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Teaching at Little River Community School

Little River Community School is located on Birdsfoot Farm in Canton, New York and opened in 1999. We currently have thirty-three students, grades K-12, in a three-room schoolhouse. For next year, there are two full-time teachers, Steve Molnar (Olders) and Kelly Burnham (Middles) and one part-time Science teacher, Leon Sawyko. We are in the process of building an additional classroom this summer.

We are seeking two full-time teachers to work with us; one in our Youngers program and another teacher to work with the Middles. The salary is \$20,000 a year with benefits including free tuition for a teacher's child, a small health fund and a supportive environment with a lot of academic freedom.

We are looking for teachers with at least several years of experience working with children, preferably in an alternative education setting. In addition, teachers may be asked to share a special skill like art, music, Spanish, or reading with students of other ages. On the academic level this year, the kids fit roughly into three groups- "Youngers," ages 5-8; "Middles," ages 8-12; and "Olders," ages 13-18. Looking to next year, we will split the Middles group in two. It is important to become comfortable working with all ages, though these positions are primarily working with the Youngers and Middles respectively.

In addition to teaching, many of the responsibilities of running the school, including outreach, fundraising and administrative tasks, are shared. We are looking for a teacher that would plan to stay with the school for several or more years. Qualities we are looking for include: a passion for working with children, flexibility, ability to think on your feet, patience, long term interest in teaching, problem solving abilities, strong communication skills, reliability, a sense of humor, self-motivation and self-confidence.

Little River provides a unique environment where students are trusted and seen as inherently self-motivated to learn about their world. The teachers are here to facilitate and support the students' quest for knowledge and understanding. Little River has multi-age classrooms where students learn together in cooperation and are grouped by their ability and interests. Little River provides strong academic classes in a small group setting. Some academic and special classes have all students, and others may have three or four. The teachers need to generate excitement and interest on the students' terms. Special emphasis is put on problem solving skills and hands-on experiences. The students and teachers come together in a morning circle for discussion, to make plans,

and solve problems. Students are given ample opportunity for unstructured play and to choose their own activities. Each student has an individualized curriculum developed by the student, teachers and parents. Visit us on the web at www.littleriverschool.org for more information about the school.

This summer there will be a building project which will add another classroom, a larger multi-purpose room and two smaller rooms. The positions will begin on August 1st. We will use the month of August for training, preparation and team building.

The school day goes from 8:00-2:00 daily. After school hours, the teachers have a weekly staff meeting and do class preparations. In the fall, we have conferences with each family to make an individualized curriculum for each student. There are all-school meetings every six weeks with the students, parents and teachers. Between work with the students, class preparation, curriculum meetings and just being a new person to a new environment, expect the fall to be quite full in terms of time and energy. But as some of that newness wears off it is possible to find a space and a pace where being with the kids takes on a life of its own and you will find a rhythm that sustains and energizes.

Little River follows the local school district's calendar for holidays and snow days. Our final day is just before Memorial Day weekend. At that time the teachers will meet to put closure on the school year and draw any lessons we can take into the next year. During the summer months there are no classes but there are some minimal responsibilities shared by the teachers including outreach, maintenance and training.

If this sounds like the job for you, please write us.

Application Process for the Teaching Positions

To apply for the teaching position you will need to fill out the Teacher Application and include a resume and three references. Teachers, parents and students are involved in the selection process. Promising candidates will be invited to meet with staff, do an activity with the students, and then interview with the families during the week of April 29.

Please call if you have any questions about the school, or the process.



Teacher Job Description

A full time teacher at Little River Community School is responsible for and expected to:

Work with students of all ages

Assess the academic and social needs of each student

Develop and implement an individualized curriculum in cooperation with the student, parent(s) and teachers for each student

Prepare and teach academic and special classes

Facilitate problem solving with students, parents and staff

Be on-site at school during all school hours and while students arrive and depart before and after school.

Attend all regular and special staff meetings

Attend all regular and special parent and student meetings

Attend special activities with students like hiking, camping and overnights

Be available for individual parent meetings and conferences as needed

Maintain the appropriate student and administrative records

Maintain the confidentiality of each student and family

Share committee work with other staff including outreach and fundraising

Share in maintenance of building and grounds with other staff

Share some administrative tasks



Teacher Application

Please answer the following questions on another sheet of paper.

- 1) Why do you want to teach at Little River Community School?
- 2) Describe your philosophy of education.
- 3) What experience do you have working with children?
- 4) What personal strengths can you bring to the school?
- 5) What would you like to learn with this experience or what special challenges might this experience present you?
- 6) How do you approach issues of "discipline" with children?
- 7) Describe your approach to teaching basic academic skills.
- 8) How can you help children learn problem solving skills?
- 9) Is there anything else you would like share about yourself?
- 10) At LRCS the pay is low and the role of teacher requires a lot of time and energy. Are you up to this? How long could you see yourself working at Little River?
- 11) Please list three references that we may contact. Include name, address, phone number, and in what context they know you or your work. Also enclose a copy of your resume.