

## Seneca Park Zoo – ZooTeen FAQs

### *What do ZooTeens do?*

The ZooTeen program provides teenagers with the opportunity to learn about environmental topics and strengthen their public speaking skills while gaining valuable volunteer experience. ZooTeens talk to guests at educational stations set up throughout the Zoo.

### *How do I become a ZooTeen?*

If you are currently in grades 7-12, you are eligible to apply to be a ZooTeen. The application is typically available on our website starting in early January with a due date in early May. After the application closes, candidates are contacted with information about participating in a group interview. After the interviews are complete, candidates will find out if they were accepted into the ZooTeen program.

### *What is a typical volunteer shift like for a ZooTeen?*

Teens start their shift by having a group meeting with the ZooTeen Coordinator. During this meeting, they hear important updates and announcements and get excited for the shift ahead. After the meeting, ZooTeens go to their stations throughout the Zoo. They stay at each station for around 30 minutes and then rotate to the next station. At the end of the shift, teens have another group meeting with the ZooTeen Coordinator where they receive kudos and share how the shift went. Volunteer shifts run 9:30am-1:30pm or 12:30-4:30pm.

### *What is the time commitment?*

Teens are expected to sign up for a minimum of 12 shifts over six weeks from early July-mid August. They choose the dates and times for their shifts using an online sign-up system. All ZooTeens must attend one training session prior to the start of the program.

### *Will I be able to interact with the Zoo animals directly?*

No. It is our policy that any volunteer that interacts with animals directly must be at least 18 years old. If you meet that age requirement and are interested in exploring a career working in the animal field, apply to be an Animal Care Volunteer by completing the application on this website: <https://senecaparkzoo.org/animal-care-volunteer/>

### *What if there is inclement weather on the day of my volunteer shift?*

It is very rare that a ZooTeen shift is cancelled. ZooTeens should arrive prepared for the weather conditions, including rain and hot temperatures. A ZooTeen shift may be cancelled in cases of severe

weather (thunderstorms predicted for the entire shift). The ZooTeen Coordinator will email all teens scheduled for the shift to let them know it is cancelled at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the shift.

*Why is there a fee associated with being a ZooTeen?*

The ZooTeen program is more than just a volunteer experience. ZooTeens receive ongoing training, guidance, and mentoring by several Zoo staff members. This experience helps ZooTeens prepare for future jobs. The fee helps cover the costs of staffing, equipment, and uniforms. There are needs-based scholarships available that cover 100% of the program fee.

*Do returning ZooTeens need to apply each year?*

Teens that participated in the ZooTeen program during the previous summer will receive an invitation to fill out the Returning ZooTeen Recommitment Form in January. This form lets us know that they plan on volunteering again for the current summer.