

Grow Whidbey -- Good Cheer Food Bank Garden Apprentice
Langley (Whidbey Island), Washington

About the Good Cheer Food Bank:

Good Cheer has been serving its community since 1962 and is funded chiefly through the revenues of two thrift stores. We are a choice-based food bank open 6 days a week, and focus on providing whole foods and fresh produce as much as possible. In 2009 we installed a garden in front of the food bank to increase the amount of fresh produce available to shoppers. The garden became the cornerstone of Fresh Food on the Table, our program that aims to create a zero-waste food bank on South Whidbey that champions fresh local produce. In 2016 we added the Big ACRE (Abundant Community Resources for Everyone) in collaboration with the South Whidbey School District. The one-acre space allows us to supply the food bank and school cafeterias with fresh produce year round when there are few other options available.

Grow Whidbey and Good Cheer Apprenticeship Description:

Grow Whidbey is a collaboration between the Good Cheer Food Bank, the South Whidbey School District, and South Whidbey Tilth. The program offers apprenticeships in community food production, garden-based education, and community garden and farmers' market management in order to train the next generation of leaders in community agriculture.

At Good Cheer, our goal is to train leaders at the intersection of farming and food access. A farm is a complex organism and apprentices will be included in all matters of farm management in order to fully understand the flexibility and forethought a full season requires. There will be opportunities to practice these skills through independently managing a small garden. The Garden Manager will provide guidance and labor as time allows, but the apprentices will be responsible for most of the work on this site. As we are a nonprofit, we rely heavily on volunteers and apprentices will develop leadership and communication skills for the many different types of volunteer coordination, from large service-learning groups to individuals.

As part of the larger Grow Whidbey program, all apprentices will participate in once-monthly evening seminars to allow for deeper discussions into the important issues surrounding agriculture, our food system, and the specifics of farming/gardening (i.e. soil science, fertility, pest and disease management, etc.). Additionally, field trips and community events will expose you to a greater variety of growing practices, farm/garden/business models, and mentors.

Scope of Duties:

1. Participate in all aspects of managing a collective 1.25 acres of growing space:
 - a. helping plan and execute the planting schedule,
 - b. starting seeds, transplanting, and direct sowing;
 - c. amending and prepping beds; learning to operate a small tractor and walk-behind tiller;
 - d. fertilizing, irrigating, weeding, mowing, weed whacking, general site maintenance;
 - e. planning weekly harvests and communicating with the food bank Produce Manager;
 - f. maintaining planting, harvest, fertilization and labor records.
2. Assist in coordinating and leading volunteers every Wednesday, some Saturdays, and as they drop in.
3. Assist the Produce Manager in the food bank to process excess produce for storage (canning, freezing, drying, etc.), sort donations, and keep the store refrigerator stocked.

4. Participate in fundraising, event planning, and outreach--writing newsletters and blog posts, posting to social media, and recruiting volunteers.
5. Manage an 1/8 acre garden site using skills learned through the course of the apprenticeship.
6. If desired, work with local beekeepers to care for a beehive located in the Big ACRE.

Time commitment:

- Position start flexible, as early as March 1 but ideally by May 1.
- Position ends October or early November, as work and interest allows. There is also the possibility of doing a second year apprenticeship.
- An average of 35 hours per week. Apprentices and the Garden Manager will rotate weekend responsibilities hand watering, opening and closing greenhouses, leading/assisting with volunteer days and special events. Apprentices will receive one weekday off in rotation to compensate for weekend work;
- Once a month evening potlucks combined with classes and discussions of farming and our food systems, plus time on own reading, listening to podcasts, and watching short videos.

Compensation:

- a stipend of \$400/month; worker's compensation is also provided as part of the [Washington State Farm Internship Project](#);
- housing, typically in the form of a homestay;
- unlimited food from the gardens and the food bank.

Skills and Experience desired:

- some experience growing food;
- enjoy working with and being around people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities;
- eagerness to learn and ask questions;
- good communication, time management, and organizational skills;
- flexibility when things don't go as planned;
- in good physical condition: able to stand, kneel, and squat for long periods of time; use manual garden tools; push, pull, and lift/carry minimum of 50 pounds;
- hard working, practical, resourceful, and creative.
- knowledge of Microsoft Office/Google Apps, Wordpress, social media platforms helpful

Application Process

To be considered for this position, please email the following materials to goodcheergarden@gmail.com:

1. a cover letter addressing why you are interested in farming for a food bank, how you meet the desired qualifications, when you are available to start, and how long you can commit to the program;
2. a current resume;
3. three references that can speak to your personal character, work ethic, or experience growing food.

Questions can be directed to the Garden Manager at the email address above or by calling the food bank at 360-221-4868. If calling, you may be asked to leave a message.

Interview process: Final applicants will be interviewed in person or by video chat. Visits are encouraged.

We are an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.