

Frequently Asked Questions about Volunteering at Green Gulch Farm–Green Dragon Temple

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer at Green Gulch Farm. Your time is valuable and your generosity and efforts are appreciated. Our volunteers are an important part of our growing and diverse community. To help you become acquainted with our work practice, the following information may answer your questions and support each person's success as a new volunteer. This information is general and not meant to include specific information on each department. For more information on volunteer job descriptions check the website Volunteer Sangha page at <http://www.sfzc.org/ggf/display.asp?catid=3,123&pageid=203> or call the Green Gulch Office at 415.354.0411. Thank you.

Do I have to be a Buddhist to volunteer?

No. Although some volunteers do follow a Buddhist practice, people from a variety of faith traditions and life situations volunteer their time at Green Gulch.

Why do people volunteer at Green Gulch?

People volunteer for a variety of reasons. Most people volunteer because they want to give back to their communities. Many people experience life changes that open their daily calendars in such a way that volunteering becomes an opportunity that they might not otherwise experience. Some of our volunteers want to learn more about organic farming and gardening, to spend time in the kitchen learning about food preparation, to share their skills in our Family/Children's Programs, to support the Sunday Program by making muffins, and many want to deepen their Buddhist work practice.

Can children volunteer at Green Gulch?

Volunteers must be 18 years and older. If small children accompany volunteers, arrangements need to be made for another adult to supervise the children during the volunteer shift. There is no childcare at Green Gulch Farm. Occasionally, high school students have volunteered for school projects and so on; these arrangements can be made in advance with the volunteer coordinator.

What kind of time commitment does a volunteer need to make?

Most of our crews do not ask for a minimum commitment, but it often takes 2-3 visits to become familiar with the work on a crew and feel part of the work team. If the ability to continue as a volunteer changes, let the head of the department know as soon as possible.

What if I am sick?

Missing a shift due to illness and vacation is, of course, unavoidable. Volunteers are asked to notify the head of the department that they are scheduled to volunteer on as early in advance as possible.

What if something happens and I am running late?

Being on time is part of being a successful volunteer. Call if you will be very late or there is a sudden change in your schedule. And let us know about changes in your address or phone so if our schedule changes, we can call you.

Is there public transportation out to Green Gulch?

There is limited public transportation. Most volunteers drive their own cars or come with a carpool. Green Gulch Farm does not make carpool arrangements.

Where do I park at Green Gulch Farm?

You may park in the back parking lot during your shift. Leave valuables at home.

Do volunteers spend the night?

There are no overnight accommodations.

Can I bring my dog with me?

No pets are allowed in work areas and pets cannot be left in cars.

I've heard the phrase "work practice"; what does that mean?

Work practice means paying attention to what is happening right now, to be mindful of digging in the garden or of chopping carrots in the kitchen. One way we do this is to limit talking. Of course, questions are asked and instructions given, but this work time is a time to focus on what we are directly experiencing. Please enjoy visiting with community members and other volunteers during tea breaks or meals that occur during your shift. The first 10-15 minutes of our meals are in silence but visiting with residents is a wonderful way to learn more about the Green Gulch Farm community. You may feel shy at first, but please find one of your crewmembers to sit with.

What if I have never worked in the garden or in a big kitchen?

Don't be afraid to try new things. This can be a time of personal growth. You can develop new cooking skills, learn about basic garden maintenance or learn about organic farming. Be sure you understand what you are supposed to do. Ask questions. Accept guidance and direction. Be flexible. It will take a shift or two to become familiar with the routines of your department. If you are working outdoors, wear clothing and shoes appropriate for your work area and the weather. Dress in layers and wear a hat in cool weather. Gloves are provided in the garden.

What else should I know to become a successful volunteer?

- Treat each area within Green Gulch Farm and all equipment with care.
- Treat staff members and other volunteers with respect. Show good judgment through your actions and choices. You, along with the resident staff, represent Green Gulch Farm. Please respect the privacy of Green Gulch Farm visitors.
- Please don't bring radios, iPods, musical instruments, or pets. They can be a distraction to you and other workers.
- If you are new to Green Gulch Farm consider coming to one or more Sunday Morning Programs. This may help you become acquainted with the wider community. Please check the website (www.sfzc.org/ggf) for the Sunday schedule.
- Some volunteers may want to work in two different departments or change departments for a better personal fit. Check with the volunteer coordinator for more opportunities.

Thank you very much for your interest in Green Gulch Farm and becoming a part of this wide community. If you have further questions, comments, or concerns, please call the Green Gulch Office at 415.354.0411.