



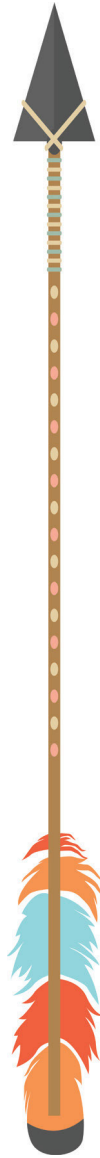
Parents' Guide to  
Camp T on Birch Lake  
2025



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## Parents' Guide to Camp T on Birch Lake 2025



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# Introduction



The Parents' Guide to Camp T is created in the spirit of helping both parents and campers become familiarized with our routines, and to showcase the camp environment and culture we have created to produce a stable and highly rewarding summer camp experience. Like all tasks we take on, we know there is room to grow and improve. We welcome your feedback and comments on this guide!

We hope you will take the time to read through this guide with your campers and familiarize yourselves with Camp T and everything we have planned for your child's camp experience.

# Frequently Asked Questions



**How do I reach the camp?**  
You can find contact information on page 10.



**How do I email my camper?**  
You can find Camper email information on page 11.



**What should we pack?**  
Packing lists are on page 16.



**When is the balance due?**  
ALL balances are due no later than June 1st.



**How do activities work?**  
Activity information is on pages 24-25.



**What if my child has allergies or other dietary needs?**  
Information about allergy and dietary needs are on page 26.



**When is Check In and how does it work?**  
**Check in** information for Day Camp is on page 17.  
**Check in** information for Overnight Camp is on pages 18-19.



**When is Check Out?**  
**Check OUT** information for Day Camp is on page 17. **Check OUT** information for Overnight Camp is on page 28.



**What is the Rule of 3s?**  
More about the Rule of 3s can be found on page 43.



## A message from the Camp Director & Assistant Director

Hello Camp Families!

We are insanely excited for your camper(s) to join us for the summer of 2025! We have spent the year building a staff and many programs that we are confident will serve our campers well.

We have spent a lot of time thinking about what camp means to us and our participants. Camp has a special place in all of our hearts and we want it to stay that way for another 100 years. We wanted to come up with 3 words to describe Camp T and what values we want to foster in campers and staff. After much deliberation, we decided on Curiosity, Mindfulness, and Respect. Along with these values, we hope to help your camper(s) discover who they are, connect with others, and engage positively with nature!



Looking back at our own experiences as campers, CITs, & counselors, we can recognize how significantly our curiosity, mindfulness, and respect have grown during our time at camp. We continue to grow every summer and hope to give our campers the chance to do the same!

One of our favorite aspects of Camp T is the community we create together. It is a unique environment filled with support, acceptance, and love. There is no where else in the world that we have found that and we are excited for your camper(s) to be



Thank you parents for entrusting us with your amazing children, and we can't wait to see you soon! Bring on Summer 2025!

Miss Gabby & Miss Meghan <3

Gabby Bittner, Camp Director  
gabby@riverbendcampfire.org  
574-387-6095

Meghan Burmeister, Assistant Director  
meghan@riverbendcampfire.org  
574-387-6095

## A message from the Camp Fire River Bend CEO

As the CEO for Camp Fire River Bend, it is my goal to fulfill the **Promise** that Camp Fire makes to all of our youth. We are excited to have all of your campers join us at Camp T this summer - our 105th summer of Camp programming!

My personal experience as a camper, staff member, and now as a parent, drive my philosophy of camp. In addition, my background as a Developmental Psychologist has helped shape my understanding of youth development, and their needs. I started as a camper in 1985 (can you find me in the cabin photo below?), worked as a counselor through high school and college, and became the camp director in 2006. I have served in my current role as CEO since 2011.



What makes camp such a special place for me is that it is a youth-focused, caring community, dedicated to your child's growth and individual needs. We are very committed to being a space where **all** youth feel welcomed and safe. We take pride in our long-standing commitment to inclusivity and diversity, no matter the ability, background, race, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, non-religion, or any other category people use to define themselves or others.



Our board and staff have been working over the past year to make updates and improvements to the camp facilities, programs, and policies, and we're excited to share those things with all of our 2025 participants and families. We have big plans for more upgrades in the future as well!

Thank you for choosing Camp T and giving us the awesome privilege and responsibility of working with your children. We look forward to an

unforgettable summer with new and old friends, making memories to carry us through to next summer.

Amber Grundy, Ph.D.  
amber@riverbendcampfire.org  
574-387-6095



## Our Why

Growing up is hard.

## Our Mission

We connect young people to the outdoors, to others, and to themselves.

## Our Vision

We envision a world where all young people thrive and have equitable opportunities for self-discovery, community connection, and engagement with nature.



## Program Framework

Woven into every Camp Fire experience is our proven framework for thriving. It's a research-based, measurable approach to youth development. Camp Fire's trained, caring, adult leaders play a vital role in building developmental relationships that are critical to a thriving mindset. Youth need people in their lives who challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities. Our approach enables youth to achieve their full potential through four components:



**Self Discovery:** Camp Fire wants to help young people not only discover their sparks (talents, interests, commitments, and qualities that give us energy and purpose) but learn to use their voice to actively pursue and share those sparks in the real world. We want a future full of engaged, passionate young people who are confident in who they are and what they have to offer.



**Community Connection:** Camp Fire wants young people to build lasting relationships with the people around them. We want a future full of connected, secure young people who know where and how they belong.



**Engagement with Nature:** Camp Fire wants all young people to experience the power and awe of the outdoors. We imagine a future full of compassionate young people who know how to make a positive, transformative impact on the environment.

## Essential Values

### Curiosity, Mindfulness, Respect



#### For yourself

The development of self-reflection, self-confidence, & self-respect is at the very heart of what we do. Campers are reminded & taught to take care of their physical and mental well-being while at camp.



#### For others

Our goal is to foster a supportive community which recognizes and values every participant. We wouldn't be surprised if your camper makes a lifelong friend during their camp experience!



#### For the environment

Environmental awareness is an ethic we incorporate into everything we do, from the programs we offer, to the food we serve, and the way we maintain our facility.

### Unplugged



One of the greatest aspects of the camp experience is being free from modern distractions. To maintain this ideal, we have a strict **No Electronics** rule for campers. This includes phones, tablets, and music players. Except when leading select programs and activities, staff also refrain from using electronics.

### Inclusion



We take pride in our long-standing commitment to providing programs and services to **all** youth and families. Our programs are designed to reduce sexual, racial, religious, gender, and cultural stereotypes, and to foster positive interpersonal relationships. **In Camp Fire, everyone is welcome.**

### Youth Voice



One of the core values in Camp Fire is that our youth participants have the opportunity to share their ideas and opinions, and youth have the opportunity to be leaders now, not just in the future. Some of the ways we encourage youth voice are through time set aside at every activity for planning and reflection, daily Free Choice activities, opportunities to serve on the Camper Council, our Counselor in Training program, and camper surveys at the end of each session.

# How to Stay in Touch or Find Information



**Call us.** You can reach us by phone at [574-387-6095](tel:574-387-6095). When camp is not in session, we try to return all voicemails within 48 business hours. While your camper is at camp, we will try get back to you within 2 to 4 hours of your call, if it is received during daytime hours. Messages received after 6pm EDT will be returned in the morning after breakfast, except in emergency situations.



**Email us.** You can reach both Miss Amber and Miss Gabby by sending an email to [info@riverbendcampfire.org](mailto:info@riverbendcampfire.org). We try to respond to all emails promptly, but if you have an urgent issue we ask you to call us instead of emailing.



**Follow us on Facebook.** We post stories, photos, videos, and news on our official Camp Facebook page. You can find us at [facebook.com/tannadoonah](https://www.facebook.com/tannadoonah). We also have a camper and parent group that you can join at [facebook.com/groups/CampT2025](https://www.facebook.com/groups/CampT2025)



**Follow us on Twitter.** We post stories, photos, videos, and news on our official Camp Twitter account. You can find us at [@tannadoonah](https://twitter.com/tannadoonah) or [twitter.com/tannadoonah](https://twitter.com/tannadoonah)



**Follow us on Instagram.** We post photos and videos on our official Camp Instagram account at [instagram.com/camptonbirchlake](https://www.instagram.com/camptonbirchlake) or [@camptonbirchlake](https://www.instagram.com/camptonbirchlake) in the app.



**Text Alerts.** We will be using our registration system (UltraCamp) for text alerts. When you created your account, you entered a phone number for the primary contact, and any additional contacts. Please be aware that if you checked the box that says "opt out of SMS messages," you will NOT receive our text alerts.



**Visit our website.** Camp dates, prices, activities, themes, staff profiles, registration information, and much more are all posted on our website, which you can find at [riverbendcampfire.org](http://riverbendcampfire.org).



**Emailing your Camper.** You can send emails to your camper through UltraCamp. To send your camper an email, you will need to purchase email blocks (blocks of 5 messages for \$5) through your UltraCamp Account. **Your message must be received by 4pm to be delivered to your camper that evening; messages received after 4pm are delivered the next evening.** Please note that messages received after 4pm Friday will NOT be delivered to your camper.



**Sending Mail and Packages.** Campers love to receive "snail mail!" You may want to consider sending your mail before your child even leaves for camp, since mail delivery tends to be slow. Write often! Care packages are fine, but please **DO NOT** send food or candy!

Any food received in care packages will be confiscated by camp staff. We have many campers with food allergies, and must be sure to keep them safe. We also do not want critters in the cabins!

Mail should be addressed as follows:

**Camper's Name**  
**Camp T**  
**14751 Harvey St.**  
**Vandalia, MI 49095**



**View our photos on UltraCamp.** During camp, our photographer *tries* to post photos and videos by approximately 10pm EDT daily. However, we cannot guarantee photos **every day!** We appreciate your patience if photos are not posted at a certain time - sometimes we have technology challenges, or things at camp get busy and we need our photographer to help in other areas.

We have as many as 160 campers each week, and just one dedicated photographer. While we do our best to make sure every camper is captured in the photos, some campers are good at avoiding the camera! Please try not to call or email us to request photos of certain campers.

We also know that not every photo is going to capture every kid with a smile on their face. Try not to read too much in the your camper's facial expressions - especially in the background of a photo or if they're focused on an activity.



# Camp T on Birch Lake

Program Area	Private Property
Wooded Area	Water
Health Center	Dorothy Denton Welcome Center
Dining Hall	Amphitheater
Shower House	Campfire Site
Phair Trading Post	Flag Pole
Staff Building	Waterfront Stairs
Parking Area	

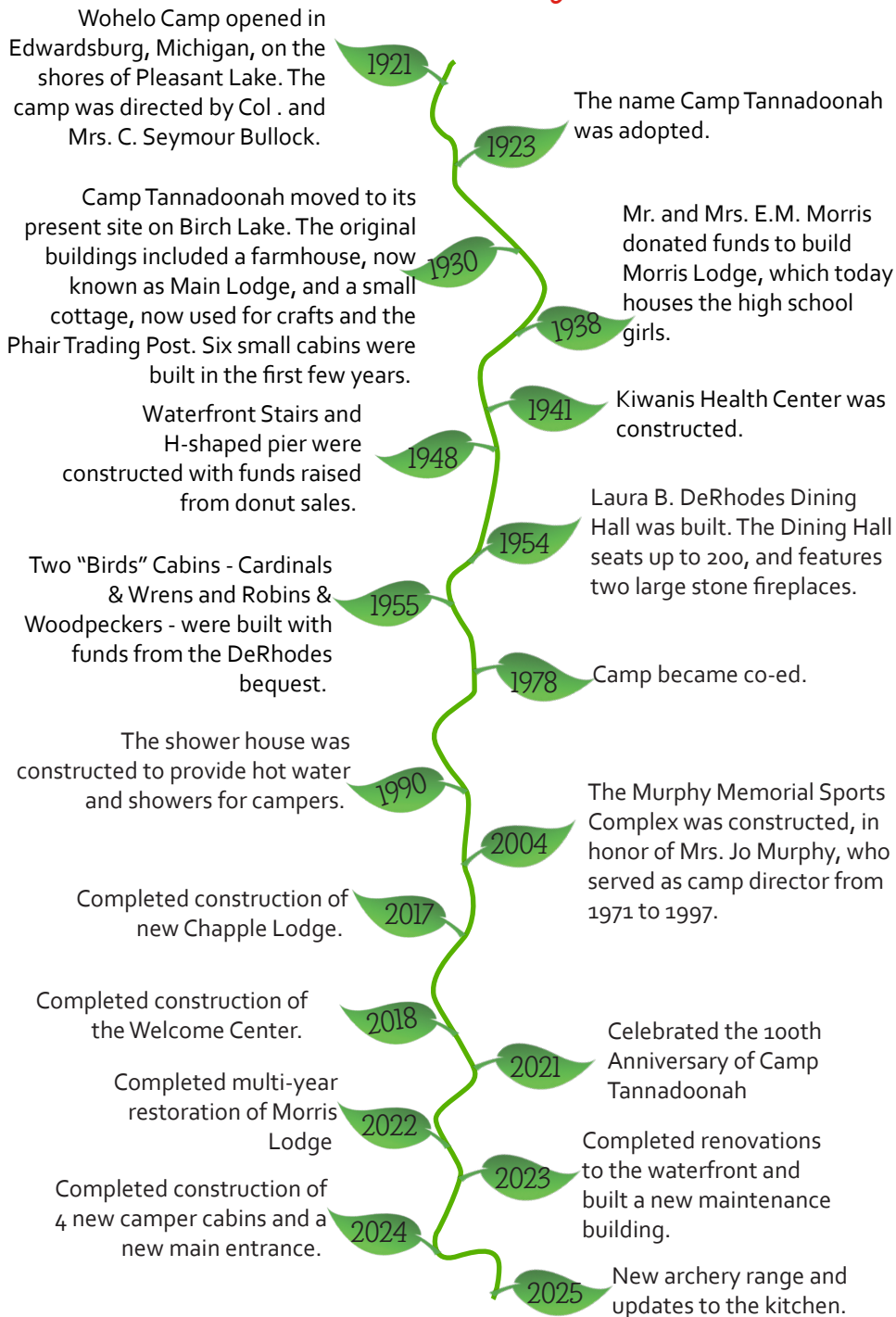
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## Camper Cabins

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1 Robins & Woodpeckers<br>Cardinals & Wrens<br>Wallace Sassafras<br>Tamarack | 6 Chapple Lodge |
| 2  | 7 Firefly       |
| 3  | 8 Lotus         |
| 4  | 9 Morris Lodge  |
| 5  |                 |



## Our History



## The Camper Experience



Camp is a magical place for young people to live among peers in a natural environment. In today's world of busy schedules and constant interactions with technology, the camper experience is a rarity that provides youth a nice pause from the outside world and allows them to learn and play in the outdoors.

For younger campers and those who have not been to camp before, camp can be a little scary at first. If your camper is nervous about coming to camp, this section will give you the tools and knowledge to ease your camper's worries (and yours!). You can reassure your camper that their time at camp will be filled with opportunities to make new friends, try new things, experience the outdoors, and above all, have fun.

Throughout the session, campers are encouraged to develop their skills in a wide range of activity areas. This section will also help familiarize you with the daily and weekly schedules, and the activities that your camper may experience during their time at Camp.



# Before You Arrive

Your child **must** have **Closed Toed** closed toed shoes!  
**Shoes** Please bring gym shoes.

## What to Pack Please LABEL EVERYTHING!

- A big smile!
- 1 bag or suitcase (must fit under the bed - no taller than 16 inches please)
- At least 1 pair of CLOSED TOED shoes
- 7+ Shirts
- 5-7 Pairs of Shorts
- Sweatshirt or Jacket
- 7+ Pairs Underwear
- 7+ Pairs Socks (extra socks are always good)
- Long pants or sweats
- Pajamas / sleepwear
- 1-2 swimming suits
- Raincoat or Poncho
- At least 2 towels
- Shampoo and Conditioner
- Toothbrush and Toothpaste
- Insect Repellent
- Sunscreen
- Deodorant
- Hairbrush / comb
- Reusable plastic water bottle
- Fitted Sheet (twin)
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket(s)
- Pillow(s)
- Flashlight
- Water shoes (recommended for waterfront activities)
- Flip Flops (for showering and waterfront ONLY)
- Postcards or Stationery
- Envelopes and stamps
- Pencil / Pen
- Stuffed animal or other comfort item
- Laundry Bag
- Medications (must be turned into the Health Officer at check in)

## What NOT to Pack

- ✗ Knives or any kind of weapon
  - ✗ Lighters or matches
  - ✗ Alcohol, cigarettes, or any kind of drugs
  - ✗ Items containing inappropriate words or symbols
  - ✗ Food, Candy, or Gum
  - ✗ Glass containers or bottles
- Anything that needs a plug or connects to the internet should stay at home.** This includes:
- ✗ Cell Phones
  - ✗ Smart Watches
  - ✗ iPods, radios, or personal music players
  - ✗ Video games
  - ✗ Straighteners, Blow Dryers, Curling Irons
  - ✗ Electric-powered fans (battery are ok)
  - ✗ Any other electronic devices

## Medical Records

The American Camping Association (ACA) requires a Health Information record to be completed by a parent or guardian **EVERY** year. This form must be filled out completely; your camper will not be permitted to attend camp if it is not **100% complete**. We collect all of our health information through UltraCamp, at <http://register.tannadoonah.org>. We do NOT require a physical signed by a doctor.

## Medications

**All medications** - prescription or over-the-counter (even vitamins) - must be turned in to the Health Officer. Medications must be in **original containers**. We absolutely will not distribute any medications that are not in their original, labeled, containers. **Please send only the amount of medication needed to last the duration of your camper's stay at camp.**

# Day Camp Specifics

Day campers are assigned to a group or cabin with campers of the same age. Day campers can participate in ALL the same activities that our overnight campers do. We try to provide the same great camp experience for day campers as we do for our overnight campers. The only difference is that day campers don't sleep at camp!

## Daily Check In

Campers may check in each day starting at 7:30am. We recommend checking at either of the following times if possible:

**7:30-8:00am** in time to join us at Breakfast  
**8:00-9:00am** in time for First Activity

You **MUST** sign your child in with a staff member when you arrive. **Do not drop off your camper without checking in!**

## Daily Check Out

Campers may check out any time before 6pm. If you need to pick up earlier than 5pm, please let us know in advance so we can make sure your camper is prepared for pickup.

You must sign your child out with a staff member. **Do not leave without checking out with a staff member!**

On Friday evening, we invite day campers to stay for dinner and our end-of-the-week closing campfire. If they stay for this, please plan to pick up at 9:30pm.



Drop off and pick up for day camp is in the Sports Field. No vehicles should drive past the Welcome Center into Main Camp while camp is in session.

If no one is in the field when you arrive for drop off or pickup, please call our staff at **574-387-6095**.

## What to Pack

Please LABEL EVERYTHING!

- A big smile!
- A backpack or small bag
- CLOSED TOED shoes
- A change of clothes
- Sweatshirt or jacket
- Swimming Suit
- Towel
- Insect Repellent
- Sunscreen
- Hairbrush / comb
- Reusable plastic water bottle
- Water shoes or Flip Flops for waterfront activities
- Medications if needed (must be turned into the nurse)



## Sleeping Over

Some weeks we have space in the cabin for day campers to sleep over one night during the week. If your child is interested in sleeping over, please talk to Miss Gabby on Monday or Tuesday to find out if there is space.

# Overnight Camp Arrival

Parents should try not to linger on arrival day. **Preventing Homesickness**  
Your camper needs to feel as independent as possible when settling in at their cabin.

The first day of the session is one of the most exciting days for campers, parents, and staff. We plan to offer our “drive through” check in process in the parking lot, but parents may also take their campers to the cabin to settle in if they wish to do so.



## Step 1: Arrival Time

Check in for all sessions except Mini Week is Sunday afternoon from **2pm to 4pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)**. Please do not arrive early! We are not able to accommodate any check ins before 2pm Eastern time. **Check in for Mini Week will be from 9am to 11am EDT on Sunday, June 29.**



## Step 4: Visit the Health Officer, if necessary

You only need to stop at the Health Officer’s station if you have medications to drop off, or questions or concerns that you would like to discuss. If your camper has special dietary needs, allergies, or a recent illness or injury, please stop and talk to the Health Officer. All medications - even vitamins, over-the-counter treatments, and medicated creams **MUST** be turned in. If you are bringing medications of any kind to camp, please go to page 16 for additional important information about medications.



## Step 2: Registration

You will proceed to the entrance of the sports and games field, where Miss Gabby will be awaiting your arrival. Your camper will be given their cabin assignment and confirm activities, and Miss Gabby will verify that all of your paperwork is complete. If any paperwork still needs to be completed, you will have the opportunity to do it now. All medical forms must be 100% complete for every camper.



## Step 5: Unload and take your camper to the cabin

Once your camper is all checked in, you will move on to the unloading area. Our counselors will help you unload your camper’s belongings. Parent have the option to walk their camper to the cabin, or you can say goodbye in the parking lot. We encourage parents not to linger over the goodbyes, as it can make the transition for campers harder. You can also go visit Miss Meghan at the Trading Post if you’d like to shop for camp gear before you leave.



## Step 3: Head Check

A member of our camp staff will carefully check your child’s head to ensure that they are lice-free.



## Step 6: Get settled at the cabin

Your camper will head back to the cabin to get acquainted with their cabin mates. A counselor will take your camper and their luggage to the cabin and help them set up their bunk.



# After you say goodbye

If your child is having a hard time with you leaving, **please do not make a "pick up deal."** Homesickness. Our staff will help your child once you leave.

After parents say their goodbyes, campers have a full schedule of activities to help them settle in and get acquainted with the camp environment. Take a look at the schedule for your camper's first day at camp!



## Get settled in to the cabin During Arrival

While campers are still checking in, counselors help campers get settled in, and lead games and activities to help campers get acquainted with one another.



## Evening Program 7:30-8:30pm

Our programming staff leads the entire camp in fun and active games on the sports field (or in the Dining Hall or Morris Lodge if it's raining). Evening activities are usually big group games that get everyone moving around.



## Swim Testing 3:30-5:30pm

When all of the campers for a cabin group have arrived, their cabin can go to the waterfront to take the swim test. When they arrive at the waterfront, a staff member goes over the waterfront rules, and explains how the swim test works (see pages 34-35 for details). Our lifeguards will guide each camper through the swim test to assess their confidence and ability in the water.



## Sing 8:30-9:00pm

Every evening we gather around the campfire to sing camp songs, tell stories and perform skits. We teach many of the same songs that campers at Camp T have learned for generations!



## Flag Lowering 5:50pm

The entire camp circles up and takes part in our evening flag ceremony. Each evening a different cabin is responsible for lowering and folding the flag.



## Cabin Meetings and Reflection Time 9:00-10:00pm

Counselors lead a cabin meeting, introducing campers to camp rules and emergency procedures. Every evening, cabins have reflection time to check in on how their days went.



## Dinner 6:00pm

All of our meals are served family style, with a counselor at the head of the table to serve the campers. One camper serves as the KP (kitchen patrol) at each meal, and helps set the table, get food from the kitchen, and clean up after the meal. At the end of each meal we sing *Announcements* and share important information with all of camp.



## Taps 10:00pm

*Taps* plays to signal the end of the day. Counselors may reward their cabins with flashlight time after taps if they choose.

# Daily Schedule

7:30am	Reveille
7:50am	Flag Raising
8:00am	Breakfast
8:45am	Cabin & Camp Cleanup
9:30am	First Activity
10:30am	Second Activity
11:30am	Free Swim & Trading Post
12:30pm	Lunch
1 15pm	Rest Hour
2 15pm	Afternoon Snack
2 45pm	Third Activity
3 45pm	Fourth Activity
4 45pm	Free Swim
5 50pm	Flag Lowering
6:00pm	Dinner
7:15pm - 8:00pm	Evening Program
9:00pm	Cabin Time and Reflection
10:00pm	Taps



## Meals

Meals are served family style. Campers serve as "KPs" (Kitchen Patrol) at least twice a week and help with cleanup. We sing a grace before every meal, thanking the Earth for the food we will eat. The graces are **not** religious in nature.

## Preventing Bullying

Free time is a great opportunity for campers to socialize and gain independence. Free time is always supervised by staff to encourage positive camper interactions.



## Polar Bear Swim

Campers ages 10 and older have the option of waking up 30 minutes before *Reveille* to participate in a Polar Bear Swim. Campers who participate in Polar Bear all six mornings may purchase a special t-shirt at the end of the week.



## Cabin & Camp Cleanup

Each morning campers and staff have time to clean their cabins, and help keep the camp property clean. The Health Officer inspects and rates each cabin daily. The cabin with the highest score at the end of the week wins the Golden Broom!



## Free Swim and Morning Trading Post

There are two 30-minute "Free Swim" times each day, at 11:30am and 4:45pm. During Free Swim, campers may go to the waterfront to swim and play in the lake, or they may spend that time in their cabin, hanging out on the porch with friends, or shopping at the Phair Trading Post.

The Phair Trading Post is open each day during Morning Free Swim (11:30-noon). During this time, campers may spend their Trading Post funds on items such as sweatshirts, water bottles, camp journals, flashlights, stamps, sunglasses, and even custom Camp T Crocs "Jibbitz." Campers may not purchase food items during morning Trading Post time.

## Activity Periods

There are four 45-minute activity periods each day; two in the morning and two in the afternoon. Campers may choose to pre-schedule up to 2 of these periods. Each camper will have at least 2 "free" periods, during which they can choose to go to Drama, Archery, Sports & Games, Nature, Crafts, Chill Zone, or anything else. They may choose a different activity to fill their free periods each day. Counselors announce the plans for these free period activities at morning announcements each day.

## Reflection Time

At the end of each day, counselors facilitate a reflection activity with their campers. Each cabin has their own name for this time. For instance, counselors might call it Cabin Reflection, "Highs and Lows," "A Rose, a Bud, and a Thorn," and our oldest girls refer to it as "Happies and Crappies." Regardless of the name, this is time at the end of each day to reflect on how their day went, to share their experiences, and to debrief at the end of the day.



# Activities

## Pre-Registering for Activities

Each day there are four scheduled activity periods, each 45 minutes in length. Campers are allowed to fill up to TWO of these periods with pre-scheduled activities. This leaves room for at least two “free choice” activities including archery, nature, drama, crafts, sports & games, chill zone, and gaga ball. Campers will confirm their schedule with our staff during check in, and will get a finalized schedule card on Monday morning at breakfast. The activities below are offered EVERY week, and do require pre-registration because there is limited capacity.



**Pro Tip:**  
Registering  
for Activities

If you want to change your activities, you need to let us know **at least 2 weeks** before you arrive at camp. Please do not request activity changes at check in!

## Specialty Programs

Every week we offer a selection of specialty programs, which are only available during certain weeks of camp. We typically have one sports, one STEM, one arts, and one water specialty program for each session. All of the specialty programs require pre-registration, and space is limited.

## 2025 Specialty Program Schedule

Session 1	Pinewood Derby, Bejeweled
Session 2	Advanced Fishing, STEM, Soccer
Session 3 / Super Week	Canoe Trip, Cooking & Baking, Yoga
Session 4	Advanced Sailing, Volleyball, Zoology
Session 5	Canoe Trip, Magic, Gardening
Session 6	Advanced Fishing, Basketball, Theater
Session 7	Canoe Trip, Astronomy, Flag Football
Session 8	Advanced Sailing, Ukulele, Book Club

## Free Choice Activities

Every camper will have at least two free periods per day. During free periods, campers can choose between seven different options. Each day at breakfast, the counselors leading the Free Choice Activities make an announcement about what their plan is for the day, to help campers decide where to go. Campers can go to a different free choice every day, and they do not need to decide in advance.



## Sparks

The Sparks are all campers who are 8 years old and younger. The Sparks Counselors supervise the Sparks and make sure that they get to their activities, that they are dressed and ready for waterfront classes, and that they know where they are going throughout the day.

The Sparks Counselors also plan special activities for the Sparks during the day if they choose.



## Sample Daily Menu

### Breakfast

Scrambled Eggs, Sausage, Toast  
Fresh Fruit, Yogurt, Orange Juice  
Cereal, Milk

### Lunch

Chicken & Cheese Quesadillas  
Chips, Salsa, Fresh Veggies & Dip  
Salad Bar  
Water, Lemonade

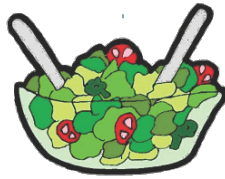
### Dinner

Spaghetti & Meatballs  
Garlic Bread, Broccoli  
Salad Bar  
Milk, Water  
Brownies

## Our Goals

We aim to provide healthy, delicious, and plentiful food. We try to serve as much fresh, homemade, and locally-sourced food as possible.

We also provide options at every meal - cereal, fruit, and yogurt at breakfast, and salad and sandwich options at lunch and dinner, to supplement the main meal being served.



Our kitchen staff works very hard to limit food waste. One way they do this is to send out small servings to start with, and having KPs or counselors come back to the kitchen for refills when their table has finished the initial quantity.

## Dietary Needs and Allergies

If your camper has food allergies, or other special dietary needs, please contact us **at least 2 weeks** in advance! We will discuss options, provide you with a copy of the menu for the week, and talk about alternative meals to meet your camper's needs. If your camper eats a gluten-free or dairy-free diet, or has other food restrictions, we may ask you to provide some supplemental food options.

We are *not* a peanut-free facility. However, we are very cautious about allergens, and if your camper has a severe food allergy we are happy to discuss steps we can take to keep them safe at camp.

## Cookout Night

Every Monday night we have cookout night. Each cabin is given a box of supplies and a fire site, and they head out to prepare their own meal over the open fire. Cookout meals include "walking tacos," hot dogs, campfire chili, and of course, S'mores for dessert!



### Pro Tip: Bunk Mate Requests

We do our best to accommodate bunkmate requests, as long as campers are the same gender and no more than 1 year apart in age.



Our 9 camper cabins can house a total of up to 150 overnight campers each session at camp. Each cabin has 2-4 staff members who live in the cabin with the campers, maintaining at least a camp-wide 5:1 ratio of campers to staff. We assign cabins based on age and gender-identity, and the age group assigned to a particular cabin changes from week to week depending on the number of registrations and bunk mate requests. Our cabins are rustic, but they do all have electricity. Each camper will have a shelf to store personal items. You should plan to bring just one suitcase, small enough to fit under the bed (no more than 16 inches tall).

## Cardinals & Wrens

- Typically girls up to age 11
- **Location:** Bird Yard
- **Campers:** 21  
(11 Cardinals, 10 Wrens)
- **Staff:** 4-5
- **Bathrooms:** Yes

## Robins & Woodpeckers

- Typically boys up to age 11
- **Location:** Bird Yard
- **Campers:** 21 (11 Robins, 10 Woodpeckers)
- **Staff:** 4-5
- **Bathrooms:** Yes

## Wallace

- Typically boys 11 & 12
- **Location:** Back Cabins
- **Campers:** 14
- **Staff:** 3-4
- **Bathrooms:** No

## Sassafras

- Typically boys 12 & 13
- **Location:** Back Cabins
- **Campers:** 14
- **Staff:** 2-3
- **Bathrooms:** No

## Tamarack

- Typically boys 13 & up
- **Location:** Back Cabins
- **Campers:** 14
- **Staff:** 2-3
- **Bathrooms:** No

## Chapple Lodge

- Typically girls 11 & 12
- **Location:** Front Cabins
- **Campers:** 20
- **Staff:** 4
- **Bathrooms:** No

## Firefly

- Typically girls 12 & 13
- **Location:** Front Cabins
- **Campers:** 14
- **Staff:** 2-3
- **Bathrooms:** No

## Lotus

- Typically girls 12 & 13
- **Location:** Front Cabins
- **Campers:** 14
- **Staff:** 2-3
- **Bathrooms:** No

## Morris Lodge

- Typically girls 14 & up
- **Location:** Front Cabins
- **Campers:** 20
- **Staff:** 3-4
- **Bathrooms:** Yes

## The Shower House

- The shower house is a short trek away for those campers who are in cabins without bathrooms.
- Only Morris Lodge has showers, so most campers head to the shower house when they need to clean up.

# Closing Day for Overnight Camp

## Breakfast 8:00am



One last meal for the session! We sing songs, thank our kitchen staff for taking good care of us all week, and reflect on the camp experience.

## Cabin Cleanup and Packing 9-10am



After breakfast, campers and staff go to their cabins to finish packing, and to clean up their cabin. Once they are packed, campers will carry their luggage to the Tennis Courts for checkout.

## Check Out Time



Check Out for all sessions is on Saturday morning from **10am to 11am Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)**. This is one hour *ahead* of Chicago time. **You will be required to show identification at check out**, so that we can confirm that only authorized individuals are leaving with campers. Please have your ID ready!

## Late Pickups

Check out ends promptly at 11am Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). Campers not checked out by 11am will be **charged a \$1 per minute late fee**. Please remember that we are on Eastern Time, which is 1 hour ahead of Chicago time, and remember to plan for traffic, too.

## Early Pickups

Please do not plan on picking your camper up before 10:00am Eastern Time. We have as many as 150 campers to help pack, and cabins to clean. When parents arrive prior to 10am, it makes it difficult for our staff to get their jobs done. If you absolutely must arrive before 10am, please let us know in advance. **Every camper MUST check out with the Camp Director before leaving!**

## Lost and Found

Please mark all items with your camper's full name. **We will *only* save items in the lost and found if they are labeled.** Any labeled items will be held at Camp until September 1. After that, all remaining items are donated to charity. Camp Fire River Bend and Camp T are not responsible for any lost or stolen items. Please leave valuables at home.

# Camper Care

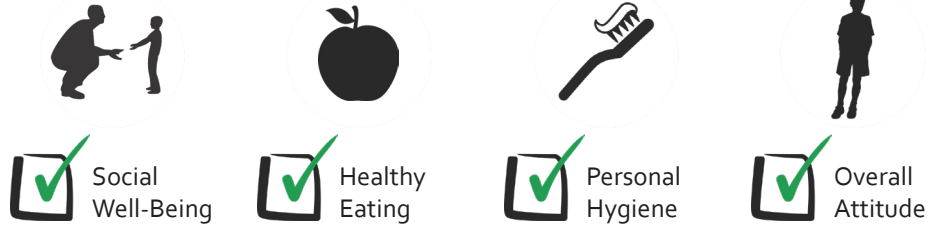


In many ways, camp is like a giant home; the Dining Hall is the kitchen, the cabin is the bedroom, the fields and forests are the backyard, the campers are the children and the staff members are the surrogate parents. In this understanding of camp, every component is geared towards maintaining a safe place for your camper to stay while they are away from home. This means providing campers with an environment that is both physically and emotionally safe. Camp T staff strive to make your camper feel at home and free to be themselves while at camp. This section outlines several strategies and systems that are in place to support your camper and provide them with top-quality care. From our Healthcare staff, to our First Aid and CPR training, to our Waterfront guidelines and protocols, you can rest assured that our camp is a very safe house.



# Camper Well-Being

Our staff is structured as a large support network of skilled and responsible individuals, working together to ensure the safety and well-being of all campers. Cabin counselors, program leaders, kitchen staff, the Health Officer, Camp Directors, and facilities staff members are all responsible for creating an environment that provides opportunities for campers to challenge themselves, but also ensures appropriate supervision and care.



Counselors are trained to observe campers at meals to make sure they are eating, to keep an eye out for social issues, to monitor campers' moods and attitudes, and to make sure campers get to the Health Officer for their medications when needed. They also encourage campers to shower, brush their teeth, and change their clothing regularly. Counselors report any concerns in their cabin or activities to the Health Officer, head counselors, or camp directors so that problems can be addressed promptly.

## Medical Resources



Our camp Health Officer lives on site and is present throughout the week. The Health Officer manages medication routines, assesses and treats minor injuries and illnesses, and contacts external medical professionals when required. If your camper is restricted from activities for more than one hour due to injury or illness, the Health Officer will contact you.



The Cass Family Clinic is a 15-minute drive from camp, and is available for appointments for campers in need of a physician's consultation. The Beacon Three Rivers Health Center is 15 minutes away in case of a more urgent injury or illness. The Newberg Township Fire and EMS station is just 5 miles from camp and provides rapid emergency response.



First Aid kits are available in every cabin and at each program area. All of our counselors are trained in CPR/AED and First Aid.

Camper's are most likely to feel homesick **Preventing** around bedtime. Sending a comforting **Homesickness** memento from home like a blanket, photo or stuffed animal can help.

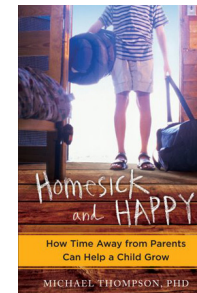
The camp staff has been trained on how to handle this expected hurdle. It is usually a temporary period, and the staff helps to overcome this feeling by channeling your child's energies towards other activities. By the time you receive a "low" letter, your child is probably feeling much better! Research on homesickness has shown that up to 85% of kids experience some feeling of homesickness, but few continue to feel homesick past the first day or two.

We do not allow campers to call home during the week, as this generally only makes homesickness worse. If we have concerns about your child, we will have a staff member contact you. You are also free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns during the week. The phone number at camp is 574-387-6095.

## Resources

For more tips on how to handle homesickness, check out the American Camp Association's resources on their website (<https://www.acacamps.org/homesickness>).

We also recommend checking out Dr. Michael Thompson's book, *Homesick and Happy*.



## Tips for Preventing Homesickness

- **DO talk about homesickness.** It is so important to talk with your child about how normal it is to feel homesick at camp. Talk about what they should do if they experience homesickness. Let them know that you can be homesick AND still have a great time at camp!
- **DO set some camp goals with your child.** In addition to making friends and having fun, camp is about trying new things and learning new skills. We encourage all of our campers to set some personal goals, whether it is learning how to water-ski or becoming a better photographer.
- **DON'T tell your camper that you won't be okay without them!** It is okay for them to know that you will miss them, but we want to avoid them worrying about mom or dad while at camp. Try saying, "I am going to miss you so much, but I know you are going to have the best time!"
- **Most importantly, DON'T make a "pick-up deal"** by telling your child that you will come pick them up from camp if they don't like it. Children often lose motivation to succeed at camp if they think a parent will come get them midweek. They will hold you to this deal, and it will make it harder for us to help your camper adjust. Part of camp is learning to work through situations that may not always be easy. Please know that the Directors and counselors are taking great care of your child, and we are committed to helping them throughout the week so that they can have a positive and successful camp experience.



# Health and Hygiene

## Illness or Injury

Parents or guardians will be contacted immediately in the event of an emergency, at the discretion of the Camp Directors or Health Officer. We do not call parents for every minor injury, upset stomach, or headache. However, any time a camper is restricted from normal program participation for more than **one hour** because of illness or injury, parents or guardians will be contacted. If at this point you wish to speak directly to your camper, Health Officer will make that possible.



If a camper is referred for medical care outside of Camp, we will contact you immediately. If medical care is needed, your family accident/health medical insurance will be billed, and you will be advised of and billed for any other medical expenses such as special medication and/or supplies advised by the physician.

## Head Lice

Our staff will check every camper's hair during check in. If a camper is identified as having head lice, you will need to take them home to treat it. They can return to camp if you provide a certificate from a Lice Removal salon, or you can treat them yourself at home and they may return when there are no live lice or nits present. Alternatively, we can arrange for them to attend a different session of camp, if space is available.



Save yourself the headache and do a couple of head checks in the weeks and nights prior to your child's arrival at camp. Make it part of the evening routine and educate your child about not sharing brushes, combs, or headwear with others.

## Fever Policy

If your camper has a fever of 100.4°F or higher, you will need to take them home until they are 24 hours fever-free (without fever-reducing medication).



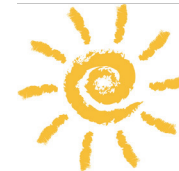
If a camper develops a fever while at camp, parents will be notified, and the camper will remain in the nurse's cabin. All campers presenting with a fever will need to be picked up by a parent or guardian. They may return to camp once they are 24 hours fever-free (without fever-reducing medication).

## Refund Policy

No refunds will be made once a child reaches camp except when he/she is sent home at the request of a physician or the Health Officer for verified medical reasons. Refunds will be processed after the completion of our summer session, no earlier than September 1st. **NO refunds will be issued for campers sent home for behavioral reasons or due to homesickness.**

## Sun & Heat Safety

Camp can be a very sunny place. To avoid sunburns, campers are regularly reminded to apply sunscreen. We suggest that each camper pack sunscreen and a hat to ensure they are always staying safe in the sun. Sunscreen lotion dispensers are located in the swimming and boating areas, in case campers need to reapply before heading out onto the water.



When the temperature is over 90°F, in the afternoon we may hold a mandatory swim time, meaning that all campers are required to go to the waterfront to cool down. This only happens a few times during the summer, on days of extreme heat.

## Staying Hydrated

Staying hydrated is an important part of the day at camp. To help your camper stay hydrated, **please be sure to send them to camp with a reusable non-glass water bottle.** Staff are always mindful of heat and hydration when leading activities and will



often facilitate group water breaks. Because our water comes from a well, it has higher levels of certain minerals (which is completely safe!) but some do not like the taste. Our Dining Hall has a filtered sink but, if you think this may be a problem for your camper, please send them with a filtered water bottle or bottles of water.

### Hydration

Please make sure your camper brings a reusable non-glass water bottle to camp.

## Showers

Campers have daily opportunities to shower if they choose to do so. No one is forced to shower, but we provide ample opportunities to do so.

In addition, cabins with younger campers will have at least one "shower party" per week to ensure that every camper gets to the shower house at least once.

Of course, a good old jump in the lake is also a good way to stay clean and refreshed!



## Hand Washing

Campers are reminded to wash their hands throughout the day, especially around meals and bedtime.

This helps to prevent illness and the spread of germs.

We also have hand sanitizer available for use at multiple activity areas.

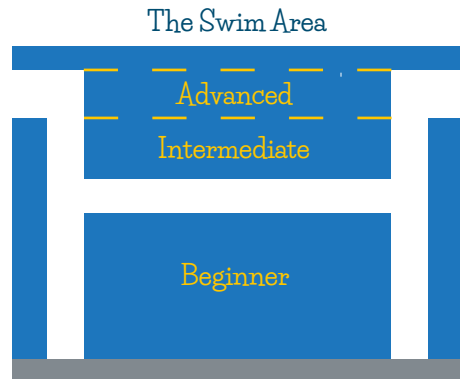


# Waterfront Safety

**Swim Test** Campers take the swim test on Sunday afternoon, right after check in concludes. To pass the swim test, they must be able to swim the distance continuously - no stopping to rest.

## Skill Assessment

At the start of each session, the Waterfront Staff assess the swimming skills of every camper. There are three color-coded levels of wristbands (the colors may change from year to year), awarded based on swimming ability. Campers who are signed up for waterskiing, wakeboarding, or a boating class must earn at least an Intermediate band. Campers who are signed up for swimming lessons are given an additional assessment to determine which Red Cross Learn-to-Swim Level they are.



Beginner

Weak or non-swimmer, or anyone who does not take the swim test.

Swimming lessons are recommended. May not take boating classes, waterskiing or wakeboarding.



Intermediate

Can swim 50 yards without stopping to rest.

May take boating, waterskiing, and wakeboarding classes.



Advanced

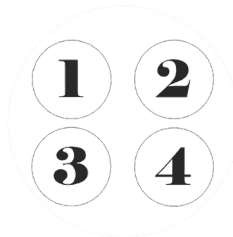
Can swim 75 yards without stopping to rest.

May take boating, waterskiing, and wakeboarding classes.

## Supervision



We have at least 6-8 certified Red Cross Lifeguards on the waterfront staff. Most of our guards are trained on-site during pre-camp training. The lifeguards also go through an extensive training process during pre-camp training to tailor their skills to the Camp T waterfront on Birch Lake.



Water in the beginner area ranges from a few inches to ~4 feet deep.

Water in the intermediate area ranges from 5 feet to 7 feet deep.

Water in the advanced area ranges from 8 feet to 16 feet deep.

## Boating Activities



Boating activities include canoeing, kayaking, sailing, stand up paddleboarding, waterskiing, and wakeboarding. Campers must earn at least an intermediate band to take part in any boating activity. Life jackets are worn during all boating activities by all staff and campers.

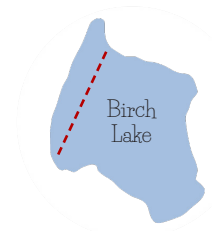
## The Buddy System

Campers sign in and out of the swimming and boating areas with an assigned "buddy" number. This helps our lifeguards keep an accurate count of all swimmers and boaters. During Free Swims, the lifeguards announce a buddy call every 10 minutes to ensure that all swimmers are accounted for.

Every camper must have a buddy any time they enter the swimming or boating areas, and they must stay with their buddy at all times. The Buddy Board counselor can help pair up campers who come to Free Swim and don't already have a buddy.

## Lake Swim

Campers who are strong swimmers may sign up to participate in the Lake Swim, which takes place early Saturday morning. Swimmers must complete a lake swim test consisting of swimming 500 yards continuously, which must be completed in 30 minutes or less. Lake swim begins at 5:45am on Saturday morning, before any boats are on the lake. They are accompanied by lifeguards who swim with them, as well as lifeguards in canoes who paddle alongside. The total distance they swim is approximately 1200 yards.



# Camp Staff



The top priority for the Camp T staff is for them to be positive role models for our campers, and to provide campers with an incredible camp experience. Camp T's dynamic staff of young adults go that extra mile by bringing an impressive variety of talents and experiences in the arts, sports, science, counseling, and leadership.

What stands out most about our staff is the level of commitment and care they put into everything that they do. Staff members play many different roles in the day. From leading songs before meals, planning and facilitating activities, lifeguarding during swim times, to supervising campers at night, our staff are the heartbeat of Camp T and approach their roles with confidence and enthusiasm.

This section will help familiarize you with the strategies and certifications that allow our staff to deliver a top-quality camp experience throughout the summer.

## The Hiring Process

Our very best resource for camp staff is our past campers and staff! We know that great campers and CITs make great future counselors. We recruit candidates for camp jobs through college career fairs, posts on job boards like Indeed and Handshake, and through our social media. We also hire staff through international staffing agencies. In addition, we have a crew of volunteers who help out throughout the summer.

When an application for a counselor is received, it is first reviewed by the Camp Director. Qualified candidates are then interviewed by the Camp Director and Assistant Director, and we collect at least three references and verify past employment for each candidate. Most years, we have many more applicants than we have positions available at camp, which means we can be very selective about who receives an offer of a position.

## Background Checks

If a candidate is offered and accepts a position at camp, their employment is contingent on a clean background check. We complete a nationwide Criminal History Background check, and a search of the National Sex Offender Registry for every candidate. For individuals over 21 years of age, we also complete a Central Registry search, which is a database for child abuse and neglect. All staff members (new and returning, and year-round staff) and volunteers are required to complete a background check every year, prior to the start of our summer programs.

## Staff Diversity

In all of our Camp Fire programs, we want to introduce our participants to the amazing diversity of experiences that the world has to offer. We hire staff from all over the United States and all over the world. In 2024, our staff and volunteers represented different 8 countries and 9 U.S. States. We had staff members and volunteers who lived or studied in Arizona, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, and Ohio, as well as Columbia, England, France, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Scotland and Wales!

In a typical year, roughly half the staff is made up of returning counselors, and half are new to Camp T. We want to uphold the traditions and things that make Camp T special to our campers and alums, but we also want to bring in new ideas and perspectives to keep our programs fresh and relevant.





# Pre-Camp Staff Training

The key to a successful summer is a well-prepared staff. Prior to the start of the summer, camp staff spend one and a half weeks participating in training workshops and teambuilding activities. This helps to familiarize them with camp policies, fine-tune skills, and foster a positive group dynamic. Our leadership staff are here an additional half week for supervisor training.

Staff also use this time to prepare the camp site and facilities for the summer. By the time campers arrive, our staff are fully prepared to make the summer ahead the best one yet. Take a look below to see what sort of topics are covered throughout pre-camp training.



## Soft Skills

Camp staff take great pride in caring for campers throughout the summer. Several workshops are run during pre-camp training to help staff develop strategies to identify and resolve camper issues such as homesickness and bullying.



## Hard Skills

Pre-camp training is also a great opportunity for staff to hone their skills in specific activity areas. Both external professionals and camp staff lead sessions during this time to help staff prepare for leading campers in activities throughout the summer.



## Safety

Safety remains the top priority throughout the summer. During pre-camp training, staff participate in workshops to learn to assess and manage safety risks. This training includes Red Cross CPR/AED and First Aid certification for all staff.



## Online Training

Before they even arrive at camp, our staff start their training by watching videos and taking quizzes online.



## Team Building

A big focus of the one and a half weeks we spend training our staff prior to the arrival of campers is on teambuilding and developing a cohesive team. Our staff learn to communicate, resolve conflicts, and help each other be successful.

# Staff Certifications



## Archery

Archery is supervised by counselors who have been trained as a Level 1 USA Archery instructors by our Level 2 Instructor-Trainers. There are always at least 2 staff members when archery is taking place.



## Boating

Our drivers for waterskiing and wakeboarding have a current boating license, and receive additional training on safe towing practices following USA Waterski Association guidelines. Campers and staff are required to wear lifejackets on all boats.



## CPR/AED and First Aid

Members of the camp staff are certified in Adult and Pediatric Red Cross CPR, First Aid, and AED during our pre-camp staff training. We conduct this training on site to ensure that all members of the staff have the opportunity to become certified.



## Challenge Course

Our Low Ropes Course facilitators are trained on site by licensed instructors. They receive Level 1 training from the Association for Challenge Course Technology. There are always two staff members at the Low Ropes course when activities take place.



## Food Preparation

The Kitchen Manager holds a current ServSafe Food Handler certificate, and is responsible for training the kitchen staff on safe food handling procedures. We also have routine Health Department inspections to ensure our kitchen is following food safety standards.



## Health Care Staff

The Health Officer each week is a licensed physician, NP, RN, PA, LPN, nurse practitioner, EMT, or medical first responder. The Health Officer lives on site in the Kiwanis Health Center, and is responsible for administering all medications, and handling injuries and illnesses.



## Lifeguarding

We train our lifeguards on site prior to the start of camp. All lifeguards are Red Cross certified as Waterfront Lifeguards. All swimming and boating classes are supervised by lifeguards, and lifeguards are on duty during all swim periods.



## LEAD's Camp Mental Health Certification (CampMHC)

"CampMHC is the nation's first early intervention certification tailored to summer camp and outdoor recreation settings." Camp staff are trained to recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of mental illness in non-crisis situations and to connect campers to appropriate professional support in crisis situations.



# Camp Lingo and Traditions

For some parents and campers, especially those who are new to camp, we know that the camp lingo and traditions can be perplexing. Here are some terms, phrases, and traditions you may hear about and wonder what they mean. If you hear other stuff that doesn't make sense, please don't hesitate to ask us!

**ACA.** The American Camp Association (ACA) is the organization that provides accreditation for camps across the U.S. The accreditation process ensures that we are following best practices for safety, staff hiring and training, health care, food service, programs, and much more. We complete a re-accreditation process annually, and have a formal accreditation visit every few years.



**Afternoon Snack.** Every day after rest time, we have afternoon snack time. During this time, campers can get two items from the store - one sweet treat and one non-sweet. This can include a candy item, a soda, or an ice cream treat, plus a bottle of water, a counselor trading card, or a salty snack (such as pretzels, cheez-its, crackers, popcorn, or chex-mix). These afternoon snacks are included in the price of a session of camp; campers do not need to use funds from their Trading Post account at this time.

**Birds Cabins / The Bird Yard.** The Birds Cabins refer to two camper cabins with bird names - these are Cardinals & Wrens for female-identifying campers, and Robins & Woodpeckers for male-identifying campers. Typically, the Birds Cabins house campers ages 11 and younger, but some weeks when there are many older campers registered for camp, there may be 12 year olds in the Birds Cabins. The Birds Cabins each have two camper sleeping areas, and a counselor area in the middle, and have bathrooms (but not showers) in the cabin. The grassy area in front of these two cabins is called the Bird Yard.

**Bunk Mail.** Bunk mail is **one-way** emails sent from parents to campers. There is NO WAY for campers to respond except by writing a letter and mailing it. Camper mail and Bunk Notes are delivered to the cabins around 5pm daily. In order to write to parents, parents need to buy blocks of email credits in your UltraCamp account. Bunk mail costs \$5 for 5 emails. All messages received by 4pm will be delivered the next evening. Messages received after 4pm will be delivered the next evening. Please note that an email after 4pm on Friday, your camper will go home before we receive those messages.



**Camper Council.** Each cabin nominates one camper from their cabin to serve on the Camper Council each session. The Camper Council meets mid-week to come up with ideas for Thursday night's evening program, which they take back to their cabin for a vote. The votes are counted, and the Camper Council members help set up and lead the chosen activity. All campers working towards the Order of the Birch award are automatically selected as representatives for their cabin on the Camper Council.

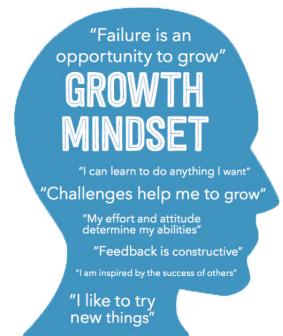
**C.I.T.s.** Counselors in Training (a.k.a. CITs) are high school-aged campers who are learning about what it takes to be a member of the camp staff. The CIT program is a 3-year program, and campers can enroll in CIT 1 when they are 15 years old. Each year the CITs take on added responsibilities, and spend a longer time at camp. They are not members of the staff, and are not responsible for supervising campers on their own. However, they help lead activities, and assist in the cabins.

**Closing Campfire.** Closing campfire is our weekly closing ceremony, held on the last night of each session (generally Friday night). We sing camp songs, share stories, distribute awards, and show a slideshow of some of the best pictures from the week. The last campfire for each summer includes additional special ceremonies. Closing campfire typically begins around 7:15pm on Friday evenings. Visitors are allowed to attend the closing campfire if they wish to. All visitors must sign in at the Welcome Center upon arrival at camp, and must check out with staff when they leave. No visitors may stay on camp after 9pm without permission from the Camp Director.



**The Golden Broom.** The Golden Broom is awarded by our Health Officer to the cleanest cabin each session. Campers have time each day to straighten up their cabins, and help with tasks that keep camp clean for everyone. Throughout the week, the Health Officer performs daily cabin inspections and posts scores for cabin cleanliness on the board outside the Dining Hall. The competition can be fierce, and the winner is announced on Friday night at closing campfire.

**Growth Mindset.** Growth Mindset is one of the core pieces of our Program Framework, around which we build our entire program. Our staff are trained to help campers develop a Growth Mindset, which means that they believe they can learn new skills all the time, and that with hard work and practice they can improve at difficult tasks. This is the opposite of a Fixed Mindset, when an individual believes that they are stuck with the skills and abilities they have now.



**IN and OUT Doors.** In our Dining Hall, the doors to the kitchen are labeled IN and OUT. If you go IN to the kitchen through the OUT door, or go OUT of the kitchen through the IN door, you will have to walk around the correct way 3 times. If it happens during a meal, everyone counts out loud while you make your three trips around. The IN and OUT doors help prevent spills by keeping the flow of traffic through the kitchen moving in one direction.

**Lake Swim.** Every Saturday morning, campers who have demonstrated a strong swimming ability are given the opportunity to sign up for the Lake Swim. These campers and a group of our lifeguards get up really early (5:45am!) and swim all the way across Birch Lake - a distance of about 1200 yards.

There are lifeguards in the water with the swimmers, as well as lifeguards in boats who paddle alongside the swimmers. Campers who complete the Lake Swim can purchase a Lake Swim shirt at the Camp Store during checkout.



**The Legend Tree.** The Legend Tree was established in 2009 as a way of recognizing those individuals who have made legendary contributions to Camp Fire and Camp T, leaving a positive and indelible mark on our programs, facilities, and most of all, our people. It is a way of ensuring that their stories continue into legend.

**Morning Trading Post.** During Morning Free Swim, campers may visit the Phair Trading Post to shop for camp items. During this time, campers may spend their Trading Post deposits on items such as sweatshirts, water bottles, camp journals, flashlights, batteries, stamps, sunglasses, or other items we stock in the camp store.



Campers may NOT purchase snacks, sodas, ice cream, or candy at this time. Most parents choose to put between \$25 and \$50 in their campers' Trading Post account. However, the Trading Post deposit is optional; even if campers do not have funds in their account, they will still receive two items at Afternoon Snack time (see above). Campers are not allowed to carry in cash during camp. When you set up their Trading Post account, you will be asked to indicate if you would like to have any unspent money returned, or if you would like to donate it to camp.

You can set up your Trading Post account in UltraCamp and check the balance throughout the week! You can even add funds to your campers' account if they start running low.

**Order of the Birch.** The Order of the Birch award is the highest honor that a camper can earn at Camp T. In order to be eligible for the award, the camper must be going into at least the 7th grade, and be attending at least their 5th year at Camp T.

During the week, campers who are working towards the Order of the Birch must attend each free choice activity at least once, keep their bunk neat and clean, be a model camper, help lead Sing one evening, be their cabin's representative on the Camper Council, do a service project for camp, and write a poem, song, or speech to perform at closing campfire on Friday night.

Campers who earn the Order of the Birch are invited to attend the last campfire of the season, when we have a special ceremony to honor the recipients.

**Reflection Time.** Reflection is one of the core components of the Program Framework on which we build our camp programs. At the end of each activity, counselors set aside a few minutes to guide their campers through a reflection process, which includes talking about what went well, what could be improved, what they might do differently next time, and what their goals are for the next time they do that activity.

Counselors also provide reflection time at the end of each day during cabin time before bed at night. Each cabin has their own name for this time. For instance, counselors might call it Cabin Reflection, "Highs and Lows," "A Rose, a Bud, and a Thorn," and our oldest girls refer to it as "Happies and Crappies." Regardless of the name, this is time at the end of each day to reflect on how their day went, to share their experiences, and to debrief at the end of the day.

**Rest Hour.** Every afternoon following lunch we have a rest period, which lasts from the end of the meal (around 1:15) until the start of afternoon Snack (which begins at 2:15). All campers are required to be in their cabins during this time. It is a quiet period, but sleeping is not required. Campers are encouraged to read a book, write a letter, rest on their bed, or talk quietly with their friends. They can play cards or other quiet games, but they must be on their bunks (feet off the floor) and quiet. It is helpful if you pack a book or journal or letter-writing supplies so that campers have something quiet to do during rest hour.

**Reveille.** Reveille is the song that is played each morning at 7:30am to signal the start of the day.

**Rule of 3s.** Campers are sent places in groups of three (to the bathroom, to grab something from their cabin, etc.) for safety reasons. If one camper were to be hurt, another one could go find help while the other stays with the injured camper. This also helps prevent bullying and other inappropriate behaviors.



**Sing.** Each evening after our evening program, we gather the campers and staff around the camp fire for 30 minutes of "Sing" or "Song Circle." Members of the staff lead camp songs, tell stories, or lead skits. This is **not** chapel time. Some of our traditional camp songs do have some references to God; however, we are a non-religious program and do not teach campers about religion.

We DO sing Grace before each meal. These songs are focused on giving thanks for our food, and do not emphasize a religious focus. Instead, we give thanks to the Earth. We are happy to provide parents with the lyrics to any songs or to our mealtime graces if you would like to review them.

**Slamming Doors.** The sound of a slamming screen door can wake up your entire cabin! Therefore, it is a camp tradition that any time you let a door slam behind you, you must go back and open and close it quietly 3 times.



**Camp T Fairy.** The Camp T Fairy (TF) is Camp T's version of a Secret Santa. During one week each summer, our staff draw names and we have TF Week. They do kind things for each other, buy each other small gifts or treats, and play silly jokes on each other. Counselors can also set up a TF event in their cabins. If they choose to do this, campers would draw each other's names and do a favor or something kind for one another, or perhaps give their store treat to another camper. For camper TFs, no pranks or practical jokes are allowed.

**Taps.** *Taps* is the song that is played each night at 10:00pm to signal the end of the day. It is a camp tradition that while *Taps* is playing, the lights are turned off and everyone is silent until the song ends. After *Taps*, overhead lights in the cabin stay off, and counselors may choose to reward their cabins with flashlight time.

**Work, Health, Love.** Work, health, and love are the watchwords of the Camp Fire Organization, and represents the ideals that we strive to live up to. We encourage our youth to work hard, make healthy choices, and be loving and caring towards themselves and others.

*Work, Health, Love*



### Our Mission

We connect young people to the outdoors, to others, and to themselves.

Camp Fire River Bend, Inc.

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