

# ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

## *GreenTeen!* HANDBOOK



## GreenTeen!

Welcome 😊

Welcome to the Environmental Learning Center (ELC). Our *GreenTeen!* volunteers are an important part of our organization, and we appreciate you choosing us for your volunteer service.

This handbook highlights the ELC's policies, procedures and benefits for each *GreenTeen!*'s personal reference. All questions should be directed to Naturalist and Summer Day Camp Coordinator, Sarah Christopherson at [SarahC@discoverELC.org](mailto:SarahC@discoverELC.org) or 772-589-5050 ext. 108.

Feel free to contact the ELC's education department staff members to share ideas, ask questions, raise concerns, or to explore other opportunities that we offer.



## **ELC's Mission**

*To educate, inspire and empower all people to be active stewards of the environment and their own well-being.*

## **Who We Are**

The Environmental Learning Center is a 64-Acre Natural Lagoon Island Preserve open to the public and to people of all ages. The ELC offers an excellent display of historical, native Florida and Indian River Lagoon habitats through extensive boardwalks and walking trails. The campus also includes a native plant greenhouse, canoe and pontoon boat excursions, EcoTalks and Adventures in Learning speakers series, nature-related workshops, and access to an interactive museum that houses aquarium displays and a Touch Tank. The ELC offers different educational programs to children as young as pre-kindergarten age, all the way up to college interns and adult learners. If you are curious to learn more about the history of the ELC and how the ELC was started, please contact Naturalist, Sarah Christopherson for additional readings.

## **Conservation**

The ELC and our volunteers are actively engaged in conservation efforts from beach and lagoon trash pickups, to mangrove tree planting and water quality testing and monitoring. The ELC strives to keep only native species on campus, with the removal of invasive populations that are harmful to our local ecosystem. Through education efforts, the ELC's education department stresses the importance of preservation, protection, and restoration of the local, natural ecosystem.

## **Safety**

### **First Aid**

All situations requiring first aid or medical attention, no matter how large or small, should be handled by ELC staff members. All ELC education staff members are trained in CPR and first aid. In the event of a first aid situation, immediately find the nearest ELC member and alert them of the situation.

### **Weather Protocols**

ELC staff should notify you if there is a weather concern and any action needs to be taken. If you are at an outdoor booth, you should pack up and store the station, and seek shelter in the Entry Pavilion. If it is raining but we are not under a weather protocol, you should leave the booth open, but move it to a covered location, if at all possible.

## **General Policies**

### **Youth Protection**

It is the policy of the ELC to provide a safe and caring environment for all the children that visit the campus. The following guidelines have been established for all paid and volunteer staff working with children.



1. Do not show favoritism among children in a group. Treat all equally and show the same level of attention to all in the group.
2. Only touch children in “safe” places. These include the shoulders and the back of the head. Never touch a child in a private place including the buttocks, breasts, thighs and groin areas. Comfort can be given to a child by gently placing your arm on a shoulder. Always pay attention to body language. Some children may not tolerate any sort of physical contact.
3. During summer day camps, there are times when children will need to change clothing. Always have the naturalist or another adult present with you when children are changing. Never force a child to remove clothing.
4. Always stay within view of the group. Never isolate yourself with a child.
5. Respect children’s privacy when using the restroom. If they require your assistance in the removal of clothing always have another adult present. Do not accompany children in the restroom stalls.
6. Be conscious of your language in front of children. Never use inappropriate language or engage in conversation that is not appropriate for youth. (Remember...even when you don’t think children are listening, they are. Children are sponges and will remember the things you say and repeat them).
7. Be sure that adequate adult supervision is provided.
8. If a situation requires the use of discipline, never use physical discipline or force. This could lead to future charges of assault or abuse. If you find yourself in a situation where discipline is necessary, calmly inform the naturalist or another adult to have them handle the situation.

### **Social Media**

The ELC must approve all media communications. If a member of the media contacts you for an interview about your activities as a *GreenTeen!* volunteer at the ELC, please notify an ELC staff member prior to accepting the request. If a media representative approaches you at the ELC, please direct them to an ELC staff member.

### **Equal Opportunity**

It’s the ELC’s policy to give all applicants equal opportunity for volunteering and other volunteer benefits and privileges based upon individual qualifications and the overall requirements of the position, without regard to the following factors unrelated to job performance: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or any other legally protected status. The ELC shall make reasonable accommodations for disabled volunteers who qualify for and who seek such assistance. Questions related to this policy should be directed to an ELC staff member.

## **Volunteer Procedures**

### **Signing In and Out**

Procedure for checking in and out each day for volunteer activities and events will be determined by ELC naturalist and staff, and will be done either electronically or manually in the caterers kitchen / volunteer



break room. Any trainings, workshops or meetings associated with the volunteer role do count as service hours.

### **Schedule & Online Shift Registration**

According to volunteer availability, ELC Naturalists will determine the camp session that each volunteer will be teaching. All other *GreenTeen!* volunteer opportunities will need to be schedule individually by volunteers online through SignUpGenius.com. Shifts to work ELC education program and events are offered on a first-come, first-serve basis.

### **Missing a Shift**

If you are unable to make a shift for which you are scheduled, please e-mail Naturalists, Sarah Christopherson at [SarahC@discoverELC.org](mailto:SarahC@discoverELC.org), and remove yourself from the schedule on SignUpGenius.com. If you are going to be late for your shift, please e-mail [SarahC@discoverELC.org](mailto:SarahC@discoverELC.org) and call 772-589-5050 ext. 108.

### **Attire**

Volunteers are required to wear their ELC *GreenTeen!* t-shirt to the first day of the camp session they are teaching, as well as the sessions when they are teaching at education booths and volunteering for the ELC. Volunteers must also wear:

- Appropriate close-toed shoes that can get wet and dirty during camp (if your camp session visits the beach, you may bring along an extra pair of flip-flops)
- For summer day camp activities that involve water activities and swimming, a modest swimsuit. A sunblock shirt or rashguard cover-up is strongly suggested
- Shorts of an appropriate length that meet standard school dress code
- Name badge

In addition, *GreenTeen!*s are also asked to wear a watch. Part of being a *GreenTeen!* is keeping track of time during each shift and being punctual.

### **Behavioral Guidelines**

In order for guests, staff and volunteers to all have a safe and enjoyable time at the ELC, there are certain guidelines that we expect participants in the *GreenTeen!* program to follow. In addition, we have established a disciplinary procedure for dealing with behavioral problems. If a *GreenTeen!* is found to be in violation of the behavioral guidelines or a problem has arisen, we will adhere to a "Three Strike" policy as follows:

- Strike One
  - o Identify the problem
  - o Identify a course of action for ceasing the undesired behavior
  - o *GreenTeen!* will speak with Director of Education and Research
- Strike Two
  - o Identify the problem



- Establish consequences if undesired behavior continues
- *GreenTeen!* will speak with Director of Education and Research and parents are notified
- Written document is signed by *GreenTeen!*, parent, and Director of Education and Research
- Strike Three
  - *GreenTeen!* is dismissed from the program

The following is a list of undesired behaviors that constitute a strike per our policy.

- No call, no show – not showing up for a shift without notifying the ELC ahead of time
- Being tardy for a shift without notifying us
- Failure to follow instructions
- Using a cell phone without permission during your volunteer shift
- Using inappropriate language

There are ground for immediate dismissal from the program. These can include:

- Being in possession of, or using alcohol or illegal drugs while volunteering for the ELC
- Being in possession of a weapon while on ELC grounds
- Verbally, physically, or sexually harassing or assaulting ELC staff, volunteers or guests
- Smoking cigarettes while on ELC grounds
- Stealing from ELC staff, volunteers or guests
- Endangering or mistreating animals

### ***GreenTeen!* Position Description**

#### Requirements

- Be between the ages of 12 and 17 (completed 6<sup>th</sup> grade or higher upon start of summer camps)
- Complete online application in its entirety by May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018. This should be done by the teenager applying, not a parent or guardian. To apply, visit our website at [discoverELC.org](http://discoverELC.org)
  - If accepted as a program participant, tuition of \$50.00 is due by orientation on May 25<sup>th</sup>
  - Scholarship funding available to those who qualify. Please contact ELC Naturalist, Sarah Christopherson for more information.
- **Attend training and orientation on Friday, May 25<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 – 6:30pm**
  - Overnight attendance in the ELC's Discovery Station is strongly suggested for teambuilding and additional learning opportunities, but is not required (but it's *tons* of fun, and there will be pizza and games!)  
Overnight date: May 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm – May 26<sup>th</sup> 8:30am pickup
  - If you cannot attend orientation but still wish to participate, please contact Summer Day Camp Coordinator, Sarah Christopherson *as soon as possible* (contact info below)
- Commit to work as an ELC summer day camp counselor (**minimum 1 full camp session, 3-5 days**)
- Commit to the following\*. Register for timeslots at [SignUpGenius.com](http://SignUpGenius.com) (the link to [SignUpGenius.com](http://SignUpGenius.com) will be sent out shortly):



- June 2018 – end of March 2019: Attend ELC lectures and workshops (**minimum 3**)
- November 2018 – end of March 2019: Lead public educational programs such as teaching booths, work with aquariums, and assist at special ELC events (**minimum 3**)
- Read *GreenTeen!* Volunteer Handbook and check acknowledgment box on the online registration
- **Parents/Guardians:** sign the indemnification form and provide original at orientation on May 25<sup>th</sup> or prior
- Have access to reliable transportation and the ability to arrive on time and be picked up on time
- Should show independence and responsibility by contacting Naturalists directly via phone or personal e-mail when necessary. Parents may be copied on e-mail correspondences, but the ELC Naturalists do expect to hear directly from our *GreenTeen!*s

\*Seniors graduating in spring of 2018 are exempt from this requirement, but still encouraged to participate when able.

#### Responsibilities

- Wear proper attire each day
- Sign up for shifts on SignUpGenius.com
- Follow the correct procedure for missing or arriving tardy for a shift
- Provide friendly customer service to all guests and campers
- Be present and engaging while volunteering (i.e. do not be on your cell phone)
- Follow all safety instructions given by ELC staff

#### Roles

- Summer day camp counselor
- Education booth teachers
- Special event assistant
- Student in lectures and workshops
- Aquarist assistant

#### Shift Times

While volunteering as a *GreenTeen!* volunteer, shift times may vary. However, we will generally observe the following schedule:

Summer Day Camp Counselors: June & July, Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 1:30pm *or* 8:00am – 4:30pm (note, there are two sessions of three-day camps that run from Wednesday – Friday)

Education booths: Saturday, 11:00am-1:00pm or Sunday, 1:00-3:00pm (during busy season only: November – March)

Lectures and Workshops: EcoTalks: 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month (except August & September)

Edible and Medicinal Immersion Plant Walks: Vary; check website or SignUpGenius.com

Other upcoming lectures, workshops, and classes to be determined.



Special events and other *GreenTeen!* opportunities will be posted on SignUpGenius.com

### **Volunteer Benefits**

- Make a difference in our beautiful Indian River Lagoon community
- Build your resume
- Earn community service hours for school
- Attend nature-related lectures and workshops free of charge
- Four free tickets to visit the ELC with friends and family
- Share your love for the environment with ELC guests
- Learn about conservation
- Work with children in summer day camp
- Form friendships with teens who love the outdoors too
- Make memories that will last a lifetime
- Explore environmental and conservation related careers
- Enjoy one overnight afterdark program at the ELC
- Sport a very special *GreenTeen!* t-shirt
- Go behind the scenes of ELC aquariums and learn how to care for our critters
- End of program party and awards ceremony

### **ELC Admittance as a Guest**

The following apply when you are visiting the ELC as a guest during non-volunteer time:

- Please try to only wear your *GreenTeen!* t-shirt to the ELC when you are participating in a program activity (see "Roles" above for details)
- Do not take out program materials and items for educational programs unless you are schedule to teach using those props at that time
- Do not go behind the aquariums in the Discovery Station unless you first ask permission from an ELC Naturalist

### **ELC Volunteer Staff Contacts**

While volunteering as a *GreenTeen!*, your questions should be directed to your immediate supervisor for the day. During summer day camps, please refer to the Naturalist teaching your camp session that week. If you are teaching an education program on the weekends, or attending a lecture or workshop, please refer to the Employee on Duty. For any ELC volunteer opportunities not related to the *GreenTeen!* program, please contact Nancy Puglio, the ELC Volunteer Coordinator. If you have sensitive issues you wish to discuss, feel free to speak with Summer Day Camps Coordinator, Sarah Christopherson, or the Director of Education and Research, MaryAm Ghadiri. All contact information for ELC staff members can be found under the "[About Us](#)" tab on the website at [discoverELC.org](http://discoverELC.org).

