Education and Outreach Teaching Assistant

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Oak Spring Garden Foundation (OSGF) seeks a creative, energetic, and enthusiastic teaching assistant to join the small and highly motivated OSGF Education and Outreach team. The primary goal of this position is to support the Education and Outreach Specialist and the day-to-day efforts made by the Education and Outreach team both on and offsite.

The Education and Outreach department was formed in July 2022 and has quickly grown its presence in the community, impacting over 1,000 youth and seniors in 2023, with plans of increasing its impact even more in 2024. The primary goal of OSGF’s Education and Outreach programs are to engage with and support our local community, primarily in Fauquier and Loudoun Counties, with particular focus on working closely with audiences that are traditionally underserved. The programs that are offered are meant to be hands-on, purposeful and joyful experiences and aim to inspire community members to connect with plants, nature and each other.

The Education and Outreach Teaching Assistant should be a self-starter who can assist with the design and implementation of educational programs that leverage OSGF’s unique resources including the Biocultural Conservation Farm (BCCF), the Biodiversity Management Team, Library, Gardens and landscape. This is a fast-paced position, that works closely with youth and seniors, both on and offsite, and both outside in the elements as well as indoors in a classroom setting. The individual should be able to work exceptionally well with community members of all ages, be comfortable speaking in public, and be passionate about plants, the outdoors, community and education.

Pay Rate: $22/hour, 40 hours per week. Schedule includes some weekend and evening programs. Benefits include medical, dental and vision insurance as well as paid holidays and up to 10 days of PTO.

Location: Upperville, VA; The Oak Spring estate is located in rural northern Virginia, 15 minutes from the nearest town and approximately 1 hour west of DC.

To Apply: We will begin reviewing applications immediately on a rolling basis and will continue until the position is filled. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply quickly. To apply, please email a resume, cover letter and 3 professional references to hr@osgf.org with the subject line “Education and Outreach Teaching Assistant.”
ABOUT THE OAK SPRING GARDEN FOUNDATION

The Oak Spring Garden Foundation is a private operating foundation, located a little over an hour west of Washington, D.C. in the rural Virginia Piedmont between the Blue Ridge and Bull Run Mountains, on what was once the private residential estate of Paul and Rachel Lambert “Bunny” Mellon. A devoted horticulturist, gardener and collector, Bunny Mellon cultivated an impressive collection of books and art objects over the course of her life that now form the core of the collections of the Oak Spring Garden Library.

While the estate has a long and interesting history, OSGF is a young organization that has only existed in its current form for about eight years. The Foundation’s mission is to inspire fresh thinking and bold action on the history and future of plants, horticultural practice, the art and culture of gardens and landscapes, and the importance of plants for human well-being. Its activities toward providing a public benefit include the sustainable management of a 700-acre landscape, as well as stewardship of the other legacies of Mrs. Mellon, which include an endowment, the formal garden, the library and substantial residential accommodation. The current President, Sir Peter Crane FRS, reports to a small but distinguished Board.

The Education and Outreach team primarily leverages the resources and learning opportunities around sustainable agriculture and plants provided by OSGF’s Biocultural Conservation Farm. The BCCF is a small, diversified vegetable operation that supplies fresh produce for the array of programs that take place onsite at OSGF by working closely with the OSGF Chef to supply short-term and long-term guests with nourishing farm-to-table meals. Produce also supports a small Community Supported Agriculture (‘CSA’) program from May-October in which community members pick-up a curated share of fresh vegetables once a week across a 25-week season. Importantly, the BCCF is committed to donating at least 50% of what is grown on-site to local food banks. Since 2019, this has amounted to over 100,000 lbs of produce delivered to those in need. Given our geographic location and the agrobiodiversity and cultural foodways in our region, we are very interested in growing and perpetuating the cultivation of heirloom crops of regional cultural and historical significance. In addition to its high-intensity, ecological vegetable production the BCCF has growing plots dedicated to production of seed, as well as plants used by people for a variety of purposes, including natural dyeing, paper and fiber making, and medicine.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide support to the Education and Outreach Specialist to ensure a safe and stimulating educational environment.
- Assist the Education and Outreach Specialist in planning and preparation for daily activities; aids instructional efforts of the teacher.
- Assist the Education and Outreach Specialist in preparing lesson outlines, plans, and curricula in assigned areas.
- Plan prepare, and develop various teaching aids for use in the classroom, including activity sheets, drawings, and similar handouts.
- Present subject matter to children or adults, utilizing various methods including stories, games, demonstrations, projects, discussions, and role-playing.
- Lead OSGF Outreach activities on and off-site.
• Assists children or seniors, individually or in groups, with lesson assignments to present or reinforce learning concepts.
• Assist with growing and harvesting instructional materials.
• Help maintain teaching and learning environments.
• May lead, guide, and train employees, interns, and volunteers performing related work.
• Correspond with participating community partners.
• Performs miscellaneous job-related duties as assigned.
• Collaborate with other OSGF Departments on projects related to outreach programs.
• As time permits, working on the farm with the BCCF team to gain experience in, and understand, the different areas of the farm, which will be essential for developing educational and outreach materials that relate to the BCCF. Tasks may include: harvesting produce, weeding, planting, harvesting and processing seed, etc.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

• A broad understanding of plants, agriculture, and horticulture, and how these subjects overlap with the arts, humanities, and sciences.
• Experience assisting with educational programs- formal or informal settings.
• A friendly demeanor, and a demonstrated ability to work with diverse community and/or student groups.
• An interest in developing programs that highlight or work in support of the educational content currently offered at local schools and/or organizations.
• Excellent oral and written communication, and time management skills.
• Ability to exhibit safe and responsible conduct in an indoor or outdoor classroom environment.
• A dependable, collaborative and solution-oriented team player.
• Proficient with Microsoft and Google Suites.
• Ability to lift at least 50 pounds.
• Ability to work in inclement weather.
• A valid driver’s license and reliable transportation are necessary for this position. Additionally, the successful candidate will be required to drive regularly to and from programs, to pick up supplies, etc. utilizing an OSGF provided vehicle.
• A Background check is required for this position

Start Date: As soon as possible. We will begin reviewing applications on a rolling basis and will continue until the position is filled. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply quickly.

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Oak Spring Garden Foundation is an equal opportunity organization and will not allow discrimination based upon age, ancestry, disability, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, race, religious belief, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, political belief, or veteran status.