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Volunteers Needed for “Written in Bone” Exhibition at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History

Fans of TV shows like “Bones” and colonial history buffs can get a hand on the science of forensic anthropology by becoming a volunteer for the exhibition, “Written in Bone: Forensic Files of the 17th-Century Chesapeake” opening Feb. 7 at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History.

Forensic science is a subject of endless fascination, and this dynamic object- and media-rich exhibition shows how investigations of the present can be applied to mysteries of the past to reveal the lives and deaths of real individuals. The exhibition contains special sections that offer great volunteer opportunities, such as guiding visitors to parts of the exhibition that match their interests, sharing insights about the exhibition and the museum with visitors and independent learning about forensics and anthropology. In addition, the museum’s Forensic Anthropology Lab, a new public-learning venue adjacent to the exhibition, will allow some volunteers to facilitate hands-on learning activities for visitors.

Volunteers will participate in a series of training sessions and learn in-depth information about the exhibition and the forensic, archaeological and historical research behind it firsthand from the exhibition co-curators, Smithsonian forensic anthropologists Doug Owsley and Kari Bruwelheide.

Volunteer eligibility requirements:

- An interest in science, forensics or history is recommended but not required
- Be at least 18 years old
- A six-month or longer commitment of four hours every other week
- Attendance at five engaging orientation and training sessions with co-curators and museum educators. Sessions begin in January and are ongoing through the spring.

Volunteer benefits:

- Meeting people with similar interests
- Discounts at all Smithsonian museum stores and cafeterias and free tickets to Imax films
- Scholarships or reduced tuition for adult classes via The Smithsonian Associates
- Invitations to special museum programs and events

For a volunteer application, please visit

www.mnh.si.edu/education/volunteering_interships/volunteers.html.

“Written in Bone” incorporates about 340 objects, artifacts and human bones from the museum’s collection as well as loans from more than 20 archaeological organizations and museums including the premier archaeological sites of English Colonial America, Jamestown, Va., and St. Mary’s City, Md. These human remains and objects are brought together for the first time to tell the story of how early colonists in the Chesapeake region lived and died 400 years ago.

Questions about this volunteering opportunity should be directed to Hal Banks at the National Museum of Natural History at banksh@si.edu, (202) 633-1075.

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