



## Volunteer Position Description

### Outdoor Mentor, Urban Nature Partners PDX

***Cohort 11 Recruitment Period open: March 1, 2023 ~ May 15, 2023***

**Purpose:** Serve as a mentor to a young person—typically an incoming 10-year-old—from a historically marginalized community to participate in outdoor activities in urban greenspaces around Portland. Provide young people with opportunities to build better health and well being, connect them with the natural world and potential outdoor career opportunities according to their interests, help them become empowered to make their own decisions and succeed in other parts of their lives, and advocate for equity and justice among other users and professionals in the outdoors. Build capacity and skills by actively participating with other mentors, staff, and board in group activities and events.

**Commitment:** *Initial commitment period is one year, with **a strong preference for mentors that are able to extend to 2-4 years** and beyond if their mentee and family are also willing and able.*

**Schedule:** Once weekly individual meeting of 1-1.5 hours with mentee in an outdoor location (plus transportation time), usually on a weekday evening in summer or bi-weekly meetings of 2+ hours with mentee on a weekend day in winter; plus an average of one longer group activity with mentor-youth cohort and family members on weekends per month, plus quarterly ongoing training or social activities alongside other mentors. *Total monthly commitment of an average of 10 hours per month on a consistent basis.*

**Responsibilities:** Like in more traditional mentoring programs, Urban Nature Partners mentors are adults that want to make a difference in the life of a young person by spending time with them to earn trust and build a caring relationship. They play this role primarily in an outdoor setting, working with their mentee in a way that is responsive to their interests, abilities, and background, and helps them make guided choices that will build their well-being, self-confidence and problem-solving skills. UNP mentors become a part of a network in a young person's family, community, and school life, and help open up the possibilities that exploring urban nature on their own terms provide for learning about oneself and one's place in the world.

Senior Partners are responsible for the safety, well being, and informal education of their mentee on individual outings, and share responsibility for other youth on group outings. They are available for at least half of weekend group activities as well as weekly meetings with their mentee, and communicate with the Program Director, Program Coordinator, other mentors, and their youth's family on a consistent and timely basis. In addition, Senior Partners support their mentee's participation in summer camps and leadership opportunities, and may occasionally be asked to assist the program as a whole in other leadership capacities as available and qualified, such as representing UNP at an outreach event or assisting with fundraising activities.

**Qualifications:**

- ***Beginning in 2021, all new adults volunteering with UNP are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and receive recommended booster doses, in order to protect the marginalized populations we serve.***
- Experience successfully working and building trust with youth ages 9-15, especially from diverse backgrounds.
- Lived experience and/or significant education or professional experiences with racial, economic, and other forms of oppression, as well as immigrant and environmental justice issues, and a willingness to be a continual learner in service as a strong advocate/ ally for equity. ***BIPOC and folks from other marginalized identities and backgrounds are especially sought as mentors for UNP youth.***
- Have basic knowledge of outdoor areas and activities around Portland, and a willingness to explore more.
- Exhibit flexibility and patience to exchange knowledge and experiences in relationship with a young person and his/her family, and proactively reach out to staff and peers for assistance with challenges.
- ***Adults 25 and older preferred.***
- Possess a personal vehicle in good working condition with valid license, registration, insurance and a good driving record and be willing to transport mentee on a weekly basis; or be willing to travel by bicycle, mass transit, and carpools throughout the Portland Metro area with a mentee.
- Be willing to discuss circumstances of any criminal record to ensure safety of youth, with disparate impacts of the criminal justice system taken into account.
- Be able to set appropriate boundaries for a young person and keep them safe outdoors, while encouraging curiosity and exploration.

**Benefits of Position:** Build skills in relating to and guiding youth as they grow over time; interpreting natural areas and scientific information in ways young people can relate to; and encouraging self-confidence, well being, curiosity, and problem-solving skills. Expand your own awareness of urban greenspaces and social justice issues in Portland communities, and contribute to building equity as an advocate/ ally for marginalized communities in outdoor spaces and programming. Potential credit for community service hours or independent study at the college level. \*\*Small transportation stipends are available for mentors without personal vehicles who are lower income, especially candidates from communities of color. \*\*

**Training/Resources Provided:** Initial and ongoing training provided about youth cognitive development, social-emotional learning, the impacts of trauma, and scaffolding informal educational opportunities; social justice issues around race, immigration status, poverty, and more; and potential locations and activities to visit and do around Portland. Numerous relevant reading materials, access to relevant partner led trainings, and networking opportunities with other mentors, staff, board, and advisors to learn and grow together in service to our community are also provided. The Program Director and Coordinator check in often and are available to problem solve with each mentor to best meet the needs of their mentee.

**Interested?** Contact Founder/Director Kristin Bowling at [urbannaturepartnerspdx@gmail.com](mailto:urbannaturepartnerspdx@gmail.com), or 541-281-7162.

Before applying, be sure to check out our website: <http://urban-nature-partners.org> and our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/urbannaturepartnerspdx>