



DISCOVERY
SCIENCE PLACE
A UT TYLER PARTNERSHIP

General Volunteer Handbook



308 N. Broadway
Tyler, Texas 75702
www.discoveryscienceplace.org
903-533-8011

December 04, 2019

Dear DSP Volunteer,

On behalf of Discovery Science Place and our many visitors, thank you for committing both your time and resources to the DSP. Our mission is “Igniting curiosity in young minds through fun, hands-on exploration!”, and volunteers such as yourself help us fulfill that mission.

As executive director of the DSP I am grateful for the strong community support we have and the willingness of those such as yourself to help educate and engage the thousands of students and families we serve every year. STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) education is vital to producing thoughtful, innovative, and forward-thinking students who go on to be the leaders, scientists, and entrepreneurs of tomorrow. Informal science education centers such as the DSP are a key ingredient in that education, and volunteers play an important role in that process. Thanks again for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Rasure", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Rasure
Executive Director

About Discovery Science Place

- We have been in operation since 1993.
- We house exciting, educational, STEM-focused permanent and temporary exhibits in 14,000 square feet of exhibit space in our main building. We also have an annex with over 2,500 square feet of exhibit space, as well as multiple classrooms and education spaces in both
- We provide educational resources for parents, teachers, schools, and day cares. In an era when learning is becoming more and more standardized, we provide imaginative, open-ended, hands-on, learning experiences. We provide these experiences to children and families from all social and economic backgrounds, in many cases these are experiences that a child would never otherwise have the opportunity to receive.
- We enhance the tourist experience for visiting families from all over the United States and many foreign countries. Last year, we had over 60,000 visitors and served over 35,000 students.
- We partner with several local individuals, organizations, and businesses, including Brookshire's, Southside Bank, Trinity Mother Frances, and the East Texas Gem and Mineral Society.
- In 2012, DSP and UT Tyler began a joint initiative for the mutual benefit of both organization and the community, to collaborate, improve STEM education, and create one of the most exciting informal learning experiences in the state.

Discovery Science Place Staff

Executive Director-	Chris Rasure
Development Director-	Monica Moore
Development Assistant-	Mackensie Northup
Education Director-	Tim Kennedy
Guest Services Manager-	LaTresa Jackson
Office Manager-	Kelechi Mmuobuike
Lead Cashier-	Amy Curry
Exhibit Designer/Shop Manager-	Jim Cox

How Volunteers help us Achieve our Goals

- You help us by donating your time to provide excellent exhibit support and programs while keeping costs down. Thank you!
- You help us by donating your enthusiasm to engage children in our exhibits and activities and increase parent/family participation. Thank you!
- You help us by donating your talents and interests to inform and teach children in our exhibits, camps, and other activities. Thank you!

General Volunteer Guidelines

All volunteers are required to:

- Fill out a Volunteer Application
- Have signed parent permission to volunteer if under 18 (minimum volunteer age- 13)
- Be willing to submit to a background check and criminal history check if over 18
- Follow all Discovery Science Place and UT Tyler rules, policies, and procedures
- Attend required training; including summer volunteer orientation and other required training sessions throughout the year. (Training counts toward volunteer hours.)
- Read the general Volunteer Handbook as well as any specific handbooks/guidelines
- Sign in and out at the Volunteer notebook at the front desk every shift

Attitude is Everything!

After guests visit the front desk, you will be the first person they interact with and will have a huge impact on how they remember their visit to Discovery Science Place! You can make or break their experience, and be the reason for them coming back for another visit, or not...

A DSP Volunteer is always:

Professional: Personal appearance and dress are professional; when in the sight of guests you are working, not socializing, texting, sitting, etc. A good volunteer is indistinguishable from a paid DSP Staff member.

Enthusiastic: Smiling, engaging guests, appearing excited about being here. If DSP were Disney Land, you would be Mickey Mouse. Even if you are redirecting kids (or adults) to enforce museum rules, you do it with a smile on your face and in a way that keeps the atmosphere fun and happy.

Respectful: Use manners, and treat every guest, staff member, and other volunteer with respect. Use “yes ma'am, no sir”, when talking to guests. Try to answer or find the answer to any question you are asked.

Knowledgeable: Has experience with exhibits and materials, knows how to operate equipment, and understands what is being taught. Take time when you aren't busy to read the signs and play with the activities. Pick a favorite activity and become an "expert"—your interest will be contagious as you work with guests.

Volunteer Positions & Duties

Floor Volunteers: (this is the most common position) Assisting guests in permanent and temporary exhibits, answering questions, picking up after guests, and cleaning up exhibit areas. Exhibit areas and activities need to be "reset" throughout the day, and thoroughly picked up and cleaned at the end of each shift. Floor volunteers can commit to morning (10am-2pm) or afternoon (1pm-5pm) shifts, or all day (with a 30 min lunch break of course). Floater floor volunteers can commit to any time between 10am-5pm. Floor volunteers report to the Volunteer Coordinators- floor manager, LaTresa or office manager, Precia.

Classroom Volunteers: Assisting teachers with demonstrations and activities, helping children learn and participate, and cleaning up classrooms. Work times vary. Classroom volunteers report to the Education Director, Teacher or Volunteer Coordinator.

Camp Volunteers: Working with teachers, other volunteers, and campers in all day, week-long camps. Monitoring children, organizing materials, assisting with activities, cleaning up, serving snack, etc. Full-day camp volunteers commit to being at camp 5 days, Mon-Fri, from 9:30am-4:30pm. We also have single day-camp volunteer opportunities during the winter and spring breaks. Camp volunteers report to the Education Director, Camp Teacher or Volunteer Coordinator.

Mobile Cart Volunteers: Mobile cart volunteers must be 18+ years of age. Duties include attending any necessary orientation or training for cart activities. Retrieving/setting up cart and attending for a minimum of one hour in one of the two main galleries or two hours (one in each main gallery). Interacting with the public to share with them the activity of the cart- ensuring a safe, fun and educational experience. Acting as an enthusiastic supporter and representative of the DSP. Cleaning all materials and properly storing at end of shift. More specific details will depend on cart activity. Cart volunteers report to the Executive Director, Education Director, and/or floor manager.

Special Event Volunteers: Assist staff members with special events, openings, or projects. Working with public, setting up, maintaining, or tearing down exhibits or activities, demonstrations, etc. Special events times vary.

Administrative Volunteers: Assist front desk and office staff; work on mailings, data entry, or other projects.

Specialized Volunteers: Utilize a special skill, such as construction, technology, teaching, web design, etc., to complete projects, teach a class, or perform a demonstration. Please let us know about your special skills!

Priorities

Volunteers will usually be assigned a specific area to work, but there are times when the crowd dies down or traffic is slow in your assigned area. Here are good uses of your time when that happens:

1. Assigned Exhibit/Duty- Greeting guests, Assisting Guests, Answering questions, Resetting exhibits
2. Assisting Other Volunteers- If another museum area is busy, and you're not, go offer to help!
3. Resetting Exhibits- Picking up, Replacing items, Organizing, Cleaning
4. Assist Staff- Ask the front desk, the Volunteer Coordinator or other staff if there is something you can do or help with!
5. Learning- "Playing" in the museum exhibits, Reading signage, Practice using exhibits and learning how/why the work- what knowledge do they impart...
6. Projects- There may be special projects the shop or Directors have in mind- check with them.

General Policies

1. Code of Conduct
2. Respect and support the mission and goals of The Discovery Science Place
3. Be courteous, friendly, and cooperative
4. Be willing to learn and take part in training sessions
5. Follow through with your commitments to volunteer, and let the Volunteer Coordinator(s) know in a timely manner if you are unable to work as scheduled
6. Follow all safety policies
7. Respect all guests, volunteers, and staff fairly and without discrimination

Safety policies

Every volunteer at DSP, even if you are working behind the scenes, has some interaction and impact on children, and you should take this responsibility very seriously. Not only can you affect the level of learning and fun that take place here, you also have a responsibility for the safety of the children you come in contact with. Safety guidelines are to be followed with care are put in place in the interests of the children we serve, Discovery Science Place, UT Tyler and the volunteer.

Criminal History: All volunteers over the age of 18 working with children must consent to undergo a Criminal History Check.

Required Training: Orientations are required annually. Additional training may be required before beginning work as a volunteer and throughout the year. Training may be required prior to working special events or some duties.

Absences and Following Duties: It is essential to keeping the children we serve safe by maintaining proper supervision and keeping the exhibits and activities in safe working condition. You must be here on the times and days you are scheduled, perform your assigned duties. We understand that sometimes absence is unavoidable. If you are sick or need to be late, please call the Volunteer Coordinator to give as much advanced notice as possible, so your duties can be covered.

Confidentiality: Please keep the identities of the children you work with private. Please do not discuss sensitive information, such as discipline or family situations, with other volunteers, children, parents, guests, or any person outside of DSP. DSP Staff will be responsible for any information regarding children that needs to be discussed with parents. If a sensitive issue occurs during your tenure as a volunteer, this information must be kept confidential to protect you and others involved with DSP.

Personal Safety: DSP Volunteers are trained in using our facilities, exhibits, equipment and activities. It is necessary that you follow all training and safety guidelines for the safety of our guests and yourself. All volunteers must sign a Waiver of Liability and Consent for Medical Treatment Form, and provide emergency contact information. Volunteers should not handle unsafe equipment or materials.

Other Policies

Standard of Appearance: Appropriate attire includes: DSP t-shirts, school shirts, plain t-shirts, plain colored pullovers, unripped jeans, appropriate shorts, slacks, skirts to the knee or longer. Camp or classroom volunteers are allowed to wear denim or khaki shorts to the knee. For all volunteers: clothing should be clean and unripped, you should have closed-toe shoes, and nametags or lanyards are required whenever you are present in your volunteer capacity. Dress appropriately for your duties. Occasionally, special events or other duties may require different attire.

Sexual Harassment/Child Abuse Prevention Training: Volunteers are required to follow the Sexual Harassment guidelines outlined in their orientation and any additional required training.

Conduct Outside the Museum: Volunteers should conduct themselves in behavior and communication, including electronic and on social media, in a way that serves the mission and goals of The Discovery Science Place both in and outside of their volunteer duties.

Dismissal

Because of the importance of the work they do, volunteers at Discovery Science Place are held to many of the same standards of responsibility and behavior as employees. Failure to comply with these standards may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from volunteer service. Volunteers may forfeit any hours earned if they are dismissed from their duties due to noncompliance with policies or inappropriate conduct. Examples of conduct that may require disciplinary action include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Not following Volunteer Policies contained within this handbook.
- 2) Substandard job performance or failure to carry out volunteer responsibilities.

- 3) Intoxication, being under the influence of illegal drugs, or bringing illegal drugs or harmful substances or materials onto Museum property.
- 4) Indecent or inappropriate behavior on or off Discovery Science Place property and/or with Museum guests, volunteers, or staff, including suggestive remarks or behavior, inappropriate jokes, propositions, harassment, etc.
- 5) Excessive lateness or absences.
- 6) Disclosure of confidential information.
- 7) Safety violations.
- 8) Criminal activity or conviction that harms the reputation of Discovery Science Place.
- 9) Cursing, obscene remarks, abusive or intimidating language, racial or ethnic slurs.
- 10) Conducting excessive personal business, including talking with friends, texting, etc., while on duty.

Volunteer Supervision

All volunteers are under the supervision of the Education Director and Volunteer Coordinator(s). Volunteers may also be directly supervised by other staff, classroom teachers, or lead volunteers. All volunteers are expected to follow the instructions of the staff or volunteers who are placed in supervisory positions over them. The Volunteer Coordinator will handle issues with scheduling, assignment of duties, and paperwork. Questions or problems with scheduling, hours, duties, placement, disputes between volunteers or volunteers-staff, and disciplinary actions will be handled by the Education Director and/or Executive Director.

General Contact Information

Museum main number: (903)533-8011 or online at <http://www.discoveryscienceplace.org/volunteer/>

I have received, read, and understand the DSP General Volunteer Handbook:

Signature _____

Date _____

Printed Name _____

Discovery Science Place

WAIVER OF LIABILITY and HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

1. Waiver of Liability. In consideration of my participation as a Discovery Science Place volunteer ("Volunteer"), I hereby **RELEASE, WAIVE, DISCHARGE, AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE** the Discovery Science Place, its directors, officers, agents, servants, and/or employees (hereinafter referred to as "DSP") from any and all liability claims, demands, actions and causes of action whatsoever arising out of or related to any loss, damage, or injury, including death, that may be sustained by me, or to any personal property belonging to me, **WHETHER CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE DSP, THE NEGLIGENCE OF ANY THIRD PARTY**, or otherwise, while participating in the DSP's volunteers services program, including related activities and events ("Events"), or while in, on, or upon the DSP premises where said Events are being conducted.
2. Indemnification / Hold Harmless. I further hereby **AGREE TO INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS THE DSP** from any claim, loss, liability, damage or costs, including court costs and attorney fees, that it may incur due to my participation in Events, **WHETHER CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF DSP, THE NEGLIGENCE OF ANY THIRD PARTY**, or otherwise.
3. Insurance. I understand that, except as otherwise agreed to by DSP in writing, DSP does not carry or maintain health, medical, or disability insurance coverage for any DSP Volunteer. **Each Volunteer is expected and encouraged to obtain his or her own medical or health insurance coverage.**
4. Photographic Release. Volunteer does hereby grant and convey unto DSP all right, title, and interest in any and all photographic images and video or audio recordings made by DSP during the Volunteer's activities with DSP, including, but not limited to, any royalties, proceeds, or other benefits derived from such photographs or recordings.
5. Binding Effect. It is my express intent that this Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement shall bind the members of my family and spouse, if I am alive, and my heirs, assigns and personal representative, if I am deceased, and shall be deemed as a **RELEASE, WAIVER, DISCHARGE, AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE DSP**. I hereby further agree that this Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas.
6. **IN SIGNING THIS RELEASE, I ACKNOWLEDGE AND REPRESENT THAT** I have read the foregoing Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement, understand it and sign in voluntarily as my own free act and deed; no oral representations, statements, or inducements, apart from the foregoing written agreement, have been made; I am at least eighteen (18) years of age and fully competent (or that I am the parent or legal guardian of the undersigned Volunteer); and I execute this release for full, adequate and complete consideration fully intending to be bound by same.

Volunteer's Signature: _____

Volunteer's Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18): _____

Date: _____