

It Takes a Village... and Then Some!

By: Kat Shreve

As we get ready for our upcoming programs for the 2018-2019 Year, including Family Camps, Teen Retreat, Overnight Camp, and Sprouts Day Camp, we are working on both the 2019 Camper Application and the 2019 Staff Application. We are excited about our new database, called UltraCamp. UltraCamp is a user-friendly application that will allow families (and volunteers) to quickly complete applications and forms, seamlessly apply for the scholarship program, and pay camp fees.

Last year, there were 450 hands raised to come to Camp Kudzu and be an on-the-ground part of our work. (That number does NOT include the 150-plus volunteers who got us packed and ready to go to camp!) We are almost ready for those hands to be waved in the air again this year. The benefits of raising your hand are tremendous!

Volunteering at one of Camp Kudzu's programs offers invaluable skill-building, leadership, training, and enrichment opportunities that can't be found anywhere else. The experience allows staff to learn and develop skills that will enhance their job marketability. The corporate world recognizes that experience as a camp counselor translates into excellent management and personnel skills.

If one's career goal is working with youth in some capacity, then camp is the ideal place to gain experience with children and teens. Counselors are able to learn how their campers react to new environments, handle homesickness, gain a sense of independence, and learn how to form friendships with other campers that were strangers before the summer began. However, there's a misconception that working at camp will only benefit you if you're headed towards a career as a teacher or similar youth development job: that's simply not true! Being a camp staff

member and working directly with children and teens teaches numerous skills with benefits for any future profession.

Leadership – There are endless opportunities to become a leader. Instantly, a group of campers look up to their counselors and seek guidance and wisdom from them.

Teamwork – At Camp Kudzu, the staff is a diverse and talented group of people from all walks of life... from college students to healthcare professionals to experienced adults in a variety of careers. Counselors learn how to communicate, compromise, and lend a helping hand to their co-workers.

Problem Solving – Plans can change at a moment's notice at camp. A rainy day can turn an outdoor activity into an impromptu indoor game.

Medical Knowledge – No textbook or lecture can begin to accurately describe or depict how to care and support a person living with type 1 diabetes. The in-the-trenches, hands-on experience of being in a space where everyone is living with diabetes is more than a PowerPoint presentation and handout. Volunteering at Camp Kudzu can be a stepping stone or deep dive into a career in the medical field.

Work Ethic – Working at camp may be one of the toughest jobs around. Long hours, hot days, and challenging situations abound, all while keeping a genuine smile on your face.

Academic Credit – Camp Kudzu Volunteers are often eligible for college credit or able to use camp as an independent study, internship experience, or practicum. We have strong, collaborative partnerships with several colleges and universities across the state.

Time Management – Staff at Camp Kudzu are supervising campers from wake-up at 7:00 AM till bed time and midnight rounds. We follow policies, procedures, and protocols to manage the health and well-being of everyone at camp. Be on time for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

A job at a summer camp is much more than being a counselor. It's being a teacher, role model, and hero. It's a unique opportunity to make a positive impact in the lives of so many people—campers, fellow staff, and themselves.