



# Volunteer Handbook

## WELCOME TO BLUE SKY FUND!

It is so wonderful to have you on our team! Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to be part of providing transformational experiences for urban youth through outdoor education. Together with our staff, you as volunteers bring a wide and varied range of life experiences to share with our students. Through you, our students are getting to make connections, build relationships, and learn more about their world and the opportunities around them.

Regardless of with which program you are engaging, you already have a passion for working with students and being outdoors. You will need to bring both a high level of positive energy to guide the students and a calm, flexible demeanor to face unexpected situations. Keep an eye out for teachable moments where you can share little tidbits of information and delightful nuggets of wisdom. The most important thing you will need to bring with you is a readiness for fun! Maybe everything won't go as planned or maybe it will start raining, but there is still fun to be had if you look for it.

The purpose of this Handbook is to help you become a better Blue Sky Fund volunteer. This Handbook will tell you our story through history, current practices and policies, as well as all the ways we utilize volunteers to build the capacity of programming. We hope this Handbook will increase your familiarity and comfort with the organization as well as answer any questions that you might have.

Volunteers are a huge part of what keeps us running! We appreciate your willingness to serve and your presence that enables us to do our jobs better and allow our students to build more relationships while they learn about the world around them.

Sarah Jane DeHart  
Volunteer Coordinator

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## SECTION I: ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

### MISSION

To provide transformational experiences for urban youth through outdoor education.

#### The transformation

We will transform the inside.....by going outside

From idle.....to active

From a tough exterior.....to a strong interior

From self-centered.....to team oriented

From surviving the system.....to changing the community

From street smart.....to intellectually curious

From reactionary.....to responsible

From isolation.....to unity

From follower.....to trailblazer

From survival of the fittest.....to awe in the Creator

From dim opportunities.....to Blue Skies!

### VISION

Our vision is to change young people's lives by meeting the adverse effects of poverty through the healing power of nature. We will give every young person the opportunity to find themselves by actively engaging the natural world.

### CORE VALUES

We show that we value:

- **Discovery** through learning about nature, spirit, and self.
- **Unity** through working together with our team, neighbors, and diverse communities.
- **Respect** by how we treat ourselves, others, and the environment.
- **Stewardship** by caring for our environment, our community, our volunteers, and our financial resources.

### INTRODUCTION

Blue Sky Fund exists to get inner-city kids out into the great outdoors. Blue Sky mentors and educates youth, mostly from low-income households, through after-school, weekend, and summer programs. Since our founding, we have sent children to camp on scholarships, taken camping trips, taught children to rock climb, swim, and take care of their environment. We have enhanced academic learning at Richmond City Public Schools through our Explorers program. We have also invested in a diverse group of young leaders in Richmond through our Outdoor Leadership Institute.

Our participants are primarily Richmond City Public School students living in under resourced neighborhoods and homes. Our city's youth deserve access to all the educational opportunities possible, and we are passionate about providing experiential learning throughout the year as well as filling the summertime with overnight camps and longer wilderness experiences.

"Yet, at the very moment that the bond is breaking between the young and the natural world, a growing body of research links our mental, physical, and spiritual health directly to our association with nature--in positive ways. As one scientist puts it, we can now assume that just as children need good

nutrition and adequate sleep, they may very well need contact with nature."

-Quotation from Richard Louv's book *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*

## **HISTORY**

Our founder, Fritz Knapp, began sending kids to summer camp out of a personal passion to connect City of Richmond students with the summer camp experience. Inspired by his late father, a man committed to mentoring and serving at-risk children, and with admiration for the Fresh Air Fund based in New York, Knapp looked for many ways to get youth into the outdoors. In 2003, Knapp helped 3 students experience summer camp. Knapp quickly found support for his model and managed to send 16 kids in 2004, 54 kids in 2005, and then partnered with Richmond Hill to send 96 City of Richmond children to five different summer camps in the summer of 2006. Dreams for our city's youth grew throughout 2006, and Blue Sky began to take shape. We soon took steps to include more in-house programming throughout the school year in addition to funding camp tuitions. Blue Sky led an exercise program, took small groups on backpacking trips, and organized expeditions to increase the children's exposure to outdoor/nature opportunities that actively engaged their bodies. In 2007 we chose to focus on our organizational structure and sustainability as an organization. We incorporated as a non-stock (non-profit) organization under Virginia law, applied for tax exemption, began to pay staff, formed our Board of Directors, and established Lawson Wijesooriya as our founding Executive Director.

## **TODAY**

Today, Blue Sky Fund continues our work with youth in the summer, as well as provides year-round opportunities for children to learn through outdoor adventures. Our participants are building teamwork on the trail, testing their expertise with a fishing rod, and pushing their physical and emotional strength by backpacking in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Our year round programming includes unity projects such as Outdoor Leadership Institute, science environmental education programs like Explorers, weekly adventure programs in disadvantaged neighborhoods, and many outdoor Expeditions such as fishing, rock climbing, and hiking.

### **Blue Sky's two core program goals are to:**

- Help children achieve academic success, especially in the sciences, through active outdoor education that is appropriate for their current science curriculum.
- Develop character and leadership through outdoor experiences that expand horizons, increase confidence, and build collaboration skills.

## **OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

1. We will follow our own five finger agreement:
  1. Speak encouraging words to one another
  2. Follow the rules, submit to authority, hold ourselves accountable
  3. Respect each other and proper professional relationships
  4. Remain committed to team goals not individual agendas
  5. Operate our organization and services in ways that are safe for all involved physically, emotionally, and environmentally

2. We are focused on excellence for the sake of the kids we serve, not the credit we will receive.
3. We assume positive intent of others- always trusting that others are giving their best effort.
4. We will love one another when we fail and help one another learn.
5. When we need to bring up things that are hard or we are hurt, we will do so humbly and constructively and with readiness to move forward.
6. We are responsible for what we say, how we say it, and what we say with our actions. We acknowledge that under the banner of grace, consequences will be enforced for our own growth and for the sake of the children we serve.
7. We seek cultural awareness with open minds, believing we have much to learn from those we work with and serve.
8. We will seek to partner with, collaborate with, and build up other organizations and people, even when it is hard or messy.

## SECTION II: VOLUNTEER OVERVIEW

### CORE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

#### Explorers

Explorers enjoy the opportunity to learn about nature from being in nature. This program began in 2008 in partnership with Oak Grove-Bellemeade and Chimborazo Elementary Schools to address the low science achievement in their schools. Now, second through fifth grade students from the 5 five RPS East End elementary schools as well as third and fifth grade students from 3 schools south of the James join Blue Sky monthly at places such as Belle Isle, a Goochland farm, Pocahontas State Park, and other outdoor environments to participate in science SOL lessons and team building games with their classmates. The program has been very successful, growing from serving 35 students in two schools to serving over 1700 students in eight local elementary schools!

#### Outdoor Adventure Club (OAC)

Blue Sky's OAC's engage participants in learning and practicing outdoor adventure skills such as rock climbing, orienteering, fire making, and kayaking. Each Club session is tailored around a specific theme or skill, and lessons and activities are tailored to meet the interests and abilities of the students in a way that encourages them to explore, learn, and grow. The Club season culminates in an Expedition – a day-long or weekend trip into the great outdoors that challenges the youth to use their new found skills in the field. OAC's are offered during the regular school day and during after school hours at local schools and community organizations.

#### Expeditions

Saturday Expeditions are meant as an extension to the Outdoor Adventure Clubs. Students are offered this more long-form space to explore certain skills or activities more in depth on Saturday mornings during the school year. Expeditions activities include day hiking, rock climbing, paddling the river and many others.

#### Outdoor Leadership Institute (OLI)

Blue Sky's OLI program facilitates groups of high school students from diverse backgrounds to come together to build teamwork, confidence, leadership, and community involvement. OLI centers on a 5-day backpacking trip, during which participants learn how to strengthen their leadership and teamwork skills by confronting the challenges of the wilderness. The program aims to shape knowledgeable multicultural leaders who learn about the social needs of Richmond through service learning. After completion of the summer portion, participants will meet monthly through the following school year to apply their new skills to meaningful community service.

#### Events

Blue Sky Fund hosts a number of events throughout the year. Some are formatted as direct interaction with our students while others are held as fundraisers to sustain our programming. Volunteers will be informed of events and recruited for service on an as needed basis.

## **VOLUNTEER POLICIES**

### **POLICY ON REPORTING IMPROPRIETIES, FRAUDULENT OR DISHONEST CONDUCT (WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY)**

Blue Sky Fund will investigate any possible impropriety, fraudulent or dishonest use or misuse of Blue Sky's resources or property by board, staff, volunteers, or program participants. Anyone found to have engaged in an impropriety or fraudulent activity is subject to disciplinary action by Blue Sky Fund up to and including termination or dismissal, and civil or criminal prosecution when warranted.

All members of the Blue Sky Fund staff, board, and stakeholder community (including volunteers) are to report possible fraudulent or dishonest conduct (including but not limited to financial improprieties or misuse of the organization's resources) confidentially to the Executive Director. If for any reason an employee, board member, or stakeholder finds it difficult to report his or her concern to the Executive Director, that person can report it directly to the Board President.

The person reporting may choose to do so anonymously via mail or through other means of communication. All efforts will be made to protect the confidentiality of those who report financial improprieties and choose to do so anonymously. However, in certain situations, legal requirements make it impossible to keep the individual's identity confidential.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

Volunteers are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement (see Appendix) before they begin.

### **COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

Only photos or videos of participants who have signed the Blue Sky photo release are permissible for use on external communications (including social media sites and marketing materials). Only authorized employees are allowed to publish updates, photos, and information on social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter.



SECTION III: RISK MANAGEMENT

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Blue Sky Fund has adopted an easy, tactile way to teach participants our behavior expectations. Each expectation is assigned a finger; the five expectations are "Encouragement", "Accountability", "Respect", "Commitment", and "Safety". This is a highly effective tool for vocalizing expectations up front and referencing expectations throughout the day.

# BSF: five finger agreement

**I** will follow the **RULES**

When we point fingers @ other people, we are NOT ONLY making them feel bad, but we are making ourselves LOOK BAD (note: 3 fingers are pointing back @ us!)

★ Lets turn that pointing finger around & hold ourselves accountable; quietly let a leader know if someone is bothering you. **OK?**

**COMMITMENT TO OUR TEAM**

We follow these expectations because we are committed to working, learning, and playing together!

**RESPECT**

FIND OUT WHAT IT MEANS TO ME.

We need to ACTIVELY think about how we treat other people (WORDS & ACTIONS!)

- Please & Thank-you
- Yes ma'am, Yes sir
- Listening ears, seeing eyes
- Positive language

**SAFETY**

In order to have FUN, we need to take care of ourselves, our team, and our environment.

**ENCOURAGEMENT**

Thumbs-up!

We ALL like to hear that we did a good job

The more you say it, the more you'll hear it!

"That was a great answer!"  
 "You are so smart!"  
 "Good try, you'll get it next time.."  
 "You look so nice today."  
 "congratulations on winning!"  
 "You are a great leader."

**PHYSICAL** - play carefully, hands to yourself, TIE SHOES

**EMOTIONAL** - care for the feelings of others

**ENVIRONMENTAL** - keep your city beautiful

Blue Sky informs all behavioral management strategies from the *Positive Youth Development Model*. Blue Sky advocates a positive guidance and discipline policy with an emphasis on positive reinforcement, redirection, prevention, and the development of self-discipline. Remind participants that the rules are established for safety and to ensure that we have a common standard of behavior. As employees, we need to show the participants that we see the need for following the rules ourselves. The behavior management policies for each program are outlined in the individual program manuals and all employees and volunteers will be trained on the appropriate level of risk management for their responsibilities directly from their supervisors.

Corrective discipline must be a creative, caring effort on the part of the employee, and it must be seen as such by the participants. Always suggest positive alternatives to unacceptable behavior before it gets out of control.

1. Discuss rules with participants and identify out-of-bounds areas.
2. Discuss the consequences of breaking any rule:
  - a. Quiet time
  - b. Restriction from activity
  - c. Restriction to adult supervision
  - d. Conference with Program Manager
  - e. Conference with parent/director
  - f. Removal from the program
3. Enforcement of all rules at all times will be without malice and consistent in application.
4. Blue Sky Fund Staff should be informed of all disciplinary measures, and will, in turn, report them to the Executive Director.
5. At no time will discipline include depriving a participant of sleep, food, or restroom privileges, placing a participant alone without supervision, or subjecting a participant to ridicule, shaming, threat, corporal punishment (striking, biting, kicking, squeezing), washing out the mouth, or excessive physical exercise or restraint.
6. Periodic evaluation of the program/staff/participant groups will be done to ensure that the program environment is not contributing to behavior problems.

#### **CHILD ABUSE**

Child abuse has been in the spotlight of public attention since early 1985. We have all become much more sensitized to the potential occurrence and serious implication of such at any day or overnight program.

Child abuse is legally wrong. We are required to report any alleged physical or sexual abuse that takes place during Blue Sky Fund programs to the State Child Protective Services within 24 hours after the allegation is made known. Any allegation of abuse prior to a participant's arrival at Blue Sky Fund is to be reported within 8 hours, with a written report within 72 hours.

In a setting such as ours, physical abuse is most likely to happen when an employee is disciplining a rebellious or unruly participant. Anything done to inflict pain while disciplining a participant is considered child abuse (See Behavior Management Policy).

The physical size and strength of staff members necessitates that you use discretion and restraint in all physical contact activities with participants. Games that encourage intense

competitive activities with physical contact that potentially could cause injury must be eliminated or supervised very closely by non-participating staff members.

### **CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

Affectionate touch and the warm feelings it brings is an important factor in helping a child grow into a loving and peaceful adult. However, staff and volunteers need to be sensitive to each person's need for personal space (i.e., not everyone wants to be hugged). Our programs encourage appropriate touch; however, at the same time prohibit inappropriate touch or other means of sexually exploiting children. Anyone working with or for Blue Sky Fund is considered a mandatory reporter by the State of Virginia.

In the event that there is an accusation of child abuse Blue Sky Fund will take prompt and immediate action as follows:

1. At the first report of probable cause to believe that a child-abuse incident has occurred, the employee or volunteer receiving the report will notify the Executive Director or Program Manager. However if these staff are not immediately available, this review by the supervisor cannot in any way deter the reporting of child abuse by the mandated reporters. Most states mandate each child-care provider to report information they have learned in their professional role regarding suspected child abuse. In most states, mandated reporters are granted immunity from prosecution.
2. Blue Sky Fund will make a report in accordance with relevant state or local child abuse reporting requirements and will cooperate to the extent of the law with any legal authority involved.
3. In the event the reported incident(s) involve a program volunteer or employee, the Executive Director will, without exception, suspend the volunteer or employee from Blue Sky Fund. The parents or legal guardian of the child(ren) involved in the alleged incident will be promptly notified in accordance with the directions of the relevant state or local agency.

Whether the incident or alleged offense takes place on or off Blue Sky Fund property, it will be considered job-related (because of the youth-involved nature of Blue Sky Fund).

Reinstatement of the employee or volunteer will occur only after all allegations have been cleared to the satisfaction of the Executive Director. All Blue Sky Fund employees and volunteers must be sensitive to the need for confidentiality in the handling of this information and therefore, should only discuss the incident with the Executive Director.

### **CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

All employees and volunteers must be very cautious in order to avoid doing anything that could be interpreted as sexual abuse. Even the appearance of wrong or a false allegation can cause irreparable damage to the reputation of an accused staff member or volunteer and Blue Sky Fund. Therefore, Blue Sky Fund employees and volunteers will adhere to the rule that no child and adult will ever be one on one in an area not seen by another adult or child. Blue Sky Fund trains its staff and volunteers on this policy and there are no times where one on one interaction is required by a program.

Child sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to any contact or interaction between a child and an adult when the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or of a third person.

The behavior may or may not involve touching. Sexual behavior between a child and an adult is always considered forced, whether or not the child has consented.

Do NOT touch the genital area or buttocks of ANY participant. A quick hug is considered acceptable, but a prolonged hug or embrace is not. Use good judgment.

Procedures for Child-Abuse Complaints:

1. Any actions observed that are not acceptable behavior according to the above guidelines should be reported as soon as possible to the Program Manager or Executive Director.
2. The Program Manager or Executive Director will notify the appropriate authorities and parents.
3. The Program Manager or Executive Director will take appropriate internal action.

**Release of Information to the Press:**

Information about an accident or incident will NOT be released without the written consent of the Executive Director. Several topics should not be discussed with the press by anyone other than the appointed representative.

These include:

1. Assessment of fault or criticism of conduct;
2. Assessment of policy, equipment, or facilities;
3. Information regarding the nature of the injury or illness prior to a diagnosis by a licensed medical doctor;
4. Names of victims prior to notification of next of kin;
5. Estimate of property damage.

**PERSONAL VEHICLE USE POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to promote the safety of participants, employees and volunteers when using personal vehicles for Blue Sky Fund business. All staff or volunteers driving a personal vehicle for any Blue Sky Fund related business shall maintain a valid driver's license, insurance, and must operate the vehicle in a safe manner at all times.

**Standards:**

1. Only authorized employees and volunteers may transport participants in their personal vehicles.
2. To qualify to transport participants in a personal vehicle, the employee or volunteer must have an acceptable driving record based on our insurance carrier's guidelines and submit documentation of a current insurance policy.
3. Driving records must remain within the insurance carrier's guidelines for continued employment or assignment in positions with driving duties. Employees and volunteers who do not maintain acceptable records will not be allowed to transport participants and may be disqualified for the position.
4. All employees and volunteers driving on Blue Sky business must maintain a valid driver's license and insurance on all vehicles they drive. Any change in the status of their driver's

- license or insurance must be reported to their supervisor immediately and prior to driving on Blue Sky business.
5. Employees transporting participants in personal vehicles will have their driving records checked every two years.
  6. Employee/volunteer insurance serves as primary coverage with Blue Sky's insurance being secondary.
  7. The personal vehicle used to transport participants must be properly maintained and in good working condition.
  8. The driver and all passengers must wear seat belts at all times. No vehicle should be operated when the number of occupants exceeds the number of passenger restraints available.
  9. Drivers shall obey all applicable traffic and parking regulations, ordinances, and laws.
    - a) Employees and volunteers who incur parking or other fines while on Blue Sky business are personally responsible for payment of such fines.
    - b) Employees and volunteers who are issued citations for any offense while driving on Blue Sky business must notify their supervisor immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours. Failure to provide such notice may be grounds for disciplinary action.
    - c) An employee or volunteer who is arrested for or charged with a motor vehicle offense for which the punishment includes suspension or revocation of the motor vehicle license while on Blue Sky business, must notify his or her supervisor immediately when practicable, but in no case later than 24 hours. Conviction for such offense may be grounds for loss of privilege to transport Blue Sky participants and/or further disciplinary action.
  10. Any driver who is involved in a motor vehicle accident while on Blue Sky business involving personal injury to any party shall notify his/her supervisor immediately. If the accident involves property damage only, the driver shall notify his/her supervisor upon return to the work location.
  11. The driver shall use hands free equipment when necessary to talk on a cell phone when driving. In no event shall the driver text message or operate any other electronic equipment while driving the vehicle. It is always preferred that the driver park the car in a safe location to receive or make cell phone calls.
  12. No smoking in personal vehicles while transporting participants.
  13. Only participants and individuals conducting Blue Sky business are to be in a personal vehicle while transporting participants.

Prior to driving participants for Blue Sky business, volunteers must sign the "Personal Vehicle Use" signature page in the Appendix and return to the Volunteer Coordinator.

#### **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS**

A criminal background check is required for all Blue Sky Fund employees and regular volunteers prior to interaction with Blue Sky Fund participants. Employee background checks are paid for by Blue Sky Fund and volunteer background checks can be reimbursed by request. Information on how to complete a background check can be obtained from the Volunteer Coordinator or Business Manager.

## APPENDIX

### STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Amanda Payne  
Interim Executive Director  
(804) 410-4273  
amanda@blueskyfund.org

Colvin Hedgepeth  
Development Director  
(804) 410-4265  
colvin@blueskyfund.org

Tanesha Powell  
Academic Program Manager  
(804) 495-1435  
tanesha@blueskyfund.org

Regan Alloway  
Explorers Site Coordinator – 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>  
(703) 850-5103  
explorers@blueskyfund.org

Erica Eddins  
Explorers Site Coordinator – 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>  
(540) 849-6770  
sitecoordinator@blueskyfund.org

Brittany Bailey  
Adventure Program Manager  
(804) 495-1413  
brittany@blueskyfund.org

Dustin Parks  
OLI Program Manager  
(540) 421-5417  
dustin@blueskyfund.org

Sarah Jane DeHart  
Operations and Volunteer Coordinator  
(804) 213-2464  
sarahjane@blueskyfund.org

## Explorers Volunteer Position Description

### Explorers Volunteer Explorers Program

**Core Program Goals:** Developing core values and character traits in students that relate to classroom behaviors and social skill, environmental stewardship, academic success, and resilience skills.

**Introduction:** We are excited to include you in our mission to provide transformational experiences for urban youth through outdoor education. At Explorers, we try to provide an academic experience that is outdoors, active, and exploration-driven. We need your support and enthusiasm to make our programs the best they can be!

**Orientation and Training:** The Volunteer Coordinator will hold volunteer orientation and training twice a year (at the beginning of each semester), or on an individual basis as needed.

#### **Expectations:**

- Arrive at the designated site 30 minutes before the students arrive so that you can know and understand the plan for the day.
- Bring a lunch and a water bottle as we will be eating lunch with the students.
- Support the staff by being attentive and enthusiastic about all activities.
- Support the staff by managing group dynamics. Managing group dynamics may come in the form of taking students to the bathroom, quietly asking students to listen to the instructor, settling arguments, helping students understand the activity, and actively participating in the activities themselves.
- Build relationships with students.
- Dress appropriately for the weather and for a school setting (please refrain from wearing athletic apparel i.e. leggings, sweat pants, running shorts).
- Limit use of cell phones and other electronics at programming as they can be distracting to students.
- If you are able, remain after programming to assist staff in cleaning up and debriefing the program.

#### **Qualifications:**

- Ability to take direction and partner with the staff to complete assignments
- Ability to respond calmly and positively to the needs and requests of others
- Participate as a team member and complete assignments independently, as appropriate
- Excellent oral communication skills

**Work Schedule:** Explorers Field Investigations take place Tuesday-Friday from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm with the option for volunteers to remain after to take part in a debrief meeting with the staff that will end at 1:30 pm. Some trips have a slightly different arrival time that volunteers will be informed of prior to their being scheduled for that trip.

**Time commitment:** Volunteering with the Explorers Program can be flexible. Explorers Volunteers are welcome to come once, twice, once a week, once a month, etc. However,

volunteers are expected to be present for the duration of the program to which they have committed. They will communicate with the Volunteer Coordinator about which days they wish to commit to.

**Supervision and Support Plan:** The supervisor for this volunteer position is the Academic Program Manager, Tanesha Powell, who can be reached at [tanisha@blueskyfund.org](mailto:tanisha@blueskyfund.org) or (804) 495-1435. The volunteer will also be connected with site-specific staff determined by which grade level he/she is placed with. The Explorers Volunteer is welcome to provide constructive feedback to the supervisor on an ongoing basis at mutually agreed upon times.

**Volunteer Benefits:**

- Opportunity to learn new skills in outdoor education
- References for employment or academic purposes, dependent on satisfactory performance
- Opportunity to network with other people and organizations in the Richmond education and environmental fields
- Opportunity to contribute toward the mission of Blue Sky Fund

**Start and End Dates:** October to end of May (the duration of the school year)

Sarah Jane DeHart  
Volunteer Coordinator  
[sarahjane@blueskyfund.org](mailto:sarahjane@blueskyfund.org)  
(804) 213-2464



## Outdoor Adventure Club (OAC) Volunteer Position Description

### OAC Volunteer Adventure Program

**Core Program Goal:** Develop character and leadership through outdoor experiences that expand horizons, increase confidence, and build collaboration skills.

**Introduction:** We are excited to include you in our mission to provide transformational experiences for urban youth through outdoor education. Blue Sky's Adventure Crew seeks to provide outdoor experiences that are both fun and challenging, in order to get kids to be active, to believe in themselves, and to learn to love and respect the natural world. We need your support and enthusiasm to make our programs the best they can be!

**Orientation and Training:** The Volunteer Coordinator will hold volunteer orientation and training twice a year (at the beginning of each semester), or on an individual basis as needed.

#### **Expectations:**

- Know and understand the plan for the day by having communicated with the staff prior to programming.
- Support the staff by being attentive and enthusiastic about all activities.
- Support the staff by managing group dynamics. Managing group dynamics may come in the form of taking students to the bathroom, quietly asking students to listen to the instructor, settling arguments, helping students understand the activity, and actively participating in the activities themselves.
- Build relationships with students.
- Dress appropriately for both the weather and the activity.
- Limit use of cell phones and other electronics at programming as they can be distracting to students.
- If you are able, remain after programming to assist staff in cleaning up and debriefing the program.
- The opportunity to assist the staff with a camping overnight (Friday afternoon to Saturday afternoon) with the students once a semester.

#### **Qualifications:**

- Ability to take direction and partner with the staff to complete assignments
- Ability to respond calmly and positively to the needs and requests of others
- Participate as a team member and complete assignments independently, as appropriate
- Excellent oral communication skills

**Work Schedule:** Each OAC meets for two hours one day a week in the time frame of Monday-Thursday between 12:30 pm and 7:00 pm. OAC Volunteers will be told a specific day and time depending on which OAC best fits their scheduling needs and program skills.

**Time commitment:** Volunteers are expected to be present for the duration of programming on a weekly basis. This level of consistency serves our students, staff and the volunteer to best be able to build relationships. The position assignment is for one school year. The commitment

may extend dependent on the needs and desires of both Blue Sky Fund and the volunteer as well as the performance of the volunteer.

**Supervision and Support Plan:** The supervisor for this volunteer position is the Adventure Program Manager, Brittany Bailey, who can be reached at [brittany@blueskyfund.org](mailto:brittany@blueskyfund.org) or (804) 495-1413. The volunteer will also be connected with site-specific staff determined by which OAC he/she is placed with. The volunteer is welcome to provide constructive feedback to the supervisor on an ongoing basis at mutually agreed upon times.

**Volunteer Benefits:**

- Opportunity to learn new skills in outdoor education
- References for employment or academic purposes, dependent on satisfactory performance
- Opportunity to network with other people and organizations in the Richmond outdoors and nonprofit communities
- Opportunity to contribute toward the mission of Blue Sky Fund

**Commitment Time Frame:** September to June (the duration of the school year)

Sarah Jane DeHart  
Volunteer Coordinator  
[sarahjane@blueskyfund.org](mailto:sarahjane@blueskyfund.org)  
(804) 213-2464

## Expedition Volunteer Position Description

### Expedition Volunteer Adventure Program

**Core Program Goal:** Develop character and leadership through outdoor experiences that expand horizons, increase confidence, and build collaboration skills.

**Introduction:** We are excited to include you in our mission to provide transformational experiences for urban youth through outdoor education. Blue Sky's Saturday Expeditions seek to provide outdoor experiences that are both fun and challenging, in order to get kids to be active, to believe in themselves, and to learn to love and respect the natural world. We need your support and enthusiasm to make our programs the best they can be!

**Orientation and Training:** The Volunteer Coordinator will hold volunteer orientation and training twice a year (at the beginning of each semester), or on an individual basis as needed.

#### **Expectations:**

- Know and understand the plan for the day by having communicated with the staff prior to programming.
- Support the staff by being attentive and enthusiastic about all activities.
- Support the staff by managing group dynamics. Managing group dynamics may come in the form of taking students to the bathroom, quietly asking students to listen to the instructor, settling arguments, helping students understand the activity, and actively participating in the activities themselves.
- Build relationships with students.
- Dress appropriately for both the weather and the activity.
- Limit use of cell phones and other electronics at programming as they can be distracting to students.
- If you are able, remain after programming to assist staff in cleaning up and debriefing the program.

#### **Qualifications:**

- Ability to take direction and partner with the staff to complete assignments
- Ability to respond calmly and positively to the needs and requests of others
- Participate as a team member and complete assignments independently, as appropriate
- Excellent oral communication skills

**Work Schedule:** Expeditions take place on Saturdays during the school year. The expedition time frame will vary based on the activity of the day but will generally be between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:00 pm. Volunteers can commit to one or more expeditions by communicating with the Volunteer Coordinator.

**Time commitment:** Volunteers are expected to be present for the duration of the programming to which they have committed. Exact times for each expedition will be communicated to volunteers prior to their committing to the trip.

**Supervision and Support Plan:** The supervisor for this volunteer position is the Adventure Program Manager, Brittany Bailey, who can be reached at [brittany@blueskyfund.org](mailto:brittany@blueskyfund.org) or (804) 495-1413. The volunteer will also be connected with trip-specific staff determined by which expedition he/she is committed to. The volunteer is welcome to provide constructive feedback to the supervisor on an ongoing basis at mutually agreed upon times.

**Volunteer Benefits:**

- Opportunity to learn new skills in outdoor education
- References for employment or academic purposes, dependent on satisfactory performance
- Opportunity to network with other people and organizations in the Richmond outdoors and nonprofit communities
- Opportunity to contribute toward the mission of Blue Sky Fund

**Start and End Dates:** Saturdays from October through June (the duration of the school year)

Sarah Jane DeHart  
Volunteer Coordinator  
[sarahjane@blueskyfund.org](mailto:sarahjane@blueskyfund.org)  
(804) 213-2464

## Outdoor Leadership Institute (OLI) Volunteer Position Description

### OLI Volunteer Adventure Program

**Program Goal:** Strengthen leadership and teamwork skills by confronting the challenges of the wilderness as a team of knowledgeable, multicultural leaders who will then translate that experience to meet the social needs of Richmond through service learning.

**Introduction:** We are excited to include you in our mission to provide transformational experiences for urban youth through outdoor education. Our OLI program runs for two weeks during the summer as new crews of high school students (both boys and girls) come together from all over the city of Richmond to learn about and practice leadership, community and service. The summer portion of the program culminates in a 5-day backpacking trip to Mt. Rogers- the highest peak in Virginia! The crews will then continue to meet one Saturday a month for the rest of the school year to engage in service projects tailored to what they are passionate about. We need your support and enthusiasm to make our programs the best they can be!

**Orientation and Training:** The Volunteer Coordinator will hold volunteer orientation and training twice a year (at the beginning of each semester), or on an individual basis as needed.

#### **Expectations:**

- Know and understand the plan for the day by having communicated with the staff prior to programming.
- Support the staff by being attentive and enthusiastic about all activities.
- Support the staff by managing group dynamics.
- Build relationships with students.
- Dress appropriately for both the weather and the activity.
- Limit use of cell phones and other electronics at programming as they can be distracting to students.
- If you are able, remain after programming to assist staff in cleaning up and debriefing the program.

#### **Qualifications:**

- Ability to take direction and partner with the staff to complete assignments
- Ability to respond calmly and positively to the needs and requests of others
- Participate as a team member and complete assignments independently, as appropriate
- Excellent oral communication skills

**Work Schedule:** OLI service projects take place one Saturday a month from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

**Time commitment:** Volunteers are expected to be present for the duration of programming during the summer and for each Saturday meeting of the OLI program. This level of consistency serves our students, staff and the volunteer to best be able to build relationships. The position assignment is for one school year.

**Supervision and Support Plan:** The supervisor for this volunteer position is the OLI Program Manager, Dustin Parks, who can be reached at [dustin@blueskyfund.org](mailto:dustin@blueskyfund.org) or (540) 421-5417. The volunteer will also be connected with day-specific staff determined by the staff schedule. The volunteer is welcome to provide constructive feedback to the supervisor on an ongoing basis at mutually agreed upon times.

**Volunteer Benefits:**

- Opportunity to learn new skills in outdoor education
- References for employment or academic purposes, dependent on satisfactory performance
- Opportunity to network with other people and organizations in the Richmond outdoors and nonprofit communities
- Opportunity to contribute toward the mission of Blue Sky Fund

**Start and End Dates:** Two weeks of the summer as well as one Saturday a month from September to June (the school year)

Sarah Jane DeHart  
Volunteer Coordinator  
[sarahjane@blueskyfund.org](mailto:sarahjane@blueskyfund.org)  
(804) 213-2464

**PERSONAL VEHICLE USE POLICY**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, (print name) have read and understand the Personal Vehicle Use Policy established by Blue Sky Fund. I agree to abide by the provisions of this policy. I understand that failure to comply with any and all provisions of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal of authorization to transport Blue Sky participants, suspension and/or termination of employment or volunteer assignment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Driver Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Driver Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Supervisor Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

It is against Blue Sky Fund’s policies for any Board member, staff, or volunteer to disclose to anyone outside of Blue Sky Fund non-public personal, health, or financial information about any participant, donor, staff, or board member that becomes known to them through their affiliation with Blue Sky Fund.

Financial information may only be shared when necessary to acknowledge donors, analyze giving, and only through established systems or the appropriate Blue Sky staff contact. Collected health information may be disclosed to the extent necessary for safety, planning, and treatment purposes.

Names, addresses and phone numbers of participants, families/guardians, staff and volunteers shall not be disclosed without permission of the participant, their family/guardian, staff and volunteers, verbally, electronically or otherwise, except as required for safety. The privacy of all participants, families/guardians, donors, staff and volunteers must be respected and protected.

By signing below, you affirm that you have read and understand this policy, and will not share confidential information with unauthorized individuals.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name



**BLUE SKY FUND**  
**Photo Release**

I, the undersigned, desire to participate in, and (if participant is a minor, 17 years of age and younger), I, the parent/legal guardian of the participant (the "Minor Participant") grant permission for the Minor Participant to participate in, activities and/or use equipment offered by Blue Sky Fund. In exchange for being permitted to participate in the activities and/or use the equipment offered by Blue Sky Fund, for myself, my heirs, guardians, and legal representatives, I (and the Minor Participant) voluntarily grant Blue Sky Fund the right to use for promotional purposes the participant's photo, video or audio taken in any Blue Sky Fund activity.

A signed copy of this document shall be deemed an original.

PARTICIPANT'S NAME

\_\_\_\_\_

LAST

MIDDLE INITIAL

FIRST

Signature of participant:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/legal guardian (if participant is a minor):

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**BLUE SKY FUND**  
**Acknowledgement of Risks, Agreement for Indemnity,**  
**Release, and Waiver of Liability**

I, the undersigned, desire to participate in, and (if participant is a minor, 17 years of age and younger), I, the parent/legal guardian of the participant (the "Minor Participant"), grant permission for the Minor Participant to participate in, the following rigorous physical activities (the "Activities") and/or use certain climbing, fitness, and adventure equipment (the "Equipment") owned and/or provided by Blue Sky Fund ("BSF"):

- Indoor and outdoor climbing wall, ropes, and climbing gear;
- Camping and/or sleeping overnight, outdoors (and other associated activities, e.g. camp fires);
- Hiking, rappelling, rock climbing, bouldering, fitness activities, use of wilderness survival skills;
- Canoeing, swimming, and other water-related activities;
- After school outdoor adventure programs and other programs involving activities and gear for hiking, bicycling, rappelling, rock climbing, bouldering, fitness, wilderness survival skills, canoeing, swimming and other rigorous activities;
- Adventure trips, team building games, and challenge activities;
- Riding in buses, vans, or other vehicles owned by BSF or a partner site or organization.

I fully understand that the Activities and use of the Equipment are potentially and/or inherently dangerous activities. By signing below, I acknowledge that using the Equipment and participating in the Activities is potentially and/or inherently dangerous, involves strenuous physical activity and a risk of death or severe injuries, including, but not limited to, falls, broken bones, cuts, lacerations, sprains, strains, illness, exhaustion, drowning, burns, or head injuries. I also understand and acknowledge that wearing a helmet while using the Equipment and/or participating in the Activities is highly recommended. As the parent/legal guardian of the Minor Participant, I certify that I have discussed with the Minor Participant the inherent and/or potential dangers and risks of using the Equipment and participating in the Activities. I certify that, as a participant in the Activities or use of the Equipment, I (and/or the Minor Participant) do not suffer from back, leg, arm, hand or other bodily injuries or medical conditions, heart ailments, dizziness, vertigo, or any other condition that may affect the participant's or Minor Participant's ability to safely participate in the Activities or use the Equipment.

I (and/or the Minor Participant) wish to participate in these Activities and use of the Equipment knowing that they are potentially and/or inherently dangerous. **I VOLUNTARILY ACCEPT AND ASSUME ALL THE RISKS OF INJURY OF ANY KIND (INCLUDING DEATH) TO ME (AND TO THE MINOR PARTICIPANT) AND INJURY OR LOSS TO MY PROPERTY (OR TO THAT OF THE MINOR PARTICIPANT), AS WELL AS ANY LIABILITY FROM MY PARTICIPATION (OR THAT OF THE MINOR PARTICIPANT) IN THE ACTIVITIES OR USE OF THE EQUIPMENT.**

In exchange for being permitted to participate in the Activities and/or use the Equipment, for myself, my heirs, guardians, and legal representatives, I (and the Minor Participant) voluntarily release and agree not to make or bring any claim of any kind against Blue Sky Fund, its officers, directors, members, agents, employees, staff, volunteers, or other persons making real or personal property available for the Activities (collectively the "BSF Parties"), on account of any injury of any kind (including death), to me (or to the Minor Participant) or any damage to my property (or to that of the Minor Participant) whether from anyone's negligence or not, or any other cause arising out of my (or the Minor Participant's) participation in these potentially or inherently dangerous activities. I further understand the risks inherent in vehicular transportation over public and private roads and voluntarily release the BSF Parties from any liability for any driving related incidents, accidents, or other events or incidents

