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VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Volunteers within the Springfield-Greene County Park Board System

For years, citizen volunteers have been the lifeblood of parks and recreation departments across the country. The Springfield-Greene County Park Board is no different, as we rely on upwards of 1,000 volunteers annually. These people are vital to the growth and existence of many of our programs and events and are an extension of our organization.

Increasing public concern regarding the qualifications of volunteers working with youth, elderly and the disabled has resulted in greater attention to the screening and training of these citizens who work on behalf of our organization. On May 11, 2009 Missouri lawmakers approved several new restrictions on sex offenders, prohibiting them from coming near public parks with playground equipment or swimming pools or from coaching youth sports teams.

Volunteer Management TLC² Program

To that end, the National Recreation & Parks Association recently launched a national volunteer management program, TLC² *Making Communities Safe*. As a charter member of this initiative, the Springfield-Greene County Park Board has agreed to establish a consistent volunteer management strategy and to follow a strict code in the screening, identification and training of all our volunteers.

The following outlines the new policies and procedures that we will follow regarding all volunteers with the Springfield-Greene County Park Board.

General Volunteer Policy

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is anyone who, without compensation, performs a task at the direction of and/or on behalf of the Springfield-Greene County Park Board. A volunteer must be officially registered, screened and approved by the Special Events Administrator or their designee, prior to beginning their assignment.

Purpose of Volunteer Policies

The purpose of these policies is to provide overall guidance, structure and direction to staff and volunteers throughout the volunteer process. These policies do not constitute a binding contractual or personnel agreement. The Springfield-Greene County Park Board reserves the right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy.

Scope of Volunteer Policies

Unless specifically stated, these policies apply to all non-elected and non-appointed volunteers in all programs and projects undertaken on behalf of the Park Board, and to all sites of operation of the Park Board.

Volunteer Involvement

Volunteers may be utilized in many programs and activities and shall serve at appropriate levels of skill. At no time, shall a volunteer be utilized to displace any paid employee from their position.

SCREENING AND IDENTIFICATION

Screening of Volunteers

All volunteers must complete a Volunteer Release Form that is to be submitted to the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, no less than 14 days prior to the targeted assignment start date. All volunteers, who work over 15 hours or work with children, elderly or the disabled, will be processed through a national screening and criminal background check as defined by the NRPA recommended guidelines. Anyone who refuses permission to conduct these checks or who is disqualified will not be accepted for placement. Any disqualified volunteer will be contacted by a third party, and all challenges will be administered by said third party. A volunteer background screening is valid for 12 months and will be conducted on an annual basis provided volunteer continues to remain associated with the Springfield-Greene County Park Board.

Confidentiality

All screenings will be conducted through the Special Events Administrator or their designee, and all records will remain confidential.

Acceptance and Appointment

No volunteer may begin their assignment without successful completion of the necessary background screening and clearance from the Special Events Administrator or their designee. Upon final approval, Special Events Administrator or their designee will contact the Supervisor to begin the identification and training phases.

Identification

All approved volunteers shall receive identification issued by the Springfield-Greene County Park Board. These ID's are only to be worn and visible during their volunteer assignment and shall be returned to the supervisor at the end of their assignment. Photo Identification badges will be issued to those volunteers who will be working more than a one day event/activity. For those volunteers working a single event, an event-specific, non-photo ID is to be issued

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Relationship between Volunteer and Park Board

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource to the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, its staff and the community. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as respected co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to appropriate involvement and participation and the right to recognition for work performed.

In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities, to remain loyal to the goals and procedures of the Springfield-Greene County Park Board.

Work Site

Prior to the enrollment of any volunteer, the supervisor shall establish an appropriate worksite. This worksite shall contain necessary facilities, equipment and space to enable the volunteer to effectively and comfortably perform their duties. Volunteer work sites are subject to the same safety requirements as are all City of Springfield/Springfield-Greene County Park Board work sites.

Dress Code

As representatives of the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, volunteers, like staff, are responsible for presenting a good image to customers and the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Volunteers are to be identified as such by a Park Board issued Identification Badge.

Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regularly scheduled and timely basis. If expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers shall inform the supervising staff member as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. Chronic absenteeism may be grounds for termination/release.

Right to Termination

The Springfield-Greene County Park Board reserves the right to limit the use of volunteers, adjust the hours of any volunteer or to reject services as it, in its sole discretion, deems fit, in order to best achieve its public purpose and policy. Participation in any volunteer position of the Park Board shall be open to any individual and no individual shall be discriminated against based upon race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin or physical, mental or sensory handicap. Grounds for rejecting services may include, but are not limited to: unsatisfactory background check, gross misconduct or insubordination, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property, misuse of Park Board equipment or materials, mistreatment of customers or co-workers, failure to abide by the City policies and procedures, failure to meet the standards of performance relating to the essential functions of the volunteer position and/or failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

Resignation

Volunteers may resign from volunteer service with the Park Board at any time. It is requested that volunteers that intend to resign provide advance, written notice of departure and a reason for this decision to their Supervisor.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS

Recruitment

Volunteers may be recruited by individual departments on a pro-active basis with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin or physical, mental or sensory handicap. Volunteers may be recruited either through an interest in specific functions or through a general interest in volunteering which will later be matched with a specific function. The Volunteer Application Form is available to download on the Park Board website at www.parkboard.org.

Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering and will, under no circumstances, be allowed to operate power tools or heavy equipment.

Staff Requests for Volunteers

Requests for volunteers may also be submitted in writing to the Special Events Administrator or their designee, complete with a description of event/activity, the number of volunteers needed, duties to be performed and a requested timeframe. These requests must be at least 4 weeks in advance of the event/activity. At this time, we have a limited volunteer database, but are currently working to increase this resource and will continually seek out opportunities to develop this area.

Placement of a Volunteer

In placing a volunteer, consideration shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the needs of both can be met. No volunteer will be assigned to work with a staff person without the consent of said staff person. Volunteers shall be provided with a description of general volunteer duties and a scope of work description so there is complete understanding of the expectations of their service.

Professional Services

Volunteers shall not perform professional services for which certification of licensing is required unless currently certified or licensed to do so. A copy of such certification or license must be on file with the Special Events Administrator.

Training

All volunteers shall receive a general orientation on the nature and operation of the Volunteer Program and a specific orientation on the purposes and requirements of the volunteer work that they are accepting in that effort.

The Springfield-Greene County Park Board will provide adequate instruction, and when necessary, training to ensure all workers perform a task properly and safely. The Park Board will further provide volunteers with adequate knowledge of City of Springfield rules and requirements. Personal protective equipment shall be provided by the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, if necessary, and is required to be worn when necessary to complete the work assigned.

Staff that will be in a supervisory capacity for said volunteers shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of the training for the volunteers assigned to them. The Special Events Administrator or their designee may assist with training as needed.

SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

Supervision

Each volunteer with the Springfield-Greene County Park Board must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of said volunteer. This supervisor shall be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer, and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance. An adult must supervise minors under the age of 18. Any volunteer working with children, elderly or disabled must be supervised at all times.

Volunteer/Staff Relationship

Volunteers and staff are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the Park Board, with each having a complementary role to play. It is essential for the proper operation of this relationship that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

Maintenance of Records

The Special Events Administration or their designee will maintain a system of records on each volunteer with the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, including dates and hours of service, position(s) held and recognition and/or awards received. Supervising staff shall be responsible for submitting all appropriate records and information to the Special Events Administrator or their designee in a timely and accurate manner.

Evaluation

Supervising staff shall be involved in all evaluations and work assignments of volunteers with whom they are connected. All evaluations shall be submitted to the Special Events Administration or their designee in a timely and accurate manner.

Recognition

Informal Recognition

All staff members responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake on-going methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. Thank you notes and letters, e-mails and/or verbal thanks are appropriate forms of recognition.

Formal Recognition

Based on information provided by area Supervisors, the Special Events Administrator or their designee, will put forward to the Director of Parks those volunteers that are deemed to receive more formal recognition for their service.