

ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

GreenTeen! HANDBOOK 2020-2021



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 professional training and volunteer service.

This handbook highlights the ELC's policies, procedures and benefits for each *GreenTeen!*'s personal reference. All questions should be directed to Environmental Educator, Sarah Christopherson at 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 & empower all people to be active stewards of the environment & 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, 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 18 months in 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 Environmental Educator, Sarah Christopherson for additional readings.

Conservation

The ELC, including staff, board members, and volunteers are actively engaged in conservation efforts from beach and lagoon trash pickups, to mangrove tree planting, water quality testing and monitoring, elimination of single-use plastics from our community, and microplastics testing. The ELC strives to keep only native species on campus, with the removal of invasive populations that are harmful to our local ecosystem. Additionally, the ELC along with participating exhibitors and organizations follow a set of conservation policies and guidelines for all events. 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 will 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 a severe weather watch or warning has not been issued, leave the booth open and move it to a covered location such as the Discovery Station (when 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 staff and volunteers 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 Environmental Educator 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 Environmental Educator 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

*GreenTeen!*s are responsible for keeping track of their own volunteer hours, and are required to sign in using the Volunteer Hour Tracking program for ALL volunteering (including: orientation, training sessions, each day of camp worked, lectures, NOAA program opportunities, special events at the ELC, etc.). Any trainings, workshops or meetings associated with the volunteer role do count toward *GreenTeen!* service hours, and signing in each day is important for both our volunteers and the ELC organization as a whole.



Schedule & Online Shift Registration

According to summertime availability provided on *GreenTeen!* applications for the program, ELC Environmental Educators will determine the camp session(s) that each *GreenTeen!* volunteer will be helping teach. All other *GreenTeen!* volunteer opportunities will need to be scheduled individually online through SignUpGenius.com. Shifts to work ELC education programs and events are offered on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Missing or Tardy to a Shift

If you are unable to make a shift for which you are scheduled or you are going to be late for your shift, please contact Environmental Educator, Sarah Christopherson at SarahC@DiscoverELC.org or 772-589-5050, ext. 108 and remove yourself from the schedule on SignUpGenius.com.

Attire

Volunteers are required to wear their ELC *GreenTeen!* t-shirt to the first day of the camp session that 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 safe and enjoyable experiences 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 Outreach
- Strike Two
 - o Identify the problem
 - o Establish consequences if undesired behavior continues
 - o *GreenTeen!* will speak with Director of Education and Outreach and parents are notified
 - o Written document is signed by *GreenTeen!*, parent, and Director of Education and Outreach
- Strike Three
 - o *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 grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. These can include:

- Being in possession of, or using tobacco, 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, campers or guests
- Stealing from ELC staff, volunteers, campers or guests
- Endangering or mistreating animals

***GreenTeen!* Position Description**

- Be between the ages of 14 and 18 (must have completed 8th grade or higher upon start of summer camps on June 3rd, 2020)
- Complete online application in its entirety by April 15th, 2020. This should be done by the teenager applying, not a parent or guardian. To apply, visit our website at discoverELC.org
 - If accepted as a program participant, tuition of \$50.00 is due, (scholarship funding available, please contact Environmental Educator, Sarah Christopherson at SarahC@discoverELC.org for more information) along with background screening information including full name and social security number (required by law for volunteers working with children 10 hours or more per month) one week before orientation on June 2nd
- **Attend training and orientation on Tuesday, June 2nd from 10:00am – 5:00pm**
 - **Orientation and training is mandatory.** If you cannot attend orientation but still wish to participate, please contact ELC Environmental Educator, Sarah Christopherson, as soon as possible (contact info below)
- Commit to working as an ELC summer day camp counselor; this includes leading camp games each morning and afternoon during pickup and drop off times, and teaching at least one lesson plan/activity to campers per camp session (**minimum 1 full camp session but most GreenTeen!s will be scheduled for 2 sessions, 3-5 days each**)
- Commit to the following* (register for time slots at SignUpGenius.com; the link to SignUpGenius.com will be sent via e-mail after *GreenTeen!* volunteers have been accepted into the program):
 - June 2020 – end of March 2021: Attend ELC lectures and workshops (**minimum 3**)
 - August 2020 – end of March 2021: Lead public educational programs such as teaching booths, work with aquariums, assist at special ELC events, or work as a camp counselor during ELC school break camps (fall, winter, or spring breaks, etc.) (**minimum 3**)
 - August 2020 - end of March 2021: Participate in the NOAA Planet Stewards Education Project through beach cleanups and plastic pollution analysis, creation of a marine debris art display, and advocating to local restaurants and businesses to reduce single-use plastic products at their facilities (**minimum 3**)

*Seniors graduating in spring of 2020 are exempt from this requirement, but still encouraged to participate when able.

- Sign in for each shift at the ELC and keep track of volunteer hours
- Read *GreenTeen!* Volunteer Handbook and check acknowledgment box on the online registration
- **Parents/Guardians:** read and check acknowledgment box for the indemnification and hold harmless agreement on the online application
- Have access to reliable transportation and the ability to arrive on time and be picked up on time
- Show maturity and professionalism by contacting Environmental Educators directly via phone or e-mail when necessary. Parents may be copied on e-mail correspondences, but the ELC Environmental Educators do expect to hear directly from our *GreenTeen!* volunteers

Summary of Responsibilities

- Wear proper attire each day
- Bring your own reusable water bottle and trash-free packed lunch to camp 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

Summary of Roles

- Day camp counselor
- Education booth teacher
- Special events volunteer
- Student in lectures and workshops
- Aquarist assistant & touch tank docent
- Team member of NOAA Planet Stewards Education Program

Shift Times

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

Summer Day Camp: June, July & August 2020, Monday – Friday, 8:00am – 1:30pm or 8:00am – 4:30pm (note, there are five sessions of three-day camps that run from Wednesday – Friday)

Education booths & ELC Community Events: August 2020 - late March 2021; dates and times TBD

School Break / Holiday Break Camp: August 2020 - late March 2021 (according to Indian River County Public School's Academic Calendar); dates and times TBD

Lectures and Workshops: August 2020 - late March 2021; check the ELC website or SignUpGenius.com for opportunities to attend lectures, workshops, and classes

NOAA Planet Stewards Education Project: August 2020 - late March 2021; check SignUpGenius.com for opportunities to participate



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
- Make a difference in our community by helping to eliminate single use plastic pollution through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Planet Stewards Education Project
- Four free passes to visit the ELC with friends and family
- Share your love for the environment with ELC guests
- Learn about conservation & the local ecosystem
- Obtain experience working with children in summer day camps
- Form friendships with like-minded teens who love the outdoors
- Make memories that will last a lifetime
- Explore environmental and conservation related careers
- Sport a very special ELC *GreenTeen!* t-shirt that's yours to keep
- Go behind the scenes of ELC's aquariums and learn how to care for aquarium 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 "Summary of Roles" above for details)
- Do not take out program materials and items for educational programs unless you are scheduled to teach using those props at that time
- Do not go behind the aquariums in the Discovery Station unless you are scheduled to volunteer at that time or you first ask permission from an ELC Environmental Educator

ELC Volunteer Staff Contacts

While volunteering as a *GreenTeen!*, your questions should be directed to your immediate supervisor for the day. During day camps, please refer to the Environmental Educator 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 other ELC volunteer opportunities not related to the *GreenTeen!* program, please contact Nancy Puglio, the ELC Volunteer Coordinator at Nancy@discoverELC.org. If you have sensitive issues you wish to discuss, please always feel free to speak with Environmental Educator, Sarah Christopherson, or the Director of Education and Outreach, Sara Piotter. All contact information for ELC staff members can be found under the "[About Us](#)" tab on the website at discoverELC.org.

