

PEER MODEL CAMPER PACKET 2018



INFORMATIONAL GUIDE FOR PEER MODEL CAMPERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Important: Please read this entire packet prior to completing any forms.

This informational packet provides important details for a successful camp experience. Please read through this packet in its entirety in advance to prepare you and your peer model camper, as well as those that will be supporting him or her. You may want to print a copy for quick reference or bookmark it on this [WEBPAGE](#).

A Friendly Reminder of your Role

We truly applaud your willingness to participate in this unique experience. Peer Model Campers have an extremely important role at Camp Encourage. Not only do they enhance the lives of other children, but they also walk away with new perspectives, enjoyable stories, new friends, and lifelong memories.

Peer Model Campers participate in Camp Encourage LIKE ALL OTHER CAMPERS. They will reside in the cabins overnight with the other campers with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), will participate in all camp activities, and will be expected to serve as role models for the campers with ASD. Because Camp Encourage targets social and behavioral deficits often paired with autism spectrum disorders, peers selected need to demonstrate developmentally appropriate social and behavioral skills. Further, Peer Model Campers must possess patience and kindness and must demonstrate acceptance and be understanding of differences. Please understand that older Peer Model Campers will NOT be incorporated as "Junior Counselors." All Peer Model Campers are to interact with the campers, enhancing each child's experience at camp and are not to isolate themselves from the campers with ASD

Important Timeline and Due Dates

Camp Session	Tall Oaks Form is due	Tuition is due unless payment arrangements have been made
March 17-18, 2018	February 17, 2018	March 3, 2018
June 20-23, 2018	April 4, 2018 (4.4)	May 5, 2018 (5.5)
July 19-22, 2018	April 4, 2018 (4.4)	May 5, 2018 (5.5)
October 27-28, 2018	September 27, 2018	October 10, 2018

Tall Oaks "Participant Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability" Form

To participate in activities directed by facilitators of Tall Oaks, it is essential that participants and parents read and **sign** the following items on the first page:

1. the starred section in the middle of the page (one for the challenge course, horses, and "other activities"),
2. the bottom of the release of liability (parent), AND
3. the bottom where indicated (the camper must sign)

Note: if you opt out of any activities on the form, *please be sure that you have informed your camper of this* (so that it does not come as a discouraging response when discovering he or she cannot participate).

You'll see that page two is simply a description of the activities for your information (and does NOT need to be returned to us). The third and final page is a *Participant Health Assessment* to help the Tall Oaks facilitate create the best program for your camper.

Please return pages 1 and 3 to Camp Encourage, NOT to Tall Oaks no later than the dates shown above to complete your camper's application process. It can be mailed (Camp Encourage, 4025 Central Street, Kansas City, MO, 64111), faxed (816.301.6228), or emailed (info@campencourage.org). Once we have received all forms, the review and acceptance process will begin.

Directions

Camp Encourage takes place at **Tall Oaks Conference Center** (12778 189th St., Linwood, KS 913.301.3004). Because fancy directional devices don't always lead travelers accurately, the below directions are provided just in case.

From KCI Airport / North Kansas City: Take I-29 North from KCI Airport to I-435 South. Follow I-435 to the State Avenue exit (Hwy. 24/40) Turn right onto Hwy. 24/40 to Leavenworth County Road 2(1 mile west of stoplight at Basehor). Turn Left. Proceed to Hwy. K-32(Linwood Road). Turn Right. Follow K-32 to Leavenworth County Road 26(189th St.) and turn left. Tall Oaks is located on the immediate left.

From I-70 West & Topeka: Take I-70 East to the East Lawrence Exit. At the stop sign, turn right. Turn right (1 mile) again on Hwy. 24/40. Follow to K-32 (2 miles) (exit toward Linwood). Follow K-32 approximately 11 miles to Leavenworth County Road 26 (189th St). Tall Oaks is the first left turn.

From I-70 East & Kansas City: Take I-70 West to K-7 South (This is the last free exit before the turnpike) K-7 to K-32 West K-32 through Bonner Springs (In Bonner Springs, K-32 makes a 90 degree turn as it goes through town. This turn is right after the Walnut street/K-32 intersection.) Proceed on K-32 for approx. 9 miles to (189th street) Leavenworth County Road 26, Turn left onto County Road/ (189th Street) Tall Oaks is located on the immediate left.

From South Kansas City / Overland Park: Take I-435 West toward Lawrence. Exit on Hwy. K-10 and follow the signs to Lawrence. Exit on Kill Creek Road in DeSoto, turn right (north). At the stop sign (83rd Street) turn left. At the fork, take the right exit, staying on 83rd street. Turn right onto Wyandotte street (3 - 4 blocks). At the stop sign County road 26(Golden Road), turn left. Proceed approx. 2.5 miles. After a sharp right curve in the road, the entrance to Tall Oaks is on the right.

From North Kansas City: I-70 West to Bonner Springs. Take K-7 South to K-32 (Bonner Springs) exit. Turn right on K-32 into Bonner Springs. (In Bonner Springs, K-32 makes a 90 degree turn as it goes through town. This turn is right after the Walnut street/K-32 intersection.) Proceed on K-32 for approx. 8 miles to (189th St.) Leavenworth County Road 26. Turn left onto County Road 26/(189th Street) Tall Oaks is located on the immediate left.

From North Lawrence, KS: Highway 40 North to Hwy 24/40 East. Take Hwy. 24/40 to K-32 (2 miles) (exit toward Linwood). Follow K-32 approximately 11 miles to Leavenworth County Road 26. Turn Right. Tall Oaks will be the first left turn.

From South Lawrence, KS: Take K-10 East. Exit on Kill Creek Road in DeSoto, turn left (north). At the stop sign (83rd Street) turn left. At the fork, take the right exit, staying on 83rd street. Turn right onto Wyandotte street (3 - 4 blocks). At the stop sign County road 26 (Golden Road), turn left. Proceed approx. 2.5 miles. After a sharp right curve in the road, the entrance to Tall Oaks is on the right.

Tour the Campgrounds

For those attending the **summer camp sessions** (in June and July), a tour of the campgrounds will be available to assist in preparing for the four-day stay.

Join us on **Saturday, April 28th at 1:00pm** at Tall Oaks Conference Center for a tour of the campgrounds! Meet other campers that will be attending camp, greet the leadership, ask questions, and tour the campgrounds. No food will be provided so be sure to come following lunch.

This is an EXCELLENT opportunity for first-time campers to peek at his or her cabin, get a glimpse into where the magic will take place, receive answers to questions, and decrease worries and uncertainties about the new experience. If you are interested in attending this, please indicate so by emailing Kelly Lee at klee@campencourage.org or calling 816.830.7171.

Note: for those attending a **weekend camp session** (in March or October), we hope to have a virtual tour available in the future. This is in the works but not ready for 2018.

Arrival

Our staff will be ready for check-in at the below listed times on the first day of your child's camp session and we will be eagerly anticipating each peer model camper's arrival!

Once entering Tall Oaks, you will need to **park in the gravel lot** to the right shortly after entering the facility. Once you park, go ahead and **bring all camper items to the porch of the Dining Hall nearby** (you will see a sign or we will have volunteers guiding you there). Someone will be waiting to greet you and check each peer model camper in (to include checking in all medications, if applicable so please have the Medical Form ready). After bidding adieu to parents, all peer model campers will then attend a brief orientation to assist them in clearly understanding their role and understanding what to expect during the week. Shortly after the orientation, each peer model camper will be able to take his or her belongings to the cabin with assistance as needed.

Camp Session	Arrival Time	
March 17-18, 2018	March 17 th at 8:15am	
June 20-23, 2018	June 20 th at 10:00am	<i>Should any peer model camper have a camper with ASD also attending the same session, please note that arrival times are different (allowing for the orientation for peer models). Please make arrangements to arrive at the assigned times.</i>
July 19-22, 2018	July 19 th at 10:00am	
October 27-28, 2018	October 27 th at 8:15am	

Health and Safety

Camp Encourage is honored that you are allowing us to share this experience with your child. We want to assure you that safety is our top priority. We have caring, qualified medical personnel kindly volunteering their time to tend to the needs of your child while away from home. Our full time medical staff will be present 24 hours a day at Camp Encourage and each individual's sole focus is the health of our campers. In addition to administering daily medications, they will provide health care assistance for any camper or staff member needing it. Although we hope your child will not need to visit the Medical Station, we are committed to our communication with you as a parent in the event that medical attention is needed that would affect your child's camp experience.

A nurse will contact a parent or family member in the event of the following situations:

- An overnight stay in the Medical Station
- If a child needs to see a physician beyond basic first aid
- If a seizure occurs
- If a child is unable to participate in any activity due to an injury or illness
- Any medical situation staff feels requires timely parental notification

Medical Form: Bring upon arrival to camp

A medical form will be available prior to camp and will be available on our website. Read the directions THOROUGHLY and complete each step. (For those that are returning, you'll see slight changes to the form.)

For those peer model campers taking medications: The medical form needs to be completed *prior to arriving at Tall Oaks* to expedite the arrival process. Because we understand that medications change, please bring the completed form upon arrival to camp (AND NOT BEFORE). Medications will be checked in with our medical personnel upon your arrival. Please do not pack medications in your camper's luggage.

For those peer model campers that do not take medications: Please send the form our way PRIOR to camp. It can be sent by: postal mail (4025 Central St., KCMO 64111), email (info@campencourage.org), or fax (816.301.6228).

Departure

Families will arrive on the last day at the times listed below for each session. Upon arrival, you'll be directed to the appropriate parking lot. At that time, all campers will be finishing a group meeting and will join parents with their assigned group. You'll be able to communicate with your camper's counselors and cabin mates briefly before being directed to the location of a slide show of the numerous pictures taken during the camp session (or closing activities). You are welcome to bring siblings (as long as they are not furry and four-legged due to possible allergies and fears). ☺ If you are running late, please contact us so we can reassure your camper that you are on your way. For your planning purposes, please note that we anticipate the slideshow or *closing activities to end roughly an hour after you arrive* (taking into account talking and transitioning time).

Camp Session	Departure Time	
March 17-18, 2018	March 18 th at 3:00pm	<i>*For the summer sessions: To decrease overstimulation and crowding, we will have two groups rotate through departure and the closing slideshow. Your specific time will be determined prior to camp. We will share that time with you before camp and will also remind you when you arrive to camp. For those that have more than one camper (of differing ages), please plan to arrive at 9:15 but confirm this with us.</i>
June 20-23, 2018	June 23 rd at 9:15am or 10:15am*	
July 19-22, 2018	July 22 nd at 9:15am or 10:15am*	
October 27-28, 2018	October 28 th at 3:00pm	

Helpful Guidelines for the Camp Encourage "Family"

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 to his or her ability. **Please review these with your camper before coming 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 Tall Oaks staff is available to supervise each. This includes the stables (anywhere near the horses really), the pool, the wooded areas and paths, the high and low ropes course, and the pond / fishing area.
- Cell phones, video games, CD players, and video cameras should only be used in a very limited fashion. 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

BEHAVIOR

In line with our above guidelines, our staff and volunteers vow to maintain acceptance, grace, respect, safety and kindness at all times. We understand that every camper is an INDIVIDUAL with unique needs. We also understand that camp can be out of a camper's comfort zone—surrounded by newness, change, and challenges.

First when all campers arrive, we will set up expectations—with positive, encouraging messages, yet clear guidelines. Your camper will be a part of sharing ideas and developing these guidelines. We ask that each camper adhere to the guidelines to ensure that everyone feels safe, feels respected, and feels comfortable to be himself or herself without judgment.

Our team will be embedding best practices of positive behavior management strategies when disruptive behavior occurs. While we hope that such behavior not occur, we want to make sure you know that we will ensure that safety and love are at the forefront of each of our reactions to behavior.

On the rare occasion that a camper present behaviors that impact the safety of him/herself and/or the safety of others (or threaten to do so), we will respond respectfully, remain calm, be clear and concise, listen to and respect the camper's perspective, allow time to calm, take care of all other campers, establish clear boundaries, be consistent, use positive language to share replacement (preferred) behaviors, and redirect the camper's behavior.

It is our intention to work together to allow a successful, positive experience for all. However, if a child continues to demonstrate behaviors that are difficult to manage with our staff:camper ratio (taking attention and support away from other campers and despite efforts to accommodate the camper), he or she may be asked to leave.

Homesickness

It isn't unusual for a camper to become homesick. Our staff and volunteers will do all they can to make your camper feel comfortable (and often the other campers and peer models are wonderful sources of encouragement as well). Parents / Guardians will be contacted if the situation warrants it but most of the time it is not helpful to have the campers talk to his or her parent / guardian. We typically call parents first to help in making that decision.

Prior to camp, you can help by:

- talking with your child about possible worries he or she may have about camp,
 - sharing similar experiences,
 - arranging for the child to spend a night away from home with friends or a relative before coming to camp,
 - telling the camper that if he or she feels homesick, to share those feelings with a counselor, and
 - not telling your child that he or she will be picked up because he is feeling homesick.
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What to Bring

Below are suggested items to pack. We encourage you to involve your camper in packing to further assist in the comfort of camp and so that he or she knows where items are located during his or her stay.

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 soaps, shampoos, conditioners, and lotions are best and are less likely to attract insects.*

Clothing

- Casual outdoor wear for entire stay (weather appropriate)
- Socks (at least four pairs)
- Shoes (tennis shoes)
- At least one pair of closed toed for horseback riding
- Swimming suit (summer only; modesty is encouraged which includes a one piece suit or a tankini for females please)
- Pair of jeans (or long pants for horseback riding)
- Pajamas
- Undergarments
- Rain jacket or poncho
- Jacket or sweatshirt

Special Dietary Needs

- Please see the next section regarding items to bring for those campers that have unique dietary needs.

PLEASE read the policy regarding phones and electronic devices.

Other

- Communication devices / systems, if applicable (iPad, PECs, etc.)—if your child typically uses a device to communicate, we strongly encourage you to send his or her method of communication. Please let us know if you do not plan to as this will impact your child's ability to communicate at camp.
- Helpful visual supports, if applicable (for routines, to promote positive behavior, etc.)
- Flashlight
- Two to three towels (for showering and for use at pool)
- Sunglasses (as needed)
- Sunscreen (as needed)
- Bug spray
- Hat (to guard off ticks)
- Disposable camera with name on it (optional)
- Stationary and stamps to send letters home (optional)
- A favorite DVD (although the movie may or may NOT be able to be viewed)—**must be** G or PG.
- 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. Although materials may differ according to each individual, some suggestions may include: a book, Sudoku puzzles, crossword puzzles, a small electronic game or music with headphones. The key to choosing the item/s is that it/they should be QUIET and CALMING.

You should probably NOT send

- Sweets
- Sodas and unhealthy snacks or drinks without talking to us prior to arrival
- Expensive items that could become lost or damaged (cameras, jewelry, etc.)

Special Dietary Needs / Preferred Foods

The kitchen staff plans a diverse menu (which includes a salad bar and many fresh fruits and vegetables for every lunch and dinner) and although they are able to make some accommodations during mealtimes (i.e. they always have a vegetarian option), they cannot meet specific dietary needs. We have considered providing a GF/CF option however due to the diverse needs, routines and often strong preferences of our campers, providing one option that is gluten and casein free is difficult.

If your camper has special dietary needs (or has strong preferences or routines), feel free to prepare preferred food in advance and send it with your camper. All meals and snacks must be packaged and clearly labeled with day, meal, and name and should be microwavable. Meals can be dropped off upon arrival. Please direct any questions regarding this issue to Camp Encourage staff rather than contacting Tall Oaks directly.

Handheld Game Systems, Phones and Electronic Devices: **DISCONNECT TO CONNECT!** ☺

Because we are planning to encourage and provide numerous opportunities for social opportunities, we recently revised our policy to reduce the use of those items that may decrease the likelihood of those valuable opportunities. We also understand, however, that some campers will *truly* need items of great interest (and comfort). If not having an electronic device or phone with him or her may potentially trigger behavior concerns or cause a negative experience, please feel free to send it as we plan to embed motivating items, activities and reinforcement throughout the week as appropriate.

WE WELCOME THEM TO BE SENT WITH THESE GUIDELINES:

- Phones and devices will not be allowed outside the cabin (and there will be a designated space for them to be kept).
- Camper cell phones are only to be used during rest time and at bedtime. Should an emergency rise, campers will be allowed to use another phone with permission from the camp staff. Campers should be made aware that a counselor is required to keep a phone near him or her at all times for communication purposes between staff. Besides that, all other rules will apply to the staff as well.
- Devices will only be able to be used at certain times during the day (i.e. during rest and relaxation time if it assists the camper in calming or allows a needed "escape").
- 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, it will only be able to be used to communicate, not to play games and not to watch videos.
- If listening to music is calming for a camper and allows him or her to feel comfortable in overstimulating environments, an iPod or something similar will be allowed HOWEVER, the camper will be encouraged to be "hands free" with the device (not accessing games but simply listening to a playlist). If you know in advance this is needed, please create a playlist that can be played and will not require song changes and frequent touching of the device).
- Games will need to be of appropriate content (**must be** eC, E, or E, 10+ only), and must be clearly labeled (chargers included). If you have any further questions or need clarification regarding this, be sure to let us know.
- Camp Encourage is not responsible for lost / stolen phones or electronic devices.



RATING CATEGORIES



Again, **PLEASE** be sure to communicate the limited usage with your camper prior to camp.

Menu

A **menu** from Tall Oaks will be available prior to camp. As soon as we receive it from our campgrounds, we'll send it your way. A menu will be posted in each cabin in a list format as well as a visual picture format.

Please discuss with your camper that meals will be served buffet style. Campers will be encouraged to take one portion the initial time through the line yet will be welcome to return further times once all other campers are served.

It is strongly encouraged that **parents of campers with unique eating habits, sensory issues, special diets, etc. print out the menu and write helpful notes upon it** for the counselors and Tall Oaks kitchen staff. Notes might include information for the counselor/s regarding foods a camper may dislike / need a replacement for or may be a list of those foods the camper may have or should not consume according to the camper's unique dietary needs. Then, please send the helpful information to us **PRIOR** to camp. It can be mailed to 4025 Central Street, Kansas City, MO 64111 or emailed to info@campencourage.org.

Regarding special diets, as noted above and also on the "What to Bring" list: *The kitchen staff at Tall Oaks is able to make some accommodations during mealtimes; however they cannot meet specific dietary needs for campers. If your child has special dietary needs, you may prepare food in advance and send it with your child. All meals and snacks must be packaged and clearly labeled with day, meal, and camper name. They must also be microwavable. Meals can be dropped off upon your arrival and will be taken to the dining hall kitchen by our volunteers. Please know that we are happy to accommodate for each camper's needs. Let us know if any questions arise.*

Schedule and Preparation Story

A **schedule** (for your camper's assigned group) and detailed **preparation story** will be available just prior to camp once the schedule is ironed out in detail. The schedule will be the same written schedule placed on each camper's nametag. Should a camper need photo or picture representation of each activity, a visual picture schedule will also be available upon his or her arrival. *It would be helpful to let us know this in advance.*

The **preparation story** will include pictures of Camp Encourage and further details to assist in knowing what to expect. Please be sure to view and discuss the schedule and preparation story thoroughly with your camper in advance. After doing so, please feel free to contact Camp Encourage with questions. Ensuring that campers have as much information as feasible is of utmost importance and we are more than happy to answer as many questions as needed to clarify uncertainties, relieve

worries, and increase excitement about camp.

Please keep this information in mind:

- If your camper is interested in participating in activities such as **Yu-Gi-Oh**, **Magic the Gathering**, or **Pokeman**, (*should those activities be provided*) please be sure to have him or her bring cards.
- As stated above, if you have opted out of any activities on the Tall Oaks form, *please be sure that you have informed your camper of this* (so that it does not come as a discouraging response when discovering he or she cannot participate).

Please also share with your camper that, at all times, there will be a space for campers to participate in other preferred activities (or to simply unwind). Although we will encourage participation and encourage campers to attempt something new, we will not force a camper to participate in an activity that will cause anxiety or frustration. Thus, to meet the needs of campers in such situations we will have the following items available: a variety of sensory materials (tubs of beans, rice, etc. as well as a variety of other materials to assist with calming or alerting one's self), games, books, and a ping-pong table. It is our hope that this will further assist us in meeting each individual's needs. We're pretty accommodating and truly want to ensure that each camper feels comfortable and experiences joy. 😊

Mail

Campers enjoy getting mail at camp and we don't want anyone to get left out. Here is the information you need to know to receive mail at camp:

All letters should be sent to:
Tall Oaks Conference Center
Camp Encourage: CAMPER NAME
12778 189th Street
Linwood, Kansas 66052

All emails can be sent to:
info@campencourage.org
(Put first and last name of camper in subject line)

Due to the limited amount of time during weekend sessions, **please consider emailing** rather than sending mail. If postal mail is preferred during any camp session, please mail it far enough in advance so that it arrives before the close of camp. Mail will be distributed once each day at camp. Any mail we receive after your term will be returned to the sender. Please do not send a package with food or candy. Due to the cost of ink, emails will only be printed that do not include photos and images. Email and mail are subject to be read by Camp Encourage staff.

Celebrating Birthdays

Should a camper 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.

Camp Visits

Because we closely monitor campground visitors for safety reasons, we ask that you please not make surprise visits to the campgrounds. If you feel you need to visit, please obtain approval before by contacting Kelly Lee at 816.729.7873 or by emailing info@campencourage.org. Please also just keep in mind that being away at camp increases one's independence, which is an important component of Camp Encourage. If you would like to be a part of the magic, we welcome volunteers. An application can be found on our website.

Important Phone Numbers

During the week of camp, please feel free to call for any reason, if even to simply check in to see how your camper is doing. We are more than happy to provide support during the week, answer questions that you may have, or provide you with an update on your camper at that moment. While at camp, we can be reached as follows:

816.729.7873 (Kelly Lee, Executive Director, cellular)

913.301.3004 (Tall Oaks, within metro area)

800.617.1484 (Tall Oaks, outside metro area)
