Job Announcement

Start date: Flexible, from December 13, 2021 to January 10, 2022

Pajaro Valley Partner Schools Program Sites Leader

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

The Partner Schools Program Sites Leader is an experienced and dedicated individual who has a passion for garden-based education, hands-on horticulture and construction, and a commitment to racial and social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion and solidarity (JEDIS). The ideal candidate is interested in developing and sustaining gardens as nurturing learning environments, mentoring students and newer educators, and collaborating on big picture program development.

Position Description

The Pajaro Valley Partner Schools Program Sites Leader collaborates with our Pajaro Valley Partner Schools Program Leader, Training and Curriculum Specialist, School Gardeners, and a team of Garden and Nutrition Instructors to create positive, healthy, supportive learning and growth environments for children in our local programs around Watsonville. More than 90% of the students in our Partner Schools identify as Latinx or Mexican, many of whom are English language learners. This is a 40 hour per week position with responsibilities varying seasonally. The Sites Leader collaborates with the Program Leader and Training and Curriculum Specialist as the leadership team for our Pajaro Valley programs and reports to the Co-Executive Directors.

Compensation

- Salary: $60,000 annually.
- Paid vacation (15 days, increasing annually), medical time (12 days), and holidays (12 days).
- Health (Blue Shield Platinum Trio HMO), Delta Dental, and VSP Vision insurance, including family coverage (up to $15,600 per year in premiums paid by Life Lab).
- Retirement plan, with employer contribution to begin in 2022.
- Ongoing professional development opportunities.

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**

- Managing gardens and/or farms, especially in an educational setting, including
  - annual vegetables, perennial borders, and fruit trees;
  - irrigation systems;
  - composting and soil fertility management.
- Construction skills and experience maintaining outdoor facilities, including
  - experience using and troubleshooting powered hand tools;
  - basic carpentry experience;
  - experience troubleshooting facilities problems and managing repairs.
- A personal commitment to equity and inclusion so that all cultures and identities are respected in our work.
- Strong, varied communication skills in Spanish and English (oral & written).
- A love of collaborating with diverse audiences, colleagues, teachers and students.
- Experience in the communities of the Pajaro Valley, or a similar rural farmworker community.
- Supervising, mentoring, and supporting people, especially the patience to support and nurture newer staff and provide positive reinforcement as well as feedback.
- Ability to organize people of all ages towards a common goal.
- Ability to prioritize and problem solve in a dynamic daily program environment. We are seeking someone who can delegate, supervise, and follow up with others.
- A commitment to a [Positive Discipline](#) approach in relationships with children (mutually respectful, kind and firm, and cooperative relationships) and cultivating a supportive environment for students’ social and emotional well-being.
- Ability to efficiently travel to Pajaro Valley and Santa Cruz sites and transport materials.
- Valid driver’s license for use in California.
- Ability to lift and move 30 lbs.
- Negative tuberculosis test.
- Pass State criminal and FBI background check.

**Desired Qualifications**

- Bilingual fluency in Spanish.
- Arborist and/or orchard experience.
- Experience working with public school systems.
- Associates degree or equivalent experience (teaching credential not required).
- Individual initiative and leadership within a collaborative culture.
- Experience in any of the following areas:
  - program development;
  - school community building;
  - leadership development;
  - education with elementary age children, ideally with experiential / hands-on learning;
  - working with diverse groups of children and adults, including Mexican, Latinx, and/or Central American communities.

**Responsibilities**

**Lead development and maintenance of Partner Schools Garden Classrooms**

- Provide design and care leadership for garden classrooms at all Partner Schools in collaboration with Life Lab Instructors.
● Lead construction and maintenance of garden structures and facilities.
● Meet with Instructors regularly to support them in their sites and programs.
● Support and supervise Life Lab School Gardeners, including leading development and tracking of maintenance plans for each site.
● Recruit, train, mentor, and supervise community volunteers, students, and interns for garden classroom care support, including coordinating volunteer work opportunities in collaboration with site teams.
● Partner with Instructors and School Gardeners on crop planning timed for program needs.

Community Connections
● Co-lead outreach to the PVUSD and broader Pajaro Valley communities to connect them with our sites and programs.
● Co-lead development of positive, welcoming relationships with school community members and families.
● Co-lead development of positive, welcoming relationships with community organizations and support partners.
● Help build a culture of school gardening at each site by supporting annual workdays or garden-related events.

Collaboration with the Pajaro Valley Partner Schools Program leadership team
● Meet regularly with Program Leader and Training and Curriculum Specialist to collaboratively lead the Pajaro Valley Partners Schools Program as it grows from 7 to 16 elementary schools.
● Participate in debrief and check-in meetings with Garden Instructors.
● Co-lead program logistics, including materials storage and transportation, food purchases and donations, laundry, and supplies.
● Collaborate on developing and maintaining a welcoming and functional Watsonville program office.
● Collaborate on program evaluation, assessment, and grant reporting.

Organizational
● Participate in regular staff and program meetings.
● Assist with building strong relations with donors, funders and community partners, including participation in Life Lab fundraising meetings and events when needed.
● Participate in regular staff JEDIS Learning Community meetings, and in JEDIS working groups as interested.
● Timely record-keeping, time-keeping, and expense tracking and reporting.

About Life Lab Partner Schools Program
Our seven school sites are within the Pajaro Valley Unified School District with the following PVUSD Student Demographics represented. Here are the links to each of the seven school sites: Hall District Elementary, Starlight Elementary, Ohlone Elementary, H.A. Hyde Elementary, MacQuiddy Elementary, Ann Soldo Elementary, and Amsoti Elementary. Check out our Partner Schools Program website here: Life Lab Partner Schools Program. We also have a field trip site in western Watsonville - check out the kids' thoughts on our Blooming Classroom field trip programs here: Pajaro Valley Life Lab Field Trip Site Video.
About Life Lab
Life Lab is a dynamic, growing nonprofit organization with office and program locations in Santa Cruz and Watsonville, CA. **Life Lab cultivates children’s love of learning, healthy food, and nature through garden-based education.** 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 6,000 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 educator training, curriculum, and networking, Life Lab also positively impacts the lives of more than 500,000 children across the U.S. annually.

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.

Job Locations and Travel Requirements
Life Lab’s Watsonville office is along the City Plaza in downtown Watsonville and is the primary work site for this position. Parking next door is available free up to 3 hours or with an annual city parking permit, and public transit is available close by. The schools of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District are located in and around Watsonville, Las Lomas and Aptos. The Partner School sites include expansive, flat and sloping garden areas with in-ground and raised beds, dirt and mulch pathways, and a mixture of shaded and sunny areas. The Life Lab Garden Classroom and main office are located on the UC Santa Cruz organic farm, a 5-10 minute walk on a dirt path from the nearest parking lot. Closer parking is available for anyone with a disabled parking placard, and Life Lab makes reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with known physical or mental disabilities. UCSC parking requires a [paid permit](#). Life Lab offices, the Garden Classroom, the UCSC campus, and PVUSD schools are all non-smoking areas.

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.*