



# ZooTeens Handbook

## 2026 - 2027

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# WELCOME

We are thrilled to welcome you to the Phoenix Zoo's ZooTeens program!

As a ZooTeen, you will play an important role in helping guests have fun, meaningful and educational experiences during their visit. Through interactive stations, activities and conversations, you'll help share the Zoo's mission and inspire care for the natural world. In the process, you'll gain valuable experience, build professional and communication skills and form lasting friendships along the way.

Throughout the ZooTeens season, you'll have the chance to try new things, meet people who share your interests, and be part of a team that's making a real impact. Every shift is a chance to grow your confidence and explore your passions!

This Participant Handbook outlines the purpose, responsibilities, and expectations of the ZooTeens program and will serve as a reference for you and your parents/guardians.

We look forward to an incredible year of learning, growth and fun.  
Welcome aboard!



**Nina Loughman**  
**Youth Engagement Manager**

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# OUR TEAM



**Nina Loughman, Youth Engagement Manager**

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**602-286-3800 x7658**

I have been with the Zoo for three years which builds upon 10 years of experience in the classroom as a high school teacher and two years at Arizona State University running a student leadership organization. I hold a master's degree in public administration, and I am excited to be behind the creation of exciting programs for teens and young adults here at the Phoenix Zoo!



**Ryan Jones, Programs Coordinator**

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**602-286-3800 x7462**

With a background in marine and conservation biology and eight years of informal learning at zoos, I always aim to keep things exciting and engaging. I recently finished my master's degree in biology. When I'm not orchestrating animal adventures, you might find me reminiscing about my days as a zookeeper working with snakes, tarantulas and vultures.

## ZooTeen Leads

ZooTeen Leads are ZooTeens who have served a minimum of one year and have shown leadership potential. ZooTeen Leads support orientation and training and are leaders among their peers.

Alaina Holmberg - Senior, third year ZooTeen  
Bella Esquivel - Senior, second year ZooTeen  
Cece Canez - Senior, second year ZooTeen  
Corrina Thielsen - Junior, third year ZooTeen  
Dominic Reddy - Sophomore, second year ZooTeen  
Emily Hernandez - Senior, third year ZooTeen  
Eunseo Roh - Senior, third year ZooTeen  
Grant Rojas - Junior, second year ZooTeen  
Lilia Saenz-Castro - Junior, third year ZooTeen  
Malloy Funk - Junior, second year ZooTeen  
Nicholas Shattuck - Senior, third year ZooTeen  
Nina Whaley - Junior, third year ZooTeen  
NJ Burton - Junior, second year ZooTeen  
Pluto Beseke - Sophomore, second year ZooTeen  
Reece Allain - Junior, third year ZooTeen  
Saffirah Estrella - Junior, second year ZooTeen  
Vivienne Soto - Senior, third year ZooTeen



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Phoenix ZooTeens program has a proud history of empowering young people to connect with animals, nature and conservation through hands-on service and guest engagement. Originally launched in the 1990s, ZooTeens provided high school students with meaningful opportunities to support the Zoo and inspire visitors.

The ZooTeens program was relaunched in 2023 with support and input from the Phoenix Zoo's Trailblazers Youth Advisory Council, who helped shape its new vision and structure. Now in its third year of the renewed program, ZooTeens continues to grow as a fun and impactful way for teens to gain experience, develop life skills, and make a real difference at the Phoenix Zoo.



## Mission Statements

### Phoenix Zoo Mission

The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation advances the stewardship and conservation of animals and their habitats while providing experiences that inspire people and motivate them to care for the natural world.

### Youth Engagement Mission

Our mission is to build the next generation of conservation stewards and advocates by providing young people from all backgrounds the opportunity to connect with nature and participate in meaningful educational, professional, and career-building experiences.

### ZooTeens Mission

To inspire teens through interactive volunteer experiences at the Phoenix Zoo, fostering life skills while educating guests.

## Program Goals

The ZooTeens program is designed to:

**Develop life skills, such as public speaking and customer service.**

**Develop an understanding of potential careers related to zoos.**

**Develop a more caring and sustainable relationship with nature.**

**Develop a sense of community within the program and with the Phoenix Zoo.**

# TIME COMMITMENT

## Required Dates

ZooTeens must commit to the program for a full year from August 2026 through May 2027. New ZooTeens must attend a mandatory orientation and two training dates. Returning ZooTeens must attend one mandatory training date. ZooTeens who miss required dates may be at risk of forfeiting their position in the ZooTeens program.

- **New ZooTeens Orientation** - Saturday, August 22, 2026 from 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- **New ZooTeens Training** - Saturday, September 12, 2026 from 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- **All ZooTeens Training** - Saturday, September 19, 2026 from 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**ZooTeens are required to attend a Mid-Year Meeting** on Saturday, January 9, 2027 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. This meeting does not count as the volunteer shift for January. This is an opportunity to regroup and retrain for the second half of the year.

## Service Requirement

**ZooTeens must complete a minimum of one volunteer shift per month from October 2026 through April 2027.**

All ZooTeens volunteering takes place on Saturdays and Sundays. Each volunteer shift has a capacity of 20 ZooTeens and 4 Lead ZooTeens. Shifts are scheduled on a first-come-first-serve basis and there is more than enough capacity for all ZooTeens to complete their service requirement. However, ZooTeens may find it challenging to meet their requirement if they wait until the last minute to sign up for their shifts! ZooTeens are welcome to volunteer more than once a month but may be asked by their peers to “drop a shift” to help ensure others meet their service requirements.

There are a few Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year where there are no ZooTeens shifts. These “Black Out” dates are important to remember when planning volunteer shifts.

### 2026-2027 Black Out Dates:

- Saturday, October 17, 2026
- Saturday, November 28, 2026
- Sunday, November 29, 2026
- Saturday, December 26, 2026
- Sunday, December 27, 2026
- Sunday, January 17, 2027
- Saturday, January 30, 2027
- Saturday, February 27, 2027
- Sunday, February 28, 2027
- Saturday, March 27, 2027
- Sunday, March 28, 2027

# TIME COMMITMENT

## Lead ZooTeen Requirements

Lead ZooTeens are expected to arrive 15 minutes early to each volunteer shift and stay 15 minutes after each volunteer shift to help prepare and debrief. Lead ZooTeens are also expected to attend the New ZooTeens Orientation and new ZooTeens Training.

## Optional Events/Opportunities

Throughout the year, additional events and opportunities may arise. Participation in these events is optional, but highly encouraged to help develop a sense of community. Information about these opportunities will be shared with ZooTeens as soon as possible to allow ample time for planning and participation.

The following events are already planned for the year. \*Dates/times subject to change\*

- Friendsgiving Potluck - Wednesday, November 11 from 5-8 p.m.
- ZooLights Outing - Thursday, December 10 from 5-8 p.m.
- Papago Park Hole-in-the-Rock Hike - Saturday, March 6, 2027 from 3-4 p.m.
- Invasive Species Clean-up Day - Sunday, May 2, 2027 from 8-11 a.m.
- ZooTeens End of the Year Celebration - Wednesday, May 12, 2027 from 5-8 p.m.

## Program Progression

ZooTeens who remain in good standing and complete their required volunteer hours may continue to participate in the program through their high school career until graduation and do not need to reapply or reinterview each year.

After graduating from high school, ZooTeens who are in good standing may automatically join the Phoenix Zoo's Adult Volunteering Program and bypass the application and interview stages for that program. Volunteer hours that are accumulated through the ZooTeens program transfer into the Adult Volunteering Program.

# SHIFT DETAILS

## Shift Timing

All ZooTeens shifts begin promptly at 9 a.m. and end at 2 p.m and follow the general schedule outlined below:

- 9:00 a.m. Pre-shift meeting
- 9:30 a.m. Volunteering at Engagement Stations/Equine Center
- 11 a.m. Lunch (brought from home or purchased at Zoo vendors)
- 11:30 a.m. Regroup and teambuilding
- 12 p.m. Volunteering at Engagement Stations
- 1:30 p.m. Post-shift meeting

## Shift Activities

### Engagement Stations

The primary role of a ZooTeen is to educate and support our guests while helping them create meaningful connections with wildlife and conservation. ZooTeens receive training in public speaking, interpretation, and guest engagement. Rather than working directly with the Zoo's exotic animals, ZooTeens are stationed at engagement stations throughout the Zoo where they interact with guests. Each station includes educational materials such as animal biofacts (replica skulls, feathers, claws, pelts, and other artifacts) and often interactive games or activities.

### Equine Center

ZooTeens who wish to complete additional training may sign up for Equine shifts. This shift involves working directly with Equine and Farm zookeepers to complete tasks such as cleaning stalls, sanitizing feed/water buckets and stall rails, helping move shavings/hay, raking, filling hay bags, general barn maintenance projects, and cleaning tack (saddles/bridles). The Equine Shift is a morning shift only; ZooTeens will transition to an Engagement Station after lunch.

Equine shifts are more physically demanding than Engagement Stations. ZooTeens who choose to train and work these shifts should come prepared by wearing closed-toe shoes that they do not mind getting dirty. Long pants are strongly recommended to help protect against dust, dirt, and minor scrapes while working in the barn environment.

ZooTeens who demonstrate dedication to Equine Shifts may be granted to privilege to train on more advanced tasks based on the number of service hours completed. Shifts and tasks are subject to change depending on the needs of the Phoenix Zoo and the capacity of the ZooTeens and Phoenix Zoo staff.

# Signing Up for Shifts

ZooTeens will use a web-based portal, Volgistics, to sign up for their volunteer shifts. It is the ZooTeen's responsibility to review the available shifts and "book" their own shifts through Volgistics. All ZooTeens will be granted access to and trained on Volgistics during orientation. All ZooTeen shifts are capped at 20 ZooTeens and 4 ZooTeen Leads and are first come, first served.

## Clocking In/Out

ZooTeens are responsible for tracking their time on Zoo grounds through the Zoo's volunteer management software, Volgistics. Each ZooTeen will be provided login credentials they are asked to memorize. Upon arriving for a volunteer shift, ZooTeens will "clock in" and before departing the Zoo, ZooTeens will "clock out". ZooTeens will use Volgistics to track their service hours as part of the ZooTeens program.

## Pick Up and Drop Off

It is up to the ZooTeen and their parent/guardian to arrange transportation to and from the Zoo for volunteering shifts. ZooTeens will enter and depart the Zoo through the main entrance and may be picked up/dropped off along the front curb. Please be aware of "no drop off zones" near the entrance to the Zoo and to not block egress points. Zoo staff will supervise pick up from 2 - 2:30 p.m. along the front curb and any students that are not picked up by 2:30 p.m. will be escorted to the Volunteer Office to wait inside for their ride.

## Inclement Weather

Adverse weather does not necessarily result in a shift cancellation. The Programs Coordinator or Youth Engagement Manager will determine shift cancellations and notify ZooTeens via GroupMe and/or email as soon as possible. If a volunteering shift gets cancelled due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances, that shift will still count towards the ZooTeen's required monthly volunteering shift for the program. However those hours will not count for service hours for other programs/clubs/etc.

## Cancelling a Shift

Volunteer shifts are "locked in" 24 hours before they start. This means that ZooTeens cannot drop a shift within 24 hours. This helps Phoenix Zoo staff with coordination and helps teach ZooTeens the responsibility of early communication when plans change.

If a ZooTeen needs to drop a shift within 24 hours of its start, they must:

1. Send a direct message on GroupMe to BOTH Ryan Jones and Nina Loughman and explain the situation.
2. Sign up for another volunteer shift to ensure you meet your monthly service requirement.

Habitual call outs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and may result in corrective action (see page 11).

# UNIFORMS

It is important that ZooTeens present themselves in a professional manner while volunteering at the Phoenix Zoo. ZooTeens are required to adhere to the following uniform guidelines:

- **Program shirt** - ZooTeens will be provided (1) program shirt and are required to wear their shirt during every volunteer shift and any other instance where they are representing the ZooTeens program in an official capacity. ZooTeens may purchase an additional program shirt for an additional fee.  
  
Please note - ZooTeens should not wear their program shirt if they are visiting the Zoo and are not volunteering as this may confuse guests. If a ZooTeen wishes to visit the Zoo before/after volunteer shifts they should bring a change of clothes.
- **Name tag** - ZooTeens will be provided (1) name tag and are required to wear the name tag on the right side of their program shirt during every volunteer shift and any other instance where they are representing the ZooTeens program in an official capacity. If a ZooTeen loses their name tag, they may request a new one.
- **Bottoms** - ZooTeens should wear bottoms that are an appropriate length and style. A general rule to aid in determining the length of shorts is to have a minimum of a 5 inch inseam. Bottoms do not need to be a specific color or material, except spandex or leggings are not permitted.
- **Closed-toed shoes** - ZooTeens must wear closed-toed shoes during every volunteer shift and any other instance where they are representing the ZooTeens program in an official capacity. Open shoes, Crocs and sandals are not permitted.
- **Water bottle** - ZooTeens must bring a water bottle with them to all volunteering shifts, regardless of the season. Please consider bringing a reusable water bottle to help reduce plastic waste.
- **Outerwear and accessories** - ZooTeens are permitted to wear outerwear, such as jackets or sweaters, that is free from logos of sports teams, branding, or other non-Zoo logos. Name tags must be worn on the outerwear. ZooTeens may also wear appropriate seasonal accessories, such as hats and sunglasses, that are free from logos of sports teams, music branding, or other non-Zoo logos.

**When in doubt about uniform expectations, please ask!**

It is up to the discretion of the Programs Coordinator or Youth Engagement Manager to determine the appropriateness of a ZooTeen's uniform. ZooTeens may be asked to make adjustments or not complete their volunteer shift if their uniform does not conform to the guidelines. Repeated uniform violations may result in corrective action.

# COMMUNICATION

## Platforms and Expectations

Effective communication is crucial to success. The primary and preferred methods of communication are [Google Classroom](#) and [GroupMe](#).

ZooTeens are expected to regularly check these platforms for updates, to access shared resources, and to communicate with other ZooTeens and program staff. If they have opted out of utilizing these communication platforms, it is the ZooTeen's responsibility to reach out to program staff via email. Program staff will use email for more formal/personal direct communication. It is important for ZooTeens to practice checking their email regularly as this is a valuable professional skill.

Please note - Communication will primarily be directed to ZooTeens, not their parents/guardians, to help develop professional and accountability skills. However, a monthly newsletter will be emailed to participants, parents/guardians and Zoo staff to share information about the program's activities and accomplishments.



**ZooTeens Google Classroom**  
Class Code - rg2pmcrj



**ZooTeens GroupMe**  
Invitation Request Link

## Contact Information

ZooTeens are responsible for keeping their contact information current. If any of the following information changes, ZooTeens must notify the Programs Coordinator immediately; otherwise they may miss out on important information and opportunities.

- Email address
- Phone number
- Medical information
- Emergency contact

# COMMUNICATION

## Radios

ZooTeens will use radios as part of their shift responsibilities to support communication, safety and coordination across the Zoo. Each ZooTeen group will be assigned a radio at the start of their shift and is responsible for ensuring it is returned and properly charging at the end of the day. ZooTeens will receive hands-on radio training during the required training days.

## Cell Phone Use During Shifts

ZooTeens are encouraged to have their cell phones with them during their volunteer shifts, however, it is important to keep our guests feeling welcomed. ZooTeens should not be on their phone while interacting with guests or in guest-facing areas unless they are using their phone to support the interaction such as showing the map or using the Trail Cards to look up information about an animal.

If a ZooTeen needs to make a call or send a message, they should do so during their break if possible. For emergencies, ZooTeens may step away from guest areas and ask their partner ZooTeen to cover their station.

ZooTeens may also use their cell phones to send GroupMe messages to the ZooTeens group or program staff when it is more appropriate to have a silent conversation rather than something that is shared via the radios.

ZooTeens will have the opportunity to work closely with Zoo staff and adult volunteers throughout the program. This is a great opportunity to start developing a professional network and to learn how to engage with others in a professional manner.

All Zoo staff and adult volunteers have undergone background checks and program staff working directly with ZooTeens will be trained on how to engage and support youth appropriately.

It is important for ZooTeens to maintain professional boundaries with adults. Exchanging personal phone numbers or becoming "friends" on social media with adult staff or volunteers is not permitted. All communication between program staff and ZooTeens will occur through Google Classroom, GroupMe or email and will remain within the professional context of the volunteer program. If a ZooTeen is interested in connecting with another Zoo staff member to grow their professional network, they may request an introduction through the Programs Coordinator or Youth Engagement Manager and an introduction will be made via email.

# EXPECTATIONS

## Code of Conduct

ZooTeens are an important part of the Phoenix Zoo community. Your behavior reflects not only on you, but also on the entire ZooTeen program. All ZooTeens are expected to follow this Code of Conduct to help create a respectful, safe, and positive experience for guests, fellow volunteers, and staff.

### Respect and Inclusivity

- **Be Respectful:** Treat all guests, fellow ZooTeens, Zoo staff, volunteers and animals with kindness, patience, and respect.
- **Be Inclusive:** Help create a welcoming environment for everyone, regardless of their background, identity, or beliefs. Encourage others and value different perspectives.

### Professionalism

- **Be Reliable:** Show up for your scheduled shifts on time, dressed appropriately, and ready to participate.
- **Be Responsible:** Follow through on your assignments and tasks during your shift. Ask for help if you are unsure what to do.
- **Be Prepared:** Bring what you need for your shift and take care of any equipment you are responsible for, such as radios or station materials.

### Teamwork and Communication

- **Be a Team Player:** Work cooperatively with your fellow ZooTeens and support each other during your shift.
- **Communicate Respectfully:** Use professional language, listen to others, and follow Zoo staff directions.
- **Ask Questions:** If you are confused or concerned about something, speak up. Zoo staff and volunteers are here to support you.

### Positive Attitude

- **Be a Role Model:** Represent the ZooTeen program with pride. Stay positive, follow Zoo rules, and act responsibly at all times.
- **Stay Flexible:** Things can change quickly at the Zoo! Keep a positive attitude and be willing to adjust, pivot, and help where needed.

### Safety and Stewardship

- **Stay Safe:** Follow all safety instructions and procedures. Never put yourself, others, or animals at risk.
- **Care for the Zoo:** Treat animals, exhibits, equipment, and Zoo grounds with care and respect.
- **Support Conservation:** Share the Zoo's mission and messages with guests in a way that inspires care for animals and the environment.

# EXPECTATIONS

## Social Media and Online Conduct:

- **Responsible Online Behavior:** When representing the ZooTeens program or the Phoenix Zoo online, ensure that your actions and words reflect the values and mission of the program and the Zoo. Do not engage in cyberbullying, harassment, or any harmful online behavior.

## Compliance with Policies:

- **Adherence to Zoo Policies:** Familiarize yourself with and adhere to all Zoo policies (included later in this Handbook), including those related to safety, conduct, and visitor guidelines.

**Consequences of Violations:** Violations of this Code of Conduct may result in corrective action or, in severe cases, removal from the program.

**Reporting Violations:** If you witness or experience a violation of this Code of Conduct, please report it promptly to the Youth Engagement Manager or designated Zoo staff member. All reports will be treated confidentially and with the utmost seriousness.

## Feedback and Growth

Reflection and feedback are core components of the ZooTeens program. We want all ZooTeens to have a “growth mindset” and be open to supportive feedback to help them develop. ZooTeens will receive feedback regularly from peers, the Programs Coordinator, the Youth Engagement Manager and other Zoo staff or volunteers. Feedback is not disciplinary coaching or corrective action. It is a tool used to strengthen behaviors, words and actions.

## Corrective Action

The Phoenix Zoo’s Youth Engagement team has developed a process for addressing unacceptable behavior to help maintain a safe and respectful environment. Depending on the severity of the situation, program staff have the discretion to bypass the corrective action steps below and may immediately dismiss a ZooTeen from the program.

- **First Offense** - Verbal counseling and documentation of the incident.
- **Second Offense** - Verbal warning and a written report of the incident followed by supportive coaching.
- **Third Offense** - Temporary suspension from activities and a conference with the Youth Engagement Manager, Programs Coordinator, the ZooTeen, and the ZooTeen’s parent/guardian.
- **Fourth Offense** - Dismissal from the ZooTeens program.

# BENEFITS



## Phoenix Zoo Membership

ZooTeens will receive a Non-Regular Volunteer Phoenix Zoo Membership. Memberships will be distributed at the September meeting and will expire in June 2027, but can be terminated early if needed. Some of the benefits of a Teen Volunteer membership include:

- Teen Volunteers entering the Zoo as guests may bring up to three guests (free admission) with them. A membership card will be provided for all volunteers.
- Teen Volunteers receive a 50% discount on additional general daytime guest admission tickets.
- Teen Volunteers receive a 35% discount at Zoo food venues both their normal work hours and hours off work.

**See Appendix A for a full list of membership benefits and regulations.**



## Letters of Recommendation/References

ZooTeens may request letters of recommendation or references from program staff for future educational or employment opportunities. ZooTeens may request this support through the request form on the ZooTeens Google Classroom. **ZooTeens must submit their request a minimum of 10 days prior to when it is needed.**



## Volunteer Service Hours

Certain clubs, classes or schools may require proof of volunteer service hours. ZooTeens who require documentation of their volunteer hours may request this information through the request form on the ZooTeens Google Classroom. **ZooTeens must submit their request a minimum of seven days prior to when it is needed.**

# PHOENIX ZOO POLICIES

In addition to the expectations and policies outlined above, ZooTeens must abide by all Phoenix Zoo policies and strive to embody the Phoenix Zoo's core values and the "WILD" factor.

-  **Core Values, Organizational Commitment and the "WILD" Factor**
-  **Safety Policies**
-  **Proprietary Information and Technology**
-  **Bullying Policy**
-  **Harassment Policy**

# Core Values

- **Collaboration**- We encourage a spirit of cooperation and teamwork by working together to build supportive relationships to meet our common goals.
- **Respect**- We demonstrate compassion and service for each other and our guests, and ensure the highest standards of care for our animals.
- **Accountability**- We demonstrate integrity, fairness and professional standards, and are committed to managing and operating the organization as a credible, successful and self-sustaining enterprise.
- **Initiative**- We assess situations independently and look for solutions with a willingness to take appropriate action.
- **Fun**- We are engaged in our work, bringing energy, enthusiasm, and a desire to create enjoyable experiences for all.

## The “WILD” Factor

The WILD Factor is our Guest Service initiative that ensures that all guests receive amazing service while visiting the Zoo.

### Welcome All Guests

Wave, say “Hello!”, offer assistance, and be fully present and engaged during every guest interaction.

### I am the ACNC!

Be confident, carry yourself with pride, watch your non-verbal behavior, and remember every point of contact with a guest is an opportunity to make a positive impression.

### Look for Solutions

Trash on the ground? Pick it up! Have a great idea? Share it! Look at the Zoo through the “Eyes of the Guest”!

### Deliver Excellence

All of us have both the authority and responsibility to exceed our guests’ expectations and seek opportunities to create memories.

## Organizational Commitment

The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation/Phoenix Zoo is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within our organization and as leaders in our community by valuing the contributions of staff from diverse backgrounds and experiences, celebrating the diversity of our guests, promoting equity in our organizational policies, processes, and programs, and ensuring that we provide experiences that are accessible and welcoming.

# Safety and Reporting

The Phoenix Zoo is firmly committed to maintaining a safe and healthy working environment. All employees and volunteers are expected to be safety conscious on the job at all times. If you suspect unsafe conditions or hazards, ZooTeens should immediately notify the Youth Engagement Manager, Programs Coordinator, or contact Park Rangers directly.

In the event of an accident or injury, contact the Youth Engagement Manager, Programs Coordinator, or Park Rangers directly. All accidents must be reported on the day of occurrence, and all appropriate forms must be filled out. It is of the utmost importance to receive treatment for injuries, to complete the appropriate report, and to ensure follow-up treatment is provided when appropriate.

## Phoenix Zoo Park Rangers

ZooTeens are strongly encouraged to save the direct line to the Phoenix Zoo Park Rangers into their phone in the event of an emergency.

**(602) 568-8807**

## Restricted Areas

Due to the health and safety of animals, staff, volunteers, and guests, there are certain areas of the park that are off limits. Volunteers should not be in these areas unless escorted by staff and with permission from the Area Supervisor. These areas include, but are not limited to:

- Animal exhibits, behind stanchions or guardrails
- Animal Ambassador Resources/Amphitheater animals
- Animal Care Center
- Conservation Center
- Nighthouses of all collection animals
- Nutrition Services

## Guest Safety

If you encounter a guest who is in physical distress (in pain, bleeding, overheated, etc.), immediately contact the Programs Coordinator or Park Rangers and remain with the guest until a Park Ranger arrives. Park Rangers are the only personnel authorized to treat guests in need of first aid.

## Unwanted Guest Behavior

If you encounter a guest engaging in unsafe acts, violating barriers, or acting in a manner that is abusive to any plants, animal, or other guests, ask them to please stop. If they persist or are uncooperative, contact Park Rangers.

# Safety and the Animal Collection

As a volunteer of the ACNC, you may be faced with unique safety issues related to the animal collection. The following guidelines are intended to ensure a safe environment for our employees, volunteers, guests and the animal collection at the Zoo.

Only the Living Collections team is permitted to feed the animal collection. Additionally, it is important to remember not to touch the animals. Zoonotic (animal to human) diseases can be very serious and occasionally can be fatal. The only exception to feeding and/or touching collection animals is if you are participating in a Backstage Adventure or animal discovery where this is specifically allowed.

It is important to remember that loud noises can startle an animal and cause it to attack or charge. Be cautious to provide a safe and quiet environment for the collection.

## Escaped Animal Emergency Procedures

Animal escapes can occur. It is important to recognize that escapes are possible at any time because of the combination of human nature, animal behavior and facility design and maintenance. To ensure the safety of all guests and staff, as well as to better enable the appropriate response team in cases of animal emergencies or escapes, it is important for all Zoo staff and volunteers to follow the designated Escape Animal Emergency Procedure.

- **Code Red** – designation for a dangerous animal escaping from its primary enclosure or an unauthorized person within a dangerous animal's enclosure. A Code Red species escape requires the public to be directed off-grounds immediately.
- **Code Blue** – designation for a non-dangerous animal that is not controlled by staff and is outside of its primary enclosure.

### I see an animal outside its exhibit - What do I do?

1. Remain calm.
2. Call ZooTeens program staff on the ZooTeens radio.
3. Report – Your name and current location, what animal is out, where you last saw it, and the direction of the animal's movement.
4. If the threat is imminent to your location, make your way to the nearest safety shelter. Direct nearby guests to follow you.
5. Standby for additional instructions on the ZooTeens radio and GroupMe.

### I just heard there is an animal escape - What do I do?

1. ZooTeens program staff will radio all ZooTeens immediately and send a message via GroupMe explaining the code (Red or Blue).
2. Follow instructions from ZooTeens program staff. Instructions will generally follow the steps below.
3. If the animal is a Code Red species, make your way to the nearest safety shelter. Direct nearby guests to follow you.
4. If the animal is a Code Blue species and you are near their location, let nearby guests know that a non-dangerous animal is loose and that you need their cooperation.
5. Continue to listen for announcements until the situation has resolved.

# Items Prohibited on Zoo Grounds

For the health and safety of guests, park visitors, collection animals and wildlife, the following items are prohibited. All staff and volunteers are expected to follow these rules. There may be times when you need to politely inform a guest that items are prohibited or should be carefully disposed of, or you may notify Park Rangers about a problem.

**This list is not intended to be all-inclusive.**

- confetti
- balloons
- glitter
- silly string
- fake flower petals or leaves
- uncooked rice
- bird seed
- straw/hay
- paper lanterns
- live animals
- sparklers/fireworks
- weapons of any kind
- whistles or other devices that make loud sounds
- flashlights
- inflatable toys
- Frisbees, balls or objects that guests may be tempted to throw
- hula hoops
- selfie sticks
- toy weapons
- drones or any other flying objects
- bicycles, tricycles, scooters, skateboards
- wheelies
- hover boards, segways
- rip sticks
- roller skates and roller blades

## Smoking Policy

The Zoo is a smoke-free environment that complies with the guidelines of city and state regulations. This includes electronic cigarettes.

- City of Phoenix Ordinance PCC 24-42 restricts smoking and open flames in desert preserves, which includes Papago Park.
- Smoke-Free Arizona Act ARS 36-601.01 restricts smoking in enclosed buildings and company vehicles.

Smoking is not permitted by any Zoo guest, volunteer, vendor, or employee within 20 feet of any enclosed Zoo entrance or structure.

Guests should be politely reminded that the Zoo is a smoke-free environment and informed that they may return to their enclosed vehicle to smoke. If you are uncomfortable with approaching guests regarding this or run into difficulties with a guest enforcing this policy, please alert Park Rangers or Zoo staff.

# Heat Illness Prevention

Summer and the heat bring some special safety considerations. Heat exposure can be dangerous so watch for signs and symptoms of heat illness. No matter where you work, if it gets hot enough and/or humid enough, you could be affected.

## Signs of Medical Emergency

| Heat Exhaustion                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Heat Stroke                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Generally develops when a person is working or exercising in hot weather, sweats a lot and does not drink enough fluids (dehydration) or loses too many electrolytes.                                                            | Occurs when the body fails to regulate its own temperature and body temperature continues to rise unchecked. This is a medical emergency.                                                                                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness, fainting</li><li>• Weakness and moist skin</li><li>• Mood changes such as irritability or confusion</li><li>• Upset stomach or vomiting</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dry, hot skin with no sweating</li><li>• Abnormal thinking, behavior mental confusion</li><li>• Slurred speech</li><li>• Loss of Consciousness</li><li>• Seizures or convulsions</li></ul> |

## Preventing Heat Related Illness:

- Dress for the heat by wearing light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing.
- Wear a hat and sunscreen.
- Carry and drink plenty of cool water, even if you are NOT thirsty. When your mouth feels dry, you need to drink more water. Try to drink about one cup of water every 20 minutes.
- Remember to replace your electrolytes. In addition to plain water, drink sports drinks or electrolyte packets added to the water. Electrolyte packets are available in the Ranger Station.
- Take short, frequent breaks in cool, shaded areas to allow the body to cool down.
- Avoid eating large meals before working in hot environments.
- Avoid beverages with caffeine. These make your body lose water.
- Keep an eye out for fellow volunteers. They may not notice as quickly as you that they are in trouble

## What to Do for Heat-Related Illness:

1. Contact ZooTeens program staff or Park Rangers immediately. 911 may need to be called immediately
2. While waiting for help to arrive, move the employee/volunteer to a cool, shaded area
3. Loosen or remove heavy clothing
4. Provide cool drinking water
5. Fan and mist the person with water

**Heat related illnesses can sneak up on you suddenly.  
Be aware of the symptoms and warning signs!**

# Propriety Information and Technology

## Confidentiality Policy

As an employee/volunteer of the ACNC, you will learn and see exciting things, such as new animal exhibits, animal care, programs and other such things. You may also learn things about your fellow employees, donors and volunteers. While you may want to share this information with family and friends, this information must remain private and confidential.

## Release of Information

This policy relates to the release of proprietary Arizona Center for Nature Conservation (ACNC) information to the public including media. In order to provide the most consistent and accurate information to the public, all official information released regarding ACNC business must originate from ACNC's Communications department.

Such information (including, but not limited to animal news e.g. births, deaths, transportation, etc.) should never be released to guests, the media, or the public without first being released by Communications. We understand you may want to share your excitement or sentiments, however, these events are confidential until the information is officially released or cleared and approved by Communications.

## Photo / Video Usage

Photographs and video are an important part of the media conversation (print, web and social). They give a face to the story. However, photographs and video can be easily misinterpreted without the proper context. When posting photos or video to the Internet, including your personal pages (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr, etc.) refrain from posting photos which violate the ACNC Confidentiality Agreement. These would be images that show animals in transport, undergoing medical procedures (all stages), or any images that may deviate from AZA recommendations, ACNC behind the scenes guidelines or animal handling/feeding guidelines, unless otherwise approved by Communications.

## Media Inquiries

Any member of the media who calls, emails, contacts you via social media or comes on-site should be immediately referred to the VP of Marketing, Communications & Events, Linda Hardwick. You can reach her by calling 602.914.4363, extension 7212. Media representing their employers are not allowed on-site without the Communications department's assistance or prior arrangement.

Likewise, unless prior arrangements have been made with Communications, ACNC employees, volunteers and consultants should not be interviewed (formally or informally) regarding any ACNC business. It is Communications' responsibility to ensure that any employee or volunteer who is interviewed is prepared with specific talking points in advance. Additionally, if you receive a non-media related interview request, please inform Communications before proceeding. Student requests can be made through the ACNC's website by visiting the "Contact" page and clicking on the relevant link.

# Social Media

Be aware that whenever you are near a guest, speaking to a guest directly, are in a publicly viewable space, etc., that any of your actions could be shared on social media. Smart phones, portable cameras and other devices make it very easy for a guest to take photos, video (including live streaming video) or otherwise gather information and share it immediately with the rest of the world.

Social media offers many ways to take part in global conversations related to the work we are doing at ACNC and the things that we, and you, care about. The choice to participate on social media and in these discussions is yours. If you do, please follow these guiding principles when discussing or sharing images related to the ACNC:

- Respect proprietary information and confidentiality. If the information or images have not been officially released by Communications, do not share it. If you have questions about what has or has not been released, please contact Communications.
- A failure to comply with the ACNC Release of Information Policy by an employee, volunteer, or consultant may lead to disciplinary action up to and including removal from the ZooTeens program.

## **Social Media Rules of Participation when discussing the ACNC:**

- **Pass it along.** Feel free to post, share, re-tweet, etc. any information that has been publicly released on phoenixzoo.org, our official Blog or ACNC/Phoenix Zoo/official Social Media pages (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X, etc.) If you have ideas, articles, videos or images that you would like for us to share, please send your idea to the Youth Engagement Manager.
- **Be transparent.** Your honesty—or dishonesty—will be quickly noticed in the social media world. If you are blogging about your work at ACNC, use your real name, identify that you work for ACNC, and be clear about your position. If you have a stake or involvement in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. You also should always disclose that you are sharing your opinion, not that of the ACNC unless you are acting as a representative of the ACNC on an official social media outlet of ACNC.
- **Be aware.** Make sure your efforts to be transparent don't violate ACNC's privacy, confidentiality and legal guidelines for external communication. Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy and ACNC confidential information. When connecting with co-workers on social media, be aware of whom you are connecting with and your personal privacy settings. Depending on your settings, by becoming a “friend” with a coworker or fellow volunteer on social media you are possibly making what you post available to even more people if the co-worker “likes,” comments on or shares your content. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and be sensible. If in doubt, please contact the Youth Engagement Manager.

- **If it gives you pause, pause.** If you're about to submit something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, don't shrug it off and hit 'post.' Take a minute to review these guidelines and try to figure out what's bothering you, then fix it. If you're still unsure, discuss it with the Youth Engagement Manager.
- **Write what you know.** Write and post about your areas of knowledge, especially if you're discussing the ACNC and our animal collection or other specifics. If you publish to a website outside ACNC, such as a personal blog, please use a disclaimer something like this: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent ACNC's positions, strategies or opinions." Also, please respect brand, trademark, copyright, fair use, and ACNC Confidentiality Policy—if you have any questions about these, please contact the Youth Engagement Manager.
- **Perception is reality.** In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with ACNC's values and professional standards. Essentially, every employee and volunteer is an extension and representative of the ACNC brand; your content should reflect that.
- **Did you make a mistake?** If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. If something has escalated, inform the Youth Engagement Manager immediately.
- **Create some excitement.** ACNC is making important contributions to the world, to the future of wildlife, education, nature, and to public dialogue on a broad range of issues. Let's share with the world the exciting things we're learning and doing—and open up the channels to learn from others.
- **A word of caution:** If the content related to ACNC is ugly, offensive, demeaning, untrue, inhibits the strategy of a marketing or PR campaign, or violates ACNC policies, you will be asked to remove the statement, image or video.

This policy does not prohibit actions supporting or limit your rights under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1991, the Labor Management Relations Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Arizona Civil Rights Act, the Arizona Employment Protection Act, the Arizona Wage Payment Act, any other federal or state statute.

# Bullying Policy

The Phoenix Zoo – Arizona Center for Nature Conservation takes all forms of harassment seriously; a term more commonly known for children and adolescents is bullying. In order to make sure all teens understand what bullying is, we have added this section to our harassment policy for ZooTeens.

## What Is Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose to cause harm. There are three main forms of bullying that we recognize.

## Types of Bullying

Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean or hurtful things. Verbal bullying may include:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying may include:

- Leaving someone out of an activity or conversation on purpose
- Telling other teens not to be friends with someone, verbally or digitally
- Spreading rumors about someone, verbally or digitally
- Embarrassing someone in public, verbally or digitally
- Taking unflattering photos of another teen, without their consent
- Sharing unflattering digital photos of another teen without their consent

Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying may include:

- Hitting, kicking, slapping and/or pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping or pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

## Where and When Bullying Happens

Bullying can occur during or outside of scheduled meetings. It can also happen through social media or via text messaging.

## **Bystanders**

- A bystander is someone who sees or knows about bullying or other forms of violence that is happening to someone else; they can either be part of the problem (hurtful bystander) or part of the solution (helpful bystander).
- Bystanders have the power to play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying – without putting themselves at risk or becoming a bully themselves. Some bystanders directly intervene by discouraging the bully, defending the victim, or redirecting the situation away from the bully. Other bystanders get help by rallying support from peers to stand up against bullying or by reporting the bullying to a trusted adult.

## **Reporting Bullying**

ZooTeens must understand that bullying of any type will not be tolerated. If you ever feel that you are a victim of bullying, please make sure you contact the Youth Engagement Manager as soon as possible. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigative process, to the extent possible, consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate corrective action.

If you are discussing an instance of bullying with a supervisor, a ZooTeen should be prepared to answer all of the same questions as in our regular employee/volunteer harassment policy.

## **Consequences for Bullying Behavior**

Coaching and/or corrective action are used to help modify or redirect behaviors.

Corrective action may be needed depending on the severity of the situation.

Parents/guardians may be contacted depending on the severity of the situation. In extreme situations, removal from the ZooTeens program may result.

## **Whistleblower Policy**

If the bullying does not stop, please keep the Youth Engagement Manager informed.

When circumstances or conditions exist that may create a potential conflict of interest, the volunteer should report the situation to Human Resources. A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee or volunteer of ACNC who reports an activity that they consider to be illegal or dishonest to one of the parties specified in this policy. Please exercise sound judgment when making an allegation. It is the policy of the ACNC not to allow retaliation for reports of misconduct by others made in good faith by employees. The whistleblower policy is intended to encourage and enable employees and others to raise serious concerns within the ACNC prior to seeking resolution outside of the program. Employees are expected to cooperate in internal investigations of misconduct. Allegations that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be reviewed as a serious offense.

**Phoenix Zoo Anonymous Whistleblower Hotline: 1 (844) 370 – 0008**

**Website: <https://lighthouse-services.com/phoenixzoo>**

# Harassment Policy

The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation (ACNC) is committed to a work [or volunteer] environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment [or volunteer] opportunities and prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment. Therefore, the Zoo expects that all relationships among persons in the workplace will be business-like and free of bias, prejudice, and harassment.

It is the policy of the ACNC to ensure an environment without discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (with or without sexual conduct), age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. The ACNC prohibits and will not tolerate any such discrimination or harassment.

## **Unlawful Harassment**

Harassment, including discrimination, is illegal under federal, state, and local laws. For the purposes of this policy, harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. In addition to sexual harassment, it is illegal and against the policies of the ACNC for any employee or volunteer to harass another employee or volunteer based on ethnicity, race, national origin, religion, age, disability, pregnancy, or any other reason protected under the law. Such harassment may include (but is not limited to) derogatory remarks, epithets, offensive jokes, the display of offensive printed or visual material, offensive physical actions that reasonably interfere with an individual's work performance or create an abusive work environment or conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or status.

Harassment will not be tolerated. All employees, volunteers, supervisors, and managers must comply with this policy and the law. Failure to do so shall result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Complaints of sexual harassment shall be thoroughly investigated by the ACNC with due regard for the privacy and confidentiality of all persons involved. Any employee or volunteer who refuses to cooperate in an investigation of a harassment (or discrimination) complaint may be subject to disciplinary action. If the investigation reveals that the complaint is valid, prompt and appropriate corrective action will be taken. As circumstances warrant, the harasser may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

False charges of harassment made intentionally or with malice will be treated as harassing conduct and may subject the charging party to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The ACNC has a zero-tolerance policy against any reprisals or retaliation against any employee for making complaints of unlawful discrimination. Failure to comply with this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

## What to Do if an Incident Occurs

- If you are offended by inappropriate verbal or visual behavior while volunteering, it is recommended that you tell the person harassing you that you are offended by the behavior and/or remarks and that you want it to stop. Be firm, polite, and clear. Do not ignore the behavior. Physical contact should be immediately reported to your supervisor or Human Resources.
- If the behavior does not stop, report the behavior to your immediate supervisor, the Human Resources Department or the Phoenix Zoo Anonymous Whistleblower Hotline: 1 (844) 370 – 0008 (<https://lighthouse-services.com/phoenixzoo>). Be prepared to answer who, what, where, when, and how, so management can properly investigate and address the improper behavior.
- The ACNC recognizes that the question of whether a particular action or incident involves a purely personal social relationship, without a discriminatory employment effect, requires a determination based on all facts in the matter. Given the nature of this type of discrimination, the company also recognizes that false accusations can have serious effects on innocent individuals. The ACNC trusts that all employees and volunteers will act responsibly to establish a pleasant working environment free of discrimination. The ACNC encourages any employee or volunteer to bring questions he or she may have regarding discrimination to the Human Resources Department.
- The ACNC prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports. Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation of a claim of harassment or discrimination is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigative process to the extent possible and consistent with adequate investigation, including appropriate corrective action.

# Appendix A - Teen Membership Benefits

Teen Volunteers receive a Non-Regular Volunteer Phoenix Zoo Membership. Memberships will expire in June but may be terminated early if needed.

**You must show valid photo ID with your membership card for entry and at all locations throughout the Phoenix Zoo to receive membership benefits.**

## DAYTIME ADMISSION

- Teen Volunteers may bring up to three guests with them for free.
- Guests must be accompanied by the Teen Volunteer upon entrance.
- Guests can only receive your membership benefits and discounts if you are with them. Otherwise they will be charged regular rates.
- Please keep your nametag in your pocket if you are enjoying the Zoo as a guest and not during a volunteer shift. If you are wearing your name tag while “off duty” guests may believe you are working and have misconceptions of your role and behavior.

## FOOD SERVICE

- Receive a 35% discount on food purchases.
- The discount applies to the Teen Volunteer only.
- To receive the discount, you must show your Phoenix Zoo name tag. If you are not working or in uniform, you must show your name tag and photo ID; otherwise, you will not receive your discount.

## RETAIL

- Receive 35% off regular priced items. This does not include already discounted or specialty items unless otherwise specified.
- The discount applies to Teen Volunteer only.
- To receive the discount, you must show your Phoenix Zoo name tag. If you are not working or in uniform, you must show your name tag and photo ID; otherwise, you will not receive your discount. Or you will receive the 10% discount when you show your membership card and photo ID.

## PHOTOGENIC

- Receive a free digital copy of your daytime or ZooLights photos taken at the main gate and the camel ride.
- Photos need to include the Teen Volunteer.
- Free digital copies do not apply to paid events or the Santa Photos during ZooLights or Bunny photos in the spring.
- Discounts on all printed hard copy and digital packages at paid events.

## ATTRACTIONS

- Receive free admission into attractions including Carousel, Stingray Bay, Safari Cruiser, Giraffe Encounter, and Camel Rides.

# Appendix A - Teen Membership Benefits

## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- Access to the Zoo one hour before opening to the general public.
- Free or discounted special event tickets, such as ZooLights.
- Discounts on WILD Birthdays, programs and camps.
- Free stroller and wheelchair rentals. Member discount on Electric Scooter rentals.
- Receive a 50% discount on additional general daytime guest admission tickets.
- Free or reduced admission to more than 150 zoos and aquariums across the country. A complete list of participating organizations can be found in the Membership section at [phoenixzoo.org](http://phoenixzoo.org).

## ADDITIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- All Teen Volunteers receive a 50% discount off of any membership package. Teen Volunteers may use this discount to purchase an additional membership or a gift membership for someone else.
- This discount is for Teen Volunteers only and may not be extended to family or friends when purchasing or renewing their own memberships.

## Membership FAQs

### **Q. Who can use the membership benefits?**

**A.** You and your guests. Your guest must be with you to receive the benefits. Membership card and photo ID are required upon entry and at all locations throughout the Phoenix Zoo to receive the discounts. Otherwise, you and your guests will be charged regular rates.

### **Q. What if I want a physical membership card?**

**A.** The Zoo transitioned to digital membership cards on the PassPlay app to help reduce plastic waste. If you would like a physical membership card, one can be requested for a \$10 fee. You can request a card by calling the Contact Center at 602.286.3800 or visiting the Guest Services Lobby or the Membership Booth.

# ZooTeens 2026-2027 Handbook

## Acknowledgement

By signing below, we acknowledge that we have received, read, and understand the Phoenix ZooTeens 2026-2027 Handbook.

We understand that the handbook outlines the expectations, policies, procedures, and responsibilities of participating in the ZooTeens program and is intended to help provide a safe, positive, and rewarding experience for all ZooTeen participants, guests, staff, volunteers, and animals.

We agree to uphold the standards of conduct and expectations described in the handbook and understand that failure to do so may affect participation in the program.

If we have questions about any information contained in the handbook, we understand that we should contact the Youth Engagement Manager for clarification.

ZooTeen Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

ZooTeen Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

