

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Ben Carroll

Where do you go to school? I'm 15 and a freshman at LaSalle HS.

What is your favorite volunteer activity? Animal care at Miami Whitewater Forest. My favorite part is feeding the red eared sliders. I love how they swim over to me and wait for the worms I give them.

What is your favorite Great Park? Miami Whitewater. I have a lot of childhood memories there. It's a fun place to go for people of all ages.

What's your favorite outdoor activity? I love outdoor activities, and my favorite is camping in the wilderness. I am a Boy Scout and go camping often.

What's your life motto? Live life to the fullest. Make every day a great one.

If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be? Camping in Yellowstone National Park. Nothing fancy, just a simple camping trip surrounded by wilderness.

Do you have any hobbies? I enjoy playing chess, having a leadership role in Boy Scouts, hanging out with friends and family, playing with my dog Cannon, and video game lore.

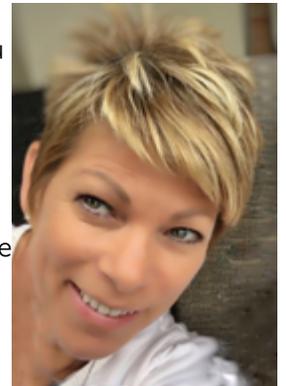
What are your future goals? Get my Eagle Scout ranking, continue to meet new and interesting people, and inspire the next generation to do great things.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION SURVEY RESULTS

Kris Roselle, Volunteer Services Manager

National Volunteer Week, April 15-21, is a time when the entire nation comes together to pay tribute to millions of volunteers. President Richard Nixon established National Volunteer Week in 1974 and every president since then has issued a proclamation encouraging Americans to be mindful of their civic duty and for organizations to recognize volunteers for their outstanding service.

National Volunteer Week is a special time to focus our attention on you and the many ways you support the park district. However, it's equally important you feel valued all year long. That's why, from time-to-time, we conduct surveys to measure how we are doing. Many of you took part in a recognition survey late last year and we think National Volunteer Week is a great time to share the results with you. Below are some of the main take-aways from the survey:



- 746 surveys were sent and we received 257 responses. We appreciate those that took time to provide us feedback.
- Approximately half of the respondents did not attend a recognition event or picnic during the last five years.
- Volunteers did not attend the formal recognition event because they were new, did not know anyone, did not want to go alone or they had work commitments.
- Some of the reasons volunteers did not attend the picnic were lack of interest, the timing did not work and they did not know anyone attending.
- A more formal recognition event is preferred for annual awards. Many volunteers found smaller, more personal potlucks more valuable than the larger picnic.
- Volunteers are happy with the locations for the larger recognition events, but many would prefer a weeknight or weekend event.
- The number one way volunteers like to be appreciated is with a simple thank you. Years-of-service awards and birthday cards with ice cream cone coupons were also highly rated. Though recreation cards are appreciated, they are not being used by many of those that earn them.
- The favorite recognition gift is embroidered park attire, but many would like a selection of items to choose from. The least preferred item is a plaque.

We received quite a few new and interesting recognition ideas through the survey and we'll be taking a closer look at many of them including events, gifts and reward ideas. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Kris or Niki at volunteer@greatparks.org. Thanks for all you do!

THIS MONTH'S BLOG

Underneath the Sycamore
blog.greatparks.org

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VOLUNTEER MEETINGS

Volunteer meetings are a great way to meet new people, learn about upcoming volunteer opportunities and learn something interesting from an exciting lineup of guest speakers. Meetings take place at 7 p.m. in Winton Centre Auditorium, unless otherwise noted. Coffee and tea are provided. Bring in your favorite baked goods to share!

March 20, 2018—Jack Sutton, Great Parks Chief Executive Officer, will take a look back at 2017 and also provide some insight on what lies ahead for 2018. Stay in tune with what's going on in the park district. Jack's annual state-of-the-park address is something you won't want to miss.



Great Parks Chief Executive Officer Jack Sutton.

Other upcoming meeting dates:

- May 15, 2018
- July 17, 2018
- September 18, 2018

When recording your hours in VIC for volunteer meetings, log them under [Volunteer Meeting \[Winton Woods\Volunteer Services\]](#). Training hours may be doubled. Drive time to and from the training may be included but not doubled.

Try Something New!

Please review the list of programs below. If you are able to assist with the activity, phone or email the event supervisor to volunteer. **NEW THIS ISSUE!** Click on any bolded assignment category in the newsletter and you will be hyperlinked to the VIC login portal.

FARBACH WERNER NATURE PRESERVE

Fri, ongoing, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. & 1-4 p.m.: Nature's Niche Gift Shop

Opportunities to serve our wonderful park guests are now available at Farbach Werner Nature Preserve. Volunteers are needed to help answer phones, assist guests with purchases, run the cash register, answer questions and do some light housekeeping at Nature's Niche Gift Shop. If you enjoy meeting people and providing outstanding customer service to park visitors, then this is the job for you. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Irene Light at ilight@greatparks.org or phone 513-923-3665. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Visitor Center & Gift Shop \[Farbach Werner Nature Preserve\Guest Experiences Central\]](#).

MIAMI WHITEWATER FOREST

Mon-Sun, ongoing:

Program Animal Care

Turtles, frogs and snakes, oh my! Miami Whitewater Forest houses several animal ambassadors that are used to educate and engage the public. Volunteers are needed to feed, clean and interact with each program animal according to each animal's unique feeding and care schedule. Animals are located in the Visitor Center, so you must be available during Visitor Center hours, which fluctuate seasonally. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Luke Ogonek at logonek@greatparks.org. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Animal Care \[Miami Whitewater Forest\Education & Events\]](#).

Mon, Tue & Wed, ongoing:

Visitor Center and Gift Shop

Opportunities to serve our wonderful park guests are now available at Miami Whitewater Forest Visitor Center. Volunteers are needed to help answer phones, assist guests with purchases,

run the cash register, answer questions and do some light housekeeping. If you enjoy meeting people and providing outstanding customer service, then this is the job for you. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Stephanie Ellis at sellis@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-9632. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Visitor Center & Gift Shop \[Miami Whitewater Forest\Guest Experiences West\]](#).



Valerie Dauwe tidying up gift shop items at the Glenwood Gardens Cotswold Visitor Center.

Mon-Fri, beginning April 26

Times are variable due to bookings:

Window into Wetlands

From bugs to birds, volunteers will assist students with macro identification, birding and more as we explore the wonders of our wetland habitats. For more information or to volunteer, contact Luke Ogonek at logonek@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4774. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Interpreter Programs \[Miami Whitewater Forest\Education & Events\]](#).

MITCHELL MEMORIAL FOREST

Sat 4/21, 9 a.m. - noon:

Earth Day Tree Planting

Trees provide us with shade, oxygen and natural habitat. Plus, they sure are pretty to look at! Celebrate Earth Day by helping us replace a split rail fence with a living wall of native trees. Bring a group, your family, friends or work solo. We also need a few volunteers to help grill, serve lunch and assist

with registration. We will meet at the Stone Memorial Shelter. Please register on-line at greatparks.org/volunteer. If you'd like to help with registration, grilling or lunch, contact Niki Marengo at nmarengo@greatparks.org or phone 513-245-7471. All ages welcome. [Stew Crew \[Mitchell Memorial Forest\Conservation & Parks West\]](#).

SHARON WOODS

Mon, Sat & Sun, ongoing:

Visitor Center and Gift Shop

The Sharon Centre is now open on Mondays year round, which means there are more opportunities to serve our wonderful park guests! Volunteers are needed to help answer phones, assist guests with purchases, run the cash register, answer questions, do some light housekeeping and help with Adventure Station. If you enjoy meeting people and providing outstanding customer service to park visitors, then this is the job for you. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Julie Shaw at jshaw@greatparks.org or phone 513-769-4336. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Visitor Center & Gift Shop \[Sharon Woods\Guest Experiences East\]](#).

Sat 4/7, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.:

Agents of Discovery

If you enjoy technology and the outdoors, then we want you to help guests with the new Agents of Discovery interactive scavenger hunt that takes place throughout Sharon Woods. You will need to have a smart phone or tablet and be comfortable with the technology. Training is provided. To volunteer, contact Julie Robinson at jrobinson@greatparks.org or phone 513-563-4513. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Interpreter Programs \[Sharon Woods\Education & Events\]](#).

Tue 4/24–5/15, 9:30–11:30 a.m.:

Mini Explorers

At this four-week drop-off series, children will make new friends and explore all that nature has to offer. Volunteers are needed to help with activities each morning. For more information or to volunteer, contact Stephanie Morris at smorris@greatparks.org or phone 513-563-4513. For volunteers ages 18

and up. [Interpreter Programs \[Sharon Woods\Education & Events\]](#).

SHAWNEE LOOKOUT

Sun 4/15, 1 p.m.:

Historic Log Cabin & School: Potluck Luncheon

Check out the 1795 house and historic stone school building and learn about recurring Sunday afternoon volunteer opportunities that begin in May. We'll be meeting at the Waterhole Picnic Shelter. For more information or to volunteer, contact Luke Ogonek at logonek@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4774. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [Interpreter Programs \[Shawnee Lookout\Education & Events\]](#).

WINTON WOODS

Mon 3/5–Sat 5/26,

Mon 6:15–7:15 p.m.,

Wed 6:15–7:15 p.m.,

Sat 10:15–11:15 a.m.:

Special Riders Program

Volunteers are needed to lead or walk beside horses ridden by Special Rider students during this therapeutic riding class. Training is provided at the Riding Center. For more information or to volunteer, contact Margie Rennie at mrennie1@icloud.com or phone 513-931-3057. For volunteers ages 14 and up. [SRP \[Winton Woods\Guest Experiences Central\]](#).

Sun 4/1, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.:

Easter Brunch in the Park

Families will be hopping on over to the Mill Race Banquet Center for Easter Brunch! They'll be celebrating the holiday with the Easter Bunny and an all-you-can-eat buffet. Volunteers are needed to help roll silverware, refill coffee, cleanup and reset the room after individual brunch seatings. If interested in this holiday favorite, contact the Banquet Center at 513-825-6467 and ask for Mike, Adam or Kathleen. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Banquet Assistant \[Winton Woods\Guest Experiences Central\]](#).

Wed 4/4, 11 a.m.:

Little Tykes

You won't want to miss our traditional Earth Day Celebration. Help youngsters embrace nature in a big way by assisting with activities during this earth-friendly program. For more information or to volunteer, contact Susan Sumner at ssumner@greatparks.org or phone 513-521-7275, ext. 243. For volunteers ages 18 and up. [Interpreter Programs \[Winton Woods\Education & Events\]](#).

Sat 4/14, 9 a.m. - noon

Winton Woods Cleanup

Join the community cleanup that has been making a difference for over 30 years! Bring a group, your family, friends or work solo and help remove litter around Winton Lake. Stick around to enjoy a grilled lunch and raffle giveaways. We'll be meeting at the Kestral Point Shelter. Please register on-line at greatparks.org/volunteer. If you'd like to help with registration or lunch, contact Niki Marengo at nmarengo@greatparks.org or phone 513-245-7471. All ages welcome. [Park Cleanup \[Winton Woods\Conservation & Parks Central\]](#).



140 volunteers picked up 2.16 tons of litter around Winton Lake during the 2017 Winton Woods Cleanup.

Tue 4/17, 11 a.m.:

Homeschool Science (Central): Earth Day Celebration

Home-schooled students and parents are invited to explore interactive learning stations and take part in a hike. Volunteers will assist families with the educational learning stations. For more information or to volunteer, contact Susan Sumner at ssumner@greatparks.org or phone 513-521-7275, ext. 243. [Interpreter Programs \[Winton Woods\Education & Events\]](#).

Tips & Tricks of Volunteering

A volunteer recently asked, "One of my friends enjoys volunteering with Great Parks, but doesn't want to sign up to be a park volunteer. Can they come out with me and help from time-to-time?"

Well, the answer is generally no. There are many advantages to being a Great Parks Volunteer, and one of those is access to wonderful volunteering

and learning experiences. We like to make those opportunities available to individuals that have gone to the trouble of completing required trainings, background checks and all the other onboarding elements required to be a Great Parks Volunteer. We also like to make sure individuals are properly trained and not just technically - we want volunteers to be aware of the Great Parks mission, vision and values, and wear a park uniform, especially when interacting with park guests and other Great Parks Volunteers.

We do encourage anyone who wants to support the park district, but are unable to make a long-term commitment, to sign up for one of our many community volunteer projects. This is a great way for individuals to give back to Great Parks without becoming a long-term volunteer. There are ample skilled employees on hand to provide oversight to untrained individuals. These events are also a wonderful way to learn new skills, make new friends, meet park staff and learn about our organization.

These projects may be found on the Great Parks website at greatparks.org/volunteer. Please share this information with your friends and family so they can support the park district in a short term, but very meaningful way.



A young family member cleaning up the shoreline of the Great Miami River, during the 2017 Great Miami River Sweep at Shawnee Lookout.

First Aid CPR Training

Sign up for National Safety Council First Aid CPR classes. All programs will be held in the Employee Training Center at Sharon Woods.

First Aid CPR is an **optional** training, free and open to all Great Parks volunteers and employees. Certification cards will be mailed to you approximately 4-6 weeks after completion of training.

Upcoming training dates are:

Wed, Apr 11, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Wed, May 9, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Wed, Jun 13, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Register on line at: <https://volunteers-greatparks.bridgeapp.com/login>.

If you register for this training and can no longer attend, please cancel or reschedule by logging into your Bridge account using the link above.

Not able to log into Bridge? Contact the Volunteer Services Department at volunteer@greatparks.org or phone 513-521-7275 and ask for Kris or Niki.

Please record these training hours under [Training \[Sharon Woods\Risk Management\]](#). Training hours may be doubled. Drive time to and from the training may be included but not doubled.

Thank You Volunteers!

From PGA Golf Professional Mike Deiters, Meadow Links & Golf Academy -

A great big thank you to the many volunteers that came out to the emergency ball popping events in February and March. The range was in the worst condition it has been in a very long time because of the rainy weather. Thanks to you, thousands of balls are now back in play at Meadow Links & Golf Academy! We look forward to another great effort on March 27. Hope to see you there.

From Rick Conrad, Winton Woods Conservation & Parks Manager -

Thanks to the volunteers that came out to Winton Woods on March 7 to clean up litter and debris that was left behind from the flood. With your help, we were able to quickly remove a tremendous amount of trash from the harbor and campground area, making these popular destinations more enjoyable for park guests (and our wildlife friends).