WCS Education is committed to inspiring a diverse and inclusive movement of conservation advocates and STEM professionals. Our work with youth is a centerpiece of this mission. Each year, over 1,800 youth ages 14 to 24 years old participate in enrichment, volunteer, internship, and employment opportunities across our five parks. The WCS Career Lattice is our integrated careers pathway program through which youth from historically under-resourced communities gain expanded entry points to opportunities at our parks and equal access to a suite of professional services and supports.

THE WCS CAREER LATTICE SUPPORTS YOUNG PEOPLE USING A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH:

**CONNECT** and recruit in local, historically under-resourced communities through outreach and partnerships

**DEVELOP** through workshops, support services, programming, work experiences, and skill-building while at WCS

**ADVANCE** professional journeys through leadership training and tiered professional opportunities

**Acknowledgements**

FROM SPRING 2022-SPRING 2023, 2,500 YOUTH AGES 14 TO 24 PARTICIPATED IN EMPLOYMENT, INTERNSHIP AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS OUR FIVE PARKS.

85% OF YOUTH REPORTED THEY PLANNED TO PURSUE A STEM CAREER.

WCS YOUTH EARNED MORE THAN $5 MILLION IN STIPENDS AND WAGES

221 YOUTH MOVED INTO NEW ROLES AT WCS INCLUDING ADVANCING INTO ELEVATED POSITIONS WITHIN ONE DEPARTMENT AND EXPLORING NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS. WE CALL THIS “LATTICING IN ACTION.”

84% OF YOUTH FELT APPRECIATED AT WCS

“IT WAS THE BEST TIME I HAD IN AN INTERNSHIP THUS FAR AND I FELT ENCOURAGED TO FOLLOW MY CAREER PATH. MY SUPERVISOR WAS INCREDIBLY KNOWLEDGEABLE AND HELPFUL AND I HOPE TO WORK WITH HER AGAIN ONE DAY.” – INTERN

79% OF YOUTH WOULD LIKE TO WORK FOR WCS IN THE FUTURE.

“It was extremely impactful to have the chance to participate in something truly engaging and inspiring with so many other talented and amazing students. I am definitely going to return to this program next summer.” – VOLUNTEER

56% OF WCS YOUTH WERE PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

26% WERE VOLUNTEERS AND 18% WERE INTERNS

VOLUNTEER & INTERN ROLES ARE OFTEN ENTRY POINTS FOR YOUTH TO THEN MOVE INTO EMPLOYMENT.
WHO ARE WCS YOUTH?

57% of youth identified as Black or Hispanic

32% of youth and volunteers were first generation college students

32% of youth age 18+

identified as LGBTQ+

WCS CAREER LATTICE

NEW YORK CITY

Asian or Asian American 17% 14%
Black or African American 18% 24%
Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish 34% 29%
White 18% 32%
Two or More 11% 6%

Other <2% Other <1%

The Other category includes American Indian or Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Other identities. Note: NYC percentages add up to greater than 100% because some respondents selected multiple categories.

Spanish

YOUTH INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS SPOKE MORE THAN 30 LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH, WITH SPANISH BEING THE MOST COMMON
INTERNS

WCS hosts over 300 interns per year, providing young New Yorkers with the experience and career insight needed to chart their next steps. WCS internships are short learning opportunities for youth to explore one of the many fields represented at our zoos and aquarium, develop new skills, and connect with a career mentor.

Beginning in 2022, as part of our effort to ensure equity across the organization, 100% of our internships are compensated.

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT: LATTICING IN ACTION

Nadiya Delgado

- CPZ Animal Care Intern, 2017
- CPZ Polar Zone Intern 2021
- BZ Behavioral Husbandry Intern, 2022
- PPZ Animal Associate, 2022

“My first mentor at WCS expanded my view on the possibilities of working in the animal field. I feel her guidance set me on current path. My second mentor was not only an alumnus of the same program I am enrolled in, but she challenged me to think critically. It has helped me grow as an aspiring behaviorist; I will forever be grateful to both of them.”

Reiariel Garcia

- BZ Discovery Guide Volunteer, 2018-2019
- BZ Treetop Adventure Ranger 2021- 2022
- BZ Behavioral Husbandry Intern, 2022
- NYA Behavioral Husbandry Intern, 2022

“Being a local of the Little Italy/Arthur Ave area next to the Bronx Zoo, I have always been familiar with the zoo from school trips and free admission Wednesdays with family. From as early as a freshman in high school, I knew I wanted to pursue conservation biology as a career, but I was oblivious to the fact that instead of needing to travel the world, I could accomplish that goal so close to home.”
INTERN SUPERVISORS

Intern supervisors play a critical role in shaping young peoples’ early perceptions of the workplace and careers.

WCS’s Internship Initiative supports supervisors in these ways:
- Crafting internship descriptions
- Streamlining recruitment, selection, and onboarding processes
- Providing coaching in mentoring and working with youth
- Connecting to the larger WCS effort to increase internship equity

To date, our supervisor support has been heavily focused on developing new administrative processes and one-on-one coaching. In 2023, we’re turning our attention to broad training that will advance culture change and ensure that all supervisors feel prepared to support WCS youth.

REFLECTIONS FROM SUPERVISORS

“At the end of the summer term, one of our interns said, ‘Thank you for letting me figure out what I want to do with the rest of my life.’ That moment made all of the work that goes into our internships worth it.”

“The Internship Initiative doubled our applicant pool.”

“I’m thrilled that interns are paid and hopeful that we will continue to see more diversity in the applicant pool and hires.”
Dave Burgos

- BZ Wildlife Theater, 2021 - 2022
- BZ Visitor Engagement Assistant, 2022

"Doing Wildlife Theater gave me more awareness on how to be free on stage. Performing outside during the dog days of summer and the cold nights in the winter definitely sharpened my endurance and playfulness when performing. It introduced me to a deeper meaning on why I do what I do. Wildlife Theater has given me further confirmation that I want to tell stories for the rest of my life, and for that I’m eternally grateful."

PART-TIME STAFF

Over 900 youth work in our zoos and aquarium each year. We recognize that part-time jobs are often youths’ first entry into the workforce and these positions are designed to support young people at the beginning of their career journeys. The work experience and resources provided through the Career Lattice ensure that our part-time staff have the skills and social capital necessary to advance into full-time positions at WCS and other organizations.

Byron Quevedo

- BZ Discovery Guide Volunteer, 2018 - 2019
- BZ Project TRUE Intern, 2020
- BZ Conservation Camp Counselor, 2022

"I am currently pursuing a career in STEM as an animal science major. My goal is to be a veterinarian and my time at WCS has helped me tremendously by giving me some of the necessary skills needed to succeed. At WCS I have learned a lot about teamwork and research... My reasoning and mediating skills have also become better as I got more practice passively mediating conflicts between campers in a peaceful manner."

bronx zoo 68%
new york aquarium 15%
central park zoo 12%
prospect park zoo 3%
queens zoo 2%
other 4%
admissions 34%
restaurants 25%
merchandise 12%
education 8%
rides & parking 8%
maintenance 3%
animal 6%
“My position as a Discovery Guide exposed me to the inner-workings of the aquarium and the education department. I was placed among welcoming and knowledgeable staff, as well as very enthusiastic peers. Being a Discovery Guide allowed me to become more assertive in social settings, and get used to interacting with both guests and fellow coworkers...I am an undergraduate marine science major and my position at WCS has solidified my decision to go into the field.”


“"The volunteer community we have here at the Prospect Park Zoo is one of the main reasons I continue to participate in the program. Us Discovery Guides are a very tight-knit, passionate community, and we really care about what we do. It feels like everyone is friends with everyone, and older guides help newer ones hone their skills and better understand the work environment, which is really helpful and welcoming. Our supervisors play a critical role in guiding us through our careers here, and are always happy to answer any questions we have.”


The earliest entry point to the WCS Career Lattice is the Discovery Guide Program. Each year this program trains 500 youth to be science communicators. Youth volunteers learn about conservation and lead science activities with zoo and aquarium visitors, building their interpretation skills and learning to tailor their message to their audience.
Workforce Development

Webinars & Skill Building Workshops- WCS offers all youth a variety of unique webinars and skill building workshops through our annual professional development series. These sessions are available to all WCS youth and those in our extended network.

- **RESUMES, COVER LETTERS, AND INTERVIEWS**
- **FINDING A JOB**
- **NETWORKING & LINKEDIN BASICS**
- **APPLYING TO COLLEGE**
- **FINANCIAL LITERACY**

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83% of youth indicated that they developed essential workplace skills through their WCS experience.

Many described honing skills in workplace communication and working collaboratively.

93% of youth indicated that they learned about science and conservation topics.

They were especially likely to learn about WCS conservation work, how zoos and aquariums care for animals, and science communication.

71% reported gains in their skills in teaching people about science and conservation.

81% reported that they increased their ability to inspire people to take action to help the environment.

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**RESUME LAB**

Join us to get individualized resume feedback!

Wednesday, November 9th
4:00-5:00 PM EST

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**CAREER TALKS**

Join webinars on how to organize and make your business more advanced with business people who are already successful with their business.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 23
12 PM EST
REGISTER IN BIO
We also have strong relationships with a variety of professional networks including the Science Research Mentoring Consortium, the NYC STEM Education Network, and the Career Internship Network (CIN).

We partner with a variety of community based organizations, including CAMBA, Children’s Aid Society, Children’s Arts & Science Workshops, Inc., Commonpoint Queens, and Phipps Neighborhoods.

We lead a partnership of NYC science institutions, including American Museum of Natural History, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, New York Botanical Garden, New York Hall of Science, Queens Botanical Garden, Staten Island Zoo, and Wave Hill.
NEW VOICES IN SCIENCE RESEARCH:
PROJECT TRUE

Project TRUE (Teens Researching Urban Ecology) is a 7-week summer research mentoring program to engage new voices in ecology research and empower youth with an understanding of the threats to NYC’s precious green spaces and how to address these threats. We partner with Fordham University and recruit undergraduate mentors through their Collegiate Science and Technology Entry program.

What They Did

- Fordham Undergraduates completed one month of training in mentorship and science research.
- High school-undergraduate teams developed ecology projects with personalized research questions.
- Youth conducted three weeks of data collection at the Bronx Zoo and nearby parks.
- Teams analyzed their data and created scientific posters describing their findings.
- Youth presented their work to hundreds of guests at the Science Research Mentoring Consortium’s 4th Annual Summer Symposium at the American Museum of Natural History.

“During Project TRUE, we would frequently have ‘closing-circle’ meetings where we would share our feelings about our fieldwork and the challenges and accomplishments we faced while researching. It helped to talk to other WCS youth with the same interests as me, and it was helpful to know that I wasn’t the only one facing inevitable setbacks while doing fieldwork.”

Samiha Nasrin- Project TRUE Field Research Assistant
In spring 2023, as a part of a national CSTEP research symposium, one of our mentors, Latif Diaoune went on to win 4th place of out 27 students in the Natural Sciences category. WCS will also be recognized with the Outstanding Service Award at Fordham’s Annual CSTEP Senior Farewell and Awards Ceremony to be held at Fordham University on May 12th.

Project TRUE Mentor Latif conducting eel research on the Bronx River in summer 2022

INFORMING OUR COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

WCS Research on the Project TRUE model led to two publications this year:

Aloisio et al. (2022) describes our study of 60 undergraduate mentors, which found that Project TRUE had a sustained positive impact on science skills and interest, especially increasing appreciation for nature. Project TRUE highlights the process of scientific inquiry and mentoring through active learning, which built competencies that undergraduates were able to apply after they completed the program.

Heimlich et al. (2022) describes a new survey method used to measure the impact of Project TRUE on academic trajectories while accounting for the many other influences on youth decision-making.
NEW VOICES IN CONSERVATION ACTION

YOUTH OCEAN ADVOCATES

Youth Ocean Advocates is a conservation advocacy internship. Youth use their collective voice and the WCS network to engage thousands of New Yorkers in conservation activities and raise awareness about ocean conservation.

Projects included:

- Research on Coney Island Creek, a small waterway that separates Coney Island from mainland Brooklyn. Youth presented their findings to Coney Island residents at It’s My Estuary Day.
- Advocacy for protection of the Hudson Canyon, the largest submarine canyon on the Atlantic Coast, located right off the coast of New York City. WCS advocacy is critical in the effort to designate this unique ecosystem as a National Marine Sanctuary.
- Creation of conservation content for WCS social media channels to inspire their peers to take action on behalf of oceans and waterways.

The 2023 cohort will participate in a variety of community events including World Oceans Day, City of Water Day, International Coastal Cleanup, beach grass plantings and more.

"I believe that the youth perspective is important because young people have a particular eagerness to advocate for the environment. Youth voice in conservation considers what is at stake for wildlife and ecosystems, but also accounts for working to form a more equitable society."

Simcha Sepler - Youth Ocean Advocate
I attended virtual WCS Youth JIVE. At first, I was intimidated by the thought of applying for a job at the Bronx Zoo because it is such a prestigious institution, but the hosts of the event were so welcoming and helped attendees discover what roles they would fit best in at WCS. JIVE showed me how committed WCS is to supporting young professionals, especially those from New York City.

-Angelina Zervos
2022 Visitor Engagement Assistant
2022-23 Birthday Party Assistant

Every year, WCS kicks off the recruitment season with the Job, Internship, and Volunteer Expo (JIVE). This day-long event allows youth to learn about a variety of WCS opportunities, spruce up their resumes and interview skills, and connect with hiring managers. JIVE provides a welcoming and inclusive space for young people to build skills and connections that are essential for launching their careers.

THE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY PRESENTS
virtual
YOUTH JIVE

18 SUPPORT STAFF
22 HIRING MANAGERS
15 ZOOM ACCOUNTS
750+ ATTENDEES
17 CONTROL ROOM SCREENS
APPENDIX

WCS CAREER LATTICE YOUTH BY
NYC CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

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WCS CAREER LATTICE YOUTH BY
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The mission of the WCS Education Department is to inspire a diverse, inclusive movement of conservation advocates. We do this by sparking connections with animals and nature, enhancing scientific literacy through hands-on investigation, and engaging constituents in stewardship and action to conserve wildlife and wild places. WCS Education is headquartered at the Bronx Zoo and has teams that operate out of each of our four zoos and aquarium in New York City.