Nashville Zoo Position Description

Position/Title: Education Director
Department: Education
Supervisor: Chief Operating Officer

Job Description
Nashville Zoo at Grassmere is a 200-acre institution accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) whose mission is to inspire a culture of understanding and discovery of our natural world through conservation, innovation and leadership. Located in the heart of Nashville, the zoo has an extensive animal collection within its current 88 acres of developed exhibits. The Zoo attracts more than 800,000 visitors annually as well as serving a diverse community through outreach programs within greater Nashville and mid-Tennessee. A comprehensive Master Plan has been created to develop the zoo’s site. Currently in design is a new Andean Bear exhibit, Spider Monkey and Giant Otter exhibits and a major new African exhibit, which provides the opportunity to create exciting and innovative exhibit elements as well as related programming that interpret the zoo’s conservation involvement. The new Education Director will assume a key role in preparing for this exhibit, both in establishing community relationships, supporting the Zoo’s fundraising efforts, exploring potential technologies and exhibit interpretive planning.

The Education Director is part of the dedicated team of Nashville Zoo leaders who are committed to integrating education in the visitor experience and recognize the significance of education to fostering community support for the Zoo. The Education Director is an experienced leader in non-formal education with excellent departmental management skills and who has demonstrated results through effective collaboration both within and external to the organization.

Education Director Responsibilities
The Education Director reports to the Chief Operating Officer, who in turn reports to the Zoo President. The Education Director develops, implements and continually evaluates the Education Department strategic plan, with short- and long-term goals that support the Zoo’s mission. In addition, the Director works with the Education team to establish, monitor and evaluate annual work plans with measurable objectives in order to implement the strategic plan.

This position provides management and oversight for the following areas:

- Onsite interpretation
- Historic Croft Site
- Volunteers, docents and Zoo Teens
- K-12 school programs, distance learning and teacher professional development
- Fee-based onsite programming including camps, tot programs and overnights
- Education Office Management
- Involvement with exhibit design

Each of the above areas is managed by full-time staff, who themselves supervise full time, seasonal, part-time, and contractual staff and volunteers.
Primary Areas of Responsibility

Staff Management: The Education Director will recruit, hire and train new employees, and is responsible for education staff performance assessment, recognition and discipline. The Director evaluates staffing and staff training needs, and makes recommendations to the Chief Operating Officer.

Management and Evaluation of Education Programs: The Education Director manages the development and implementation of onsite and Behavioral Enrichment programs for audiences of all ages, working with lead staff to ensure that program goals, objectives and measurable outcomes are identified and used to develop program content and teaching methods. The Director will ensure the development of zoo-wide conservation messages, and will collaborate with other departments to include those messages in zoo education programs, exhibits and communications. The Director is responsible for evaluation of the zoo’s education programs, and will work with Education staff to ensure that programs successfully meet their intended outcomes. In addition, the Director will establish and maintain successful partnerships with schools, organizations and community groups to expand interaction and foster collaboration and support for the Zoo.

Exhibit Interpretation: The Education Director oversees the development of exhibit graphics and interactive elements. This work may include researching, writing and editing educational content and selecting media for current and future zoo exhibits and/or working with external contractors to oversee the exhibit interpretive planning, content development, media selection and installation. The Education Director will oversee the evaluation of exhibits including audience research and both formative and summative evaluation.

Finance and Fundraising: The Education Director develops and manages the Education Department’s annual operating budget, as well as budgets for grant awards and corporate sponsorship packages. This work includes regular monitoring of expenditures and revenue throughout the fiscal year, and preparation and submittal of budget reports. The Director will actively collaborate with Development Department staff to research potential education funding sources, and prepare narratives and budgets to procure sponsorships, grant awards and donations. The Education Director will support the Zoo Director, Chief Operating Officer and Development staff’s work in establishing donor relations.

Marketing: The Education Director oversees staff preparation of education program promotional materials, collaborates with the Marketing Department on preparing education-related press releases, and provides support as needed to generate media coverage. The Director also manages the Education Department’s programming information and educational content on the zoo website.

Education Resources: The Education Director works closely with the Curator of Behavioral Husbandry to ensure all protocol and practices in relation to animal facilities, acquisition and disposition of animals within the Education department are maintained within the guidelines set by the Curator of Behavioral Husbandry. The Director also oversees the organization and acquisition of the zoo’s Library collection, which includes books, periodicals and audiovisual material and the zoo’s bio-fact interpretation collection.

Other responsibilities: The Education Director will perform other duties as assigned. Occasional work on weekends, evenings and holidays may be required.

Job Requirements

Minimum Requirements

- Bachelor’s degree in Biology, Zoology, Environmental Education/Interpretation, Education
- 2 years of Department or significant program management experience
- 5 years of multiple staff supervisory experience
- 5 years of Department or significant program budget development and management experience
• 5 years of education program development and presentation experience in a zoo, aquarium, museum, park or related non-formal education setting.

**Required Skills**
The successful candidate must have:

• Demonstrated excellent interpersonal communication skills and be able to collaborate effectively with other zoo departments and with community partners
• Excellent written and oral communication skills to represent the zoo
• Ability to work well independently without direct supervision
• Excellent multitasking and time management ability
• Ability to act in emergency situations based on protocol
• Ability to type, utilize the Internet, communicate via email, and use basic computer programs such as WORD, Excel, PowerPoint and Publisher.

**Desired Skills**
The following skills and experience are desired and are considered a plus:

• Experience establishing and maintaining community partnerships
• Experience managing programs designed to serve targeted diverse audiences
• Successful grant proposal writing and grant award management/administration
• Program and exhibit evaluation training and experience
• Familiarity with technology relevant to use in a zoo education setting, including, but not limited to: touch screens, Smart Boards, smart phone technology, GPS, Web site programming, and the use of social media
• Knowledge and experience with live animal education programming

**Physical Requirements:**
• Ability to lift up to 25 pounds
• Work outdoors in temperatures ranging from below 20 to above 90 degrees Fahrenheit
• Travel zoo grounds

**Employee Requirements:**
Prior to hire, the successful candidate must:

• Submit to a criminal background check and drug screen
• Provide proof of a negative TB test as a pre-requisite to handling animals
• Provide proof of a valid driver’s license.

Nashville Zoo offers a competitive benefit package. Compensation level for the Education Director position depends on experience.