstances can you bring friends, family or guests behind the scenes without permission and accompaniment by Education Department Staff.
- 3) **Be a good example for visitors.** Always observe the animals calmly and respectfully. If a visitor is acting inappropriately while viewing an animal, politely remind him/her that they are visitors in the animal's home. Animal harassment should be reported to Zoo Staff immediately.
- 4) **Report incidents to Zoo staff.** If a Zoo visitor violates Zoo rules, remain calm and do not become involved in the situation. Report the incident immediately to Education Department Staff (heretofore referred to as your "Supervisors"), another Zoo employee, or the Zoo Emergency Phone at 501 – 975 – 9111.
- 5) **Wear your uniform appropriately.** You are required to follow the dress code discussed on the next page of this handbook.

Dress Code and Personal Belongings

While volunteering, Teen Volunteers are required to dress in uniform as follows:

1. Volunteer uniform shirts are to be worn and tucked in.
2. Jackets and sweatshirts are permitted, weather dependent. No religious, political or controversial messages may be worn.
3. Your Zoo identification nametag must be worn in a visible location at chest level at all times.
4. Khaki shorts, pants, capris or skirts are preferred; navy blue, brown, gray, and black are also approved colors. If shorts or skirts are worn, they must not come to more than three inches above your knees. No short shorts, leggings, sweatpants, cut-offs, jeans, or baggy pants are permitted! If you come to volunteer in violation of the dress code, you will be sent home if a change of clothes cannot be supplied.
5. Comfortable walking shoes are a necessity! Do not wear shoes that are not secured to your foot (i.e. flip flops or slides) or shoes with heels.
6. Only hats or visors without any branding or the Little Rock Zoo's logo or name are permitted. Hats must be worn with the bill facing forward and parallel to the ground.
7. Any buttons or other accessories that you choose to wear must have messages relevant to the Zoo, animals, or conservation.
8. Do not bring pocket knives or multitools with knives. Weapons of any kind are not allowed.
9. Belts are strongly encouraged.
10. Do not wear excessive jewelry (earring and facial studs, dangling necklaces, etc.) when working around animals.
11. Any extreme or offensive tattoos should be covered.

The use of cell phones is prohibited while in a public area on Zoo grounds while in uniform. Communicate with Zoo staff and other volunteers using your walkie-talkie ("radio").

The Little Rock Zoo is not liable for the loss of personal property that you bring while volunteering, including cell phones, tablets, and iPods. The Zoo does provide lockers in the Education Building for storage while you are on grounds to volunteer.

Safety around Animals

Each Teen Volunteer has the responsibility to help ensure that accidents do not occur. If you are injured, report this to your supervisor immediately. If it is a serious injury, report it to Security and they will notify your supervisor. **All injuries must be reported--no matter how minor they may seem.** If you see an unsafe condition on Zoo grounds, let a staff member know immediately.

A volunteer is never to enter an animal area other than when assigned to work in that area. NEVER make direct contact with Zoo animals without permission from Zoo Staff. If you are a Level 3 Volunteer and have been trained on animal handling, do not handle any animal unless you have permission from an animal care staff person in that area for that particular occasion. NEVER assume that because you have handled an animal in the past, you can handle it in the present without renewed permission.

If you are assigned to an area that works directly with animals (such as the Arkansas Heritage Farm), your supervisors will inform you how to behave around them. If you have any questions about how to complete a task or what to do or not do, please ask; we would rather you take the time to learn rather than continue without a clear understanding.

Disciplinary Process

As a Little Rock Zoo Teen Volunteer, we hold our representatives to a high standard of conduct. Your volunteer standing is on an at-will basis, meaning that there is no guarantee of your continued volunteer standing. The Zoo may dismiss a volunteer at any time. Little Rock Zoo staff reserves the right to determine when immediate dismissal is necessary.

Teen Volunteers are expected to behave following their Standard of Conduct. In the case of a poor choice made by a volunteer, we adhere to the following disciplinary procedure in most cases. Education Department Staff may circumvent this procedure at any time, depending on the severity of your actions.

First Offense: Verbal Warning: A verbal warning from a Little Rock Zoo staff member means a rule has been broken and an explanation of what corrective action, if any, should be taken by the volunteer. A notation of a verbal warning will be made and retained in the volunteer's file.

Second Offense: Written Reprimand: A written warning to the volunteer indicates that a rule has been broken or that performance is unacceptable. This warning serves to notify the volunteer that unless improvement is made, his or her continued relationship with the Zoo is in jeopardy. A copy of the written warning will be made and retained in the volunteer's file. A parent/guardian will be notified.

Third offense: Dismissal: This means your volunteering relationship with the Little Rock Zoo has been discontinued. You will be required to return your name badge, lanyard, and volunteer shirt. The processing fee will not be refunded.

Some examples of choices which result in disciplinary action are:

- Behavior which results in a complaint from guests or staff
- Inappropriate or obscene language
- Carelessness or neglect in performing work duties
- Failing to appear to volunteer without 24-hour prior notice or finding replacement
- Inappropriate use of a cell phone when on-grounds with guests

Immediate dismissal from the volunteer program will result from:

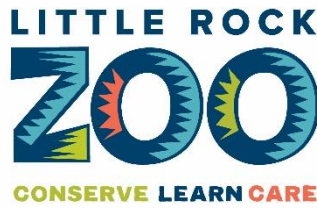
- Using illegal substances
- Entering an animal area without permission
- Handling an animal without permission
- Bringing a weapon to the Zoo. This includes, but is not limited to, firearms and knives.
- Theft
- Behavior that creates an unsafe situation for Zoo animals, guests, other volunteers or staff
- Sending or posting non-approved electronic media

NOTE: Offenses are not limited to the above examples and are at the discretion of the Supervisors. Using common-sense is the best way to avoid a situation that requires discipline. If you are unsure about what to do, check with your Supervisors first.

General Rules

1. You must sign in and out to receive credit for volunteering. If you do not sign in and out on the day you volunteer, that day will not be counted towards your volunteer hours.
2. When you arrive at your scheduled area, check-in with a Zoo staff member before beginning your work.
3. Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted to be used on Zoo grounds while volunteering. This includes entering the Zoo in the morning at the beginning of your shift and leaving the Zoo in the afternoon at the conclusion of your shift.
4. If you arrive at your scheduled area and after looking diligently, you have been unable to locate someone there to explain your duties, report back to the Education Building.
5. Always let staff know when you are leaving an assigned area to go to your next area.
6. Carry out your assignments promptly and to the best of your ability. If you finish a task early, ask if there is anything else you can do to help.
7. When using Zoo equipment or supplies, you are responsible for returning items in good condition. If something is damaged, even if the damage seems minor, report it to your Supervisor. Removal of Zoo property from Zoo grounds is prohibited.
8. Unless you obtain prior approval from your Supervisors, Teen Volunteers are not permitted to bring non-Volunteer friends on days you are scheduled to volunteer. We do not have emergency release forms on your friends and cannot be responsible for them. Also, they tend to distract you from your duties. They are welcome to come with you when you are not volunteering.
9. If you come to the Zoo on a day where you are not scheduled to volunteer, do not prevent other Teen Volunteers from doing their jobs. Doing so will result in the Supervisors writing a negative evaluation on you that day, even though you are not scheduled to work. You can socialize during their lunch breaks.
10. Under no circumstances are you permitted to bring friends, family or guests into staff only or behind-the-scenes areas.
11. Lunches may be brought and kept in the Education Building, or food is available for purchase at the concession areas.
12. Teen Volunteers are eligible to stay in the Little Rock Zoo Teen Volunteer Program until the August 15th after their High School Graduation.

If you ever have a question about an animal or are unsure about anything (procedures, problems, etc.), ASK! Your Supervisors, as well as other Zoo staff members, are here to help you learn and have a fun, educational summer. Let us know how best we can help you work to the best of your abilities!



Little Rock Zoo Teen Volunteer Program Application

Name:

Last, First, MI: _____

Date of Birth; month, day, year: _____

Home Address:

Street: _____

City: State: _____

Zip: _____

County: _____

Mailing Address (If different from home address):

Street: _____

City: State: _____

Zip: _____

County: _____

Your Parents/Legal Guardian Contact Info:

Name(s): _____

Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Please provide us with the names, relationships and phone numbers of two persons we may contact on your behalf **in case of an emergency**. ***NOTE***: We will always try and contact your parent/legal guardian first. So for the emergency contacts, please put someone else who could easily get ahold of your legal guardian in case of an emergency.

Emergency Contact #1: _____

Emergency Contact #2: _____

Education

What school do you currently go to? _____

What grade are you currently in? _____

Do you play any sports or are you involved in any clubs?

Skills, Training, and Experience

Do you have any experience in working with or caring for animals? Explain.

Have you ever worked with children? Explain.

What are some other things you are interested in?

Have you ever volunteered at the Little Rock Zoo before? _____

If yes, please describe your previous volunteer experience.

Why you are interested in volunteering at the Little Rock Zoo?

What do you hope to get out of the Teen Program?

References

Please list the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of two non-familial references:

Name: _____
Last, First, MI: _____
Relationship: _____
Cell Phone #: _____
Email: _____

Name: _____
Last, First, MI: _____
Relationship: _____
Cell Phone #: _____
Email: _____

You must have your references (2) complete the attached recommendation form.

Authorization to Release Information

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, all of the information I am providing the Little Rock Zoo is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation, falsification, or willful omission may result in a refusal to allow me to be a Zoo volunteer or a dismissal from volunteer service.

I understand that as part of the Teen Volunteer application process, a routine inquiry may be made that will provide or confirm information concerning my character, education, training, and qualifications to be a Teen Volunteer.

I hereby authorize the release of information relative to the status of my character, education, training, and qualifications.

I release all individuals and organizations from any and all liabilities resulting from providing such information.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

WAIVER OF LIABILITY
Volunteer Service with a Municipal Recreational Facility

Legal Guardian's Name: _____ Starting Date: _____

Because of the nature of the volunteer work I will be doing, I understand that neither the Little Rock Zoo, City of Little Rock, or ANY of their employees shall be held liable for any actions or injuries which may result from this type of work. I will also follow the designated chain of command as established by the institution.

I further understand that I will complete all required training and will be subject to supervision from the facility director and/or designated employees and shall follow ALL directions as instructed.

Signature of volunteer: _____ Date: _____

Signature of legal guardian: _____ Date: _____

I understand that applying for the Teen Program **DOES NOT** guarantee acceptance into the teen program. Initials: _____

Latest update 04/20/2020