



# ALBUQUERQUE AQUARIUM AQUARIUM NARRATOR BIOPARK EDUCATION VOLUNTEER VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTION 2008

## PURPOSE

Aquarium Narrator volunteers host scheduled feedings at specified locations in the Aquarium. Aquarium staff feed the animals; Aquarium Narrators teach visitors general information about the animals being fed, as well as specific information about what and how the animals are being fed. Feeding sessions are of great interest to visitors, and many questions arise. Having Narrators present to provide ready information greatly enhances the BioPark visitors' understanding and appreciation of the exhibits and animals.

## REQUIREMENTS

Anyone over 18 years old is eligible. Skills needed to become a successful Aquarium Narrator include enthusiasm, flexibility, a commitment to teaching conservation, a sense of responsibility, patience and a desire to educate Aquarium visitors. The required knowledge is taught. As a safety precaution, volunteers are required to submit to a security check before they can begin volunteering and an annual security check thereafter.

## DUTIES

The duties of an Aquarium Narrator are to teach about specific marine animals and explain the feeding process during scheduled feeding sessions. Aquarium Narrator volunteers work **only** at specific exhibits and during specific feeding times, **not** in other areas of the Aquarium. Narrators will be trained to interpret the following feeding sessions:

Exhibit	Animals	Days	Times
Ocean Tank	All fish except sharks	Daily	2:00pm
Ocean Tank	Sharks only	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday	11:00am
Eel Cave	Eels and groupers	Monday, Wednesday, Friday	4:00pm
Shallows & Shores	Stingrays	Daily	11:00am

## MINIMUM TIME

Volunteers create their own schedule. They choose the feeding, day and time they wish to work (see chart above). A regular weekly schedule is encouraged, but not required. Aquarium Narrators are asked to sign up in advance and to find their own substitute if they cannot make their scheduled shift.

A minimum of 60 hours a year is required to receive recognition as a BioPark Education Volunteer. At least 30 hours of these must be spent directly working as an Aquarium Narrator; the remaining 30 hours may also be spent directly working as an Aquarium Narrator or doing support work such as research, writing, attending monthly meetings, continuing education classes and Brown Bags, assisting with general BioPark projects, etc. Volunteers are responsible for tracking their own hours on an honor system.

If an Aquarium Narrator is active in another BioPark Education Volunteer program, the minimum number of required hours does not increase. The total of 60 hours may be divided between both or all jobs.

**TRAINING**

Aquarium Narrators go through a training process which consists of two days of lecture-style presentations and practical demonstrations. The process includes studying the written material for each animal and feeding process, completing three shifts of on-the-job training (to learn and demonstrate appropriate interpretive styles by working with experienced Narrators), and taking a written assessment to demonstrate an understanding of the natural history of the animals and the Aquarium's feeding processes. All Narrators are trained to host all feeding sessions. Upcoming training dates in 2008 are: August 13 & 14.

**UNIFORM**

Aquarium Narrators wear a uniform vest, which is borrowed from the Aquarium/ Garden Education Building. Volunteers must also wear their BioPark ID and nametag. Volunteers are responsible for acquiring solid-colored clothing (blouse/shirt and pants/skirt/shorts) in uniform colors to wear with the vest. Uniform colors are black, brown, beige, tan or white. (Blue jeans are not considered appropriate). Comfortable shoes with a good tread are recommended.

**BENEFITS**

BioPark Education Volunteers have the opportunity to do meaningful and gratifying education work with thousands of visitors to the BioPark, an important intangible benefit. Tangible benefits are also available. Upon completion of the entire training process and a commitment to give the minimum number of hours, Aquarium Narrators will be given an identification badge which allows free regular admission to all BioPark facilities (Zoo, Aquarium, and Botanic Garden). While on duty, volunteers receive a discount at the food and gift concession stands. After the end of each calendar year, volunteers are awarded recognition items for their service. Volunteers are offered discounts to all fee-based BioPark Education programs and are invited to special volunteer-only events.

**SUPPORT**

Resources exist throughout the BioPark to help volunteers fulfill their duties. Education staff can provide assistance, and small Education Libraries are available. Monthly education meetings are generally held on the first Thursday and first Saturday of each month, and all volunteers are encouraged to attend. The Aquarium/Botanic Garden meetings are at 11:00am in the AQ/BG Education Building. Current BioPark happenings and facility-specific information are discussed. Volunteers are also invited to attend monthly Brown Bag Seminars following the meetings. Mid-month, a written update is mailed to all BioPark volunteers. Information on current happenings is also available in the Volunteer Communication Room at the AQ/BG Education Building.

**COSTS**

BioPark Education Volunteers are responsible for acquiring their own uniform.

**STRUCTURE**

Aquarium Narrators report to the Aquarium Education Coordinator, Dave Karrmann (848-7172). Dave reports to the Acting BioPark Education Curator, Allyson Zahm. The AQ/BG Education Clerk, Kim Woodhouse, and the BioPark Program/Volunteer Specialist, Cathy Wylie, are also available to provide assistance.

**HOW TO APPLY**

Fill out the attached application and contract/release forms, and return to Albuquerque BioPark Education, Attn: Cathy Wylie, 903 Tenth Street SW, Albuquerque, NM 87102. Once your application is received, you will be asked to complete a separate background check form.

**CONTACT**

For more information, contact BioPark Education: (505) 764-6245, [cwylie@cabq.gov](mailto:cwylie@cabq.gov)

The BioPark is a division of the City of Albuquerque's Cultural Services Department. For general inquiries, please call 311 (Relay NM, TTY 1-800-659-8331, or 711).



Martin J. Chávez, Mayor