

Hello, and welcome to the Camp Augusta FAQ booklet.  
Please thoroughly read this and have a basic understanding of the information provided before going into your interview.

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# Why Me?

## ***What makes a successful staff member?***

### **Community Living Skills:**

- Open mindedness; tolerance for different opinions and ways of approaching a challenge
- Flexibility; willingness to bend and flow with changing circumstances; finding opportunity in adversity
- Compassion is innate; for both others and self; acceptance of people and unconditional love for the person beneath any action or decision that they make; LOVE of CHILDREN is an absolute must
- Creativity and innovation; no same formula works from year to year, be prepared to be part of the solution when community disagreements occur and logistical issues need to be resolved. Sometimes things are imperfectly planned or prepared for
- 100% honesty; asking for what you need when it arises with the community and the tasks in mind
- Responsibility; finding and creating your impacting role within the community in a way that encourages comfort, a growth space, support and openness. Open to both offering and receiving feedback with other community members
- Desire to learn, grow, and face many challenges with openness, joy and curiosity; growth mindset demonstrated through actions and choices
- Physical/mental/emotional stamina: Is energized by operating in a highly structured, fast-paced work/living environment for extended periods of time
- Actively facilitates goodwill and positivity through body language, tone, and choice of words
- Has awareness of their own limitations regarding energy management and well-being. Is able to prioritize effectively and balance personal well-being with community participation in order to maximize efficiency and health

## ***What is the staff community like?***

- Augusta has around 60 total staff members during the main season
- There are 32 counselors, 7 kitchen staff, 4 wilderness staff, 22 non-counseling support staff.
- Counselors tend to range in age from 19-28 or so. Staff with significant experience tend to be 24-40+.
- We hire staff from all over the world. Expect to meet people from a variety of countries, cultures, backgrounds, beliefs, and value systems!
- The staff culture changes every year with each new group bringing in new energy and community goals, visions, and needs. You'll likely become exceptionally close with some people and there may be a few folks that you don't know particularly well at the end of the summer.

- We value close relationships and, generally speaking, the members of our crew tend to be very accepting and eager to develop those bonds. You'll spend a LOT of time with other staff here - we are a relatively small group, living in close quarters, and sharing an intense summer camp experience.
- Yearly staff return rates vary wildly - it has been 79% as well as 41%. The variation is attributable to many factors including: groups that come and go together; age; career choices; and options that limit long return windows. We generally aim to hire a diverse group of people who are up to things in the world and sometimes that means they stay for a while and other times they move on more quickly.



## Before You Arrive at Camp:

### ***What certifications do I need prior to arrival?***

- It is tremendously helpful - though not required - to arrive at camp with Red Cross First Aid, CPR, and Lifeguarding certifications. If you have these before arriving at camp, you will have more time at camp to be trained in a wider variety of activities. Camp Augusta will reimburse you for the cost of these courses with prior approval. We will train you in First Aid/CPR upon arrival, if you have not yet done so.
- Lifeguard certifications during staff training are optional for staff, though we need at least 50% of staff to be certified.
- Please check with us prior to enrolling in any certificate courses outside of camp, as some of them tend to be very pricey!

### ***What can I expect in terms of work BEFORE I arrive at camp?***

- In total, about 100 hours of prepare work, which includes Cabin Life planning, manual reading and chats, NVC studies, and videos about children, American culture, and counseling
- The staff manual needs to be read in its entirety. It is LARGE! We highly recommend that you work on it bit by bit before you get to camp. Attempting to get through it all in a short amount of time is overwhelming for most people. You'll have 3 staff manual check-ins, with a current staff member, once you've had a chance to process the contents of the manual in order to check for comprehension and have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss.
- You'll have a bunch of paperwork to complete (we lovingly refer to it as the "Paperwork Hell Package") We will send you all the information and deadlines. Need support? Ask!
- There are a few personality tests that we have new staff take, largely for your own knowledge and awareness heading into the community
- A few other bits and bobs, like informal chats with other staff members to say Hi :)

## Getting to Camp:

### ***When can I arrive to start working, and how long can I stay?***

- You must arrive at camp in time for all of staff training on May 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Camp Augusta hosts pre-season groups and site-prep work projects beginning in April and would LOVE to have you on-site for those if you are available (\*note: there are a limited number of spots for April work) Interested? Let us know!
- Typically, staff must plan to stay through all of the main summer season ending on August 10<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to stay longer, there is full-time work available through mid-September.

### ***How do I get to camp?***

- If you are traveling to camp without a car, we will arrange to pick you up from mass transit stations in the Sacramento area, including: Sacramento Airport (SMF), Sacramento Amtrak Train Station, Sacramento Greyhound Bus Station, or Auburn Amtrak Train Station.
- We are also happy to provide you with a lift back to any of those places at the end of the season.
- If you plan on driving to camp, we have room for you to park your vehicle on-site.

### ***What should I bring to camp?***

- We have included our official packing list attached to the email this booklet came in. You will receive it again as a part of your paperwork package before arriving to camp.

### ***Where will I sleep and store my personal belongings?***

- Counselors sleep and store their belongings in a rustic, open air cabin shared with their campers during the summer season.
- Staff who are not cabin counselors sleep in a variety of dwellings, including yurts, platform tents, tiny houses, and sometimes tree houses. These also double as staff housing during pre-season and post-season work. You may be asked to share your housing with one or two other staff members.

***How many sessions are there during the summer, and how long are they?***

- Each summer, there are 6 sessions during the season. Of the six, there are three 1-week sessions and three 2-week sessions.
- The 9 weeks of the main summer season typically span from mid-June to mid-August.
- Staff training is three and a half weeks prior to the start of the main summer season.

# Staff Training:

## *What is staff training like?*

- It is 3.5 weeks of personal development, skill training, stamina building, friendship making, team and culture building, and a giant dose of wish, wonder and surprise!
- Staff training at Augusta is the longest that we know of in the camping world and each day will match the pace of camp during the main season (typically 14+ hours per day).
- ⅓ of staff training is focused on “doing camp” (ex. wakeups, embers, evening programs, etc.)
- ⅓ is learning activity skills, including facilitation and safety
- ⅓ is workshops and discussions around philosophy and counseling/communication tools

## *What are the Camp Augusta philosophies?*

- There is a long list of ‘philosophies’, indeed a whole manual is written around them! Though we have many philosophies that we wish to hold as a community (Clean communication, NVC, 100% responsibility, consensus), it is hard to define the important ones, or the required ones. Clean communication is an exception as it is a community agreement, similar to flat hierarchy and consensus. Some of our philosophies include:
- **Summarized Value for a Camp Augusta Employee**
  - Nonviolent Communication (NVC) – (Emotion Coaching/ Emotional Intelligence)
  - Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP)
  - Training and on-the-job practice with compassionate conflict resolution
  - Child development psychology
  - Rational-emotive behavior therapy - (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Choice Theory, Perceptual Control Theory)
  - Group development, facilitation, and debriefing with large and small groups
  - Awareness and cultivation of emotional intelligence (EQ)
  - Collaboration and consensus building; Flat Hierarchy
  - Responsibility, awareness, and accountability in community living

## Clinics:

### ***What activities will I get to teach during the summer?***

- This is determined by three main factors:
  - What are you interested in teaching?
  - What are you able to teach confidently?
  - What activities does camp need taught at a given point during the summer?
- You will have the opportunity to list 10-15 of your top preferences for what you will teach during the summer. If you arrive for pre-season, you'll double the number of activities you get to learn.
- We then do our very best to design a staff training schedule which will allow you to learn to confidently teach the majority of those activities.
- Each day during the summer, we write a fresh schedule dictated by what activities the campers have selected the previous day. As such, not all activities run daily.
- Each counselor can expect a different teaching schedule each day, with a high likelihood of teaching a different activity each hour. The more you know how to teach, the more variety you will be able to have in your day-to-day schedule.
- If you possess particularly strong skills in a clinic activity that requires advanced knowledge or training - such as aerial silks, ceramics, blacksmithing, or lampworking - you may find yourself teaching those activities more often.

### ***What are clinic activities like?***

- Clinics typically last for one hour, with a few exceptions that are longer. There are four clinic blocks each day.
- Campers choose their schedule each day by signing up for different activities that we offer. We have a rotation schedule for signing up so campers have a chance to sign up at the "top of the order", as well as toward the end.
- Clinics at Augusta operate on 'challenge by choice', meaning campers choose how much they wish to push themselves in any given activity, with the support of the counselor(s) teaching.
- Some activities have different levels - as campers increase their skills, they achieve level benchmarks and become eligible for more advanced instruction and/or challenges.
- Clinic ratios are determined by the intensity of the clinic and its need for focused facilitation.



# The Life of a Counselor:

## ***What is the daily schedule like at camp?***

- Go to the Camp Augusta website, then Staff → The Staff Experience → Sample Week in order to see a sample schedule from a previous summer
- Generally speaking, staff are up around 6:45 - 7:00am and it's a full day of camp until 10:00pm.
- The pace is fast and you will be changing activities every hour or so... no two days are alike and, often, no two hours are alike.
- If you haven't figured it out yet, working at Camp Augusta for a summer takes a huge amount of energy on an ongoing basis. Physical, mental, and emotional stamina are crucial to thriving here!
- If you take any medications or supplements, these are stored with the camp nurse and administered during meals times.

## ***What are the villages at camp? What is a Village Leader?***

- There are four villages at camp: Manzanita, Pine, Oak, and Cedar - Manzanita is the younger girls' village, Pine is the younger boys' village, Oak is the older girls' village, Cedar is the older boys' village.
- Each village has its own rustic bathhouse and hang-out area. You'll have a small cubby in your village bathhouse in which to store your shower supplies and other bath stuff.
- Each village also has a Village Leader - a counselor for the counselors in many senses. This person helps to create unity and camaraderie within their village; supports the planning and execution of cabin activities, parent letters, wookies, and provides general, ongoing support for village counselors

## ***What technology/outside communication is available at camp?***

- Our vision for a camper experience free of modern technology while at camp means that you agree to not use any technology while in sight of the campers.
- Your cabin will not have electricity, and you will need to agree to not using an iPod, laptop, cell phone, kindle, iPhone, etc. around campers.
- You will have time off each day and between sessions that you can use such devices out of sight of campers. There are computers at camp to use, however, cell service in the woods of Augusta is typically non-existent or poor.

- There are many communal computers available for personal use and camp-related work when time allows, and WiFi hotspots around camp make it possible to connect with a personal laptop if you bring one.

***How many campers will I have? How old will they be?***

- In your cabin you will have 5 campers at a time, and they will all be the same age +/- a few months to one year difference. That age could be anywhere between 8-16, and the age of your campers will be determined from our careful consideration of your preferences, experience, and our estimate of where you will be best suited.



## Cabin Life:

### *What is a special wakeup?*

- [Special Wakeups](#) are a daily occurrence at Camp Augusta. They are the counselor's magical way of starting their campers' day. Flex your imagination and the limitations of the costume closet as you ditch the alarm clock and wakeup your campers as a pirate in search of buried treasure, or as a fairy hosting a tea party! Special wake-ups can touch the heart, tickle the funny bone, inspire wonder, create wishes, be surprising, foster creativity, build connections, and make memories for everyone. They are also a great way to get campers up, moving, and energized for the day ahead!

### *What is a cabin activity?*

- [Cabin Activities](#) are a time of day when a cabin unites to experience an hour doing a planned activity they imagined up together. Campers are greeted with the question on the first day "If you could do anything . . . anything you could imagine to do while at camp that is not a regular clinic activity, what would that be?" From there, creativity and imagination are engaged and incredible experiences are spawned. Because of that openness and "we can do it" attitude, cabin activities number in the hundreds by way of examples. Cabin activities are an opportunity to do something special as a group that facilitates bonding, teamwork and togetherness. There are 5 cabin activities in a one-week session, and even more in a two-week session.

### *What is an embers?*

- [Evening Embers](#) get their name from the idea that the close of the day can be like the embers of a fire. Embers is a time when your cabin can have a guided discussion, get to know each other, or play a game together. It is a special time for your cabin to come together and share their thoughts and hearts.

### *What is a Story Experience?*

- Every session, your campers will be able to participate in a game where they will use the points they earned to buy a Story Experience! Story Experiences are unique events hosted by the Heroes. Your campers may be treated to a spa evening, VIP campfire seating, or they may have to solve the puzzles of this year's Mission Impossible!

***What is a Wookiee?***

- A wood cookie, or 'wookie', is a heart gift each counselor creates and presents to their campers on the final night of the session. A Wookiee is designed with intentionality. One side of the Wookiee has the camper's name and the other has a 'name' given to the camper based upon the experience he or she has had over the session. Have no fear, you do not need to be an artist to create a Wookiee!



## The Life of a Hero:

### *What is a hero?*

- At camp Augusta, our non-counseling staff are known as HEROES, which stands for: **H**onorably **E**mloyed **R**otating **O**perational **E**fficiency **S**taff.
- There may be sessions where you are not a counselor, and instead take the role of a 'HERO'. A hero's life is a busy one. Heroes are responsible for getting all of Camp Augusta's clinics set up, assisting their village with special wakeup and cabin activities, teaching a full day of clinics, sitting with campers at meals, running playstation, serving snack, setting up and breaking down the Evening Program, hosting a Story Experience, assisting with Embers, and participating in a nightly camp meeting called "KM". Heroes have their time off at night after the KM meeting. Whew! Heroes may not be responsible for a cabin, but they are the gears operating behind the scenes that keep camp running.

## Food:

- We believe that food service is an integral part of our community. Breaking bread together helps to create a sense of community and comfort. We pledge to provide whole food that is nutritious, healthy, alive in flavor, aesthetically pleasing, and presented reverently to our guests and staff. We adhere strictly to the following:
  - We provide meals that are 92-100% organic
  - Everything we serve is freshly prepared from scratch using authentic ingredients.
  - Bread, desserts, and pastries are baked fresh daily.
  - We offer vegetarian, nut-resistant, gluten free, lactose free, and vegan entrees as nutritional choices when requested at registration.
  - We provide sustainable and locally grown produce, chicken, beef, and pork whenever possible. Many of our ingredients are served within 24 hours of harvest.
  - Our oils and sweeteners are the highest standard available.
  - And more! Check out our website : )

## Camp and the Surrounding Area:

### *What is the weather like at Augusta?*

- During the main season, it is sunny and warm or hot 99% of the time. It very infrequently rains during the summer. Evenings and early mornings are a bit cooler, even chilly at times.
- Common daytime temperatures during the summer are 85-95°F (29-35°C). Evenings and early mornings are often 55-65°F (12-18°C).
- Pre-season months (April - early June) have more mixed weather, and you can expect rainy and cold weather for at least a few days.

### *What sort of wildlife might you experience at camp?*

- Mosquitos, bees, and spiders are all around.
- Deer occasionally come through camp, as well as skunks.
- Generally, we are very noisy and wild animals tend to steer clear of camp during the main season. Bears, mountain lions, bobcats, raccoons and skunks all are native to our location - but we rarely see them.
- We have a strict no food in cabins (or other open air living structures) rule to discourage visits from any insects or animals.

### *How environmentally conscious is Augusta?*

- We take many steps to address our environmental footprint throughout a season of camp, including:  
Composting all food waste (and weighing it to track how much we are producing!)  
Lots of recycling (including creative reuse and upcycling of many objects)  
Air drying hands after washing them and foregoing napkins at meals
- We also have extensive programming - over 150 activities! - that require a lot of equipment and materials to teach. In other words, we have a lot of stuff, and we need more stuff throughout the summer to replace things that wear out, are lost, or break.
- As a community of 150+ people, we produce about the same amount of garbage as a family of four for a year during the summer season. We are certainly not an environmentalist utopia, and are always open to exploring new ways of addressing our impact.

***How do staff spend their days off?***

- We are located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in a small town called Nevada City. In their time off, staff usually head off in small groups to enjoy one of the many local attractions. For those interested in getting out to enjoy nature, we are close to Lake Tahoe, the Yuba River, Mt. Shasta, and many other campsites. Nevada City is full of small shops and restaurants, we are driving distance to a waterpark and shopping mall, and we are a few hours from The Bay Area, Sacramento, and Reno. Staff have the option to stay on or off site.



# Campers:

## ***How many campers are at camp?***

- In a given session, there are 95-100 regular campers at camp at a time.
- The CIRCLE Leadership Program, which hosts 8-10 older campers (16-18 years old) at a time, runs for either one or two 3-week sessions each summer. During those times, the total camper population is closer to 100. We also have a JC program.
- Individual cabins are made up of 5 campers and one counselor. There are 4-5 cabins in each of four villages at camp, for a total of 20-25 individual cabins at a time.

## ***How do campers get to camp and home again?***

- A large majority of our campers come from the Bay area and we send a bus to pick up a group of campers for each session.
- At the end of each session, a bus will also take campers back to the Bay area, with 5-8 staff members accompanying them along the way. Staff rotate through this responsibility, so at least one of your days off during the summer will likely be spent in the Bay with the rest of the counselors on that bus trip. These staff usually stay with friends of camp in the area, and spend their evening enjoying the many attractions the Bay Area has to offer.
- The rest of our campers are dropped off and picked up by parents or other adults.

## ***How many campers come back each year?***

- Camper return rates are between 70-80% each year. We nearly always have a waitlist of campers who we are not able to admit each year due to high demand.
- We always have a waitlist – we are the only camp in California that has been full for 14 summers in a row, and, we do that without advertising.
- Staff who return for a few years in a row get to know many campers very well, and witness their growth over this time.
- Some of the oldest campers, CIRCLEs, and JCs have been at camp for nearly a decade and bring a huge amount of camp experience and knowledge with them each year.

***How do campers know what activities they are going to do each day?***

- They will choose! The day's activities are chosen the day before – when you wake them up, you will have the schedule they chose ready to go! Camper choice is a big part of what we do here, and we offer a huge variety of activities to make sure campers always have a choice they are excited about. Campers sometimes change their mind the next day, and we happily switch them into something different when needed. Challenge by choice!

# Randy:

## ***Who is Randy?***

Check out the following page on the Camp Augusta website if you haven't done so already for an introduction to Randy, our director → <http://campaugusta.org/about/leadership>

Randall Grayson, Ph.D.

Randy brings over two decades of camp experience, serving in almost every capacity at camps, including several years as director. Established in 1931 Camp Augusta has seen many lifetimes. For the past 15 years, Randy has been Augusta's director and, with the contribution of many, has brought its commitment to wish, wonder, and surprise to what it is today. Before Randy was a full-time camp director, he spent his non-summer months working on his doctorate in psychology at the Claremont Graduate University, specializing in developmental, social, and organizational psychology. This education serves as the theory behind his practice.

Randy is well known in camping circles as he wrote the acclaimed book series entitled *Creating Exceptional Camps*, and created/maintains numerous websites (see below). He also presents at camp conferences (yes, there is a conference for everything!), writes for *Camping Magazine*, and is active on discussion groups. Additionally, Dr. Grayson has taught at three universities, including child development at Westmont.

Why direct a summer camp, you may ask? As a child, camp was a place where Randy gained a lot of self-confidence, social skills, independence, creativity, physical skills, and leadership while having more fun than he thought was possible. As an adult, Randy has dedicated his life to providing exceptional camp experiences where children and staff can thrive and grow. He is committed to creating a special, magical world that helps to create fine people in a safe, fun environment.

Dr. Grayson has been interviewed in national and local newspapers. He appeared as the key source for a *Family Circle* magazine article on safety at summer camps, with an audience of over 25 million. Randy has also been interviewed for the *CBS Morning Show* and the *New York Times* as a summer camp expert. Additionally, Dr. Grayson has been expanding "Partnering with Parents," and is working on a few websites, with most of his new work appealing to audiences outside of the specific camping world.

Some fun facts about Randy include: he is a master balloon artist; he worked as a cowboy on a sheep ranch in New Zealand; he's handy with both broad swords and fencing swords; he continues to compile his storytelling anthology book; he has broken 16 bones; he is certified to fly hang gliders, give massage, and hypnotize; he has competed at the national level in archery; he is adept at both pillow and oatmeal fights; and he used to own an 8 foot boa constrictor named "Cuddles."

- Takes a cabin of campers for a session as a counselor — usually session 5. See photos below of a couple past cabins.
- Teaches a clinic activity daily, usually archery, balloon animals, native flute, sword fighting, or lifeguard, although several others occur too.
- Frequently offers Playstations — usually something off the wall 😊
- Offers Story Experiences that are conducted every session after the Monday Evening Program. Again, the offerings tend to be unusual and mysterious.
- Leads a couple astronomy sessions in the middle of the lake
- Plays as a character in every evening program
- Can be seen leading songs and offering skits at campfires
- Tells stories at the storytelling campfires that occur in two-week sessions, and often at the weekly campfire

And, when Randy uses e-mail, he does not use a pre-filled signature. Instead, he types it out every time, so the intent behind the words goes into each signature . . .

Campingly yours,  
Randy

