

Classroom in Bloom

Garden Assistant & Food Security Practicum

(This position is shared half time at Red Shed and half time at Classroom in Bloom)

Salary: \$13.69 per hour, 24 hours/week for 10 weeks (*paid by Office of Sustainability*)
Supervisor: Kim Romain-Bondi
Period of Employment: June 21, 2021 – August 27, 2021

Overview

Classroom in Bloom (CiB) is a non-profit organization established to enrich education through our school garden for K-12 students in the Methow Valley School District (MVSD) of Okanogan County, WA. Our vision is to “connect children to sustainably grown food and the natural world to support the health of our people, place and planet”. The centerpiece of our effort is a student-led garden on the MVSD campus where we provide garden education to K-12th grade students. Through this garden we create experiential, inquiry-based learning opportunities and teach a curriculum based on ecosystem complexity, biodiversity, and science education. We cultivate an understanding of sustainable food systems and foster a love of fresh and healthful foods. This collaborative, hands-on approach to learning builds self-esteem and develops personal responsibility for each child, greatly improves student engagement, and creates new opportunities for every type of learner.

Every MVES student spends one hour/week in the garden; our High School and Junior High students spend up to 3 hours per week in the garden. We use the garden to teach hands-on, place-based inter-disciplinary lessons that relate to students’ classroom studies focused on health, nutrition, math, science, engineering, literacy/poetry, and art. Hands-on activities and lessons not only include academic learning, but also farm chores: weeding, harvesting, weighing, delivering, planting, sowing seeds, turning compost, cleaning tools, and eating the bounty of their efforts.

We are building K-12 programs around climate change, environmental science, and organic farming connections between children, schools and our community. The foundation of this expansion is the construction of a 72 x 24 ft passive solar educational greenhouse and related student-led environmental programs. In 2020, students harvested over 4,000 pound of fresh produce that was delivered to our schools’ cafeterias or eaten as snacks during our garden programs. This is important because the Methow Valley School District is a rural, Title 1 school, where more than 46% of the students qualify for free or reduced meal service and 30% of the children are living in poverty. Classroom in Bloom’s fresh food and nutrition programs are therefore impacting those children and families that need it most, contributing to food security for all in our community.

Responsibilities

Classroom in Bloom's Vision "connects children to sustainably grown food and the natural world to support the health of our people, place and planet".

As an intern with Classroom in Bloom, you will build hands-on skills with our farming operations, assist in teaching and garden activities at summer camps following Classroom in Bloom's educational model, assist in native garden plantings, and assist with responsibilities of non-profit management for a model Farm to Cafeteria program. Much of your two days per week at CiB will be dedicated to farm work with staff, volunteers and assisting children with garden activities during our July summer camp programs.

Required Qualifications and Experience

We hope as a summer intern you will find inspiration in farm work, build connections to the land through farming, art and science education programs, work as a positive presence with staff, students, and volunteers.

No formal farm experience is needed, however we expect interns to be punctual, self-driven, energetic, hard-working, and ready to learn each day on the farm. Interns will work closely with our Garden Coordinator, Executive Director, and our summer camp educators. Writing, photography and social media outreach skills are highly valued for our quarterly newsletters and outreach efforts to the public about our programs. A few administrative tasks may be asked of interns to enhance and grow our non-profit organization.

Interns must be able to get to work with their own vehicle (bike or car), lift heavy objects, and work comfortably on the farm for long hours during the summer months. A background check is required by the Methow Valley School District to work with school-aged children.

Red Shed

Garden Assistant & Food Security Practicum

(This position is shared half time at Red Shed and half time at Classroom in Bloom)

Salary: \$13.50 per hour, 24 hours/week for 10 weeks (*paid by Office of Sustainability*)

Supervisor: Kelleigh McMillan

Period of Employment: June 21, 2021 – August 27, 2021

Overview

Red Shed is a small organic farm located 3 miles west of Twisp Washington in the beautiful Twisp River Valley. The people of this 4 acre piece of land have been pulling food from it's soil far longer than it's most recent caretaker laid claim to it. For hundreds of years it was the entry to the shrub steppe hills where the Methow's First People dug Bitterroots and Spring Beauty tubers, and the main thoroughfare for Mule deer to migrate from the hills to their watering hole in the Twisp river. When the white people came, it was identified as good orchard ground, bearing apple and pear trees. When the freeze of 1968 killed those trees, the land awaited it's next incarnation. Cattle grazed there occasionally and eventually no one watered or tended it. In 1999, Kelleigh McMillan decided to dig the tree stumps out, pick up broken down barbed wire and create a food farm.

Since then, Red Shed has been providing organic produce to the people of the Methow Valley, much of it for free. Various grants and donors have supported this endeavor over the years and students of all ages have spent time participating in the cultivation of this food shed. As our society adapts to a diet of processed foods, we hold the belief that everyone feels better and does better when eating fresh food as part of their diet. That is why we have been delivering produce to our food bank, our social service center, our school's Friday food program and Summer Lunch program (both programs initiated by Red Shed) since 2007.

This internship position will aid in the goal of getting farm fresh food to organizations who will distribute it at no charge to the people eating it. Responsibilities on the farm include having a positive attitude while preparing soil for planting, weeding, learning and implementing our irrigation system, harvesting food and washing it, delivering it to its destination.

Red Shed works towards food security by providing free produce to people in the Methow Valley who would not otherwise be able to afford fresh foods as part of their regular diets. While many distribution avenues have included young children and people, this food is made available to those who access the food bank and other social service programs in the area, since 2007.

The intern position will aid in the growing of beautiful organic produce so that more people and families in the Methow Valley may have access to healthy and vibrant food. Cultivation, harvest, washing and delivering the fruits and vegetables comprise the main duties of this position.

Responsibilities

Students will have the opportunity to learn how to plan and plant a food garden of substantial size to the degree that they are interested. They will have the opportunity to learn how to operate an

irrigation system off of an open ditch; run a rototiller; plant seed by hand and with a walk-behind planter. They will also be instructed in harvesting greens of many kinds, berries and other vegetables as they ripen. Students will also prepare the food for bulk or individual servings and then deliver them to town, to their distribution site.

Required Qualifications and Experience

It will be really helpful to have a driver's license and a vehicle. This is true for the position but also in general for living in a rural place with limited public transportation. An intern must be able to pass a background check as there is the possibility of having some cross over with students of the Methow Valley school district. It is also important that a person is accustomed, or open to, hard physical work in a hot climate. In addition to being suited for the specific internship position, it is important that anyone coming to the Methow Valley be prepared to live without big town amenities, an airport, or reliable internet.

Educational/Professional Benefits

This internship is a good fit for a student who is moved by the lack of fresh food in peoples' modern diets and who see the destructive nature of large scale agriculture. While a small program like Red Shed isn't going to save the planet, it does supply a useful model for small plots of land which could be retrofitted around the world. This service, of connecting people to food, through programs which connect people to people, is an example of what we can do on a small scale that spreads good will and good nutrition to any community.