



Fiddleheads Forest School Intern

ORGANIZATION: UW Botanic Gardens

REPORTS TO: Nature Preschool Directors

AGE REQUIREMENTS: Must be 18 years or older

TIME COMMITMENT: 8 – 12 hours/week for a minimum of 3 months (must be available mornings 8:45 a.m. – 12:30pm)

Organization Overview:

The UW Botanic Gardens Education Program aims to serve a wide variety of audiences through high-quality, experiential education programs that strengthen the human/plant relationship for the betterment of both. Our Youth & Family unit has traditionally focused on elementary school children who visit our site at the Washington Park Arboretum to take part in science-based, hands-on field trips during the school year or weeklong day camps during the summer. In 2012, we expanded our audience to include preschool-aged children via drop-in parent/child programs. Owing to the success and demand of these early childhood programs, in the fall of 2013, we launched a nature-based preschool to further serve this youngest of audiences.

Preschool Overview:

The Fiddlehead Forest School is a nature-based preschool at the UW Botanic Gardens. In September 2013 we opened to our first two classes of preschoolers. Our program is rooted in nature and exists almost entirely outdoors at the Washington Park Arboretum, our 230-acre classroom comprised of forests, wetlands and meadows. Our goal is to support the growth of the whole child - their social, emotional and physical development. We aim to promote self-regulation by allowing ample opportunities for play and community building in order to nurture these three, four and five year olds.

Position Summary:

Join the Fiddleheads Forest School staff at the UW Botanic Gardens in supporting the development and growth of this new program. Gain valuable experience in early childhood development as well as nature-based education, while working with the lead teachers to create and lead fun, age appropriate, educational activities. This position will assist with leading activities, preparing materials, and supervising children ages 3-5 to provide a safe, enjoyable and educational experience. Fiddleheads Forest School is a 10-month program and based at the Washington Park Arboretum in Seattle, Washington.

Interns will benefit from this opportunity in the following ways:

- Experience with early childhood behavior, and physical, emotional and social development
- Opportunity to further develop skills in teaching and engaging children outdoors
- Experience teaching and developing nature-based curriculum that will enhance the volunteer's resume. There will be an opportunity to write a lesson plan toward the end of the internship to highlight what he/she has learned.

- Receive support from staff such as access to resources like experts and professionals in the field, curriculum guides, and reference books, and one-on-one time with the lead teacher to reflect on experience, seek feedback and discuss projects/curriculum.

Summary of Duties (to include, but not limited to):

- Assists and works with lead teachers to lead educational activities and develop preschool curriculum. There will be opportunities to self-initiate curriculum development and implementation.
- Assists in leading a variety of educational activities including games, hikes, plant and animal identification and crafts.
- Assists in ensuring the safety of, engaging with and playing with up to 12 children with 2 staff members
- Assist in preparing educational materials and equipment
- Assist in maintaining accurate records of incidents and participant behavior issues
- Follows and enforces child safety and security policies as set by the UW Botanic Gardens
- Records hours in the “Volunteer Log Book”
- Performs other duties as requested

Qualifications

- Current First Aid and CPR recommended, but not required
- Possession of a high school diploma or equivalent
- Knowledge of, or willingness to learn, Pacific Northwest flora and fauna
- Interest and/or experience in early childhood education or other experiences working with 3-5 year olds
- Ability to work comfortably, tactfully, courteously, and effectively with children, UW Botanic Gardens staff, parents and volunteers.
- Ability to comfortably hike up to 2 miles on any given day in varied and uneven terrain in natural areas
- Ability to be outside in all weather and model appropriate behavior regarding clothing for the weather and attitude (i.e. wear boots, rain pants and rain coat when it’s raining, and exhibit a positive attitude about the weather).

Expectations

- Each volunteer is expected to be timely and available to attend his/her scheduled shift. If you cannot attend your scheduled shift due to an emergency please contact your supervisor.
- Attend all required trainings
- Be able to successfully pass a background check

Hours, Dates & Commitment

A full commitment to the Tuesday/Thursday class or the Monday/Wednesday/Friday class for the full preschool fall quarter is preferred (Sept. 6 – Dec. 20). Flexibility to accommodate a college academic schedule and/or class conflicts will be considered.

Preferred Start Date: September 15th, 2014

Flexible Start Date: September 15th - September 29th, 2014

Time commitment –

- 8-10 hours/week: Tuesday/Thursday from 8:30am-12:30pm
- 12-15 hours/week: Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 8:30am-12:30pm
- 20 hours/week: Monday-Friday from 8:30am-12:30pm

Compensation

This is a volunteer internship program.

Application Procedures

Send a resume and a cover letter to:

Sarah Heller & Kit Harrington
Fiddleheads Forest School Directors
UW Botanic Gardens
2300 Arboretum Drive
Seattle, WA 98112
ffschool@uw.edu