

VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTION: Nature Walk

Nature Walk is a summer volunteer program that inspires youth to be stewards for wildlife. Youth will connect visitors to Como's animals and plants to encourage appreciation, and preservation of the natural world. Additionally, the Nature Walk program provides youth with valuable work experience and job skills and creates a gateway for potential future opportunities at Como and other conservation institutions.

Requirements for Applying:

- o Must be entering grades 8th through 12th in the fall of 2023.
- o Must have a youth-owned e-mail address and be able to receive information from Como.
- o Must complete the online application through Google Forms.
- o Must submit one personal, professional, or academic reference online through Google Forms.
- o If selected, be prepared to present and speak by attending an interview and giving an oral presentation.
- o Have a passion for wildlife, and be comfortable initiating conversations or willing to learn how to talk with visitors of all ages and backgrounds.
- o Be prepared to volunteer outside in summer weather conditions.

Responsibilities as a Nature Walk Volunteer:

- o Learn and review plant and animal informational and interpretation material at home virtually.
- o Attend two in-person half-day training sessions at Como.
- o Volunteer for 15 morning or afternoon shifts during the summer of 2023 season (June 13th through August 17th).
- o Volunteer for two event shifts during the 2023-2024 school year. This includes monthly weekend events that run September to April or special events as well as a few other special event opportunities.
- o Display courtesy, professionalism and maturity while working with other volunteers, staff, and the public.
- o Practice sharing knowledge about Como's plants and animals, sparking curiosity, and making visitors feel welcome.
- o Follow established procedures when working at Como, as specified in training and the *Como Park Zoo and Conservatory Nature Walk Volunteer Handbook*.
- o Provide basic visitor service assistance regarding Como Park Zoo & Conservatory.

Program Benefits:

- o Be a part of the Nature Walk team and meet new people!
- o Be fully prepared to interact with Como's visitors and share exciting knowledge.
- o Exercise invaluable job skills such as self-reliance, punctuality, public speaking, and teamwork.
- o Network with Como staff and volunteers to provide a reference for future resumes and job applications.
- o Learn about animal and plant husbandry from zookeepers and horticulturalists.
- o Take part in additional opportunities that include animal enrichment creation, future job skill workshops, and more!
- o **Live program animals are not a part of the Nature Walk program. Participants do not interact or handle any of Como's ambassador animals.**

Questions about Nature Walk or the application process? E-mail comovolunteers@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Thank you for your interest in the Nature Walk youth volunteer program! We are looking for 20-25 participants to join the program in 2023.

Nature Walk is a Como Park Zoo and Conservatory Interpretive program for rising 8th graders through incoming 12th graders with a strong interest in the natural world and a desire to become stewards for wildlife.

To be a part of the Nature Walk program, applicants **MUST** fulfill these expectations:

Attend an information session WITH a parent/guardian to learn more about the program.

Information sessions will be held virtually. Information sessions can be attended either before or after the application is submitted. E-mail comovolunteers@ci.stpaul.mn.us to sign-up for a virtual session. Applicants and parents can choose between two information session dates:

- Wednesday, March 15th from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm
- Wednesday, April 12th from 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Submit an application and *one* reference through Google Forms by 11:59pm on April 10th, 2023.

- [Google Forms Application](#)
- [Google Forms Reference](#) Copy/paste this link to email to the applicant's reference

After the application deadline, select candidates will be invited to sign-up for an interview through email by April 14th. In-person interviews are preferred.

- o Interviews consist of panel questions and an oral presentation presented by the applicant.
- o Interview date options are below. There will be multiple time slots available.
 - Saturday, April 22nd (morning/afternoon)
 - Tuesday, April 25th (afternoon/evening)

If successful in the interview process and selected, confirm your involvement in the Nature Walk program.

- o Applicant references, interviews and oral presentation scores will be used to determine the selection.
- o Acceptance letters and participant enrollment forms will be e-mailed No later than End of Day Friday, April 28th

Commit to attending one session of an Orientation, Training 1 and Training 2. Choose one option that works best for trainings 1 and 2 as they can be done interchangeably. All sessions will be in-person.

- o **Orientation:** Saturday May 20th in the morning or Tuesday May 23rd in the evening
- o **Training 1:** Saturday June 3rd or Sunday June 11th both in the afternoon
- o **Training 2:** Sunday June 4th or Saturday June 10th both in the afternoon
- o **Note:** Some at-home virtual learning will also be required outside of the two training sessions.

Commit to 15 shifts during the summer of 2023. Shift sign-up forms will be sent virtually.

- o The 2023 Nature Walk season runs Tuesdays and Thursdays June 13th to August 17th
 - Morning shift: 9:30am-12:00pm
 - Afternoon shift: 1:30pm-4:00pm

Commit to 2 special events during the 2023-2024 school year.

- o Special events take place one weekend a month from September 2023 to April 2024.
- o Nature Walkers are also needed for one-time summer evening events. These count as 1 special event shift.
 - Obon Festival: Sunday, August 20th afternoon and evening

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