

Would I Make a Good Counselor?

Why are we showing this to you?

We want you to be happy!
We want you to be successful!

Who wouldn't want to spend your summer playing in 406+ acres of beautiful grass and woodland nestled in the rolling hills of Virginia? Well, unfortunately, being a summer camp counselor is not for everyone. There is an immense amount of responsibilities and tremendous amount of expectations placed on your shoulders. Being a counselor is both physically and mentally draining. Please thoroughly read these forms to see if you would be a valuable member of our counseling team.

An AstroCamp & Camp Motorsport counselor needs to be able to put their needs behind the children's and camps for the whole summer!

Great Counselors enjoy that kids are EVERYWHERE. You will eat with kids, share housing with kids, shower with kids (separate stalls), teach kids and learn with kids...there is almost no escape. That should be something that excites you, and not something that aggravates you. If personal time is something you need everyday, you are not going to be happy here.

◆ **Lake Example**

You will be out by our lake for 4 hours at least once a week during the summer. On lake days, you will need to be present with the kids, move around, make kids comfortable and play with the campers. While at the lake, sitting by yourself, sleeping, talking to the other staff, reading, listening to headphones, and anything else that is not interacting with the campers is not okay.

◆ **Relationships at camp**

If you find yourself with someone during the summer, it is difficult to find time for each other, the community, and the campers. There are more needs than can be satisfied, and someone usually gets hurt. You must agree to spend no more time with your new love (except on your day off or discrete time off) than you would with 30 other staff at camp. Your character must stand up to the test. Campers always come first naturally.

AstroCamp & Camp Motorsport requires flexible people happily ready to chip in to do anything.

You may find yourself doing, or even teaching, an activity that you never dreamed you'd do. You may find yourself on an overnight camping trip sleeping on a plastic tarp being woken up deer stealing your food, performing on stage in front of 250 people dressed as a roll of singing toilet paper or being woken up at 2 AM by a 9-year-old camper who vomited in his sleeping bag. Take the "we don't exactly know what it is, but you should come prepared to do it" clause seriously and with reflection. Whatever it is, you need to approach it with, "Alright, let's go get it done and have fun!"

If you fake it, you won't be happy. We want to see that you have enough self-reflection and maturity that you can deal with changes or make mistakes and recover; that you're not afraid to make mistakes; that you're not afraid to stand up for what you believe in in a mature and productive way; that you can quickly come up with an alternative plan of action if your plans don't go as planned; that you can handle and learn from constructive criticism; and that you can pick yourself up after adversity and move on with a smile.

Children and camp can be stressful – you NEED to be able to deal.

All of the following have happened in the last 3 summers at our programs. These are not typical or even common, but they did happen. The vast majority of kids are just fine;

- ◆ Camper urinated on another campers pillow.
- ◆ Camper said she was the victim of physical abuse at home.
- ◆ Social cruelty – push kids out of group, teasing, and being verbally and non-verbally hostile.
- ◆ Camper cried every time they heard the word “No”
- ◆ Teens tried to sneak off together to make out.
- ◆ Campers took turns peeing into a Gatorade bottle and kept it in the cabin
- ◆ Camper with learning disabilities, developmentally delayed.
- ◆ Camper was homesick and crying for 7 days despite everyone's best efforts.
- ◆ A camper stole things from other campers in the cabin.
- ◆ Camper brought contraband to camp; i.e. drugs & alcohol.
- ◆ Camper promoted raciest ideas and raciest literature.

Community is appreciated, but not loved.

You'll experience a small, tight community, which is a very rare experience in today's world. The joys (shared values and goals, mutual influence, people belong, home) and troubles (rumor mills, personality issues, we're stuck with each other) that go along with this will be yours to treasure and endure.

Most people would like to think that they love strong, tight communities, but often the feeling is one of appreciation not love. Just a few of the realities of community are:

- ◆ On days off, everyone usually does things together, or in small groups. No one is left out – a community ethos. Sometimes this requires great organization, compromise, and planning, which must arise from the staff.
- ◆ When the staff is spread thin due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, the community needs more than your already heroic contribution.
- ◆ Undoubtedly, you will find people you appreciate more and appreciate less, but you must be loving to both. Time must be spent with the whole group, and not a sub-group. That is a powerful human tendency to resist, but the health of the community requires it. For the non-community minded, this is torture. Yes, it will torture you.
- ◆ The Dorms & Staff Lounge are the main shared spaces. It is as filthy or clean as everyone makes it. It is nice for it to be clean, and that requires constant diligent effort on everyone's part. When you see a mess you didn't create, clean it anyway.
- ◆ There are a few washers and driers (free) for everyone. That means that the community must work on this task together. When clothes are wet and need to be transferred to the drier, the next person who wants to wash does it. If you want the

drier and clothes are in it, you fold the clothes, which are not yours, and then put your clothes in.

- ◆ Emotional support is everyone's responsibility. When this is not done, the community suffers.
- ◆ In day-to-day camp life, when you see that other people need a hand, you are the person to help them, because you noticed. We all do many jobs, and we help each other out.

Characteristics of staff who work out (Generally Speaking)

- ◆ Have lived away from home before.
- ◆ Have worked with children a lot.
- ◆ Fighting, grudges, anger, talking behind other people's backs, gossip...all not your style.
- ◆ People describe you as someone who is warm, a people person.
- ◆ You are upbeat. You brighten people's day. You find the humor, even when it is hard to find, and you laugh at yourself.
- ◆ You are inclined toward the service of others, and you have examples to back up your intentions.
- ◆ Wake up everyday with the thought "What can I do today to make the campers feel special?"
- ◆ Go to sleep thinking "What can I do tomorrow to make the campers feel even more special?"
- ◆ Need to be ready to covered in sand, dirt, thrown in the lake, covered from head-to-toe in paint and sing loudly and by yourself – even if you sing really poorly.
- ◆ Instead of children sapping your energy, they feed it. The more time you are with kids, the happier and more energetic you feel. They are always excited to devote their time to children; it's why they are at camp.
- ◆ Positivity and Energy levels are tested when working 16-18 hour days, for six days in a row, for entire summer. Sprinters crash and burn at camp, and find themselves exhausted by week 3 and become unhappy. You can be happy running a marathon.

Reflect on these writings. You want to live, work and play in a place where you will be happy and successful.