Nature Center at The Summit—Great Parks’ Newest Facility

Lauren McClure, Volunteer Resources Coordinator

In case you haven’t heard, Great Parks is growing! A few months ago we opened a brand new nature center located within the New Prospect Baptist Church in Roselawn.

Our team is incredibly excited about this new opportunity. As Todd Palmeter, our Chief Executive Officer, said “This new location allows us to provide nature education and outdoor recreational services to a community that we currently do not serve. This amazing opportunity aligns with our master plan by providing innovative programming as a gateway to nature exploration.”

Having a full time nature center in Roselawn will help us connect to our urban communities in ways that we have never been able to before, and you can be a part of it!

The Summit Center is ready for volunteers to help with their programs. Right now, they are offering various scheduled programs, as well as open hours for the community on Sundays and Mondays. If you are interested in getting involved you can contact Ashley Moore at asmoore@greatparks.org or look for upcoming opportunities in the GrapeVINE (check out the Volunteer Opportunities page for the Urban Farming Festival coming up on 4/11!).

Stay tuned for more to come from The Summit Center!

Volunteer meetings are a great way to meet new people, hear about upcoming volunteer opportunities and learn something interesting from an exciting lineup of guest speakers. Meetings take place at 7 p.m. in the Winton Centre Auditorium, unless otherwise noted. Coffee and tea are provided. Bring in your favorite baked goods to share. No need to RSVP, just come and enjoy!

May 19 – Shara Clark, Professor at Miami University, and Dan Marsh, Director of Education at the Cincinnati Zoo, will be sharing their experiences in Namibia, Africa as a part of the Project Dragonfly Master’s Program. Hear about their work with the Cheetah Conservation Fund and how conservation organizations can succeed by partnering with local communities to save wildlife.

Jul 21 – Corporal Anthony Leidenbor from the Green Township Police Department will be joining us to share his experience working with K-9 units. Corporal Leidenbor received his first certification as a K-9 handler in 2007. Come out to the Orchard Shelter, located in Winton Woods, for an exciting presentation with one of their dogs!

Sept 15 – Stay tuned!

When recording your hours in VIC for volunteer meetings, log them under Volunteer Meeting [Training]Volunteer Services. Training hours may be doubled. Drive time to and from the training may be included but not doubled.

THIS MONTH’S BLOG

An Oasis in an Urban Setting

http://blog.greatparks.org/2020/02/an-oasis-in-an-urban-setting/
Volunteer Spotlight

LUIS VILLAVICENCIO
Volunteer since 2011

What is your favorite volunteer activity? I have two areas of focus in my volunteer work. I work on the golf course at Sharon Woods carrying out various duties, including repairing divots on the greens, picking up debris on the course, trimming around yardage markers and occasionally washing golf carts. My other area of focus is monitoring all the bluebird boxes along Sharon Woods Golf Course.

What’s your favorite outdoor activity? I have several favorite outdoor activities. Golf is my favorite sport and I play at all the Great Parks courses. At the same time, I am always on alert for the wildlife. Birdwatching is a part of everyday life for me and is incorporated into all activities.

What’s your favorite outdoor activity? Growing up in Peru, soccer is in my blood. Although I no longer play, I am still very involved in teaching youth. I attend many games, both professional and otherwise, and monitor international soccer.

What hobbies are you passionate about? I am an avid reader and lie on the couch with my Kindle and dog for a couple hours every day...almost any topic will spark some interest.

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. Click on any bolded assignment category and you will be hyperlinked to the VIC login portal.

Special Riders Program at Winton Woods
Recurring Mon, Wed, Sat: 3/2–5/23
Mon 6:15–7:15 p.m.
Wed 6:15–7:15 p.m.
Sat 10:15–11:15 a.m.
Volunteers are needed to lead or walk beside horses ridden by Special Rider students during this therapeutic riding class. Your support can help alleviate the long waiting list of potential riders. No experience necessary. Training is provided at the Riding Center. To volunteer, contact Margie Rennie at mrennie1@icloud.com or phone 513-931-3057. For volunteers ages 14 and up. SRP [Riding Center\Guest Exp Central]

Little Tykes-Earth Day
Wed 4/1, 11 a.m.
Join the fun as we celebrate our planet and help families learn about simple ways to give back. Volunteers will engage children, ages 3–6, and their families with Earth Day themed activities. Meet at the Winton Centre Auditorium. To volunteer, contact Susan Sumner at ssunner@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Winton Woods\Education & Events]

Hog Log Nature Jog: Search for the Mysterious Grand Pied
Sat 4/5, 1 p.m.
Legend tells of a creature hidden deep in the woods at Miami Whitewater Forest. Do you have what it takes to track down the Grand Pied beast? Move swiftly as you hit the trails to discover the mysteries that lay deep in the forest. Volunteers will help facilitate this program by directing guests and leading various group activities. Meet at the Miami Whitewater Forest Visitor Center. To volunteer, contact Will Buelsing at wbuelsing@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4774. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Miami Whitewater\Education & Events]

Wildflowers in the Preserves: Newberry Wildlife Sanctuary
Sun 4/5, 1 p.m.
Join us for a walk through Newberry Wildlife Preserve to see what wildflowers nature has on display. Volunteers will help as trail follow-up. This two-hour hike involves steep areas, creek crossings and rugged, off-trail walking. Wear appropriate footwear. We will meet at Farbach-Werner Nature Preserve and carpool to Newberry. To volunteer, contact Stephanie Morris at smorris@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Newberry\Education & Events]

Wild West Off-Trail Hiking Series: Miami Whitewater Forest
Sat 4/4, 10 a.m.
Miami Whitewater Forest has many acres rarely seen by the human eye. Accompany our nature interpreters as they traverse hidden hills and valleys of this vast park in hopes of spotting some of our reclusive residents. Volunteers will act as trail follow-up and assist in providing interpretation throughout the hike. This hike is off-trail and will be strenuous. Meet at the Forest/Beech Bluff Shelter. To volunteer, contact Will Buelsing at wbuelsing@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4774. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Wild West Off-Trail Hiking Series [Miami Whitewater\Education & Events]

Little Miami Trail Work Day
Wed 4/8, 9 a.m.–noon
Help us get this scenic trail ready for another wonderful year. We will be pruning back the edges of the trail, marking utilities for mowing and other preventative maintenance needed. Meet at Avoca Park Trailhead.

GRAPEVINE
Removing Vines at Withrow Nature Preserve
Sat 4/11, 9–11 a.m.
Many mature trees at Withrow Nature Preserve are being invaded by non-native vines. We need your help cutting and treating them to give native trees a fighting chance. Wear sturdy shoes/boots as we may be on steep hillsides. Meet in the parking lot at Withrow Nature Preserve. To volunteer, contact Dan Hart at dhart@greatparks.org or phone 513-250-0925. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Woodland Mound Park\C&P East]

Glenwood Gardens Honeysuckle Hunt
Thu 4/16, 9 a.m.–noon
Get ready for the Glenwood Gardens honeysuckle hunt! Removing this invasive will improve native wildlife habitat. Meet in the parking lot near the service road in the back of Glenwood Gardens. To volunteer, contact Shaun McClary at smccclary@greatparks.org or phone 513-869-9525. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Glenwood Gardens\C&P Central]

Green is the New Gold: 50th Anniversary Earth Day Project
Sat 4/18, 9 a.m.–noon
Let’s all celebrate the Golden (50th) Anniversary of protecting our planet. Help us clear out invasive species, plant new trees, and other tasks to improve Sharon Woods for years to come. Stick around afterward for a tasty lunch and a special visitor. To volunteer, contact Niki Marengo at nmarengo@greatparks.org or phone 513-245-7471. Volunteers of all ages are welcome. Park Cleanup [Sharon Woods\C&P East]

Urban Farming Festival
Sat 4/11, noon–5 p.m.
Come say hello to some farm animals at the Summit Center! Meet local artists, beekeepers, taste test from local farms and visit the start of the Roselawn Community Garden. Volunteers will be stationed both in and outside the center to interact with guests of all ages. Meet at the Great Parks Nature Center at The Summit. To volunteer, contact Sarah Kent at skent@greatparks.org or phone 513-728-4360. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Interpreter Programs [Summit Center\Education & Events]

Shawnee Lookout Garlic Mustard Pull
Sat 4/18, 9–11 a.m.
Celebrate an early Earth Day by weeding out one of our most obnoxious invasives! Meet at the golf clubhouse. To volunteer, contact Adam McCosham at amccosham@greatparks.org or phone 513-978-7198. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Shawnee Lookout\C&P West]

Hog Log Nature Jog: Pig Prep
Sat 4/18, 11 a.m.
With just a few weeks left until Flying Pig Weekend, join Great Parks for our final push to mile 26. Volunteers will help facilitate this program by directing guests and leading various group activities. Meet at Embshoff Woods River Mount Shelter. To volunteer, contact Will Buelsing at wbuelsing@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4774. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Embshoff Woods\Education & Events]

Wild West Off-Trail Hiking Series: Shawnee Lookout
Sun 4/19, 10 a.m.
Take a step off the beaten path of this National Archeological District with nature interpreters to explore the ancient ways of the cultures who once inhabited the hilltops. Volunteer will act as trail follow-up to the hike leader and assist in providing interpretation throughout the hike. This hike is off-trail and will be strenuous. Meet at the Shawnee Lookout/Cedar Bend Shelter. To volunteer, contact Will Buelsing at wbuelsing@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4774. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Shawnee Lookout\Education & Events]

Wildflowers in the Preserves: Trillium Trails
Sun 4/19, 1 p.m.
Join us for a hike into the Trillium Trails Nature Preserve as we search for wildflowers and other signs of spring. Volunteers will assist as trail follow-up. This two-hour hike involves some steep areas and off-trail walking. Meet at the Gatehouse and carpool to the hike site. To volunteer, contact Paul Seevers at pseevers@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Glenwood Gardens\Education & Events]

Sharon Woods Invasive Removal
Wed 4/15, 8–11 a.m.
Help control invasive shrub species. We will be removing invasive species along the hike/bike trail at Sharon Woods. Long pants and closed-toe shoes are required. Tools will be provided! Meet at Lakeside Lodge on Kemper Rd. To volunteer, contact Jeremy Barkley at jbarkey@greatparks.org or phone 724-814-1008. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Sharon Woods\C&P East]

Farbach-Werner
Sat 4/11, 9 a.m.–noon
Come to Farbach-Werner to help control invasive species. Learn what invasive plants could be present in your backyard and how to properly remove them. Meet by the fire pit. To volunteer, contact Paul Steuer at psteuer@greatparks.org or phone 513-728-4360. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Farbach Werner\C&P Central]

Urban Farming Festival
Sat 4/11, noon–5 p.m.
Come say hello to some farm animals at the Summit Center! Meet local artists, beekeepers, taste test from local farms and visit the start of the Roselawn Community Garden. Volunteers will be stationed both in and outside the center to interact with guests of all ages. Meet at the Great Parks Nature Center at The Summit. To volunteer, contact Sarah Kent at skent@greatparks.org or phone 513-728-4360. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Interpreter Programs [Summit Center\Education & Events]

Shawnee Lookout Garlic Mustard Pull
Sat 4/18, 9–11 a.m.
Celebrate an early Earth Day by weeding out one of our most obnoxious invasives! Meet at the golf clubhouse. To volunteer, contact Adam McCosham at amccosham@greatparks.org or phone 513-978-7198. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Shawnee Lookout\C&P West]

Hog Log Nature Jog: Pig Prep
Sat 4/18, 11 a.m.
With just a few weeks left until Flying Pig Weekend, join Great Parks for our final push to mile 26. Volunteers will help facilitate this program by directing guests and leading various group activities. Meet at Embshoff Woods River Mount Shelter. To volunteer, contact Will Buelsing at wbuelsing@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4774. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Embshoff Woods\Education & Events]

Wild West Off-Trail Hiking Series: Shawnee Lookout
Sun 4/19, 10 a.m.
Take a step off the beaten path of this National Archeological District with nature interpreters to explore the ancient ways of the cultures who once inhabited the hilltops. Volunteer will act as trail follow-up to the hike leader and assist in providing interpretation throughout the hike. This hike is off-trail and will be strenuous. Meet at the Shawnee Lookout/Cedar Bend Shelter. To volunteer, contact Will Buelsing at wbuelsing@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4774. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Shawnee Lookout\Education & Events]

Wildflowers in the Preserves: Trillium Trails
Sun 4/19, 1 p.m.
Join us for a hike into the Trillium Trails Nature Preserve as we search for wildflowers and other signs of spring. Volunteers will assist as trail follow-up. This two-hour hike involves some steep areas and off-trail walking. Meet at the Gatehouse and carpool to the hike site. To volunteer, contact Paul Seevers at pseevers@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Glenwood Gardens\Education & Events]
Miami Whitewater Forest
Memorial Mulching
Tue 4/23, 9 a.m.–noon
Memorial trees provide a lasting legacy for families to remember their loved ones. Great Parks of Hamilton County is tasked with maintaining these memorial plantings for our donor families. Help us keep their legacies alive by spreading new mulch for the upcoming season. Meet at the Shaker Trace hike/bike trail parking lot. To volunteer, contact Alex Hearing at ahearing@greatparks.org or phone 513-367-4626. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Miami Whitewater ]

Winton Woods Cleanup
Sat 4/25, 9 a.m.–noon
Come out for the community cleanup that has been making a difference for more than 30 years! Afterward, stick around to enjoy a grilled lunch and raffle giveaways with Forest Park Environmental Awareness and Wild Birds Unlimited. Students, gather your groups together to participate and win the High School Challenge. To volunteer, contact Niki Marengo at nmarengo@greatparks.org or phone 513-245-7471. Volunteers of all ages are welcome. Park Cleanup [Winton Woods ]

Garlic Mustard Pull at
Withrow Nature Preserve
Fri 4/24, 9–11 a.m.
Join the Woodland Mound Conservation & Parks team in the ongoing fight against garlic mustard. Your help will give our native woodland flowers a chance to grow. Meet in the parking lot at Withrow Nature Preserve. To volunteer, contact Dan Hart at dhart@greatparks.org or phone 513-250-0925. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Woodland Mound ]

Wildflowers in the Preserves: Warren Wells Preserve & Garnett Wildflower Overlook
Sun 4/26, 1 p.m.
Join us for an off-trail wildflower hike on the slopes through Warren Wells Preserve. Catch a glimpse of the newly created Garnett Wildflower Overlook in search of other spring beauties. Volunteers will assist with trail follow-up. Meet at Spring Beauty Dell parking lot in Winton Woods. Wear appropriate footwear for steep hills. To volunteer, contact Susan Sumner at ssumner@greatparks.org or phone 513-385-4811. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Stew Crew [Winton Woods ]

Get Certified in First Aid CPR
Sign up for National Safety Council First Aid CPR classes. First Aid CPR is an optional training, free and open to all Great Parks volunteers and employees. Trainings are held at the Sharon Woods Employee Training Center adjacent to the Sharon Centre. Certification cards will be mailed to you approximately 6 weeks after completion of training. Upcoming training dates are:

Tue 4/7, 8 a.m.–noon
Registration closes one-week prior to training so don’t delay.
Sign up on line at: https://volunteers-greatparks.bridgeapp.com/login (your user name is your 6 digit volunteer ID number found on your photo ID card. Example: 000987 or 009876).
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 Resources Department at volunteer@greatparks.org or phone 513-521-7275 and ask for Kris, Niki, or Lauren.
Please record these training hours under First Aid CPR [Training ].

Francis Homestead Invasive Plant Removal
Thu 4/30, 8–11 a.m.
Come out to the Francis Homestead to help control the invasive species found there. Volunteers will assist in the removal and treatment of these species to help create better habitat for our native plants and wildlife. Long pants and closed-toe shoes are recommended! Meet at Francis RecreAcres and then carpool over to the Francis Homestead. To volunteer, contact Jeremy Barkley at j barkley@greatparks.org or phone 724–814–1008. For volunteers ages 14 and up. Stew Crew [Francis RecreAcres ]

Nature’s Babies Field Trips
Help students explore spring changes and why many animals have their young at this time of year. Volunteers will assist with teaching, craft set-up, and presentation. No experience is necessary. Training will be provided. There are no set days or times yet. Field trips will vary in March and April. To volunteer, contact Stephanie Morris at smorris@greatparks.org or phone 513–385–4811. For volunteers ages 18 and up. Interpreter Programs [Farbach Werner ]

Impromptu Programming and Docent Roles
Our interpreters are looking for volunteers who are interested in facilitating impromptu programs for the public throughout the West Region parks. The programs will be free and are for anyone interested in participating. These impromptus will have topics with plans and supplies ready to go in bins. If you are interested, contact Luke Ogonek at logonek@greatparks.org or phone 513–367–4774. Training will occur in late April or May. Interpreter Programs [Park ]

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GRAPEVINE
A Culture of Philanthropy

Todd Palmeter—Chief Executive Officer

Great Parks is one of the leading park systems in the country for many significant reasons — our outstanding staff, the region’s cultural history, a tradition of preserving natural resources, responsible financial practices and philanthropy. The park district and Hamilton County residents have benefitted from contributions made by families, businesses and foundations dating back to the first donation received in April 1933 to reforest Sharon Woods. Since then, Great Parks has received land, artifacts, volunteer time and financial funding to achieve our mission. As announced in December, I created a Philanthropy Division to make our fundraising more intentional. This new division pulls together the duties and responsibilities of Great Parks Forever, grants and sponsorships. Since that announcement, there have been a few questions from staff that I want to address.

1. What happens to Great Parks Forever (GPF)?

Great Parks still needs a 501(c)(3) partner to solicit and manage gifts from some grantors, businesses and individuals. GPF’s Board continues to fundraise in the community and report to the Board of Park Commissioners. Alicia Culman continues to manage GPF’s operations in addition to leading the Great Parks Philanthropy Division.

2. Is the Philanthropy Division responsible for getting land donations?

No, this function remains the responsibility of the Planning Division. Tim Zelek, Chief of Planning, Daniel Calvert, Director of Design & Land Acquisition, and the rest of the Planning Division team are best suited to work with landowners to acquire land.

3. How can I support philanthropy for Great Parks?

A. Keep up the good work!

Our supporters donate because they love our parks. Donors most often reference our clean, reliable amenities and the excellent customer service they received. You are the reason they donate.

B. Share stories from the field with the Philanthropy Division.

Storytelling is the main ingredient in fundraising. Call, email, send a note or stop a Philanthropy team member to tell them about an experience with a guest or a project you are working on.

greatparks.org/volunteer
Happiness Survey Results—Staff Communication

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our Volunteer Happiness Survey that went out at the beginning of the year! Overall, the response was very positive, with over 94% of respondents saying they were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience as a Great Parks volunteer. However, there is always room for improvement. Over the next few months, we are going to use the GrapeVINE to highlight some important topics that came up in the survey.

For April’s newsletter we wanted to address communicating with staff. While the majority of people reported that staff responded in a timely manner, there were a few comments that mentioned instances where there was no follow-up from staff when inquiring about different volunteer opportunities.

If you are ever in a situation where the staff you are trying to reach are not responding, or you are not sure what staff member you should be reaching out to, you can always contact Kris, Niki or Lauren in the Volunteer Resources Department for assistance. You can reach all of us using the email volunteer@greatparks.org

Shout Outs!

Thank you to all involved in cutting back honeysuckle and vines last Thursday, February 20, at Glenwood Gardens. From on your hands and knees cutting and ripping things out by the root, we defeated and treated 12,296 sq. feet of invasives. Everyone did well. We can’t thank you enough!

Shaun McClary, Conservation and Parks Technician

Maple Sugar Days were hopping this year! We estimate Saturday attendance at 750. It felt busier, but we realized people were hanging out for hours. Sunday we had about 800 people come through. We had 29 volunteers each day and they worked HARD. We couldn’t have done it without you. Thanks so much!

Stephanie Morris, Central Region Interpreter

Volunteers and staff teamed up to tackle invasive plant species at Glenwood Gardens.