



The Camp Hope Buddy

Camp Hope provides an opportunity for student volunteers to selflessly serve campers with joyful, dedicated care as a one-on-one Buddy. The lessons, perspectives, and friendships gained are unparalleled to any other volunteer experience.

Description:

Buddies play a vital role in the mission of Camp Hope. The Buddy's primary responsibility is to ensure their assigned camper's physical safety and emotional well-being for the entire week. A fundamental part of being a Buddy is building a friendship with their camper - this genuine connection is the essence of being a Camp Hope Buddy. It distinguishes our volunteers from the standard version of a camp counselor. A Buddy's duties begin before camp commences, with training, preparation, and communication with their camper's family. During camp, the Buddy assumes all responsibilities for the camper and is with them during awake and sleeping hours. The Buddy manages the camper's schedule throughout the week and provides support during activities in an engaged and encouraging manner. The Buddy assists with feeding and changing needs as needed, based on the camper's level of abilities. Buddies do not need to have direct prior experience with disabilities; however, they must be open to learning and taking on required responsibilities. Importantly, Buddies and campers are supported and assisted by dedicated Camp Directors, nurses, and leadership staff throughout the camp week.

Personal Qualities and Experience

- High School Junior or above
- Commitment to remain onsite for the duration of the camp session
- Emotional maturity
- Must be physically and verbally independent:
 - To support all physical needs of their camper
 - To be able to insightfully, efficiently, and succinctly communicate to other staff
- Eagerness to have fun, laugh, and play
- Compassion and a desire to serve
- Selflessness
- Openness to prayer and reflection
- Calm and wise disposition when handling behavioral concerns and daily challenges
- Flexibility
- Welcoming (towards other buddies, camper families, volunteers, entertainment providers, etc.)
- Self-confidence & humility

Buddy Duties:

Pre-Camp

- Complete application, affidavit, and agree to follow all camp policies and rules
- Complete background check, if over age 18

- Attend full Buddy training, which includes but is not limited to: disability education, first aid, medication protocol, special equipment management, camper care, and safety.
- Study and understand their camper's profile
- Communicate with camper parents and camper prior to camp

During Camp

- Follow all Universal Rules of Camp Hope.
- Welcome camper and assist in camper's orientation
- Check-in camper with each station (kitchen, nurse, other)
- Make camper feel at home, ease transition when parent(s) leave after drop-off
- Enthusiastically attend all activities with camper
- Share a bunk room with camper
- Continually be observant of camper's moods and emotions throughout the week
- Be aware of camper's physical needs, abilities and limitations, assisting when needed.
- Check in with camp nurse for camper's scheduled medication dispensing and/or if medical needs arise.
- Join camper at each meal, with complete oversight of dietary restrictions, allergies or other nutritional requirements
- Assist, as needed, all activities of daily living and hygiene for the camper including, feeding, bathing, toileting, sleeping and any other needs which arise.
- Communicate with Group Leaders if additional support is needed.
- Join in evening discussions in a supportive group setting. Buddies will have an opportunity to participate in prayer experiences from the Christian tradition and have personal time to reflect on the events, stressors, and successes of the day.
- Assist in packing camper's belongings at the end of the week. Complete check-out and engage with parents at pick-up, providing a weekly recap and overview of the camper's week.