

Winter/Spring 2010/2011 Internship Position with Synergia Learning Ventures:

Finding the Good High School Semester Program

Position: Intern

Finding the Good, a high school traveling semester program based on studying and documenting models of sustainability, is seeking 2-3 interns for the Winter/Spring 2011 semester. College graduate or commensurate life experience. Interns live on-site and help with the preparation and implementation of this exciting project.

Finding the Good is partially a traveling program, with students and instructors traveling in a 15-passenger van towing a mobile classroom/living space trailer, and partially a site-based program with base-camp on 10 acres of mixed conifer forest located in the watershed of the Middle Fork of the Yuba River on the San Juan Ridge in the Sierra Nevada. Traveling and base-camp facilities are built sustainably, as models of how humans can solve the problems of living sustainably on the earth.

Intern responsibilities fall into two categories: Infrastructure, and Program Development and Application. We do not expect every intern to come with experience or expertise in all of these areas. If, however, you have a desire to learn in these areas, and a willingness to put effort into the learning process, we will teach you.

Infrastructure

- Small cabin construction using green construction methods.
- Milling the lumber for the cabins -- selected and sustainably harvested from our forest.
- Farm half-acre organic garden, including orchard.
- Build greenhouse for garden.
- Retrofitting and converting a camper type trailer into "MIC" – Mobile Interactive Classroom. MIC is our traveling classroom, itself a model and example of sustainable and alternative energy living systems. Construction, cabinet construction skills, installing solar electric system, networked computer stations.
- Finish winterizing the lodge kitchen, and classroom/lodge building.
- Tree thinning for a healthy forest ecosystem.

Program Development and Application

- Co-teaching the students – helping with documenting, writing, portfolio creation.
- Helping to create promotional materials, including short film projects, DVD "brochures" and podcasts.
- Website upgrading
- Helping to research and formulate the curriculum.
- Create presentations to take into schools, community gatherings, and house parties as a way to recruit potential students and educate the public.
- Create model portfolios of the work we will be doing, similar to the portfolios that students will create for themselves.
- Learning how a non-profit works from the inside

- Helping with existing programs (including a challenge ropes course program and youth outdoor programs).
- Interfacing with community organizations in the areas of organic agriculture, environmental conservation and restoration, sustainable forestry, alternative energy, etc.
- Grant writing

Intern benefits:

The primary benefit is that you will be in on the ground floor of an innovative new educational approach for high school. Interns are mentored by program directors in this unique learning environment. Interns choose an area to focus on including project development and are guided throughout the process.

Benefits include:

- Being part of a small community living in a beautiful area with staff, interns, students and volunteers involved in alternative living systems.
- Close proximity to vibrant rural town community that is rapidly becoming one of the forerunners in envisioning and implementing sustainable communities.
- Access to full prosumer filmmaking, photography, and audio recording equipment, and instruction.
- Learning and practicing organic gardening methods with opportunity to bring skills and knowledge in permaculture and biodynamic gardening to a working garden.
- Instruction and practice in preparing delicious, nutritious, meals using whole, organic foods, including fermented foods, baked goods, and artisan breads.
- Access to full woodshop and instruction in woodworking.
- Learning about sustainable forestry and non-commercial milling practices in relation to choosing the best solution to shelter needs based on where you are, what the land can support, and what sustainable materials and practices are available and correct to employ in any given environment.
- Learn to retrofit a traveling classroom trailer into a model of sustainable and alternative energy systems including waste, water, heating, and fuel. The trailer is towed by a 15 passenger bio-fueled van.
- Opportunity to help on backpacking and river canoe trips in late spring.
- Close proximity to some of the best outdoor recreation spots anywhere for water sports, rock climbing, backpacking, hiking, swimming, and snow sports.
- Synergia is located on 10 acres of beautiful pine forest in the foothills of the Sierra in the Yuba River watershed, between the South and Middle forks, on the San Juan Ridge. We are 30 minutes north of Nevada City, CA, which is mid-way between Sacramento and Lake Tahoe.

Compensation

- Room and board at Synergia's base camp site which includes: organic food, much locally grown. Lodging includes a small lodge with kitchen, outdoor bathhouse.
- Trip to Baja, California! Early in the semester we embark on a 4-week road trip to Baja California, Mexico. Our main study areas on the sustainability spectrum are culture and environmental conservation. Specifically, we study Spanish language, cooperative rural economies, gray whales, endangered sea turtles, eco-tourism, and more. We will interview gray whale naturalists, sea turtle research scientists, ejido cooperative members, and more. We will be doing much recording, filming and editing while in Baja. We have a sister village there, and many wonderful contacts and friends from traveling and studying there for the past 15 years. NOTE: you will need a valid passport.

Other location details

You do not need a car. Synergia has vehicles, and if you have a license, you may be asked to drive from time to time. A license is not required however. From Auburn, about an hour from here, there is bus service to all of California. Amtrak service from Sacramento. International airport in Sacramento.

Internship Dates and Duration

Internship begins January 3, 2011 with a one-week training session before students arrive, and lasts until May 18. The semester begins on January 9 and lasts until May 14.

Expectations

We are looking for diverse, energetic, and durable individuals who love challenge and are passionate about making positive change in the world through education, and through community-based living. You must have a sincere interest in sustainable living and in finding your purpose, as well as a “career”. You need to be willing to do a variety of tasks, some of which may seem mundane, though we promise this is not a filing job. This is immersion in a real-world organization dealing with real-world issues on a grassroots level. We are dedicated workers and we expect that everyone contribute their best. We are also committed to justice, community, and shared leadership/governance, and that includes in the workplace. We love what we do and consider mentoring interns to be a big part of our responsibility as educators. We are open to hearing what you want experience in and supporting you in those areas.

Below are some of the skill sets we are looking for, and areas of interest that you will be mentored in. No one individual is expected to have all of these skills. Even if you have no skills in a given area, but lots of interest in learning them, that is important to us.

- Strong interpersonal skills.
- Teaching: interfacing with students. Good with young people.
- Writing skills. (Type of writing varies from grant-writing, to promotional, to film narratives, to articles, to essays.)
- Curriculum Development in the areas of sustainability and community activism.
- Technology skills for media creation –photography, audio recording, filmmaking, documentation, editing and software proficiency.
- Carpentry and alternative building skills.
- Organic gardening
- Cooking with whole foods
- Outdoor adventure skills
- Environmental science/ecology
- Travel experience; experience with other cultures.
- Bi-lingual in Spanish and English, or strong Spanish speaking skills

Schedule is varied and non-conventional. Sometimes we will be traveling 24/7 for days at a time, depending on the projects and what we are working on. There are two scheduled breaks for the students. Interns get the same breaks, with part of the break-time for staff development. Some time off to leave, visit family, etc. can be arranged on a case-by-case basis. A commitment through May 18 is required. All internship and staff positions are on an “at-will” basis.

For more information on ***Finding the Good*** please visit our website at www.findingthegood.org , also www.synergia.us , and/or ask for our comprehensive write-up via email. To apply, email to learnmore@findingthegood.org with letter of interest, and resume if you have one. If no resume, tell us about yourself in the letter. Please no phone calls initially. Telephone interviews will be scheduled on a case-by-case basis based on your letter, and in-person interviews are scheduled after that if it seems a good fit, and the physical distance is reasonable. If you are far from California, then a second telephone interview may suffice for an in-person meeting.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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www.findingthegood.org www.synergia.us