

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

*A Camp for Adults with Disabilities located at the Riverside
Retreat Center at 7305 CR 78 in Labelle, FL.*



Welcome and Overview

First and foremost, thank you for this generous gift of your time. Staff and volunteers alike commit to helping out at the Trailways Camp even though many of you have jobs, families, and responsibilities that already stretch you thin. This camp would not be possible without you.

The mission of Goodwill merges perfectly with the mission of the Robert V. and Benjamin G. Miller Fund in that everyone involved in this endeavor aims to create lifelong memories for adults with disabilities, break down social barriers, and provide opportunities for fun, friends, and support. You will see during your time here: this camp changes lives.

To ensure that you get the most out of your experience at Trailways Camp, please take notice of all posted signs, as these contain information crucial to the success of the camp. Also, pay close attention to the schedules posted on the walls. There is so much to do in the few days we

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have set aside for this camp, so it is imperative that everyone knows where they ought to be and how long they should be there.

With that said, I hope your experience at the camp will be fulfilling, enlightening, and most of all, fun!



First Day Jitters – Checking in on Day One

The first day at camp is usually the most stressful. Keep in mind; many of our campers have never spent a night away from home! As campers arrive on day one, our goal should be to make what might be an upsetting or difficult experience as seamless and comfortable as possible.

Campers will be dropped off by parents/caregivers, will carpool with others, arrive by Goodwill van or even may drive themselves. Everyone should go to the Lodge first, and

campers should leave their luggage against a wall or at a table while they check in. Check in entails:

- Getting a name tag
- Having a health assessment by the nurse
- Handing over any medications to the nurse

Once all campers arrive, the camp coordinator will start the events of the day, and campers will then be able to select their beds. Male campers sleep on one side, female campers sleep on the other, and signs should be posted on each door to indicate the gender separation.

First Day – cont'd

Campers will receive camp shirts and camp cups on the first day. ***Campers should NOT wear their shirts until the last day of camp***, so make sure everyone packs theirs away until the final day. Campers' names should be written in permanent marker on their cups unless labels are provided.

Staff and volunteers are welcome to take shirts only after each camper has selected their own. ***Staff/Volunteers are welcome to a camp mug, but please put your name on it*** or use the drinking cups found in the kitchen.

Parents and caregivers are free to go once the camper has settled in, turned in any medications, and they feel comfortable.



Check In/Out Procedure for Staff and Volunteers

Checking in and out is the easiest thing you will ever do at camp, and it is also the thing you'll most likely forget to do! In order for us to get an accurate idea of how many people we have working/volunteering at the camp, it's very important that everyone check in and out every time they visit the camp.

Signs will be posted to help you remember. Each day you come to the camp you should:

- Get a name tag (pay attention to tag colors)
- Sign in
- Check the schedule to see where you need to be (*for more on this, see page 3*)

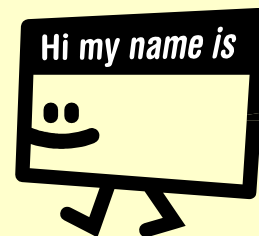
When you leave, please remember to:

- Sign out

If you are leaving and not planning to return to the campsite, it's very important that you:

- Sign out
- Turn in your name tag
- Fill out a satisfaction survey and put it in the collection box (*for more on satisfaction surveys, see page 5*)
- Goodwill staff should report their hours for the week to their supervisor

Name tags will be different colors depending on if the person is a camper, staff member, volunteer, or visitor!



Name tags should be worn at all times, by everyone!

What Should You Be Doing?

Many staff and volunteers sign up to help with specific activities. Others sign up to help wherever they are needed. The best way to figure out what you should be doing is by looking at the schedule posted on the wall and seeing what events are happening while you are at the camp.

Maybe you signed up to help with fishing, but you notice there is a party scheduled for later in the day: that might be a good chance to offer to help decorate for the party! Or perhaps you signed up to help the campers play outdoor games but you notice one or two campers who would rather stay inside and play bingo: perhaps you could volunteer to help them relax inside and enjoy their game.

Some staff/volunteers find one camper who they can tell needs a bit more attention and dedicate themselves to being their assistant throughout the day. Others float around helping with set up and

How to Help the Campers

There's a saying in the disability services world: If you've met one person with a disability...well...you've met one person with a disability! This means that no two people with a disability are alike, even if they have the same diagnosis. So even if you have a family member or friend with, say, autism, that doesn't mean any of the campers will behave anything like that one person you know with autism.

That being said, it is very difficult to prepare for how to treat the campers if you go into the camp expecting to treat people based on what type of disability they have. The best way to help the campers is to treat them like the adults they are, and respect that they have their own likes, dislikes, opinions, abilities, and way of doing things.



Remember: ask before you help!

clean up in between activities. Most of the time, the camp coordinator or volunteer coordinator can give you some ideas for where you are needed. However, it is best if you look around at the camp and at the schedule and determine where you think you'll be able to help the most, since you know your skills and strengths better than anyone!

Some campers will want a lot of help. They might not necessarily *need* any help but they might really like having someone to do things for them. Encouraging independence at every turn is very important.

On the other hand, there may be campers who really do need help who do not know how to ask for it. We've had campers who didn't want to participate in the t-shirt signing party because, little did we know, they didn't know how to sign their name. If someone refuses to participate in something or struggles to complete a task, ask them why they don't want to participate or ask if you can help them in some way. Then, it is important not to do things for the camper when you could instead teach them to do it themselves.

How to Help the Campers – cont'd

Campers may need assistance with:

- Baiting hooks
- Casting rods
- Releasing fish
- Applying sunscreen/bug spray
- Learning the rules of games
- Selecting healthy food at meal time
- Carrying food/drinks
- Assembling birdhouses
- Roasting marshmallows
- Completing arts and crafts projects
- Reading skits
- Walking across the campsite
- Walking down to the river
- Opening doors
- Filling out surveys

Most campers only need a minimal amount of

help, and usually just encouraging the camper to try to do the task themselves is more than sufficient.

Encouragement means:

- Smiling
- Showing the camper how to do the task once or twice
- Telling them you believe in them
- Telling them you will help them if they need it
- Praising them whether they succeed or not

Refrain from making the camper feel guilty if they do not want to participate in an activity.



You'll be impressed by how independent the campers may be!

Organization of the Camp Supplies

Supplies will be stored in various locations around the camp site. Similar items will be stored together as much as possible.

Outside of the Lodge near the front door, there is a closet where supplies are kept. Also on the back porch of the lodge, supplies will be stored. Also check the kitchen area in the cabinets and along the back all of the lodge.

The Program Center will have art supplies and party/talent show decorations stored in various closets and bins, all of which should be labeled.

To the best of your ability, try to return items to their rightful place once they are not being

used in order to decrease clutter. Always try to clean as you go: don't let paint dry on brushes, don't let sinks fill up with dirty dishes, and don't let the campers forget to wash out their cups every day.

On the final day, everything should be neatly packed away and prepared for loading onto a truck. Please try to put items in the correctly labeled bins as this will help us maintain our inventory. Trash can be loaded onto a golf cart and driven down to the dumpster.

Final Day and Surveys

On your last day working as a staff person or a volunteer, make sure you fill out a satisfaction survey and leave it in the designated box. This information will help us continue to improve the camps.

On the last day of camp, you'll find campers are exhausted, excited to return home, and saddened to leave their new friends. Our job is to make sure everyone leaves the camp with all of their belongings and with all of the information they might need. Campers may require help packing their luggage, gathering/carrying their arts and crafts projects, prizes, awards, and filling out their surveys.

- ***Every camper should fill out a survey*** with the help of someone who has not been their primary helper throughout the camp. The campers should be as honest as possible, so explain the questions in whatever way is needed to help them understand. You can read the questions to them and write down their answers if that is the sort of help they need.
- ***Every camper should also go home with a survey for their parent/caregiver.*** You can help by making sure each camper has the parent/caregiver survey in their luggage when they leave. If their parent/caregiver picks them up, ask them to fill out a survey before they leave.

Once the surveys are complete and the campers are waiting to leave, staff and volunteers should busy themselves with cleaning and packing away supplies. ***All bathrooms and kitchen counters should be wiped down, all trash should be emptied, and high-traffic areas should be swept and mopped or vacuumed.***

If you have any questions or need any further guidance, contact Anna Mullvain, Camp Coordinator 239-357-3623 or annamullvain@goodwillswfl.org