

## Pre-Camp Orientation Materials

**WELCOME!** We're glad you're going to be a part of the Camp Mason family this summer. It will be an exciting adventure as we strive to make a positive impact on the lives of our campers and literally change the world! We look forward to helping as you embark on a journey that will prove to be a most enjoyable and memorable experience.

### **CONTACT INFO**

Mailing address: YMCA Camp Mason  
23 Birch Ridge Rd.  
Hardwick, NJ USA  
07825

Phone: (908) 362-8217 Fax: (908) 362-5767

Website: [www.campmason.org](http://www.campmason.org)

Summer Camp Director: Don Jennings [Don@campmason.org](mailto:Don@campmason.org)

Associate Executive Director: Marcus Forster [marcus@campmason.org](mailto:marcus@campmason.org)

### **IMPORTANT DATES**

<b>June 8 – June 14</b>	Specialty Staff Training (Ranch Camp, Adventure Trips, & Leadership staff)
<b>June 15 – June 21</b>	All Staff Training
<b>June 22</b>	Opening day (First resident campers arrive)
<b>July 19</b>	Half time – All campers go home for the weekend
<b>August 16</b>	Closing day (last campers depart)
	Camp wide clean-up and staff appreciation event
<b>August 17</b>	All resident staff depart (final checks)
<b>August 18 –22</b>	Day Camp Adventure week



### **TRAVEL**

You are responsible for arranging your own transportation to and from camp. If you are **flying into Newark Liberty airport**, you may either catch an airport shuttle to Port Authority in New York City and follow the instructions below, or catch a bus (Martz or Greyhound) to Stroudsburg, PA. We will only pick up incoming staff from either the Newton (Lakeland) bus station or the Martz / Greyhound station in Stroudsburg, PA. If you are **flying into an NYC airport (JFK or LaGuardia)**, you can catch an “Airport Bus” to Port Authority. These buses depart often and are usually easy to find. (Ask if you need assistance). Tell the bus driver you want to go to Port Authority. The ticket will cost around \$15. You may choose a taxi, which is expensive, or the subway, which is cheaper but more difficult to manage with luggage and probably not as safe as the bus.



Once at **Port Authority**, find the ticket stand for “Lakeland Buses.” Buy a ticket for Newton, New Jersey, park-n-ride and ask the ticket seller what gate to go to. This ticket will cost around \$10. Save your receipt and we will reimburse you this money during the summer. Once you have your ticket, call camp and let us know what time your bus is scheduled to depart New York and arrive in Newton.

The Lakeland Bus schedule is available for viewing at: <http://www.lakelandbus.com/BusSched.html> and click **Rte. 80 West Bound from New York.**

Keep in mind that you need to check the weekend schedule if you are arriving on Sunday. Across the top of the schedule you will see departure times from New York. Follow the grid lines to see what time your bus will arrive at the Newton Park-n-Ride.

The bus to Newton takes about 1 ½ hours depending on traffic. You may very well meet some fellow staff members while on the bus! Newton is the last stop and the bus will drop you off in the middle of a big parking lot that seems to be in the middle of nowhere. Don't fret! We will be there to meet you. From Newton, camp is about another 20 minute drive.

**If you are driving**, our website has good directions. You will need to provide us registration information for your vehicle. It can be parked right in our lot, but will have to be moved to an upper field for opening and closing days.

### **MONEY**



In line 2 of the Seasonal Employment Agreement you signed from Camp Mason, is listed the total amount of money you will earn for working with us this summer. The total sum is further broken down into 2 sub-amounts. The first, called "salary amount," will be given in three equal installments throughout the course of the summer (about every 3 weeks). The second, called "season completion incentive," is a portion of your overall salary that is given only if you are able to fulfill the employment obligations all the way until the final employment date. If for any reason, either our choice or yours, you leave camp prior to the completion date, this "completion bonus" portion of your salary will not be paid. Cash advances on your salary are available.

All staff members have an automatic charge account at the camp store, the **Trading Post**. You may purchase items when it is open, cash or charge. Account charges will be deducted from your final paycheck. *We suggest you bring enough money with you for travel and time off the first several weeks!*

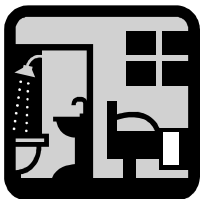
### **CAMP LIFE**

Camp Mason is a **community** in itself. There are hundreds of campers on the property as young as 5 and as old as 16. There are counselors, support teams (kitchen, maintenance, and office), families, and administrators from all walks of life and all corners of the globe. We will be sharing work, life, and home with one another for two months. As a close knit community we each must be respectful of each others' space, belongings, and feelings. We must also be tolerant of each others' differences and appreciate the uniqueness of each individual and the positive qualities he or she brings to our camp community.

We are located on over 600 acres of **forested** and somewhat hilly terrain, with a broad range of trees and wildlife, along with lakes, ponds, and streams. The temperatures during the summer typically range from the low 80's into the high 90's (Fahrenheit). We are prone to receive the occasional afternoon thunderstorm.



Counselors will live in cabins with a fellow counselor and 8-12 campers. Support and administrative staff live in cabins or dormitory housing with other staff. Counselor cabins all have

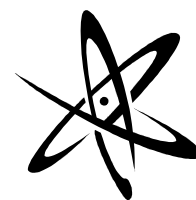


running water, toilet and shower facilities in each living area. Most support **living quarters** do as well, and the few that do not have it readily accessible from a nearby cabin. Counselors will spend one night a session camping in the outdoors.

There is a **staff lounge** available during off times. It has a TV for watching movies, computers with internet access, and is generally a place to relax away from the campers. Staff are prohibited from accessing, displaying or downloading inappropriate or pornographic material on any YMCA computer. There is a designated smoking area near the staff lounge and is the **ONLY** place that smoking is permitted.

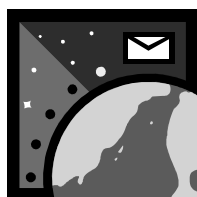
Before campers arrive we will be spending some time learning from each other, and strive to become a cohesive team, confident and ready to change the world! During this **training week**, all of the basics regarding work at camp will be covered. You will have ample opportunities to get to know the other staff and begin to forge the lasting friendships that are so important to the success of our program.

**Each day** during camp is very active and requires the expenditure of a great deal of energy from all of the staff. Any time you are on duty you are expected to be fully engaged in the tasks at hand. In order to maintain the level of excitement needed to work with campers every day, you are expected to get your rest at nights. You will also get 2 hours off each day and some extended time off each week to get away and get some rest, relax, and recharge.



### **COMMUNICATING WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY**

It is not possible for friends or family to call you or visit you at camp. There is a public **telephone** available for staff use during their time off. We do sell calling cards, and find this is the most convenient way to stay in touch via phone. Most cell phones do not get coverage here. If you choose to try and use a cell phone please be aware of the following rules regarding their use here at camp: only during off time away from campers, not in view or earshot of campers, not in any building or area of camp other than the staff lounge or main parking lot. Campers are not permitted to have cell phones in camp, and camp reserves the right to take ANY cell phone and keep it locked in our safe until its user departs camp.



Please advise friends and family wishing to send you **regular mail** via postal service or package delivery, to write your full name followed by the mailing address listed in the 'CONTACT INFO' section of this packet.

There are two computers located in the staff lounge that have internet access. If you wish to communicate with friends and family via **E-mail** during your off time, please provide them with an e-mail address that you can access via the World Wide Web. Be aware that because of the potential demand, time limits may apply to computer usage. Be respectful of others waiting. If you choose to bring your own computer, we have wireless internet available to staff, but you are responsible for your laptop. There is no safe large enough to store computers and if you keep it in your cabin you are responsible for securing it. Camp is not responsible for damage or theft of personal items, including laptops.

## **TIME OFF**

It can get difficult to make wise choices and remain passionate about mentoring kids after weeks of the exhausting daily life that is camp! Therefore when you are **off duty** you are expected to take time for yourself. Rest, relax, and enjoy spending time with the other staff. Cabin Counselors receive two hours off per day, during which you may leave camp. We will do our best to keep them together (IE 2 hours in a row) but make no guarantees! Members of our key leadership team receive one hour off per day. Each staff will have extended time off each week of no less than 14 hours concurrently. Most are 24 hours or more. Also, if you are not on duty in your cabin for the evening, you may have from lights out until - 12:00am to gather with the other staff who are free. You may not leave camp at this time, and should stay in an area where we can easily find you if the need arises. All staff must be back in their cabin by 12:00am.

Staff **under the age of 18** are considered legal minors and may not leave the camp without permission. Parents may provide minor staff with a blanket permission slip which states that the minor may leave the camp property on his or her time off with whomever the minor chooses. If a permission slip is not provided, then the minor may only leave with the director's permission, and only in camp vehicles.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

Pack enough **warm weather clothes** to last for at least two weeks. We will provide a staff polo shirt for opening and closing days, and ask staff to wear **khaki / tan shorts** on those days. These shorts must be clean, hemmed, and of appropriate length to present yourself as a professional to parents and campers. Other than that: shirts, shorts, light jacket, blue jeans, tennis shoes, water sandals, rain gear, all the basics. If you know you need certain gear for your specific job, bring it. Ranch staff need to bring their own riding boots and helmet if they have one, as well as jeans or riding pants. Don't forget a swim suit and towel! Make sure you have at least one pair of sturdy closed-toe shoes (sneakers, etc) and one pair of khaki/tan shorts for opening/closing day. Bring the basic toiletries and personal things that you need to maintain good health and hygiene. Extras like a sunglasses, a hat, flashlight and items to trade or decorate your bunk for campers are also a good idea. An **alarm clock** is essential! Also, don't forget your pennant or flag to hang in the dining hall.



American staff are responsible for their own bedding – a sleeping bag and pillow work best. The cabins are not air conditioned, so if you have space, a sheet set and a fan are also nice additions to your sleeping bag. International staff can borrow a sleeping bag from us or buy an inexpensive one during a staff trip to Wal-Mart.

Many staff ask about our **dress code**. We are in the business of being positive role models for children, and though individuality and personal tastes are important, we need to match the standards of parents who are entrusting the very lives of their children to us. Please wear **appropriate** stuff! Avoid foul words or questionable graphics, such as advertising alcohol or tobacco, or any sexual innuendos, on clothes. Remember that your **swimsuit** must be appropriate for children. (Guys – trunks only, no bikini briefs! Ladies – two piece suits are ok as long as they provide sufficient coverage – no string bikinis!) Make sure all of your clothing has appropriate length and coverage. Use this test: hold your arms out, squat as low as you can go, then stand up and twist around. If none of your "stuff" shows, it's probably ok. Piercings are ok provided they are relatively discreet. Camp reserves the right to request removal of piercings for opening and closing days. Tattoos should be coverable and appropriate (according to

the Camp Director). It's good to be different, however to our campers, you are a walking billboard and your appearance sends a message constantly. Ask this question: What does my appearance say to my campers and their parents? If your appearance promotes any unhealthy lifestyle choices or promotes a disrespectful attitude towards self or others, it is not appropriate.

We have **laundry** service available. The service is reliable but not guaranteed. Some staff prefer to go to a coin Laundromat during their off time. The choice is yours. Due to the dirty nature of barn work, ranch staff have access to laundry in Spruce Lodge.

We are in the service of being exceptional **role models** for our campers. Though we work hard and get very dirty from time to time, body odor is considered offensive, and routine **personal hygiene** is expected.



Please bring an **open mind**, a sense of humor, your creativity, and a desire to make a positive impact on the lives of our campers!

### **WHAT NOT TO BRING (and other important stuff)**



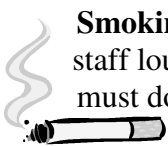
Being an adult counselor can be difficult at times, as camp is a bubble, separated from the “real” world. There are things that in your real life might be considered ok, but not so here at camp. Recreational drugs, illegal substances, weapons, and **alcohol** are not permitted on camp. Possession of these items will result in immediate dismissal! Keep this in mind, even if you are over 21 and legally allowed to drink, possession of any alcohol on camp property will result in your being fired! What you do on your time away from camp is your business, but if you return to camp intoxicated you will be fired. Staff in the immediate proximity of alcohol use on camp property are considered guilty by association.

As role models, **profanity** around campers is counter-productive to our mission and is not acceptable behavior for staff. Put-downs, name calling, and threats of violence, even in jest, are not conducive to the Camp Mason environment.

With the exception of the professional staff and the nurse, staff and campers are not permitted to keep **pets** on camp. Visiting pets must be kept secure at all times.



The YMCA prohibits **tipping** staff as this encourages favoritism and is unfair to the other staff that worked with that child. If a parent offers you money, politely refuse and encourage them to instead place a donation in the “Staff Appreciation Box,” or give a donation to our Campership Fund. The Staff Appreciation money will help fund our staff banquet at the close of summer.

 **Smoking** is not permitted in any building on camp. There is a designated smoking area near the staff lounge and is the **ONLY** place that smoking is permitted! If you must smoke or chew, you must do so away from the campers, and keep your tobacco well secured. Butts must be disposed of properly, and spit from chew should go down a drain, not on a walkway! This summer is a great opportunity to quit a habit proven to be detrimental to your health.

Actions or statements that are demeaning to another staff member or a camper are prohibited. Slurs against someone's gender, race, religion, ethnic background, or disability are not tolerated from anyone

in our camp community. Repeated offenses are viewed as **harassment**, and the offending person will be dismissed from camp. Report harassment to your village leader, the Summer Camp Director or the Associate Executive Director.



The camp is not responsible for your **personal property**. Things do get damaged, lost, and occasionally taken. Do not keep valuables or cash in your cabin. If you have a car on camp, we suggest that you keep it locked. Portable TVs, video games, i-pods, cell phones, personal computers and other electronic gadgets are prohibited to the campers. If you have one, it should never be seen or heard by the campers.

No staff member may engage in any kind of **relationship with a camper** outside of the regular counselor to camper interaction. Such is cause for dismissal and possible legal action. Any kind of sexual contact with a camper will result in criminal charges. Staff are not permitted to contact campers away from camp via e-mail, chat rooms, or phone. Friendships between staff and campers may develop during the course of a summer, but on-going contact outside of this environment is not permitted.

We realize that the relationships staff form with each other are incredibly tight, incredibly important, and often last a lifetime. Inter-staff relationships that do develop should be kept discreet. Staff members must not exhibit anything but a professional working relationship or regular friendship in front of campers (no kissing, hand-holding, long amorous hugs, etc.). **Staff personal relationships** should not be discussed with campers, as this is none of their business and the gossip will impair the effectiveness of everyone involved.



### **Camp goes UNPLUGGED**

Camp is the perfect place for participants to temporarily unplug from everyday life. The modern technology of cell phones, laptops and the internet provide us with an exciting and well connected world. Camp is different. While here at Camp, any staff using cell phones, computers, Blackberries, or DVD players must do so in or very near the staff lounge. Staff are not allowed to have any of these electronic devices in cabins, in villages, or anywhere else on camp other than the staff lounge / parking lot area.

As staff, you have two worlds. There is your social world at school and home where your friends know you well and take what you say in context of your friendship. At camp you are a leader and role model, defining the Camp Mason community. Your “MySpace” or FaceBook” profiles, BLOGS, and other **online forums** create an impression of you and our camp. Campers, parents, supervisors, etc. can all access this information. Camp Mason requests that all staff working as role models in our camp make their online profiles “private” to reduce the likelihood of campers viewing your social life outside of camp. Also, as a staff member, you are not allowed to post any pictures of campers or discuss any camper related issues in any online forum.

Assume that as an employee working with children that **what you share online becomes part of your character reference**, and may qualify or disqualify you. Staff members breaking our unplugged policies may find themselves out of work.

### **TRAINING WEEK**



No need to hit the panic button! We will guide you and give you many of the tools you need to be a great camp counselor. To win any championship, the key is in the preparation and the practice, which are often more difficult than actually winning the game! We will spend a very full week in preparation before meeting the campers. We'll review many of the things in this packet and we will be doing so much more! Come prepared with questions. Come prepared for long days. Come prepared to meet new friends. Come prepared to have fun!

Here are some of the topics we will be covering:

Positive discipline – age characteristics of campers – how to teach an activity – communication strategies – character recognition and appreciation – group dynamics – how to build a team – ideas for daily closings – back pocket games – dining hall procedures – working with a co-counselor – dealing with homesickness – recognizing and prevention of bullying – opening and closing days – program activities – meeting our mission - and so much more!



### FINAL WORDS



We are excited that you will be joining the Camp Mason family this summer! We look forward to working together, building a place and a program this summer that makes a positive difference in the lives of our campers. Check out the website for more information. If you have questions or concerns please let us know. See you soon!