

## New Canaan Nature Center

### **Visitor Services and Volunteer Coordinator**

*Updated 16 June 2010*

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**Department:** Education

**Reports to:** Director of Education

**Status:** Salary/Exempt

**Hours:** Year-round, Tuesday to Saturday, with evenings on other days as required by the Director of Education or the Executive Director

#### Position summary

Under the management of the Director of Education the Visitor Services and Volunteer Coordinator is a full-time, year-round position. Primary responsibilities include the management of daily customer service in the Visitor Center, day to day operations, providing visitors and guests with current, accurate and up to date information, directions, programming, opportunities and activities that enhance each person's experience with the New Canaan Nature Center. This position serves as the "front-line" staff member in educating visitors about the Nature Center with the promotion of programs/events and all other Nature Center offerings.

Position is also responsible for coordinating and managing volunteer contributions to the Nature Center through the recruitment of volunteers and interns, documenting volunteer contributions and ensuring positive and rewarding experiences for all volunteers, ensuring strong retention of volunteers. Person must be willing and able to communicate effectively and enthusiastically to visitors about any and all aspects of the New Canaan Nature Center through in-person, telephone and during program/event interactions.

#### Responsibilities

##### Welcome Desk

- Responsible for the effective running and management of the Welcome desk and positive public interface in the Visitor Center.
- Proactively greet and assist visitors.
- Enhance every person's visit to Center by providing detailed and accurate information, directions, and/or history about Nature Center activities, offerings, opportunities and programming.
- Engage visitors in conversation about organization's mission and our role in being a resource for the community.
- Promote New Canaan Nature Center membership and various other ways people can support our mission and organization
- Respond to visitor inquiries via the phone, in person, and e-mail as needed.

- Perform general administration duties: answering phones, filing, faxing, statistics tracking, etc.
- Help to facilitate a variety of program offerings of the New Canaan Nature Center, including planning, registration and evaluation as needed
- Help to maintain a safe, clean and welcoming Center, including ensuring that the Center is properly used and alerting the appropriate person(s) when personal safety or the facility is compromised
- Train reception/reservations staff and volunteers for greeting public, answering telephones, answering/directing wildlife and environmental questions and handling gift shop sales
- Direct the staffing and volunteer efforts of front desk during special events, summer camp registration and rental events, if needed
- Provide coverage for Saturdays and Special Events, when needed.
- Manage the interaction of front desk staff and volunteers who may come to assist in gift shop, on grounds or in offices
- Work with Director of Marketing and Program Directors, and Business Manager to develop script books utilized by staff to promote programs and other visitor activities & materials
- Know and promote membership opportunities to visiting public
- Enthusiastically greet visitors and promote nature center experiences

### **Visitor Center Education**

- Collaborate closely with Education Department to identify, assess and implement effective public educational activity/information/program interfaces for the Visitor Center.
- Responsible for creating an engaging learning environment for public entering and utilizing the Visitor Center.
- Keeping all bulletin boards, kiosks and educational interfaces up to date and relevant with Center's seasonal educational themes, upcoming events and self guided activities.

### **Volunteer Coordination**

- Recruiting – Connect with regional volunteer networks and organizations to recruit new volunteers to fill volunteer needs in the areas identified above. Manage the volunteer application process, collecting complete information about all volunteers, and interviewing and screening those volunteers who will regularly volunteer and do not volunteer as members of a service organization.
- Volunteer orientation – Maintain and update volunteer handbook. The volunteer handbook must include, but not be limited to: a welcome statement; the NCNC mission; the NCNC history; a description of the volunteer opportunities available (Horticulture and Grounds, Animal Care, Visitor Reception, Office Support, and Special Events); a description of rights and responsibilities of volunteers; incentives; NCNC policies and procedures; Volunteer agreement letter; and emergency contact form.

- Volunteer retention– Work with the Directors to encourage volunteer loyalty, to develop effective ways to communicate with volunteers, and to recognize volunteer contributions.
- Coordination/management of volunteer efforts - assessing needs of entire organization and working with staff and organization schedule to fulfill needs in best manner possible utilizing volunteers. Point person when volunteers are on site working.
- Volunteer data collection and reporting– Provide the Education Director with monthly reports as required. Provide the Development Director with monthly reports detailing information about volunteers and their contributions. Maintain a volunteer database as determined by the Director of Finance and Operations.
- Work with the Chair of the Fall Fair and Secret Garden Tour to recruit and manage volunteers for these two yearly events as well as other public programs like Syrup Sunday and Cider Harvest Saturday, etc.

### **Minimum Skill and Ability Requirements:**

- Experience and/or interest in customer service/retail, parks, landscape design, and/or tourism
- A strong desire to work with the public
- A strong desire to learn about the New Canaan Nature Center, in detail and all aspects
- Prior knowledge of the natural environment and desire to continue to learn about nature
- Knowledge and good common sense of working with public of all ages – very young to seniors
- Ability to work productively as part of a diverse team of staff, volunteers and interns
- Enthusiasm for working on multiple aspects of Nature Center role at one time
- Strong verbal and written communication skills; personable; and energetic
- Creative and artistic expression a plus
- Computer proficiency (Word, Excel, use of an e-mail system, etc.)
- Able to effectively manage self in fulfilling and completing required tasks in timely fashion
- Able to take charge of Visitor space and ensure effective use and maintenance of space
- Responsible and reliable; ability to be at work regularly and on-time
- Must be at least 23 years old; candidate should have a minimum of a high school diploma

The salary is competitive for field and commiserate upon experience and skill. Good benefits are provided as well. E-mail a letter of interest, a resume, and 3 references to Keith Marshall, Director of Education at [jobs@newcanaannature.org](mailto:jobs@newcanaannature.org) .