

BAY CLIFF HEALTH CAMP

Dear Counselor Applicant:

As you consider employment at Bay Cliff Health Camp, some of the following information may make the scope of the job clearer. One of the dangers in writing a job description of the counselor role or trying to describe a "typical day" is that you might feel restricted by it. This is not intended to be the case. The staff at Bay Cliff has a great deal of latitude to be innovative. This information is to better acquaint you with some general duties you will assume.

The Bay Cliff camping session runs seven weeks, with a week of pre-camp training and orientation for staff. The primary purpose of Bay Cliff is to PROVIDE THERAPY for children in the areas of physical, occupational, speech and music therapy, as well as instruction for the hearing and visually impaired. The counselors are an extension of the therapy team at camp and play an important role in the carryover of therapy goals. Other daily activities include arts and crafts, recreation, nature classes, and swimming – activities you would find at any summer camp. It is the therapeutic component of camp, however, that makes Bay Cliff uniquely different from typical summer camps.

Who can be an effective counselor? Those who genuinely enjoy being with children! Those who can patiently help children discover & learn, and who are themselves awed by discovery. We have found that persons from various fields of study (from anthropology to zoology!) do well as counselors. In a sense, counselors become parents/teachers for the summer. The Bay Cliff experience is especially suited to those interested in education, special education, therapy, medicine, psychology, behavior management, communication, and recreation.

Briefly, the responsibilities of a counselor are covered in the attached job description. A regular day begins with reveille at 7:00 a.m. Breakfast, cabin clean-up and one or two therapies for each camper follow. Each camper has his/her own therapy schedule. Rarely will all of your campers attend therapy at the same time. Afternoon begins with a noon meal, followed by rest period (counselors rotate this duty), and resumption of therapies and activities. Supper is served at 5:45 p.m., with a planned evening all-camp activity or program to follow. Campers are usually in bed before 9:00 p.m. Unless it is your turn for evening rest counsel, you are free until curfew at 11:00 p.m.

Campers attend their therapies and one activity class Monday through Friday. For the "non-scheduled" time and both weekend days, counselors plan the activities for their campers. **COUNSELOR PLANNING IS ESSENTIAL!** An endless list of possible adventures and activities is open for use at Bay Cliff, and the counselor must be willing to plan activities which will make it a worthwhile summer for their campers.

It is important that prospective counselors be aware of the wide range of handicaps and ages of campers when they are considering where they might work most effectively at Bay Cliff. The campers, who range in age from 3 through 17 years, are assigned to one of five units. Those units are broken down in the following ways.

UNIT I - All Females. Ages 6-17. Eight cabins. FEMALE COUNSELORS ONLY.

UNIT II- All Males. Ages 9-17. Eight to ten cabins. MALE COUNSELORS ONLY.

UNIT III- All Males. Ages 6-8. Six cabins. MALE AND FEMALE COUNSELORS.

In these three units, the children may have speech, hearing, vision, and/or physical impairments (i.e., cerebral palsy, spina bifida, etc.). Some campers use walkers, crutches, or wheelchairs. Some need assistance with their self-care. All campers have intact cognition. Counselors sleep in the cabins with their campers. In these three units, the average counselor to camper ratio is 1 counselor to 6 campers.

UNIT IV- (Shady Nook). Males and Females. Ages 3-5. FEMALE COUNSELORS. The children have speech, language, hearing, vision, and/or physical impairments, with intact cognition. The campers generally require close supervision and a great deal of assistance with self-care skills. Counselors sleep in the unit with the campers. Average counselor to camper ratio is 1 staff to 2-3 campers. **(NOTE: This unit is an ideal match for those interested in early childhood education and speech & language development.)**

UNIT V - (Previously Sam's Place). Males and Females. Ages 6-17. FEMALE AND MALE COUNSELORS. Campers have physical impairments and speech, hearing and/or vision impairments, with intact cognition. Cerebral palsy, spina bifida & muscular dystrophy are common diagnoses. Almost all campers use wheelchairs. Most require extensive assistance with self-care and mobility. Counselors sleep in the unit with the campers on a rotating basis. Average counselor to camper ratio is 1 staff to 2-3 campers. Counselors work in paired teams.

Because almost all of the campers in this unit use wheelchairs and are more medically involved than campers in other units, additional responsibilities and characteristics are required of the staff in this unit. Some of them are:

- The basic care of campers in this unit includes helping with stretches, feeding, toileting, catheterization, changing diapers (even on older campers), giving baths, and lifting/transferring. Much time is spent in self-care activities.
- Children with multiple impairments have special needs. These children often require more patience, understanding and care. Some use alternative forms of communication, some communicate only a little, others communicate quite well.

(NOTE: This unit is an ideal match for those interested in nursing, pre-med, and pre-therapy programs - especially physical therapy and occupational therapy.)

The successful functioning of all of the units is dependent upon the ability of the staff to work together as a team under the guidance of the unit leader. A high energy level & a tremendous amount of self-sacrifice is required!

PLEASE NOTE: If you decide to apply for a counselor position, PLEASE INDICATE ON THE APPLICATION FORM YOUR FIRST THREE CHOICES OF UNITS. It may not be possible to have your first choice.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A COUNSELOR POSITION IN UNITS I and II, we want you to be aware of the wide range of ages of campers in these two units. We ask that you give some thought to which age group (i.e., 8 year olds, 11 year olds, teens, etc.) you would prefer to work with. The age span in each cabin will usually be no more than one to two years. PLEASE LIST YOUR FIRST THREE CHOICES ON THE APPLICATION. It may not be possible to have your first choice.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us, or if you would like to talk with anyone who has been a counselor, we would be happy to provide names for you to contact.

We appreciate your interest in Bay Cliff. We are looking forward to another summer with staff who know what it means to really care about children and who are willing to make the personal sacrifice and commitment necessary to make a difference for the children. We look forward to hearing from you!

Tim Bennett, Camp Director
Karen Schlicher, Assistant Director
Christy Osborn, Therapy Coordinator