

## Yale University President's Public Service Fellowship

### Proposal for Fellowship Placement • Summer 2017

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- Organization: **Common Ground High School, Urban Farm, and Environmental Education Center**
- Full street address of organization: **358 Springside Ave, New Haven, CT 06515**
- Website: **commongroundct.org**
- Name and title of the Direct Supervisor (*please note: the Direct Supervisor must be available to supervise Fellow on a daily basis*): **Tom Gaudio, Green Jobs Corps Manager**
- Phone number and e-mail address of Direct Supervisor: **203-389-0823 x1209, tgaudio@commongroundct.org**
- Placement dates (*8-11 weeks between Tuesday, May 30 and Friday, August 11, 2017*): **Jun 6-Aug 11**
- Are placement dates flexible? If so, please describe: **Yes, there is flexibility, within the context provided in the question that follows.**
- Hours of the program (*placements should be equivalent to full-time*):

Mandatory hours of the program: **Jun 5-Aug 12: Mon-Fri or Tue-Sat, 8:30-4:30**

**If Fellow is interested, he/she can work May 30-Jun 3: Mon-Fri or Tue-Sat, 8:30-4:30, but this is not mandatory**

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## Placement Description

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- Organization description (*Mission statement, population served. 150 words or less.*):

**Common Ground** is a center for environmental learning and leadership located at the base of West Rock Ridge State Park. Our mission is to cultivate habits of healthy living and sustainable environmental practice among a diverse community of children, young people, and adults. We accomplish this mission through three connected efforts:

- The nation's longest-running charter high school focused on the environment – growing a new, more diverse generation of successful college students and powerful environmental leaders.
  - An environmental education center – each year connect more than 15,000 people of all ages with the natural world while helping them develop habits of sustainable living.
  - An urban farm and 20-acre site – modeling sustainable agriculture, building community, and contributing to a healthy food system for New Haven residents.
- Please write a 1-2 sentence summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting (*50 words or less. This will be used as your agency's project description summary on the PPSF website, so please be succinct*):

The Fellow would co-lead a crew of Green Jobs Corps members in work related to our site and urban farm. The Fellow, based on their interests and strengths, can also either (1) provide hands-on support to Common Ground's urban farm, or (2) help ensure the long-term sustainability of Common Ground's Green Jobs Corps by documenting impact and seeking new resource streams.

- Please write a complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow. (*Suggested length: one to two pages.*)

### **Job title: *Green Jobs Corps Assistant Leader***

Common Ground's Green Jobs Corps connects more than 50 Common Ground High School students with paid environmental work, career and leadership development opportunities, and individualized supports both during the summer and throughout the school year. This summer, Corps members will take on a variety of work placements – stewarding neighborhood greenspaces, restoring habitat on and off of Common Ground's campus, growing and selling produce from Common Ground's urban farm, monitoring water quality in New Haven rivers, and more.

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Common Ground seeks a PPSF to **co-lead one of our on-site youth crews as they take on important stewardship, agricultural, or food security work (20 hrs/week)**. The Fellow will help supervise and work alongside members of our Green Jobs Corps site crew, farm crew, or mobile market crew. In every case, the Fellow would co-lead the crew in partnership with a member of Common Ground's staff (e.g., our site manager or farm manager). The final decision about which crew the Fellow would co-lead will be made based on the interests and skills of the Fellow, and based on Common Ground's needs. The Fellow will also take responsibility for developing and facilitating one or more workshops for our Youth Crew. The topic will be selected based on the interest and skill set of the Fellow, and will be discussed with the Green Jobs Corps Coordinator prior to the start of Youth Crew. Youth Crew runs from Jul 5-Aug 6. This work will give the Fellow an opportunity to build capacity and understanding related to youth leadership, youth development, youth employment, and education.

**In addition to this core work with one of our youth crews, the Fellow can also take on one of the following critical roles:**

1. **Taking on hand-on work on Common Ground's urban farm (20hrs/wk)**. Our  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre sustainable, diversified market garden grows over 8000 lbs. of food and raises livestock in a unique urban setting. We sell our fresh produce and eggs at an on-site farm stand, through CitySeed's Mobile Market and to our school cafeteria throughout the season. The fellow will work under the guidance of our Farm Director, and alongside Common Ground students and other interns, in the following areas:
  - a. Planting, cultivating and harvesting over 25 types of fruits and vegetables
  - b. Running a farm stand - customers to money to displays
  - c. Record keeping and money management
  - d. Recipe development, nutrition and other added value information

These farm-related responsibilities are flexible and based on both the interests and strengths of the Fellow.

2. **Helping to sustain Green Jobs Corps into the future by documenting the program's impact and developing new resource streams (20 hrs/week)**. Green Jobs Corps is a model youth employment program, having received support from the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. EPA, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and other private funders. Over the last two years, one of the most important funding streams – the federal Workforce Investment Act – has shifted focus from in-school
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to out-of-school youth – creating a potential gap in program funding, and forcing Common Ground to demonstrate program impact, re-think program models, and identify new funding sources. The fellow can play a critical role in helping to respond to this challenge – by:

- a. Researching additional funding streams for Green Jobs Corps, and work with guidance from Common Ground’s development team to write at least two proposals for Green Jobs Corps funding.
- b. Conducting follow-up interviews with Green Jobs Corps alumni, and writing an impact brief documenting the long-term impact of Green Jobs Corps.
- c. Working with Youth Crew members to document and reflect on their experiences through blog-style writing and photodocumentary work.

Prior to July 5<sup>th</sup>, the Fellow can focus on both the development of one or more workshops for Green Jobs Corps members, and on the sustainability planning or farm work described above. If it is of interest, the Fellow can also participate in rounds of other aspects of Common Ground’s work: i.e. spending a day with Common Ground High School teachers and students. In this way, the Fellow will be familiar with the organization as a whole, the Green Jobs Corps program model, and the Youth Crew curriculum before the start of the program.

The Fellow’s work is a direct contribution to achieving Common Ground’s mission: cultivating habits of healthy living and sustainable environmental practices for a diverse community of children, adults, and families. Specifically, the Fellow will support both the direct impact and long-term sustainability of two critical Common Ground programs – our Green Jobs Corps and Urban Farm.

- Specific skills/experience required for the project (*Please list*):
    - Experience in working with youth, preferably high school aged
    - Commitment to social justice, inclusiveness, and work in racially diverse contexts.
    - Good communication/interpersonal skills with people of all ages, especially youth
    - Good organizational skills and ability to multi-task
    - Willingness to get dirty and work in the heat
    - Ability to be work hard and be physically active for most of an 8 hour day
    - Demonstrated commitment, reliability, punctuality, and responsible behavior
    - An interest in learning about sustainable agriculture and local food
    - Maturity, and the willingness to be a positive role-model and leader for young people (ages 14 – 18), while maintaining appropriate supervisory boundaries
    - Strong writing, research, and program planning skills
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- Additional requirements (e.g. a car or weekend working hours). If a car is required, please include information regarding parking arrangements and mileage reimbursement):

A car is not necessary, as our site is accessible by the city bus or bicycle. However, parking is available if needed.

- Briefly describe the work that Yale PPSF Fellows have done with your agency in the past and present. If you have not worked with Yale Fellows, please describe any work that Yale students have done with your agency.

Common Ground has been fortunate to host a Yale Fellow on several occasions, and our site and our students have greatly benefited from their contributions. In summer 2007, a Fellow worked in the Ecology Camp as a counselor for the 6-8 year old campers. She also put in many hours in the garden and at our Farmer's Market stand. In summer 2008, we significantly expanded our summer camp program and our Yale Fellow was instrumental in the launch of many new camp sessions. Summer 2008 also benefited from the farm and farmer's market help of an additional Yale Fellow, who labored in the garden, worked with our teenage Youth Crew, attended farmer's market, and helped us design attractive new publicity materials for our farmer's market stand.

Summer 2009 saw the start of a very popular Saturday Open Farm Day and a successful on-site farmer's market stand, both of which relied on the capable, hardworking help of our Yale Fellow. In 2010, our Fellow ran a small work crew in the garden and helped to make the on-site farm stand more successful than in 2009. In summer 2011, our Fellow was a Green Jobs Corps Youth Crew Assistant Supervisor, managing a team of teenage workers on Common Ground's campus. She developed original environmental and food justice curricula, and ran various workshops for the entire Youth Crew throughout the summer. In the summer of 2012, our Fellow was also a Youth Crew Assistant Supervisor. She proved to be a valuable member of the team; helping to supervise the Farm Crew, running a workshop on goal setting, facilitating various team building activities and leading impromptu discussions on various issues such as the food system and human rights. She was instrumental in helping the program run effectively.

Other students from Yale have also worked as tutors for Common Ground High School, as research interns, as volunteers in the garden, and as mentors for students in classes doing field work and research on the farm and in the forest.

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