



## **Preliminary Position Description** **Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps Member** **at Great Kids Farm**

### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE:**

**Mission:** Friends of Great Kids Farm, Inc. is a nonprofit foundation partner to Baltimore City Schools' Great Kids Farm. As an independent 501(c)3 organization, Friends financially supports and enhances the Farm's programs to benefit as many of City Schools 85,000 students as possible.

**History:** In 2008, the Farm's site was transformed from an overgrown, unused nature center into a working farm and outdoor education center. This unique facility now provides:

- a working farm for City Schools students to engage in curriculum-linked experiential education programs;
- science classrooms for studying the Farm's living systems;
- forest and trails for guided exploration of the natural environment;
- internships for high school students in agricultural science and the culinary arts;
- a professional kitchen where students cook produce guided by a chef educator;
- fresh produce for use in school cafeterias and nutrition education programs; and
- a farm-to-school training site for food service directors from across the country.

While City Schools provides funds for staff and facilities, the Farm's programs require resources beyond those available through the school system. Since Friends' formation in 2011, we have raised over \$350,000 for the Farm, directed toward educational materials, student transportation, high school internships, a work truck, and the installation of a deer fence. In the 2012-2013 school year, 3,300 students visited the Farm, and more than 21,000 benefited from the educational materials, produce, and curriculum distributed by the Farm.

**Programs:** The Farm serves K-12<sup>th</sup> grade students through a variety of platforms:

- **Food Fellows Program:** Friends of Great Kids Farm (FGKF) will sponsor five Baltimore City Schools (BCPSS) Student Internships with local restaurateurs who view food through the lens of sustainable food systems. The FGKF Culinary Advisory Committee is comprised of local chefs and food professionals who advise and support the Farm to Cafeteria Initiatives at the Great Kids Farm (GKF). The Food Fellows Program will begin with a Kick-Off event at GKF where students can interview with prospective employers, receive job skills training and learn more about food production at the farm level.

Students will learn about food career pathways and making healthy decisions. They will have the opportunity to see food being grown and harvested. After placement in an internship they will gain practical culinary experience designed to develop students understanding of food production systems as they relate to culinary food preparation, research and development. Internships are six weeks long for fifteen hours of work a week. FGKF will supply these stipends. At the culmination of their internships, students and their chef partners will work together to present a project at a showcase event at the Farm in April.

- **Work-Based Learning:** One way Great Kids Farm develops young people to lead their peers into a more sustainable future based on local, healthy food sources is through Work Based Learning internships. Our interns not only become skilled growers and eaters, but also serve as ambassadors for the farm. Farm interns assist with planting, harvesting, processing and packaging farm-grown produce for service in Baltimore City Public School Cafeterias, raising chickens, goats and managing vermiculture. Students run a micro-green enterprise to help support the program. High school students enrolled in Career and Technology Education (CTE) pathways such as Agriculture Sciences, Environmental Sciences, or Culinary Arts earn course credit for their career certification.
- **Farm Explorations:** The Farm Exploration suite is a set of unique educational experiences at Great Kids Farm (GKF). Farm Explorations evolved out of a district wide effort formerly called “Learning Journeys” which was an excursion to a non-traditional learning space, in which every student in the district participated at a specific grade level. The Farm Exploration suite targets specific grade levels in an attempt to ensure that every City Schools’ student will have a meaningful learning experience at the Farm before graduation. Through a series of standards-based lesson plans taught by teachers before their trip to the Farm, teachers will prepare students to link their farm experiences to core academic content with a focus on STEM and environmental literacy. While at the GKF, Farm Educators will teach a series of hands-on lessons that provide real world connections to science, math, and agriculture and help to shape positive experiences with healthy foods. Upon returning to school, students will complete a follow-up lesson connecting their farm experiences to their classroom learning. Because produce from the farm is distributed to school cafeterias, students can take action on their experiences at GKF through their selections at the cafeteria salad bar. The connections they develop over the course of the trip often create positive reactions to unfamiliar vegetables, or to foods students previously rejected.
- **The Healthy Eating Healthy Living initiative** is an ongoing program that supports schools and their communities in strengthening their commitment to living a healthy lifestyle. This initiative encompasses educational support and activities targeted at students, teachers, and families to build knowledge and confidence through practice in the areas of healthy eating and school and community gardens. Throughout the school year, Great Kids Farm will provide monthly opportunities for students, teachers, and families to engage in activities or events to enhance their current skills or learn new ones. Each month a seasonal vegetable is highlighted in our video series “Great Choices for Great Kids”. The series highlights easy healthy recipes, growing tutorials and tips for

healthy living. The Good Food Summit, the Garden Summit and the Pollinator summit are held over the course of the school year. These summits bring City Schools students to the farm for advanced training workshops that they can share with their peers. There are three seedling and material giveaways, three to four professional development opportunities for instructors and classroom vegetable boxes with lessons and produce grown at Great Kids Farm. GKF also supports school gardens throughout the district. Participation in the HEHL program is open to any City Schools' student, teacher, or family.

- **Farm-to-Cafeteria:** Farm to School programs throughout the country aim to increase the availability of fresh produce and local foods to students. Although many schools and school districts partner with local farms and urban gardens, we are unique: Great Kids Farm is a public school campus that operates as a working farm to grow fresh produce which is served to students in Pre-K through twelfth grade in school cafeterias throughout the Baltimore City Schools district, and to students who come to visit us at the farm. Because we are a campus of Baltimore City Public Schools, we strive to engage students in every aspect of growing, harvesting, and processing the food that we send to school cafeterias. Students participate in cultivating, harvesting, taste-testing, washing, packing, marketing, and eating our seasonal crops. Farm to School creates connections among all of our students and the healthy food we grow and eat together. School staff and teachers are encouraged to display signs to identify the food from Great Kids Farm, recognizing the student-led efforts to increase healthy food choices for all students in Baltimore City Schools.

**Volunteer involvement:** Volunteers have been critical to the Farm's development and service to students since its inception. Volunteers at the Farm fall into two broad categories:

- Education volunteers are trained, registered volunteers who support educational programs at the Farm. Education volunteers are trained to serve as additional instructors during educational farm visits and the Summit events. They lead tours, assist with lessons, and develop relationships with students as they progress through learning activities.
- Day of service volunteers: Business and organizational groups visit the Farm to provide half- to full- day volunteer service days. Days of service mobilize groups to accomplish large projects that expand production, providing more produce to schools. Day of service volunteers also accomplish large organizational tasks, such as creating classroom growing kits for distribution or processing vegetables for delivery to school salad bars.

The Volunteer Maryland Coordinator will work to recruit, train, document, and manage volunteers that will support all of the above listed programs. Volunteers will continue to serve in the education and day of service roles described above, but with the additional support of the VMC, volunteers will be recruited and placed in more specialized roles, including volunteers that will partner with individual HEHL teachers to support their gardening activities at their schools, and kitchen volunteers to work with the Chef Educator working with student interns

and processing produce for distribution to schools.

The Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps Member will recruit 15 new volunteers who will support the education and landscaping for our programs. In addition, the AmeriCorps Member will also work to develop and/or revise the Volunteer Program Vision Statement, Volunteer Program Evaluation Process and Evaluation Documents, Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures Manual, Volunteer Position Description(s), Volunteer Recruitment Materials, Volunteer Orientation Agenda and Materials, Volunteer Training Agenda and Materials, Volunteer Performance Evaluation Process and Documents, and Volunteer Recognition Plan and Materials.

This is an 11 month, full-time (40 hours/week) position as a member of the Volunteer Maryland (VM) AmeriCorps program serving as a Volunteer Coordinator at **Great Kids Farm**. Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps Members (VMAs) are responsible for developing and implementing a volunteer program as agreed to in the VM site partnership negotiations that occurred in spring, 2018. The VM service year will begin on September 5, 2018 and conclude on July 23, 2019; Volunteer Coordinators are expected to complete 1,700 hours of service during the term.

**BENEFITS:**

Full-time VMAs receive a living stipend of \$13,732 (*pending funding*), an education award of \$5,920, and health insurance if they are not already covered. They may also qualify for a child care allowance. Other benefits include mileage reimbursement for site-related travel, student loan deferment, professional training, valuable networking opportunities, working with a dedicated team of AmeriCorps members and staff, and making a real difference in a local community.

**DUTIES:**

- Develop a written work plan and timeline for implementation.
- Develop program materials such as a policy and procedure manual, volunteer position descriptions, promotional fliers or brochures, and screening, training, and evaluation tools.
- Recruit volunteers. Outreach methods may include: presentations to faith, business, and/or community groups; staffing information booths at community events; and utilizing the media.
- Screen volunteers as necessary; procedures might include interviews, reference checks, and criminal background checks.
- Develop and facilitate orientation and training for volunteers.
- Supervise volunteers; develop and implement recognition activities for volunteers such as special events, awards, gifts, etc.
- Maintain accurate records of volunteer participation.
- Evaluate progress made in achieving the program's goals; report on progress in statistical

and narrative reports for Volunteer Maryland.

- Develop community partnerships to support the volunteer program.
- Serve as public ambassador for the Service Site, Volunteer Maryland, and AmeriCorps.
- Participate in VM and AmeriCorps training, service projects, and other activities.
- VMCs may be assigned other volunteer program duties during the course of the service year by the Service Site Supervisor.
- Note: The AmeriCorps member will not be allowed to perform duties that violate the AmeriCorps Prohibited Activities or fall outside of the program goals

### **SELECTION PROCESS:**

To participate in Volunteer Maryland, applicants must submit an application. Staff will review the application, with special emphasis placed on the writing sample, invite the applicant to interview if appropriate, conduct two reference checks, and complete a criminal background investigation. After an applicant has been tentatively matched, the three-part criminal history check will be initiated and appropriate paperwork will be sent. Individuals will not be allowed to start training until all paperwork is received by the program, the NSOPR check is received, and fingerprints are submitted to the Maryland CJIS Central Repository and the designated agencies of any other states where the individual resided. No individual will be enrolled as an AmeriCorps member until satisfactory completion of training.

### **ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS:**

To serve as a Volunteer Maryland Coordinator, an individual must be at least 17 years of age; have a high school diploma or GED; be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien; pass a national service criminal history check of the national sex-offender registry, state repository check (Maryland and state of residence), and FBI fingerprint check; and complete pre-service training requirements. Documentation of age, education, and citizenship are due on the first day of training. Criminal history checks will be initiated before the start of service; an individual will be ineligible if s/he is required to register on the National Sex Offender Registry, has been convicted of murder, or fails to disclose any previous conviction. Other convictions or pending charges will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in accordance with program policy.

### **SKILLS AND ATTITUDES NECESSARY:**

- Skilled at taking initiative, problem solving, and working independently, to be able to develop and implement a volunteer program.
- Skilled at building interpersonal relationships, to work effectively as part of a team (at the Service Site and with his/her class of VMCs), and to manage volunteers.
- Strong verbal skills, to communicate effectively with staff, volunteers, and community groups.
- Skilled at written communication, to develop program materials and reports.

- Committed to the concept of national service and to making a difference in his/her community.
- Basic computer literacy, to be able to produce program materials and track volunteer hours.
- Have own, or have access to, transportation to and from VM trainings, events, and Service Site-related activities.
- Able to respond to organizational change productively and maintain positive attitude.

### **ORIENTATION AND TRAINING:**

Volunteer Maryland provides approximately 20 days of training in program development, volunteer management, marketing, communication, and leadership skills. Training is held the first two weeks of the service year, with monthly training days throughout the rest of the year. Additional training opportunities are also available through AmeriCorps and the Host Site. The Site Supervisor provides orientation to the VM Coordinator's local placement site.

### **SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION:**

The Service Site Supervisor provides day-to-day supervision. The Site Supervisor will evaluate performance in accordance with the agency's policies. In addition, Volunteer Maryland's Director provides overall supervision to all VM Coordinators, and evaluates performance at mid-year and at the end of the year.

### **VOLUNTEER SERVICE**

Each Volunteer Maryland Coordinator is encouraged to volunteer as part of their service year. The volunteer activity **cannot** be within any of the prohibited activities, and should be discussed with their Site Supervisor prior to engaging in the volunteer activity. The Volunteer Maryland Coordinator may volunteer at their site. The Volunteer Maryland Coordinator may claim up to five hours each month on their timesheet for volunteer activities. If the volunteer activity is fundraising, the Volunteer Maryland Coordinator will need to include these hours under fundraising on their timesheet.

### **HOURS:**

Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps Members are required to serve approximately 40 hours each week. At **Great Kids Farm**, the office hours will be Monday through Friday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm with occasional weekend shifts. Volunteer Maryland training days are 10:00 am – 4:00 pm.

### **LOCATION:**

The AmeriCorps Members' office will be located at **6601 Baltimore National Pike Catonsville, MD, 21228**. VM training locations will be held at locations throughout Maryland. Please note: locations may not be accessible by public transportation.

### **PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

AmeriCorps members may not engage in the below activities directly or indirectly by recruiting, training, or managing others for the primary purpose of engaging in one of the activities listed above. Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the activities listed below on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-federal funds. Individuals should not wear the AmeriCorps logo while doing so. AmeriCorps members will not be allowed to take part in the following prohibited activities:

- Attempting to influence legislation
- Organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes
- Assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing
- Impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements
- Engaging in partisan political activities, or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office
- Participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials
- Engaging in religious instruction, conducting worship services, providing instruction as part of a program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship, constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship, maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship, or engaging in any form of religious proselytization
- Providing a direct benefit to any of the following:
  - A business organized for profit
  - A labor union
  - A partisan political organization
  - A nonprofit organization that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative
  - An organization engaged in the religious activities described above, unless Corporation assistance is not used to support those religious activities
- Conducting a voter registration drive or using CNCS funds to conduct a voter registration drive
- Providing abortion services or referrals for receipt of such services
- Such other activities as the CNCS or GOSV may prohibit

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*Site Approval of Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps Position Description  
(please sign or electronically sign for approval)*

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*Date*