



Dear Shedd Colleagues,

With great pleasure we announce our intent as employees of John G. Shedd Aquarium to form our union, Shedd Workers United, with AFSCME Council 31.

Every day we come together across departments to make Shedd's mission come to life. We work hard to make Shedd a top-tier facility that cares for more than 32,000 animals, to provide a seamless and welcoming experience for all who come to look nature in the eye, and to inspire continued interest and care for these animals for years to come. We help maintain the aquarium's complex ecosystem through engaging with and educating the public, caring for the animals, managing outreach, and supporting the facility's operations.

We believe that by joining together in our union, we can truly have a voice to advocate for our own welfare and for the welfare of the animals that bring us together.

In recent years, we have voiced concerns to management regarding work-life imbalance, financial struggles, and lack of communication, but received little tangible response. Faced with an unsustainable working environment, we have seen far too many of our skilled, passionate coworkers take their knowledge and experience elsewhere. That turnover worsens staffing levels further, resulting in overwhelming workloads, added pressure and frequent miscommunication. We find ourselves mentally drained, physically stressed, and frequently under-compensated; as a consequence, we are unable to perform our duties at the high standard to which we expect and aspire, leading to more staff injuries, high burnout rates, low morale, and decreased animal welfare.

Together in our union, we can bring to light and work to resolve these inequities in order to better our own lives and—very importantly—those of the animals we work to protect and uplift.

We believe that through our union, we can use our voice to advocate for a sustainable, transparent, and equitable workplace for everyone at Shedd Aquarium, at every level. We can further strengthen our role in the DEAI initiatives. We can democratize the decision-making process that affects us, our families, and the animals we care for, leading to better collective decisions made inclusively with everyone and every animal's best interest at heart.

We urge leadership to honor our legal right to form a union and not waste limited monetary and personnel resources on distributing anti-union propaganda, hiring anti-union lawyers, or holding mandatory anti-union meetings.

In the spirit of One Shedd, we, the employees of Shedd Aquarium, stand united as the heart of this institution. Individually, our voices cannot be heard, but together we can advocate as one and lead the way to positive change. We invite every colleague to become empowered and join us. Sign your Shedd Workers United/AFSCME union card and claim your voice in improving our aquarium that we all care about deeply.

In Solidarity,  
Shedd Workers United (SWU)

Moa Arquiza  
Learning Specialist  
Learning and Community

Aloha Rasmussen  
Public Engagement Facilitator  
Learning and Community

Audrey Bensching  
Membership Coordinator  
Development

Alice Bereman  
Senior Aquarist  
Animal Care

Christina Joellenbeck  
Senior Safety Diver  
Animal Care

Abby Accettura  
Learning Specialist  
Learning and Community

Nasr Bin Safwan  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Angel Campos  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Cameron Ceglia  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Joseph Cole  
Aquarist  
Animal Care

Amanda Departo  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Dio Ferretiz  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Olivia Francis  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Rachel Bery-Wingate  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

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Learning and Community

Jade Greear  
Manager, Donor Engagement  
Development

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Customer Service Ambassador  
Guest Relations

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Learning and Community

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Guest Relations

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Technology and Information Security

Nathan Schuman  
EQ Technologist  
Facilities

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Animal Care

Kieran Minor  
Learning Specialist  
Learning and Community

Julie Nagler  
Senior Water Quality Technician  
Facilities

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Learning Facilitator  
Learning and Community

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Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Xochitl Montes de Oca  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Elliot Nardelli  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

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Trainer  
Animal Care

Chris Berg  
Learning Specialist  
Learning and Community

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Animal Care

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Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Ness Patti  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Kerri Olzewski  
Aquarist  
Animal Care

Rebecca Pelka  
Senior Aquarist  
Animal Care

Alejandro Perez  
Public Engagement Facilitator  
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Guest Relations

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Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Darrianna Rockholt  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

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Public Engagement Facilitator  
Learning and Community

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Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

Jasmyn Richardson  
Guest Relations Ambassador  
Guest Relations

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Guest Relations Ambassador  
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Adriana Rubio  
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Leadership & Annual Giving Manager  
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Prospect Research Coordinator  
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Animal Care Specialist  
Animal Care

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Keeley Stancel  
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Guest Relations

Bee Webster  
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Daniela Tovar-Miranda  
Public Engagement Facilitator  
Learning and Community

Max Steinberg  
Aquarist  
Animal Care

Kirby Garcia  
Coordinator, Audience Analytics  
and Operations  
Audience Insight



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with us and  
sign your union  
membership card today!

