

Poughkeepsie Farm Project
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2012 Handbook for Apprentices and Interns **Goals, Policies and Expectations**

The PFP Mission: The Poughkeepsie Farm Project is a non-profit organization that works toward a just and sustainable food system in the Mid-Hudson Valley by operating a member-supported farm, providing education about food and farming, and improving access to healthy locally-grown food.

PFP Programs

The CSA: CSA, or community supported agriculture, is a partnership of mutual commitment between a farm and a community of supporters – members make a commitment to support the farm throughout the season, and assume the risks and bounty of growing food along with the farmer. The farm provides, to the best of its ability, a healthy supply of seasonal fresh produce throughout the growing season. CSA promotes a responsible relationship between people and the food they eat, the land on which it is grown and the people who grow it.

City Seeds provides positive fresh food learning experiences through hands-on farming, gardening and cooking on farm and in school settings for urban teens, connecting students to natural environments and learning through food production and preparation.

Community Education draws on the PFP community and our working farm to provide a unique educational resource for hands-on learning experiences about food and agriculture, including interactive and thematic farm tours, work projects, workshops, events and education sessions for school and community groups.

Farming for the City provides vocational training for future farmers, farm educators and community food organizers while providing exposure to urban food access issues.

Through **FoodShare**, the PFP works towards increasing access to healthy, locally grown food in Poughkeepsie by making 25% of our food available to low-income people through donations to local emergency food programs, our sponsored CSA share program, and PFP management of the Poughkeepsie Farmers Market.

PFP Staff:

Executive Director: Susan Grove

Farm Managers: Asher and Wendy Burkhart-Spiegel

Education Manager: Jamie Levato

Office Manager: Nicole Baker

The Board of Directors: The PFP is a non-profit, 501c3 organization, guided by a volunteer Board of directors. The Board is made up of PFP members. It bears ultimate responsibility for the well-being of the organization, and works with the PFP staff to set clear priorities that advance the PFP's mission. Much of the work of the Board is done through its committees, which include events, finance, fundraising strategy, program steering, and others convened as needed.

PFP Members: Many PFP members participate in the PFP CSA as shareholders and come weekly to the farm to pick up their vegetables during the growing season. Much of the work of the PFP is done by shareholder volunteers who help in the fields, do soup kitchen deliveries, manage CSA distributions, publish the newsletter, and more.

Poughkeepsie Farm Project's Farming for the City program provides apprentices and interns with field trips, hands-on training and experience growing food and providing education and outreach to the community, and meaningful employment which makes a real difference in the community. Apprentices and interns work with PFP staff and members to grow mixed vegetables on 14 acres, operate a CSA, run a farmers' market, teach children and teenagers about food and farming, practice and promote gardening and seed saving, and lead outreach efforts to increase food access and awareness of food in the City of Poughkeepsie.

2012 Positions

Farming Apprenticeships - one 9 month position (March through November) and two 7 month positions (April through October)

These apprenticeships are designed for those actively exploring farming as a vocation. Farm apprentices focus on gaining skills necessary for managing a farm (such as tractor work, harvest management, management of CSA, farmers' market booth management). One apprentice will also assist in managing the Poughkeepsie Farmers' Market.

Farming Internships (three 11 week positions)

The 11 week internships are designed for college students interested in an intensive exposure to community food issues and farming during their summer break.

Education Apprentice - one 6 month position (May through October)

This apprenticeship is designed to provide skills in leading hands-on education that integrates gardens and a working farm into experiential learning about food and agriculture. The apprentice will participate in trainings on topics related to education, gardening, and/or farming. The apprentice will help plan and manage education gardens as spaces used for learning about natural processes that result in fresh produce, including planting, providing nutrients and water, weeding, harvesting and seed saving. The apprentice will refine and adapt existing curricula and possibly create new activities and lessons to teach youth about food, agriculture, food justice, and healthy eating. The apprentice will prepare for and conduct educational activities with groups guided by farm and garden-based curriculum; evaluate curriculum and education sessions; maintain up-to-date documentation of education programs; adapt curriculum to the changing activities and crops available on the farm and to different age groups; produce and distribute outreach materials; and assist with other tasks as needed.

Education Intern (Community Fellowship) - one 10 week position

This 10 week fellowship is designed for a Vassar college student interested in an intensive exposure to community food issues and farming during her/his summer break. The fellow will focus on contributing to and learning from PFP's farm- and garden-based education programs, with assistance provided to other programs as needed. The Fellow is hired by Vassar College and the position is contingent on funding for Vassar's Community Fellows program. Applicants need to contact both the PFP and Vassar's Office of Field Work.

Goals for farm apprentices and interns:

- Build skills and knowledge necessary to operate a vegetable farm.
- Build familiarity with larger networks and resources related to sustainable farming, food justice, and agricultural/environmental education.
- Build skills and knowledge necessary to educate others about sustainable agriculture.
- Participate in meaningful work.
- Experience positive community interactions.

Goals for the education apprentice and intern:

- Build skills and knowledge necessary to provide experiential learning about food and agriculture.
- Build familiarity with larger networks and resources related to sustainable farming and gardening, food justice, and agricultural/environmental education.
- Build skills and knowledge necessary to plan and manage a garden for educational purposes.
- Participate in meaningful work.
- Experience positive community interactions.

How do we strive to attain these goals?

- Integrating apprentices and interns into the hands-on work of the farm and organization accompanied with ample explanation and discussion about context and methods.
- Offering workshops, group discussions, and farm movie nights at the PFP.
- Taking field trips to other farms and community food organizations, primarily through CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training).
- Providing opportunities to teach and share new skills with visitors.
- Ensuring that the work is necessary and meaningful.
- Maintaining a respectful, positive environment.
- Involving apprentices and interns in planning and evaluation of our shared work.

Work Guidelines:

Farm work hours: Hours of farm operation are seasonally variable; the “high season” schedule is Monday-Friday, 7am-4pm and Saturday, 6:30am-3:30pm, with an hour off for lunch. CRAFT meetings and education seminars usually take place one or two additional evenings a week. We also schedule an occasional meeting over lunch.

Summer Farming Internships: The farming interns take part in an 11 week program from late May through mid August. Internship hours will be 45 hours per week, approximately 40 in hands-on work with PFP programs and in the field and 5 hours each week reserved for educational workshops and field trips.

Full Season Farming Apprenticeships: The farming apprenticeships are 7 or 9 month positions (45 hours per week, approximately 40 “in the field” and 5 hours each week reserved for educational workshops and field trips. In 2012, one farming apprentice will spend 4-10 hours a week managing our farmers’ market booth and assisting with the management of the Poughkeepsie Farmers’ Market. The other two interns will spend a larger amount of time on tractor work and CSA management.

Time off: Days off are Sunday and one other day each week. In addition, those working full time may take one personal day off for each month worked. Because we need to pick and distribute vegetables regardless of federal holidays, days off do not necessarily coincide with those holidays. If you have special circumstances regarding days off, please discuss them with your supervisor.

Sick time: If you are sick, please alert your supervisor that you are not able to come in that day, giving as much notice as possible. You do not need to make up work for sick days. If you are sick often, there will need to be some discussion as to whether you are able to complete the apprenticeship or internship.

Working on the farm: The work plan for the week is discussed and laid out at the weekly farm crew meeting. Farming activities include greenhouse work, transplanting, cultivation (by hoe or tractor), harvest, washing, weeding, maintenance, mowing, spraying, flame weeding, working with volunteers in the field, and other tractor operations. Other activities may include working with youth in the fields, preparing deliveries for soup kitchens, selling produce at the farmers' market, giving farm tours, attending the CSA distribution room and doing community outreach activities such as events and demos.

Working on a vegetable farm is a challenging job in many ways. It is physical work that requires hours of lifting, bending, and concentrating. Some tasks can become tedious. Since one works outside, the weather presents a variety of challenges including cold, heat, wind, rain, and snow. Juggling the needs of hundreds of different varieties of plants requires careful planning and vigilant care and can be stressful at times when everything seems to need attention at once. One who comes to the farm only to get "closer to nature" may soon be disappointed as operating a farm is a busy job and doesn't always allow time for deeper reflection. At the same time, the rewards of farm work are great: working outside, understanding where your food comes from, helping to feed others, developing relationships with the land and other people involved on the farm are just a few of the benefits of this work.

Education work hours: Education hours will be 45 hours per week, approximately 40 in hands-on work with PFP programs and in the field and 5 hours each week reserved for educational workshops and field trips. Hours of education work variable. The schedule is usually Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm or 9am-6pm, with two half-hour breaks or one hour break. From time to time we have an evening or weekend event or education session. CRAFT meetings and education seminars usually take place one or two additional evenings a week. We also schedule an occasional meeting over lunch. The education apprentice and intern will likely participate in some farm work in addition to education work. Therefore, please be sure to read the section above about working on the farm.

Shared standards for a positive environment: As an apprentice or intern, you are representing the PFP to visitors and acting as a role model for all those who visit the farm. You are helping to ensure that working members and youth visitors are engaged in meaningful work on the farm and that they experience a positive learning environment that encourages respect for all life. Shared standards that are important to building this environment include a positive attitude, respect for others and the land, honesty, proper and safe handling of all food and equipment, proper clothing (neat, safe, and appropriate), being on time, working hard and being motivated, and non-violent solutions to conflict. Apprentices and interns are in a position of authority as role models for youth and appropriate behavior is expected.

Drugs and alcohol: There are no illegal drugs permitted on the farm property at any time. Alcohol is permitted (for those of age) in moderation only at PFP sanctioned potlucks and events, and never during work time. Any use of tobacco necessitates careful hand washing before working on the farm as tobacco may carry disease that affects crops.

Gear to Bring with You to the PFP :

- rain coat and pants (we recommend the inexpensive plastic type)
- waterproof boots
- close toed shoes such as work boots or sneakers (we do not allow apprentices and interns to wear sandals or have bare feet in the fields)
- pocketknife
- sunscreen
- hat
- timepiece
- lightweight clothing that is neat and professional but okay for dirty work
- work gloves

Compensation

Training: The most important compensation that apprentices and interns receive for contributing their time and energy to the PFP is training in sustainable agriculture, community farming, gardening and experiential education. For a program that does not charge a fee to its participants, the amount of time spent on training, seminars and field trips is large compared to the time spent working on the farm. The PFP takes on costs in providing education to apprentices and interns and training is an important piece of the compensation for their contributions to the PFP.

Stipend: We provide a stipend which is distributed every two weeks. The farming intern stipend is \$300/week. The farming and education apprentice stipend is \$340/week. The education intern position is compensated through Vassar College. All appropriate taxes are withheld from these stipends.

Workers compensation: Apprentices and interns are covered by workers compensation for work-related injuries.

Veggies: Apprentices and interns are each provided a small CSA share.

Credit: The PFP provides an experience for which apprentices and interns might receive credit through their college or university. We encourage students matriculated at schools with programs that give credit for apprenticeships to seek these credits.

Housing

There is no housing for staff, apprentices or interns at the Poughkeepsie Farm Project. We can, however, arrange low cost housing at Vassar College for the summer interns if desired. We can also assist apprentices in locating affordable housing situations. Past apprentices have found

roommates locally, found an apartment together, or rented rooms from CSA members or others in the community.

Policies from the PFP Employee Handbook:

Provided in this section is a brief overview of the employee policies found in the PFP Employee Handbook. More extensive information may be found in the handbook itself.

Our Employee Relations Policy: The Poughkeepsie Farm Project is committed to providing the best possible climate for the professional development of our employees and the accomplishments of the goals of the farm as outlined in our Mission Statement. Our practice is to treat each employee as an individual, and to promote a spirit of teamwork as individuals working together to reach common objectives. The Poughkeepsie Farm Project will strive to develop a workplace where communication is open and where problems can be discussed and resolved in a mutually respectful atmosphere.

Equal Employment Opportunity: The Poughkeepsie Farm Project is an equal opportunity employer, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, marital status, disability, creed, religious or political affiliation, age, sex, or sexual orientation. It is the policy of the Poughkeepsie Farm Project to recruit and select applicants for employment solely on the basis of their qualifications including their ability to meet the physical demands of the job. All personnel practices follow this policy. It is our policy to provide a work environment that is free of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment, whether verbal or physical. Any employee who feels that he or she has been a victim of such harassment should immediately report the matter to a supervisor or to a member of the Board of Directors. Harassment will not be tolerated, and may result in discipline up to and including discharge.

Health and Safety: The Poughkeepsie Farm Project is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for employees, members, and visitors. Because we do not employ synthetic fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides, and make relatively modest use of powered farm machinery, most of the hazards of modern “industrial” farming are avoided. However, all farm work is physically demanding, requiring considerable bending, lifting, pushing and pulling, as well as prolonged outdoor exposure. It also involves the use of tools and machinery that can be dangerous if not used with care. All employees need to become familiar with potential hazards, and use safety procedures, protective equipment, and good body mechanics. Apprentices and interns receive safety training during their orientation at the PFP.

Evaluation Procedures: At least two formal evaluations for each apprentice and intern shall be scheduled each season: one at approximately the halfway point of the position and one at the end of the program. During these reviews, apprentices/interns and supervisors should make use of the opportunity to express satisfaction with or desire for change regarding any aspect of the apprenticeship/internship program. Ongoing informal communication is encouraged as a way for the parties to discuss and confirm mutual expectations as they compare to the unfolding reality. Copies of each evaluation shall be given to the apprentice/intern and the PFP staff and are made available to the Board of Directors upon request.

The Poughkeepsie Farm Project Board of Directors and You: The Board is legally and fiscally responsible for this non-profit organization while the staff ensure that the daily work of

the PFP is accomplished. Apprentices and interns should consider the Farm Managers their supervisors on the farm and the Education Manager their supervisor for education activities. Any questions regarding on-farm procedures or programs, time off or payment should be addressed with them. However, on occasion, you may feel that an issue requires the insight or intervention of the Board. Please feel free to contact the appropriate Board committee (any member of the committee) with your question or comment. In the event of a serious and unresolved conflict, please follow our procedures for conflict resolution (below).

Conflict Resolution and Grievances: The Poughkeepsie Farm Project offers both informal and formal procedures for resolving conflicts among employees, between employees and members, and among members, in those instances where communication breaks down or is for any reason difficult. Please refer to the employee handbook for more information on the informal procedure of conflict resolution and the formal grievance procedure.