

# LOUISIANA PURCHASE GARDENS & ZOO NEEDS YOU!

Information about the Zoo, its history, rules & regulations, safety procedures, and staff introductions will be offered at classes held at Louisiana Purchase Gardens & Zoo in the Education Building. Classes will be taught by Public Relations Specialist and Zoo Educator, Gary Miers and held Thursday, October 7th at 6:00pm. Subsequent classes will be held Thursday, October 14th, also at 6:00pm; Saturday, October 16th at 10:00am; and Sunday, October 17th at 2:00pm. Each class is designed to last approximately two hours. Volunteers/Docents are required to attend at least two of these classes. A certificate of completion will be presented at the final class.

A Mandatory Safety Meeting and additional training will be scheduled for special areas and activities. Volunteers/Docents are expected to contribute at least eight (8) hours per month of their time to the zoo. This may be done in increments or at one time. Most volunteers/docents contribute more time than eight hours per month. No maximum limit has been set, but most volunteers are aware of their availability and should note this on the application.

Volunteers/Docents will receive a handbook that outlines much of the information that will be presented in the training sessions. As with any zoo, training is ongoing. Working at the zoo is always a learning experience. It is a LIVING MUSEUM and offers the opportunity to see many animals in naturalistic settings, behaving as they would in the wild.

As is indicated on the application, there are a number of areas that you may choose from in which to volunteer. Some volunteers are ideal for working with other staff in caring for the animals, general population or education. Others may be interested in programs, especially those with a teaching background. You may have a talent for plumbing or carpentry, welding or as a hand-man (or woman) and, by holding proper certification, you may want to work with the maintenance crew. A great number of volunteers enjoy working with their hands in the dirt. Our on-site botanist, Kerry Heafner, is ready to welcome volunteers who enjoy landscaping and gardening. He works to make the zoo beautiful with plants and shrubs, trees, vegetable gardens, water plants and more. The zoo has two "green houses" that supply many of the flora located on the zoo grounds.

Those who choose to work with animals are offered specific areas, as noted on the application. Special training for the area you choose will be given by the staff member(s) responsible for those areas. As always, safety and security are a priority. With this in mind, each volunteer/docent will receive a handout of these guidelines and procedures concerning zoo safety and incident reporting.

A new area of the zoo, The Kids Petting Zoo, is a wonderful opportunity to interact with visitors to the zoo and assist with feeding some outstanding domestic animals. It is also an opportunity to teach visitors about these animals that many have never even seen, even though the animals are not exotic!

Working at Louisiana Purchase Gardens & Zoo can be a highly rewarding experience. In addition to making a positive difference in your community by partnering with this facility and its staff, you are also afforded the opportunity to interact with visitors from around our city and parish, from other states, and sometimes from other countries!

Louisiana Purchase Gardens & Zoo is, indeed, Northeast Louisiana's Premier Family Attraction. As a volunteer or docent, you can offer your time and talent to its progress and continued improvement.