

# Your Clinic and the Mission of Camp

## Some Facts About "Activity"

- Bike riding has decreased by 30 percent over the past few decades.
- In a typical week, only 6 percent of children ages nine to thirteen play outside.
- Children at 8-years-old can identify 25 percent more Pokemon characters than wildlife species.
- Average youth between eight and eighteen spend more than forty-five hours a week with electronic media.
- Obesity in American children has increased from about 4 percent in the 1960s to close to 20 percent in 2004.
- 70 percent of mothers report playing outdoors every day when they were young, compared with only 31 percent of their children.
- Free play and discretionary time declined nine hours a week from 1981 to 2003.
- 71 percent of adults report that they walked or rode a bike to school when they were children, but only 22 percent of children do so today.

## So, What Are Clinics & Why Do We Have Them?

At Camp Augusta our daily schedule, in general, contains four clinic times and a Playstation, from which the campers can decide what they would like to do. We like to offer lots of diversity and options to the campers and also love to hear their requests of new and exciting things to do. Our main reason for having clinics is that we hope to ignite passion in campers, whether that be with a new activity that they enjoy, an appreciation for activity and time spent in the outdoors, or a newfound desire for life and living.

Some other camps run their programming very differently. The cabin may stick together for the entire time at camp and do all of their activities as a group, or campers may sign up for a themed session where all of their activities will be decided ahead of time and they're handed a schedule to keep to. So why do we do it the way we do?

- At Camp Augusta, we believe in choice. Choice is empowering. The campers make the decision of what their day will look like entirely for themselves, based on their own interests and what they feel in the mood for.
- It encourages independence in campers - they don't have to sign up to clinics with their friends or the activities their parents want them to learn. They learn to find what THEY love, not what their friends do.
- Their day is varied - if they don't enjoy something, they don't have to do it again. If their reason for not trying something again is "failure" or something not embodying true personal choice, we counsel the child on trying again, often with a note to the instructor.
- Ultimately, they can learn a lot in a day and will sleep very well at night!
- Campers will find something they like and want to excel in it. By doing sign-ups, they have the opportunity to do that activity every day if they so choose, and really develop their skill to an advanced level.
- Campers know their own personal needs better than we do. Our activities range from highly active, to creative and "chill." If they know they are low on energy in the afternoons, they can sign up for more chilled out clinics.
- We get feedback as to what clinics activities are hits and misses, and in future years we can use this data to come up with programs that mirror camper choices.

## The Mission of Your Clinic

A study was undertaken which revealed that surgeons who played video games were better than those who did not. The idea being that they developed a dexterity through play. However, what would be the difference between a surgeon who played outside at a summer camp compared to a surgeon who played video games? Even without the credibility of a study, we can all be pretty sure that the surgeon who played outside would be a safer bet to take care of your operation, and there are good reasons why. Take archery for example, both intense focus and coordination are necessary to hit the center of a target at 30 meters. Dozens of muscles must be in harmonious synchronicity. The mind must be still and focused. In sword fighting, quickness of reaction time, nimble body, and awareness of more than a single focal point are just a few of the abilities necessary. Or, when creating a fine piece of wood working, playing the kalimba, sensing the wall of your clay pot on the wheel, or being in tune with the flow of liquid and color in silk painting, one's mind and body are becoming more unified and connected.

In teaching your clinic, pay attention to the grace and beauty with which you demonstrate, practice, and coach.

There is more at stake than the finished product of an art, the flight of the arrow, one's seat in riding, conquering the Tower of Terror, or perfecting the J stroke. The process and experience are equally important!