

Volunteer Job Description –Volunteer Field Trip Educator

To discuss this position or apply to be a volunteer at the GDMBG, please contact Susan Cory, Volunteer Coordinator, 515-323-6293, scory@dmbotanicalgarden.com

Position: Volunteer Field Trip Educator

Time Commitment: Approximately 1.5 hours. Youth field trips are offered on weekdays and scheduled by request throughout the year with heavier programming in the spring months. Volunteers are notified in advance regarding openings but are encouraged to review the schedule anytime to identify openings they can assist with. Schedules are made available through individual volunteer accounts set up for each person.

Activities:

The education department plays an important role in engaging guests in our mission of “Exploring, explaining, and celebrating the world of plants.” The youth field trip program actively involves children in this mission through plant related lessons that are designed to meet national and state curricular standards. Volunteer support is essential to offering a quality experience.

The position involves staff and volunteers leading or co-leading student groups through plant-related activities and/or on short tours within the conservatory. Volunteers will work under the guidance of the Youth Education Coordinator. During the school’s visit, volunteers may work with groups in the Botany Lab, Conservatory, Show House or outdoor gardens delivering curriculum based lessons. This will involve leading the group in 3 or 4 activities (approximately 20 - 30 minutes in length), highlighting specific points of interest in the Conservatory (and/or outdoor gardens when available) and conducting games, stories and other age appropriate activities. Groups are kept to 25 or fewer students per volunteer pair. Chaperones are required to accompany the group and information about expectations is shared with the school prior to a group’s visit.

The bulk of field trip requests are for grades Pre-K through 6th although there are some requests for middle and high school (these are anticipated to grow as program offerings develop). Training will be provided to help a volunteer develop skills to work with any age level they are comfortable with.

Requirements:

- A desire to educate and an interested in guiding youth through field-trip activities and facilitating hands-on learning.
- Comfort co-leading groups with a maximum of 25 youth (with assistance of chaperones). Sometimes volunteers lead solo if comfortable.
- Ability to direct both participants and adult chaperones as needed.
- Comfort with public speaking and the ability to project your voice over the sounds of the conservatory.
- The ability to be on your feet for an extended period of time (up to 1 ½ hours) and move along various inclines and grades with ease.
- A friendly and positive attitude is necessary. Being comfortable taking questions and working “off-script” as needed (while still providing accurate information).
- Training is required and provided periodically for this position. On-going training will take place to introduce new learning components. Refresher or update courses or meetings will be held periodically.
- Background checks are required for Botanical Garden volunteers.