Working with A Way of Life Farm in 2018

If you’re considering a career in farming, our apprenticeship positions are a great way to get the experience and knowledge that you’ll need before jumping in.

All members of the farm crew learn the ins and outs of our farm- vegetable growing from seed to harvest, pastured pork production, marketing, soil health, tools, and our broader vision for the land and what it means for our world. Farming is our form of activism. We believe that providing people with truly healthy food that is also healthy for the land is a powerful act.

About the farm:
A Way of Life Farm has the goal of fostering healthy people, healthy economy, and healthy ecology through food production. With a crew of two farmers, four apprentices, two children, and extended family, we grow Certified Organic vegetables, strawberries, blueberries, and pasture-raised pork for sale to farmers’ market, CSA, and restaurant customers. This commercial production is integral to a broader permaculture design and land revitalization, which includes the development of fruit and nut orchards (persimmon, pawpaw, muscadines, chestnuts, and apples). A combination of sustainable practices including bio-intensive raised beds, cover cropping, Kinsey-Albrecht method, keyline plowing, Holistic Management, and permaculture design are used throughout our land. About 90% of our time is spent growing vegetables.

We start our own vegetable transplants from seed and propagate perennials in a permanent greenhouse. Forty types of vegetables and herbs are grown primarily outdoors in raised beds. We also grow tomatoes, cucumbers, and winter greens in a large hoop house and other veggies in low-tech, movable “caterpillar tunnels”. A tractor is used for initial bed preparation, but most of our work -- planting, weeding, harvesting- is done with hand tools. Our products are sold through farmers’ markets, CSAs, and restaurants. Working with A Way of Life Farm offers an opportunity to see what it’s like to earn a livelihood from a farm. We are located an hour from Asheville and Charlotte, NC.

Working and Learning with us:
Farming really is a way of life and it is truly meaningful work! You will take part in all aspects of the farm from vegetable seed to harvest, livestock chores, marketing, perennials, and experimental projects, but should expect to spend the vast majority of time growing vegetables.

Apprenticeships:
We take our role as educators seriously, offering information and skills that will lead to a greater understanding of farm management and systems. We work closely with you, explaining tasks as they come up in the season and offer written information and informal “classes”. As the season progresses, apprentices are given increased
responsibilities around the farm. We teach thoughtful and efficient execution of farm tasks, which is essential to the success of any enterprise (the goal in production work is to get the job done right and get it done quickly).

**Qualifications:** We are looking for curious apprentices with good communication skills and self-motivation. Some previous experience on a commercial farm is highly recommended -- this may take the form of previous farm internships or even just a couple days volunteering on a commercial farm. Experience with physical labor or intense outdoor activity is important. Our bodies are our primary tools on the farm. Hands-on learning is a given on a farm, but the ability to learn from listening is very valuable as a lot of information is conveyed verbally through informal “classes” in the field. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate pets.

Apprentices commit to the following:
- Full season stay (mid-January - April through November/December
- Average 45 hours per week of work

We expect hard work during these hours and also respect your time and life away from the farm, trying our best to stick to a pre-arranged schedule. A typical day will begin at 7:45 am and end at 5:45 pm, with two hours for lunch. Apprentices will have every Sunday off, one Tuesday afternoon/month off beginning in May, and one four-day weekend in the summer (Saturday-Tuesday). Saturdays will rotate between going to the Farmers’ Market and having the day off. Fridays are one of the busiest farm days and cannot be missed. Occasionally, the farm will demand longer days just to get the job done.

- Prepare healthy meals for yourself throughout the week
- Arrive promptly at pre-arranged start times
- Work outdoors in rain, shine, heat, or cold
- Maintain a positive and curious attitude
- Bring appropriate clothing and supplies to stay comfortable and healthy on the farm.
- Respect farm housing, tools, and facilities
- Respect the farm crew, volunteers, and customers of the farm
- No smoking, pets, illegal substances, or firearms

**Sara Jane and Jamie will provide the following:**

- A broad range of information and skills related to farming, primarily communicated in the field. These skills include vegetable raising from seed to harvest, raising pastured pigs, methods of pest control, soil health and revitalization, perennial fruit raising, and a lot more.
- Answering or helping to research any farming related questions
- Experience marketing farm products and information on a farm as a business
- Access to an excellent library of farming related books
- Membership to CRAFT
• $700/month stipend (taxes will be withheld and a W-2 is given at the end of the year)
• Housing: a personal camper-trailer or tiny home (electricity, cold water, outhouse, hot outdoor shower, and propane cooking appliances are provided)
• 2 farm crew meals per week
• Vegetables from the farm and $150 pork credit (3 pack limit on bacon- this is a hot commodity!)
• Food staples (dry goods we order in bulk such as organic rice, beans, oats, etc)

Apprentices say:

"I had a truly transformative experience working with Jamie and Sara Jane at A Way of Life Farm...I genuinely feel like I couldn't have gone through this experience with better mentors. Jaime and Sara Jane are both incredibly knowledgeable and patient teachers...It in incredible to think back on my first days on the farm and the transformation that has occurred. I have learned so many of the technical skills and basic knowledge to help jump start my farming career, but even more importantly I have a greater sense of drive to achieve my goals after experiencing what life as an organic farmer is really like."

"My apprenticeship with A Way of Life prepared me to go from very little formal farming experience, to the job I have now: running a farm with a 180-member sliding-scale CSA... A Way of Life farmers, Sara Jane and Jamie Davis, dedicate themselves to educating their apprentices. I've never seen a farm achieve such a balance between maintaining financial stability while also continuing to deepen ecological practices. My apprenticeship gave me both the hard skills and the inspiration to farm in a way that is both idealistic and realistic."

For more references from former apprentices and customers, and even MORE information, check out http://organicgrowersschool.org/farm/a-way-of-life-farm/

Want to apply? Please fill out a completed application found on our website along with a resume and two work references. We look forward to hearing from you!