

## **Why Surprise Lake Camp is such a great place for Staff:**

Although Surprise Lake Camp is a big place with over 475 campers and 250 staff, it still has a cozy feel to it. This is because most of our campers and staff live in small rustic cabins that are spread throughout our large, picturesque site. Instead of being right on top of one another, they each have their own scenic forest setting. The staff lives either in cabins for only staff or in separate staff rooms within camper cabins. No staff member lives in an open room which they share with children.

Surprise Lake Camp is renowned for its natural beauty. Nestled in the heart of the Hudson Valley sixty miles from New York City, we are surrounded by breathtaking scenes of rugged mountains, flower laden fields and our own private lake. If you enjoy hiking, sunsets, or seeing wildlife, you'll love Surprise Lake Camp.

Among our staff of 250, there is a high percentage of returning staff who cannot seem to get enough of Surprise Lake Camp. They are a valuable resource for the new staff members we hire every year. Our staff is very diverse -- they are drawn from a variety of different areas across the United States and from abroad. You will work with some really great people who have a wide range of interests and personalities.

We provide plenty of time off, including one full day a week, most evenings free, and periods off during the day, so that staff can "recharge" their batteries. We are only sixty miles from New York City, and we provide daily rides to the Cold Spring train station for staff who want to go to the city on their days off. In a little over an hour and a half, you will be in the heart of Manhattan. We also provide a daily van ride for people on their day off to go to a local retail venue. While there, a staff member can eat, shop or even see a movie at the Tenplex. Whether you like exploring a state park, hiking the Appalachian Trail, playing miniature golf, eating out at a restaurant, antiquing in town or a quick ice cream sundae, Surprise Lake Camp is near it all.

For those who prefer staying in camp, a Staff Activity Center is available for day and evening use with recreational facilities, a movie room and refreshments. A daily newspaper is always on hand. There are also frequent evening staff programs like barbecues, tournaments, crafts nights, and DJ parties. We recognize that we need to take care of you so you can be at your best when you take care of the campers.

Camp is rich with natural beauty, wonderful people, and exciting things to do. Once you have joined the Surprise Lake Camp family, you may never want to leave.

## **What we expect from you:**

Being a staff member at Surprise Lake Camp is a big commitment. We expect our staff to give their all to make every camper's experience as positive as it can be. We ask every staff member to dedicate themselves to our Staff Standard of Excellence (enclosed). The Staff Standard of Excellence is woven into the fabric of everything we do at Surprise Lake Camp. It is the code of principles by which we live.

Every job at Surprise Lake is demanding. The counselors and specialists live, eat, sleep and play with kids all day long for eight full weeks. The support staff help make the daily camp operation run smoothly. Everyone is expected to work hard, have a good attitude, and like and value children.

We believe that the single most important ingredient at camp is the staff. And since we want the very best for our kids, we expect the very best from our staff.

## **How we help you succeed:**

Your success is our success. To help our staff do the best job possible, Surprise Lake Camp provides a job description to every staff member. Our counselors receive a staff routines manual and our kitchen and office staff also receive staff manuals. These manuals are read before you come to camp, used throughout our six day orientation, and referred to for the rest of the season. Staff orientation takes place just prior to the opening of camp, at which time our camp philosophy is reinforced, along with discussions of routines, goals and methodology for working with each age group. Instead of relying solely on lectures and demonstrations, our orientation features many hands on experiential sessions in building relationships, establishing mutual confidence and support, and learning and practicing particular skills.

We also have a Red Cross course in Responding to Emergencies just prior to orientation that we ask our new counselors to attend. The course would ordinarily cost you \$200. It teaches valuable, potentially life saving skills that will benefit you the rest of your life. And the extra days in camp give you a little extra time to settle in and learn your way around.

Supervision is an ongoing process at SLC. Every staff member has a direct supervisor who is available to give direction, advice and support. Asking for help is encouraged; it helps everybody grow.

Weekly staff meetings are scheduled to reinforce how we work with our children at camp and to allow for an opportunity to share ideas and skills. We consider our staff a team. We approach working together as an ongoing process. To assist in this process, there are two Support Supervisors in camp whose sole responsibility is to give staff and campers extra support if problems arise. No staff member should ever feel alone while they are at Surprise Lake Camp.

## Jobs:

### **Counselor**

Counselors move with their groups throughout the day. They are the leader, helper, listener and above all, the role model.

On our younger side of camp, Mainside, two counselors are assigned to a group of twelve campers, so responsibility is shared. On our older side of camp, Teenside, one counselor is assigned to a group of eight campers. The groups throughout camp are organized into units of 35 to 60 campers and seven to ten counselors. Each unit has its own supervisor who gives direction to the counselors and oversees the program.

Every counselor sits shmira (night watch) one night out of four so that the rest of the counselors can have time off.

### **Specialist**

Specialists instruct specific activity areas like athletics, performing arts, music, waterfront, environmental education and many others. Each one is responsible to camp's Program Director or Assistant Program Director. In addition to their specific program area, specialists live in camper units and are expected to assist counselors when not running activities. Some specialties are run by counselors who split their time between working with camper groups and running a program area in which they have expertise. Like counselors, all specialists participate in the shmira rotation.

### **Support Staff**

Surprise Lake Camp offers a variety of non-program staff opportunities. These include kitchen, maintenance, housekeeping, site assistant and office staff. These positions play a significant role in the everyday operation of camp. They vary in work schedule, and most of them involve some kind of rotating night responsibilities.

## Schedule:

To help you get a feel for how the day moves, here is the basic schedule.

### **MAINSIDE**

7:30 wakeup  
8:15 breakfast  
9:00 cleanup  
9:45 first AM activity  
10:45 second AM activity  
11:45 third AM activity  
1:00 lunch  
1:45 hafsakah (rest period)  
3:00 first PM activity  
4:15 milk and cookies  
4:30 second PM activity  
6:15 dinner  
7:15 evening program  
8:15 snack/unit meeting  
9:00 staff time off begins

### **TEENSIDE**

7:30 wakeup  
8:15 breakfast  
9:00 cleanup  
9:30 first AM activity  
10:30 Specialty\*  
11:30 Specialty\*  
1:00 lunch  
1:45 hafsakah (rest period)  
(staff have time off)  
3:00 first PM activity  
4:15 milk and cookies  
4:30 second PM activity  
6:15 dinner  
7:15 evening program  
8:30 open curfew  
9:00 staff time off begins

(schedules vary on Shabbat)

\* Teens pick a favorite activity as their Specialty where they spend extra time and learn advanced skills.

### **NEED MORE INFORMATION**

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## STAFF BROCHURE

Surprise Lake Camp is affiliated with UJA-Federation of New York. It is also accredited by the American Camping Association and is a member of the Association of Federation Camps and the New York State Camp Directors Association.