



Adventure Curator

focused on programmatic development and implementation

TomTod Ideas is a youth development nonprofit that listens to, honors, and advocates for middle schoolers. Yep. You read that right. Middle schoolers, and only middle schoolers. We create programming and curricula specifically for 11-14-year-olds because we believe their perspective is valuable and necessary for the community. Since 2012, we've helped thousands of middle schoolers discover and love their community while finding ways to help it thrive. Using the latest research about early adolescent development, our programming and curricula allow students to explore idea creation through a community-focused, developmentally appropriate lens. We connect the energy, imagination, and intuition of middle schoolers with the wisdom, resources, and experiences of adults, while equipping middle schoolers with vital skills that empower them to take action today and set them up for success tomorrow.

We are seeking a teammate with 3+ years of dedicated experience working with and creating learning experiences for early adolescents, who is passionate about empowering middle schoolers while shifting cultural conversations on youth ability, education, and the common good.

What does that look like? Adventure Curators split time between:

- guiding and instructing middle schoolers in a variety of school, camp, and community settings.***
- collaborating with and supporting the TomTod team in exploring and utilizing best practices in early adolescent education and youth development research.***
- developing and managing community partnerships with organizations and individuals that create authentic learning experiences and connect middle schoolers to community initiatives.***
- designing and researching curricula and developmental strategies that elevate youth voice, grow individual skills, and empower idea pursuit, while infusing everything with 20% more fun.***

Position Type: Full Time; Exempt

Salary & Benefits: \$43,000 - \$49,000 salary based on experience. Retirement match. Healthcare. Technology provided. Professional development opportunities. Mileage reimbursement. Generous PTO accrual and paid holidays.

Location: Headquartered in Canton, OH. Programming delivered throughout NE Ohio.

How to Apply: Submit a cover letter and resume to andrea.capuano@tomtodideas.org

Application Deadline: Applications will be considered on a rolling basis as they arrive, with a final deadline of Friday, April 4th 2025

TomTod Ideas takes a whole-team approach to diversity, equity and inclusion practices and is an equal opportunity employer. As we seek new team members, we welcome the meaningful contributions you might bring in terms of your education, perspective, race, culture, ethnicity, gender identity, national origin, disability, veteran's status, age or religion.



ADVENTURE CURATOR REQUIREMENTS

Any Adventure Curator candidate should be:

- a self-starter with high ability at self-discipline and self-direction.
- a team player who readily operates in a collaboration-oriented atmosphere that includes a high level of interaction with a variety of constituents (educators, middle schoolers, parents, volunteers, mentors, board members, funders, community members, etc.).
- able to operate in an environment with substantial complexity, balancing multiple tasks simultaneously while prioritizing intuitively.
- focused on building a thoughtful, diverse team culture, with high values on experiential discovery, excellence (not perfectionism), and empowerment.
- a creative thinker, able to solve problems and think creatively about tackling obstacles in a variety of forms and from various angles.
- able to navigate conflict and interpersonal relationships proactively and professionally, balancing empathy and accountability.
- adept at professionally communicating and writing in a variety of contexts.
- willing to promote funding initiatives and facilitate connections that help fuel TomTod's mission and programming
- occasionally available for night or weekend commitments.
- able to travel to off-site programming with reliable transportation.
- capable of physically transporting materials for programming (lift and move up to 30 lbs).
- available to guide middle schoolers within the schedules and contexts of school, camp, or out-of-school time programs as assigned.
 - *Work hours are determined seasonally, based on school district, out-of-school time, and summer day-camp partnerships. Schedules are designed to engage middle schoolers where they are, ensure time for team collaboration and program preparation, and respect individual needs and responsibilities outside of work.*

STANDOUT QUALITIES

Exemplary candidates will:

- have 7+ years of dedicated youth development experience with middle schoolers, with a high value placed on project-based learning in schools and/or experiential learning in camps.
- demonstrate a history of project management and successful team collaborations.
- have experience managing and/or fulfilling grants related to youth programming.
- have experience with and/or certification in research-backed best practices related to:
 - **Early Adolescent Development;** e.g. Positive Youth Development or Social Emotional Learning
 - **Community-Focused Learning;** e.g. Youth Participatory Action Research, Human-Centered Design Thinking, Asset-Based Community Development, or Project-Based Learning
- Possess significant curriculum development experience with examples of past projects, lesson plans, or activities developed for middle schoolers.
- have the ability to turn random objects into spontaneous games and seamlessly weave puns into everyday conversations—because middle school humor is an art form.



ADVENTURE CURATOR SPECIALTIES

Adventure Curators will report to the Senior Adventure Lead and work alongside the Programming Team to create, plan, implement, and evaluate core TomTod programs (classes, clubs, camps, and collaborations) during each programming season. Adventure Curator primary responsibilities include:

Middle Schooler Empowerment

Adventure Curators will:

- build relationships with each middle schooler to foster connection and trust.
- utilize effective learning strategies and TomTod toolkits to co-explore/ideate/create with middle schoolers by integrating TomTod's 10 C values and 6 research themes (see addendum)
- responsively adapt to meet the needs of diverse populations of learners.
- ensure strong middle schooler outcomes by maintaining thorough documentation and data collection practices that track project progress and support team communication.

Team Collaboration

Adventure Curators will:

- contribute to a professional learning community focused on exploring and refining best practices of early adolescent youth development.
- co-plan projects with the programming team to curate community-rooted projects during each season of classes, clubs, camps, and collaborations.
- equip seasonal team members to engage middle schoolers in deep learning experiences.
- commit to an active cycle of professional reflection and growth alongside the TomTod team with a posture of curiosity, collaboration, responsiveness, and creativity.

Community Partnerships

Adventure Curators will:

- maintain an active presence in the community, seeking opportunities to connect TomTod to local professionals and organizations to develop community collaborations.
- plan community partnerships and projects, such as exploration events or idea pilots.
- advocate for middle schooler voices and ideas to be heard by community partners.
- connect middle schoolers and their families to TomTod programs and community opportunities, contributing to a web of support through their middle school years and beyond.

Curriculum Development

Adventure Curators will:

- be life-long learners, actively researching best practices in early adolescent youth development, learning strategies, and instructional design.
- curate a rich, varied, relevant set of pedagogically-informed curricula for TomTod's classes, clubs, camps, and collaborations.
- assist in creating helpful systems and standard operating procedures for each of TomTod's programs and initiatives.
- develop effective evaluation and assessment measurements and use data and feedback to improve TomTod's curriculum and professional development offerings.
- develop and facilitate learning opportunities for adults to discover and engage in best practices in early adolescent development.



TOMTOD IDEAS: CORE PROGRAMS

Classes

TomTod's school-based classes guide students through TomTod's community-centered design thinking process to explore and create ideas for their community. Through weekly sessions, TomTod staff and partnering educators lead students through community projects tailored to each community that complement middle school learning standards. TomTod's classes center on student voice and focus on growing students' critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creative problem-solving skills. The goal of each TomTod class is for middle schoolers to use their newly acquired community knowledge and skills to formulate ideas that serve others. TomTod Classes take the best of project-based, problem-based, place-based, and passion-based learning in ways that unlock middle schoolers' innate creativity and altruism.

Clubs

Clubs take middle schoolers beyond the research and brainstorming phase to practice professional communication, collaboration, and project management skills in real-world settings. Clubs engage best practices from Youth Participatory Action Research approaches to create space for and empower youth voice in active community conversations and projects. Each TomTod club focuses on bringing together the relational power of mentoring, the joy of play-based learning, and the authenticity of project-based learning to ensure student voices are heard and ideas are launched in the community.

Camps

TomTod's summer day camps cultivate fun, curiosity, and creativity, inviting middle schoolers to explore and create ideas by immersing them in their community and interests. Using a design-thinking-infused approach, campers are empowered to explore their community, collaborate with adult leaders, imaginatively problem-solve with their friends, and prototype ideas with TomTod's staff. All TomTod camps immerse middle schoolers deeply in their community by hosting camps in collaborative spaces with partnering organizations (such as park systems, universities, art galleries, and business owners). During TomTod's camps, middle schoolers make friends, have fun, and make memories while growing essential skills. Every TomTod camp ends with a celebration of the campers' discoveries and creations with community members, friends, and families!

Collabs

TomTod's love of community doesn't stop in the classroom or at camp. TomTod develops curricula and provides professional development opportunities for school districts, out-of-school-time consortiums, community partners, and anyone interested in activating opportunities for youth voice in their community context.

TomTod's 10 C values (informed by Positive Youth Development and Essential Skills research): *Caring, Character, Collaboration, Communication, Competence, Confidence, Connection, Contribution, Creative Innovation, Critical Thinking*

TomTod's 6 Core Research Themes:

- Liberatory Design Thinking
- Gold-Standard Project Based Learning
- Youth Participatory Action Research
- Positive Youth Development
- Social-Emotional Competencies
- Essential Skills