

camp johnsonburg

online resources

Summer 2009

Dear Parents, Guardians, Campers, and Friends,

At Camp Johnsonburg, we are always looking for ways to better equip young people with the tools they need to deepen their faith, build upon their personal uniqueness, form and strengthen relationships, and meet the challenges of the future with hope and resilience.

Underlying the fun of camp is our passion for safety. To provide a rich and safe experience, our staff are screened for responsibility, trained for a week before campers arrive, and supervised twenty-four hours a day. Over our history, we also have learned that equally important to creating a safe community is our partnership with parents. To this end, we ask that you share the following observations with your camper.

Mosquitoes and other flying bugs

We encourage all campers to bring with them an insect repellent for use during the day on hikes or other extended outdoor programs. We also will have a non-deet bug repellent in each unit. We will continue to do our part here to control the mosquito population by treating areas of standing water and scheduling to have the Warren County Mosquito Commission spray the campsite weekly in the summer.

Other occasional critters in residence

As New Jersey has become more populated, larger mammals like raccoons and bears have reestablished themselves in the more remote areas of the state like the Johnsonburg area. We have seen raccoons and the occasional black bear en route to and from a garbage can or dumpster in search of food. In these cases, the animals remain well clear of campers, tents, and cabins, and their presence seems to diminish with the increased tempo of summer camp. However, if campers keep food or even substances that smell like food (e.g., soap or toothpaste) in their cabins or tents, the chance exists that the scent can summon a wild animal.

To create an extra margin of safety, we ask your help to ensure that your child **brings no food to camp and that you send them no food while they are at camp**. We will serve plenty. In those cases where we discover that a camper has food in a cabin or tent, we will keep it away from the living areas until the end of their stay.

Small but stubborn critters

Dog ticks and deer ticks have lived with us at Johnsonburg for years and have not been a problem. With the increase in Lyme disease, however, we ask you to reinforce with your camper the need to wear long sleeves and pants on hikes, and we will check each other for ticks at intervals during the day.

Sunshine

Your child will spend most of the day outdoors. To protect campers from exposure to the sun, please send you child with a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher. We stock it in each unit area, but we recommend that each child have his own supply.

Human critters

Camp Johnsonburg has always been, and we will continue to ensure that it is, a safe environment where people's humanity is reaffirmed, not denied. Our style is to encourage healthy communication among campers and between campers and staff. Still, we ask that you join with us in a few specific ways:

- By talking with your camper about the necessity of raising with his/her counselor any needs or anything the camper finds uncomfortable. Typically this is something as simple as "when will we be going by a bathroom." But not sharing these feelings can result in a more difficult initial adjustment. Our staff is trained to listen and be responsive.
- By being involved in packing your child's belongings before your leave home, and being alert to the presence of items that are inconsistent with a week of safe, summer camp fun -- things like drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, firecrackers, firearms, and knives other than pocket knives. We have not had a problem with campers bringing inappropriate items to camp, but we wanted to take an extra measure of precaution.

A word about cell phones

Cell phones are wonderful devices, but we ask that you **NOT** leave a phone with your camper. Having a cell phone readily available to call home doesn't allow campers the independence to solve problems and handle situations on their own. Encourage your child to talk with his/her counselor if they are having a problem. If the situation persists, one of our directors will be brought in to the situation, and if necessary you will be contacted at that point. We will never prevent a parent from speaking to their children, but we truly believe it's in the best interests of all involved, especially the camper, to give them the opportunity to work through the issues that arise when they are away from home

We very much look forward to having you with us for a wonderful time this summer. If you have any questions, please call us.

Sincerely,

Harry Zweckbronner
Program Director