

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
- Zooteens meet and greet

Independent Study

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

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
- Intro to animal contact zoo tour
- Intro to biofacts
 - Biofacts inventory
 - How to use and display biofacts
 - Tour of biofact table presentations

Independent Study

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

Level 3 (prerequisite Level 2)

- Intro to Living Ambassadors
- Animal welfare / stress / zoonosis
- Animal handling policies & procedures
- Intro to Plants & Animals
- Tour: meet the MPZ ambassador animals

Independent Study

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

Certification:

- Take 3 animal handling practice sessions - (with mentor)
- Take animal handling test - (with mentor)

Level 4 (prerequisite Level 3)

- Take 3 animal handling sessions - (with mentor)
- Take animal handling test - (with mentor)
- Take animal certification test - (online)

Camp Refresher

- Held each spring
- Latest zoo updates & tips for a successful camp summer
- Mandatory for all RETURNING zooteens



Training Schedule 2025

Mar. 29	Application deadline
Apr. 5	Level 1 Class
Apr. 19	Level 2 Class
May 24	Camp Refresher Class for returning ZTs
TBD	Level 4 Class & Recertification
TBD	Level 3 Class & Recertification





Volunteer Structure 2025

Mesker Park Zoo and Botanic Garden is committed to conservation of our wildlife and the environment we share. We seek engaging educational interactions with guests with the goal of enhancing their experience at the Zoo, and increasing their empathy and awareness about the environmental issues we all face. Volunteers have a significant role in that success.

Many people volunteer with their church, school, scout, work, or civic group to help with a special event or grounds project for a day, and no special training is required to do that. Others want to volunteer at the Zoo on a more regular basis, and should complete the training they need to serve in the roles they seek. There are a few types of volunteers at the Zoo...

Volunteers

There are many opportunities to volunteer at the Zoo, including special events, botanical projects, guest interaction, and educational programs for both the young and the young at heart. Our volunteer program is diverse and flexible to meet your needs. You can begin your volunteer path assisting with general projects and events on zoo grounds with minimal training, or advance to ambassador animal handling or educational programming with specialized training. One can begin for as little as 6 hours of training & 20 hours /yr.

Docents

Docents are adult volunteers that interact with guests to enhance their zoo experience. Docents have completed specialized training to provide educational interpretation of exhibits, bio facts, and animals throughout the zoo to teach about wildlife, environment, and conservation topics. Docents also conduct programs to schools, scout groups, summer campers, senior citizens, and civic organizations in our community. Docents must be at least 18 years old, a Zoo member, and complete training requirements for level desired.

Zooteens

High school students 14-18 years of age can become Zooteens. They help staff and Docents with projects, educational activities, summer camps, and events. Our Zooteen program offers opportunities to interact with animals, meet like-minded teens, and gain beneficial experiences to help them find their paths as young adults. Zooteens can apply in the spring of their freshman year, and reapply annually to serve through the summer of their senior year. A Zooteen can begin for as little as 6 hours of training & 40 hours per year.

Zooteen today, your way!

See below for the Zooteen program structure, and on the reverse side for the training schedule. The program is adapted to staff and volunteer needs, so be sure to seek out the most recent version from the website. Apply at www.meskerparkzoo.com.

		Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden ZooTeen Program last updated 11.23			
		Level 1 - Volunteer	Level 2 - Interpreter	Level 3 - Ambassador	Level 4 - Ambassador
To Train	Class training & certification (hrs)	4	4	4	2
	Animal handling certification (hrs)			6	2
	Spring refresher class each returning year (hrs)	2	2	2	2
To Stay Active	Annual service requirement (hrs)	40	40	60	60
	Annual summer camp requirement (days)	6	6	8	8
	Annual scheduled assignments requirement (outside of camp) **	0	4	6	6
To Advance Levels	Annual animal handling recertifications			1	1
	Complete volunteer time at the zoo (months) ***	0	18	30	
Privileges	Complete cumulative hours at the zoo (hrs training & volunteering) ***	10	100	130	
	Level 1 Assist on zoo grounds with general projects, events, and Camp ZooFari
	Level 2 Interpret exhibits, biofacts, animal contact yard, & educational activities		.	.	.
	Level 3 Interpret/ handle ambassador animals ***			.	.
Level 4 Interpret/ handle advanced ambassador animals ***				.	

** **Scheduled assignments** are experiences, programs, or events that are **scheduled by zoo staff to fill a specific need (not self-scheduled)**. Summer camp does not count towards these requirements. All other camps do. |

*** **Zooteens must be approved to enter training in Levels 3&4**, to be based on frequency & performance of volunteer service.

Zooteens must be in their 2nd year to train on Level 3 animals, and in their 3rd year **and FLUENT handling L3 animals** to train on Level 4 animals.

Zooteens that have been trained to handle ambassador animals are expected to handle them for interpretive experiences and programs.