



Docent Program Overview

Thank you for your interest in the Philadelphia Zoo Docent Council. The following overview outlines the docent volunteer program. For more information, call 215-243-5200 or email volunteer@phillyzoo.org.

Definition:

Docent = volunteer teacher

Purpose:

Provide educational and informational services to Zoo visitors and the community. Cooperate with and encourage participation in all aspects of the Philadelphia Zoo's endeavors. Respond to Philadelphia Zoo curatorial and managerial needs whenever feasible.

Responsibilities:

Provide accurate information about Philadelphia Zoo animals, exhibits, horticulture, statuary and architecture. Explain the various roles of the Philadelphia Zoo, present them in a positive manner and encourage public support. Convey a positive image of the Philadelphia Zoo to the public. Engage in required council sponsored and independent continuing education.

Specific Duties:

Conduct tours, operate Just Ask information carts, perform offsite Zoo-2-U and LINKS programs, give audio-visual presentations, observe and interpret animal behavior, contribute to Docent Data newsletter, participate in special events and other docent projects.

Qualifications:

- Must be an adult member of the Philadelphia Zoo
- Must successfully complete the docent training course
- Must accept the responsibilities stated in the Docent Council directory
- Must have good communication skills and a pleasant manner

Commitment:

Weekday docents must donate a minimum of 90 hours per year. A weekday docent commits one day of choice per week.

Weekend docents must donate a minimum of 60 hours per year.

All docents must fulfill their touring and other obligations as outlined in the by-laws, maintain Philadelphia Zoo membership and pay annual docent dues, currently \$25.00.

Location:

Philadelphia Zoo grounds and authorized off premises assignments.



The Docent Training Course

The following information describes the docent training course and provisional docent requirements.

The course is held on Zoo grounds and consists of approximately 18 sessions held one day per week. Each session lasts five hours.

The course covers mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, biological concepts, presentation skills, and general information about Zoo operations and the Docent Council.

All provisional docents should expect to spend several hours per week outside of class on reading and writing assignments, walking quizzes, shadowing tours and studying.

Only two absences during the course are allowed. More than two absences may be reason to drop the course, as there may be too much material to make up. Members of the education committee will be available for assistance if needed.

All requirements must be fulfilled to graduate.

There is a charge for training materials, which include the Docent Council training manual, "Redbook," and several handouts.