

## **OUTDOOR EDUCATION SPECIALIST**

Dedicated, energetic educator needed for a new half-time position at the Asombro Institute for Science Education ([www.asombro.org](http://www.asombro.org)) in Las Cruces, New Mexico. The Asombro Institute is a nonprofit organization that works to increase scientific literacy by providing science education programs for more than 14,000 K-12 students, 600 teachers and 1,300 other adults each year in southern New Mexico and West Texas. Programs take place in classrooms, schoolyards, and at the Asombro Institute's 935-acre Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park.

The Outdoor Education Specialist will join a small but dedicated team of three other staff members and an incredible volunteer corps. S/he will be primarily responsible for planning and implementing outdoor (schoolyard and field) education programs for K12 students, teachers, and other adults. This will include considerable coordination and collaboration with other regional organizations with similar missions. In addition, the Outdoor Education Specialist will play an integral role in advancing the Asombro Institute's award-winning education programs, assisting with maintenance of the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park site, and helping with some administrative and fundraising tasks to maintain the organization's strength and capacity for growth (see details below). Must be flexible and willing to work long hours and weekends during some weeks when large projects or events are underway. The Asombro Institute for Science Education is an equal opportunity employer.

### Background:

Children's connections to the natural world are becoming broken. A recent study by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that American youth spend an average of 53 hours per week exposed to electronic media like television and computers. This time comes at the expense of time spent outdoors playing, exploring, and learning. Numerous studies have linked this lack of outdoor time to physical, emotional, and intellectual deficits.

The Asombro Institute for Science Education is working to turn these trends around. Studies show that children who spend time outside perform better academically, experience fewer symptoms of ADD and ADHD, become healthier and leaner, and have greater respect for themselves and the environment.

For more than a decade, many of Asombro's programs have given children the opportunity and knowledge to get outside at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park and in schoolyards. In 2010, Asombro redoubled its efforts by becoming a founding member of Southern New Mexico Youth A.C.T.I.O.N. (Appreciating, Connecting, & Thriving in Nature). The coalition of 20 groups is dedicated to engaging communities – especially youth – with fun and educational outdoor experiences to promote healthy lifestyles and stewardship of our natural world.

The new Outdoor Education Specialist position will facilitate Asombro's ongoing participation in outdoor education work. Our staff is dedicated to the cause, and we now seek an equally dedicated person to join our team and help get kids outside, active, and learning about the unique desert ecosystem.

### Responsibilities:

- 1) Create a printed and online calendar highlighting outdoor, family-friendly opportunities in the region.

- 2) In collaboration with Asombro staff and volunteers, coordinate and deliver family-friendly, public, hands-on science education programs at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park and other venues.
- 3) Organize and deliver afterschool programs using Asombro's inquiry-based science programs.
- 4) Work with staff and volunteers to schedule, plan and deliver the Asombro Institute's existing science education programs (field trips, classroom visits, schoolyard ecology projects, teacher workshops, public programs, and annual events) to K-12 students, teachers, and other adults.
- 5) Collaborate with other organizations dedicated to promoting outdoor opportunities in order to work toward shared goals. This will include attending meetings of Youth A.C.T.I.O.N. and recruiting additional partners from Doña Ana County, New Mexico and El Paso County, Texas.
- 6) Other tasks as needed.

Qualifications:

- B.A. or B.S. in natural science or related field
- Demonstrated excellent ability to communicate the scientific method and natural science concepts in an age-appropriate manner to K-12 students, teachers, and other adults in outdoor settings
- Dedication to promoting outdoor experiences for learners of all ages
- Extremely well organized and capable of juggling multiple projects and tasks
- Excellent record of completing assigned tasks in a timely manner
- Excellent writing and public speaking skills
- Confidence with Microsoft Office software
- Internally motivated to work as part of a diverse team with a spirit of cooperation and collaboration
- Valid U.S. driver's license and proof of insurance
- Knowledge of desert ecology desirable
- Spanish fluency desirable

Salary: \$16,000/year; 12 paid holidays; comp time, vacation, and sick leave

Hours: 20/week including some weekends

Duration: 1 year with high probability of extension contingent on performance and funding

Start Date: Flexible (prior to end of February is preferred)

Application Deadline: January 31 or until position is filled

To Apply: Please send a cover letter, resume, college transcripts, and contact information for three references (name, position, phone, email and mailing address) to:

Dr. Stephanie Bestelmeyer, Executive Director, Asombro Institute for Science Education,  
P.O. Box 891, Las Cruces, NM 88004

Phone: 575-524-3334

E-mail: [stephanie@asombro.org](mailto:stephanie@asombro.org) (e-mail submissions welcome)

Web site: [www.asombro.org](http://www.asombro.org)