



Program Coordinator Job Description

Updated 10/20/08

Organization Profile

Spark is an award-winning, rapidly growing youth empowerment organization. Spark creates real-world opportunities for middle-school youth to build motivation, self-confidence and school engagement through hands-on apprenticeships. Our mission is to inspire middle-school students to pursue their interests, create bonds with their communities, and develop a lifelong passion for learning. As students explore the opportunities and challenges of a work environment, guided by a trained volunteer, they discover the relevance of school, build motivation, and set positive goals for academic and personal success.

Spark's innovative model piloted in 2005 and has more than doubled in size each year since, reaching students in the San Francisco Bay Area. With demonstrated effectiveness, the model has attracted interest from communities and educators around the United States. Spark was recently awarded the prestigious Draper Richards Fellowship in 2008, given to four early-stage non-profits from around the world with the highest potential for "broad social impact." Spark is now preparing to launch national-scale programs and help thousands of youth around the United States, showing that middle-school can be a time when students become motivated lifelong learners.

Since its founding in 2004, Spark has grown rapidly in response to need and demand from the Bay Area community, serving 132 youth in 2008 and an estimated 280 youth in 2009. Spark's programs operate at four locations in Redwood City and two in San Francisco. For more details, please visit www.sparkprogram.org.

Position Overview:

Spark seeks an enthusiastic Program Coordinator to lead groups of 7th and 8th grade youth through Spark's Redwood City summer and after-school programs. The position is an opportunity to work daily with students, parents and mentors in the context of a high-impact youth empowerment program. Spark's Program Coordinator will join a supportive, dedicated team of educators, will have significant leadership responsibility, and will have the opportunity to help develop Spark's curriculum and model. The ideal candidate wants to grow significantly, is an excellent communicator, and deeply motivated to help students become self-actualized learners.

Spark's Core Values:

- **Self-Actualization:** Empowering people to confidently pursue their interests and live their values, driven by intrinsic motivation.
- **Community:** Fostering connections among people and organizations to meet individual and shared goals.
- **Democracy:** Collaboratively involving all stakeholders in decision-making.
- **Transparency:** Encouraging honest communication and actively seeking feedback for understanding and growth.
- **Positivity:** Planning for and expecting the best from every situation and person, and finding the opportunities in each challenge.



Job Description:

The Program Coordinator role is focused on running Spark's after-school and summer youth programs. The position offers an intensive learning experience, with responsibility and potential for growth. The ideal candidate wants to grow significantly, is an excellent communicator, and is deeply motivated to help students become self-actualized learners.

Specific Responsibilities:

Direct Youth Program Management (70%)

- Lead inspiring summer and after-school youth programs, creating an environment of encouragement, motivation and support for students as they develop their leadership potential.
- Act as personal role model for students as they progress through their apprenticeship and Spark's curriculum.
- Lead 2-3 groups of eight to 10 students each during the after-school sessions, meeting with each group for one afternoon per week, in addition to facilitating their apprenticeships.
- During the summer, lead one group of 12 students for each of two four-week intensive session, with assistance from another Spark staff member.
- Lead each day's workshops and staff-led activities, and coordinate volunteer-led workshops.
- Act as a "case manager" for each student, maintaining a positive relationship with the student, their parents, and their mentor, maximizing the effect of the experience through good communication.
- Ensure a smoothly-run program by managing volunteers, logistics, transportation and other critical program areas.
- Assist with student transportation to and from their apprenticeships and field trips in Spark vans (during summer and occasionally during after-school programs).
- Implement Spark's evaluation methods: pre- and post-program surveys, long-term follow-up surveys, focus groups, and school district data.
- Help schedule parent carpools and arrange other logistics and transportation related to the program.

Outreach & Recruitment (20%)

- Ensure high awareness of Spark among students, families and teachers at Spark's feeder schools in Redwood City, through presentations, awareness-raising events, and announcements, particularly during Spark's recruitment periods.
- Review student applications and assist in interviewing and selecting students.
- Assist in recruiting and training volunteers for Spark's apprenticeships, workshops and field trips.
- Maintain relationships with Spark alumni when possible, assisting in developing an alumni relations process.
- Manage "Discovery Night," the graduation and presentation of learning event at the conclusion of each Spark session.





Curriculum & Organizational Development (10%)

- Deepen Spark’s impact by making improvements and modifications to Spark’s student curriculum, parent and volunteer guides, and other materials.
- Document Spark’s ongoing processes, helping to create more detailed training guides for staff and other organizations interested in customizing the Spark model to their areas.

Qualifications:

- **Spanish fluency required.**
- Demonstrated passion for and commitment to helping students become self-actualized, empowered learners.
- At least one year of relevant experience working with youth, preferably with middle-school ages.
- Strong interpersonal skills in working with diverse groups of adults and youth, including leadership experience and outstanding written and verbal communication skills.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to both communicate clearly with both adults and children, and follow up on these communications.
- Demonstrated ability to exercise good judgment and manage her/his time.
- Ability to coordinate with multiple people, both within and outside the organization.
- Comfortable managing complex programs and keeping track of many details.
- Comfortable giving and receiving honest, constructive feedback.
- Must have a driver’s license, an excellent driving record, and a car.
- Comfortable with Microsoft Word and general internet and computer usage.

Personal Qualities

- High-energy, creative, and has a sense of humor even under stress.
- Loves being part of an active team, while also able to self-direct and take initiative.
- Love of, and ease in, forming relationships with students, parents, and teachers.
- Energized by working with youth, especially in a leadership-development context.

The Coordinator’s time will be divided roughly evenly between Redwood City (for program management and meetings) and San Francisco at the Spark office.

Compensation & Benefits:

- **Salary:** \$37,000 per year.
- **Learning Benefits:** Spark staff and students are fellow learners, and the organization highly values the staff’s personal learning pursuits. To that end, there are several opportunities for staff to “walk the talk” and experience the excitement of being a Spark student.
 - **Annual Paid Sabbatical:** Seven paid working days off each year, in addition to other paid time off, for the pursuit of a personal learning opportunity. Each day of the sabbatical comes with a \$100 learning expense stipend.
 - **Personal Apprenticeships & Learning Roundtables:** All staff are encouraged to spend time every other week to pursue a personal apprenticeship, with occasional mornings designated for learning roundtables in which staff can collaboratively continue their study of the education field and share new knowledge, stories, and best practices.



- **Professional Training Account:** A personal account to pursue your choice of professional training opportunities, including workshops, conferences, books, etc.
- **Retirement Benefits:** Spark matches all retirement contributions to the organization's retirement plan dollar-for-dollar, up to 3% of salary.
- **Paid Time Off (PTO):** Spark has a unique flexible time-off policy, which empowers staff to collaboratively determine and schedule time off as needed. Rather than setting and tracking specific numbers of days off, Spark staff may take time off based on the status of their work-related goals and results within the organization. This policy is part of Spark's focus on a balanced and healthy life for staff.
- **Health Benefits:** Full health coverage is provided, including medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and some alternative health coverage (acupuncture, herbal treatments, etc).

Timeline: Start date for the position is January 5, 2009. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

Contact:

To apply, please e-mail your resume and cover letter as two separate documents to Gail Fisher, Associate Director, at gfisher@sparkprogram.org. In your cover letter, please describe your personal educational philosophy, and how the Program Coordinator position fits into your vision of creating social impact.

Spark is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage applications from all individuals regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation, and evaluate all candidates based on merit.