

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who are the staff?

All the volunteer counselors (cabin, activity and misc. counselors) combined make up the staff members. The staff is a widely diverse group of caring individuals. Each session includes approximately 40-45 volunteers between the ages of 19 and 60 + years, averaging 25 years old. June Camp volunteers are ages 19 or older. Teen Camp volunteers are age 21 or older. Approximately 80-85% of our volunteer staff returns to camp again and again. Camp SAM volunteers come from all walks of life. They include, teachers, lifeguards, managers, doctors, nurses, pharmaceutical salespeople, pharmacists, waiters, pediatric oncology counselors, lifeguards, homemakers, business executives, child life specialists, former campers and college students.

What are the different roles for Volunteer Staff Members?

- o **Cabin Counselors-** depending on the campers needs, each cabin counselor will be assigned to two to four campers, joining in activities, eating meals, sleeping in the same cabins and providing guidance, safety, friendship and supervision.
- o **Activity Counselors-** instruct or assist in one of the many program activities offered during a session. Activity counselors work with and meet more campers and volunteers throughout the week.
- o **Nurse and Doctors-** volunteers that provide 24-hour health care to our campers and staff. Their job includes handing out the daily Band-Aids for scrapes, distributing medications at mealtime, bedtime and monitoring the health of all campers and staff.
- o **Unit Heads-** a group of volunteers with previous camp experience that provide support to the cabin counselors and activity staff.

What are we looking for in volunteer staff?

Camp life can be a rewarding and supportive experience. We also realize that camp is not the best volunteer experience for everyone since it can challenge an individual's patience, flexibility, and privacy. We are looking for individuals that can work in and appreciate a rustic outdoor environment, promote healthy personal interactions with campers and staff and be a positive role model for our campers. Staff must show enthusiasm for the program and our mission, be flexible to try new challenges, and be able to deal with conflict. We are a team of motivated individuals that have a healthy vision for the needs of our campers.

We are also looking for volunteers who are willing to make a commitment to our organization, the mission of the program and our campers. There can be considerable time between you returning your application and your session- many things can change between now and then. We understand that, however, we need your cooperation and commitment to communicate with us, as well as follow through with our orientation and training program. We can't run this program without volunteers and we count on you to help make the magic happen.

How do I get a volunteer application?

Applications are available in January from our website, www.campsam.org. Click on the volunteer tab to access an application for NEW APPLICANTS. For more information about our program and volunteering, please contact Jennifer Queen, Program Director- jennifer.queen@campsam.org.

What age campers attend the week long June Camp?

Campers, ages 6-12 that are currently on therapy or off therapy will attend the June camp session. We anticipate up to 70-80 campers for a week session. There is not a limit on how long the child has been off therapy. Parents and siblings do not attend.

What age campers attend the week long July (teen) Camp?

Campers, ages 13-18 that are currently on therapy or off therapy will attend the July camp session. We anticipate up to 70-80 campers for a week session. There is not a limit on how long the child has been off therapy. Parents and siblings do not attend.

What are campers like?

Children at our weeklong sessions have or have had cancer. Please keep in mind these are "normal" kids who just happen to have a medical condition. Treat them like any other child. That is what they want. Yes, they are special but they can see right through those who give them special attention just because of their condition. Be genuine in your relationship with them. Many have had cancer treatment in their young lives and continue to attend camp. Other campers will be attending camp during some stage of treatment for their disease. The most obvious signs of treatment in campers may be baldheads, medications, general weakness, amputations, or lessened mobility or vision. A number of campers also have cognitive issues.

What are the health care responsibilities of volunteer camp counselors?

Your responsibility is to be aware of the general health and safety of your campers and report any changes to the doctor and nurses at camp (ie-camper has a stomach ache, does not have an appetite, seems lethargic). You are not responsible for dispensing medication to your camper(s). The nurses and doctors attending camp will be take care of those duties. During counselor orientation, all volunteers receive a medical orientation that addresses procedures and concerns volunteers may have regarding the health of their campers. (ie- when & where medication will be distributed, bodily fluid contact, emergency procedures etc.)

Will I be told what type of cancer my camper or any of the campers have?

NO. Since April of 2003 the HIPAA Act has taken affect. We are being affected by this Act since Camp SAM is an associate to Children's Hospital and they are who we get our referrals from. HIPAA stands for Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act. This Act protects the privacy of all patients across the United States. The standards of this act aims to maintain the right of individuals to keep private information about them. The Camp SAM staff which includes the Medical Staff, Executive Director, Program Director, Community Relations Manager and Communications Specialist will not share patient medical information with volunteers or Board of Directors. As an associate, we could be fined thousands of dollars if private medical information is shared with others. If you should learn about a child's illness while at camp, it will be because the child has volunteered to share that information with you or the parent has elected to tell you. If a camper and/or family does share this information with you, this information is confidential and must not be shared with others at camp or after you leave camp. If you do share this information with others, you will be jeopardizing your opportunity to volunteer with Camp SAM again.

Will I be provided an address list of campers and volunteers after camp is over?

NO. Due to privacy issues, Camp SAM does not provide address, phone #'s or email addresses to volunteers, campers or families. As a volunteer, if you wish to stay in touch with volunteers, campers and/or families, it will be your responsibility to get 'permission' from the child's parent before getting their personal address, email or phone number. Information you, families or patients provide Camp SAM on applications is confidential and stays in the Camp office.

Where is the campsite and what are the accommodations?

The campsite facility Camp Smile-A-Mile's uses is called Mariner's Adventure Camp located at Children's Harbor on Lake Martin, near Alexander City, Alabama. It is a 1.5-2 hour drive from Birmingham down Hwy 280 east. Camp Smile-A-Mile is one of the user groups of this facility and we are responsible for bringing all program supplies and the 'man' power to run our program. Children's Harbor provides the buildings for our use of activities and cabin assignments.

The activity and cabin areas are within close range to the heart of the campsite. The terrain is filled with pine and hardwood trees along the shore of the lake. There are four main cabins which counselors and campers stay in. Three out of four of the cabins are air-conditioned. Assignments to cabins change for each camp session due to the number of people attending and the ages of the children. Pioneer Cove sleeps 48 people. There are two separate sleeping areas in this cabin which sleep 24 on each side. Each side has its own bathrooms and showers. The Henderson House sleeps 64. It has the same set up as Pioneer Cove; it sleeps 32 on each side. Bay House sleeps 16 and is used sometimes as an activity staff cabin. There are three bathrooms with showers. Lookout Inn is a screened in cabin overlooking the lake that sleeps a total of 45 people. It has two bathrooms with 4 showers and 4 toilets in each bathroom.

What kind of activities will be at Camp?

Activities offered at camp are designed to help the participants make new friends, feel part of a group and discover new skills and interests. Each camp session, the activities vary, but they may include:

Archery	Nature
Arts & Crafts	Cooking
Sports & Games	Fishing
Baseball	Tennis
Woodshop	Karate
Drumming	Ropes Course
Swimming	
Swimming Lessons	
Inner tubing	

There are special programs each evening for the whole camp. Some of these evening programs may be different for each age group and they may include campfires, boys/girls night out, karaoke, dances, digital scavenger hunts, fishing trips, field games and talent shows. As a volunteer counselor, you will help plan some evening activities, encourage the campers during the activities and be expected to participate in these activities.

Morning Activities= woodworking, arts & crafts, cooking, archery, paintball, group games, baseball, etc.) Afternoon Activities= swimming, snorkeling, canoeing, fishing, boating, inner tubing

What is a typical day like for

week long camp?

6:45 a.m.	Rise & Shine
7:45	Bunk Check
8:00	Breakfast
9:00-noon	Morning Activities
12:00 p.m.	Lunch
12:45	Rest Period
1:30-5	Afternoon Activities
2:45	Trash for Snacks
5:00	Bunk Time
5:30	Dinner
7:00	Evening Program
9:00	Snack
10:00	Lights out for June Campers (times will vary)
10:15	Galley Gang (volunteers only)
11:00	Lights out for Teen Campers (times will vary)
12 a.m.	Lights out-volunteers

Schedule for volunteers working Youth or Teen Weeklong Camps: For the two weeks of summer camp, volunteers arrive the day before the campers. On these days, we will briefly review volunteer rules and expectations, participate in group games and team building exercises and prepare for campers to arrive the following day. This will be an especially important time for you to get-to-know your fellow volunteers, learn how to work together as a team and how to live in a camp community setting.

What are the rules for Camp Smile-A-Mile?

Every community needs limits or rules to insure the safety and well being of all our campers and volunteers. Camp rules will be discussed in detail at pre-camp volunteer counselor training. All volunteers are asked not to possess or engage in the use of any of the following during his/her camp session:

- o Foul language
- o Recreational or Illegal Drugs
- o Alcohol
- o Tobacco Products
- o Sexual activities
- o Discussion of your personal love life with campers

Volunteers are expected to be with and supervise campers at all times during their session. The Camp Manual explains these policies in more detail and is given to the volunteers once they have been accepted. Due to the goals of our camp- we do not allow volunteers to use a cell phone until after campers lights out, and away from campers present. A designated area for cell phone use will be discussed at pre-camp volunteer training. Please do not count on access at email while at camp.