



Amanda Gibson, Education Coordinator

Planting Seeds of Exploration

Sioux City Lewis and Clark Children's Programming to Nurture Spirit of Discovery and Adventure, with a Practical Twist

"The Center's children's programming has unbelievable potential. I feel lucky to be in a position to use the Center's resources to enrich the lives of kids in underserved communities."

When Amanda Gibson became the Sioux City Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center's Education Coordinator in July 2023, she arrived with a vision. The Center's children's programming had traditionally focused on teaching kids the narrative of Lewis and Clark's journey along the Missouri River, specifically in the Sioux City area. Gibson imagined a more ambitious program, one that would expand kids' cultural intelligence by encouraging a spirit of discovery and adventure in the wider world, while teaching them practical skills.

With those missions in mind, Gibson got to work designing curriculum for 2024.

Kids' Club

The first of Gibson's 2024 initiatives is a Kids' Club focused on exploration, tentatively planned for children aged 10 to 14. Among

other exploratory activities, enrollees will be invited to participate in several day trips, potentially including destinations such as:

- Durham Museum in Omaha, Neb.
- National Music Museum in Vermillion, S.D.
- Spirit Mound State Historic Prairie in Clay County, S.D.

"The field trips will deepen kids' understanding and acceptance of cultures other than their own," notes Gibson. "They will also be fun adventures that many of these kids may never otherwise have the opportunity to experience."

Growers Academy

The second educational innovation that Gibson will helm is a Growers' Academy and Community Garden. To bring this programming idea to life, the Center will partner with local nitrogen products manufacturer CF Industries, which will finance the project.

The project will involve establishing a vegetable garden on the Center's campus and building a produce stand from which the community will be invited to take as much fresh food as they can use.

Children enrolled in a series of classes through the Growers Academy throughout the 2024 growing season will be responsible for the garden. After harvest and the completion of classes, the Center and CF Industries will host a graduation ceremony and picnic—featuring produce the students have grown—for the families of students who have completed the course.

"We're excited about this series of classes because although we often incorporate activities in our instruction, planting and tending a garden will introduce a new level of hands-on participation," says Gibson. "We'll incorporate lessons about plant and human nutrition, sustainability, and historical agricultural practices, among others. We would love to see some lifelong gardeners emerge from this program."

