

Education Department Intern at Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden

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INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 2021, I had the chance to work as an intern in the education department of the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden located in Cincinnati, Ohio. I found this job online while looking for environmental and conservation-based jobs in Cincinnati. While this internship was unpaid, I gained a lot of connections and experience that made the internship very worth my time. The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden is dedicated to creating adventure, conveying knowledge, conserving nature, and serving the community. While the Cincinnati Zoo is for visitors, while working there I felt like that conservation of wildlife and nature was sometimes even more important than the visitors, which I really liked.

Pictures from when I was trained on handling and interpreting the Kenyan sand boa and the three-banded armadillo



More animals I was trained on interpreting, including the Madagascar hissing cockroach, the radiated tortoise, and the blue tongued skink



JOB DUTIES

During this internship, my main duties included helping with summer camp and virtual programs for school groups. While working, I:

- Taught summer camp classes, where I led hikes, brought animals into the classroom, taught curriculums, and led age-appropriate activities
- Worked on the logistics of summer camp, including making class rosters, parent phone calls, and recruiting kids for the department's scholarship program
- Taught virtual programs for school groups and assisted with camera work

EXPERIENCE

While working, I mostly worked on the back-end of summer camp with the program coordinators and assistant coordinators. I did however, substitute for the summer camp instructors when needed, which helped me gain a lot of new teaching skills and classroom experiences. By August, I was able to be an instructor myself and teach my own full-week of summer camp. During this internship I was also able to work with animals I had never worked with before, getting valuable animal handling experience and reaffirming my desire to work with wildlife in the future.

5th-6th graders presenting their poster on an animal exhibit they learned about while at camp



My 1st-2nd grade class learning about tigers for international tiger day



Red pandas Lin (top) and Kenji (bottom)



EXPERIENCE (cont.)

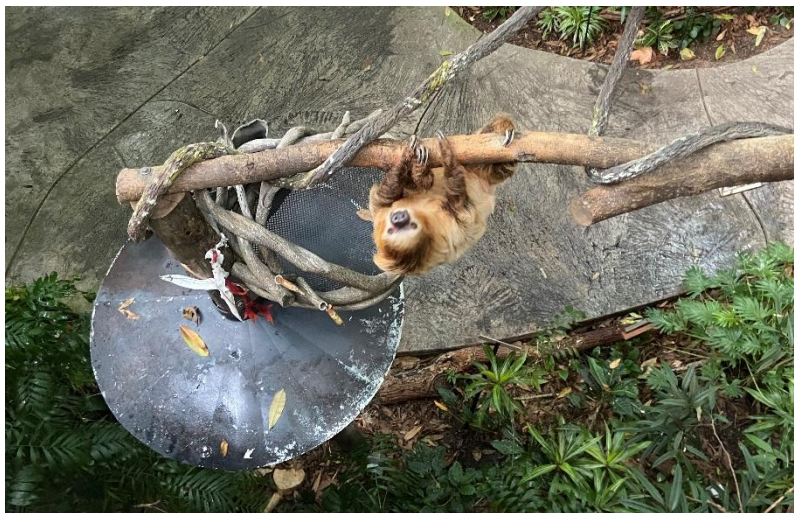
While at the zoo I also had the chance to volunteer as an assistant keeper at the Zoo's red panda habitat. This was an amazing experience for me, as I got to see what a career as a zookeeper is like, and I also got to work up close and personal with one of my favorite animals. My main duties while volunteering included cleaning up the indoor and outdoor spaces of the red panda habitat and cutting down bamboo around the zoo to feed to the pandas.



REFLECTION

This internship solidified my career goals of being able to work with both children and wildlife. I love sharing the joy of nature and conservation with kids and watching them apply knowledge that I have taught them. I would love to go back to work at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden in the future, perhaps as a camp instructor, but I would likely not do another internship there as I cannot afford it. Recently, I have been looking for other similar internships and children's programs around the Columbus area and hope to find something like the work I did at the Cincinnati Zoo. I would recommend this internship to those who are able to take on unpaid internships, as it was an amazing experience I will never forget.

Other animals I worked in proximity with, including Mai Tai the elephant, Moe the sloth, and Fiona the hippo



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