A2I: Aspire to Inspire Leadership Development

Camp Concepts believes leadership is influence. We can influence best when true elements of personal connection and trust are established. We also strongly believe that leaders are not born but rather they are developed. Leadership training takes time and energy, as well as a positive attitude from the trainee. This training program is a mentor experience where positive leadership skills are modeled by experienced leaders. We view this training program is a 2-summer commitment on our part to help young leaders gain exposure and experience in working with children at camp. A 3rd summer may be added at the discretion of Camp Concepts.

The first stage of training begins as a Counselors-In-Training (CIT) at age 14. The following year, (providing the camp is satisfied with leadership progress) they matriculate up to the role of Junior Counselors (JC) at age 15. There is a possibility of an additional third year of training (Associate Counselor- AC) through a selection/application process based on previous 2 summer performance. Those who participate in this program are introduced to the skills, techniques, and strategies necessary to successfully serve as a counselor in a day camp situation, and are provided consistent feedback and job performance monitoring by senior staff members.

Our program includes a variety of learning experiences. CITs and JCs work as counselor aides throughout the summer. They are assigned to various camper age-levels to gain greater exposure to the developmental differences in our campers. In addition to their main role as assistant to the group counselor, they also have assigned duties to assist in the smooth running of the camp business such as, but not limited to, cleaning and serving in the cafeteria or other areas of the campus, possibly planning and supervising lunch recess activities, organizing equipment for lunch recess or activities. With each level of experience, we give more and more leadership responsibility. We are careful to put them in areas where personal leadership growth is the focus. The most important part of this program, however, is the mid-camp training workshops. Workshops are conducted on a range of topics specifically designed to help train young leaders to effectively work with children and to understand how to be a good employee. Workshop activities involve both small- and large-group work, analysis and reflection, brainstorming, role playing, and discussion. Feedback and assistance is readily available as the oversight of this program is the sole responsibility of one senior staff member. This person observes, meets with the CIT or JC individually, and provides professional feedback and constructive ways to develop stronger leadership skills.

We view the leadership roles of CIT, JC and AC as valuable life learning experience. It is therefore expected that all employees will be committed to working at least an 8-week camp season. We seek dynamic individuals with an outgoing personality and an expressed willingness and ability to receive constructive feedback and guidance. This is not an appropriate training program for kids who are shy or who have displayed a lack of interest or respect for the camp program when they were campers. Whereas we appreciate that all parents are supportive of their children, please realize that the behavior we often see in them while they were campers may not be the same behavior you see at home. Our candidate selection process involves input from all levels of camp community.

As camp leaders, we have been training young leaders for years. This program has achieved positive and proven results. The quality of young leaders coming out of this program has been impressive. They emerge more dynamic, better-qualified young leaders who demonstrate the ability to begin serving as counselors in a day camp situation.

We look forward to working with each young leader to help develop them into stronger, more confident leaders of tomorrow.

Steve Haines
Executive Director,
Camp Concepts