

Summer 2008

Dear Parent/Guardian:

WELCOME

Another season of fun and friendship is about to begin at Camp Talooli! We have always taken the safety and well-being of our campers--your children--very seriously. We want to do everything in our power to keep the trust you have afforded to us by leaving your child with us but we cannot do it without your help. Below you will find a number of ways that we can work *together* to ensure that your child has a safe, fun, wholesome, and unforgettable experience with us at camp. Please read this letter carefully. It will help you to understand our policies, procedures, and some of the challenges we will all need to overcome together.

MEDICATIONS/HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Health and wellness at Camp Talooli begins before campers even arrive at camp. Each child is required to have a health form filled out and turned in at least two weeks before coming to camp for the first time. Day campers fill out the health history and shot records portion of the form, while resident campers must have the entire form, with a doctor's physical, completed. Any medication your child may need **must** be given to our Medical Director in the original prescription bottle. A doctor's note must accompany any medicine brought to camp (including over the counter meds), prescription or over the counter, explaining the dosage. The medication can only be dispensed according to the doctor's written directions.

We encourage open communication between parents and our directors so that we can serve your child the best way we know how and also so that we can work to accommodate any special circumstances or needs your child may have. Proper care and supervision of campers is our primary aim. You will be notified if a broken skin injury has occurred and a tetanus shot is recommended. We will also notify you if your child is running a fever above 101 degrees.

GRATUITIES

Camp policy prohibits monetary and expensive gifts to camp personnel.

BILLING

Remember, full payment is due 2 weeks prior to your child's arrival at camp. Should this pose a problem, please call our office immediately. If your payment has not been received at the due date, we will fill your child's spot with someone from the waiting list. In the event that your child has to leave camp at any time during the session no refund will be made. Note: Final payment receipts will only be mailed if you send a self addressed stamped envelope in with your payment.

Any cancellations must be received by the Monday prior to your child's week of camp or no refund can be made. If cancellation is received in time **AND** we can fill the spot from our waiting list, a refund of everything but the \$35.00 deposit will be made.

PERSONAL DATA

Our policy is that all personal information including personal data and records, medical information, evaluations and photographs will be kept confidential unless we have written permission from the parent/guardian for release. Camp Talooli is a full service camp serving children in Central New York without regard to race, color, creed, sex, socioeconomic status, national origin, or disability.

INTERNET AND OTHER TECHNOLOGIES

Technology is something that poses many challenges to the continued health and safety of our camp community. Please discuss the following points regarding our cell phone policy, the internet, social networking sites, and exchanging contact information with counselors with your children prior to attending camp.

CELL PHONES

As you may know Camp Talooli has a “no cell phone” policy. Aside from the fact that cell phones are expensive pieces of equipment that can get lost or stolen and that the camp environment is not kind to such items, there is a fundamental problem with campers having cell phones at camp and that is trust. When children come to camp they--and you--are making a decision to temporarily transfer their primary care from you as their parents to us as their counselors and directors. This is one of the benefits, although challenging, of camp. As children learn to trust other caring adults they grow and learn to solve some of their own challenges. Developing a sense of independence is one of the greatest benefits of camp. It is one important way your child starts to develop resilience. Contacting you by phone during their camp time means that they have not made this transition. Sending a cell phone to camp with your child also sends the message that you as the parent haven't completely come to peace with your child being away from home and in our care.

We will call you personally if your child is experiencing a challenge in their adjustment to camp. *You can help us* by talking with your child *before they leave for camp* and telling them that there is always someone they can talk to whether it be a counselor, the program staff, the camp nurse, or the directors. We're here to help and your child needs to know that!

DIGITAL CAMERAS

Another drawback of having cell phones at camp is that many of them have built-in cameras. It has happened at some camps around the country that children have secretly taken pictures of other campers or staff during changing or showering times and later uploaded those images onto the internet. To lessen the possibility of this happening we encourage you to send disposable or non-digital cameras with your children. This will also lessen the possibility of having another expensive piece of equipment damaged or lost at camp. Please help us to maintain a safe environment by explaining this to your child.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

With more and more children taking part in social networking sites on the internet it has come to our attention that this is something we need to be concerned about, all of us, as a community. Social networking sites such as Myspace, Facebook, Bebo, and many others are, on the whole, fun and positive places where children can interact with friends. But these sites also pose a fundamental danger to members of the camp community. These sites have been used for cyber bullying (sending rude, demeaning, intimidating, or vulgar emails, IMS, or posts to others), to post inappropriate information or pictures, and children can even become targets of sexual predators. Please visit our website at www.campfireusacny.org/talooli and click Links for Parents to learn more about how you and your child can work together to make their time online safe.

YOUR KIDS AND OUR STAFF AFTER CAMP

At camp we are committed to putting your child in the care of the most trustworthy, capable staff we can hire--counselors who are well suited for the task of caring for campers. We thoroughly screen and interview our staff and spend a week together in an intensive training situation. Our staff work with your children in the context of a visible, well scrutinized environment that has built-in checks and balances. Counselors are supervised by program directors, a seasoned leadership team, and the camp's directors. Their actions are also visible to other staff and campers. By hiring them to work at camp we do not recommend them as babysitters, nannies, or companions for your children outside of camp. *In general we discourage our staff from having contact with your children outside of camp since we are not there to supervise it. We hire our staff for the camp season only. We take no responsibility for their behavior off-season.* As a parent you are, of course, free to make your own choice in this matter. While we cannot keep you from allowing your child to visit with one of our staff members, in doing so you take full responsibility. We also know that many children exchange contact information (e-mail addresses, profile names, cell phone numbers) with counselors without our or your specific awareness or permission. *We recommend that you as the parent supervise your child's online activities just as you do other aspects of their life in your home, and oversee any off-season contact between our staff members and your child.*

RESIDENT CAMP SPECIFICS

ARRIVAL You should plan to *arrive* at Camp Talooli no earlier than **6:00 p.m.** and *no later* than **8:00 p.m.** Parents must provide transportation to camp. During this registration time you will be given your child's cabin assignment and have a brief interview with the camp nurse.

HEALTH FORM Campers must have a newly completed Health Form with a doctor's signature. If your child was a Talooli overnight camper last year, we can use the doctor's physical if it falls within the last two years. These forms must be on file two weeks before your child's week of camp.

WHAT TO BRING You will need to bring the following items: 6 days of clothing (there is no laundry), toothbrush, toothpaste, flashlight, extra batteries, towels, washcloth, soap, shampoo, sleeping bag, fitted twin sheet, swim suit, jacket, sweatshirt, comb, brush, extra blanket, rain gear, 2 pairs of sneakers, hat (sun/insect protection), and pillow. Please label **all** of your camper's items. **OPTIONAL:** Insect repellent, camera, stationary, books, water shoes, water bottle, T-shirt for tie-dying.

DO NOT BRING Sandals, portable radios, fishing poles, jackknives, personal sports equipment, cell phones, video games, drugs, alcohol, axes, hatchets, and/or anything that could be considered a weapon. We cannot be responsible for replacing camper's lost belongings.

MEALS The camp provides 3 nutritious meals and snacks everyday. When campers bring snacks from home they focus on eating those snacks rather than eating a well-balanced meal. Therefore, we are asking that you not send snacks with your child. Food is not allowed in the cabins because it attracts insects and rodents. The camp has snack time in the evening before going back to the cabins. We will offer a small store available Monday – Thursday evenings with additional snacks. Each snack will cost \$.50 and no camper will be allowed to spend more than \$1.00 per day. Any money the camper has to spend will be collected on Sunday evening at registration and will be held in an account for their use throughout the week.

FRIDAY Departure on Friday is at 4:30 p.m. SHARP. A late fee will be charged if you are late. Please be sure to check the lost and found before leaving camp.

PARENT Campers are NOT available by phone. However, it would be nice if your camper received a letter or postcard from you. The camp address: **Camp Talooli 520 County Route 54, Pennellville, NY 13132.** NEW: Parents can sign up with Bunk1.com to have their emails delivered to campers each day. Go to www.campfireusacny.org for more details. In the event of an emergency, you may call Talooli at 315-695-5932 or the Camp Fire Office at 315-463-8799.

CAMPER LEAVING THE SITE If your child must leave camp early or at anytime, a letter giving permission from you **MUST** be given to the Camp Director. Please include the name of the person taking the child. This person will be asked to identify him/herself before your child will be released. This procedure is intended to maintain the safety and welfare of all campers.

DAY CAMP SPECIFICS

ARRIVAL Please be at your bus stop a few minutes early as our bus operates on the published schedule. If your camper will be absent any day of the week please call the Camp Fire Office at 315-463-8799. We will notify Camp Talooli of your camper's absence.

HEALTH FORM Campers must have a completed Health Form, however, day campers do not have to have it signed by a physician unless they will need medication at camp. The immunization section must include dates.

WHAT TO BRING Your child should bring a bathing suit and towel everyday of camp. In addition, your child must wear socks, sneakers and weather appropriate clothing each day (light jacket, rain coat, etc.) If you are sending insect repellent to camp with your child it must be in roll-on, solid, wipes, or lotion form. **NO SPRAYS OR PUMPS.** The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is currently suggesting a repellent with a concentration of 30% DEET. For more information you can go to the AAP website: www.aap.org/family/wnvsept02.htm. Please label **all** of your camper's items.

DO NOT BRING Sandals, portable radios, fishing poles, jackknives, personal sports equipment, cell phones, video games, drugs, alcohol, axes, hatchets, and/or anything that could be considered a weapon. We cannot be responsible for replacing camper's lost belongings.

LUNCH Campers bring their lunch from home – a beverage is provided at camp. An all camp cookout will be on Thursday. If there is a change of day or additional cookout a separate note will come home during the week with details.

LOST & FOUND Items that are lost can be claimed at the end of each day. All items not claimed are discarded at the end of each week.

We look forward to seeing your child this summer!

Kristin Smith

Kristin Smith
Camp Director

Damara Canary

Damara Canary
Assistant Camp Director