

S.L.E.W.T.H.S. Orientation Summary

Thank you for your interest in applying as a volunteer to Science Learning and Exploration With The Help of Sea lions (S.L.E.W.T.H.S.). We are the non-profit arm of Animal Training and Research International, mostly made up of undergraduate volunteers from local universities and community colleges. We care for and train California sea lions, working with them for various research projects and in educational programs. We are located in Moss Landing, in the center of the Monterey Bay, approximately 30 minutes south of Santa Cruz and 20 minutes North of Monterey.

Getting the opportunity to obtain a job at S.L.E.W.T.H.S. is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Positions like these working with marine mammals, especially with the opportunity to train the animals, are few and far between and therefore very competitive, as demand far exceeds the number of positions we have available. There is often an image of glamour associated with training marine mammals and it is important that when applying to volunteer you know exactly what the true reality is. The animals need to be cared for 365 days a year, **rain** or **shine**. The job is **wet, dirty** and **often cold**. It is also physically demanding, and you must be in reasonably good health and able to lift 50 lbs. You have to **love animals** to work here. Also animal training and/or marine science has to be something you are deeply interested in, in order for the difficulties of the job to be worth it. You will go home smelling like fish, bleach and dirt every day that you work and you will be working for free. You will also go home having learned something new and exciting every day that you work.

We have very strict care and training standards and it shows in how this project is run. It is also the reason why we are very careful in selecting volunteers. Our system is hierarchal and separated into different levels. Volunteers are hired on a three-month trial basis. This gives everyone a chance to decide whether or not this job is right for him or her and also gives the management a chance to see what is best for the volunteers also. There is a **6 month minimum** commitment working at least one day a week, but we're really looking for people who want longer commitments. Each volunteer is allowed two weeks of vacation to use throughout the year. All volunteers start at the Managed Care Specialist level where they learn basic husbandry tasks associated with taking care of the

sea lions. Examples of these are processing the animal's food (fish) in the morning, knowing how to work our complex water systems, clean pools, and checking water quality.

If you are interested in becoming part of our academy system, declare that and we will work that out. Being in the academy a staff person must take a lecture series on animal training and be here at least six months before they can do any training with the animals. However it *usually* takes most people close to a year to move into an Assistant Trainer position, the beginning trainer level. This level requires another one and a half year commitment working at least 2 full days a week to protect the animals from people fluxing in and out of their lives too quickly. At this level volunteers start their hands on training experience with the animals.

Everybody has their own learning pace and experiences are very personalized so that everyone gets everything they need out of their time here (because of that the time moving into various positions also varies). When volunteers finally leave our program, they often leave for jobs in the industry all over the country.

In addition, remote work is sometimes a part of the job description when we are doing our education outreach programs. These may entail late hours, extra shifts during periods of strong need, and remote work staying overnight in locations where we may be working (always scheduled in advance, not a surprise). We highly value flexibility and schedule availability in our volunteers.

Beyond the Assistant Trainer level there are further levels of development (see website for details). There are also opportunities to move into a limited number of paid positions for those volunteers who are interested and who the management feels are eligible.

If you are still interested in applying please send a resume and an application back to us here at S.L.E.W.T.H.S. Please be sure that you have read our entire web site before applying. There you can find information on not only our animals and current staff, but also current and past research projects and educational programs. Please see:

animaltraining.us

You can return your application and resume, or direct any questions, to atrintlcenter@gmail.com.