

Staff vs. Camper Community - Why are YOU here?

Camp Augusta's Vision:

"To reclaim and foster the beauty, wonder, awe, potential, and innocence of childhood."

Camp Augusta's Mission:

"Camp Augusta's mission is to provide children a safe, fun-filled experience that will serve as a catalyst for personal growth and an appreciation of the outdoors..."

Throughout staff training and during the summer, much attention is paid to building community and connection amongst the staff at Augusta. The staff connections made each summer have stood the test of distance and time, some have even resulted in lifelong commitments between two people. While we all value the beauty, uniqueness, and possibility that comes with these connections, at times, they can pull us away from working towards Augusta's mission and vision that center on working with and for children and childhood...we are looking for people who see these as the reasons we all come here in the first place.

When considering whether Augusta is the right place for you, please consider your reasons for wanting to join us in the woods. This does not mean that the staff community can't be part of your reasons for wanting to come here; it means you feel the staff community supports your work with children rather than feeling like they are competing priorities.

Examples of staff community supporting your work with children:

- Chats with staff about creating more wish, wonder and surprise – follow this with action.
- Connect with folks whether you need support with campers or not – rather than always connecting over having a dramatic cabin that is pushing your buttons, celebrate the hilarious and joyous things your campers are doing
- During snack, you're chatting with staff AND campers
- Hang out with some HEROES or other non-counseling staff and have them help you create your Wookies or assist in coming up with Wookie names

Examples of staff community competing with your work with children:

- Trying to find time to be with your friend(s) or partner
- You spent most of your hours off, PL/Wookie hour and evenings hanging out in the staff house or elsewhere. Now it's the weekend and you're looking forward to your 24 hours off to hang out in a large group, but now you've got to spend your Saturday afternoon writing PLs.
- Talking about plans for the weekend while campers are around
- "Sit where you'd like"-time at lunch finds you sitting at a table with mostly staff. You may argue that you were the first to sit there, but what did you do to engage campers or remind other staff members of expectations? Create change and live your integrity.
- You're staying up late, becoming more tired than you would be otherwise, to hang out with staff.
- Personal issues with other staff (relationship issues or disagreements, for example) overshadow your ability to interact with the campers. This may lead to acting differently when they are around

Two reflections/observations that are often heard include:

"But time with staff re-energizes me, and that in turn serves the campers."

"But I need some alone time, time with the children, time to decompress with the staff, and time to do wood cookies and PLs. All of those feed me, and I'd be less human and less present if I cut any of those out, including sleep"

There are many sources of energy for people - biologically, energy comes from nutrition and sleep...this cannot be changed within your lifetime. Emotional and mind based energy is ultimately controlled by you and can change within your lifetime. You have the power to change your mind and heart rather than let it be controlled by external forces/circumstances. Your commitment to Augusta is not conditional upon time spent

with others. The amount of time you choose to devote to various actions at camp shows your commitment to each of those. Note also that time spent with others can either be in service to your work and their work with children/camp or not...the line of reasoning in this document is not disagreeing with building a staff community, but rather building staff community who's energy and actions show their true intentions and purpose.

A helpful indicator of how we choose mind/heart energy, is to ask yourself the question "Does being around children drain me or give me energy?" Examples of this include:

- Is the bickering between Steven and Albert stressing you out? (You would not believe how much these kids argue!) Or, can you see it as an opportunity to be of service in creating compassion and understanding?
- Is the fact that all of your girls rush off to the bathhouse in the morning to apply make-up causing you to complain about how sad our culture is or can you see yourself as being able to positively influence the way that the girls you are interacting with see themselves?

Give yourself the power to choose the story to attach, and that story in turn will affect your energy.
Be aware of "Rackets"

After reading through this, take another look at the "selfless" document, merge the two frames of thinking, look inside yourself and ask yourself "Why am I here?"