



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

City of Santa Rosa, California  
Recreation & Parks Department  
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[www.srcity.org/parksvolunteer](http://www.srcity.org/parksvolunteer)

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## I. INTRODUCTION: Welcome to Recreation & Parks!

### Director's Message

Dear Volunteer,

On behalf of the City of Santa Rosa, I want to thank you for your interest in volunteering with the Recreation & Parks Department.

Taking care of 66 parks, hosting 20 community events each year and providing recreation programs to thousands of residents is a big effort. In addition to the hard work and commitment of our dedicated staff, we rely on the efforts of community groups and volunteers to help make our parks and programs great – while bringing a spirit of community and service to our City.

We hope the variety of volunteer opportunities with Recreation & Parks offers something for everyone – whether it is bringing your family to a Park-A-Month clean-up, teaching a class at a senior center, coaching youth sports or bonding with co-workers at a tree planting.

Thank you in advance for helping to enhance the quality of life in Santa Rosa.

Nanette Smejkal, Director of Recreation & Parks

### Purpose of this Handbook

The purpose of this Handbook is to provide guidance and basic information for individuals who volunteer with Recreation & Parks.

### Department Vision

Creating community through people, parks and programs.

### Department Mission

Santa Rosa Recreation & Parks provides recreational experiences, fosters human development, increases cultural unity, protects environmental resources, facilitates community problem solving, strengthens safety and security, promotes health and wellness, strengthens community image and sense of place and supports economic development.

### Department Overview

The Recreation and Parks Department oversees:

- 525 acres of City parks
- 250 acres of public landscaped areas, open space, street medians, and frontages

- 72,000 street and park trees
- Howarth Park Amusement Rides and Lake Ralphine
- Luther Burbank Home & Gardens
- Church of One Tree
- DeTurk Round Barn
- Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery
- Finley Community Center and Person Senior Wing
- Bennett Valley Senior Center
- Steele Lane Community Center
- Ridgway and Finley Aquatic Centers
- Bennett Valley Golf Course
- Recreation programs for all ages and abilities, hundreds of classes each season of the year
- Violence prevention and intervention services to at-risk youth through after-school, summer and sports programs

## II. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

### Overview

The Recreation & Parks Volunteer Program seeks to harness the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm of community members to augment and improve City parks, programs and events. The Volunteer Program provides a structured way to recruit, train, track and recognize individuals and groups who volunteer with Recreation & Parks. Park-A-Month, Adopt-A-Green Space, Youth Sports, Junior Giants, Special Events and Senior Programs are just some of the ways volunteers can get involved.

### Website

[www.srcity.org/parksvolunteer](http://www.srcity.org/parksvolunteer)

### Role of the Volunteer Coordinator

The function of the Recreation & Parks Volunteer Coordinator is to facilitate the effective use of volunteers in all of the Department's divisions. The Volunteer Coordinator recruits volunteers, ensures that volunteers meet minimum qualifications, matches volunteers and groups with projects, maintains the volunteer database, tracks volunteer hours and coordinates recognition events for volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator also acts as a liaison between staff and volunteers, as well as being a liaison with community and neighborhood groups. Volunteers should always feel welcome contacting the Volunteer Coordinator with any questions, concerns or issues.

## **We Value Volunteers**

Volunteers for Santa Rosa Recreation & Parks commit personal time and effort, without compensation, to help the Department provide the community with a positive quality of life. Recreation & Parks encourages the involvement of volunteers and values their contributions to City parks, programs and events.

### **III. PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

#### **Types of Volunteer Opportunities**

Volunteer opportunities with Recreation & Parks fall into two categories: one-time volunteer events or ongoing volunteer positions. One-time volunteer events include Park-A-Month cleanups, special events, group projects and days of service. Ongoing volunteer positions are those that involve a longer and recurring commitment of time, such as youth sport coaches, Adopt-A-Green Space volunteers and community center front desk greeters.

#### **Application Process and Liability Waiver**

Individuals wishing to volunteer in an ongoing volunteer position must complete a Volunteer Application. Groups desiring to do a project in a park must complete a Group Volunteer Application. These applications contain the Liability Waiver to which volunteers are agreeing. Applications are submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator, who will review and forward to Department staff who will supervise the individual or group. Interviews or site meetings may be required, depending on the volunteer position or project. For one-time volunteer opportunities, such as a special event or drop-in workday, volunteers must check in on the Sign-In Sheet upon arrival, which contains the Liability Waiver to which they are agreeing.

#### **Age Requirements and Parent/Legal Guardian Permission**

There are volunteer opportunities with Recreation & Parks for all age groups. Each opportunity or event will state any minimum age requirements for volunteering in that capacity. For opportunities that are open to volunteers under age 18, parent/legal guardian permission will be required, either through a Parent Permission Form or through the parent/legal guardian signing in on the Sign-In Sheet. Volunteers under age 13 require a parent or guardian to accompany them.

#### **Background Checks**

To comply with laws and for the safety of all program participants, volunteers with Recreation & Parks who work directly with minors or vulnerable adults, as well as volunteers with positions involving sensitive and/or confidential information, will be required to undergo a criminal background check. Volunteers will be notified if their position requires a background check. Individuals that are interested in volunteering for sensitive positions that refuse to comply with this request or fail to meet the standard of the background checks will not be permitted to volunteer.

**Discrimination**

Recreation & Parks prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

**Department Employees as Volunteers**

Recreation & Parks Department employees may volunteer their services, but are prohibited from participating in duties that they are normally paid to perform within the scope of their employment. The Department may not accept volunteer services that result in layoff or the reduction of hours or services of any existing City employee.

**Orientation/Training**

For one-time volunteer opportunities, volunteer shifts begin with demonstrations or training for the duties required. For ongoing volunteer positions, orientation and training is provided by the staff in the program area.

**Volunteer Supervision**

Recreation & Parks is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for volunteers. All volunteers will be supervised by a designated staff person within the program area that they are placed. This might be a Recreation Coordinator, Groundskeeper or other lead staff person that coordinates assigned tasks, and tools and supplies used by the volunteer to accomplish their role. The staff person is responsible for the volunteer sign-in process, making sure Parent Permission Forms are collected from volunteers who are minors and making sure the volunteers have adequate training and support to perform their function. Staff are also there to respond to problems or concerns that may arise. Other than the Adopt-A-Green Space Program or other pre-approved circumstances, volunteers should not perform volunteer work without staff supervision.

**Volunteer Expectations**

- Volunteers must not be impaired due to alcohol or drugs.
- All City parks and facilities are smoke-free.
- Respectful treatment of patrons and staff.
- Dress codes may apply to certain volunteer positions; check with the program area supervisor for guidance. When performing outdoor labor, volunteers must wear closed-toe shoes and appropriate protective clothing.
- Volunteers are encouraged to take breaks and stay hydrated when working outdoors.
- Volunteers must notify staff immediately if encountering an unsafe situation.

**Volunteer Use of Tools**

Recreation & Parks has implemented guidelines for the tools that may be used by Basic through Advanced Volunteers. Please refer to the List of Approved Tools and Equipment for Volunteer Use for guidance on what hand tools are allowed during basic volunteer service in our parks and facilities (see Appendix). Volunteers wishing to operate power tools must be 18 and older

and must undergo safety training with Department staff to receive certification on each approved power tool, thereby becoming Advanced Volunteers. The City does not provide power tools for volunteer use. Advanced Volunteers must supply their own power tools; however, they do so at their own will and risk. The City is not responsible for tools breaking or wear and tear.

### **Injury/Incident Reporting**

Report any injury, accident or incident that occurs while volunteering to the on-site staff supervisor immediately. If the injury or accident is an emergency, call 911. If an on-site supervisor is not present, report it to the Volunteer Coordinator within 24 hours so that an Incident Report can be completed. If a volunteer is injured during the course and scope of their volunteer services to the City, they will be covered under the City Workers' Compensation self-insurance.

### **Media Requests**

If you are approached by a member of the media regarding a City of Santa Rosa matter, refer them to the Recreation & Parks Marketing & Outreach Coordinator at (707) 543-3276.

Volunteers are not authorized to speak on behalf of the City of Santa Rosa regarding City matters.

### **Right of Publicity**

The Recreation & Parks Department reserves the right to photograph facilities, activities and program participants for potential promotional use. All photos will remain the property of Recreation & Parks and may be used for publicity or promotion purposes only. If you or anyone in your family should not be photographed, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

### **Feedback, Concerns and Comments**

If you have comments or suggestions to improve your volunteer placement or experience, or have a concern about something, bring these issues to the Volunteer Coordinator or onsite staff supervisor at the earliest possible time. Volunteer feedback is welcome at any time or you may use the Volunteer Survey (anonymous responses) at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VCVGL8P>.

### **Resignation**

To voluntarily end your volunteer commitment with Recreation & Parks, please inform the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.

### **Termination/Separation**

The need to dismiss a volunteer is rare, but sometimes is required for the safety and protection of volunteers, staff and citizens. These behaviors will result in termination:

- Theft, misuse, destruction or defacement of property
- Inappropriate behavior toward visitors, program participants, other volunteers or staff
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Possession of weapons or illegal drugs at a volunteer work site

- Excessive tardiness or repeated unexcused absences
- Excessive failure to perform assigned or agreed upon duties, or follow directions given by staff supervisor

Recreation & Parks reserves the right to terminate any volunteer who does not adhere to City of Santa Rosa policies and procedures or who fails to satisfactorily perform his or her volunteer assignments. Recreation and Parks may elect to separate volunteers if the Department determines there is no longer a benefit or need for the service.

### **Volunteer Recognition**

Recreation & Parks recognizes our volunteers annually during National Volunteer Week in April with a volunteer appreciation event. Volunteers are periodically given the spotlight in Recreation & Parks webpages, social media and newsletters to highlight accomplishments and underscore the immense value volunteers bring to our community.

### **Contacts**

- Elaine Gutsch, Volunteer Coordinator (707) 543-3279, Mobile (707) 495-1906
- Park Maintenance Weekdays (707) 543-3770, Nights/Weekend/Holidays (707) 543-3805
- Non-Emergency Police (707) 528-5222

### **Volunteer Position Descriptions**

#### **SPORTS**

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##### **Title: Youth Sports Volunteer Coach**

**Duties:** Volunteer coaches run practices, substitute players during games, and act as a liaison between the Youth Sports program and team parents in Youth Soccer, Youth Basketball and T-Ball leagues.

**Qualifications:** Willing to volunteer coach participants ages 4-8.

**Age Requirement:** Age 18 or over

**Time commitment:** One 45-minute practice and one hour-long game weekly for six weeks.

**Background check required:** Yes

**Reports to:** Recreation Coordinator

##### **Title: Junior Giants Volunteer Coach/ Assistant Coach**

**Duties:** Junior Giants Volunteer Coaches/Assistant Coaches are positive role models, teach life lessons and coach: provide baseball skill instruction to youth ages 5 - 18, implement character development curriculum, perform coaching during games.

**Qualifications:** Leadership qualities and positive attitude. Basic knowledge of baseball desirable but not required.

**Age Requirement:** Age 18 or over

**Time commitment:** June through August. Typical hours are Monday & Wednesday 4:30pm-6:45pm, Saturday 8:30am-1:30pm, nine weeks during the summer.

**Background check required:** Yes

**Reports to:** Recreation Coordinator



**Title: Junior Giants Team Parent**

**Duties:** Junior Giants Team Parent coordinates programs that extend beyond baseball, such as education, health and bullying prevention. Team parent supports player's character development and must be committed to the team for the duration of the season.

**Qualifications:** Leadership qualities and positive attitude.

**Age Requirement:** Age 18 or over

**Time commitment:** June through August. Typical hours are Monday & Wednesday 4:30pm-6:45pm, Saturday 8:30am-1:30pm, nine weeks during the summer.

**Background check required:** Yes

**Reports to:** Recreation Coordinator

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**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Title: Special Event Volunteer**

**Duties:** Provide event assistant at Recreation & Parks community events such as St. Patrick's Day 5K, Handmade Holiday Crafts Fair, Floating Pumpkin Patch and others. Duties include set-up, decorating, food prep, event monitoring, clean-up and other event-related assistance.

**Qualifications:** Physical abilities may include lifting, standing, walking.

**Age Requirement:** Typically age 13 or over; each event listing will specify.

**Time commitment:** Various shift lengths from 2 to 5 hours.

**Background check required:** No

**Reports to:** Event lead staff

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**PARKS**

**Title: Park Beautification Volunteer**

**Duties:** Park Beautification Volunteers pick up litter, spread mulch, clean play area equipment and picnic barbecues, weed, prune, plant and other general landscape maintenance.

**Qualifications:** Ability to perform general manual labor.

**Age Requirement:** Varies

**Time commitment:** Varies

**Background check required:** No

**Reports to:** Volunteer Coordinator or Parks Maintenance Staff

**Title: Community Garden Volunteer Manager**

**Duties:** The Community Garden Volunteer Manager oversees the operation and maintenance of a specified community garden in a City park. He or she will be chosen by a committee of plot users from the community garden and approved by the Director of Recreation and Park, or designee. Responsible for: posting their contact information, conducting garden workdays and events at the garden; ensuring plot users have a signed agreement with Recreation & Parks for their plot; submitting proposed changes

to the garden no less than 60 days in advance for approval by the Director of Recreation and Parks, or designee; and maintaining good communication with parks staff.

**Qualifications:** Experience in gardening and working collaboratively in a community setting

**Age Requirement:** Age 18 or over

**Time commitment:** Varies

**Background check required:** No

**Reports to:** Parks Superintendent

## **PROGRAMS**

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**Title: Volunteer Activity Instructor, Senior Programs**

**Duties:** Conduct classes or lead activities for seniors at Bennett Valley Senior Center or Person Senior Wing in an area that the volunteer has expertise. For example, needlecraft, Spanish language, computer skills, card games or a musical instrument.

**Qualifications:** Skill or expertise in instructional topic, experience working with seniors.

**Age Requirement:** Age 18 or over

**Time commitment:** Varies

**Background check required:** Yes

**Reports to:** Recreation Coordinator

**Title: Volunteer Event Assistant, Differently Abled Adults Program**

**Duties:** Assist with event preparation, arts and crafts, and general participant assistance at monthly DAA Adventure Days at Steele Lane Community Center.

**Qualifications:** Experience working with people with disabilities desirable but not required

**Age Requirement:** Age 18 or over

**Time commitment:** 2-6 hours per month; 6 month minimum commitment

**Background check required:** Yes

**Reports to:** Recreation Specialist

## **COMMUNITY CENTERS**

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**Title: Volunteer Front Desk Greeter**

**Duties:** Greet the public, direct visitors, hand out Rec & Parks Activity Guides and brochures, answer basic questions.

**Qualifications:** Customer service skills, English language proficiency

**Age Requirement:** Age 18 or over

**Time commitment:** Minimum of 4 hours per week

**Background check required:** No

**Reports to:** Administrative Secretary or Recreation Specialist

## YOUTH PROGRAMS

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**Title:** Volunteer Afterschool Tutor, Neighborhood Services

**Duties:** Volunteer Afterschool Tutors help youth ages 6-18 with homework at after-school program sites: Apple Valley, Valley Oak and Amarosa Village. Experience working with children desired.

**Qualifications:** Strong command of one or more school subjects (reading, math)

**Age Requirement:** Age 18 or over

**Time commitment:** Minimum of 4 hours per week for one semester

**Background check required:** Yes

**Reports to:** Recreation Specialist or Recreation Coordinator

## HISTORIC SITES

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**Title:** Historic Site Volunteer

**Duties:** Historic Site Volunteers interpret the site to the public as a docent, maintain the grounds, research history, maintain archives, hold tours and fundraising events and create newsletters.

**Qualifications:** Interest in the preservation of historical resources

**Age Requirement:** Age 18 or over

**Time commitment:** Varies

**Background check required:** No

**Reports to:** Volunteer Coordinator

## IV. APPENDIX

### Approved Tools for Volunteer Use



Recreation and Parks Department  
 55 Stony Point Rd  
 Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
 (707)543-3279

## Approved Tools and Equipment for Volunteer Use

General Requirements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No volunteer under the age of 18 can use power tools</li> <li>All volunteers must wear closed-toe shoes, gloves, eye protection, and earplugs (for power tools).</li> <li>Those volunteers wishing to operate tools listed in the Advanced Volunteer section must undergo training.</li> <li>Volunteers with professional gardening experience may provide a copy of their license certificate to forgo the training component.</li> <li>The City does not provide power tools for volunteer use; volunteers must use their own power tools. However, they do so at their own will and risk. The City is not responsible for tools breaking down.</li> <li><b>Prohibited Equipment:</b> tractors, backhoes, skid steer loaders, riding mowers, chainsaws, fork lifts, wood chippers, boom &amp; scissor lifts, and backpack, hand-held or truck-mounted pesticide application sprayer or spreader.</li> </ul>	
Basic Volunteer	
TOOL	TRAINING LEVEL
<b>AGE 10 AND OVER</b>	
Shovels	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Hoes	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Brooms & rakes	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Litter stick and bucket	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Wheelbarrows	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Basic hand tools (wrenches, hammers, screwdrivers)	Onsite demonstration of safe use
<b>AGE 14 AND OVER</b>	
Palm sanders	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Loppers	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Hand shears	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Pitchfork	Onsite demonstration of safe use
McLeod – also known as Fire rake	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Digging (breaker) bar	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Post hole digger (manual)	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Stake pounder	Onsite demonstration of safe use
<b>18 AND OVER</b>	
Pick	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Weed whip	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Turf roller	Onsite demonstration of safe use
Advanced Volunteer	
TOOL – 18 AND OVER	TRAINING LEVEL
Power drill	Completion of required training
Line trimmer (weed whacker)	Completion of required training
Leaf blower - hand-held	Completion of required training
Leaf blower - backpack	Completion of required training
Cold water pressure washer	Completion of required training
Pond vacuum	Completion of required training
Power hedge trimmer	Completion of required training
Walk behind mower	Completion of required training
Power sander	Completion of required training
Edger	Completion of required training
Power post hole digger	Completion of required training

## List of Facilities and Contact Info

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### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

Elaine Gutsch, Volunteer Coordinator, [egutsch@srcity.org](mailto:egutsch@srcity.org)  
Municipal Services Center North  
55 Stony Point Rd, Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
(707) 543-3279, Mobile (707) 495-1906

### **PARK MAINTENANCE**

Municipal Services Center North  
55 Stony Point Rd, Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
Weekdays (707) 543-3770; Nights/Weekends/Holidays (707) 543-3805

### **COMMUNITY CENTERS**

Finley Community Center  
2060 West College Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
(707) 543-3737

Steele Lane Community Center  
415 Steele Ln, Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
(707) 543-3282

Bennett Valley Senior Center  
704 Bennett Valley Rd, Santa Rosa, CA 95404  
(707) 545-8608

Person Senior Wing  
2060 West College Ave, Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
(707) 543-3745

### **AQUATIC CENTERS**

Finley Aquatic Center  
2060 West College Ave. Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
(707) 543-3760

Ridgway Swim Center  
455 Ridgway Ave. Santa Rosa, CA 95401  
(707) 543-3421

### **TDD for Hearing/Speech Impaired**

(707) 543-3289  
Hours: M-F 8am-5pm