

MHKC COUNSELOR

Empower individuals with developmental disabilities

**EARN
INTERNSHIP
HOURS**

Volunteer

**GAIN LIFE-LONG
SKILLS**

**Become a best friend, a
better version of yourself
& make a difference**



ABOUT

MT. HOOD KIWANIS CAMP

There are few places where individuals with disabilities can spend a week joyfully focusing on their abilities. For over 85 years, Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp (MHKC) has offered incredible outdoor recreational programming for campers with developmental, intellectual, and physical disabilities at its fully accessible 22-acre campsite in the Mt. Hood National Forest.

On any given summer day, our campers are catching fish, conquering their fear on the adventure course and zipline, splashing at the pool, riding a horse for the first time, whitewater rafting, paddling a canoe on Trillium Lake, and dancing the night away at our dance. Wheelchair accessible trails and innovations such as adaptive saddles, harnesses, and bicycles make the traditional camp experience available to all. Camp doesn't just offer outdoor activities, it offers a chance for people with developmental disabilities to make new friends and build community in a friendly, non-judgmental environment where they can feel empowered and included.

Each year, MHKC offers 8 weeks of camp, where campers enjoy a one-to-one camper-counselor ratio with the option for outgroup adventures, including Trip & Travel, Tent & Travel, and Lakeside Camp where campers pitch tents on Trillium Lake, paddle canoes, go whitewater rafting and more. We hold weeks for groups of adults and children ranging in age from 12 to 50+ years old (Camp weeks are arranged by age).

What does ACA mean?

The term "ACA" is frequently used in Camp and course materials, and the acronym is regularly heard up at Camp. ACA is the American Camp Association and is the organization through which Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp earns accreditation as a reliable camp providing superior programming to persons with disabilities. The Camp's policies and procedures are written to adhere to ACA guidelines and it is a counselor's responsibility to be aware of the Camp's policies and follow them while they are at MHKC.



THE COUNSELOR ROLE

One of the most important features of Camp is the counselor. You are responsible for the care, encouragement, and support of camper(s) while they are at Camp. Care comes in the form of supporting personal care, positive behavior, and supervision at all times. Encouragement is practiced the whole time the campers are at Camp. Support can come in many forms, sometimes physical or emotional. You will need to model camp life by singing camp songs, playing games, and participating in activities. The counselor position has many responsibilities.



“Although intensive, my time at MHKC was inspiring, hands-on, and the highlight of my college career thus far.”

Each week most of our campers will need personal care assistance. They need help transferring in and out of their wheelchairs, dressing, showering, and toileting or assistance with changing Attends. You will be given training on providing personal care with consideration for the feelings of the person you are helping.

You will always be paired with at least one other counselor or staff member when performing these tasks, and never be alone with a camper in these scenarios.

We know that helping another person with showering, toileting, and changing Attends is hard for anyone. For most counselors, this is a new experience and it is only natural to be nervous or apprehensive. Remember, too, that about half of our camper participants are teens or adults, so you may also help persons the same age or older than you are with these tasks. Also, because we have more women counselors than men counselors at camp, but usually 50% men and 50% women campers, sometimes women counselors provide personal care for male campers. All of these personal assistance tasks are done with many others around in the sleeping and bathroom areas and with help from our trained staff.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

7:00AM

OR EARLIER! **WAKE UP** - COFFEE & TEA ARE AVAILABLE BEFORE YOU ARRIVE TO YOUR GROUP. COUNSELORS AND STAFF REPORT TO THEIR GROUP AROUND THIS TIME TO HELP CAMPERS WITH THEIR MORNING ROUTINES.

8:15AM

FLAG & BREAKFAST - ALL OF CAMP GATHERS AROUND THE FLAG POLE TO SING SONGS AND WAIT TO HEAR THE BELL RING THAT BREAKFAST IS READY.

9:15AM

ACTIVITIES - ALL GROUPS WILL FOLLOW THEIR OWN SCHEDULE ROTATING TO ALL THE ACTIVITY AREAS THROUGHOUT THE WEEK.

12:30PM

LUNCH - GROUPS WILL WAIT OUTSIDE THE DINING HALL FOR THE BELL TO RING THAT LUNCH IS READY.

1:15PM

REST TIME - GROUPS GO BACK TO THEIR LIVING QUARTERS AND FIND A QUIET ACTIVITY TO DO. A COUNSELOR FROM THE GROUP STAYS TO BE ON "BREAK DUTY" EACH DAY (THIS ROTATES BETWEEN COUNSELORS).

2:15PM

ACTIVITIES - ALL GROUPS WILL FOLLOW THEIR OWN SCHEDULE ROTATING TO ALL THE ACTIVITY AREAS THROUGHOUT THE WEEK.

6:00PM

FLAG & DINNER - ALL OF CAMP GATHERS AROUND THE FLAG POLE AGAIN TO SING SONGS AND WAIT TO HEAR THE BELL RING THAT DINNER IS READY.

7:15PM

EVENING ACTIVITY - CAMPFIRE, DANCE, COOKOUT, BBQ ETC.

8:30PM

BEDTIME - COUNSELORS ASSIST CAMPERS WITH BEDTIME ROUTINES.

9:00PM

GROUP MEETING - YOUR GROUP WILL MEET TO DEBRIEF ABOUT THE DAY.

10:00PM

NIGHT ACTIVITIES - (optional) STAFF & COUNSELORS WILL HAVE OPTIONS TO HANGOUT.

11:15PM

CURFEW - YOU MUST BE IN YOUR BUNKING AREA. PLEASE GET SOME SLEEP!



THE CAMPERS

All of our campers have developmental disabilities. Some of our campers have other disabilities that accompany the developmental disability such as emotional, physical, sensory, or learning. The types of disabilities you might see at Camp include, but are not limited to Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Intellectual Disabilities, etc.

Some individuals need assistance in many of the tasks of everyday life, continual supervision, and support. Here are a couple of examples of campers that attend MHKC.



“
At Camp,
I can fly!
”

Sam has an Intellectual Disability and Cerebral Palsy. They have limited mobility, language, and utilize a wheelchair which requires full personal care. Their physical disabilities are such that they cannot sit on a toilet, and thus wear an Attend, which needs to be changed several times a day. Sam needs help dressing, grooming, and needs to be fed at meals- all responsibilities of their counselor(s). Sam has needed this kind of assistance since birth and is used to and comfortable with others' assistance. Sam is very bright and has a great sense of humor, and loves Camp.

Jesse has Autism. Jesse is nonverbal and lets others know what they need or want through actions. Jesse has a hard time understanding spoken words. When Jesse is at Camp, we use a picture schedule of activities and icons of different objects for communication. Sometimes Jesse will point to a picture of what they want but other times will just go and get it. Jesse is very active and constantly moving. Jesse is sensitive to lots of noise so a quiet space is always available to go. In many ways, Jesse shows us they are happy to be at Camp and having fun, but not in the usual ways of talking or smiling.



“Camp is better than Disneyland!”





MEDICAL

SAFETY IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

Nurses

We have 3-5 nurses on staff 24/7. They are there to look out of the well being of campers, staff & counselors. Each group is assigned to one nurse that helps assist their campers group with any medical needs, feeding protocols and, administration of medications. There is a nurse on-call overnight as well.

Health History

Sharing any pre-existing medical conditions on your health history form & with the healthcare team will help us provide the utmost care for you while at Camp. We want to do all we can to support you through this experience, though without proper knowledge and preparedness we cannot be prepared for emergencies. If you have a more complex condition, please inform the Program's Director at Kayla@mhkc.edu so we can work together to create a plan before you arrive at Camp.

Medication

Because we have campers who can, and do, get into other people's belongings, all staff and counselors give their medications to the nurse who keep them in a locked cabinet. You will be able to retrieve your medications from the nurse whenever you need them, but they cannot be left in your bunk area.

*Emergency meds such as an Epi-Pen may be kept on you.

ILLNESSES

Screenings

Everyone will receive a temperature check upon arrival to MHKC property. If your temperature is 100 degrees or higher, you will be quarantined until you have been fever free for 24hrs.

Masks

Masks are currently optional.

Testing

If you test positive for Covid, you will be asked to quarantine immediately. You may return to your work duties following a negative COVID test and fever free for 24 hours.

If someone in your group at camp tests positive, you will be informed and have the choice to wear a mask. Nurses will provide a rapid test for anyone with 2 or more symptoms as outlined by the CDC. You are welcome to bring your own at-home tests if you'd like greater access to testing.

Sanitization

HEPA FILTERS

There are HEPA filters in every room inside buildings. The filters are changed every week before new campers/staff arrive.

HANDS-FREE

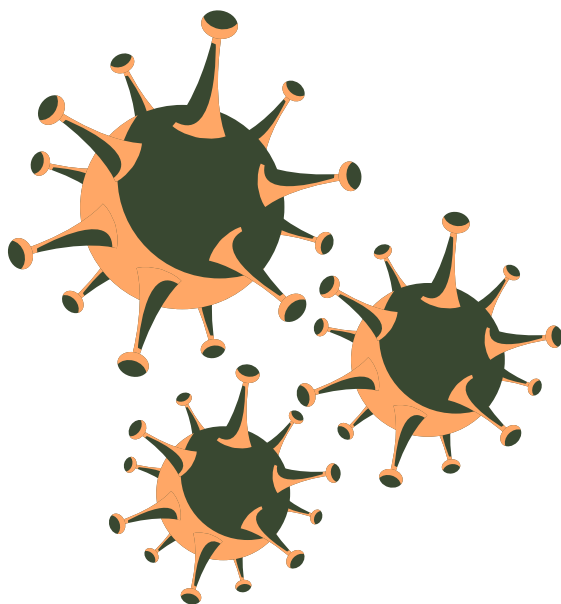
All bathrooms in Camp have hands-free toilets, soap dispensers, faucets & paper towel holders. There are also handwashing stations at every porta potty as well as hands-free hand sanitizer stations around Camp.

FOGGERS

All buildings will be fogged with Hypochlorous Acid at least once a day. Hypochlorous Acid is naturally produced in our body to fight infections. It is just as effective as bleach but is safe on our bodies and gentle enough to clean baby toys without a rinse!

ELECTROSTATIC SPRAYERS

High traffic areas will be sprayed with Electrostatic sprayers once to multiple times a day. These sprayers apply a positive charge to liquid disinfectants as they pass through the nozzle. The positively charged disinfectant is attracted to negatively charged surfaces, which allows for efficient coating of hard nonporous surfaces.





LOGISTICS OF CAMP

DAILY BREAKS

During the afternoon rest periods and nights that you are not on duty, you are free from responsibilities for campers. Because the program is so active, most counselors also take a nap in the afternoon if they are not on break duty.

SESSION BREAKS

On the Saturday of the first week, counselors are usually free to leave by 3:00 p.m. Counselors then return by 11:00 a.m. on Monday to start the second week. Thus you have Saturday evening, Sunday, and Monday morning off. On the final Saturday at the end of the second week, counselors are also free to leave by 3:00 p.m.

****If you have an event or commitment anytime during the session that works best for you (even if it is the last Saturday morning) please choose a different session. We do not have the capacity to have staff and counselors leaving early.****

INTERNET & CELL SERVICE

MHKC asks all counselors and staff to be present and focus on the campers while assisting with an amazing week. We ask that you do not have your cell phones out during “camper times”, so please make sure you bring a wristwatch, and alarm clock. Counselors will be unable to use the internet during the day but will have access in the mornings & evenings.

Outlets are available for charging devices, but will only be accessible during non- camper times. Please note that internet and cell services are limited on the mountain and can be very unreliable.



SLEEPING

Space is limited at Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp. You will be sharing space with other counselors. All counselors will sleep in platform tents that house five. Each platform tent has five-bed frames with mattresses. There will be Male, Female and All Gender platform tents to choose from.

Alternatively, you may choose to bring and sleep in a personal tent. Limit your tent to a small (2-3 person) tent.

You are responsible for providing your own bedding (sleeping bag & blankets) and pillow.

Prepare to spend 1-3 nights on Night Duty each week. You will be sleeping outside on the porch and/or inside a lodge where campers sleep. Night Duty is a supervisory role for sleeping campers, be prepared to be awakened if you are needed (Don't worry you will get sleep!).

EATING

MHKC provides three meals a day. We have our own cook and kitchen, and we design our menu to be camper-friendly. We provide vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, and gluten-free options. We work hard to provide foods that fit specific food intolerances and sensitivities but do NOT have an allergen-free kitchen (gluten, nuts, soy).

You are encouraged to bring your own meals if you have a limited to severe food allergy/diet (i.e. Celiac Disease).

*If you have an airborne allergy to nuts please inform us immediately, as we discourage these individuals from attending.

Snacks are welcome! MHKC has one designated refrigerator/freezer for 60 counselors. You are welcome to use it but please be aware of limited space. There is a dry food storage cabinet available for both staff and counselors. Snacks/food are not to be stored in sleeping areas; we are in the forest, and food attracts animals.



ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

Any person in violation of the following policy will be asked to leave the premises immediately. Violation of the policy will result in termination from your student or volunteer experience and will affect your ability to receive credit for the camp experience. You will be in violation of the drug and alcohol policy if you:

- Have drugs or alcohol in your possession on campgrounds. This includes cannabis/marijuana.
- Consume alcohol or engage in illicit drug use on campgrounds.
- If you leave camp and return intoxicated.

The “Alcohol and Drug Policy” form has a full description of our policy. You will need to sign and return this form as part of your application.



SMOKING & VAPING

We have a designated outdoor smoking area at camp. We never smoke in the presence of campers. If you smoke, we ask that you do so on your “off-time”, in the mornings before you wake up your camper group, at your rest time after lunch, after your camper group is in bed, and/or after your nightly meeting. If you need more outside of that, talk with your Counselor Supervisor to arrange other times. Please realize, however, that every time you take a smoking break during camper time, the other counselors in your group will need to supervise the camper you are paired with until you return.

HOW WILL I BE SUPPORTED?

- Fellow counselors
- Assistant Counselor Supervisor (ACS)
- Counselor Supervisor (CS)
- Behavior Support
- Program Staff
- Assistant Directors (AD)
- Program's Team



Within your group, you will be paired with a particular camper. Sometimes a counselor is paired with two campers; sometimes two counselors are paired with one camper, depending on the needs of the campers in the group.

Each group consists of about eight counselors. Each group is trained, supported, and supervised by two staff members, the Counselor Supervisor (CS) and the Assistant Counselor Supervisor (ACS). Approximately eight campers are also assigned to each group.

Our CS's emphasize teamwork and group problem-solving. Under their guidance, you will become very close with the counselors in your group, you will watch out for each other, and help each other. Most of our CS's have many years of experience working with people with developmental disabilities and/or specifically at Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp.

Our ACS's are usually former counselors heading toward careers in teaching or counseling, who have had several years of experience at camp. It is likely that your ACS will be the same age or younger than you. They are supervising and teaching you because of their experience with our program and our campers.

Other Camp Staff for Support:

Behavior Support Persons - Trained staff in how to manage behavior will be onsite to assist groups. These persons are certified in Oregon Intervention Systems (OIS) as well.

Program Staff - Oversee and facilitate the program areas (activities) at camp such as adventure, horses, arts and crafts, etc...

Assistant Directors - One will oversee the Program Staff and one will oversee the CS's and ACS's.

Program's Team - Program's Director, Kayla Plessinger, and Assistant Programs Director, Sarah Doty will be onsite and oversee the entire program and all staff, counselors, and campers.

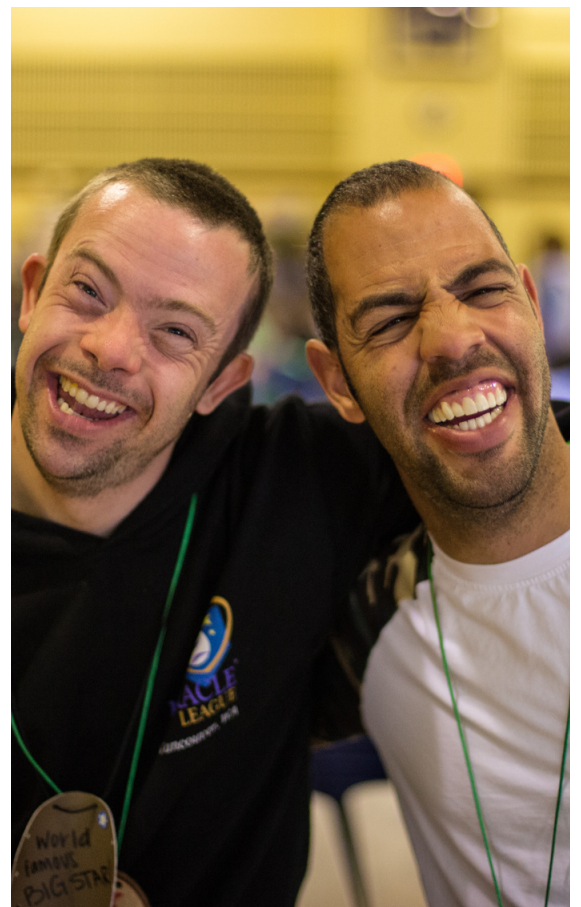


We can't fully prepare you before the campers arrive. This is largely a "hands-on" learning experience; the real learning begins once the campers show up. To make this training experience successful for you, you need to be a person who will accept coaching, suggestions and feedback throughout the week from your Counselor Supervisor (CS) and the other camp staff.

REQUIRED TRAINING

THERE ARE 2 TYPES OF REQUIRED TRAINING THAT WILL HELP YOU PREPARE FOR THE EXPERIENCE!

- **Online Training:** You get an email from MHKC's Programs Director, inviting you to participate in MHKC's online training. From there you will read slide presentations, watch videos, and take quizzes that will take you approximately 2 hours. These are specifically designed to prepare you for Camp. They are not intended to be difficult or tricky in any way. Take the time to read and watch the videos and learn the materials.
- **Onsite Counselor Training:** This will be up at MHKC and will begin when you report at camp for your session. We will review previous training and make a more in-depth exploration of life at camp. This is when you will meet staff members and begin bonding with your group.



**EARN CREDIT OR
FULFILL YOUR
INTERNSHIP HOURS IN
2-WEEKS!**

How to Apply:

Go to the MHKC website at www.mhkc.org

Navigate on the menu:
Employment & Volunteer > Volunteer > Apply
Here, New Volunteer

Fill out the application, once complete you will receive an email shortly after with access to submit all required paperwork (photo ID, proof of background check consent form).

If you have questions before applying please email the person correlated with your school:

Portland State University: Counselor Recruitment Coordinator, Joe Wightman at Joe@mhkc.org

Any Other University: Programs Director, Kayla Plessinger at kayla@mhkc.org

Follow us on social media for the most up-to-date information on MHKC!

Facebook: facebook.com/MHKKCamp
Instagram: [mhkcamp](https://www.instagram.com/mhkcamp)



- “...what I really want to highlight is the culture that I experienced within this camp and the forever relationships that I made. The community of MHKC felt like a Utopia to me. Everyone had varying cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, identities, disabilities, communication, mobility, beliefs, etc... but we all gathered together for the same reasons, accepted one another, and celebrated our differences.”

