

Position Title: La Mesa Verde Volunteer Network Coordinator

Location: Sacred Heart Community Service, La Mesa Verde Program - 1381 South First Street, San Jose, CA 95110-3431

Service Period: August 2015 – August 2016

Description of La Mesa Verde (LMV):

La Mesa Verde (LMV) is a network of urban gardeners who increase access to culturally appropriate organic food through creating home gardens, working together in mutual support, and developing leadership within the larger San Jose community. La Mesa Verde operates out of Sacred Heart Community Service, a non-profit social service agency that envisions a community united to ensure that every child and adult is free from poverty. We believe all people regardless of ethnicity, class, gender, nation status, and sexual orientation have the right to local, nutrient dense, whole foods. We believe in preserving our traditional land-based knowledge while learning new environmentally sustainable urban gardening techniques. LMV hosts an introductory garden course providing all materials for home gardening to 50 new families a year, including raised garden beds, drip irrigation, two seasons of seeds/seedlings, and yearlong classes and mentorship. Graduates of this course are invited into membership, where gardeners participate in advanced workshops and in volunteer committees that run aspects of La Mesa Verde, including construction, cooking and nutrition classes, and local policy work. Our goal is to enable our families to create and sustain an alternative food system while also increasing food access for all families through San José.

Position Description:

This position focuses on strengthening and expanding a network of volunteers to build healthy food access in San Jose. The Volunteer Network Coordinator would work with volunteers from within the La Mesa Verde network and from the larger Sacred Heart community to recruit new families, build garden beds, run garden and cooking classes, coordinate Planting Days, and support all aspects of the first-year introductory course at La Mesa Verde. The Volunteer Network Coordinator would also work with volunteers and La Mesa Verde members to seek out and implement local solutions to improve community-wide access to healthier foods, and provide support for grassroots fundraising and in-kind donation solicitation.

Primary Duties:

- Recruit, retain, and train a network of volunteers involved in the LMV Build Committee and the LMV Recruitment Committee and ensure the success of both committees, including streamlining processes and construction logistics
- Work with volunteer committees to conduct direct outreach in recruiting 50 new families to join La Mesa Verde, to build 50 new home gardens, and to host events such as Planting Day
- Develop and implement core volunteer training materials to build an ongoing, long-term volunteer base that supports La Mesa Verde activities and develops a baseline understanding of food systems and food justice
- Identify barriers faced by low-income families and implement local solutions to improve community-wide access to healthier foods
- Maintain contact with volunteers through in-person meetings, email newsletters, and social media
- Participate in ongoing evaluation and improvement of current La Mesa Verde activities, including systems for communication, volunteer recruitment and retention, and family recruitment and retention
- Connect LMV beneficiaries to other programs offered by Sacred Heart Community Service, such as JobLink/ABI, the Sacred Heart food and clothing pantries, and Energy/Weatherization assistance
- Cultivate existing and new relationships with partner organizations on a regular basis to procure materials and expertise for LMV programs
- Support grassroots fundraising efforts and the solicitation of in-kind donations of materials from community partners and corporations
- Record and report on data aligned with VISTA performance measures
- Attend monthly professional development trainings

Preferred Skills and Abilities:

- Excellent communication skills (both writing and public speaking)
- High level of organization and time management

- Can lead, facilitate, and manage groups
- Data management skills (managing large databases of information, and teasing out what the data means via charts, graphs, etc.)
- Computer Literacy Skills (Office, Word, Google Docs, Dropbox)
- Culturally competent and comfortable in multicultural community
- Is knowledgeable about current issues around food, health, and sustainable gardening practices
- Has experience with volunteer outreach, recruitment, and retention
- Can lift 25 lbs.
- Is committed to the vision of La Mesa Verde and Sacred Heart Community Service
- Proficient or fluent Spanish language skills required

Application Instructions:

To apply to the LMV Volunteer Network Coordinator VISTA position, please send your cover letter and resume to Jamie Chen at jamiec@sacredheartcs.org. Please type “LMV Volunteer Network Coordinator VISTA application” in the subject line.