



NEW COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

Position Description

Title: Youth Program Specialist
Salary Range: Commensurate with experience
Department: New Communities Program
Reports to: NCP Director
Date Prepared: June 2007
Background:

The Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance (GPCA) is a non-profit organization involved in a unique partnership with the Chicago Park District and a number of local grassroots and city-wide organizations. GPCA is dedicated to the revitalization of the Garfield Park Conservatory and the communities it serves, particularly the East Garfield Park community. The New Communities Program (NCP) is a long-term initiative of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation/Chicago to support comprehensive community development in Chicago neighborhoods. NCP is supported by a major grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation plus additional funding has been provided by both local and national supporters.

Connecting people and plants is the primary function of the Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance. We believe that an understanding of plants and the fundamental connection between plants and human life can contribute to a greater appreciation for ecology, environmental protection, and natural resource conservation. More than 180,000 people visited the conservatory during the past year, including nearly 20,000 who attended children's and family programs. Nearly 35% of participants in children's and family programs come from the West Side neighborhoods surrounding the conservatory, and 31% made repeat visits to participate in multiple activities.

Program Overview:

The "Green Teens" program utilizes a successful arts-based teaching model and hands-on job skills training to enrich the lives of adolescents on Chicago's West Side and to prepare them for life after high school. "Green Teens" builds on the lessons learned from the Alliance's Teen Docent pilot program which ran from FY 2002-2005 and aligns with the vision for youth development articulated in the East Garfield Park quality of life plan, the Alliance-led community development initiative supported by LISC-Chicago's New Communities Program. The "Green Teens" program emphasizes arts-based learning of leadership, presentation skills, teamwork, and conflict resolution. The program also provides hands-on job skills training offered through seasonal youth apprenticeships at the conservatory; and a community-guided process that will create more options for local youth.

The three components of the "Green Teens" program are as follows:

School Year Program

Conducted in partnership with After School Matters, "Green Teens" is offered in two 10-week sessions (one in the fall and one in the spring), at three days per week. The program serves 25 youth per 10-week session. Hands-on job skills training that will prepare youth for internships and/or part-time jobs particularly in the local greening industry (hence the name "Green Teens"). "Green Teens" emphasizes forming partnerships that will link youth with internships and/or part-time jobs out in the community. However, youth remain connected to the Alliance through a mentorship relationship with a staff member.

Summer Mosaic Project

Working with guest artist instructors provided through an ongoing partnership with the Chicago Public Art Group and After School Matters, the summer "Green Teens" learn the basics of mosaic work, develop concepts for the mosaics, design murals, and cut and arrange tiles in a six-week paid internship initiative for up to 15 West Side high school youth.

Paid Intern Program

This component of “Green Teens” involves hiring students who have completed the “Green Teens” programs for part-time and full-time internships in the Alliance offices, key program areas, and conservatory greenhouses.

The “Flower House Kids” program offers a safe after-school program for up to 50 neighborhood latchkey children (25 in each semester) per school year. Two days per week, the children, ages 7-13, meet at the conservatory from 2:30-5:00 pm and receive homework help. The children also participate in activities designed to help with reading development and to build character and self-esteem.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Green Teen Program

- a. Create, manage, and facilitate the Green Teen Program
- b. Recruit high school aged youth to participate in the program
- c. Recruit and hire presenters, artists, and instructors as needed
- d. Supervise, assign, and evaluate the work performed
- e. Record and track program expenses. Compile and furnish these figures for reports
- f. Attend workshops and trainings as need for project implementation
- g. Oversee Teen Program assistant
- h. Manage partnerships with participating schools and After School Matters
- i. Identify internship/employment opportunities for Green Teen graduates

Flower House Kids Program

- a. Recruit elementary aged youth to participate in the program
- b. Recruit presenters and instructors as needed
- c. Supervise, assign, and evaluate high school program assistants
- d. Compile and furnish figures for reports
- e. Oversee and manage existing program partnerships

Summer Mosaic Project

- a. Recruit high school aged youth to participate in the program
- b. Work directly with artists, and instructors as needed
- c. Supervise and evaluate the work performed by high school students

NCP Youth Empowerment Network Committee Leader

- a. Manage committee of youth organizations in East Garfield Park
- b. Foster growth and expansion of the committee by making new partnerships
- c. Address goals and objectives as listed in the Quality of Life plan
- d. Hold monthly meetings and furnish reports as needed
- e. Ensure annual youth conference is implemented

Additional Responsibilities

- a. Assist with GPCA special events
- b. Performs other duties as assigned

Position requirements:

2-3 years of teen related organizational experience; Bachelor’s degree preferred; proven ability to work with youth. Candidate should possess excellent interpersonal skills, strong oral and written communication skills, strong organizational skills, and should be computer literate. Community organizing skills are a plus. Position requires flexibility in working daytime, evening and weekend hours as needed.

Submit resume and references by mail, fax or e-mail to:

GPCA, 300 N Central Park Ave, Chicago, IL 60624; (FAX) 773-638-1777; or mtomas@garfieldpark.org

Garfield Park Conservatory Alliance is an Equal Opportunity Employer