

belonging
AWAITS

**Volunteer
Informational Packet
2026**



Hooray!

First things first.

On behalf of the campers on the autism spectrum served at Camp Encourage, we send you enormous amounts of gratitude! What a special (and valuable!) gift you are giving—your time, your expertise, and your heart. What goodness is in store! May this packet help prepare you prior to your arrival! ***Goodness and belonging truly awaits.***

Details matter.

If you already love someone on the autism spectrum, you know this all too well. Not having clear details can make or break an experience. We want this to go as smoothly as feasible for everyone involved (you, each camper, our staff, and all other volunteers). Because of this, please, please please be sure to read through this packet thoroughly, prepare yourself for the experience, ask as many questions as needed, and provide as many details to our staff as warranted.



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Next Steps

1

Visit and bookmark this helpful webpage.

Bookmark the "Selected Volunteers" webpage that is full of helpful details. Click [HERE](#) or visit <https://campencourage.org/selected-volunteers/>

2

Complete a background check.

Safety is of the utmost importance at Camp Encourage. In compliance with the American Camp Association accreditation requirements and to keep our campers as safe as can be, a background check will be completed on each* volunteer over the age of 18 on a yearly basis. The cost of the background check is gladly covered by Camp Encourage. You provided all detailed needed and permission on the volunteer application, so Camp Encourage will take care of processing your background check. No further action is needed.

3

Return to CampBrain.

Please return to our online application system [HERE](#) and:

- upload copies of any **certifications** (i.e. First Aid, CPR),
- upload a recent **photo** of your fine self
- and complete a **staff medical form** (whether you take medications or not). More details about medications can be found below.

4

Complete a quick form.

To indicate which orientation/s you plan to attend and answer a few other questions, please complete [THIS](#) brief form. Further details about the volunteer orientation options are described below. Be sure to place the orientation date/s on your every calendar.

5

COMING SOON!! Download AVA Camp Connect

NEW: This year, we are transitioning to a new communication platform. Because it will serve as a primary source of communicating information to you during camp and will provide access to photos it will be essential that you download and access the app. Android users may click [HERE](#) for download instructions. IOS users may click [HERE](#) for download instructions. *When setting up your account, your user name will be "encourage_firstinitial + full last name." For example, Jane Doe would enter "encourage_jdoe."*

6

Find answers to questions.

A list of frequently asked questions can be found [HERE](#) and should be helpful in answering some of your questions. Should you have any other questions, don't hesitate to ask Aimee (agorrows@campencourage.org).

7

Brace yourself.

Seriously. Brace yourself for unexpected moments, for laughter, for learning, for meeting some of the most marvelous humans, and for heart-changing growth. It is truly a like-no-other, cup filling experience and our campers would not be able to be afforded the opportunity without YOU. A million times, thank you.

Description of Volunteer Roles

Group Leader in Training: This role is for those interested in possibly joining our staff as a Group Leader in future years. A Group Leader in Training is assigned a small group of roughly five campers and at least two adult volunteer counselors. These individuals: facilitate a group gathering once to twice daily (with a detailed plan that is provided); facilitate and provide general structure and consistency in their assigned cabin; make sure the group remains on schedule; communicates with the director any concerns that arise and provides feedback, guidance, suggestions, and encouragement to counselors through the week. Each Group Leader in Training will be paired with a mentor Group Leader in the cabin next door to direct questions and seek guidance from. It is preferred that this individual is a returning volunteer however, we will consider others that are interested in this leadership position. Further, it is highly preferred that Group Leader in Training applicants be able to commit to multiple camp sessions per year.

Counselor: Counselors typically remain at camp during the entire session and it is assumed that you will be unless you have informed us otherwise. Each counselor is assigned to two to three campers depending on the needs of the camper. He or she accompanies the camper(s) to all of the daily activities and resides overnight with the campers in a temperature-controlled cabin. The role may require extensive walking on uneven terrain. Due to possible cancellations and group adjustments, assignments to specific gender and age groups will be squared away by the orientation. Listed preferences (age, gender) will be taken into consideration and those volunteers that are returning will be assigned first. Note: counselors can begin serving in this role at the age of 18.

Counselor in Training (CIT): A CIT serves in the role of a counselor (described above) but is under the support and guidance of the Group Leader and Counselor over the age of 18. All CITs must be at least 16 years of age. Exceptions may be made for 15 year olds who have previously served as a Peer Model Camper. The role may require extensive walking on uneven terrain. Please note that there will only be a small number of CIT roles available.

Counselor (Floating): Nearly each small group during the week of Camp Encourage has an additional counselor that we call a "floater." Just as the name implies, this counselor will float where needed most likely only within his or her small group of campers. He or she will follow the leadership of the group leader, communicate with the counselors on a regular basis, assist all campers within the assigned group daily, accompany campers to activities, and demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to step in where and when needed. The role may require extensive walking on uneven terrain.

Medical Personnel: Medically Trained Professionals reside overnight to assist with any medical needs. These individuals are in charge of collecting and distributing prescription and over-the-counter medications and will be under the loving direction of our staff Lead Nurse. Important: these volunteers need to have certification to administer medications in the state of Missouri.

Activity Facilitator: An Activity Facilitator facilitates daily activities such as STEM, sensory, art, social development, campfire songs, music activities, yoga, relaxation strategies, self-advocacy, and/or self-esteem for the campers. These volunteers can give their time for a portion of a day, a portion of the week, or for the entire session. Just before each camp session, a (very) detailed list of behind-the-scenes tasks as well as detailed instructions and needed materials for all assigned activities will be provided. The role may require extensive walking on uneven terrain.

Photographer: The Photographer is in charge of taking pictures of daily activities using his or her personal camera or the camp's (far from fancy) digital camera. He or she will also assist in preparing the slideshow, which is shown at the closing of camp to all campers and their families. There will be at least two photographers for each camp session. The photographer ensures that each activity and camper is being photographed throughout the duration of camp. The role may require extensive walking on uneven terrain.

Social Media Support: In this role, individuals will capture media content of the camp experience and post to various social media outlets throughout the day. A schedule, sample content, and helpful related information will be provided by Camp Encourage staff. It is preferred that this volunteer role is filled by someone able to stay (overnight) for the duration of the camp session.

Kitchen Support: This is a part-time role assisting at meals throughout the session. Individuals serving in this role would distribute food from the buffet line, while monitoring portions. It would be ideal if the volunteer could commit to all three meals in one day. This role could be paired with other part time roles, if desired, or breaks would be provided between meals.

Van Driver: This is a part time role (but could easily be full time) from the hours of 7:00am-9:00pm each day of the camp session. While we prefer this volunteer to reside overnight on the campgrounds, exceptions can be made to allow for commuting daily. In this role, the volunteer will transport campers throughout the campground using a vehicle and schedule provided by Camp Encourage staff. The volunteer will also be on-call to pick up campers or volunteers as needed.

Crucial Tidbits

Arrival at Camp for All Volunteers

Overnight sessions: We will gather in **Genesis Hall**. Upon entering the campgrounds, veer to the right and park in the LEFT gravel lot to get to Genesis Hall.

Summer sessions:

- **HEARTLAND:** We will gather in the **Great Room**, located in the Main Lodge. Upon entering the campgrounds, veer to the right and continue right toward the main parking lot. Walk into the main office and follow the signs to the meeting space.
- **TALL OAKS:** We will gather in Budd Park. Upon entering the campgrounds, follow the gravel lot past the main office. Park in the gravel lot near the playground / pavillion and walk over to the dining hall. Budd Park is directly to the left of dining hall.

Location

Camp Encourage hosts sessions at two locations:

Heartland Retreat Center

16965 NW 45 Hwy
Parkville, MO 64152

Tall Oaks Camp and Conference Center

12778 189th St
Linwood, KS, 66052

Most navigation apps take you right to their beautiful grounds but, should you have any trouble, feel free to contact us at the numbers provided at the end of this packet.

Departure

Regarding departure, please plan on staying until the time listed below. Do all you can to stay through the duration of the camp session. Should you need to leave early, arrangements will need to be made in advance (to cover your role) thus please be sure to let us know (agorrorrow@campencourage.org).

Camp Session

Arrival Time

Departure Time*

Overnight 1 (3.21-3.22)



March 21 at 8am



**There will be a staff meeting after campers depart.*
March 22 around 4:30pm

Summer 1 (6.11-6.14)



June 11 at 8am



June 14 no later than noon

Summer 2 (6.29-7.2))



June 29 at 8am



July 2 no later than noon

Summer 3 (7.25-7.28)



July 25 at 8am



July 28 no later than noon

Alumni (8.29-8.30)



August 29 at 9:30am



August 30 at 3:30pm

Overnight 2 (10.10-10.11)



October 10 at 8am



October 11 around 4:30pm

A Special Note for Part Time Volunteers

Your specific arrival and departure times will be ironed out as each schedule is finalized. Once it is, you will be sent a detailed email. A few important things to consider and embed in your noggin:

- Upon your arrival each time, you will need to officially "check in" (for safety reasons / to track those coming and going). When you do so the first time, you'll find your water bottle, name tag, and other important items waiting for you. Unless otherwise indicated, you will check in at the above stated locations.
- Please be timely or call 816.419.7196 should you be the slightest bit late.
- If something arises and you are unable to fulfill your specific volunteer times, please let Camp Encourage know ASAP so that each activity is covered.
- If you are staying overnight, you will be provided with details of your overnight accommodations upon your arrival.

more Crucial Tidbits

Volunteer Orientation

As stated on your application, we have planned an orientation to answer any questions you may have and to provide you with information regarding your role, camp activities, and camper expectations. This meeting will also be an excellent opportunity to get to know the other volunteers that will be working beside you along with gathering information regarding the campers you'll be serving.

As we get closer to each date, you will be sent a reminder notice by email that will provide you with detailed information – parking suggestions, the exact meeting location on the campgrounds, the Zoom link (if applicable), and any other crucial details.

Important Notes for all camps (*Overnight and Summer*):

- **Counselors, CITs, Floaters and Medical Staff** are required to attend one in-person orientation per season. It is strongly preferred that each of these volunteers attend the in-person option, however, those who reside outside a 70 mile radius, apply after the training date, or have an emergency prior commitment may obtain the training virtually. On the day of the training, a voice-over powerpoint will be sent to your inbox and you will have 48 hours to view the training and take a quiz covering the content.
- **Photographers, Social Media Support, Kitchen Support, Van Drivers and Activity Facilitators:** The in-person orientations are NOT required for these volunteers however, each is welcome to attend.
- In-person training will take place at the actual location of camp (Heartland Retreat Center in Parkville, MO).
- If volunteering for the Alumni Reunion camp, only NEW volunteers will need to attend an orientation.

Mark Your Calendar 

REQUIRED TRAINING

In-Person Options

Please select a training that will occur prior to the first session you are attending.

➔ February 28, 2026 9am to 3:00pm

➔ April 4, 2026 9am to 3:00pm

Virtual Option

It is required for everyone to attend the in-person option. However, if you reside outside a 70 mile radius or have an emergency prior commitment, we can arrange for an online training. Participants miss out on live conversations and learning from other volunteers by skipping the in-person component.

^ a few more Crucial Tidbits

Cash Incentives in 2026 for Volunteer Recruitment

As you may know, volunteerism in our country has greatly declined since the pandemic. Camp Encourage is no exception. We plan to continue the cash incentive recruitment program in 2026 to ensure we are able to fill all volunteer roles and provide a quality service for our campers. Please click [HERE](#) to read about our Volunteer Recruitment Program and the **cash incentives** provided to current volunteers who “bring a friend” to camp this year.

Medications

As stated above (Page 3, Step 3), all volunteers, whether they take medications or not, must complete an online Medical Form through the online application process [HERE](#).

Should a volunteer take medications, the medications will need to be kept in the separate medical station (for the safety of our campers). This will include prescription medications and any over-the-counter medications. A volunteer will be able to dispense his or her own medications at the medical station OR, the assigned Medical Personnel will be happy to deliver them to the volunteer at the time of distribution (as he or she will be doing the same for the campers).

Should you prefer to Medical Personnel to distribute them to you,

- bring a pillbox large enough to be divided into specific medication dispensing times. All medications should be properly placed in the pillbox before arriving at camp. If you are unable to locate a pillbox large enough to fill all medications, please contact us and we will make sure one is available upon check in or will send it your way prior to camp.
- Bring original packaging for each prescribed medication listed.
- Please do not pack medications in your luggage or carry them around with you.

Failure to comply with this policy will result in the immediate dismissal from camp.

Important: we also gather meal request data from the Medical Form. Not completing it in a timely manner causes alternate meals to not be available as the kitchen staff needs to prepare in advance.

The Menu and Special Dietary Needs / Preferred Foods / Alternate Meals

Heartland Retreat Center and Tall Oaks are able to offer Gluten Free, Vegan or Vegetarian meals upon request, but **CANNOT prevent cross-contamination. Those with celiac and severe gluten allergies are encouraged to bring their own meals.** If you would like an alternate meal, please contact our Program Director (agorrorow@campencourage.org) to make arrangements at least two weeks prior to the camp session, as The campgrounds may be unable to honor requests made after we submit our final headcount. Requests may be made for all meals or just a few. Please reference the menu published on the “Selected Volunteers” page of our website for each session to determine if an alternate meal request is necessary.

Should you decide to bring alternate foods, all meals and snacks must **be packaged and clearly labeled with your name, day to be served and meal it's replacing** and should be **microwavable**. Due to limited space, we ask the quantity of alternate meals be minimal. Meals will be dropped off upon your arrival and will not be kept in cabins. Please direct any questions regarding this issue to Camp Encourage staff rather than contacting Heartland directly.

Important: Heartland Retreat Center, is NUT FREE. Please be sure not to bring anything that contains nuts.

Schedule

Once finalized, a detailed schedule of each session will be available on the informational webpage for selected volunteers ([HERE](#)) and will also be available at the Volunteer Orientation.

What to Bring

Belongings may be **searched** should a safety concern arise.

Bedding

- twin sheets and a blanket OR a sleeping bag
- pillow

Toiletries

- shampoo and conditioner
- toothbrush in holder
- toothpaste
- soap
- deodorant
- brush and comb

non-fragranced products are best and less likely to attract insects.

Should you need help securing any of the items on this list, **please** let us know. We already have many items ready for anyone that may need them!

Clothing

- socks
- shoes (tennis shoes)
- casual outdoor clothing for entire stay
- pair of jeans (if desired)
- pajamas
- undergarments
- rain jacket or poncho
- jacket or sweatshirt
- at least one pair of closed toed shoes for zipline, archery, and horseback riding
- swimming suit (summer only): bring swim wear appropriate for swimming, jumping, and playing (able to stay in place and be comfortable during play)

Other

- flashlight
- two to three towels (for shower and pool)
- sunglasses (as needed)
- sunscreen (as needed)
- bug spray
- hat (to guard off ticks)
- disposable camera with name on it (optional)
- Relaxation choice item/s: There will be a designated time during the day for quiet activities in the cabin. This time will be provided for campers to engage in an activity that is calming. Volunteers may want to bring similar items to model a relaxing recreation activity. Although materials may differ according to each individual, some suggestions may include: a book, Sudoku puzzles, or crossword puzzles. The key to choosing the item/s is that it/they should be QUIET and CALMING.
- medications (over the counter and/or prescribed)

→ *bring a positive attitude ready for fun, growth, and special memories!*

What to not, not, NOT Bring...

Please do not send the following items: anything that contains **nuts** (Heartland is nut free), **sweets, sodas** and **unhealthy snacks or drinks** without talking to us prior to arrival, and/or **expensive items** that could become lost or damaged (cameras, jewelry, etc.)

The following items are prohibited at camp: **Alcohol** or **drugs; Weapons** (including firearms, knives or any other item that could inflict harm upon someone else). Campers are not allowed to bring **Electronic Devices** (including phones)

Procedures, Practices, and Policies, Oh My.

Emergency Communication Plan

Code Blue: This code is to be used when alerting the Camper Support Specialists, Program Director or Executive Director of any incident involving the behavior of a camper in which the volunteer may require assistance. Communication should include the code and location to which Lead Staff should report. Volunteers should refrain from sharing identifying information when requesting assistance.

Code Green: This code is to be used when alerting Lead Staff that a camper has eloped or is running away. When communicating, please share the camper's location. It may be necessary to provide continuous updates as the camper's location changes while running.

Code Purple: This code is to be used when a camper escalates from **eloping** to **missing**. Volunteers or staff no longer have eyes on the camper. Please follow direct instructions from the Lead Staff.

Code Red: This code is to be used when requesting minor medical assistance. Examples include: vomiting, requesting supplies, minor cuts / scrapes, etc.

Code Red 911: This code is to be used when requesting major medical assistance. Examples include: seizures, fainting, serious injury to limbs or ligaments, etc.

In the event of an on-site emergency, the Executive Director and / or the Program Director will contact the parent / guardian of campers directly involved in the incident via phone. If multiple families are needing to be contacted, the Camper Support Specialists and Lead Camp Nurse will assist to ensure speedy contact is made. Please refrain from posting details surrounding the event on social media.

Helpful Camp Family Guidelines

While at Camp Encourage, all volunteers, staff members, and campers should keep the following helpful guidelines and tips of kindness and respect in mind. It is expected that each follow these to the best of his or her ability. Each parent is provided these guidelines and encouraged to review them with his or her camper prior to camp.

- Each person has **personal space** that must be respected. Please be mindful of that and only touch another individual with his or her permission.
- Each person has **personal property** that must be respected. Please be mindful of that and only touch another's belongings with his or her permission.
- Only enter activity areas at camp during specified times (on one's schedule) when the campground staff is available to supervise each. This includes the pool, the wooded areas and paths, the high and low ropes course, and the pond / fishing area.
- Electronic devices are not permitted. Please see the below section titled "Handheld Game Systems and Electronic Devices" for further information.
- Camp Encourage is a place to welcome each individual—despite hardships and/or differences. It is a place to feel good about oneself and celebrate strengths, abilities, and talents. It will be crucial that each camper and volunteer do their very, very best to make sure those around him or her feel that way. Please join our Camp Encourage "family" in ensuring this loving atmosphere by demonstrating these key skills:

grace

respect

safety

kindness

acceptance



belonging
AWAITS

Weapons

Camp Encourage prohibits all persons who enter Camp Encourage (our office or our campgrounds) from carrying a handgun, firearm, or prohibited weapon of any kind onto the property regardless of whether the person is licensed to carry a handgun or not.

This policy applies to all partners and employees, independent contractors, volunteers, and visitors, whether or not they are licensed to carry a concealed handgun. The only exceptions to this policy are police officers, security guards or other persons who have been given written consent by Camp Encourage to carry a weapon on Camp Encourage property.

Prohibited weapons include any form of weapon or explosive restricted under local, state or federal regulation including all firearms, illegal knives or other weapons covered by the law. Legal chemical dispensing devices such as pepper sprays that are sold commercially for personal protection are not covered by this policy. If you have a question about whether an item is covered by this policy, please call the Executive Director. You will be held responsible for making sure that any potentially covered item you possess is not prohibited by this policy.

If you become aware of anyone violating this policy, please report it to the Program Director immediately (816.419.7196).

Drug, Tobacco, and Vape Free Environment

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, campers, and visitors (at the office or on the campgrounds).

Drug Free

Camp Encourage is committed to a drug-free workplace. Camp Encourage's Drug and Alcohol policy includes rules and guidelines for the use of drugs and/or alcohol. The presence or use of any controlled substances or unauthorized alcohol will not be tolerated. This does not include medications obtained with a valid prescription.

Reporting to Camp Encourage after using alcohol or a controlled substance is absolutely prohibited. The abuse of prescription drugs in the workplace may affect an employee's performance, or may endanger the safety of an employee or the public. Whenever management has reason to believe an employee is under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance, or is exhibiting any impairment brought on by the use of any substance, appropriate action will be taken. This action will include a test for the presence of drugs and/or alcohol and disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Any type of involvement with the use or presence of a controlled substance, unauthorized alcohol, or the misuse of any drugs, prescription or otherwise is strictly prohibited during camp hours. Failure to comply with this policy may result in immediate dismissal.

Marijuana

Vaping, smoking, or consuming marijuana in ANY way is strictly prohibited, even if it is legal recreationally.

Smoking and Vaping Tobacco

The law defines smoking as the "act of lighting, smoking or carrying a lighted or smoldering cigar, cigarette or pipe of any kind."

Vaping refers to the use of electronic nicotine delivery systems or electronic smoking devices such as e-cigarettes, e-pipes, e-hookahs, and e-cigars.

In keeping with Camp Encourage's intent to provide a safe, healthy and friendly environment, smoking and vaping are prohibited (*with exceptions defined below).

The smoke and vape free policy applies to:

- All indoor areas of buildings in use by Camp Encourage (office, campground spaces)
- All off-site conferences and meetings
- All vehicles leased by Camp Encourage

*In certain circumstances, smoking and vaping tobacco may be approved in advance by Lead Staff if and ONLY IF:

- the amount of times the individual anticipates needing to step away does not impact the quality of Camp Encourage programming,
- breaks are scheduled at agreed upon times,
- the smoking occurs in parking lots or in appropriate outdoor spaces only,
- if it is discreet (campers and others such as volunteers and staff are not in sight / cannot see),
- and if campers are FULLY covered in advance by staff and volunteer support.

Handheld Game Systems, Phones, and Electronic Devices

Although this policy is directed to campers, we wanted to provide the details to our volunteers as well (to ensure that each volunteer is ready to follow through with the policy). Parents have been informed and encouraged to share the information with each camper so that he or she knows what to expect in advance.

Campers are encouraged to spend time making connections and engaging with other campers, thus we do not allow campers to bring electronic devices of ANY kind to camp. This includes (but is not limited to) cell phones, tablets, laptops, ipods, e-readers and hand-held games (such as a GameBoy, Nintendo DS, PSP, etc). "Downtimes" in the cabin are a great opportunity for campers to shape the bonds we hope they form at camp. These devices can limit the positive interactions in the cabins that are an integral part of the camp experience. Campers who are "tuned out" may miss out on this.

Activity trackers that do NOT have the ability to connect to the internet or receive calls and texts will still be allowed. Apple Watches and Smart Watches are NOT allowed.

If a device is needed for communication purposes, exceptions will of course be made and the device can be kept with him or her at all times to bridge communication and socialization. However, wi-fi accessibility will be disabled and it will only be able to be used to communicate, not to play games nor watch videos.

Campers who wish to utilize a non-internet connected music player for sensory purposes in the evening or during rest time may do so with the use of headphones or earbuds. This should be prearranged with the Camper Support Specialist.

If a camper is found with a device, it will be given to a Lead Staff member and will be delivered to parents on the final day of camp.

Parents have been asked to review this policy with their child prior to camp.

Important Note: Volunteers are encouraged to have a phone at all times (for emergency purposes, for connecting with parents if preferred, for capturing photos, etc.). Phones should be used to bridge communication between camp and home. HOWEVER they are **NOT** to be a distraction and we are counting on the volunteers to serve as a good role model of socialization and of NOT focusing on the screen.

Gender-Inclusive Practices and Policies

Camp Encourage endeavors to create an environment of acceptance for all campers and volunteers. Indeed, the goal of acceptance is at the core of our values. We strive to create a camp that fosters growth for everyone involved regardless of race, national origin, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identification. In order to ensure that all of our campers and volunteers feel accepted, Camp Encourage will support those that identify with a different gender than assigned at birth to determine the best course of action related to bathroom use, cabin assignment, communication with others, and any other related issues. Depending on all factors, other volunteers, campers and the parents of other campers may or may not be notified.

Remaining on the Campgrounds

All volunteers are expected to remain on the campgrounds for the duration of their assignment. Volunteers should not leave the premises without first obtaining permission from the Program Director.

Service Animals

Service animals (defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act as an animal that has been trained to perform work or tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability) may be allowed during Camp Encourage programming if certain criteria are met.

- The service animal must have current licensing and vaccinations.
- The service animal must be tethered (harness, leash, or other tether), unless, because of a disability, the handler is unable to use a tether, or a tether would interfere with the service animal's safe and effective performance of the work. If tethering isn't an option, the animal must be under voice control, hand signals, or other effective means.
- The handler is responsible for all care including feeding, watering, toileting and veterinary care.
- The handler (or the handler's legal guardian) may be held financially responsible for any damages that may occur to the common areas and / or living quarters within the campgrounds.

Camp Encourage may request that a service animal depart the campgrounds under the following circumstances:

- The animal is out of the handler's control and the handler does not take action to control it.
- The animal is not housebroken.

Service animals will not be denied due to other camper, volunteer or staff fears or allergies.

This policy does not include emotional support animals (ESAs). Heartland Retreat Center does not allow emotional support animals on the premises. ESAs are permitted at Tall Oaks.

Visitors at Camp

Because we closely monitor campground visitors for safety reasons, we ask that you please not invite friends and loved ones to the campgrounds. If the need for a visit arises, please obtain approval before by contacting Aimee Gorrow at 816.419.7196. If you have friends and loved ones that would like to be a part of the magic, we certainly would welcome volunteers (should roles be available). An application and a sign up form can be found on our website.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency or severe weather: Communication from the Program Director to the Group Leaders will be sent out.

Storm Shelters at Heartland: Basement of Genesis, Trask Basement, Cray meeting room & Oak Place bathrooms are all safe places for groups to go. When out and about, please go to the closest storm shelter to your current location.

Storm Shelter at Tall Oaks: Basement of the Dining Hall

All Clear: Communication from the Program Director to the Group Leaders

Celebrating Birthdays

Should a camper or volunteer have a birthday while at Camp Encourage, we will be geared up and ready to celebrate! There will be light snacks, singing, and a card. Because there often are more than one birthday during a camp session, we ask that no additional items be brought in (i.e. a cake, balloons, etc.) so that we ensure that all celebrations are the same, so that no one feels it unfair, and so that we are monitoring sugar intake and allergies.

Use of Vehicles on the Campgrounds / Release and Hold Harmless

It is highly preferred that volunteers and staff walk or utilize the shuttling service that is available during camp. However, if driving one's personal vehicle is necessary (for an emergency, to support a behavior, for health reasons, etc.) **the driver assumes all risk.**

When campers are present on the campgrounds, volunteers in the following roles may use their personal vehicles only IF preferred and if needed: volunteers transporting supplies, photographers, medical personnel, and Lead Staff (i.e. Camper Support Specialist, Program Director, Lead Nurse).

Driving during camp should be very limited and the following precautions must be taken and agreed to:

- The driver must remain on the campgrounds at all times.
- Speed limits posted must be honored.
- Vehicles must remain locked when not in use.
- Vehicles must remain on roads and paths intended for vehicles and not on grassy or dirt areas.
- Vehicles must go extremely slow when near any humans—for safety but also out of respect as to decrease the amount of dust being blown on or near them.
- Campers cannot be transported by volunteers and can only be transported by approved employees.
- Cars should not be left running unless the driver is behind the wheel.
- Valuable items should not be left in vehicles.
- Car keys should be kept in a secure location so that no one else has access to them or can acquire them unknowingly.
- Seating limit capacities established by the manufacturer must be adhered to.

Volunteers are not permitted to transport a camper or campers in their personal vehicles. Should a camper need to be transported due to an emergency (medical or behavior), Lead Staff must operate the vehicle. In the event transporting a camper or volunteer becomes necessary, Lead Staff members should adhere to the above and also the following:

- The driver must ensure that all passengers are secured using restraint devices while the vehicle is in motion.
- If windows can be locked, it is advised to lock them right away.
- In keeping with the 2:1 supervision ratio, two adults must be in the vehicle at all times.
- Campers are prohibited from riding in parts of the vehicle not intended for passengers.
- The vehicle must be equipped with a first aid kit.

Should a vehicular accident occur, the following policies will be followed:

- Immediately notify the Executive Director, Lead Nurse, or Program Director.
- If medical attention is required, instruct them to call 911.
- If needed, provide immediate first aid care to any injured passengers.
- Ensure that all uninjured passengers are moved to a safe location and supervised.

Release / Hold Harmless

All staff and volunteer applicants were required to complete an online form, agreeing to hold harmless Camp Encourage for any and all liability which may result from driving during camp. The signed form confirms that

- they are a licensed driver,
- that the vehicle in which will be driven during camp is insured in accordance with the laws of the licensed state, and
- that the individual carries liability coverage as required by law and this coverage will be in force as of the dates of the camp session.

Those that drive need to understand that in the event of an accident during camp, their personal coverage may be used to pay for damages to the vehicle(s) involved in an accident and/or any injuries to a passenger or occupant of another vehicle.

Protection of Children and Youth

Code of Conduct

Relationships among campers and adults are central to the success of Camp Encourage. Defining healthy and safe relationships through policies and a Code Of Conduct is not intended to undermine the importance of personal interaction at Camp. Relationships at Camp should, ideally always be experienced without intention to do harm or allow harm to occur. The following Code Of Conduct has been adopted by Camp Encourage to help ensure that Camp is a safe environment for children and youth as well as all of our volunteers. We ask that everyone read through the following statements and carefully consider them before agreeing to serve our campers.

- I agree to do my best to prevent abuse and neglect among children here at Camp Encourage.
- I agree to not physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a camper.
- I agree to comply with the policies and guidelines for Appropriate Affection.
- In the event that I observe any inappropriate behaviors or possible policy violations between or among adults and children or youth, I agree to immediately report my observations to Camp Encourage Staff.
- I acknowledge my obligation and responsibility to protect children and youth here at Camp and I agree to report known or suspected abuse to Camp Encourage Staff.
- I understand that Camp Encourage will not tolerate the abuse of children and youth and I agree to comply with this Code Of Conduct.

Types of Abuse

- Physical Abuse: Non-Accidental/intentional injury
- Sexual Abuse: Any contact that is meant to arouse the sexual desires of an adult
- Emotional Abuse: Actions or statements that result in mental injury to a child
- Neglect: Failure to provide basic needs to a child
- Economic exploitation: Wrongful use of a child or their belongings

Reporting Abuse

- Any suspected abuse must be reported immediately to Camp Encourage Staff.
- It may also be helpful to write down what you witnessed so that details can be easily recalled.
- Any reports of abuse will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly.

Guidelines for Appropriate Affection

Appropriate forms of affection

- Brief Hugs
- Pats on the shoulder or back
- Handshakes or High Fives
- Verbal Praise
- Holding hands while walking with younger campers
- Help with sensory needs such as spinning or deep pressure hugs

Inappropriate forms of affection

- Lengthy embraces
- Kisses
- Holding older campers on your lap
- Touching genital areas other than for bathroom or showing help
- Showing isolated affection
- Sharing a bed
- Massages by an adult to a child or by a child to an adult
- Comments or compliments about body development or appearance
- Snapping bras and wedgies
- Unwanted tickling

Keep in mind that many of our campers have sensory needs that either limit or heighten their desire for touch and deep pressure. Always keep individual camper needs in mind when considering what is appropriate and what is not. Our Camper Support Specialists will be helpful resources.

Volunteer Cancellation Policy

Should a volunteer be accepted to serve yet then is unable to fulfill his or her commitment, the individual most likely will be charged a \$50 cancellation fee (regardless of the date of cancellation). Although certain circumstances will be considered, this policy is in place due to the importance of having a sufficient number of volunteers in place for our wonderful campers, the time needed to train each volunteer, and the amount of time to fulfill the void.

Should a volunteer simply not arrive at camp and not inform Camp Encourage of his or her intention to not volunteer, the cost of all meals, overnight stays and other fees will be considered and the volunteer could be charged for the total of the costs that Camp Encourage will incur.

Further Details

Further details will be provided in depth at the orientation. However, if you have specific questions, don't hesitate to contact Camp Encourage by email (agorrows@campencourage.org) or phone (816.830.7171).

General Goals

Many of our activities aim to achieve the following set of general goals:

- increasing skills of **independence**
- enhancing one's **self-esteem, understanding and awareness**
- increasing **social abilities** and **connections**
- widening awareness of **recreation opportunities** and **skills of recreation**
- strengthening **emotional wellness**

→ Let's do this.

Ever have a question? Feel free to reach out or visit the **SELECTED VOLUNTEERS** webpage ([HERE](#)). It's super helpful!

Until camp, we'll be counting down the days. ❤️

Thank you.

Whew! You did it. Thank you for taking the time to comb through the massive amount of details.

We are meticulous folks at Camp Encourage, trying to think of every possible scenario and every possible camper need.

Details are crucial. You know what else is crucial?

*Having amazing volunteers like YOU who absolutely make it all happen! **A million times, thank you!***

belonging
AWAITS

