



**Volunteer Preparation Booklet**

**Family Retreat**

## The Who/What/Where.....

**Who We Serve:** The Center for Courageous Kids accepts children ages 5-18 that have been diagnosed with life threatening illnesses such as cancer, sickle cell anemia, and heart disease. Many children are still under active treatment, while others are in remission. Family retreats allow the camper's entire family the chance to enjoy camp for a weekend in a medically safe environment.

**Our Volunteers:** Our volunteers come from all walks of life –students, teachers, artists, businessmen and women, husbands and wives, some of whom have a child with a serious illness. Each volunteer brings something different and unique to camp. Here at CC we look for enthusiastic, safety-conscious, creative and caring individuals whose first priority is the well-being of our campers. Our volunteers range in age from 18-70 but all share the desire to offer loads of love and encouragement and to ensure each camper's experience is not only memorable but valuable.

**Accommodations:** On-site housing is provided for those volunteers able to commit to a full weekend session. The camp has 4 camper lodges, which have central heat and air conditioning. Each Lodge houses 4 dens, which is what we call our cabins. These four dens share a common lounge space, with a fireplace and back porch. During family weekends, each family will have their own den, and volunteers will room together in a separate den. Each den sleeps between 6-8 people, so plan on having roommates! This means bring earplugs and an eye mask if you are a light sleeper! Each den has its own bathroom with 2 showers, and in-lodge laundry facilities. Bed linens and towels are provided.

All meals at camp are provided. The diet is balanced, nutritious, and a salad bar is always available. When possible, CCK is happy to accommodate vegetarians and dietary restrictions.

## A Day in the Life of a Den and Program Counselor:

**Den Counselor:** Your role as a Den Counselor is to act as an ambassador of CCK to your assigned family (or families). This means helping them feel welcome, escorting them throughout their camp experience, providing information about camp and interacting with the family members in a positive, appropriate and caring fashion. Your role is very important as you are the initial face of the family's camp experience and you have a major part in the feel of camp and the community that is established.

**Program Counselor:** Your role, as a Program Counselor, is to facilitate programming in your assigned area on camp. We see your role as having three levels:

**Facilitate Assigned Program Area:** This means setting up the activity (as described by the year-round staff), helping families be successful, answering questions, and cleaning up the area at closing time.

**Assist with All-Camp Activities:** There will be other activities throughout the weekend that require setup and takedown, such as building the opening camp fire, running carnival games, popping popcorn for a movie or manning the dressing rooms in the stage area during a talent show. If a full-time staff member approaches you looking for assistance, please jump on in!

**Hanging with the Families:** At all meals and when not otherwise occupied by other jobs, you are encouraged to interact with your assigned family, support the Den Counselor and have a good time!

## The Schedule:

### Friday

**2pm - Volunteer Arrival:** Time to get settled in, unpack your things and park your car. When you arrive, you will be given a rooming assignment in the Volunteer Den. Sheets, blankets, a pillow and towels will be provided (but if you have a favorite pillow etc, please bring yours from home). Our staff rooms can hold 6-8 people, so you may have multiple roommates, so please be aware of this when you come into the lodges at nighttime. We also ask that volunteers only visit dens on the same gender staff for privacy purposes.

**3pm - Volunteer Orientation:** Orientation will include a tour, introduction of the full-time staff, games, camp policies and procedures, and an overview of the schedule. After the close of orientation, All Counselors will... meet on Camper Lane and prepare for...

**3pm - 6pm - Family Arrival:** All volunteers will meet on Camper Lane at the conclusion of orientation to welcome the families. Each family will bring their car to their assigned Lodge to drop off their luggage! You will be there to help the family with their luggage, introduce yourself and start to establish a friendly relationship.

It's important that the relationship and open communication starts here, as it helps everyone get on the same page. It also helps the kids to see you interact with their parents and realize that we present a unified front.

**6pm - Family Orientation:** All families and volunteers will head to the gym for family orientation. Year-round staff members will welcome families, introduce all staff and volunteers, teach the camp cheer and provide a brief overview of camp policies.

**6:30pm - Dinner:** Head over to the Dining Hall for dinner. When you are finished eating and have cleared the tables, the gym will be open for a bit of free play until...

**7:30pm - Evening Activities or Opening Camp Fire:** This is the true start to the weekend and with each weekend we try to provide the schedule that will best suit the families that we are serving. Therefore, you can anticipate the evening being structured in one or two different ways:

\***Evening Activities-** A few program areas will be open for families to choose from to really dive into the camp experience! As a counselor join your assigned family in the fun! Examples of activities include: The Woodshop, Bowling and the pool.

\***Opening Camp Fire-** Float over to the dining hall with your family for the opening camp fire, where we present the camp rules, sing some songs, and kick off the weekend. Sit with the kids in your family and enjoy!!

Be a role model and participate actively in everything: the kids will take your lead and realize that camp is a place for safe fun and judgment-free silliness!! Before departing for the night, make sure to make plans for Early Risers in the morning.

**9pm - All-Staff Meeting:** This is a time for the full-time staff to get any last minute information out to you, give updates on absent families and answer any lingering questions. We will also have a late-night snack for you! Program Counselors will... meet in their designated program building to learn about the activities they will offer this weekend and have time to ask any lingering questions you may have. After that, you are done for the night, but remember Early Risers is just that... early! So get some rest, because Saturday is a long day!

## **Saturday**

**7:30am - Early Risers:** This is an optional program for the families. Program Counselors should get to their program area 10 minutes early to arrive before the families. Den Counselors should be at your family's cabin by 7:20am, if the kids plan on attending. Kids change their mind, so if there was any inkling that "little Jimmy" might wake before the rest of the family, plan to check in. If the parents made it clear that no one from the family would be getting up before breakfast, you can head to a program area to help out.

**8:30am - Breakfast:** Food is served buffet style. When the music starts to play, it's time to clean up, so get some food into your system quickly! After dishes are cleared, we dance and sing- so get ready to "cotton eye Joe" and "cha cha slide" (Don't worry, if you don't know them you'll learn quickly!). Remember to role model with participation!

**9:30am - 1st Rotation:** Every lodge will be assigned specific program areas at specific times to keep the traffic flowing around camp. During every rotation, Program Counselors will either be in their program area, helping out with another specified assignment or with their family. Den Counselors will stick with their assigned families. We also want to remind everyone about keeping the program areas camper-centered. This means that our job is to assist kids in doing projects, without doing them for them. If a family has multiple children, it's okay to divide the kids between you and the parents so that they can enjoy different activities.

**11am - 2<sup>nd</sup> Rotation:** Second verse, same as the first!

**12:30pm - Lunch:** A little mellower than breakfast, more singing, less dancing. This helps everyone prepare for....

**1:30pm - Siesta:** This is the scheduled down-time you will have away from you family- be sure to communicate this with them! You can feel free to nap, do homework, use your cell phone etc.

**3:10pm - 3<sup>rd</sup> Rotation:** This rotation varies; sometimes it's a pool party, a carnival or a concert. Check the schedule for more details. Around 4:30 certain activities will open up for free time, so keep checking in with your family to see who wants to go where.

**4:30pm:** Free Choice Activity

**6pm - Dinner:** Yay food.

**7pm - Evening Rotation:** This is an all-camp activity: usually a movie, hayrides, family bowling, or an all-camp swim etc.

**9pm - All-Staff Meeting:** This is another time for the full-time staff to get any last minute information out to you and give updates. We will also have another late-night snack for you!

## **Sunday**

**8:30-10:30am - Brunch:** Families are welcome to attend brunch anytime during this allotted period of time. Communicate with your family on when you're meeting them for breakfast and morning activities.

**Program counselors will be prompted to begin morning activities.**

**9am - Morning Activities Open**

**10:50am Transition to the Dining Hall:** Help program counselors clean up and give time cues to make sure the families are heading to the Dining Hall for closing.

**11am Closing:**

- Dancing
- Awards
- Cubby Presentation
- Families Depart

**12pm:** Volunteer Debriefing and Thank You in the Dining Hall

## **Behavior Management:**

### **Pro-action**

The concept of pro-action is the foundation upon which we build our guidelines. Many problems can be prevented by establishing a caring relationship with the children and providing outlets for the children's energy and attention.

Children usually focus on one thought or activity at a time. Therefore, if campers' attention and energy are focused on a positive activity, there is less chance they will become engaged in negative activity.

**Listen to Your Campers:** Children feel valued and respected when we listen to them. If holding a conversation with a child is difficult for you, remember it is easier to talk about things that we like. Ask the child questions about a favorite music group, movie star, or television show. Validate their feelings and match their excitement. Learn what campers want to get out of their weekend at camp.

**Role Model Appropriate Behaviors:** It is a known fact that children will do what we do before they do what we say.

**Play with Your Campers:** Keep children busy with fun, but appropriate activities, especially during non-structured time. Play with them when you don't have to. Use down time to establish a relationship. Our job is to play with kids not baby-sit them. UNO is your friend.

**Tolerate Annoying Behavior:** Kids are kids- at times it may be beneficial to tolerate some annoying behavior, as long as the behavior is not UNSAFE or disruptive.

**Work as a Team:** It's important to be on the same page as the parents in your family. If it's established early on that you and the parents share the same expectation of the camper behaviors, such as travelling together around camp, the campers will be much less likely to challenge the expectation.

## **Redirection**

"Distraction with a purpose." Here are some redirection techniques:

**Proximity Control:** Standing near a camper who is having difficulty, giving a quiet touch on the shoulder, or a whisper in the ear so the camper can "save face."

**Hurdle Hop:** A camper may not be able to begin or complete a task without some assistance. Example: Help the camper clear their dishes at the end of a meal.

**Two Positive Choices:** Campers respond better to having a choice and feeling they have control in the situation.

Ex.- "You can stand quietly where you are or you can stand quietly next to me. It's your choice."

**Know Your Resources:** It is always appropriate to ask for help from co-counselors or a Full-time Staff Member. We strongly encourage debriefing frustrating situations.

## **Intervention**

Only to be used for unsafe behaviors such as fights, vandalism, violence, and cursing.

**Directly Address The Behavior:** Ex. - "[Name], I need..." be specific and wait it out. "Here at camp we..." is a great statement to address behavior that is unacceptable at camp from a child or an adult.

**Parenting Style:** Every family has different ways of addressing inappropriate behavior. If a family member uses specific language or techniques with their children that are appropriate for camp, feel free to use the same techniques. If you are uncomfortable with a parent's intervention, please address the issue with a full-time staff member. Never correct a parent for any reason.

## General Guidelines: Have Safe Fun!

- Here at camp we don't stand on tables or chairs.
- Wheelchairs are not toys. For some of our campers, this is the child's only means of mobility and independence. We do not run with or ride on the back of wheelchairs.
- No shoulder rides should be offered by counselors.
- **Phones:** We have a no cell phone policy during the daily camp activities. This means phone calls, text messages and browsing social media should not take place when with families. However, phones can be utilized to take pictures and monitor the time. In the evening time or during siesta, you are welcome to use your cell phone for phone calls, text messages, etc. There are also phones available for you to make local calls or to use a phone card. Please ask a year-round staff member to use a phone.
- **Privacy:** Some families will share openly with you information about a camper's diagnosis or medical treatment. When appropriate, a staff member may also provide pertinent information to you. Please respect the family's privacy and keep that information confidential.
- **Universal Precautions:** If it's wet, sticky and it's not yours don't touch it! Always use gloves and the 10% bleach solution (available in all dens and program areas) for cleaning up spills. Frequent hand washing with soap is also important!
- **First Aid & Routine Medical Care:** All program areas and cabins are stocked with a First Aid Kit. If you are uncomfortable with providing basic first aid, contact the medical center by walkie-talkie or at phone ext. 241.

## The Glossary of Camp Terms:

**Wear Your Shoes:** We are a flip flop free facility. Sandals with heel straps (like Chacos, Keens, or Crocs) are acceptable. Certain activities will necessitate sneakers or boots (such as the barn or the gym. Oh! Please remember socks for bowling!!!).

**Early Risers:** Early morning activity for those interested in taking full advantage of the day! This activity starts at 7:30am, lasting until breakfast at 8:15am. Different activity areas will open throughout the session. This is a great time to finish arts and crafts and woodshop projects.

**Lodge:** There are 4 lodges on camp- each lodge houses 4 dens. Each family will stay in their own den. Volunteers will stay in a den together (with a maximum of 8 per den).

**Camper Centered:** This refers to remaining focused on the campers and their best interests throughout the week. Their needs should be everyone's first priority.

**Camper Appropriate - CA:** This means being aware of topics of conversations, language and music that we use around the campers. This is especially important with regards to music that may be utilized for a stage day act.