



**EDIBLE SCHOOLYARD NEW ORLEANS
VOLUNTEER &
INTERN HANDBOOK**

Contents

Welcome!

- ESYNOLA Mission, Vision, & Guiding Principles
- About Edible Schoolyard New Orleans & FirstLine Schools
- Our Schools & Gardens
- Volunteer Roles & Intern Positions
- Policies & Procedures
- Kitchen Class Volunteers
- Garden Class Volunteers
- Garden Volunteers
- Special Events
- Contact Info

Dearest Volunteer or Intern,

Welcome! We greatly appreciate your decision to join Edible Schoolyard New Orleans (ESYNOLA), a comprehensive garden and culinary education program that teaches children to make healthy connections through food and the natural world at FirstLine Schools. Volunteers are integral to the success of our program, enriching and enlivening our work.

ESYNOLA is, and has always been, a largely volunteer-run organization. Our volunteers are uniquely passionate about food access, nutrition, hands-on learning, New Orleans culinary culture, and the natural world—and your passion is contagious! Volunteers and interns build meaningful relationships with students and make significant contributions to the beauty and bounty of our gardens' harvests. Because of this, volunteers and interns find their time with us deeply rewarding. Most importantly, by volunteering your time with Edible Schoolyard New Orleans, you are demonstrating to students the caring and commitment of their larger community, a display of respect and love they so deeply deserve.

We offer this booklet as a means of introducing you to Edible Schoolyard New Orleans—our history and the context of our work, and how we work with FirstLine Schools to facilitate garden classes, kitchen classes, and many special events—as well as ESYNOLA volunteer roles, expectations, and duties. We look forward to a rewarding relationship and are deeply thankful for your gift of time and love for this work.

Gratefully Yours,

ESYNOLA Staff

ESYNOLA Mission & Vision

MISSION

To teach children to make healthy connections through food and the natural world. Our aim is to ensure the long-term well being of students, families, and school communities by:

- Integrating hands-on kitchen and garden classes into the school curriculum and culture
- Inviting students, families, and the community to experience local food through joyful events involving chefs, farmers, and community partners
- Supporting core academic learning in garden and kitchen learning environments
- Maintaining beautiful school gardens that stimulate students' curiosity and desire to learn about the natural world
- Cultivating safe spaces for social and emotional development
- Collaborating to provide healthy nutritious food in welcoming school cafeterias.

VISION

Edible Schoolyard New Orleans envisions generations of New Orleans children who have healthy relationships with food, the natural world, themselves, and their community.

Guiding Principles

These are the cornerstone of the Edible experience at FirstLine Schools:

- *Food education is taught in conjunction with core academics*
- *Children learn by doing*
- *Health and wellness contribute to the success of the whole child*
- *Beauty is the language of caring*
- *Local farms and sustainable farming practices are an important part of our past and future*
- *School food reform supports the education and wellness of the whole child*
- *Families and communities are a vital part of our recipe for success*
- *Interconnectedness to the natural world impacts everyone and everything.*

History of ESYNOLA & FirstLine Schools

FirstLine Schools is a network of open-admission public charter schools (independently operated public schools) in New Orleans. FirstLine grew out of the first charter school in the city, New Orleans Charter Middle, which was started by Dr. Tony Recasner, Jay Altman, and other parents and educators in 1998. At Charter Middle members of the New Orleans Town Gardeners volunteered to offer a garden class called PropaGators, which eventually became Edible Schoolyard New Orleans shortly after Charter Middle was destroyed by the flood following Hurricane Katrina. Chef and activist Alice Waters visited Samuel J. Green Charter, Recasner and Altman's first "turnaround" school after the storm, and agreed to allow them to replicate her program in 2006. Created to help heal a stressed school community after the storm, ESYNOLA was the first replication of Chef Waters' renowned garden and cooking education program in Berkeley, CA, and opened the door for other replications of the ESY program model across the country.

The mission of FirstLine Schools is to create and inspire great open admissions public schools in New Orleans. We do this by educating the whole child, in mind, body, and spirit. ESYNOLA supports this mission by offering social, emotional, and hands-on learning experiences in school gardens and teaching kitchens.

As FirstLine expanded its network of schools from one to five, ESYNOLA grew with it. Designed to build on the community cultural wealth of our region, ESYNOLA serves a network of four charter schools: Samuel J. Green Charter, Arthur Ashe Charter, Phillis Wheatley Community School, and Langston Hughes Academy. The scope of Edible programming varies from school to school.

Who we Serve: All four FirstLine schools are open-admissions public charter schools. We serve over 3,000 students in pre-K-8th grade. FirstLine students live in all parts of greater New Orleans.

Leadership and Governance: FirstLine Schools is a non-profit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors. All of our schools are authorized by New Orleans Public Schools.



Our Schools & Gardens



Samuel J. Green Charter School (2005)

2319 Valence St., NOLA 70115
Pre-K-8th



Arthur Ashe Charter School (2007)
1456 Gardena Dr., NOLA 70122
K-8th



Langston Hughes Academy (founded in 2007 & merged with FirstLine in 2010)
3519 Trafalgar St., NOLA 70119
Pre-K-8th



Phillis Wheatley Community School (2010)

2300 Dumaine St., NOLA 70119 Pre-K-8th

Volunteer Roles & Internship Positions

Since ESYNOLA's gardens and Edible programming are different across all four FirstLine schools, volunteer and intern positions vary by site.

Volunteer Roles

Kitchen Class Volunteer – Assist in a kitchen class
(*Green or Ashe*)

Garden Class Volunteer – Assist in a garden class
(*Ashe, Langston Hughes*)

Garden Volunteer – Work in a school garden
(*Ashe, Langston Hughes, Green, Wheatley*)

Special Events Squad – A team that helps with special events (all sites)

Internship Positions

Culinary Education Internship – Assist in the teaching kitchen, in culinary classes, and with special events
(*Ashe, Green*)

Garden Education Internship – Assist in the garden, in garden classes, and with special events (*Ashe, Langston Hughes*)

School Garden Internship – Work with garden team in a school garden (*Ashe, Langston Hughes, Green, Wheatley, Network*)

Administrative Internships – Support behind-the-scenes functions of ESYNOLA (*Network office*)

Policies & Procedures

Requirements

Volunteers with Edible Schoolyard New Orleans must: attend an ESYNOLA volunteer orientation, clear a background check, and be able to commit to at least one hour per week.

Interns must attend an ESYNOLA volunteer orientation, clear a background check, do mandatory reporter training, and commit to 8-10 hours a week.

Schedule

Changes to the school class schedules occur frequently, so volunteer and intern schedules are managed through updated online calendars—one for each school site. The calendars can be viewed at the following address:

esynola.org/volunteer-calendars

It is your responsibility to check the calendar 24 hours before your scheduled class. The calendar will show when you are expected to arrive and leave, the name of the teacher to report to, and the volunteer's first name and last name initial. If a last-minute scheduling change arises less than 24 hours before your class, an ESYNOLA staff member will make every effort to reach you in a timely manner. Please consider

bookmarking this address on your computer so that you can easily track any calendar changes.

Attendance

We expect that our volunteers will commit to a consistent schedule. Because volunteers are such a vital part of our program, we ask that you give *one week's notice* for anticipated absences and *miss no more than three shifts* during a semester. *Two or more unexcused absences will result in termination.*

If your schedule cannot accommodate a regular weekly commitment, then volunteering in a class would not be a good fit. A better placement for an irregular schedule would be as a garden or special events volunteer.

Sign-in/Nametag/Teacher Check-In Procedure

Volunteers are required to sign in and out for every shift. This requires entering the school through the front office, presenting ID, and signing into LOBBYGUARD. Volunteers are required to wear the name tag when in the school and on school grounds. Please remember to sign out via your nametag when you leave. If your service learning has an hour requirement, it is your responsibility to track your hours on a timesheet.

Behavior, Dress Code, & Personal Hygiene

We consider our volunteers to be a reflection of the quality of our work. We expect volunteers to treat *all* school staff, students, family members, community partners, and fellow volunteers with exemplary warmth, kindness, and respect. In addition, looking (and smelling) presentable is important. Your image reflects ESYNOLA's values to our students and school community, and you could be asked a question by a visiting potential funder at any time.

All volunteers are required to follow the professional-casual dress code of the school. Jeans should not be ripped; shorts, skirts, and dresses should be mid-thigh or longer; and shirt sleeves on tank tops should be at least three finger widths thick. No leggings, stretch pants, sweat pants, midriff tops, spaghetti straps, tube tops, low-rise jeans, halters, or flip flops. Volunteers cannot wear provocative, profane, or suggestive messages, must wear undergarments or dress in a way that no one could guess that you aren't, and all undergarments must be completely covered. *Volunteers who are dressed inappropriately will be asked to change or go home.*

Cellphone Use

Volunteers are not permitted to use their cell phones while volunteering unless it's an emergency. Phone conversations, text messaging, emailing, etc., should not be done in front of students. If a student needs to contact a family member, take the issue to a teacher; we are prohibited by law from contacting parents from personal phones. Volunteers are prohibited from posting photos of students on their personal social media pages. All photos can be sent to archive@esynola.org so they can be posted from the ESYNOLA pages; our posts can then be shared.

Discipline

Your role as a volunteer is to engage with the students and contribute to a positive learning environment. ESYNOLA staff members will handle all disciplinary actions according to the standards set forth by the school.

Communication

Your initial point of contact with ESYNOLA will be the volunteer manager. Once you have been assigned a site and have set your schedule, you will then communicate with your supervising teacher or staff member directly. Supervising teachers or staff members are responsible for letting their volunteers know of any

changes to the schedule via the volunteer calendars.

Addressing Issues

We are committed to providing a fulfilling experience for all of our volunteers and interns. If you would like to discuss what is working and address any issues that may have arisen that you don't feel comfortable resolving with your supervising staff member, please schedule a meeting with the volunteer manager. We value your needs and voices and welcome all invitations to talk.

If the ESYNOLA staff have a concern about a volunteer or intern's performance, the supervising staff member will speak to you. If the issue is not addressed, the volunteer manager will follow up. If, after both of these conversations, the issue is still not resolved, your service term will end.

Feedback

Volunteers can receive feedback about their performance from their supervisors upon request. There will be an online form emailed at the end of each semester so volunteers can anonymously provide feedback.

Interns establish goals in the beginning of the term, check-in with their supervisors in the middle (at which point they can give and receive feedback and address any challenges), and write a self-reflection and receive written feedback from their supervisor at the end of the semester. All of the forms can be found on the Volunteer Calendars [website](#).

Safety

In the instance of a student injury, ESYNOLA volunteers should immediately alert the supervising staff member and *should not attempt first aid*, no matter the volunteer's outside training. Staff is only permitted to use soap, water, and a paper towel with pressure on a wound. The injured student should go to the nurse's office.

Mandatory Reporting Policy

FirstLine Schools requires mandatory reporting of child abuse or neglect. If you have any reason to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare is endangered as a result of abuse or neglect or a child confides in you revealing concerning information about their physical and mental well-being, immediately report such instances or suspicions to your supervisor, who will help you to contact the appropriate agency.

Report forms and additional information are also available on the [Department of Social Services website](#). The reporting hotline is 1-855-4LA-KIDS. The failure to report suspicion of child neglect or abuse can subject the person who fails to report to criminal proceedings.

Risk Management Policies

ESYNOLA volunteers should not work with students without supervision by paid staff and/or appropriate school personnel. "Supervision" is defined as at least one visit per hour of the volunteer's direct work with the students, if there are more than two students. *At no time shall a volunteer work one-on-one with only one student.*

ESYNOLA does not allow volunteers to drive students. ESYNOLA has no automotive or liability policy that covers volunteers or the organization if a student is injured in an auto accident.

ESYNOLA does not intend to place volunteers in situations that could become dangerous. Volunteers are serving at their own risk. If a volunteer believes that she or he is in a situation that has become dangerous, the volunteer should immediately remove her/himself from the situation and notify his or her direct

supervisor and the ESYNOLA Volunteer Manager. ESYNOLA takes immediate steps when we become aware of a potentially dangerous situation, even if it means removing the volunteer from the organization.

ESYNOLA does not allow corporal punishment of any kind.

ESYNOLA is committed to providing a work environment free from discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or any other legally-protected characteristic that may be construed to be harmful will not be tolerated.



Kitchen Class Volunteers

Kitchen class volunteers participate in one kitchen class per week, working alongside Pre-K through 8th grade students. Volunteers arrive 15 minutes before the start of class and stay 15 minutes afterwards in order to help with class set-up and breakdown, depending on the class. During class, volunteers provide students with an invaluable opportunity to work and interact with people of all ages and backgrounds while experiencing the pleasure of cooking and eating together.

Logistics

Students typically come to the kitchen class by grade level in elective blocks. Students in kitchen classes learn kitchen skills and use real tools. Most classes have a connection with nutrition, justice, history, New Orleans culture, literacy, or other core academic content being taught in the classroom. All have social and

emotional learning components too.

The class is divided into two or three groups that sit at separate tables and do hands-on lessons adapted specifically for the grade level (Kindergartners taste food from every letter of the alphabet in the Food ABC's while 8th graders will cook sophisticated recipes from start to finish). Students and teachers sit together to share food and conversation. Classes typically end with shout-outs or a closing activity.

Culinary Education Interns perform the daily duties of a kitchen class volunteer in addition to taking on more advanced projects.

Before Class

Arrive 15 minutes before the class starts. Sign in and stow personal belongings (silence your cell phone please!) in the appointed place.

Check in with your supervising teacher about the lesson for the day and what your role/responsibility should be. Ask if there are any specific students or behaviors you should be on the look-out for or any quick tips to help with distracting behaviors. It is polite to ask the teachers if they need help setting up for class and even more polite to offer help cleaning up after the class.

During Class

Follow the guidance of the chef teacher—sometimes it's most helpful to work in the background, getting ingredients and tools together and setting up for class, while other times it's best to work with students.

Do participate as a model student by sitting quietly, directing attention to the teachers, demonstrating proper kitchen tool use, and following directions. Do not answer questions for the students (or give students the answers)!

Engage with students. Remember to:

- Place yourself away from the teacher in the group
- Give attention to kids feeling left out
- Work with a student needing extra attention
- Allow students to do the prep and cleaning, participating as a model and providing gentle reminders when necessary.
- Do not discipline students. If a problem occurs, notify the teacher

<p>Daily Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wash & put away dishes wipe down stove & counters empty & rinse compost bins wash aprons & towels clean & oil cutting boards scour sinks sanitize surfaces clean out sink drains sweep the floor if necessary 	<p>Special Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> find & post good student work compile recipes to print laminate posters photograph classes create bulletin board content create kitchen signage
---	--

Garden Class Volunteers

Garden class volunteers participate in one garden class per week, working alongside Pre-K through 8th grade students. Volunteers arrive 15 minutes before the start of class and stay 15 minutes afterwards to help with class set-up and breakdown. During class, volunteers provide students with an invaluable opportunity to work and interact with people of all ages and backgrounds while experiencing the pleasure of growing food and exploring the natural world.

Logistics

Students come to the garden class in an elective block. Students in garden classes do real work with real tools, and activities are age and seasonally appropriate. Most classes have a connection with life science content. All classes have social and emotional learning components.

Students, teachers, and volunteers break into small groups for a hands-on lesson in the garden. Sometimes class ends with shout-outs or the class coming together as a group to share reflections on the day's activities.

Garden Education Interns perform the daily duties of a garden class volunteer in addition to taking on more advanced projects.

Before Class

Arrive 15 minutes before the class starts. Sign in, put on your name tag, and stow personal belongings (silence your cell phone please!) in the appointed place.

If the supervising teacher has time, check in with him or her about the lesson for the day and what your role/responsibility should be. Ask if there are any specific students or behaviors you should be on the look out for, or any quick tips to help with distracting behaviors. It is polite to ask teachers if they need help setting up for class and even more polite to offer help cleaning up after the class.

During Class

Participate as an active model student (except for answering questions— leave that for the students!) by sitting quietly, directing attention to the teachers, demonstrating proper tool use, following directions, and using non-verbal redirections.

Engage with students. Remember to:

- o Place yourself away from the teacher in the group
- o Give attention to kids feeling left out
- o Work with a student needing extra attention

Allow students to do the work, participating as a model. Do not discipline students. If a problem occurs, notify the teacher.

Daily Tasks	Special Projects
gather class materials clean & store garden tools weed water beds clean animal pens (LHA & Green) prepare classroom	design & paint garden signage prepare classroom material set up harvest table make compost photograph garden classes

Garden Volunteers

Garden volunteers and interns work with the garden maintenance team (the gardeners and garden teachers) to keep ESYNOLAs' school gardens beautiful and fruitful. Each site has a weekly two-hour garden volunteer shift that several garden volunteers attend. The garden volunteer team is ideal for those who may not be able to commit to a weekly volunteer shift in a class, wish to work alongside other adults, and enjoy helping out in the garden on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Gardening experience is helpful but not necessary. Come prepared to do physical work and dress appropriately for the weather.

At the beginning of your shift in the garden, sign in, retrieve your name tag, and stow your personal belongings (silence your cell phone please!) in the appointed place. At the end of your time in the garden, please be sure to sign out, put your name tag away, and retrieve your belongings.

Network and Site Garden Interns perform the daily duties of a garden volunteer in addition to taking on more advanced projects in the garden.

Daily Tasks	Special Projects
weed & mulch beds water beds clear & amend beds transplant & sow seeds harvest collect and dump compost tend compost & worm bins feed animals & clean animal pens deadhead flowers freshen cafeteria bouquets	design & paint garden signage prune trees & perennials create bouquets for school café & leaders identify and control pests fertilize beds Id and catalog plants

Special Events

The Special Events Squad is a team of on-call volunteers for the 70+ special events ESYNOLA puts on every year. These volunteers receive emails in which they can sign up to help with the events that best fit their schedules and interests.

Edible Experiences for K-8

Edible Schoolyard New Orleans provides “Edible Experiences” for each grade level celebrating the bounty of Louisiana through seasonal festivals that highlight local, fresh foods like strawberries, sweet potatoes, and citrus. Sometimes farmers make guest appearances at schools with truckloads of watermelons, while other times we bring students to the farm. Local chefs come to the Edible Schoolyard for Market-to-Table and Iron Chef. Edible Experiences take place during the school day in the morning or afternoon.

Family Food Nights

At Family Food Nights, families, teachers, and ESYNOLA staff enjoy food together in community. Parents visit the school gardens and kitchens for either a family-style dinner, in which families prepare and eat a meal together, or expo-style, at which families circulate among a variety of stations. At both styles of Family Food Nights, families enjoy food together, share and learn new recipes and techniques, and have lots of fun! Family Food Nights take place on weekday evenings, and are perfect for volunteers who work a 9-5 job.

Open Garden Days

Open Garden Days are good ole fashioned workdays in the school garden. Open Garden Days are where ESYNOLA accomplishes larger garden projects that require many hands and bodies, such as building and planting beds, building benches, painting, moving soil, and landscaping. Open Garden Days take place on Saturdays from 10-1pm. These are great for volunteers with only occasional weekend availability, and they are great opportunities for service groups and people of all ages and skill levels.

Contact Information

Marnie Williamson

Garden, Greenhouse, & Volunteer Associate

mwilliamson@firstlineschools.org

504-884-0219

300 N. Broad St., New Orleans, LA 70119