

ftg | Finding the Good

Traveling Semester Program

18441 Rainbow's End Rd Nevada City CA 95959 | 530.265.5490 | learnmore@findingthegood.org | www.findingthegood.org

Welcome to the Finding the Good semester program! The next four months promise a student-centered learning experience different from any other, expanding the way you perceive and interact with your world. Our program offers a new, relevant, and dynamic academic environment that connects scholastic enterprise with real life application. Through rigorous study, individual and guided exploration, outreach to mentors throughout our community, lively debate and discussion, and creative endeavor we will unearth and share the good that makes the world work.

Finding the Good Fall 2011 is an incredibly exciting program to be a part of. Participants – an equal mix of high school students and college-age faculty interns – have a unique opportunity to benefit as both students and consultants of the Finding the Good semester. Upon arrival to the Finding the Good base camp in the Sierra Nevada foothills, students, interns, parents, and staff share a special welcome dinner upon which our semester community is built. Community support, sharing, strength, and solidarity are important elements throughout this intense semester.

Orientation begins with a session at the on-site high and low ropes course and a trip to the beautiful Yuba River nearby. A weeklong wilderness adventure will follow as the whole team canoes the length of the Sacramento River. In addition to solidifying leadership skills within the group, the days and nights spent in and along this highly endangered river ecosystem provide real context for our sustainability studies during the rest of the semester. By the beginning of September, we will turn our attention to fully exploring the concept of sustainability through six different strands: energy, food, shelter, transportation, culture, and environmental conservation. The group will be tight-knit, together 24/7 in the woods, and reliant on honest communication, mutual respect, and maturity.

The interests and insights of each of the Finding the Good participants will guide the academic specifics for the semester. This is a real opportunity to take responsibility for your learning and to experience the freedom that comes with it. Using a trans-disciplinary education structure, we'll explore topics of social relevance – energy, food, shelter, transportation, culture, and environmental conservation – and how they all connect to one another organically. The traditional subject areas of science, social studies, language arts, and math become the tools for more complete understanding of these complex issues. All members of the Finding the Good Founding Semester will contribute their passion for experiential education, fieldwork, involvement with large-scale projects, entrepreneurship, and organization-building to the program.

At Finding the Good, students learn by taking positive action with real people in real jobs who make a real difference. We draw on the existing educational resources embedded in our own community for a rich and rewarding learning experience. Our teachers and mentors – professionals deliberately sought out by Finding the Good staff – run local farm-to-school lunch programs, produce community radio shows, and lead watershed restoration efforts. We frequently take advantage of our strong partnerships with organizations that are tied to the Sierra Nevada Mountains surrounding us.

Work projects and leadership opportunities abound during the semester. Between designated study, research, and travel times, the Fall Founding Semester group will contribute to green cabin building and organic gardening and food preparation at the Finding the Good base camp. We'll retrofit our mobile interactive classroom (MIC) to become a rolling model of sustainable living that we bring on the road for presentations throughout the semester. Participants will assist in leading ropes course programs for visiting groups in the fall, combining work, play, and leadership training.

Studying and practicing sustainable models of living are not enough, however. A major component of the Finding the Good semester is training participants to be effective agents for meaningful social change. By combining advanced media making technology with academic skills like writing, researching, and data analysis, students create a number of media pieces to share the good – the positive, sustainable solutions that they discover – with the public. Top-quality radio broadcasts, podcasts, and documentary films become accessible tools of change for the Finding the Good participants.

The last month and a half of the semester, we pull together every aspect of the Finding the Good Fall Semester: dedication to discovering positive, sustainable solutions; appreciation for our natural surroundings; real capabilities in building; self-reliance outdoors; a healthy relationship to technology; and the desire to be a community leader. Participants present their experiences and findings in public forums – ranging from local cultural centers and community venues to schools and prearranged speaking engagements – passing the torch to others who may join us to find the good in the future.

Prepare to be stretched and supported, exhilarated and exhausted, and to learn and apply more new knowledge than you ever have before. You are one in a group of bright, motivated people who are on a mission to experience education in a whole new way. You'll be engaged from start to finish, expected to contribute, and encouraged to challenge yourself every step of the way. The Finding the Good semester is rigorous and the rewards are many – come with us and find the personal and social value of lifelong learning.