



SAFARI ZOO CAMP- JOB INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ASSISTANT COUNSELLORS

Each summer, children, teens and adults from around the world take part in the Safari Zoo Camp experience. We offer participants the unique privilege to learn about nature through hands-on experiences, helping develop awareness and concern for endangered wildlife and habitats. This fun and interactive approach to environmental education encourages campers to build the necessary confidence, knowledge and skills to live in harmony with nature.

Before pursuing a job at Safari Zoo Camp, please review this document closely. Be sure that this is a job that you are both capable and eager to do. For more detailed information, please visit: <http://www.zoocamp.com/>

WHY VOLUNTEER AT SAFARI ZOO CAMP?

This is truly a unique program. It has changed the lives of both campers and staff from around the world. It has become a *home away from home* for many. It's a place for both excitement and serenity, where you can find friendship, understanding and compassion.

You will see the world around you with more clarity and scope. It is a place where you can nurture your love and enthusiasm for nature and develop the confidence to venture out and share it with others. During your stay, you will laugh and cry, be elated and frustrated, get a better understanding about *who you are....* yet question, *who you are*.

Then there is the opportunity to make a positive and lasting impact on the campers, offering them confidence, strength and direction. And because of this influence, they may grow up to become a great leader, a caring parent or a concerned citizen. Because of you, the world has become a better place. That is the essence of Safari Zoo Camp.

PREREQUISITES

- 15 years of age or older
- Attended Safari Zoo Camp as a camper for a minimum of 2 sessions
- A paid registrant in any of the upcoming Safari Zoo Camp teen/adult sessions
- Submit a Cover Letter and Resume
- Complete the on-line job application:
http://www.zoocamp.com/documents/document_JobVolunteerApplication.doc
- Upon acceptance, be able to submit a current police check, or letter from the authorities stating that you have no criminal record.



JOB INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

- **Work Schedule:** This is the 2009 activity schedule. The curriculum for the upcoming summer season will be similar: http://www.zoocamp.com/media/document_2009curriculum.pdf. **Assistant Counsellors are expected to arrive on the first day of their scheduled work week, at 3:00pm Sunday at the Education Centre. Departure from camp is 12:00pm the following Saturday** (unless special arrangements have been made).
- **Time Off:** Unlike the full-time seasonal staff, Assistant Counsellors do not get time off during their stay, since they are only at camp for 1-2 weeks. However, requests to leave work can be made for special occasions and emergencies.
- **Job Responsibilities:** Assistant Counsellors work with, assist and take direction from the Counsellors. Your immediate responsibility is to make sure the campers have a safe, fun and memorable visit. This includes, but is not limited to, duties such as: Meal supervision, packing for offsite excursions, rounding up campers for programming, helping prepare activities and taking part in them, cleaning and making yourself available to be a friend and playmate for the kids!
- **Work Involved:** Zookeeping work is dirty work. There is lots of fecal material that needs to be cleaned and food to be prepared. You may be asked to cut-up a dead deer (a road-kill) so you can feed it to the lions. Most of the animals eat dead, whole chicken. The head, legs and wings have to be removed. Some of the monkeys and reptiles eat live grubs and insects. Staff might be asked to eat one to show the kids that, "Yes, we are primates too!". This is not a job for the squeamish.
- **Responsibility:** Each week, staff and volunteers work together to manage a group of approximately 40 children. Each cabin will have about 12 campers, which you and another staff member are *specifically* responsible for. Responsibilities include: making sure the children are eating at meals and brushing their teeth, etc. You will be dealing with an array of behavioural disorders and challenges, such as Autism, Tourette's, bed-wetting, fighting, stealing, low self-esteem, wandering, homesickness, etc.
- **Physical Fitness:** There are many athletically challenging activities, including caving, rappelling, rock climbing, mountain biking and hiking. Sports include baseball, soccer and swimming.
- **Keen Awareness:** Many of the activities at camp can be considered dangerous. Zookeeping is one of the world's most dangerous professions, in particular, when working with large carnivores. Our extra-curricular activities include rappelling, caving, wall & tree climbing (over 60' high!) and hang-gliding. Training and protocols are in place to manage these risks. That said, a moment of absent-mindedness, a split-second of distraction, and a child can lose an arm to a Jaguar, or fall down a chasm while hiking at Warsaw Caves. Serious injury and even *death* is possible. This job requires immense amounts of attentiveness and awareness of your surroundings; the ability to see things coming before they happen. There is no room for complacency.



- **Experience with Kids and Animals:** Some of the best skills and knowledge are acquired through direct experiences in life. We prefer volunteers that have some experience with both kids and animals. Animal related experiences could include: Riding horses, having a pet dog (or snake!), volunteering at a vet clinic, etc. Experiences with youth can include: Being a Big Brother or Big Sister, teaching music lessons, working as a babysitter, etc.
- **Knowledge:** Each summer we are pleasantly challenged by campers that have a plethora of information about the world around us. Some of them are specialized, knowing everything about the one thing they are passionate about, like tigers or snakes. At camp, you are a teacher, as well as a role model. You should know a few facts about the species in the zoo (<http://www.zoocamp.com/animals.html>). What causes Global Warming? What shouldn't we drink bottled water? Why do we need worms? Be prepared to answer questions like these.
- **Selflessness:** This job is about helping kids grow and learn. It's about making the lives of the animals in the zoo more comfortable and enjoyable. It's about helping another staff member with their workload, though you're busy with your own. When someone is cold, you give him or her your jacket. If someone is thirsty, you give him or her the last of your water. Zoo Camp is about being of service to others- good will and good choices.
- **Confidence:** Zoo Camp takes pride in encouraging individual to face their fears, whether it's heights, spiders or crawling through tight spaces. We do not accept "I can't" or "I won't" by those that have yet to try. We are not looking for fearlessness, but rather, an open mind to tackle, or at least, master that fear. Ignorance is often the root of fear, which can lead to prejudice, a dislike towards other people, animals or our environment. Each novel experience brings new awareness, knowledge and skills.
- **Positive/Optimistic:** When it's raining, you're outside with the kids watching the songbird's bath in the puddles. When it's stifling hot, you retreat to shade beneath a tree to discuss the wonders of this woody plant. When a child gets a small cut, you stop for a moment to examine the wound, commenting on how fascinating the human body is and how it will heal itself. Every instance, regardless how bad or uncomfortable it might seem, is an opportunity for a positive, educational experience. We do not tolerate melodramatic behaviour, gossiping, negativity, foul language, etc.
- **Enthusiasm/Interpersonal Skills:** HOW something is being taught is as important as WHAT is being taught. We're looking for personable and outgoing people that can communicate effectively. This is a job for people that like spending time with others.
- **Worldly Experiences:** Many of our staff have attained many great life skills, knowledge and interesting stories from their travels around the world, exploring and becoming familiar with other societies and biomes. Since many campers visit Safari Zoo Camp from around the world, this familiarity and understanding of other cultures and their homeland (geography, ecosystems, etc.) is an asset.
- **Power of Example:** Our staff are environmentally conscientious and responsible and live accordingly. We require people that don't just teach GREEN, but live GREEN. This includes showing interest, concern and compassion for all living things.



- **Accommodations:** The bunkhouses, bathrooms and dining hall are small and simple. Nothing fancy. We don't have the large and complex infrastructure that some other camps have. If you like camping, this is the place for you!

EVALUATION

Job performance is evaluated at the end of each session. The Director examines such things as: Initiative, Enthusiasm, Interaction with Campers, Team Player & Competence. Each characteristic is given a numerical value:

1- Fantastic 2- Average 3- Needs Improvement.

The results are then added up. The results are shared with each Assistant Counsellor in private, to promote growth and improvement and as an opportunity for the Director to reward exemplary work. This information is also used to help management write any reference letters that Assistant Counsellors may request.

Last updated: April 8, 2010