

Dear Applicant,

I am happy you're interested in working at Camp Dark Waters this summer. I'd like to introduce you to our program.

Some information about the camp: Camp Dark Waters is a co-ed overnight camp for 94 children aged 7-14. The 30 or so staff members are mostly American, but will also include foreign staff. In recent years, we've had staff from England, Scotland, France, New Zealand, Australia, Hungary, and Germany. As our camp brochure states, "...we believe that the days of children's summer vacation should be a time for them to play, to venture forth in learning new skills, and to grow. A friendly emphasis on physical, emotional, and spiritual growth is sought through simplicity of living... encouraging independence, social responsibility, and self-esteem." In short, it's a fun place where children are provided freedom to be themselves, to choose their activities, and to try new things.

As a counselor, you will be living and working with a group of children in a variety of activities. Counselors live in cabins with 8-12 campers (grouped by age) and a co-counselor. We are proactive in maintaining ethnic, racial, religious, and economic diversity among campers and staff. An overall camper-to-counselor ratio of 4:1 provides each child with individual attention. The typical daily schedule includes family-style meals, morning and afternoon group activities and swim periods, rest time, a cabin clean-up time, and an all-camp evening activity. Counselors work with campers on crews to set-up for meals, clean up, etc.

The camp Program Director works with counselors to plan activities based on imaginative interpretations of camper's needs. These activities might be a mix of tried-and-true activities such as conventional games of volleyball or soccer, canoeing, team challenge course, drawing, and music. Less-conventional activities such as building sandcastle cities with moats and rivers or other imaginative activities you think would be a hit with the campers are encouraged. Before each activity period, an assembly is held to explain all of the options to the campers. The children are expected to choose an activity in which to participate (sometimes, they need a little help!)

The evening activity might be a game of capture-the-flag, treasure hunt, talent show, or campfire program. The Program Director and counselors plan and lead these as well. The evening concludes with a "friendship circle" in which everyone joins hands in a circle and sings a quiet song of goodnight. Then, counselors help campers get ready for bed and read to them. "Lights out" occurs at 9 PM. After the children are settled in bed, some counselors remain "on duty" ready to respond to any need, while other counselors can have time to get a snack and socialize with other staff in the dining hall or lodge.

The Sunday schedule differs in that a Friends meeting for worship is held between 10-10:30 AM. It is an un-programmed group gathering of quiet meditation, held in a wooded dell. The Director explains the meeting for worship to the campers, and encourages those who feel they have an inspired thought to share it. The evening activity

on Sundays concludes with a program called “vespers” in which the camp engages in a program of reflection and sharing, or an activity that emphasizes group cooperation, social responsibility, etc. Vespers is also planned and led by the counselors with help from the Program Director. Here again, traditional themes as well as creative, new ones are encouraged.

Throughout the summer, there is a program of overnight outings, hikes, and canoe trips along New Jersey Streams in a wilderness region known as the Pine Barrens. These trips provide an opportunity to explore the pine woodlands and cedar wetlands, pick wild blueberries and to see many of the curiosities of the region. Counselors are encouraged to participate as trip leaders for outings with 12 or so children and another staff member.

This coming summer will mark my 20<sup>th</sup> year working in summer camps and my 9<sup>th</sup> as Director of Camp Dark Waters. I am convinced that Dark Waters is a special place for campers and staff alike. It’s been said that working at camps is the hardest, most rewarding and fun job you’ll ever have. I tend to agree.

If all of this sounds interesting to you, please read through the enclosed brochure and Personnel Policies and Procedures. Complete the application for employment and return it to me. Once I’ve received your application, I’ll call upon your references and schedule a time we can meet to talk more about the camp and your role here this summer.

Camp is celebrating its 81<sup>th</sup> anniversary this summer. It’s a truly special time to be part of the Dark Waters family. I hope you’ll be here to make it the best summer yet!

Sincerely,

Travis W. Simmons  
Director