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**LEAD COOK**

The Lead Cook assists the Kitchen Manager in meeting the needs of retreaters and staff as it relates to meal service. At Vajrapani Institute, we strive to cultivate a contemplative environment and the kitchen department is at the heart of that endeavor – nourishing our staff and guests’ bodies so they have the energy to nourish their minds in spiritual growth. Our Kitchen philosophy is to provide a meditative atmosphere that allows a calm, peaceful, and loving energy to flow into the food. The intention is to cultivate a sense of pervading peacefulness and serenity so that anyone who steps into the kitchen and dining areas feel that sense of support and nurturing.

Our food services provide meals for group retreaters in our main dining room, along with delivering meals to solo retreaters in our ridge cabins. The Lead Cook also helps with the organizing and cleaning the kitchen.

We are looking for a kindhearted, mature, and spiritually oriented person who values harmony. They should be able to live and work in a contemplative environment with a community of practitioners made up of retreaters and staff members. The ideal candidate is one that sees the service of a kitchen as offering love and compassion through their food.

Following a 2 yearlong closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we will be reopening in a limited capacity around Spring 2022. Ideally, this position would start immediately as it is an integral part of reopening.

**DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES**

* Prepare balanced vegetarian meals for individual retreaters, group retreaters, and staff lunch
* Follow food safety and injury prevention guidelines
* Deliver meal bags to solitary ridge retreaters
* Maintain and use kitchen systems – whiteboards, group information sheets, kitchen charts, etc.
* Use daily, weekly, and monthly cleaning checklists to maintain kitchen cleanliness
* Assist the kitchen manager with precuring of food and kitchen supplies
* Accommodate food allergies and certain special needs with cooking (e.g. vegans, gluten free, nut allergies, precept days, etc.)
* Support the Kitchen Manager in the planning of the menus
* Help maintain food storage in the kitchen, pantry, teachers house and solitary retreat area
* Help orient new employees and volunteers on the Community Kitchen Use Guidelines
* Present Working Meditation Guidelines to group retreaters
* Follow the Kitchen Manual and VPI food policy
* Assist other departments as needed
* Attend weekly staff meetings and kitchen team meetings

**QUALIFICATIONS**

* A spiritual practice/orientation
* At least one year of cooking experience
* Has knowledge of vegetarian health & nutrition
* Ability to maintain calm and patience among busy kitchen activity
* Skillfully communicates with the kitchen manager, team as well as other departmental staff
* Works efficiently while paying attention to the details (ie, private retreaters needs, group retreat needs)
* Enjoys working in a team environment
* Flexible with varying schedule
* Familiarity with Buddhism
* Approved to work in the U.S.

**Benefits**

* Full-time, 35 hour per week position with hourly compensation
* Daily staff meditation sittings
* Opportunity to do a supported one-month personal retreat during our annual winter staff retreat
* Free lunch on workdays
* Health care stipend
* Dental coverage after first 3 months
* Housing perks for living on the land

Confidence can sometimes hold us back from applying for a job. We at Vajrapani Institute know there is no such thing as a “perfect” candidate. Here we look for exceptional people who want to make a positive impact through their work and help create a place where they, and others, can have spiritual growth. So whatever background you bring with you, please apply if this role would make you excited to come to work every day!

**About Vajrapani Institute**

Vajrapani Institute is located on a secluded 70 acres of land within the redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Our purpose is to inspire deep spiritual growth by providing supportive conditions to both guests and staff members from all religious background. For over 40 years, we have been hosting retreats in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition of our founders Lama Yeshe and Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche. VPI is an affiliate of the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition (FPMT), an international, non-profit organization with over 140 centers, devoted to the transmission of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition and values worldwide through teaching, meditation, and community service.

*Vajrapani Institute is an equal opportunity employer and seeks diversity with respect to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, and physical abilities.*