

Job title: *Farm Manager and Director of Agricultural Programs*

Organization: *Common Ground, 358 Springside Ave., New Haven, CT 06515*

Organization Overview

Common Ground is a center for environmental learning and leadership in New Haven, Connecticut where a diverse community of children, young people, and adults cultivate habits of healthy living and sustainable environmental practice. Farm meets forest meets city on Common Ground's 20 acre campus at the base of West Rock Ridge. The site abuts the 1500 acre West Rock State Park, sharing hiking trails, wildlife, and diverse natural habitats with the surrounding forests. Common Ground's Charter High School uses the site as an organizing principle of its curriculum which is guided by an ecological framework that recognizes the connection and interdependence of all living and non-living things. Each year, more than 6,000 community members participate in festivals, field trips, after-school programs, and other educational opportunities on site. Our working organic farm is a key resource for both the high school and community programs, as well as for the greater New Haven community. It includes both production gardens that provide food for our school lunch program and New Haven families, educational gardens used to demonstrate and teach lessons in agriculture, and a variety of farm animals. For more information on Common Ground, see www.commongroundct.org.

Farm Mission

- Education
 - The Common Ground Farm serves as a classroom for active, authentic learning.
 - The Common Ground Farm provides opportunities for the community to learn about food production and sustainable agriculture.
 - The Common Ground Farm is used to engage children and youth with food and where it comes from.
 - The Common Ground Farm demonstrates small-scale sustainable animal husbandry and meat production
- Community Resource
 - Common Ground Farm is an incubator for environmental ventures, becoming a source of value-added products that benefit the community.
 - Common Ground Farm participates in efforts to strengthen local food production and agricultural viability.
- Food for All
 - Food from Common Ground Farm fills the plates of New Haven residents, in particular those who without our efforts would have limited access to fresh produce

Job Description

Common Ground is seeking a reliable, hands-on, experienced farmer-manager to direct our Agricultural Program and run our urban farm. The cultivated area of our farm is approximately one acre, divided between a small children's educational garden and a larger production field. All of our farm practices follow organic recommendations and emphasize overall sustainability, but we are not certified organic. The Director of Agricultural Programs will be responsible for managing both the production and education gardens, training and oversight of volunteers, interns, apprentices and staff working on the farm, and coordinating the distribution of farm products to Common Ground's various constituencies. However, beyond being a farm, Common Ground is a high school and an educational center for the community, making this job opportunity distinct from many typical farm jobs. The Director of Agricultural Programs will play an important role coordinating educational projects involving the farm that will require strong

skills in leading, supervising, and communicating with groups of youth and adults. Some assistance in managing farm tasks and infrastructure is available from the Site Manager; however, the Farm Manager is currently the only full time position dedicated to our Agricultural Program. Duties will include:

Garden Management

- Create and carry out an annual farm plan that meets the needs of Common Ground's many programs and constituencies. The plan shall include at minimum:
 - Annual Farm Budget
 - Crop Production Plan
 - Farm products sales and distribution plan
 - Farm maintenance plan
 - Farm Related Programs plan
 - Farm staffing plan, including volunteer and intern program plans
- Ensure that all daily farm-related tasks are completed including placing seed orders, daily planting, weeding, harvesting, irrigating, soil amendment, and general maintenance.
- Coordinate and oversee the distribution of farm production to end-users, including providing produce to Common Ground High School for its lunch program, providing produce for sale at market, and providing produce to Common Ground's community programs, among others.
- Manage the compost operation, maintain garden infrastructure (irrigation, fences, tool repair...), and daily care for the farm animals and farm landscape as needed.

Volunteer, Student, Intern, Job Corp Oversight

- Train and direct students, volunteers, seasonal farm staff, and interns in doing the seasonal work of the farm.
- Lead individuals and groups of many ages in contributing to the work of the farm.

Educational and Farm Programs

- Work directly with teachers at Common Ground High School to find effective ways to use the farm as an educational resource to supplement classroom work.
- Develop and implement farm and agriculture related training and education programs for adults in close collaboration with the Director of Community Programs.
- Support the use of the farm by Community Programs.
- Oversee development and implementation of Community Kitchen Programs

General Management

- Work closely with Management Team on planning, coordinating, budgeting, and operating the Agricultural Program
- Prepare monthly reports on the status of the Agricultural Program for the Common Ground Board
- Assist with raising funds, including helping with grants, for investment in the Agricultural Program
- Represent Common Ground and its agricultural programs at relevant conferences and events.
- Participate in the hiring of all farm related staff
- Supervise all farm related staff

Common Ground's programs are growing and expanding. This is a great opportunity for a passionate person to jump in at a time when we are ready to explore and develop programs that reach beyond our current scope. Can you teach backyard gardening workshops for adults? Lead youth in developing small business ventures from farm products? Help us green our campus by better integrating composting and waste management into the farm cycle? We are working on many new programs and systems, and are eager to have a Director of Agricultural Programs contribute to the conversation.

Job Schedule

While this is a full time, year-round position, the hours and days necessary to complete the job requirements are expected to vary with the season and the cycles of work on the farm. The successful candidate must be willing to work the necessary hours to manage the farm in the growing season, recognizing that this is often more than a typical 40 hour week. Staff, student, and volunteers will contribute to the work of the farm, but final responsibility rests with the farm manager. To balance the long hours of the growing season, the position will have a more flexible work schedule in the winter. Vacations of more than a day or two must be taken during this time.

The work-week will also vary with the season. From April through November the farm must be staffed on weekends. From December through March the farm opens only for special events on weekends.

Qualifications and Compensation

Minimum qualifications for this position are:

- Experience managing an organic farm, from annual planning and seed ordering to all aspects of caring for the farm through the growing season
- Experience managing the distribution and sale of farm products (CSA, wholesale, farmer's markets, etc)
- Experience with educating and supervising workers on the farm (volunteers, interns, staff, students, etc)
- Excellent administrative, communication and organizational skills
- A strong work ethic and the ability to work independently, with minimal oversight
- Proficiency in Microsoft Word and Excel
- A flexible work schedule
- Non-smoking while on site

Additional skill areas (not required as minimum qualifications, but desired in a strong applicant):

- Mechanical aptitude for maintaining and operating standard farm equipment (mowers, weed whackers, small tractor, etc)
- Carpentry and "fix-it" skills: handy enough with tools and basic carpentry practices to build and fix various items around the farm
- Experience working with small livestock (poultry, goats, sheep, pigs).

Compensation: Commensurate with Experience

Position Type: Full time with benefits.

Position Length: One year renewable basis

To Apply

Application deadline: open until filled

Position Starts: ASAP

Email a resume and a cover letter describing your relevant experience to Melissa Spear (mspear@commongroundct.org)

PLEASE NOTE: Interviews will be scheduled starting January 2, 2011

It is the policy of the New Haven Ecology Project, Inc. and Common Ground High School that no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise discriminated against under any program, including employment, because of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, civil union status, sexual orientation, mental retardation, and past/present history of mental disorder, learning disability and physical disability.

It is the policy of the New Haven Ecology Project, Inc. and Common Ground High School to provide equal employment opportunities to all qualified individuals without regard to age, color, marital status, civil union status, national origin, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender in all personnel actions, including recruitment, evaluation, selection, daily interactions, promotion, compensation, training and termination.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended, it is the policy of the New Haven Ecology Project, Inc. and Common Ground High School not to discriminate against protected qualified applicants and employees with disabilities in all aspect of employment.