Volunteer Job Description: DOCENT

Docents lead guided interpretive programs for school and youth groups, assist in the development of educational materials, and with special event workshops. Docents inspire children to be environmental stewards through hands-on interaction with plants and nature. The docent is a representative of the Education department of Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum.

General Role and Importance:
This volunteer role will assist in the interpretation and education for K-12 youth. Docents also lead guided tours of select areas for adults.

MBGNA K-12 education is based on Michigan Science Education standards and emphasizes exploration and discovery.

Docents represent MBGNA’s strategic goals of nature based outreach to youth and families.

Additional tasks may include helping to develop educational materials for youth and training materials for other docent volunteers, with the direct supervision of the Youth Education staff member.

Commitment and Schedule
- 2 year commitment, renewable
- Docents commit to one 3 hour tour per week during the school year
- Docents are encouraged to participate in at least one special youth event or summer program each year

Training Requirements
- New Docents are required to attend an orientation and 9 week training
- Current docents attend a Fall Kick-off and attend at least 3 ongoing education updates or classes per year; at least one each: conservatory, trail and one special focus workshop
- Docents will be trained on group management, interpretation and grade level relevant plant science and ecology in order to lead K-12 field trips

Qualifications
- Online application approval and pre-assignment meeting/discussion with Volunteer Coordinator and other staff as needed
- Sincere interest in Matthaei-Nichols’ mission, property, and programs
Enthusiasm for learning about plants and ecosystems and sharing this knowledge with youth of various ages
- Interest in nature education, enjoyment of the environment and horticulture
- Positive, enthusiastic attitude and ability to work in a team
- Physically able to lead tours – prolonged walking/standing & good voice projection

Staff Supervision and Review

- Docents are supervised by the Youth Education Coordinator
  - Liz Glynn, lizglynn@umich.edu
- Additional support is provided by the Volunteer Coordinator
  - Christine Chessler-Stull, cmchess@umich.edu
- New Docents receive training and evaluation as a field trip leader.
- Docents participate in self evaluation and skill needs assessment.

Volunteer Role Agreement:

X

MBGNA Staff Supervisor Role Agreement:

X