Groundwork Elizabeth Green Team Handbook

Groundwork Elizabeth's Green Team is not just another job; it is a chance to make a real difference in the city where you live, learn new things, and make friends. This is an opportunity to change the perception of Elizabeth youth and show just how much a dedicated group can accomplish.

Groundwork Elizabeth's Mission

Groundwork Elizabeth, Inc. is a locally-based 501(c)3 non-profit organization working to create sustainable environmental change through community-based partnerships. Groundwork's mission and operations are premised on the understanding that environmental conditions are inextricably linked to the economic and social health of a neighborhood. As a consequence, Groundwork is committed to "*changing places and changing lives*" through on-the-ground projects that help to transform local communities. To accomplish this, Groundwork leads and supports a variety of partnership-driven efforts that bring together the public, private and non-profit sectors to solve complex environmental problems and sustain a long-term vision for neighborhood change and renewal.

The formal mission of the organization is ***"to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement and management of the physical environment by developing community-based partnerships which empower people, businesses and organizations to promote environmental, economic and social well- being."***

Our projects and programs are designed to:

- ***Increase Opportunities for Physical Activity*** through the development of parks, trails and recreational facilities that are safe, welcoming and accessible to all;
- ***Increase Access to Healthy Food*** by creating a citywide network of community gardens, and expanding opportunities for community-supported agriculture;
- ***Improve the Quality of Our Air, Water and Land*** through community truck counts to measure air pollution, volunteer cleanups, and water quality monitoring
- ***Support Biodiversity*** by implementing habitat enhancement and restoration projects.

- ***Increase Intergenerational Programs*** Involve the community of all ages and ethnicities in our environmental education programs throughout the city of Elizabeth. This includes the Elizabeth Public Schools and the Community Centers.

Groundwork Elizabeth is an affiliate of Groundwork USA. The **Groundwork USA** network of 22 Trusts is linked together by the Groundwork USA national office, and built on a partnership between the **Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Program** and the **National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.** The Groundwork model is based on Groundwork UK, where the first trust was founded in 1981.

Groundwork Elizabeth's Green Team mission is to make an investment in the future of Elizabeth's youth by focusing on three guiding principles – service, diversity, and education.

CORE VALUES

- **Shared Stewardship -** We share a commitment to resource stewardship with the global preservation community
- **Excellence -** We strive continually to learn and improve so that we may achieve the highest ideals
- **Integrity -** We deal honestly and fairly with the public and one another
- **Tradition -** We are proud of it; we learn from it; we are not bound by it.
- **Respect** - We embrace each others' differences so that we may enrich the well-being of everyone.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For absences, questions, or problems contact staff members below:
Executive Director: Jonathan Phillips jonathan@groundworkelizabeth.org (908) 298-0262
Director of Urban Agriculture: Jackie Park Albaum jackie@groundworkelizabeth.org
Operations Director: John Evangelista john@groundworkelizabeth.org
Director of Youth Initiatives: Lucy Crespo Lucy@groundworkelizabeth.org
Green Team Youth Leader Coordinator: Beren Delgado beren@groundworkelizabeth.org and Kayly Hernandez kayly@groundworkelizabeth.org

MAIN LOCATION:

1. Groundwork Elizabeth Administrative Office
   205 First Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07206
2. Groundwork Elizabeth Urban MicroFarm and Conservation Center
   740 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ, 07202

Emergency procedures: In the case of an emergency, dial 911! If an injury has occurred, you may be required to fill out an incident report form with Groundwork Elizabeth. If needed, your emergency contact will also be called.

EXPECTATIONS

- Set a positive example to other team members at all times, show leadership among peers
- Work on assigned projects in a timely and efficient manner
- Show up on time for work and volunteer events dressed properly and with all necessary materials
- Be an active participant in educational, volunteering, and maintenance activities
- Maintain a level of professionalism
- Be responsible for safety of self and of the team
- Bring up ideas and concerns with Groundwork Elizabeth staff
- Take care of personal needs (i.e. drink water, eat nutritiously, use bathroom when necessary)

SERVICE

Service is part of your commitment as a Groundwork Elizabeth Green Team member. The Fall-Spring work schedule includes volunteer service events. Your participation in these activities is important to your community and the city. When you participate in these activities the rules are the same as a regular workday. All service hours will be documented, and a designated staff member will sign your community service hour sheets. This can be valuable if applying to colleges or programs that require a commitment to community service. Graduation from Elizabeth Public School requires a minimum of 60 hours by the senior year.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Groundwork Elizabeth Green Team members must attend all days of the program unless the absence has been excused ahead of time (emergencies will be handled on a case by case basis). If you are sick or going to be late, call a staff member and leave a message explaining your situation. Please leave a contact phone number where we can call you back. If you have two unexcused absences (no call, no show) you will no longer have a position with the Green Team. Employees who are frequently late will be suspended from work (how long depends on the case).

EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT

Environmental work and community development take a number of skills and

competencies. Green Team members should use this employment opportunity to deepen their understanding of many of the **STEM** focus areas (science, technology, engineering and math) that are applicable to the work being done. In addition, Green Team members will be taught leadership and group dynamics to further their effectiveness as community-based environmental stewards. Green Team members will engage in weekly leadership and STEM training to facilitate their education as environmentalists. On occasion readings, films, group exercises and field trips will be offered to further this process.

Training will focus on:

- Understand the environmental implications, both positive and negative, of each work project.
- Understand the basic elements in an ecosystem
- Ways people influence and are influenced by nature.
- Assess the present conditions of the environment
- Analyze the demand being placed on renewable and non-renewable resources by humans
- Recognize individual differences in opinions, background, values, and goals associated with the relationship between humans and our environment.
- Identify policies and attitudes of many different groups with respect to nature: environmentalists, homeowners, local residents, businesses, etc.
- Realize the effect that a personal environmental ethic has on the world. (adapted from the YCC)

LEAVE NO TRACE

Groundwork Elizabeth adheres to the principles of **Leave No Trace** developed by the National Park Service, National Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to help protect our public lands from overuse by humans. Green Team members will be expected to thoroughly familiarize themselves with these goals. Briefly they are: Plan and Prepare, Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces, Dispose of Waste Properly, Leave What You Find, Minimize Campfire Impacts, Respect Wildlife, and Be Considerate of Other Visitors.

CLOTHING & GEAR

- **Shirts:** You **MUST ALWAYS** wear your Green Team t-shirt while on duty. No excuses. Each member receives 2 t-shirts. You MUST wear a Green Team t-shirt for all work, service, and volunteer activities unless otherwise instructed. It is your responsibility to ensure your laundry is clean and ready for each day.

- **Pants:** Long pants are mandatory for environmental work to protect your legs. We require that you wear a pair of blue jeans, khakis, work pants (such as Carhart or Dickies) or gray nylon hiking pants (you may wear convertible pants that can be turned into shorts for non-work time).
- **Shoes:** Sturdy, closed-toe shoes are **required**. No sandals or flip-flops allowed. Work boots or hiking boots are best, tennis shoes are okay (they will get dirty). Socks are required.
- **Hats:** Hats are highly recommended while working in the field. No “doo” rags. While working with tools you will often be required to wear hardhats.
- **Rain Protection:** Access to a rain jacket and rain pants or a large durable poncho will make your life a lot easier on rainy days. Disposable rain gear is intended for one time use only so it is not appropriate for a summer’s worth of work. Check at your local large retailers for a good selection of affordable rain gear.
- **Water Bottle:** You are responsible for filling and bringing the bottle with you while you are on duty. You will have opportunities to refill as needed.
- **Work Gloves –** you will be issued a pair of work gloves.
- **Hardhat –** When using certain tools you will be required to wear a hardhat. These will be issued to you at the start of the season, and it is your responsibility to keep them clean.
- **Eye Protection –** Often simply called “eyepro,” these will be distributed at the beginning of the work session using tools. You are required to use these whenever you are using impact tools.
- **Sunscreen –** most of our work is performed outdoors. We highly recommend that sunscreen be used during all work assignments. GWE will provide sunscreen.
- **Additional PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) –** occasionally the Green Team may operate or be around equipment that requires ear protection, dusk masks, respirators, or other such safety equipment. These will be made available as needed, and are to be worn at work as required.
- **Daypack –** You may use it to store water bottles, lunch, rain gear and gloves.

Things NOT to wear include gang-oriented clothes, clothes with **inappropriate language, revealing clothes, expensive clothes or ones you do not want to get dirty.** Remember that dressing appropriately will keep you safe and help earn you the respect you deserve.

If you are having trouble getting the required clothing, please speak with a team leader to make special arrangements. Bottom Line: If you are dressed

inappropriately for the job (including shoes) you will be sent home to change and not paid for time lost! On trip days our departure time will not be changed to allow you to change, so make sure you are dressed as required.

If you wear your Groundwork Elizabeth t-shirts when you are off duty, please remember that you are representing the organization and your behavior will reflect on GWE in general.

SAFETY
Safety for team members is a priority. Staff will make sure a safe working environment is provided and team members will be trained in the proper use of tools, safe working practices, and anything that is needed to ensure safety. At no time will team members work alone. Team members are expected to look out for their other team members as well as themselves. Following the guidelines and instructions given will ensure the safety of team members. Team members are encouraged to speak up and raise questions if they think something looks unsafe and if they are unfamiliar using any tool. In addition, teams will be provided with first aid kits and proper emergency procedures to follow if needed. See the appendix for additional information on safety. A brief safety meeting - “safety circle” - will be held each morning and “safety stand-downs” will be held before using new equipment or in the case of accident or injury.

Stretching exercises will be held prior to the start of work to help reduce the risk of injury or strained muscles. If you are taking any medication, especially medication that causes physical or cognitive impairment and sun sensitivity, please alert your crew leader.

ELECTRONICS
Unless otherwise directed by your Team Leader, use of cell phones, games, CD players, iPods and other electronic devices is prohibited. Headphones are also prohibited due to safety issues. **Keep your phones off at all times unless you have discussed it with your Team Leader ahead of time.**

SMOKING
Groundwork Elizabeth Youth Programs support healthy living. There will be no smoking while on duty, at any job site or on any field trips.

TRANSPORTATION
Each team member must provide his or her own transportation to and from the meeting location. From that point, a staff member will provide transportation to job sites and field trips.

The Groundwork van will be used for transportation of team members for the purposes of field trips only.

- Only Team Leaders will drive the van.
- Each person in the vehicle must have and use a seat belt

- Each person is responsible for the cleanliness of the van.

MEALS AND BREAKS

- Green Team members are held to strict standards of professional behavior. Members will report to work on time and remain at work sites until the end of the workday.
- The workers and the staff are required to stay on site during breaks and lunch unless prior arrangements have been made with your team leaders.
- Unless otherwise specified, you must bring your own lunch or bring money to buy food from near the work site. Please check your schedule to see if we are in an area with food vendors.
- Breaks will be given as needed. **Team Leaders will use precaution on extreme weather days and make decisions accordingly.**

TRIPS

Before each trip you will be given information on what to bring, appropriate dress, and additional information that will make the trip more enjoyable. Team members will adhere strictly to packing lists as space in the vans is limited.

GENERAL CONDUCT

Group members are expected to treat each other, staff and the public with respect. Profanity, obscene gestures, sexual harassment, threats, physical violence such as pushing or hitting will not be tolerated. Team members engaging in these behaviors will be dismissed from the Green Team jobsite and will not be allowed to return. Bullying, in any form, is also not tolerated. Bullying is defined as: *Unwanted, aggressive behavior ... that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.* – US Dept of Health and Human Services Additional dismissible offenses include (but not limited to) breaking standard laws or park regulations, possession of firearms, entering the tent of the opposite sex (without permission), leaving a worksite without notifying a supervisor, and inappropriate sexual or physical contact.

We hope our Green Team members will strive to create an inclusive and fun *esprit de corps*.

TERMINATION POLICY

- Verbal warning from Team Leader

- Meeting with Lucy Crespo (Conservation Director) and Jules Tezen (Youth Leader) with a written warning put on file
- Second meeting with Lucy Crespo (Conservation Director) and Jules Tezen (Youth Leader) and Jonathan Phillips (Executive Director) with further course of action to be determined at meeting
- If conditions are not met, termination will follow.

At any time, if transgression warrants, these steps can be administered at once and instant termination can occur. Examples that would expedite the process but are not limited to violation of any federal, state, or local laws, violence towards teammates, sexual harassment, threatening or anti-social behavior of any type. Parents will be notified of any action taken towards the team member.

GREEN TEAM JOB DESCRIPTION

The **Groundwork Green Team** is a part-time position for ages 14-24 helping to lead local environmental initiatives. Our work consists of working outdoors on various conservation projects created and continuing to develop, modify, and teach their own curriculum to engage children, peers, senior citizens, and other community members, allowing members to cultivate critical leadership and social skills through environmental conservation and restoration. The program is intended to promote awareness and understanding of the local food system, the protection and restoration of critical ecological systems and natural resources in the City of Elizabeth by engaging teens in advocacy and service-learning efforts aimed at Elizabeth's waterways, parks and open spaces. It also includes working federal agencies like the US Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service and National Forest Service working on trails, vegetation control, etc. The program has dual goals - to prepare Elizabeth's youth for a lifetime of environmental leadership, and to develop community capacity to improve the physical environment.

For more information, please refer to www.groundworkelizabeth.org OR contact elizabethgreenteam@gmail.com

*** SUBMIT ONLY the last THREE pages upon completion ***

Name (First Last):_____

Age _____ **Gender** _____ **Phone Number:** _____

E-mail Address: _____

Preferred contact method (Please circle): Phone Email

How did you hear about us? _____

Home Address: _____

School Name: _____

Level of Education: _____

List Hobbies: _____

_____

Background (circle all that apply):

African American, Latino, Native American, White, Other: _____

Do you have any criminal history? (circle one) Yes or No

If yes, please explain: _____

_____

Extracurricular activities: (clubs, sports, music, hiking, etc.)

_____

Certifications/ Training: _____

_____

Future plans: Describe your career plans, educational plans, etc.

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Do you have any pre-existing conditions that may interfere with the way you may perform as a Green Team member? Please provide information. (i.e., allergies, asthma, etc.)

_____

Is there anything that limits you from working outside?

_____

Past work experience: Provide a brief description. (i.e., trail building/maintenance, river-clean ups, etc.)

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Please explain why you want to join the Green Team.

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Signature : _____Date: _____

Please return application to elizabethgreenteam@gmail.com (preferred), OR to Groundwork Elizabeth, 205 First Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07206