

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Sarah Walker

What is your favorite volunteer activity? Working with Special Riders at the Riding Center; they achieve some pretty amazing things and are always so happy to be there.

When you're not at Great Parks, where can we find you? Studying at UC, working towards my degree in physical therapy.

What is your favorite Great Park? Miami Whitewater Forest. Morning runs on the outer loop really make me feel like I'm in the middle of nowhere and it is so beautiful.

What is your life motto? "Happiness is a choice we make each day" or "Today is a good day to have a good day". I'm all about positive thinking! I always tell my friends I just want them to be happy, healthy and successful (I may have a bit of a mothering soul).

Any hobbies that you are passionate about? I love activities that involve working with my hands. Knitting, sewing and other crafty projects where I get to make something.

Do you have a favorite Great Parks memory? What I love most about working with Great Parks is the amazing people you meet. Everyone is so welcoming and willing to teach, learn, share their time and interests. It is just a fun group to work with on every level!

GREAT PARKS VOLUNTEER ANNUAL REPORT

Kris Roselle, Volunteer Services Manager

The numbers are in and, once again, all of you continue to astound! If I've said it once, I've said it a million times, Great Parks volunteers are the absolute best!

In 2017, volunteers contributed 57,075.27 hours of service to Great Parks. That's a monetary value of \$1,312,162* or 27.5 full time employees.

Some other interesting numbers and facts:

- 604 Great Parks volunteers recorded over 53,311.78 hours of service in 2017.
- 506 individuals comprised of families, community members, civic organizations, churches, scout & school groups contributed 1,668.50 hours of service to special projects like the Winton Woods Cleanup, Ohio River Sweep, National Trails Day and other special projects.
- 202 corporate volunteers contributed 1,244 hours of service.
- 62 one-time volunteers contributed to youth leadership projects like Eagle Scout and Senior Capstone work, amounting to 739 hours of service.
- 11 other one-time volunteers lent a hand when a little extra help was needed, contributing 66 hours of service.
- Great Parks worked with 3 individuals who needed to fulfill court-ordered community service for a total of 46 hours.
- In total, more than 1,300 individuals connected with Great Parks in 2017.

YOUR TOP 10 FAVORITE WAYS TO VOLUNTEER!	
Department	2017 Hours
Naturalists	9,666.88
Recreation	9,601.00
Natural Resources	8,725.87
Riding Center	7,399.83
Operations	6,015.25
Nature's Niche	3,655.75
Park's Farm	3,352.40
Volunteer Services	3,015.53
Golf	2,081.95
Adventure Outpost	1,412.25

You help us stretch scarce resources, bring grant dollars to the agency, increase our reach and bring knowledge and new ideas to the table. Equally important, everyone who volunteers with Great Parks has the opportunity to meet new people, learn, connect with the environment and better their community.




Whether you helped once a month or once a week, volunteered from your home or at one of our many parks, if you contributed 400 hours a year or 4 hours a month, your support means so much. When we all work together, it's amazing what can be accomplished. Thank you!

*Based on \$22.99/hour, the value of volunteer time as provided by the Independent Sector for the State of Ohio: <https://independentsector.org/resource/the-value-of-volunteer-time/>

THIS MONTH'S BLOG

Cold Weather is Good for You!
blog/greatparks.org

CONNECT WITH GREAT PARKS

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-  twitter.com/greatparks
-  instagram.com/great_parks

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 Office Jack Sutton.

Other upcoming meeting dates:

- May 15, 2018
- July 17, 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. <https://www.volgistics.com/ex2/vicnet.dll?FROM=23983>

Get Involved

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. Don't forget to record your service hours in VIC or on a paper time sheet, using the assignment category found highlighted at the end of each opportunity.

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 Natures 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]**.



Volunteer at Nature's Niche in Farbach Werner Nature Preserve, or at one of the other Visitor Centers & Gift Shops located at Woodland Mound, Sharon Woods & Miami Whitewater Forest.

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]**.



You can help take care of critters like this at Miami Whitewater Forest.

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 to park visitors, then this is the job for you. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Mike Brech at mbrech@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-9632. For volunteers ages 18 and up. **Visitor Center & Gift Shop [Miami Whitewater Forest\Guest Experiences West]**.

Sat 3/24, Noon–3 p.m.:

The Amazing Race

Do you love deciphering clues and solving challenges? Volunteers are needed to greet guests and help initiate a few challenges during this family-friendly, around-the-park adventure. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Luke Ogonek at logonek@greatparks.org. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Interpreter Programs [Miami Whitewater Forest\Education & Events]**.

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]**.

Fri 3/2, 7–9 p.m.:

Out of This World

Guests will be dropping in to enjoy the park after dark and celebrate all things space! They'll explore a scale model of the solar system, launch water-powered rockets, explore the constellations in a pop-up planetarium and more! Volunteers will welcome guests, help with crafts and educational stations, and assist with set up. For more information or to volunteer, contact Stephanie Morris at smorris@greatparks.org or phone 513-563-4513. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Interpreter Programs [Sharon Woods\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]**.



Volunteers assisting with SRP at the Winton Woods Riding Center

Sat 3/17 & Sun 3/18, 1–4 p.m.:

Heron Rookery Viewing

Help park guests get a bird's eye view of a great blue heron nesting spot. We'll be traveling along the West Branch Trail to view these feathered marvels in their tree-top homes. Spotting scopes will be provided. For more information or to volunteer, contact Susan Sumner at ssumner@greatparks.org or phone 513-521-7275, ext. 243 For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Interpreter Programs [Winton Woods\Education & Events]**.



Volunteer Richard Amable assisting with a heron viewing at Winton Woods.

Tue 3/20, 11 a.m.:

Homeschool Science (Central): Heron Rookery Day

Volunteers are invited to help home-schooled students and parents explore interactive heron learning stations. We'll also be taking a hike to view a heron rookery. Bring binoculars if you have a pair. 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]**.

Tue 3/27, 8-10 a.m.:

Operation Range Ball Recovery

We're looking for volunteers that like to have fun and don't mind spending a morning at the driving range. Volunteers are needed to "pop" golf balls that are stuck in the soft driving range turf. After the balls are removed from the turf, they can then be swept up by the automatic ball machine. A long-handled popping tool will be provided so stooping and bending will be minimal. There will be some dirt involved so wear old clothing and bring work gloves. This project annually helps recover thousands of golf balls and saves thousands of dollars in park assets. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Matt Starr at mstarr@greatparks.org or phone 513-825-3701. For volunteers ages 14 and up. **Course Maintenance [Winton Woods\Golf]**.



Volunteer Larry McLean popping golf balls at Meadow Links & Golf Academy.

Tips & Tricks of Volunteering

It's no surprise that many volunteers are hired into paid positions at Great Parks. After all, volunteering is a great way to learn new skills, get on-the-job training, meet paid team members and learn a lot about the Great Parks organization.

If you are thinking about applying for a Great Parks paid position, or you are currently employed by Great Parks and volunteering, there are some things you need to be aware of:



- Volunteers who are hired as Great Parks employees should make the hiring supervisor aware of their volunteer position.
- Volunteers who are hired as Great Parks employees should notify the Volunteer Services Department immediately regarding their new paid position.
- Employees may volunteer (with no promise or expectation of compensation) with Great Parks, as long as the volunteer work is not the same type of work they are employed to provide Great Parks.
- Participating in the volunteer program is entirely at the employee's discretion.
- Any employee who resigns or retires from Great Parks may not volunteer in any department or in any capacity as they were once employed.
- Great Parks reserves the right to approve or deny volunteer eligibility of a former employee.
- Any involuntarily terminated Great Parks employee is not eligible to volunteer in any capacity for Great Parks.



To learn more about this and other volunteer policies and procedures, log into Bridge at <https://volunteers-greatparks.bridgeapp.com/login> and click on the volunteer handbook in your learning library. A copy of the handbook may also be found on your VIC homepage.

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, Mar 14, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Wed, Apr 11, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Sun, Apr 15, noon-4 p.m.
- Wed, May 9, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Sat, May 12, 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.

Niki Named to CAVA Board

Congratulations to Niki Marengo, Great Parks Volunteer Coordinator, for being named to the CAVA (Cincinnati Association of Volunteer Administrators) Board of Directors. CAVA is the premier volunteer administrator organization in the Greater Cincinnati Region. They provide monthly professional development opportunities, networking events and specialty training for individuals working within the field of Volunteer Management. Niki was elected to serve as CAVA's Certification Chair and will be spending the next two years revamping and implementing the organization's Volunteer Management training classes. Great job, Niki!

