

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 90 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, singing karaoke on stage, tie-dying camp shirts, 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 is more than just outdoor activities—it's a vibrant, welcoming space where individuals with developmental disabilities forge friendships, build a strong sense of community, and feel empowered and fully included in a non-judgmental environment.

Each year, MHKC offers eight weeks of camp, where campers enjoy a 1:1 or 2:1 camper-to-counselor ratio, with the option of specialized groups—including Forest Trekkers and Ground Explorers—where campers experience outdoor cooking, additional adventure elements, water play, hiking excursions, and more. All weeks serve groups of adults 18 - 50+ years old.

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. Counselors are paired with 1-2 campers and are responsible for the care, encouragement, and support of these camper(s) while they are at Camp. Care comes in the form of supporting activities of daily living, including personal care, communication, behavior management, mobility, dining supports, activity engagement, and socialization as needed. But more than caregivers, Counselors are friends. Counselors take an active role in encouraging campers throughout their time at Camp, modeling engagement, and joining in on the fun, participating at activities, playing games, singing songs, and more!



“What I learned about myself was primarily that I am resilient. I went into camp thinking I wouldn't be able to do it, that I didn't have the knowledge or capabilities. I left camp knowing this is where I belong and this is what I'm suppose to be doing. I learned that I need to believe in myself more and have more confidence in myself.”
-Previous Counselor

A NOTE ON PERSONAL CARE

Many of our campers need assistance with personal care. This may look like assisting them with transferring in and out of their wheelchairs, dressing, showering, toileting, and changing Attends/briefs. Counselors never assist with personal care alone and will always be with another Counselor or Staff member.

Supporting camper(s) with personal care is often the number one thing Counselors feel most nervous about. This is normal! For most Counselors, this is a new experience. We know that helping another person with these tasks can feel scary for a variety of reasons. We also know that it becomes way less scary once Counselors do it. Counselors receive training prior to camper arrival and hands on support from staff in the moment.

The majority of Counselors who join Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp have little to no experience previously working with individuals with developmental disabilities!

A DAY IN THE LIFE

7:00AM

OR EARLIER! WAKE UP - Coffee and tea are available before camper wake up. Staff & Counselors report to their group at 7:30 AM to support campers with their morning routines and getting ready for the day.

8:30AM

FLAG & BREAKFAST - All groups gather around the flag pole to sing Camp songs and wait for the breakfast bell to be rung.

9:45AM

ACTIVITIES - Each group follows their own schedule rotating to all activities throughout the week.

12:45PM

LUNCH - Groups will wait outside the dining hall (Fanning) until the bell is rung. Each group is assigned a meal 1-2 times per week, where they assist with setup.

1:30PM

REST TIME - Campers enjoy quiet activities —napping, reading, or journaling, back at their living quarters. Counselors have “break duty” 1-2 times/week, otherwise, it’s their break time. When on break duty, counselors receive their break later in the day.

3:00PM

ACTIVITIES - Groups typically enjoy 3-4 activities during the day- two between breakfast and lunch and two between rest and dinner. Some activities are a longer block of time which results in only one activity instead of two.

6:00PM

FLAG & DINNER - All groups gather around the flag pole again to sing Camp songs. Each group is assigned 1-2 flag duties per week, leading songs for Camp.

7:15PM

EVENING ACTIVITY - Campfire (staff lead skits & songs), Cookout (cooking outside & a hike), Dance, & BBQ

8:00PM

CAMPER BEDTIME - Counselors assist campers with their evening routines.

9:00PM

GROUP MEETING - Each group of Counselors & Staff meet to connect and debrief the day.

10:00PM

NIGHT ACTIVITY (optional)- 1-2 nights a week, activities are available for Counselors & Staff.

NIGHT DUTY - Begins at 10:15pm.

11:15PM

CURFEW - Counselors must be in their bunk area for the night. Trust us, you’ll need your sleep!



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

-Previous Counselor

GROUPS

Counselors are randomly placed into a group of approximately 8 counselors, 8 campers, and 2 staff members— Counselor Supervisor (CS) and Assistant Counselor Supervisor (ACS). Within the group, each counselor is 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 and group.

COUNSELOR SUPERVISORS have prior experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities and have typically worked at Camp previously.

ASSISTANT COUNSELOR SUPERVISORS are often previous Camp counselors or have previous experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities in some capacity.

Both the CS and ACS are cheerleaders, working alongside counselors to coach, guide, and support them, emphasizing teamwork, reflection, learning, and growth.



COUNSELOR SUPPORT

Other Staff Support

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Assistant Directors supervise Group Staff (CS/ACS) and Program Staff, assist with the day-to-day operations of Camp.

Behavior Support provides additional support to Counselor and Staff in navigating camper behavior, providing materials and coaching on how to care for the behavioral/communication needs of campers.

PROGRAM STAFF

Facilitate the program area activities and provide camper care support to groups during meals and in the evenings.

PROGRAMS TEAM

The Programs Director and Assistant Programs Director will be onsite overseeing camp operations and supervising all campers, counselors, and seasonal staff.



OUR CAMPERS

Many of our campers spend their year waiting excitedly for their week at Camp. MHKC is a place of acceptance and joy, where campers can fully be themselves, connect with friends, and challenge themselves with fun activities. Camp fosters independence, promotes skill-building, and celebrates play.

All of our campers have developmental disabilities. Some campers have additional physical, emotional, sensory, or learning disabilities. Types of disabilities you might see at Camp include Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Intellectual Disabilities, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Epilepsy, and more. The type of support campers need at Camp ranges- some campers are independent while others need total care. Here are a couple of examples of campers that attend MHKC:



“
At Camp,
I can fly!
- Camper
”

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, 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. While Jesse doesn't speak or smile, they show us they are happy to be at Camp and are having fun in many other ways.

LOGISTICS OF CAMP



SLEEPING

Counselors sleep in all-gender communal platform tents (shown above). Each tent has five beds and Counselors choose which tent they want to bunk in.

If they prefer, Counselors may choose to bring a personal tent to sleep in. Due to space limitations, personal tents must be small 2-3 person in size, unless sharing with other counselors.

You are responsible for providing your own bedding including pillow.

A NOTE ABOUT NIGHT DUTY

Two counselors/staff from each group are on night duty each night to be available for campers if needs arise. You will be sleeping outside on the porch and/or inside a lodge near campers. There is a Leadership member and Nurse on night duty each night to support when needed.

BATHROOMS

Counselors have access to our pool house (shown above) for toilets, showers, lockers for storing items, and getting ready for the day/night. The pool house is available to Counselor during non-camper times (before 7:15am, from 1:30-2:45pm, and after 9pm).

The pool house is all-gender and has two sides consisting of multiple stalls including 3 toilets (6 total), 3 showers (6 total), 2 open sinks on (4 total), and 2 urinals (one side only). Stalls are separated by curtains, with showers having a double curtain with a private, dry changing area.

**Smellables (scented items) may NOT be stored in tents as they attract animals. Bring a lock if you would like added security to your locker.*

If any Counselor has a concern about this setup, please reach out to the Partnerships Coordinator to discuss.



TIME OFF

DAILY BREAKS

Off time for Counselors occurs after lunch during rest time from about 1:30-2:45pm and following their nightly group meeting ending at 10pm. Counselors receive an additional 15 minute break each day at various times, assigned by their supervisor.

Counselors will be assigned a break and night duty 1-2 times/week each. When on break duty, counselors will receive a separate hour break at another time during the day. For night duty, they will be given following morning off until the start of the first activity period. Please note that Counselors have paperwork responsibilities and do often need to use some of their break time to complete it.

SESSION BREAKS

Counselors receive about a 1 1/2 day break in between their two week commitment. Counselors are dismissed the first Saturday at about 2:30pm and need to be back, ready to go by 11am on Monday of the second week.

*We highly encourage individuals do NOT have any outside commitments such as course work during their time at Camp. Camp is hard work and Counselors need their off time to be able to care for themselves. We are not able to accommodate for individuals who need additional time off during a session to attend any prior commitments.

INTERNET & CELL SERVICE

MHKC is, for the most part, a phone-free community. Counselors and Staff are to be present and engaged with campers, their groups, and activities. Phone use is allowed for pictures only. We encourage Counselors to bring a watch for time purposes.

Wi-Fi is available with outlets to charge devices during "non camper" times.

*Please note that internet and cell services are limited on the mountain and can be unreliable.



ALCOHOL & DRUG POLICY

Any person found to be in violation of MHKC's Alcohol & Drug Policy will be asked to leave the premises immediately and will result in the termination from your student or volunteer experience, affecting your ability to receive credit. A person is in violation of this policy if they:

- Have drugs or alcohol, including cannabis/marijuana, in their possession on camp premises.
- Consume alcohol or engage in illicit drug use on camp premises.
- If they leave camp and return intoxicated.

The "Alcohol and Drug Policy" form has a full description of MHKC's policy. Counselors need to sign and return this form as part of their application process.

SMOKING & VAPING

We have one designated outdoor smoking/vaping area at camp. This is the only area on camp premises where smoking/vaping is permitted, and we ask that Counselors/Staff utilize their off times for this. If Counselors need more time than this, they need to make a plan with their Supervisor.

FOOD

MHKC provides three meals a day plus snacks. We offer a regular diet, dairy-free, gluten-free, egg-free, pork-free, vegetarian, and vegan options.

Our kitchen is NOT allergen-free (gluten, nuts, soy). **We do not offer custom menus.**

If you have a strict diet or severe food allergy (e.g. Celiac), you will need to bring your own meals or supplemental food.

Snacks are welcome! MHKC has one designated fridge/freezer for 50 counselors and a dry food storage cabinet available for counselors/staff. You are welcome to store food/drinks from home but please be mindful of limited space.

No food is to be stored in tents.

If you have an airborne allergy to nuts, please inform the Partnerships Coordinator immediately. We are **not a nut free facility and MHKC may not be the best placement.*



“

Camp is better
than
Disneyland!

-Camper

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MEDICAL

SAFETY IS OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY

Nurses

We have 3-4 nurses on staff 24/7. Each group is assigned to one nurse who provides the medication management for those campers, and cares for any other medical needs or feeding protocols. There is a nurse on-call overnight to assist with any nursing needs that may arise. Nurses are also there to support any Counselor or Staff needs that may occur.

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 during this experience, though without proper knowledge or necessary plans, we cannot be prepared for emergencies. If you have a more complex condition, please inform the Partnerships Coordinator so we can work together to create a plan before you arrive at Camp.

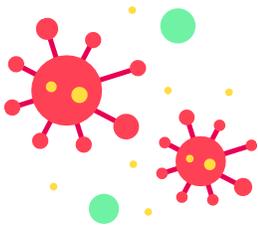
Medication

As part of our safety policies, all medication, including Counselor and Staff's, are required to be stored and locked up in the nursing station. Emergency meds can be kept on the individual's body if needed, such as an inhaler or EpiPen. The nursing station is open 7am-11pm for individuals to access their meds. If anyone needs medication outside of that timeframe, they will make a plan with a Nurse.

HEALTH

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.



Illness

Regardless of what type of illness (Covid, flu, cold, or norovirus), we cannot risk the spread to our camp family. If anyone is feeling sick, they are asked to remove themselves from the group and tell their supervisor. A director or nurse will determine if that individual will be moved to quarantine or dismissed from camp until symptom free for 24-hours.

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.



“

Overall this experience was something truly special. Outside of the credits and academic aspects, it was amazing to step into a snapshot of a community that means so much to so many people and get to experience what that feels like to be a part of it. I hope to return in the future and stay a member of the community.

-Previous Counselor

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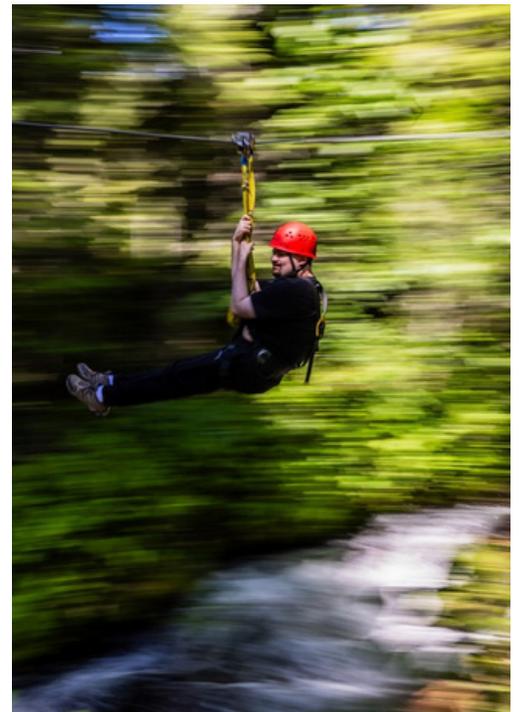
CAMP CULTURE

celebration teamwork
 meaningful fun acceptance
 reflection community modelinghub
 authentic hardwork joy
 playful belonging

Camp is a new experience and a break from every day life. Coming to Camp also means stepping outside of your comfort zone and stretching yourself. Learning is uncomfortable! Together, we lean into that discomfort, challenge ourselves, support one another, and collectively grow, all while doing important work that truly matters!

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Counselors join us with a variety of interests, majors/fields, backgrounds, and experience. No matter where they come from, Counselors walk away from Camp greater disability advocates with newfound knowledge, awareness, and perspective, including a more inclusive lens. Camp is a profound experiential learning opportunity in which Counselors practice and develop professional skills such as communication, critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, and leadership. They also grow personally, experiencing greater self-awareness, confidence, and more. Camp is a valuable experience, and what Counselors gain from their work at Camp moves forward with them wherever they're off to next.





REQUIRED ORIENTATION & TRAINING

ORIENTATION

● All Counselors will attend an Orientation that will dive deeper into Camp life, what it means to be a Counselor, logistics, and camper care. More details about this will be shared once onboarding occurs.

ONLINE, ASYNCHRONOUS TRAINING

● This will be emailed out prior to Camp, and takes approximately 2-4 hours to complete. It will include reading slide presentations and watching videos, designed to help prepare you for Camp. Online training is completed on at your own pace and on your own time.

ONSITE TRAINING

● Counselors receive in-person training at MHKC at the beginning of their scheduled session. Training occurs all day Sunday and Monday morning, and includes a deeper dive into online training material, hands-on practice, and meeting and connecting with other Counselors & Staff.

Being a Counselor at MHKC is an immersive, hands-on learning experience. While Counselors receive training prior to campers arriving, much of their learning begins once they do! Counselors receive in the moment modeling and guidance, along with coaching, support, and feedback throughout their time at Camp. Counselors need to be able to ask questions, seek support, and be receptive along the way. We invite you into this life-changing experience, where Counselors lean into their growth zones together, work collaboratively, and make magic happen!



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



How to Apply:

Go to the MHKC website at www.mhkc.org

Click "Employment & Volunteer" tab at the top > Scroll down and click "Volunteer Positions" > Under 'Apply Here' click "New Volunteer"

After submitting your application, you will be contacted within a few weeks to discuss next steps!

**If you have any questions, reach out to the appropriate contact below, we'd love to chat with you*

Michaela Marquand
Partnerships Coordinator
partnerships@mhkc.org | 971-230-2922



“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.”
-Previous Counselor

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[@mhkcamp](https://instagram.com/mhkcamp)





“
Saying the time I spent at
Kiwanis [Camp] was
transformative or life-
changing might sound
extravagant, but far from
hyperbole these terms
honestly fall short of
describing the feelings I have
for my experiences at camp.
-Previous Counselor”



