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**LEVEL 1**  
**ZOO TEEN**  
**HANDBOOK**

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## ***CH 1- WELCOME TO MESKER PARK ZOO***

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- ***Our Zoo***
- ***Our Mission***
- ***What is the AZA?***
- ***Who's Who at the Zoo***

## ***CH 2- ZOO HISTORY***

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- ***The Evolution of Zoos***
- ***Mesker Park Zoo History***

## ***CH 3- CITY OF EVANSVILLE & MPZ POLICIES***

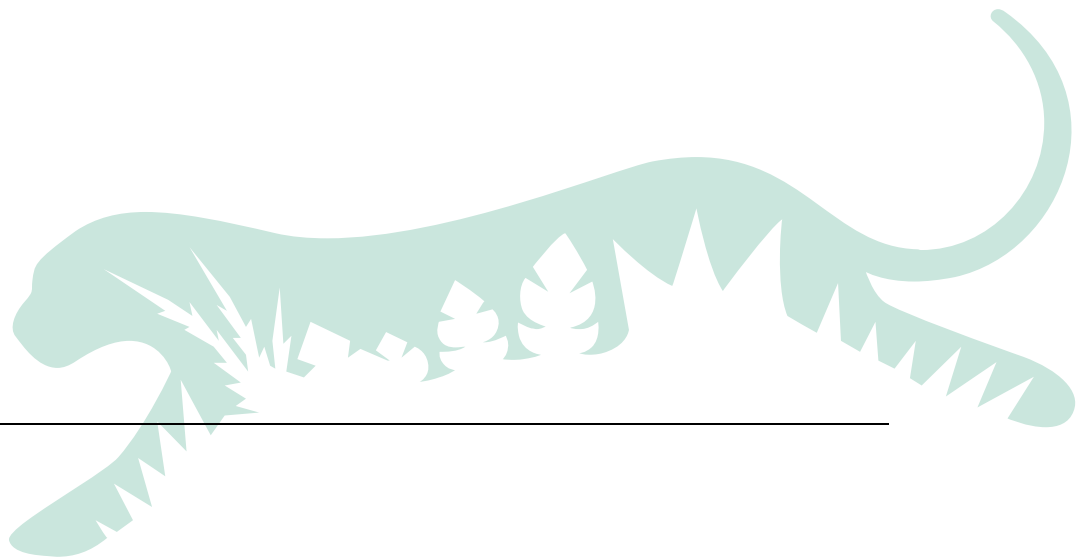
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- ***General Policies & Procedures***
- ***Youth Protection Policy***

## ***CH 4- VOLUNTEERING***

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- ***Volunteer Types***
- ***Benefits***
- ***Service Opportunities & Supervisors***
- ***Scheduling & Records***
- ***Uniform***
- ***Volunteer Levels***
- ***Training Classes***
- ***Volunteer Status***
- ***Code of Conduct***



# Welcome to Mesker Park Zoo

## Chapter

# 1

*Get to know the Zoo!*

**W**elcome to our team! This Volunteer Handbook will provide guidance as you begin your volunteer journey with us. Before you get started, we want to introduce you to the Zoo and to our ZooTeen program.






## Our Zoo

Evansville's Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden opened its doors in 1928. We are a public zoological park operated by the City of Evansville, with the assistance of our non-profit partner, the Evansville Zoological Society. Zoo grounds consist of approximately 50 acres, with an additional 80 acres across the street at our compost facility, and over 700 animals on exhibit. We employ approximately 45 full time staff, and just as many part-time and seasonal staff. We have about 150 volunteers consisting of general volunteers, Docents, ZooTeens, and board members. Mesker Park Zoo serves thousands of people from all over the Midwest region each year.

## Our Mission

**Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden's mission is to foster the preservation of the Earth's diverse species and living systems through an active role in education and conservation in our regional and professional community. We will forge connections between people and the natural world by providing quality experiences that promote understanding and celebrate the rich tapestry of life.**

In support of our mission and to better serve our community we will:

-  Improve the quality of our visitors' experience through engaging and accessible exhibits, interpretive activities, and amenities.
-  Create exhibits and programs that have a meaningful impact and form a connection with the world's ecosystems.
-  Increase our relevance to the regional community by being the premier resource for conservation, ecological education and recreation in the surrounding area.
-  Help preserve biodiversity through the responsive management of a diverse living collection and involvement in conservation efforts.
-  Improve the understanding of the results and processes of scientific endeavor through research partnerships, sponsorships, and educational initiatives.

## What is the AZA?

Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden is proud to be accredited by the American Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The AZA is a “nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation.” AZA establishes and maintains high industry standards for zoos and aquariums through accreditation. Zoos and aquariums voluntarily seek to meet these standards to gain acceptance and access into a credible community of zoo and aquarium professionals and resources. To be accredited, an institution must be a permanent cultural facility that owns and maintains wildlife, open to the public on a regular basis, and under the direction of a professional staff. We are proud to be one of the AZA’s 210 accredited members. For more information about the AZA or its programs please visit their website ([www.aza.org](http://www.aza.org)).

ACCREDITED BY THE  
**ASSOCIATION  
OF ZOOS &  
AQUARIUMS**

**AZA’s Vision:**  
“The American Zoo and Aquarium Association envisions a world where all people respect, value and conserve animals and nature.”

**MESKER PARK ZOO & BOTANIC GARDEN**  
**Zoo Map**

West Summit Drive  
To HWY 66

Additional parking  
MAIN ENTRANCE Lot A  
Mesker Park Drive

Animal Commissary  
Brooks Garden  
Pheasant Garden  
Port Victoria  
Paddle Boats  
Lake Victoria  
Lemur Forest  
Bumper Boats  
Event Tent  
Family Garden  
Lone Point  
NORTH AMERICA

St. Joseph Avenue  
To HWY 62

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AQUARIUMS**

### Map Key

Restrooms	Paddle Boats*
Concessions	Bumper Boats*
Tram Stop	Garden
Gift Shop	* Seasonal attractions

Kley Building	North America
Asia/Australia	Amazonia
Africa	Discovery Center
African Rift	Children's Enchanted Forest

**Animal Commissary**  
Stop by this "cafeteria" for animals and talk to Zookeepers about what it takes to keep over 700 animals healthy and well-fed.

**Concessions**  
The Rainforest Grill (near the main entrance) is open daily from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Concessions are also available seasonally near the Discovery Center.

**Zoo Tram**  
The Zoo Tram runs daily and offers a guided tour of zoo grounds. The tram makes regular boarding stops at Tram Stations around the zoo. Tram rides are FREE for Zoo Members. *Stroller and handicap accessible*

**Zoo Tokens**  
Tokens can be purchased at four locations throughout the zoo. Use your tokens at the following activities:

- Tram Tours
- Giraffe Feeding
- Paddle Boat Rides
- Bumper Boat Rides

Each activity requires 2 tokens per person.

## Who's Who at the Zoo

A zoo requires a large, diverse team of people to operate and maintain it.



### DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR –	Erik Beck
DEPUTY DIRECTOR –	Paul Bouseman



### MANAGERS

ANIMAL CURATOR –	(vacant)
ASSISTANT ANIMAL CURATOR –	Leigh Ramon
REGISTRAR –	Dana Dillon
STAFF VETERINARIAN –	Dr. Carrie Ullmer
FACILITIES MANAGER –	David Voegel
EDUCATION CURATOR –	Lauren Norvell
BOTANIC CURATOR –	Misty Minar
MARKETING MANAGER –	Danny Schembre
VISITOR SERVICES MANAGER –	Stephanie Sanderson
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR –	Jennifer Evans



### OTHER FULL-TIME STAFF

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT –	(vacant)
MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR -	Leigh Ann O'Donnell
EVENTS COORDINATOR -	(vacant)
FINANCE MANAGER -	Sam Stone
FINANCE OFFICER -	(vacant)
REVENUE CLERK -	Gina Nance
VETERINARY TECHNICIAN -	Kristie VanHoosier
Teamsters Staff in Animal, Operations, & Botanical Departments	



### PART-TIME STAFF (year-round)

VISITOR SERVICES ASSISTANT -	Kristie Rueger, Cassie Englert
EDUCATION SPECIALIST – Camp & Volunteer Coord. -	Daytona Begle
EDUCATION SPECIALIST – Family Engagement –	(vacant)
EDUCATION SPECIALIST – Youth Programs -	(vacant)
EDUCATION PROGRAMS COORDINATOR -	Virginia Sanabria



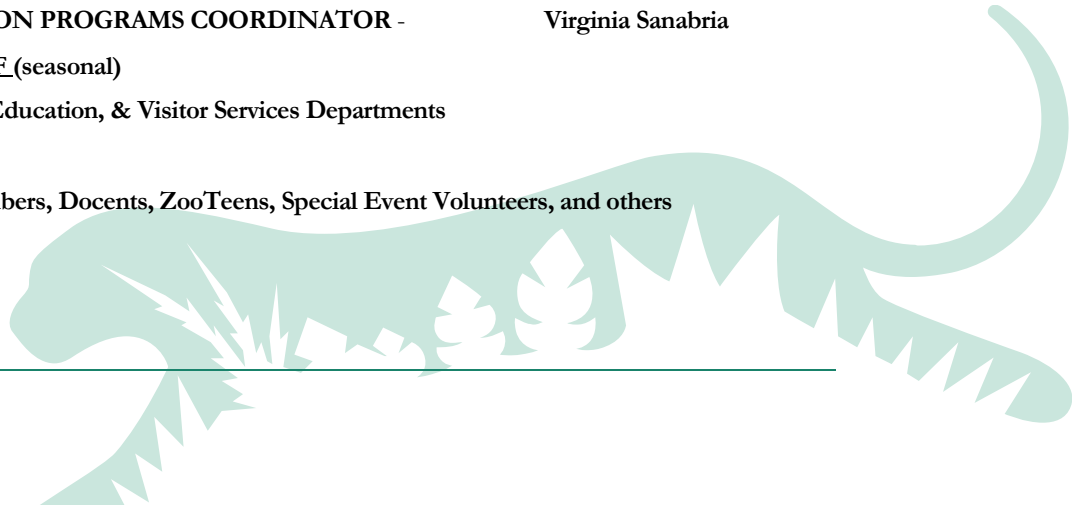
### PART-TIME STAFF (seasonal)

Botanical, Education, & Visitor Services Departments



### VOLUNTEERS

Board Members, Docents, ZooTeens, Special Event Volunteers, and others



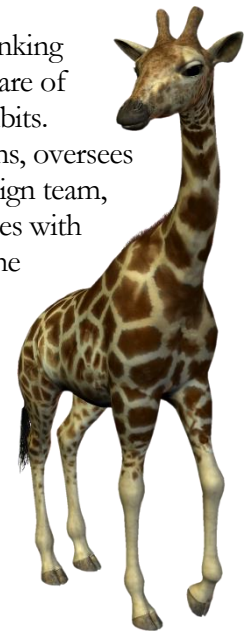
## Zoo Departments

Volunteers interact with staff in many different zoo departments. Volunteers may help guide guests (Visitor Services Dept.), complete a grounds project (Botanical Dept.), or assist with an education program (Education Dept.). Here is a *brief look* at the zoo, department by department.

### Animal Department

Most children (and ZooTeens) that tell you they want to work for the zoo are thinking of working in this department. Although this department is responsible for the care of the animal collection, there is more to this than feeding animals and cleaning exhibits.

The Animal Curator also plans animal acquisitions, implements breeding programs, oversees enrichment, protects the health of the animal collection, works on the exhibit design team, and manages the largest full-time staff in the zoo. The Animal Curator coordinates with vet staff to maintain a healthy collection. In addition, he oversees nutrition, and the ordering of animal food and other supplies. An essential part of managing the zoo's collection is accurate record keeping and the Registrar is responsible for the integrity of the records. Most people are familiar with the basic duties of the zookeeper, but would be surprised by how it has changed over the last few decades. Zookeepers are now expected to have college degrees and may engage in professional activities including: animal training, developing new enrichment programs, assisting in medical procedures, implementing conservation projects, and membership in a variety of national and international organizations. The Animal Curator, Assistant Animal Curator, and the Zookeepers work together to ensure that specific husbandry standards are maintained.



### Health Services Department

MPZ&BG is proud to have a full time staff veterinarian and veterinary technician. The health services department is responsible for all medical care needed by our animals from preventative medicine (including prenatal care, vaccinations, and nutrition) to regular check-ups to medical emergencies.

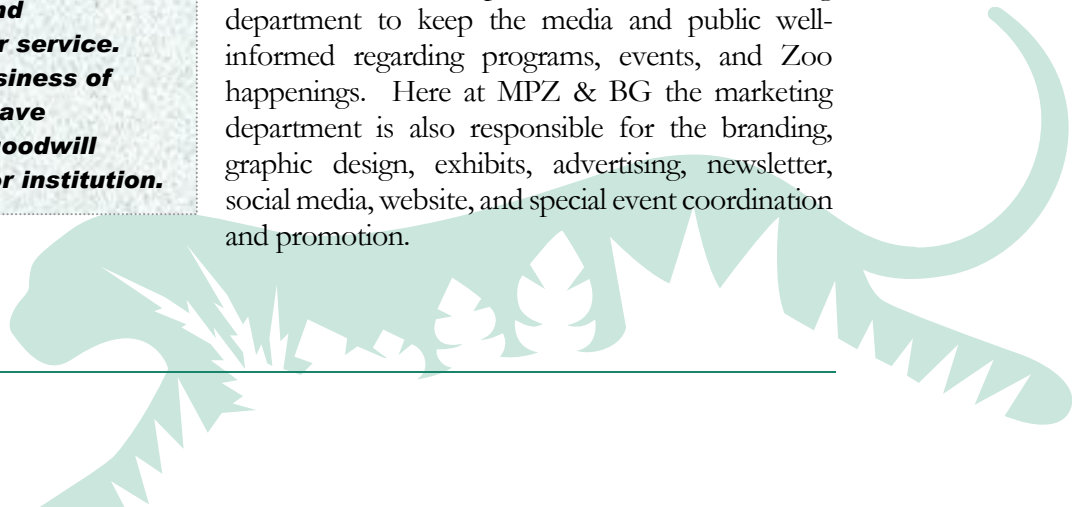
### Marketing Department

**From Merriam-Webster Online**

**Marketing: the process or technique of promoting, selling, and distributing a product or service.**

**Public relations: the business of inducing the public to have understanding for and goodwill toward a person, firm, or institution.**

Marketing departments at zoos are asked to market the zoo and its programs without compromising its mission. It is important for the marketing department to keep the media and public well-informed regarding programs, events, and Zoo happenings. Here at MPZ & BG the marketing department is also responsible for the branding, graphic design, exhibits, advertising, newsletter, social media, website, and special event coordination and promotion.





## Education Department

The Education Department provides a variety of interpretive and educational opportunities to further the mission of the Zoo. The Education staff design and conduct school, scout, and other youth group programs, adult programs, day camps, community events, and more at the zoo and out in the community. We utilize live animals, hands-on activities, biofacts, guided imagery, journaling, and other methods in both formal and informal settings to teach about animals, ecological relationships, environmental issues, and the roles of zoos in conservation. These engaging experiences help people build an understanding of and empathy for wild animals and their natural world. We aim to help people to find a relevant connection to these animals, so that they might advocate for their care and protection.



We couldn't accomplish all that we do without our Volunteers. Volunteers, Docents (volunteer educators), and ZooTeens are all part of our team. The Education Department coordinates the volunteer program by conducting training classes, communicating volunteer opportunities, and coordinating with them for all events and programming.

## Botanical Department

All the beautiful plantings and lush immersion experiences around MPZ&BG are the work of the botanical department. They create a better environment for the animal collection and our visitors. Careful planning of landscaping, specimens, and exhibit plantings promote the zoo's educational messages and create a rich experience. The Botanical Curator's job is similar to the Animal Curator's: plans acquisitions, implements propagation programs, works on the exhibit design team, and protects the health of the botanical collection. The Botanical Department also participates in collaborative community conservation projects.

***"Without the animals you still have a very nice botanic garden, but without the plants you have a very depressing zoo."***  
- Paul Bouseman, Botanical Curator



## Operations Department

The health of our animal collection and the safety and comfort of our visitors requires the constant maintenance of many complex systems. Most zoos have a department dedicated to the smooth functioning of mechanical systems, construction, and repair. At MPZ&BG our operations department adds creating new exhibits, gunite fabrication, and an amazing ability to repair antiquated systems to their skill set.

**From Dictionary.com**

**Gunite: A concrete mixture that is sprayed from a special gun over steel reinforcements in light construction. In zoos, gunite is specially fabricated to look like stone, soil, trees, or other natural features.**

## Visitor Services Department

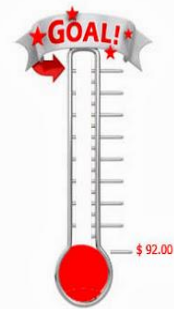
**"Whether you are in the customer service department, education, grounds, in the office or serving as a volunteer, it is your job to provide each and every guest with the friendliest, safest & most efficient service possible."**

**-- Stephanie Sanderson, Curator of Visitor Services**

The Visitor Services Department is responsible for our guests' comfort and enjoyment while visiting the zoo. They are in charge of visitor amenities like restrooms, benches, and way finding signs. The Visitor Services Curator liaisons with the businesses that hold contracts to run the gift shop, concession stand, and janitorial services. The visitor services department manages amenities that serve guests: paddle boats, bumper boats, tram, giraffe feedings, budge feedings, carousel, and the contact yard. Last but not least, they are in charge of birthday parties and facility rentals.

## Development Department

The Development Department generates support for the Zoo in many forms. They create communications for staff, volunteers, members, donors, and community citizens and organizations to cultivate and foster relationships that will benefit the Zoo. They oversee major fundraising campaigns for new exhibits, education, and conservation programs. Specifically, the department engineers and conducts strategic fund planning, event sponsorships, sponsorships of zoo amenities, annual fund and membership drives, major gifts program, capital projects, special events and endowment fundraising to accomplish financial objectives.





**Chapter****2**

## Zoo History

### *The Evolution of Zoos.*

The first recorded zoos were symbols of power and status for the rich. These menageries, made up entirely of animals caught in the wild, were what most zoos were for the vast majority of recorded history. A few hundred years ago, zoos started charging admission and allowing the public to view the animals for entertainment. Though some zoos started breeding programs, most animals were still trapped from the wild. However, the concept and purpose of zoos has changed over time.

It has only been very recently, perhaps the last 25 years, that education and conservation have become a focus of zoos. Exhibits began to look more and more like the animal's natural habitat and the health and welfare of the animals became more important. As Indiana's oldest public zoo, Mesker Park Zoo has experienced these same historical shifts in philosophy and practice. Today, responsible zoos serve four purposes: education, conservation, recreation, and research.

So where did Zoo's begin? What was a zoo like long ago in faraway lands? In this chapter we offer a very brief history of zoos and a timeline of Mesker Park Zoo history.

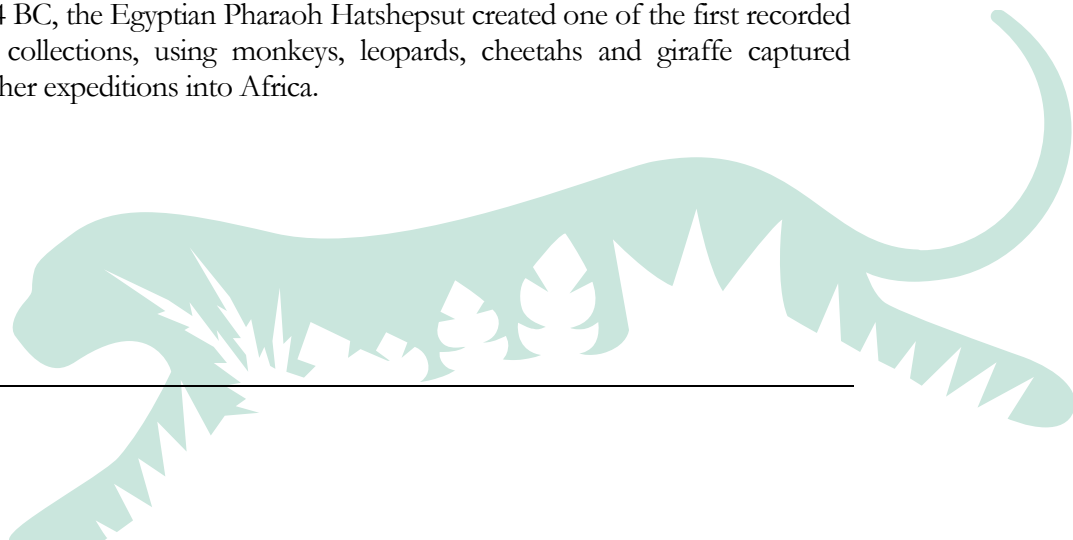
### **Zoos of the Ancient World**

**Ancient zoos were symbols of power.**

In the beginning, exotic animals were presented to royalty as gifts. A nation's wealth was reflected in its animal collection, or menagerie. These ancient menageries had little or no public access and were usually exclusively the playground of the nobility. These menageries looked nothing like modern-day zoos; their architecture blended in with, or matched, that of the palace. Exhibits did not reflect the animal's natural habitat; animal life spans were short, and when an animal died, there was no replacement.



In 1494 BC, the Egyptian Pharaoh Hatshepsut created one of the first recorded animal collections, using monkeys, leopards, cheetahs and giraffe captured during her expeditions into Africa.





The first recorded animal collection in China was Empress Tanki's marble "House of Deer" in 1150 BC. However the prize of largest ancient animal collection belongs to the first Zhou king, Zhou Wen Weng. Zhou Wen Weng created a 1500-acre zoo in 1100 BC that he called Ling-Yu, or "Garden of Intelligence." This Garden of Intelligence was one of the first examples of exotic animals being kept for educational purposes. Unfortunately, it would be thousands of years before education would again be a priority in animal collections.

In the tenth century BC, King Solomon was reputed to have a collection in excess of 5,000 animals. He was also credited with trying to build a rapport with the animals in his collection.

Centuries later, Rudyard Kipling commented on Solomon's unusual respect for his animals:

*There never was a king like Solomon*

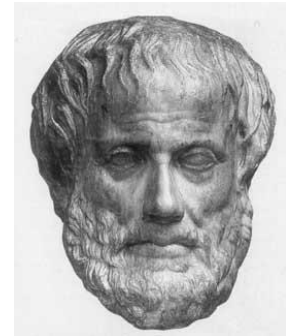
*Not since the world began*

*For Solomon could talk to a butterfly*

*As a man would talk to a man.*

**In the fifth century BC, the Greeks earned the distinction of being the first to charge admission to a zoo.** The incredible event that prompted the Greeks to pay the new fee? Peafowl were newly imported from India.

By the fourth century BC, most Greek states had collections of exotic animals as symbols of prestige and power. It was an accepted practice for philosophers and biologists to study animals and lecture to students at the city zoo. The zoo lectures did at least bring a bit of education to the zoo; however, they were not for the general public. Zoos of this period were still designed to cram as many animals as possible into a small space with little or no organization.



Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) began the tradition of sending back exotic animals from the far reaches of the empire, some say in an attempt to impress his famous teacher: Aristotle (382-322 BC), the Greek biologist and philosopher.

In 280 BC, Ptolemy II created the largest collection of animals the world had yet known in the city of Alexandria. The exact size of Alexandria's Great Zoo is unknown; however, a typical parade involved 96 elephants, 24 lions, 14 leopards, 16 cheetahs, 14 camels, a giraffe, a rhinoceros, and numerous birds and domestic animals.



In ancient Rome, the blood sport of the arenas and coliseums that pitted animals against humans or animals against each other were staged for hundreds of years. Typical human contestants were army deserters, Christians, and gladiators. They were fought in just about every way imaginable, armed, unarmed, tied, families, etc. Animals were pitted against each other, much like today's barbaric dog and cock fights.

***Even the Roman intellectuals were scary!*** Noted bird biologist Marcus Terrentius Varro (116-27 BC) enjoyed eating his study species. Lucullus designed the first walk-through aviary as a sort of living buffet; any bird that caught his guest's fancy was served on the giant table in the center of the enclosure. (Sensible birds probably must have waited until all the guests were happily crunching on their cage mates before flying over the table. There is no record of what method Lucullus used to keep birds from adding guano to the cooked dishes.)

## The Dark Ages



After the fall of the Roman Empire (5<sup>th</sup> century AD) the menageries dissolved. There were still a few collections, such as those held by the Emperor Charlemagne and King Henry I. However, to find an impressive zoo in the Dark Ages, we must go back to 13<sup>th</sup> century Asia.

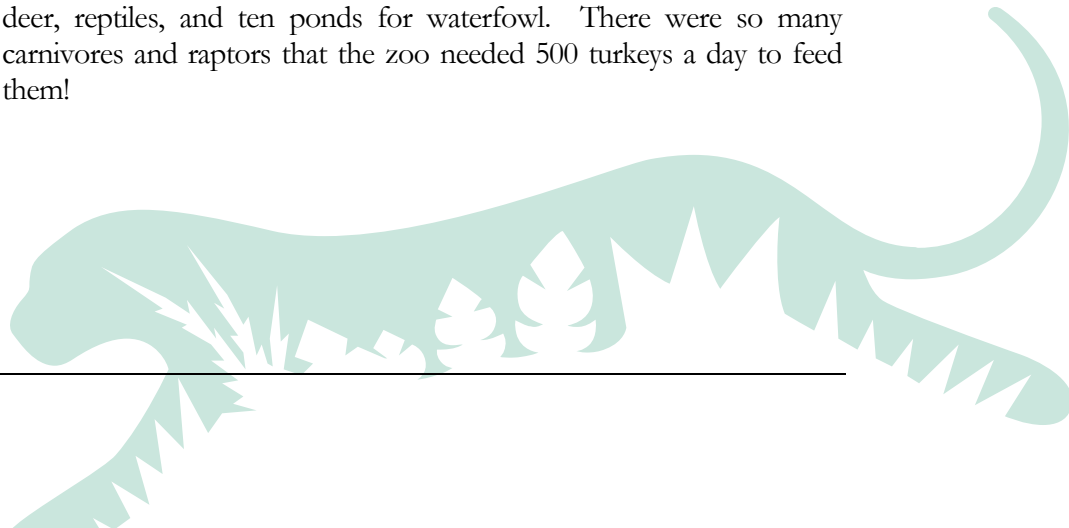
Marco Polo was the first European traveler to describe Kublai Khan's menagerie. If zoos were a measure of wealth, then the Kubla Khan was extremely wealthy. His menagerie included elephants, rhinos, hippos, leopards, lions, tigers, deer, bears, boars, donkeys, horses, camels, monkeys, civets, porcupines, and thousands of birds and fish.



Meanwhile, in 13<sup>th</sup> century London, a menagerie was founded in the Tower of London with a handful of animals. It lasted 600 years before closing. The Tower has the dubious honor of reviving animal baiting as a form of entertainment. (Animal baiting is the practice of setting one animal against another for sport.)



In the New World, 15<sup>th</sup> century Aztec emperor Montezuma had a zoo so large that it required a staff of 300 people to care for the animals. It contained jaguars and other carnivores, thousands of birds, llamas, deer, reptiles, and ten ponds for waterfowl. There were so many carnivores and raptors that the zoo needed 500 turkeys a day to feed them!



## Zoos in the Renaissance

The Renaissance saw a rebirth of the creation of menageries by the noble houses of Europe. Nobility viewed their collections as sources of entertainment for their families and guests as well as symbols of prestige. Although zoos were still private playgrounds, some nobles expressed an interest in expanding knowledge and made their collections accessible to scientists.



## The Industrial Revolution

**Public  
Access  
Zoos**

The shift in animal collections from private collections to public collections coincided with an increase in leisure time, civic pride, and the desire of urban planners to create green spaces within ever-growing cities. These menageries were similar to royal collections in that the exhibits did not reflect the animal's natural habitat, when an animal died there was no replacement, and the animals' lives were hard and short.

### PHILADELPHIA



AMERICA'S FIRST ZOO

**The first zoological garden in the United States was chartered in 1859 in Philadelphia.** The oldest zoo in the United States is the Philadelphia Zoo, which was opened on July 1, 1874. The Zoological Society of Philadelphia was chartered the same year that Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace presented their independently derived theories of evolution in London, England.





# Mesker Park Zoo History

Depending on your criteria, Mesker Park Zoo may be considered the oldest zoo in Indiana. During its long history it has suffered setbacks including animal attacks, keeper strikes, animal escapes, funding shortfalls, fires, and much more. But it has not been all bad, we've also had fantastic breeding achievements, wonderful new exhibits, conservation success stories, and consistent community support.

Here we provide a brief timeline of significant events at Mesker. If you want the definitive history of Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden, the zoo's history book "Pictorial History of Mesker Park Zoo" is on sale in the gift shop.



## Where are we going?

Mesker Park Zoo is always changing and growing! We are committed to making this not only the premier facility for family entertainment in the tri-state area, but also a leader in conservation education. As we look toward the future, we must create new reasons for people to visit.

## Penguin Exhibit

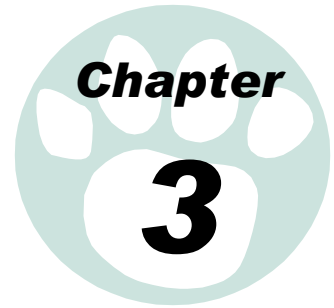
Our newest exhibit is already underway - a Humboldt penguin exhibit with an underwater viewing area and rock structures to resemble their native land of South America. This exhibit will open in the fall of 2021.



<b>OUR HISTORY</b>	
<b>1928 - PRESENT</b>	
1928	Evansville Zoological Society formed.
1928	2 circus lions donated for Evansville's zoo.
1929	Kay the elephant purchased.
1930	Zoo moves to current location in Mesker Park.
1932	Bar-less lion and bear exhibits built by WPA.
1933	"Santa Maria" monkey ship built by Rotary Club.
1935	Dam built to form the lake.
1954	Kley building constructed
1954	Bunny arrives. She is 3 years old.
1975	Children's Contact Area dedicated.
1984	Lioness escape prompts repair of old lion exhibit
1985	MPZ Docent program established.
1987	African Panorama exhibit constructed.
1988	Australian exhibit constructed.
1991	MPZ ZooTeen program established.
1992	Discovery Center opens
1995	MPZ adds Botanic Garden to its name.
1999	Bunny's departure dominates local media coverage
1999	Lemur Forest opens.
1999	Bunny retires to Hohenwald, TN.
2000/2001	Dramatic restructuring of Zoo
2002	Reaccredited by the AZA.
2003	Children's Enchanted Forest opens.
2008	Amazonia & new front gate open.
2009	Nocturnal exhibit redesigned.
2011	Multi-year Kley renovation project begins
2013	Komodo Cove & Kley exhibit hall open.
2015	New Playground & Contact yard renovations
2014	Engelbrecht Carousel & Koch event center opens
2019	Budgie Aviary opens
2021	Penguin exhibit opens



# City of Evansville & Mesker Park Zoo Policies



## *Rules and Expectations.*

**R**egardless of what role you play when volunteering at the Zoo, you will represent Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden in the eyes of our guests. Our guests are coming to enjoy the Zoo, and staff and volunteers are charged with ensuring that it is an enjoyable and safe experience.

Friendly faces and excellent customer service are extremely important. Being friendly, making eye contact, and talking with guests can make their visit an enjoyable one! Remember that you might be the only zoo person some visitors interact with. Be prepared to answer questions with a smile, and if you are unable to answer their question, please refer them to someone that can. All volunteers should become familiar with the surroundings of the zoo so they can help guests.

Volunteers are expected to follow all the same rules and expectations as we have for the general public. You will be a role model for the public, who ARE watching you. If you encounter visitors behaving in a manner that violates zoo rules, you may approach them in a courteous way and politely inform them that what they are doing is not permitted. Wear a smile and be polite – it will ease a difficult situation. If they do not comply with your request, do not argue. Instead, seek assistance from zoo staff.

This chapter will cover important aspects of how to help guests around the zoo, and outline the rules and expectations for everyone.

## **First Aid**



Simple first aid materials are kept at the front gate, gift shop, boat dock, in all zoo vehicles including the tram, and in the offices of the Kley Building and the Discovery Center. Notify zoo personnel (Visitor Services or Education) if first aid supplies are low. There are blood borne pathogen kits available in DC and Kley to clean up blood and other bodily fluids (vomit, diarrhea, etc.). We are not permitted to dispense oral medication.


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### **EMERGENCY CONTACTS**

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 Visitor Services / Gate –  
(812) 435-0834 /5

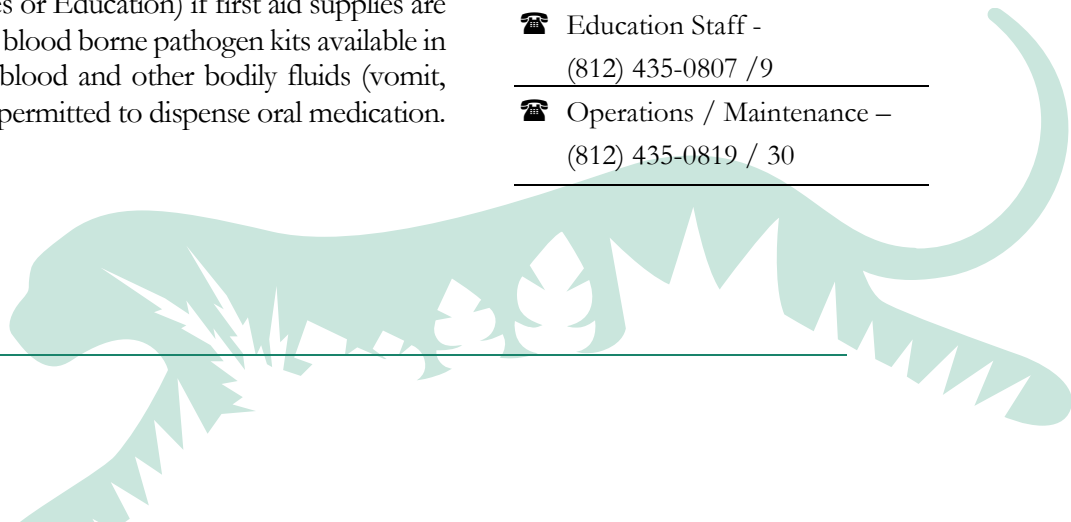
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 Education Staff -  
(812) 435-0807 /9

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 Operations / Maintenance –  
(812) 435-0819 / 30

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All injuries should be reported to the office so that an incident report can be filed. All animal bites are to be reported immediately to the office. In the event of a serious injury, someone should stay with the person while someone else goes to the office (or nearest staff) for help. In the event of injury or damage to someone's possessions, show concern, but do not admit liability! Contact the office and let the staff member-in-charge make that determination.

## Weather

The Zoo is open rain or shine. Programs and events can be conducted indoors regardless of the weather in most cases. However, guests will sometimes call and cancel a group visit or program when the weather is undesirable or threatening. When weather is of concern, Volunteers may want to check in with staff before arriving for a group related assignment just in case of cancellations. During the wintertime, if we have a significant precipitation event and schools are closed, please call first to be certain we are open.

In the case of severe weather, staff will issue an alert. Help direct all people into a sheltered area. The DC bathrooms or classrooms, Kley exhibit hall or keeper area, Amazonia lower levels are all good places to take shelter. If you are with a large group, then DC classroom or Kley exhibit hall are the best shelter choices.

## Radio Protocol

In case of an emergency and a need to use a radio, you need to know how to use one. Do not just turn a radio on and start speaking – you could interrupt an existing conversation. Listen carefully for an ongoing conversation first, and if clear, go ahead using the following procedure:

- Push the button that allows you to speak. Hold the button down for a few seconds before and after you speak so that every word is transmitted. Speak clearly and slowly.
- “This is Zooteen <your name> to < radio #>”, then wait.
- Listen for them to respond: “This is 5.0, go ahead.”
- Conduct your conversation.
- Say “clear” when finished, so that others know the radio is now open for use.
- Return radio(s) to the appropriate charger or manager after use.

Use the telephone or meet face-to-face for lengthy or “sensitive” conversations. The public can be listening, as there are radios being carried by most staff members at the zoo. Keep it brief and professional. Do not discuss the following over a radio: condition of an animal that is injured or deceased, condition of an injured person (unless needed to provide care), personal business, the public (unless someone is breaking rules or in danger), and no profanity or horseplay.

### RADIO CODES

☎	Education Curator & Staff – 5-0 / 5-1
☎	Visitor Services & Gate - 8-0 / 8-1
☎	Event Coordinator 7-1
☎	Animal Curators – 2-0 / 2-2
☎	Vet Staff – 3-0 / 3-1
☎	Botanical Curator & Staff – 6-0 / 6-1
☎	Operations & Maintenance – 4-0 / 4-1

## Radio Silence

**Stay  
off the  
radio!**

**You must observe radio silence during any code.** Only use the radio if you have information that is directly related to the emergency. Any other business should be handled by phone or must wait until the crisis is over. Stay off the radio!

## Emergency Codes

The following code system is used to broadcast information to zoo staff and volunteers:

CODE Red	Fire or Bomb Threat
CODE Yellow	Serious weather alert
CODE Blue	Medical Emergency (Human)
CODE 1	Missing Person
CODE 86	Dead Animal
CODE 99	Animal Escape

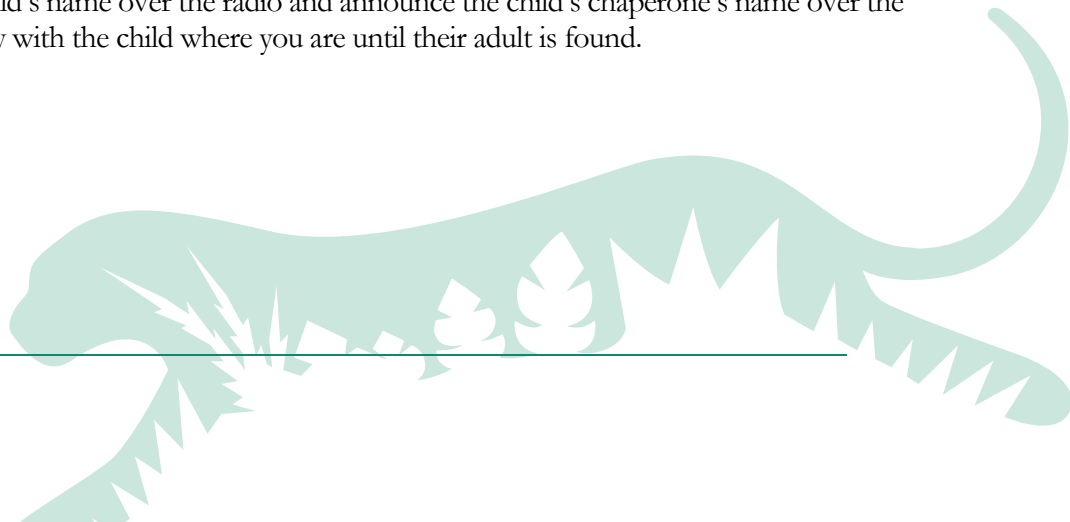
What should you do?

- **CODE yellow / 99** - calmly proceed to the nearest building and instruct members of the public to accompany you. Remain inside until an all clear is given.
- **CODE red / blue** - remain in your area and wait for further instructions. Let staff handle these situations. If you are witness to an animal escape proceed to a safe location and notify the nearest member of the permanent staff of the situation: type of animal, location, etc.
- **CODE 86** – no action is needed on your part. Animal staff will handle these situations.
- **CODE 1** – follow the instructions below.

## Missing Child

**If a member of the public reports a missing child to you, find another Zoo employee who can put a message out on a radio.** Relay a complete description of the child including age, general appearance, clothes, where they were last seen, and whether or not they are part of a group visiting the zoo. *Do not state the child's name over the radio.*

**If a child approaches you and tells you they have lost their people, find another Zoo employee who can put a message out on a radio.** Relay a complete description of the child including age, general appearance, clothes, where they were last seen, and whether or not they are part of a group visiting the zoo. You may state the child's name over the radio and announce the child's chaperone's name over the public address system. Stay with the child where you are until their adult is found.



## Our Animals

**The rules exist to protect zoo visitors, staff, volunteers, and animals.**

Obviously, animals are a big part of what we do here at the Zoo. The Zoo has strict animal policies for your safety and theirs. The following activities are prohibited by MPZBG policy, and violations may result in suspension or dismissal of a volunteer.

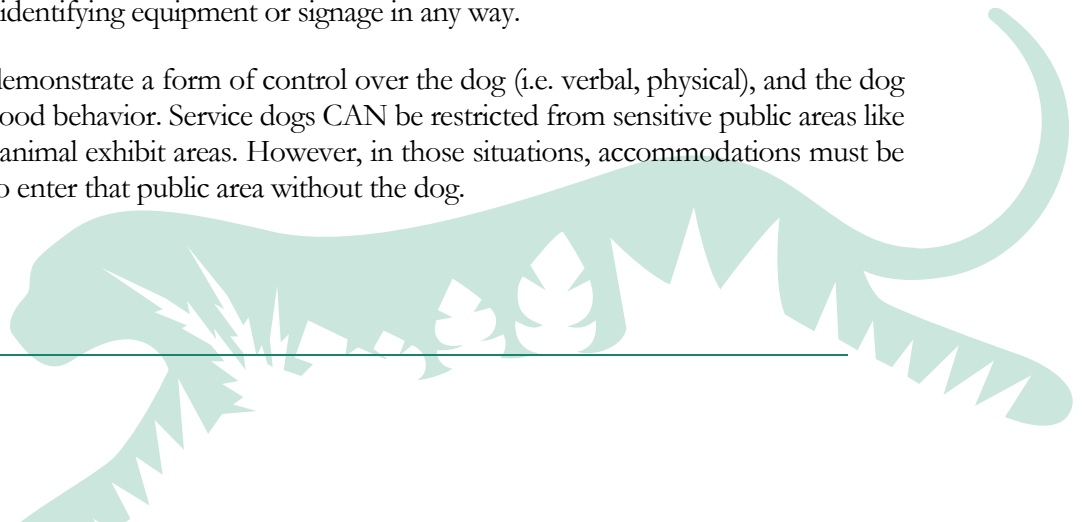
- **Entering exhibits** –Volunteers may not enter an animal exhibit without the express permission from zoo staff (Curators or keepers) for that moment and time. This includes hopping over a barrier such as fence, entering a gate, or even opening an enclosure door. These activities can pose a threat to you, other people around you, all visitors on grounds, and the animals in our care.
- **Entering animal areas** - Volunteers may not enter animal areas unless approved for their level of access and notice is given to a staff member. Volunteers removing an animal from its enclosure must properly sign out the animal.
- **Feeding animals** - Volunteers may not feed an animal a food item that is not prescribed in its daily diet without express permission from zoo staff (Curators or keepers) for a training or enrichment activity. All food items must come from the animal staff.
- **Handling animals** – Volunteers may not handle an animal without complete training and certification on that animal, or express permission from zoo staff (Curators or keepers), unless there is an emergency where you are backing up a certified handler. Ways you might need to help include helping a certified docent transport a crate carrying the animal, helping to secure an animal that is getting stressed or flighty, or securing the animal when a certified handler asks you to because of a personal or zoo emergency.

## Pets & Service Dogs

Pets are not allowed on zoo grounds unless prior permission is received. However, service animals (dogs) are certainly permitted. Emotional support animals are NOT considered service animals, and are not permitted on zoo grounds.

The front gate should make an all-radio call that a service dog is entering the zoo so that all staff are aware of the dog's presence. This will help ensure the dog owner is not questioned over and over by staff while on zoo grounds. We are allowed only two questions to a service dog owner. 1. Is this a service dog? And 2. what task is he trained to do? We may not ask about the disability, dog training, or certifications. The dog does not have to have identifying equipment or signage in any way.

Dog owners must always demonstrate a form of control over the dog (i.e. verbal, physical), and the dog must always demonstrate good behavior. Service dogs CAN be restricted from sensitive public areas like food kitchens and delicate animal exhibit areas. However, in those situations, accommodations must be offered to the dog owner to enter that public area without the dog.



## Public Information

**You may at times be privy to insider or confidential Zoo information, events, or pictures. Please do not share this with the public in person, email, text, or social media.** Let the Zoo staff determine what is announced publicly, and how and when it is done. If it is already public knowledge or in public view, you can share it freely. If you are not sure it is public knowledge or in public view, ask a staff person before you share it. Events such as animal escapes, births, deaths, injuries, etc. can sometimes be sensitive subjects or exciting news, and timing of announcements can be very important to the course of the zoo's efforts.

Volunteers are expected to refrain from posting material on social media that may be considered detrimental to the image and policies of the Zoo or volunteer program. Use discretion in discussing Zoo policies, interpersonal relationships with zoo staff or volunteers, or animal concerns. Do not pose your personal opinions as that of the Zoo's, or project your opinions onto Zoo guests.

## Unauthorized Entry

The presence of unauthorized employees and non-employees on zoo grounds after hours is strictly prohibited.

**Volunteers should not enter any non-public area without expressed permission of a Zoo Manager or animal keeper.** Non-public areas include staff offices, staff congregation areas, supply rooms, maintenance areas, veterinary hospital, animal exhibits and animal service areas. Even zoo employees have limited access to some areas, in particular animal exhibits and service areas. If an unauthorized part-time staff or volunteer is found in any of these non-public areas, question them and inform a staff manager or animal keeper.

Entry into any vehicles, buildings, offices, cabinets or any other locked devices shall be made by way of a key – one that has been authorized to be utilized by such person – unless specifically authorized to enter in another manner. Do not go around barriers such as walls, gates, or fences. Use or duplication of any zoo key(s) is prohibited unless specifically authorized by zoo management.

*For Example: It would be a violation of the zoo's discretion policy to post news or photographs of a new red panda birth on your Facebook page or other social media site.*

## Restrooms

Restrooms are available in the Discovery Center, Kley building, Carousel, and near the Front Gate. Please note that the restrooms in the Discovery Center hallway are not available for public use.

## Trash

Even though specific visitor service and grounds staff are responsible for collecting trash, it should be picked up by any and all zoo employees or volunteers when spotted, unless inside an animal exhibit.

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## **Wheelchairs**

We are unable to provide wheelchairs for our visitors to ensure their safety when traveling our hills. However, we do have a few motorized scooters for rental at the front gate, and they are first-come-first-served. The tram is also handicapped accessible and operates on a regular basis during our busy season.

## **Food & Drinks**

We generally do not allow the public to bring food or drinks on grounds. However, we can provide an exception to organized, prescheduled school groups so they can eat lunch in the middle of their visit. Those groups can make advance arrangements with the Education staff at the time of scheduling. Volunteers can bring food on grounds when confined to the DC classroom, event tent, or other designated eating area. It is best to keep food out of the public eye to avoid any potential confusion with the public policy.

## **Drug-Free Workplace**

The City of Evansville is committed to providing a safe and productive workplace for employees. The unlawful manufacture, dispensation, use, distribution, possession, sale or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol during work hours or on City property is strictly prohibited. This is applicable to all volunteers and employees including full time, part time, and temporary employees. Violation of this may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Volunteers and employees are permitted to smoke in NON-public areas only. You may not smoke while performing volunteer duties in public. Visitors may only smoke in designated smoking areas (that currently consist of the two covered tram stations).

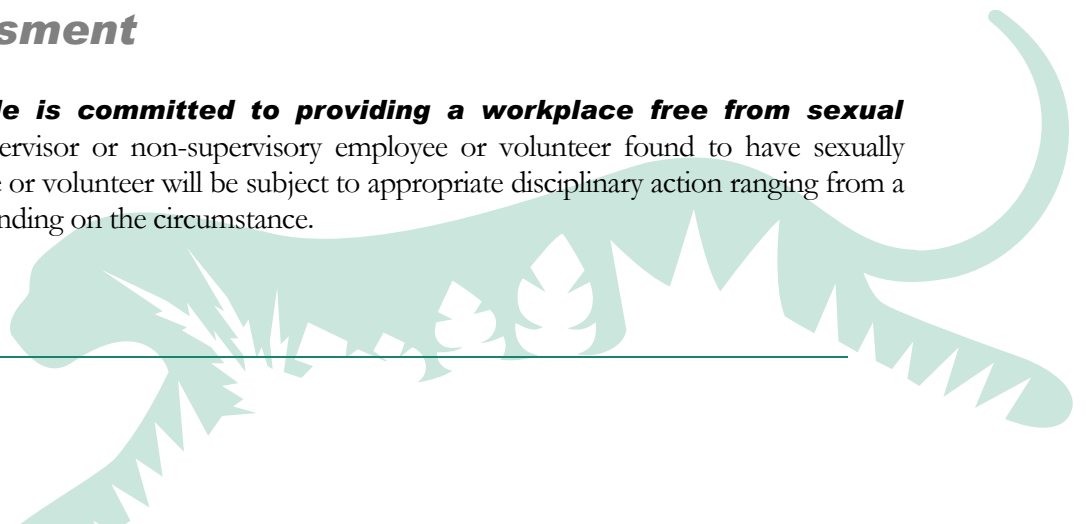
## **Unethical Conduct**

Volunteers represent the Zoo and the City of Evansville, and are expected to maintain professional and respectful conduct. Comments or humor that may be considered distasteful, derogatory, sexual, racist or sexist are not appropriate. Unethical conduct includes inappropriate contact or conversations with zoo guests, program attendees, docents, ZooTeens and other volunteers, or zoo staff. It also includes stealing zoo materials, giving or accepting gifts in exchange for better treatment, blaming errors on innocent people, hiding errors, lacking appropriate discretion, conducting personal business, and the like. Inappropriate behavior or comments can result in suspension or dismissal of a Volunteer.

## **Sexual Harassment**

**The City of Evansville is committed to providing a workplace free from sexual harassment.** Any supervisor or non-supervisory employee or volunteer found to have sexually harassed another employee or volunteer will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action ranging from a warning to discharge, depending on the circumstance.

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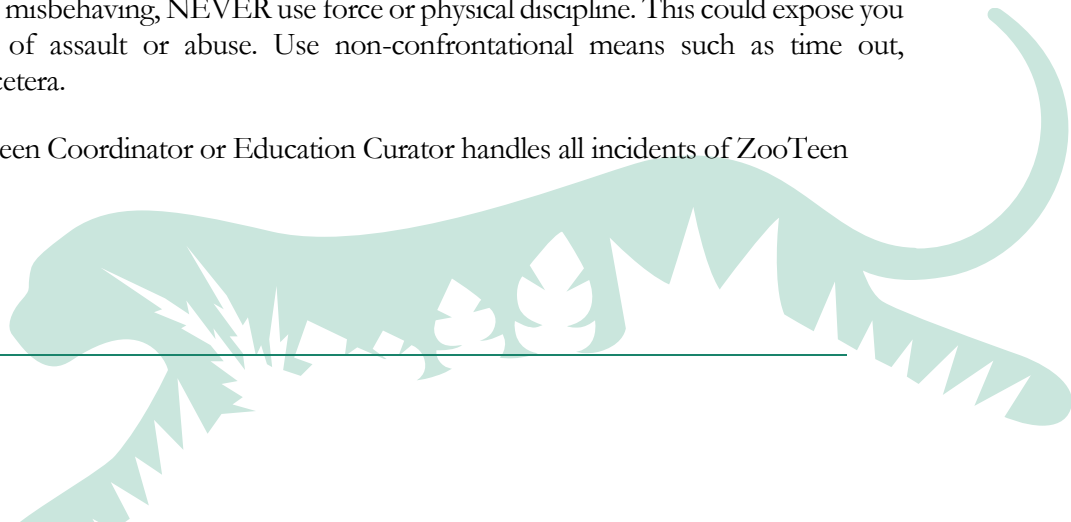
Sexual harassment includes such conduct as unwelcome sexual suggestion perhaps in the guise of humor; verbal harassment or abuse; subtle pressure for sexual favors; persistent remarks about another person's clothing, body or sexual activities; unnecessary touching, patting or pinching; demanding sexual favors accompanied by implied or overt threats concerning one's job; and sexual assault.

Any volunteer who believes that he or she has been sexually harassed should report the act to the Education Curator, the Personnel Department or any Department Head or supervisor. A confidential investigation of any complaint will be immediately undertaken by the Personnel Department.

## **Youth Protection Policy**

It is the policy of Evansville's Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden to provide a safe and caring environment for children that visit or volunteer at the zoo. The following guidelines have been established for all paid and volunteer staff working with children. *(The margin notes are for Volunteers.)* Do not show favoritism among children in a group. Treat all equally and show the same level of attention to all in the group.

1. Only touch children in "safe" places. These include the shoulders and the back of head. Never touch a child in a private place; the buttocks, breasts, thighs and groin are unacceptable. Comfort can be given to a child by gently placing your arm on a shoulder and giving a gentle squeeze from the side. Always be conscientious of the child's reaction. Allow the child to pull away if they are uncomfortable.
2. Be careful when administering first aid. If the injury involves the removal of clothing, ALWAYS have another adult present. Do not force a child to remove clothing. If they are uncooperative, notify the parents that the child has been hurt and do what you can to make the child comfortable until the parent arrives.
3. Always stay within view of the group. Do not isolate yourself with a child.
4. Respect children's privacy when using the bathroom. If they need your assistance in the removal of clothing, (belts, suspenders, etc.) have another adult present. If it becomes necessary to accompany a child into the restroom stall, keep the door open at all times.
5. Do not use sexual language or tell sexual jokes in the presence of children.
6. Be sure that adequate adult supervision is provided. It is the policy of the Education Department of MPZ&BG to have at least 1 staff member per 10 children.
7. If a child is misbehaving, NEVER use force or physical discipline. This could expose you to future charges of assault or abuse. Use non-confrontational means such as time out, redirection, and etcetera.
8. The ZooTeen Coordinator or Education Curator handles all incidents of ZooTeen discipline.

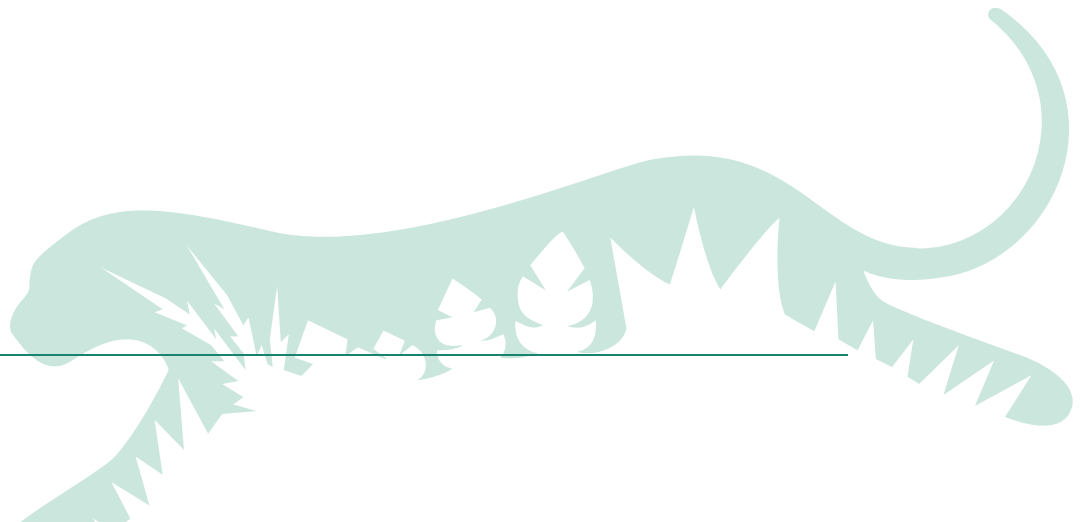


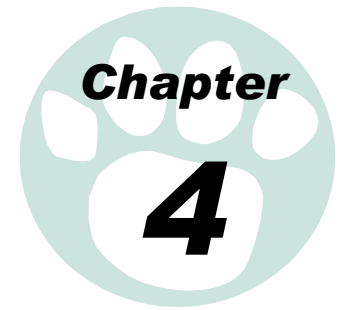
Protecting youth is a responsibility of everyone in the community. As an educational facility, it is also a *legal* responsibility. Make yourself familiar with the physical and behavioral warning signs of abuse that can be found at the end of this policy.

**Reporting Procedures for Suspected Abuse of a Child**

If you encounter a child that you feel may have been abused or neglected you must report it to the Education Curator immediately. The Education Curator will follow up with the appropriate agencies if abuse is suspected, and inform the Zoo Director and Child Protection Services. If the complaint is against the Education Curator, the complaint should be reported directly to the Zoo Director.

Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden has zero tolerance for any abusive behavior against children.





## Volunteering

*Nurture your nature.*

Everybody works hard in mission-based organizations like zoos and aquariums, and no department ever feels it has enough resources. Volunteers bridge the gap between our guest's needs and our limited resources, while providing a vital infusion of enthusiasm and energy to our Zoo team. In this chapter, we will cover many of the volunteering basics for you.

### Volunteer Types

There are many opportunities to volunteer at the Zoo. Our volunteer program is diverse and flexible to meet your needs. You can begin your volunteer track by assisting with general projects and special events on zoo grounds with minimal training, or advance to more skilled privileges like educational programming with specialized training.

#### General Volunteers

Many organized groups volunteer at the Zoo to help with a single special event or project. We host church, school, scout, corporate, civic, and other groups that want to help with special events, botanical or grounds projects, fundraising events, and other large scale efforts. Special training is NOT required to volunteer at the zoo with an organized group for a single day. Groups that want to volunteer can simply contact the zoo to arrange a volunteer opportunity. However, those individuals that want to volunteer at the Zoo on their own or on a more regular basis, should complete the training they need to serve in the roles they seek.

#### Docents

Volunteers that further their training may go on to become a Docent. A Docent is a volunteer educator. Docents complete specialized training to build their knowledge and skill set so that they may interact with our guests and our community in an educational or interpretive role.

Docents can help with interpretation of our exhibits, gardens, biofacts, and family activities. They may do informal interpretation for visitors throughout the zoo, or conduct more formal educational programs on or off zoo grounds. Some Docents choose to further their specialized training to handle our ambassador animals in these educational experiences. MPZ currently has about 70 active adult volunteers, most of which are Docents.



Docents are expected to comply with all zoo and city policies and maintain membership in the zoo. The volunteer meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Zoo.

### ZooTeens

ZooTeens are teen volunteers that assist adult staff and volunteers in a variety of ways at the Zoo. Teens get opportunities to learn about and interact with animals, socialize with people of all ages and backgrounds, and gain valuable knowledge and experiences that can

ZOOTEEN REQUIREMENTS
▪ 13 to 18 years of age
▪ Member of MPZ&BG
▪ Complete training course in level desired
▪ Commit to minimum volunteer hours and activities for level desired
▪ Be available 10 days in summer

help them in their personal, academic, and professional lives. Like the adult volunteer program, the ZooTeen program has many levels of training and associated privileges. ZooTeens may help with special events, grounds projects, the contact yard, interpretive experiences, educational programming, ambassador animals, and Zoo camps. The ZooTeens also participate in special meetings and fun events just for them. MPZ currently has about 60 active ZooTeens.



DOCENT REQUIREMENTS
▪ 18+ years of age
▪ Membership in MPZ&BG
▪ Complete training course in level 2 +
▪ Maintain active volunteer status.
▪ Commit to minimum volunteer hours and activities for level desired

### Volunteer Benefits

Volunteers will find pleasure in being part of the zoo team in their interactions with staff, guests, animals, and other volunteers with the same passion. You will acquire new knowledge and skills, build experience, and make new friends. Volunteers can also enjoy the following Zoo benefits:

- Zoo membership -free (with 60 hours/yr) or reduced price (25% off)
- Free general admission & tram rides.
- Discounted or free admission at over 172 AZA facilities.
- Zoo member only events & discounted admission to ticketed events.
- Discounts in gift shop and Rainforest Café
- E-newsletter

### Passcodes

Volunteers need access to the old entry gate and online educational resources to enable them to perform volunteer service. We are entrusting you with the passcode to enter both. This is to be kept strictly confidential. Sharing these codes with anyone outside of Zoo staff and volunteers is strictly forbidden, and is grounds for dismissal from the program.

PASSCODE gate:	_____
PASSCODE website:	_____



## Volunteer Service Opportunities

As we've already indicated, there are many and varied roles for volunteers at the zoo. Below is a brief overview of some volunteer opportunities.

**Special Events** – Help with special events in the Zoo or out in the community. Volunteers can help with planning, setup, activity stations, guest direction, and more.

**Visitor Services** – Our guests want to see your friendly face so they can ask questions and get help with amenities like giraffe feedings, bumper boats, carousel, and others.

**Botanical / grounds projects** – Help our dedicated team spruce up the zoo with plantings, painting projects, signage, and more.

**Administrative** – Help any of our departments with various tasks like data entry, membership mailings, filing, archiving records, and more.

**Exhibit Interpretation** – Interact with visitors as they encounter our animal and garden exhibits. Enhance their experience with a story, fun fact, activity, or cool biofact.

**Contact Yard** – Help visitors brush and pet the animals in the contact yard, and take advantage of the moment to teach about their breeds, behaviors, and needs.

**Roaming animal encounters** - Roam on zoo grounds with an ambassador animal to share a surprise visit with guests. Teach guests about their ecology, behaviors, and conservation status.

**Informal interpretation stations** – Setup a station in the zoo to give guests a chance to learn and do something new. Share an activity, animal, biofact, skit, story, or other enjoyable experience. These can be done in the stage area of the family forest, the family garden, the event tent, Lion's plaza, or anywhere in the zoo on a table or bench.

**Formal Programs** – Assist or lead a scheduled, themed program for an organized group. Audiences include school groups, scout troops, preschools, after school clubs, senior homes, civic groups, garden clubs, not for profit organizations, and others.

**Day Camps** – Assist or lead activities during our day camps for ages 5-12. Inspire the kids to want to learn and visit the zoo more.

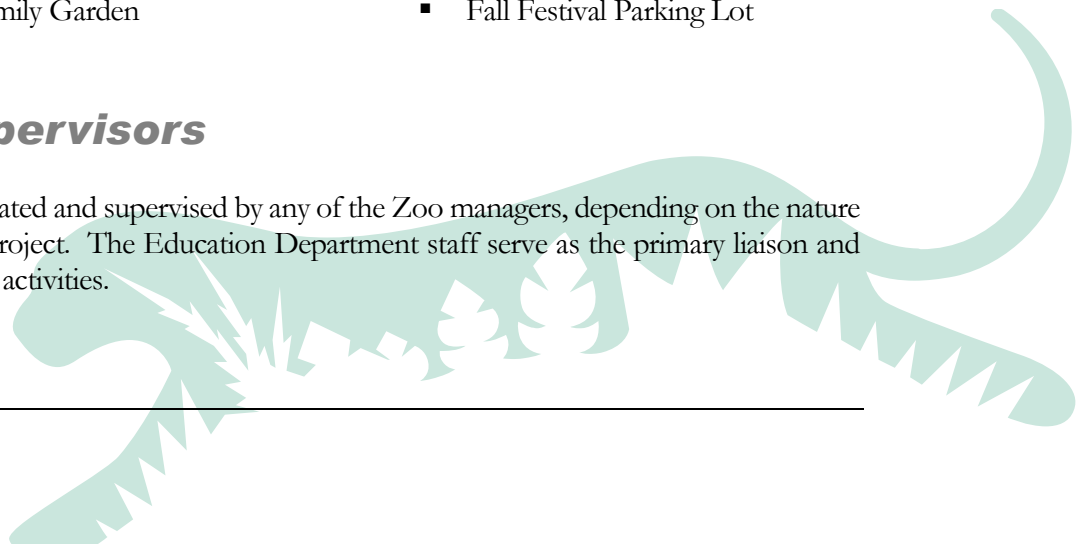
**Other** – Sometimes there are special projects such as

- Animal watch
- Animal Enrichment
- Fun in the Family Garden
- Fun in the Children's Forest
- Fall Festival Parking Lot

## Volunteer Supervisors

Volunteers can be coordinated and supervised by any of the Zoo managers, depending on the nature of the service activity or project. The Education Department staff serve as the primary liaison and supervisor for all Zooteen activities.

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## Volunteer Scheduling

**Volgistics** - is the volunteer management software we use to coordinate volunteer opportunities and keep volunteer records. Staff will give you an overview of how to use the software in the first training class.

Once you finish your first training class, you will be given a login and password to access the system. You will find the link on our website under “Volunteer Resources”: [www.meskerparkzoo.com](http://www.meskerparkzoo.com).

Once you login, you will see a screen that will allow you to:

- Check messages & announcements
- Check the schedule
- Sign up for service
- Track hours
- Check on certification



## Volunteer Records & Privacy

Volunteers have access to their own volunteer records in Volgistics. Volunteers are encouraged to keep their profile and preferences updated in Volgistics, or by requesting changes in writing to education staff. All volunteer records are the property of the Zoo. Access to volunteer records is restricted to the individual volunteer, volunteer coordination staff, senior management, and human resources. We may share a volunteer’s contact information (email and phone number) with other volunteers for the purposes of coordination on a mutual assignment. If you do not wish for your contact information to be shared with other volunteers, please notify us in writing.

## Dress Code

As a volunteer, you are a highly visible member of the zoo team. Therefore you must wear a uniform that makes you instantly recognizable as a zoo representative. If you are conducting any interpretive or educational activities, handling any animals, or helping direct guests, a uniform is required. Note that if you are working at the zoo in a “manual labor status” (i.e. planting flowers), no uniform is required.

**You will order a Zooteen t-shirt and a name tag when you begin your training.**

### The uniform:

- Royal blue shirt with the Zooteen logo.
- Logo fleece, sweatshirts and jackets are also available for warmth.
- Khaki or black pants, skirt, or walking shorts. Blue jeans are not permitted.
- Clean, sturdy shoes.
- Volunteer nametag.
- No protruding jewelry or heavy perfumes



# Volunteer Levels

The MPZ&BG volunteer program offers a tiered system of volunteer levels, which involve varying levels of training, perks and privileges. The tiered structure affords volunteers flexibility in the time they can give and the things they can do at the Zoo.

		Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden ZooTeen Program					
		Level 1 - Volunteer	Level 2 - Interpreter	Level 3 - Ambassador	Level 4 - Ambassador	Level 5 - Ambassador	
Requirements	To Train	Class training & certification (hrs)	4	4	4		
		Animal handling certification (hrs)			6+	6+	6+
		Complete pre-summer training each May (hrs)	2	2	2	2	2
	To Stay Active	Annual service requirement (hrs)	20	20	40	60	60
		Annual commitment to zoo camp (days)	6	8	8	10	10
		Annual minimum of interpretive activities**	4	4	6	8	8
	To Advance Levels	Annual animal handling recertification (2 required)			Yes	Yes	Yes
		Complete volunteer hours at current level (hrs)	10	10	20	20	20
		Complete minimum time volunteered (months)	2	2	6	12	18
		Complete cumulative hours at the zoo (hrs training & volunteering) *	20*	80	120	140	160
Privileges	Level 1 - Assist on zoo grounds with general projects, events, and Camp ZOOfare	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	
	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					▪	
Typical Training Timeline		March	May	Sept.	Feb.	August	
* Cumulative hours - 20 hrs are a soft guideline to move onto Level 2; but 40 hrs is a requirement to move on to Level 3							
** Interpretive activities are educational public interactions about an event, exhibit, biofact, animal, or environmental topic.							

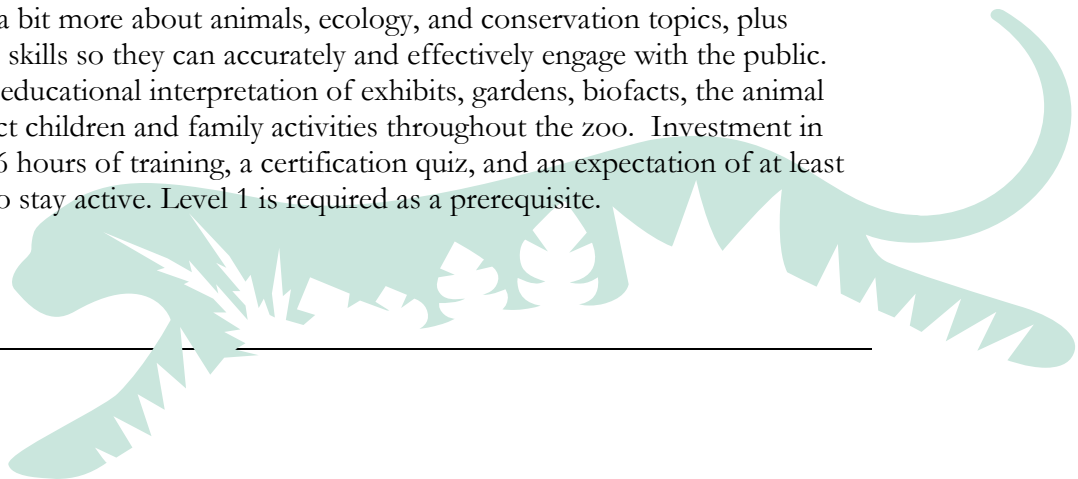
Volunteers start at Level 1, and can further train and move up levels in sequential order up to Level 5. Volunteers have the flexibility to decide when they want to train and move up a level, but only as often as training opportunities are offered and space allows. Volunteers can also elect to move down levels anytime to reduce service obligations to suit their needs.

## Level 1

Level 1 volunteers assist with general projects and special events on zoo grounds with minimal training. Investment in this level involves up to 6 hours of training, a certification quiz, and an expectation of at least 20 service hours a year to stay in an active volunteer status.

## Level 2

Level 2 volunteers train a bit more about animals, ecology, and conservation topics, plus interpretive presentation skills so they can accurately and effectively engage with the public. They are qualified to do educational interpretation of exhibits, gardens, biofacts, the animal contact yard, and conduct children and family activities throughout the zoo. Investment in this level requires up to 6 hours of training, a certification quiz, and an expectation of at least 20 service hours a year to stay active. Level 1 is required as a prerequisite.



### **Level 3**

Level 3 volunteers elect to train further to qualify to handle our ambassador animals. Ambassador animals are a select population of animals at the zoo that are not on public display, but are used in educational programs and guest experiences. Investment for this level requires classes, a class certification quiz, animal handling practice sessions and testing with mentors, and an animal knowledge quiz. Once certified, volunteers are expected to serve at least 40 hours a year, to include several interpretive activities, to stay active. Annual recertification is also required for the first two years after certification, then unnecessary as long as active at that level. Level 2 is a prerequisite.



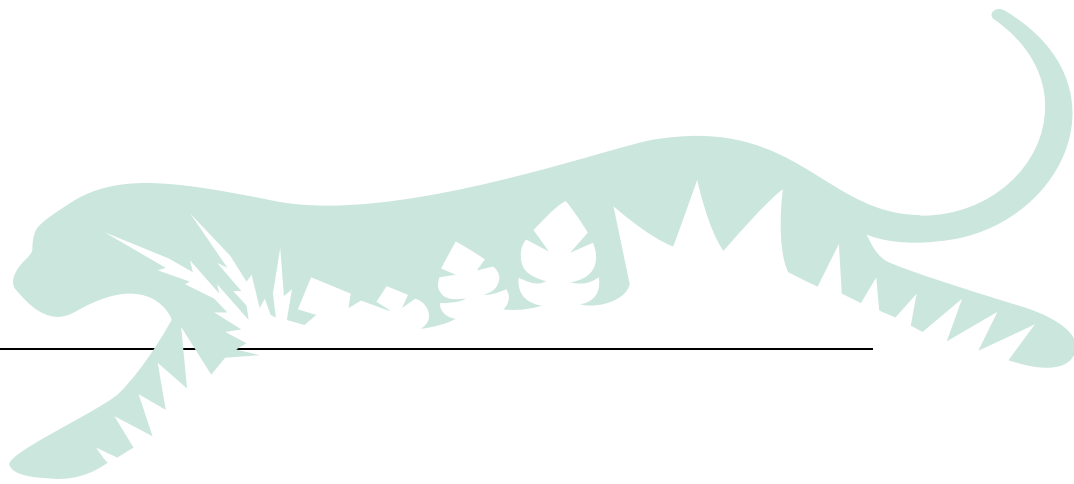
### **Level 4 / 5**

Level 4 and 5 volunteers elect to train on more advanced ambassador animals. Level 4 animals are considered intermediate level animals; Level 5 more advanced. These levels do not have a classroom training component. Rather, they are a brief group introduction to the animals in the level, and then series of practice sessions with mentors. Certification at each level requires completion of all animal handling practice sessions and testing with mentors, and an animal knowledge quiz. Once certified, volunteers are expected to serve at least 60 hours a year, to include several interpretive activities, to stay active. Annual recertification is also required for the first two years after certification, then unnecessary as long as active at that level. Level 3 is a prerequisite.

### **Levels Explained**

Level training classes, certification, annual requirements, and privileges will be explained further in each level class. Class agendas and general annual timeline will be outlined below. This is subject to change as needs arise and staffing can accommodate demand.

Volunteers planning to take a new level training class must register in advance, and early registration is advised. It should be noted that Level 1 and 2 class sizes are not limited, but Level 3, 4, & 5 classes are. In the event that there is more demand for these classes than space allows, a competitive selection process by committee will be utilized. There will be no guarantee of admittance into any class level 3 or higher. Volunteers already certified at a level may audit that level class at any time, though seating and class materials are not guaranteed without prior registration.



# Volunteer Training Classes

## **Level 1**

- Get to know the Zoo
  - Mission & Accreditation
  - Staff & Departments
  - Map orientation
- Zoo History
- MPZ policies & procedures
- Volunteering
  - Volunteer types & opportunities
  - Volunteer service levels & training
- Lay of the Land zoo tour & scavenger hunt
- Docents meet and greet

### Independent Study

- Read - MPZBG Zooteen Handbook Level 1
- Login to Volgistics
- Take Level 1 Class Quiz - (online)

## **Level 2** (prerequisite Level 1)

- Conservation & Education
  - What does conservation look like?
  - Conservation education messages
- Ecological Concepts
  - Ecological terms & definitions
  - Ecological concept use & messages
- Interpretation
  - What is interpretation?
  - MPZ interpretive resources
  - Effective interpretation know-how
  - Interpreting to your audience
- Tour: contact zoo
- Tour: biofacts
  - Biofacts inventory
  - How to use and display biofacts
  - Biofact table presentations

### Independent Study

- Read - MPZBG Zooteen Handbook Level 2
- Take Level 2 Class Quiz - (online)

## **Level 3** (6 sessions, Prerequisite Level 2)

### Class 1

- Intro to Level 3
- Intro to Plants
- Tour: ambassador animals & resources
- Session 1A: animal handling

### Class 2

- Intro to Animals
- Session 1B: animal handling

### Class 3

- Handling animals for interpretation
- Session 2A: animal handling

### Class 4

- Review
- Session 2B: animal handling

### Class 5

- Session 3A: animal handling

### Class 6

- Session 3B: animal handling

### Independent Study

- Read - Level 3 Zooteen Handbook
- Read - Ambassador Animal Fact Sheets
- Take - Level 3 Class Quiz - (online)

### Certification:

- Take 4 animal handling sessions - (with mentor)
- Take animal handling test - (with mentor)

## **Level 4** (prerequisite Level 3)

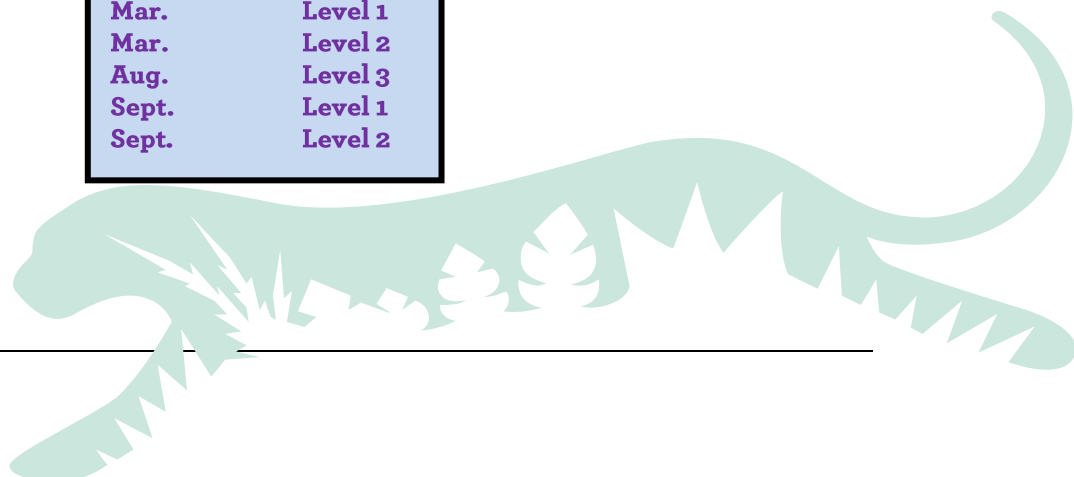
- Take 4 animal handling sessions - (with mentor)
- Take animal handling test - (with mentor)
- Take animal certification test - (online)

## **Level 5** (prerequisite Level 4)

- Take 4 animal handling sessions - (with mentor)
- Take animal handling test - (with mentor)
- Take animal certification test - (online)

### Typical Training Schedule

<b>Mar.</b>	<b>Level 1</b>
<b>Mar.</b>	<b>Level 2</b>
<b>Aug.</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
<b>Sept.</b>	<b>Level 1</b>
<b>Sept.</b>	<b>Level 2</b>





## **Volunteer Status**

Only ACTIVE status volunteers are permitted to serve in volunteer assignments and represent the Zoo. Volunteers are responsible for ensuring they have the proper training for any service they perform, and for staying up-to-date on changes to all Zoo policies and procedures.

### **Active Status**

Volunteers are required to serve 20 hours a year to retain ACTIVE status in our volunteer program. Volunteers that complete training and certification at any level, are expected to maintain the minimum annual requirements to stay at that level. Check the chart on page 5 for these requirements.

At the end of each calendar year, the Education team will review all volunteer service records. Each volunteer's service record will be weighed with the specific requirements needed for their level. Volunteer status and level will be adjusted accordingly.

Volunteers that do not complete the requirements at a level will be reclassified at a lower level until they are met. Volunteers will be notified, and given a grace period to rectify the deficiency.

Example: Joe is a Level 3 volunteer. He serves 32 hours for the year. His level requires 40 hours of service a year. He will be notified and given a window of opportunity to complete the deficient hours. Once he has done so, he can be reinstated into Level 3. If he does not, he will be reclassified into Level 2, which requires only 20 hours a year.

### **Inactive Status**

Volunteers that do not fulfill the minimum requirement of 20 hours a year are at risk of being reclassified as INACTIVE status. However, they will not be automatically dismissed from the program. Volunteers sometimes need to take a leave of absence or have extenuating circumstances that prohibit them from volunteering. They will be notified and given options for correcting any requirement deficiencies in order to continue in the volunteer program. The Education Curator will consider any extenuating circumstances on a case by case basis.

### **Status Policies**

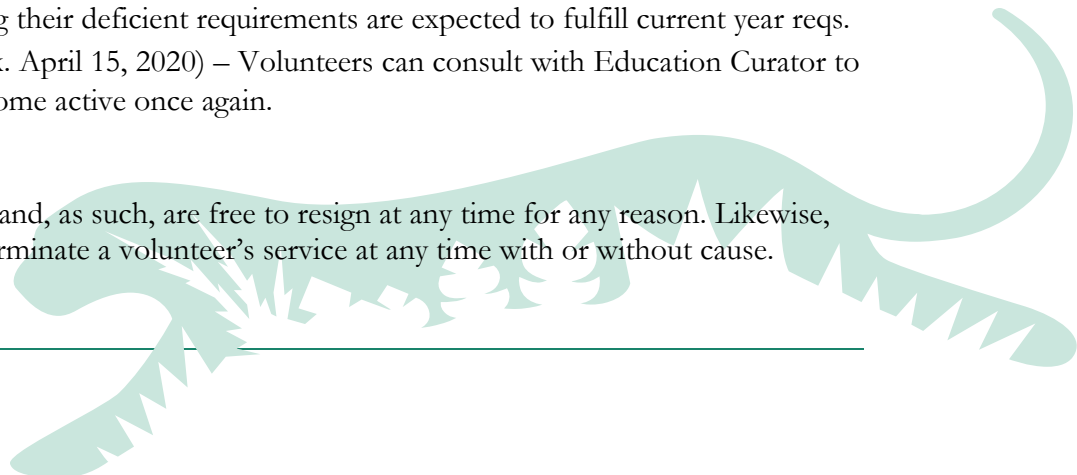
The following policies will serve as guidelines for level and status determinations. (Example dates are in parenthesis to aid explanation.)

- The volunteer service calendar is Jan. 1 – Dec. 31. (Ex. Jan 1- Dec 31, 2020)
- Volunteers that have not met annual service requirements by Dec. 31 will be notified by Jan. 15 the following year (Ex. Jan. 15, 2020) of actions that must be taken to remain in active status or at current level.
- Volunteers will be given 90 days to respond or remedy to retain current level and status. Those completing their deficient requirements are expected to fulfill current year reqs.
- After 90 days (Ex. April 15, 2020) – Volunteers can consult with Education Curator to plan steps to become active once again.

### **At-Will Service**

All volunteers are at-will and, as such, are free to resign at any time for any reason. Likewise, Mesker Park Zoo may terminate a volunteer's service at any time with or without cause.

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## Code of Conduct

Volunteers are expected to maintain a code of conduct while serving in any volunteer capacity or representing the Zoo in any way. Your personal conduct is vital to making the Zoo a fun, friendly, and educational place for all who visit, volunteer, and work here. Your conduct should reflect positively upon the Zoo.

Volunteers should:

- Support the mission and goals of the Zoo
- Behave professionally to bring only credit, honor, and good repute to the Zoo
- Be flexible, cooperative, respectful, and supportive of all volunteers and staff
- Be approachable, friendly, helpful, and courteous when interacting with guests
- Be informed and knowledgeable when presenting information to our guests
- Ensure the health, safety, and dignity of all animals in the Zoo
- Ensure the care and safety of all facilities, equipment and materials in the Zoo
- Take pride in all activities and perform reliably and with integrity

The following behaviors will not be tolerated:

- Disregard of Zoo or City policies, as outlined in Chapter 1 of this manual
- Willful safety violations
- Releasing confidential information about the Zoo
- Using toxic talk (see below) about or to Zoo staff or other volunteers
- Contributing to a negative, uncomfortable, intimidating, or hostile atmosphere
- Participating in verbal abuse or physical confrontation with another

### **Toxic Talk**

Toxic talk is discussing concerns or complaints with a negative attitude, and with no intent or plan to address them in a constructive way. Toxic talk is also using slanderous or demeaning comments when dissatisfied or in disagreement. This type of talk is detrimental to any group or program. It affects not only the volunteers and staff you are talking to, but those you are talking about and those around you. This contributes to a negative, uncomfortable, and even hostile atmosphere. We empower all staff and volunteers to call out toxic talk when they hear it, and to encourage more productive ways of handling dissatisfaction. **There is no place in our program for this behavior.**

**Please note that any disregard for the code of conduct can result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the volunteer program.** We appreciate your cooperation as we seek to create an atmosphere of trust and camaraderie within the Zoo's volunteer program. The Mesker Park Zoo is committed to providing a positive and enjoyable environment for everyone.

