Parent's Guide to Camp Laurel

Table of Contents

Welcome 1

Who we are 2

Summer Camp & Winter Family Camp 2

Medical Staff & Procedures 5

Mail 6

Emergency Contact 6

Drop-off and Pick-up 7

Parent Orientation and Lost & Found 9

Camper Discipline 10

Frequently Asked Questions 11

Packing List 12

Contact Us 14

Welcome!

Welcome to the Parent's Guide to Camp Laurel. We look forward to sharing the best experience that Camp Laurel has to offer with your child. For over twenty-six years The Laurel Foundation has offered camp programs to children and their families living with HIV and AIDS and has all but perfected our programs though over 50 years of combined residential camp experience.

Whether your child is new to camp or if they are a returning camper, this guide will help you through every aspect of our camp program.

By now you have signed up for a camp session and have returned our multiple page application or update packet. If we need any additional information, we will contact you immediately. This will assure that your child is best served in our camp setting.

On behalf of The Laurel Foundation's Board of Directors, and staff, we welcome you to the continuing tradition of Camp Laurel.

Who we are

The mission of Camp Laurel is to give children living with HIV and AIDS an opportunity to experience wilderness camping in order to enrich their lives. Camp Laurel will provide opportunities for each child to broaden his or her capabilities and to heighten his or her self-esteem.
The Laurel Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to:

- offering a unique camping opportunity for children living with HIV and AIDS
- creating an atmosphere where children can forget about their illness and enjoy life
- offering a safe, structured environment for all campers
- providing a supportive environment to children with special needs
- providing a novel and unique experience to campers

And the best part of the program is - it's FUN!! Campers make new friends, have new experiences and learn important lessons all at the same time. No other extra-curricular activity can even hope to match what we offer. But don't take our word for it. Just ask the thousands of former campers who have experienced Camp Laurel year after year. It truly is an experience that will last a lifetime!

Summer Camp/Winter Family Camp

Summer Camp is a week-long camp for campers ages 6-17. It is a time to learn new skills, find their inner strength, and to just be a kid and have fun! Activities include horseback riding, rock climbing, boating, swimming, archery, mountain boarding, live animal care, live farm animal care, to name a few!

Winter Family Camp is fun for the whole family! Parents/legal guardians and their children ages 3-17 get to spend quality time together and with new friends who share common life experiences and challenges.

When arriving at camp, all campers will be assigned to a cabin group, which will be sorted by age and gender. Daily, campers will attend activities, which might include the following:

Lakefront (summer only)

Led by our fully trained Red Cross certified lifeguards, your child can canoe or paddle into adventure on a 25-acre private lake.

High Ropes Adventure Course
Your child can learn self-esteem and courage being challenged by a program that brings the children to new heights above the trees. Our trained staff of experts will lead your child through this exciting program.

Low Ropes Adventure Course
Our leaders will guide your child and their cabin group through a series of problem-solving exercises. Children learn to work in a group on our Low Ropes Challenge Course.

Archery
Our archery instructor will teach your child how to safely shoot a bow-and-arrow and aim for the target.

Arts and Crafts
Your child can learn how to make wonderful keepsakes, which will remind him or her of the camping experience for years to come.

Nature Center
Our nature instructor will lead your child through our nature program that will teach him or her about some of the biggest trees and the smallest flowers in the world, and many of the other wonders and gifts of the great outdoors.

Evening Programs
Your child's cabin will participate with the other cabins in various friendly programs (like a scavenger hunt or campfire). There will be a new and different program for your child every night of the session.

Rock Climbing Wall
The 40-foot wall has four possible routes, with climbs challenging for all levels of climbers, including an overhang. There is no minimum (or maximum!) age for the Rock Climbing Wall. Every participant must be able to safely fit in a waist harness and a helmet

Campfire
Various nights throughout the week, your child's cabin will entertain the camp with skits, songs, and silliness at our "infamous" campfire program.

Counselors-In-Training (CIT) Program

Camp Laurel offers older campers, ages 15-17, and the opportunity to learn how to be leaders at camp. This program is geared to help these campers become future Camp Laurel counselors. The campers participate in all activities with a special focus on developing their leadership skills. For Winter Camp, this program is open to returning CIT's only.

Camp Laurel's Medical Staff

Each camp session is staffed with an expert medical team. This team supervises your child's health and administers medical care and routine medications. Camp Laurel maintains a staff of nurses on site 24-hours a day to handle your child's medical needs. While at camp, the Medical Staff operate under the direct supervision of an on-call medical doctor.

Camp Laurel's Medical Procedures

If your child needs medical attention while at camp, documentation of any treatment and instructions for further action will be sent home with your child.

Should a medical emergency occur while your child is at camp, our medical staff will first assess the situation and decide the most appropriate course of action to take. We will call you, to make you aware of the situation, and inform you of the steps we intend to take.

Camp Laurel's Medication Management:

At Camp Laurel, we strive to maintain an absolutely perfect safety record. Managing medications for our camper and staff population is a very serious endeavor that is successful only with your cooperation.

Parents have many concerns when sending their children off to camp. Making sure they have taken their medications, accurately and on schedule, should not be one of them.

We dispense over 100 medications in any one day at camp. This is made possible by prepackaging the medications into daily doses using an established standardized packaging system. **Prepackaging medications is among the most reliable methods to reduce the risk of medication errors**. Therefore, based on the American Camp Association guidelines, only a registered nurse and/or medical staff are responsible for administering the daily medication while campers attend camp.

Mail

Your child is going to get homesick. This is a fact. No amount of fun or inspiration will change this reality. So please send your child mail! This little detail will relieve and free their minds and hearts so that their camp experience will be the best that it possibly can. Remember: your child will be away from home for up to seven days (summer)! And because we do so much at Camp, seven days seems like seven weeks. So send your child some mail: it'll make his or her day!

Here's how to do it:

On the Wednesday or Thursday BEFORE YOUR CHILD LEAVES FOR CAMP, sit down and write a letter. Then go to your local post office and mail it. Mailing an item on the **Wednesday or Thursday before** your child leaves for camp (first Saturday) is the only way to ensure that it gets there before your child leaves Camp.

(Your Child's Name)
Camp Stevens
c/o Camp Laurel
1108 Banner Rd.
Julian, CA 92036

Your children can also send mail to you, so you may want to provide them with a pad and pen, a couple of envelopes with your home address pre-written on them, and stamps. Remind your child to send the letter within the first few days or you may not receive it before they come back from Camp.

Emergency Contact

If there is an emergency and you should need to speak with The Laurel Foundation staff, you will be able to call our emergency line at (213) 300-CAMP.

Drop Off Procedure & Safety Rules

The following safety procedures have been put into place to ensure the safety of your child at Camp Laurel drop-off and pick-up locations:

- Please do not leave your child unattended until they have been released to The Laurel Foundation staff for supervision.
- Please stay clear of the parking lot flow of traffic. This is a working hospital and there will be many cars coming in and out of the parking lot.
- We will release children only to parents/guardians and adults named on the Camp Laurel Camper Care and Medication Form. If you are unable to make the pick-up time at the end of camp please make sure to specify who is authorized to pick-up your child on the above mentioned form.
- When releasing campers, The Laurel Foundation will ask to see photo identification for anyone (including parents/guardians or anyone listed on the Camper Care and Medication Form) picking up a child. Please have it ready so that we may release your child.
- Please be patient when the campers are being unloaded and released to you at the end of Camp. We must check all identification and distribute medications before releasing your child.

Sending your child to camp on that first day is sometimes a chaotic experience. In order to alleviate some of the chaos, we have created a sense of order on departure-to-Camp day.

First, you must arrive with your child, your child's belongings, and any previously uncompleted forms at the time stated on your "Transportation Flyer", which we will mail to you 2 weeks before camp.

Once you arrive, please proceed directly to the check-in table where your registration forms will be checked. The Laurel Foundation staff will verify that all forms are complete.

Then proceed to the Medication Station. Complete the bus form and deposit your child's meds with the RN. When this is complete your child will receive a name and luggage tag and then may proceed to load luggage on the bus and finally board the bus for Camp, at which point The Laurel Foundation will assume care and custody of your child.

Your child will be set to have GREAT FUN!! Don't forget to confirm our return date and time, for your child's arrival.

Before the bus leaves, a Laurel Foundation staff member will review safety guidelines with all passengers. Safety guidelines include:

Everyone must remain seated while the bus is in motion. Every bus will contain a first aid kit. Unless absolutely necessary, no one should leave the bus until reaching the final destination.

Pick Up Procedure & Safety Rules

Return-from-camp-day is almost as hectic as departure-to-camp-day. We have, however, established the following procedures to make it even easier for you.

We ask that you arrive at the Camp Laurel pick-up location on time (the time designated on your ("Transportation Flyer") to receive your child (we cannot control traffic, so there may be delays). For updated times or delays the day of pick-up, call The Laurel Foundation office at (626) 683-0800.

Once we arrive, the luggage will be unloaded. At the same time, for safety concerns, campers will be dismissed from the bus by family group and will be released to their parent or legal guardian. The child's name will then be crossed off the bus roster.

It is imperative that you remain patient while we verify that every child in our care has been properly returned to his or her legal guardian.

Once your child has been released to your custody and care, you may pick up his or her belongings, including medications. (it is your responsibility to pick-up meds!), your child is checked-out and you may leave.

***REMEMBER, when picking up your child, The Laurel Foundation requires photo identification; please be sure to bring one.**

Evaluations

Within two weeks of your child's return from The Laurel Foundation you will receive an evaluation form. It is extremely helpful to us for you to complete this and return it to the camp office. We are constantly trying to improve Camp Laurel to ensure your child's experience at Camp Laurel is the BEST!

Parent Orientation

The Parent Orientation is a highly recommended event that you as a parent should attend before your child is scheduled to depart for Camp. The Parent Orientation is held at The Laurel Foundation office (75 South Grand Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91105). It is a short meeting where you can ask questions about Camp Laurel, meet some of the camp staff, and share your excitement about your child coming to Camp. **Please contact Andrea for more information at (626)683-0800.**

Lost and Found

The camp staff and all The Laurel Foundation employees are not responsible for any items lost or stolen during the course of camp. Should we find any items left behind by campers, we will gladly hold them at the office for one week. We will make every attempt to contact you if the item is labeled. After one week, the items will be donated to a thrift store.

Camper Behavior Management

At Camp Laurel we implement a traditional positive behavior management model. Within this model, our counselors are trained to provide structure, set expectations for camper behavior, give campers choices, as well as praise when positive choices are made. We continually strive to foster a community that ensures both physical and emotional safety for all members.

If a behavioral issue arises our counselors are trained to address the issue the first time by having a conversation with the camper(s) in a way that is respectful and constructive. Campers are not shamed for an undesired behavior or choice made; instead counselors facilitate a conversation that leads to a behavior plan that encourages a more appropriate behavioral choice in the future.

A positive behavior management plan will likely contain an appropriate consequence or resolution. A consequence is designed for learning and correcting behavior. It is designed to be fair and meaningful, not a punishment.

If the behavioral plan with the counselor is not successful and/or the behavior escalates to an unsafe level, it will be brought to the attention of the Camp Director. Each behavioral situation and camper is different. If a call home is needed, parents will be notified to discuss the situation. Campers who are unable to make behavioral corrections and/or are imposing physical danger to themselves or others will be asked to leave camp.

All counselors are trained in appropriate standards of conduct and child abuse prevention guidelines. Through those trainings, counselors understand that physical or emotional abuse/punishment will not be tolerated in any circumstance.

Camp Laurel ensures that behavioral specialists are a part of the counseling staff each session. These professionals play a critical role in helping coach campers and staff through challenging situations.

It is our goal to provide a safe and inclusive environment for all Camp Laurel participants.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Why does Camp Laurel require an annual TB Test & Physical?

Children & Adults with HIV are at higher risk of developing active TB and becoming ill if they become infected. That's why requiring an annual TB test and a physical in order to attend our camp programs is a great way of protecting everyone who attends camp. A physical and TB test is required every 6 months for infected campers.

Can I call my camper during the week?

No. Camp is a time for children to grow and gain self-esteem through experiencing independence. Our experience shows that if a child is in contact with their parent they will grow homesick and wish to return home. However, we encourage you to apply to our Winter Family Camp program so that you can experience our camp with your children.

How are the Camp Counselors screened and selected?

The Laurel Foundation's priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of our campers at all times during camp sessions and camp-related activities. It is the policy of The Laurel Foundation that every applicant endure a rigorous selection process involving a pre-screening phone interview, group interview, reference checks, and a criminal background check. Additionally, each volunteer must attend 24 hours' worth of Camp Laurel volunteer training.

How does the wait list work?

We encourage everyone to turn in their application as soon as possible to avoid being placed on the wait list. If you or your child are wait listed, though there are no guarantees, there is a good chance that you will be able to attend camp because it is likely that there will be cancellations. If there are cancellations, you will be confirmed on a first come, first served basis. *Note: We do experience dropout "no shows" the day of camp which automatically opens up a space for another person to attend camp. So we do encourage campers to show up in case any "no shows" happen at bus check-in.

Why can't I bring my cell phone or electronics to camp?

Camp is an opportunity to spend quality time with each other and for campers to get away from their everyday challenges. Cell phones, electronic games, iPods, tablets, etc. are prohibited. These are considered "anti-social devices" and would not allow you or your child to fully enjoy camp.

Is there a Camp Group photo?

Yes, everyone poses for a group picture the first day of camp. In order to be included, please sign the permission(s) found on page 8 of the child's application and page 9 for the adult's application.

What to Bring

Your family will experience exciting activities while at camp, and in order to enjoy your time it is important to pack carefully for the weather. The average temperature during the day is projected to be in the mid 50's degrees and 30 degrees at night. Campers will sleep in bunk beds inside a heated and insulated cabin. Parents will sleep in adult cabins by gender and the kids 6-17 will sleep in cabins by age and gender. Children under 6 will sleep with their parent. The camp site will allow us to provide a "retreat-style" program with many new activities focused on empowerment through workshops focused on disclosure, life skills development, and stress management.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING LIST CAREFULLY!!

The following checklist is for your use so that you can pack properly for camp.

- ☐ **Use a bag that zips completely closed to pack your child's items.**
- ☐ 1 **warm** sleeping bag OR
- ☐ 1 sleeping bag with an extra blanket and twin fitted sheet to put over mattress.
- ☐ 1 pair of weatherproof boots
- ☐ 1 pair comfortable, athletic/hiking shoes
- ☐ A snack (for the trip up on the bus)
- ☐ Warm Sleepwear (modest)
- ☐ Personal toiletry items (feminine hygiene products, deodorant, etc.)
- ☐ Toothbrush & Toothpaste
- ☐ Bath soap / Shampoo (Travel size)
- ☐ Hair brush / Comb
- ☐ 4 pairs of socks
- ☐ 3 pairs of underwear
- ☐ 2 pairs of durable jeans
- ☐ 2 t-shirts
- ☐ 2 warm long-sleeved turtlenecks (thermals)
- ☐ 2 sweatshirts/sweaters/sweatpants
- ☐ 1 Warm, waterproof jacket
- ☐ Lip Balm and Sunscreen
- ☐ Warm Hat and Mitts
- ☐ 1 bath towels/wash cloth
- ☐ **WARM JACKET – FOR BELOW FREEZING TEMPERATURES**
- ☐ At least 1 Flashlight and batteries
- ☐ 1 pillow/case
- ☐ 1 bag for dirty laundry
- ☐ Prescription Meds (MUST give to Med staff in ORIGINAL containers before departure)
- ☐ Shower Shoes (for shower use only)

** If for any reason you do not have access to any of the items listed above please contact Andrea at (626) 683-0800.

What Not to Wear

To help create an emotionally and physically safe, as well as culturally sensitive environment for your family, we ask that **all** campers (adults and children) dress appropriately for camp and the cold weather. These guidelines are for outdoor and indoor activities. In advance, we thank you for your cooperation and look forward to a fun-filled camp!

General:

- ✖ No clothing with adult language or images
- ✖ No open-toed or open-backed shoes

Ladies:

- ✖ No half-shirts or low riding jeans (we don't want to see any belly buttons or undergarments)
- ✖ No low cut tops
- ✖ No short shorts or short skirts

Gentlemen:

- ✖ No sagging pants (again, no belly buttons or undergarments, so please wear well fitting pants or a belt)

What Not to Bring:

Please help us prevent any problems before they start. Make sure you and your child do not bring any valuables or other forbidden items to camp.

The following items are NOT permitted:

- ✖ Anything valuable
- ✖ Cell Phones*
- ✖ IPods, mp3 players, tablets, handheld gaming devices, etc.*
- ✖ Money
- ✖ Weapons
- ✖ Fireworks or other dangerous items
- ✖ Alcohol or controlled substances
- ✖ Toys
- ✖ Matches /lighters
- ✖ Any pet or other live animal
- ✖ Cigarettes or other tobacco products

We suggest each camper pack all belongings in a duffel bag clearly marked with his/her name. No trunks or hard suitcases are allowed. Each camper is permitted only 2 pieces of luggage.

*If you accidentally bring one of these devices, we will collect them at the bus check-in and return them upon departure from camp. The Laurel Foundation accepts no responsibility for the loss, damage, or theft of campers' property.

How to Get More Involved

The Laurel Foundation is always in search of another kind heart. If you want to get more involved in your child's camp experience or The Laurel Foundation family in general, there are a number of ways you can do it. We always need help with the following: distributing fliers, mass mailing of the newsletter, making posters, fundraising events, registration and check-in on departure day, and coordinating the transportation of all the children to and from camp. You can also help The Laurel Foundation by volunteering as a counselor, coach, or referee and by donating money to the Camp Laurel program.

Support from the community is growing every year and that support takes on many forms -- from direct service to monetary and product donations. We want your help too! If you are willing to dedicate some time to The Laurel Foundation, we can certainly find a mutually beneficial way to use your knowledge and skills that will be rewarding for all of us.

For more information, please call The Laurel Foundation office at 626-683-0800 and say, "I want to help!"

We hope this helps you prepare for your child's experience at Camp Laurel.

Find Us Online:

www.Laurel-Foundation.org

www.Twitter.com/TheLaurelFdn

www.Facebook.com/TheLaurelFdn

www.Youtube.com/TheLaurelFdn

Contact Us:

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