



Get to know the Camp Cabin Counselor Job

Mystic Lake YMCA Camp is an overnight summer camp who has been providing life-changing experiences for campers for over 90 years. We encourage and model the values of honesty, caring, respect and responsibility to our fellow staff and participants. We are for all, and create an inclusive environment for children from all walks of life. Our camp programs will help campers grow in spirit, mind, and body.

Mystic Lake YMCA Camp is accredited by the American Camping Association.

FAQs

What skills do I need to be a camp counselor?

A genuine drive to positively and respectfully engage with youth by providing a safe place for campers to try new activities and grow. On our team the skills of flexibility and proactive problem solving will set you up for success in this role.

One of the best aspects of camp is the opportunity to share your interests with youth. Do you play an instrument? You could lead a music clinic or play your instrument for morning wake up or sing a song around the campfire. Do you enjoy art? Can you envision yourself painting a mural with a cabin group? Are you a writer? You could help the campers create their own camp newspaper to be published on Friday at breakfast. Do you know how to catch the biggest fish in the lake? Help a camper catch their first fish. Are you hoping to stay conditioned for your sports team? Imagine yourself running across the soccer field while playing a game of pool noodle tag with your sports clinic. Was making your baking soda volcano science project your favorite part of school? You could make a mega baking soda volcano with campers on the beach. Do you dance? Imagine doing to cha-cha slide with over 100 of your new best friends during lunch time hang out. Are you good listener? You could build relationships with the campers who are a little more introverted but are so excited to tell you about their dog they have at home. Are you looking for new hobbies? We can help you find a passion, while you help the campers find theirs. The list is endless of how you can incorporate your genuine self into the cabin counselor position.

We can teach you to lead activities like kickball games, archery and to safely supervise swimming- you bring creativity and engagement, and the rest falls into place.

Where will I live?

All summer positions will include living in a cabin with campers. All cabins have electricity and private shower stalls. Wi-Fi is available in the health center and main lodge.

What is the food situation?

Meals are provided for all staff while they are working. Our kitchen staff work hard to accommodate a wide range of dietary restrictions, such as gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian, and vegan. Peanuts and tree nuts are not served or cooked with in any camp meals.

Where is Mystic Lake?

We are located in the village of Lake, and camp's 600 acre property is situated in the middle of glorious pine forests and boasts its own 90-acre private lake. Our nearest town is Clare- that is where you can do laundry, get a pizza, grab an ice cream cone, or go to the grocery store. Mt Pleasant is 30 minutes away and is where you can go to stores such as Walmart.

Mystic Lake is a branch of the YMCA of Lansing, but we are located about 100 miles north of Lansing. Many of our campers come from the greater Lansing area, they are not required to be YMCA Members to attend camp- anyone can sign up. A membership to the YMCA of Lansing is included in your staff benefits.

What do I wear?

A staff polo is provided to staff for camper check in and check out days. Aside from check-in on Sunday, and check-out on Friday, staff may wear clothes that are appropriate and functional. We have a camp store here at Mystic Lake for you to purchase camp swag.

What will I learn while working at camp?

Every role at camp will challenge staff members to grow as professionals and leaders. Time management, interpersonal skills, communication, public speaking, innovation, project management, group leadership, conflict resolution, inclusion, work ethic, and SO MUCH MORE will be practiced daily! Skills developed at camp will benefit summer staff for the rest of their lives.

After a successful summer of camp, you will have the opportunity to ask us for letters of recommendation, references and guidance while you plan how to apply your camp skills to future positions.

Who is my support team?

The current Mystic Lake staff describe the work environment as unique collaboration to make this a great place to work, and a great place for our campers. You will be matched with a returning staff member who will be your mentor as you step into your position of cabin counselor.

Your direct supervisor is Amiee Woodrow, Senior Program Director- Animal lover. Reader. Burrito bowl enthusiast. Indoor kid turned outdoor kid. Event Planner. Lifeguard instructor. Amiee joined camping in 2010 and has held camp roles including nature day camp

counselor, overnight cabin counselor, day camp director, program coordinator, aquatics coordinator and senior program director.

What are the Staff Expectations?

Caring- Your job whilst at camp is to care for the campers. You must show caring towards your coworkers and towards every child in our program. Caring includes tending to their physical and emotional needs from breakfast to bedtime.

Honest- Say what you mean and mean what you say. Embrace your fellow staff and campers as whole people who are growing every day.

Respectful- Be respectful of each other, of camp, of your job, and of yourself. We honor where everyone at camp is physically and emotionally at and meet them where they are.

Responsible- If you lead by a positive example your campers will follow. If you open it, close it, if you get something out, put it away, and take ownership of your assigned tasks.

Unplugged- Mystic Lake is “Unplugged for a week, connected for a lifetime!” You will model this behavior with the campers. Always keep your phone put away in the presence of children. Being present at camp is a special part of the job. It gives you an opportunity to be in community with your cabin groups- engage fully where you are.

Model positive attitudes- Modeling good behavior is one of the most important aspects of being a camp counselor. We only want to act in a way in front of the children that we want them to act too.

Problem Solving- We spend a week prior to camper arrival learning about youth development and program facilitation. In a week we cannot possibly go over every scenario that could unfold. Make the best decisions you can, with the information you have, and reach out for support when you need it.

Embrace Diversity- We celebrate that every person on our staff team and all our campers have different life experiences, cultures and backgrounds.

Child Safety- Our number one responsibility at Mystic Lake to ensure our campers are safe. We follow many protocols to ensure the campers at Mystic Lake are provided with a safe environment and role models. All adults are background screened and trained in recognizing and preventing abuse. All interactions with children at camp will be in the presence of others.

What does the schedule look like?

The typical weekly schedule for camp counselors kicks off Sunday with a staff meeting. In the afternoon campers check in and we do swim checks, get to know your group activities, and head to dinner. We do a welcome campfire with silly songs and give campers expectations for the week. We head back to the cabins and get ready for bed. Monday through Friday includes small group activities in the morning, cabin activities and free choice in the afternoon and a large group activity in the evening. Campers check out Friday evening.

The day-to-day of camp is a packed schedule and a lot of time with people. There is very little alone time between activities and ensuring your cabin group is well cared for. This job is a high action and high reward.

All staff will work at least one weekend stayover or complete weekend Lansing bus duties.

Want more info or have any questions? Send Amiee Woodrow an email!

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