Job Announcement

Start date: Flexible start, between January, 18th and 25th

Life Lab Garden Instructor
in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District

Full-time, 40 hours per week, with occasional weekends and evenings for school, community, and Life Lab events

Candidate and Position Description: Life Lab seeks an energetic, skilled and dedicated educator who has a passion for engaging elementary-age children, and a devotion to teaching experiential garden-based science, literacy, nutrition, environmental education and cooking. Garden Instructors are the heart of a growing Life Lab partnership with the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) to provide rich, garden-based learning and social-emotional wellbeing for more than 7,000 students across 16 elementary schools. In addition to working directly with TK-5 students at garden classrooms at each school, Garden Instructors also co-create and implement programs for family involvement in the gardens and family cooking nights with their school site communities.

Position Title: Life Lab Garden Instructor in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District

Time Requirements: 40 hours/week

The work schedule is aligned with the bell schedule of each school. Typical hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am to 4:30pm, including a 30 minute lunch, and will include some weekend and evening events. In general, Instructors will teach four days per week, with the fifth day devoted to training, assessment, program prep, and staff meetings.

Compensation: $52,000 annual salary -$53,000 for instructors with Spanish bilingual ability, paid on the 15th and last day of each month. Paid time off for vacation (15 days first year, increasing to 24 days in the fourth year), medical needs (12 days accrued per year), and holidays (12). Blue Shield Platinum Trio ACO HMO 0/25, Delta Dental, and VSP vision insurance coverages are available as part of Life Lab’s group plans, for Instructors and their partners and dependents, up to $15,600 per year in premiums paid by Life Lab.

Life Lab Core Values
Life Lab values collaboration, authentic communication, connection with people and nature, and open-inquiring minds. We also value individual initiative and cultivate a culture in which it can thrive. At Life Lab, we know that having a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives on our
team improves our decision-making and programs. In addition, we recognize that staff members whose identities and lived experiences are relevant to those of the students we serve help us have the greatest impact. Therefore, we strongly encourage applicants who have experience living and working with Latinx populations in agricultural communities to apply for this position. We are a non-profit organization committed to equity and we are currently working to improve our transparency and accountability frameworks.

**Required Qualifications:**

- Strong communication skills in Spanish.
- A passion for Life Lab’s mission to cultivate children’s love of learning, healthy food and nature through garden-based education.
- A deep commitment to social justice, cross-cultural relevancy, equity and inclusion.
- Experience teaching and working with elementary-age students, especially in public school settings.
- A love of collaborating with diverse audiences, colleagues, teachers and students.
- An appreciation for working in the outdoors and willingness to learn on-the-job gardening skills.
- Experience prioritizing and managing varied projects and needs, both independently and in collaboration with others.
- Willing and able to commit to work the entire 2021-22 PVUSD school year.
- Associates degree or bachelor’s degree from an accredited community college or university.
- Ability to prioritize and problem solve in a dynamic daily program environment, both independently and in collaboration with others.
- Ability to get to and from Watsonville, CA, and PVUSD school site(s) on time each day.
- Ability to work legally in the U.S.
- Pass state criminal and FBI background checks, and a national check in the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Registry.
- Test negative for tuberculosis and for COVID-19

**Desired Qualifications/Characteristics:**

- Bilingual in Spanish and English. Mixteco is also helpful.
- Bicultural understanding of the Watsonville community and its children’s experiences.
- Experience in the communities of the Pajaro Valley, or a similar rural farmworker community.
- Willingness to learn and practice Positive Discipline in working with children.
- Clear and prompt communication.
- Adaptable and flexible with sudden changes in program and priorities.
- Experience with gardening and garden maintenance.
- Proficiency in Microsoft and Google Suites

**Responsibilities *Subject to the changing needs of COVID protocols***:

- Work at one of our seven current partner schools as we build our full 2021-22 team of nine Life Lab Instructors.
● Manage and co-maintain the physical garden classroom spaces in your own sites and work as a team with the other Garden Instructors to support each others’ sites. New School Gardener staff positions will add garden care capacity for the team in 2022.
● Lead TK-2nd grade *Next Generation Science in the Garden* lessons for approximately 15 classes per week.
● Lead cooking and nutrition lessons for 3rd-5th grade students at each site. (Details still pending due to evolving COVID-19 safety practices.)
● Build strong relationships within your school communities, including through community outreach at school and family events and community workdays in the garden classrooms.
● Participate in weekly individual check-ins with your Program Leader and weekly Life Lab Instructor team meetings
● Participate in monthly Life Lab all-staff meetings and staff-wide JEDIS (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Solidarity) Learning Community meetings.
● Gather and share with the Life Lab Communications and Impact Specialist photos, quotes and assessment data from your programs, to help understand their impacts, refine programs, and share stories with the community.

**About Life Lab Partner Schools Program**
Life Lab’s Partner School Program strives to create a culture of garden-based learning in elementary schools to enhance science and nutrition education during school day instruction. Our team of Life Lab Instructors lead lessons alongside classroom teachers at our partner schools every other week at seven elementary schools. We host *Next Generation Science in the Garden* classes for all TK-2nd graders and Kids Cook Nutrition Education and hands-on cooking classes for 3rd-5th graders. All second graders also experience an enriching three-hour field trip to our Blooming Classroom on a western Watsonville farm. We facilitate school garden workdays and plant donations, and provide teacher training. Our partner school teachers report that our NGSS in the Garden program improves students’ scientific knowledge, enthusiasm for learning, school pride, and connection to nature. In our Kids Cook program, over 70% of students report that they like or love what they are tasting, and 50-60% are trying a new fruit or vegetable for the first time each class.

**COVID-19 and Vaccination**
Life Lab staff working at our PVUSD Partner Schools sites are required to follow school district policies regarding COVID-19 safety and vaccination requirements. Life Lab staff working at our UC Santa Cruz Garden Classroom and office site are required to follow University policies regarding COVID-19 safety and vaccination requirements. Currently, the University is requiring all staff and visitors to campus to be vaccinated. Life Lab encourages all of its team members to be vaccinated for their own health and community safety, while respecting that individual needs and circumstances may create barriers to vaccination.

**About the Site Locations**
Most of the Garden Instructor’s work time will be spent at two of the following school sites initially, and then one starting later in the school year, within the [Pajaro Valley Unified School District](https://www.pvusd.org) with the following [PVUSD student demographics](https://www.pvusd.org/cms/index.php?d=15381) represented. Some of our garden sites are co-managed with [Fitness 4 Life](https://www.f4l.org) after-school staff.
Amesti Elementary’s garden has 10 beds, perennial borders, a large teaching area, and a greenhouse. 5 min walk from main office and parking. Uneven ground. ~8 hours per week maintenance.

Ann Soldo Elementary’s garden has 14 beds, perennial borders and a large teaching area. 3 min walk from main office. Uneven ground. ~ 6 hours per week maintenance.

Hall District Elementary’s school garden is an expansive, mainly flat garden with twenty garden beds, a fruit tree orchard, and several learning circles. It is a 5-minute walk from the parking lot and main office. ~10 hours a week to maintain.

H.A. Hyde Elementary’s garden is an open space with a learning circle, fruit trees creating a perimeter, with crops directly sown into the ground. ~5 hours per week.

T.S. MacQuiddy Elementary’s garden is a large garden with 6 beds for produce, ~20 fruit trees, and 2 learning circles. ~8-10 hours per week of maintenance.

Starlight Elementary’s school garden is a small L-shaped garden wedged between classrooms with 4 garden beds and 10 fruit trees. It is a 5-minute walk from the parking lot. This garden has small pathways... ~5 hours a week to maintain.

Ohlone Elementary’s garden is a large garden which includes two learning circles, 10+ garden beds, and 10 fruit trees in a sloped area located past a narrow pathway. ~8-10 hours of maintenance per week.

The Life Lab Watsonville office is located at 349 Main Street in downtown Watsonville, on the historic Watsonville City Plaza. In addition to the school sites, this is the primary workplace for our PVUSD Garden Instructors and the staff who collaborate with them. The second floor office is accessible, and there is easy parking and nearby public transit. Life Lab also has an office on the UC Santa Cruz Farm, a 5-10 minute walk on a dirt path from nearby parking lots. Closer parking on the Farm is available for anyone with a disabled parking placard. Life Lab makes reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with known physical or mental disabilities. Our field trip site in western Watsonville, the Blooming Classroom, is on a private farm with easy parking and dirt path access. Check out the kids thoughts about our field trip programs here: Pajaro Valley Life Lab Field Trip Site Video.

About Life Lab
Life Lab is a dynamic and growing nonprofit organization with offices in Watsonville, CA and on the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) Farm. Life Lab cultivates children’s love of learning, healthy food, and nature through garden-based programs.

Founded in 1979, Life Lab is a pioneer and national leader in garden-based learning, providing programs, training, and curriculum to inspire children and educators locally and nationally. We serve more than 5,000 children each year through programs at partner elementary schools across Santa Cruz County and through field trips and day camps in our Garden Classroom in Santa Cruz and our Blooming Classroom in Watsonville. Through professional development workshops, curriculum sales, and a dynamic knowledge network, Life Lab also positively impacts the lives of more than 500,000 children across the U.S. annually.

Application Process
Please send a cover letter and resumé to Cara Wild-Sundell at cara@lifelab.org as soon as possible. We will review materials and schedule interviews on a rolling basis beginning December 3rd. Applications are welcome until the position is filled. A background check will be conducted with finalists for this position. Please include how you heard about the position in your cover letter to help us improve our recruiting.
Life Lab is committed to a policy of non-discrimination as an Equal Opportunity Employer. Employment candidates and employees will be considered and managed without regard to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other basis in accordance with applicable law.