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**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* For Immediate Release\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Youth Environmental Leadership Program Now Accepting Applications**

*VANCOUVER, WA (August 2, 2022)* – Know someone interested in science or science education? The Youth Environmental Leadership Program (YELP) is a new opportunity at Columbia Springs providing paid internships for local youth.

Now more than ever, it is important that our next generation of leaders develop skills in science, science education, and science communication. YELP is designed to support young people in learning these skills through a hands-on leadership role in our elementary science education programs. This includes the completion of an independent project that utilizes each intern’s skills, background, and interests.

“The innate curiosity and flexibility of young people makes them natural scientists. We believe in fostering these qualities to encourage critical thinking and independence, which will set our future leaders up for success in any pursuit! There is no better setting to develop these abilities than in the beautiful outdoor environment at Columbia Springs, and we are so grateful to continue to serve our community as a leader in environmental programming and education through the Youth Environmental Leadership Program.” - Kylie DaCunha, Columbia Springs Community Engagement Specialist

In order to make the program an equitable learning opportunity for youth from all backgrounds, interns will be compensated for their time through a stipend in recognition of their valuable contributions. The Youth Environmental Leadership Program is funded through support from the Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation and private donations.

For those interested in applying, more information and the program application can be found at [www.columbiasprings.org/YELP](http://www.columbiasprings.org/YELP). Applications are due by August 23rd and the fall program will run for 15 weeks beginning the week of September 12th.

***About Us:*** *Columbia Springs is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit on the Old Evergreen Highway in Vancouver, WA that helps thousands of children and their families to find belonging in and love for nature. We build a community of lifelong learners and land stewards through our educational opportunities, walking trails, events, and workshops – which are open to all. Located on a 100 acre historic site in the City of Vancouver, Columbia Springs is a natural gem in an urban environment, providing cutting edge environmental education close to your home.*