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## Job Description

JOB TITLE: Beautiful Science Docent  
DEPARTMENT: Education

DATE: October 2009  
CLASSIFICATION: Volunteer

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### WHAT IS A DOCENT?

The word docent comes from the Latin word "docere" meaning to teach. During the 1800s it was used to describe lecturers who were not on the salaried staff of an institution or a private/volunteer tutor. Today the term is used by many museums to describe the trained volunteers who provide educational services for the museum visitor. Other terms include tour guide, interpreter, and volunteer educator.

A docent in the Beautiful Science school program will serve as interpreters working with our students to help them discover a deeper understanding and appreciation of science.

The interpretive or educational role of the docent is the most important and challenging aspect of the job. An effective docent does not lecture to an audience. Docents must actively involve visitors in the interpretation, giving them the tools of visual literacy. A docent helps the visitor attain some sort of "ownership" of the objects and helps them to find relevance to their own lives.

As interpreter a docent is careful not to force value judgment or opinions on a visitor. The goal of a good tour or program is to enable the visitor to think for themselves about science. In addition, a docent is sensitive to visitors' differences – in learning styles, cultural backgrounds, age level, and special needs. Today's Huntington audience is as varied as the objects in the exhibition and requires open-mindedness, flexibility and respect.

### SUMMARY

Working under the guidance of the History of Science Educator, the Volunteer Programs Manager and the School Programs Coordinator, the History of Science Docent is an outgoing, people-focused individual primarily responsible for facilitating students' discovery of science as it relates to the History of Science school program.

### ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

1. Greets and orients students in a courteous, prompt, and professional manner.
2. Facilitates discussion among students while working with objects in the History of Science exhibition and the hands on component of the program.
3. Provides lessons that adhere to California State Academic Standards in the Sciences.
4. Is able to "read" an audience, and engage them using methods that best suit the students' learning styles.



**QUALIFICATIONS**

1. Interest in student-centered education is essential.
2. Professional attitude and appearance.
3. Ability to work both independently and within a team.
4. Strong communication and organizational skills.
5. Sensitivity to working with diverse audiences.
6. Demonstrates a proficiency and interest in student centered education.

**REQUIREMENTS**

1. Completes all required training.
2. Demonstrates a proficiency in facilitating discussion with students.
3. Attends program reviews and monthly Library Docent meetings.
4. Participates in on-going and annual review and evaluation.
5. Upon successful completion of training, tours a minimum of two times per month for veteran docents and four times per month for new docents, or as directed by the History of Science Educator and Volunteer Programs Manager, during the Beautiful Science school year- October through May. This is a two year commitment. (The first year of the program will be January through May )
7. Open-minded and respectful to the audience.
8. Open-minded and respectful to staff and fellow docents.
9. Ability to work in a team setting

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

Volunteer will work in The History of Science exhibition. Job requires standing and walking for up to two hours. The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed by people assigned to this position. They are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills required of volunteers in this position.

I have read and understand the essential functions, qualifications, requirements and working conditions of the above Volunteer Job Description.

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Name (please print)

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Date

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Signature