



FRIENDLY PINES CAMP

OPEN LETTER & GUIDELINES FOR FAMILIES OF FPC COUNSELORS

DEAR FAMILIES OF OUR 2024 COUNSELORS...

It's not often, if ever, that an employer reaches out to their employees' loved ones. This sentiment derives from the old adage that our staff are legally adults, and therefore we shouldn't have much if any communication with their families.

The shift we have noticed, especially since the Pandemic, is that our staff are more connected to their parents and families now than they were even five years ago. Our staff more readily seek advice from or turn to their parents in times of struggle or hardship. Thus we know families are a crucial resource for our staff members. It is for this reason that we feel it is important to reach out to you as your FPC staffers are showing up and spending their first days at camp.

Our goal with this note is to let you know a bit more about Friendly Pines Camp, where your staffer will be spending part of their summer; and to build a relationship between you as their trusted family members and us as the senior FPC leadership. Our primary hope is that we make progress towards being set up for the most successful summer experience possible for our campers AND our staff! Although we already know many of you from previous summers, please read on, as we believe this is all important information.

We often refer to ourselves {the leadership team} as “counselors to the counselors” – it's a mindset and a mantra for us. We watch young, sometimes shy, newly-minted adults venture into what is to many, their first “real job”. A job that is vastly more complex than a server at the University Center Coffee Shop, a lifeguard at a pool, or even an internship at a local company. A summer job at FPC builds the invaluable skills of leadership: communication, time management, conflict resolution, creativity, problem-solving, empathy, critical thinking, and sound decision-making.

The experience, camaraderie, and natural beauty of our mountain home greatly outweigh the paycheck. Further, the skills gained greatly enhance our staffs' future job marketability. An article from The American Camping Association about the benefits of working at camp reports that, “business executives often note that experience as a camp counselor translates into excellent management and personnel skills.” Beyond the hard skills gained, we see so much growth in our staff when they put the campers, their co-workers, and something greater than themselves, the FPC community above their own desires and comforts. It is undeniably a life-changing experience.

Now is the part where you, as parents and family members, can help by supporting your staffers at FPC. We are humbly asking our staff's families to partner with us this summer. We're asking this because we know our staff value your guidance, advice, and reassurance. There is no doubt that life and work at FPC can be hard. We have long days, significant physical activity, tons of details to manage, live in a somewhat isolated place, and are ultimately responsible for the well-being of others. As in life, things sometimes don't go exactly like we planned, and we have to learn to be flexible, learn from our mistakes, and ultimately carry on.

Thus, when your staffer calls, texts, or emails you frustrated, exhausted, or even in tears; we ask you to listen, empathize, and offer support. We also ask you to encourage them to speak with their counselor mentor, a member of the office staff, the Well-Being Specialist, or Adam, Eldon, or myself directly. Our goal is to acknowledge challenges, support them by helping craft a plan, and ultimately keep moving forward. Overcoming their challenges is one of the many ways our staff develop grit, tenacity, and resilience. While an early departure from camp is sometimes the eventual outcome, we want to make sure it's a last resort by having thoroughly explored all other options.

We are excited that FPC will soon become, or continue to be, part of their life story. Please remember that we want to be a helpful resource for you and your staffer. When they hit the bumps in the road, encourage them to come talk with us. Lastly, if you ever have concerns, know Adam and I are just a quick phone call or email away. Thank you for supporting them this summer, and we hope to be able to thank you in person one day soon.

Yours & s'mores,

MEGAN MAY
Camp Director
megan@friendlypines.com
(928) 445-2128

SOME GUIDELINES TO KNOW & FOLLOW...

We're so excited for your child to work at Friendly Pines Camp this summer! As the Director, I would like to provide you with important information regarding your role as a parent during your child's employment with us. This resource aims to guide you on appropriate communication, contact with me as the Director, and what you can expect regarding the privacy of your child. Please review the following guidelines:

1. WORK HOURS, AVAILABILITY, & TIME OFF:

- Counselors will typically work from 7AM-9PM most days of a session. Arrival and departure days will have slightly different schedules, but for the most part, folks can assume that counselors are busy for most of every day.

- Counselors will usually have a couple hours of free time most days; typically this free time (or “R&R”) happens from 9PM-11PM. However, free time could happen at any time of day really, but for the most part, free time happens at night.
- Counselors will receive one evening off every week, where they’re released at 5PM and don’t have to come back to camp until 11PM
- At the end of each two-week session, counselors will also receive a full 24-hour day and night off.

2. COMMUNICATION WITH CAMP COUNSELORS:

- Our camp counselors play a vital role in providing a safe and engaging environment for our campers. Therefore, they will not have access to their personal phones for most of the day to ensure their full attention is dedicated to their responsibilities.
- If you need to contact your child during their working hours, please reach out to our camp office, and we will relay your message or schedule a suitable time for communication. You can call us at +1 (928) 445-2128 or email info@friendlypines.com.

3. CONTACTING CAMP & THE DIRECTOR:

- As the Director, I am here to address any concerns or questions you may have about your child's employment at camp.
- You can contact the camp office during operating hours, and our staff will be available to assist you. We encourage you to raise any inquiries or discuss any specific needs your child may have in their role as a camp counselor.

4. APPROPRIATE CONTACT & CORRESPONDANCE:

- We understand that staying connected with your child is important to you. While we encourage parental involvement, it is essential to maintain a balanced camp experience for all employees.
- Please limit non-essential communication with your child during their working hours to ensure they can focus on their duties and foster positive relationships with the campers and fellow staff members.

5. INFORMATION SHARING:

- Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of our employees is of utmost importance to us. There may be certain details or updates we are unable to share due to privacy considerations.
- We will not be able to divulge information about your child's employment, both during the summer and after the summer. If you have specific questions, you will need to speak directly with your child.
- For employment-related questions, it's always best to speak with your child directly. For general questions about camp, we're happy to speak with you.

6. MORE INFORMATION & RESOURCES:

- Visit our website: <https://friendlypines.com/>
- View our daily camp photos at the following webpage: <https://friendlypines.com/camp-photos/>
- Follow the camp's Instagram: [@friendlypinescamp](https://www.instagram.com/friendlypinescamp)
- If you'd like to send a letter or package to your child, you can use the following address:

"COUNSELOR'S NAME"

FPC Counselor

933 E Friendly Pines Rd

Prescott, AZ 86303

USA

- We have a couple of options that your staffer can use if they are in need of mental health and well-being support. We spend a good amount of time during staff training discussing the importance of good self-care and well-being, but it doesn't hurt to make parents aware of the options available should your child reach out to you if they're struggling while employed at Friendly Pines.
 - We have a service called **Dear Scout**, which is a third-party online therapy platform that the camp provides to its staff, free of charge. Staff can arrange to meet with a Dear Scout counselor virtually, and all they need to do is fill out the brief questionnaire and inform Dear Scout when they're available. It's a great starting point for folks that have no experience with therapy, as well as seasoned veterans of therapy.
 - We hire a **Well-Being Specialist** who is available for campers and staff in need of extra support. They are not a licensed therapist or social worker, but have experience in that realm and are available to listen and make suggestions for further help. They live on-site for the season and folks are welcome to schedule a meeting whenever they like.

Thank you for taking the time to review these guidelines. By following these recommendations, we can ensure a productive and fulfilling camp experience for your child in their role as a camp counselor. If you have any further questions or require additional information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We appreciate your support and look forward to a successful summer!