



PARENT HANDBOOK 2011

This Parent Handbook provides specific information about what is needed before arriving at camp, general information about Gwynn Valley, and suggestions for preparing your child for the summer experience.



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MEET THE YEAR-ROUND STAFF

In 1998 Anne and Grant Bullard became the Directors and Owners of Gwynn Valley Camp. Grant has 35 years experience in the camping field and Anne taught school at both the elementary and secondary levels for 16 years and has worked in camping for 15 years. Dale Robertson, Assistant Director, manages the site, mill and farm, and has worked at camp since 1974. In 2006 Andy Savage who has spent 22 summers at Gwynn Valley joined the year round team as the Assistant Director of Staff and Program. In the office, Barbara Whitmire, Office Manager and Bookkeeper, has worked at Gwynn Valley since 1991 and Shelley Heath worked at camp for several summers before joining the year round team in 2011 as the Registrar and Co Office Manager.

TUITION DISCOUNTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Gwynn Valley Camp is proud to have a Campership Endowment which helps provide scholarships for children who would not have the opportunity to attend camp without financial assistance. Discounts and Scholarships are limited, but we make every attempt for it to be possible for many different children to benefit from the camp experience.

As a general guideline, if family income is below \$70,000, you may apply for financial aid. We are happy to send a scholarship/discount form upon request. If you have questions about the endowment or our discount / scholarship program, please contact our office.

CAMPERSHIP ENDOWMENT

If you would like to contribute money to enable children from low income families to attend camp, you may do so through our endowed scholarship program. These donations are tax-deductible and become part of a permanent endowment, the interest from which is used for Gwynn Valley Camperships. Please make checks payable to Gwynn Valley Campership Foundation and send to:

Gwynn Valley Camp
301 Gwynn Valley Trail
Brevard, NC 28712.

PHOTOS ON THE WEB FOR PARENTS, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

Each summer we post pictures on the web and provide this service through a company called eCamp. You will be able view photos taken each day at camp along with an update of what's going on, special events and any newsworthy items. You may also order photo-lab quality photos directly from e-Camp. eCamp will also offer an e-mail service through their website which you can utilize. When you log on to the pictures site you will be able to view those options. The site is password protected.

When you bring your camper for Opening Day, you will be given detailed instructions on creating an eCamp account.

Please keep in mind that we can't put every camper's picture on the web site but we will post all cabin photos. Our goal is to provide you with some insight into daily activities and life here at camp. We look forward to providing this fun and valuable service.

If you have questions about the site during the summer, it would be best to contact eCamp. We have no control here at camp on your log in and technical questions should be directed to e-Camp. You will be given their contact information on Opening Day.

VISITING CAMP BEFORE ATTENDANCE

If your child has never been to Gwynn Valley before, a visit prior to attendance can be helpful in his/her adjustment to camp. Some apprehensions can be dispelled by seeing first-hand what the cabins, dining room, showers and bathrooms look like. On opening day, your child will be coming back to a more familiar place. You are welcome to visit anytime. Please call first so we can have a tour guide available. On Sat., May 28, we will offer a **NEW CAMPER OPEN HOUSE** which includes a tour, question / answer time, and games for the campers. Please arrive at 2:00; the visit will last about 2 hours. Please call or e-mail for reservations.

TRANSPORTATION

We will send you a Transportation Form in April. Please return it to us if you are **not** driving your child to/from camp yourself or if your child is flying.

Flight arrivals and departures should be scheduled between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM to and from the Asheville Airport (AVL). If unable to schedule a flight during this time, please contact our office before booking the flight. Thanks!

If flying, **please send a copy of the eTicket** so we can arrange to meet your child at the Asheville Airport. Please use the name of "Anne Bullard" as the person responsible for meeting the flight; we will send a release with the driver to the airport. Make reservations early as Western North Carolina is a busy place in the summer. There is a ten dollar (\$10) transportation fee per family for each one-way trip to Asheville. If unable to book a flight into Asheville, the next nearest airport is Greenville, SC (GSP). There will be a \$100 round trip transportation fee at this airport. Please contact our office before booking a flight to GSP.

International Campers: If you have difficulty booking a connecting flight into Asheville, please contact our office before booking flights to any other airports.

PACKING/BAGGAGE

Trunks are fine, but not necessary at camp because the children unpack most of their belongings into "cubbies". If you need to purchase baggage for your child, we recommend a duffle bag. Airlines will accept a trunk as part of regular baggage. If your camper's baggage is not accompanying him/her to camp, please ship it by UPS two weeks in advance.

Sunday Service: As you read through the packing list you will notice "one white outfit for Sunday Service." Sundays we close our day with a non sectarian service that is God centered where we encourage camper and staff involvement. It is a tradition at Gwynn Valley to wear casual white clothes to the Sunday Service. A simple white T-shirt with shorts is appropriate. There is no Sunday Service during E session.

Tajar Ball: At the end of each session (except for C1) camp holds the Tajar Ball. You can find out about the Tajar by going to our website or asking a camper. On the next to the last night of camp, we all celebrate the Tajar's birthday by coming to the Ball dressed in costume. Some children bring their own costumes from home while others visit Gwynn Valley's costume room with their cabin group to pick out something to wear. It's always a fun affair and some of the costumes are very creative. I'm sure the Tajar has a great time. Good food, games, music, skits and entertainment are presented at the Ball. If your child wants to bring a costume, please make sure that it is child friendly and is fun. Many campers bring their costumes from past Halloweens to share with us. At Tajar Ball you can see everything from Harry Potter, a cabin full of Dalmatians, to the Ninja Turtles. Staff and campers alike have a great time at the Ball.

*Please Note: We do not hold a Tajar Ball during the C1 session but these campers will get to enjoy our 4th of July celebration!

Spending Money: There is no canteen nor regular store where campers can make purchases; therefore, there is NO NEED FOR ANY CASH to be brought to camp. If incidental needs arise (disposable camera, flashlight, batteries, lost toothbrush, etc.), these items will be purchased in town and charged to you. Gwynn Valley sweatshirts, t-shirts, and hats are available for sale on opening and closing days.

OPENING DAY

Please note the exact day your child's camp session begins. Camper arrival time is between 10:00 and 1:00.

Lunch for campers is served between 12:00-1:00. You will be able to meet your child's counselors and see the cabin on opening day. Our experience has shown that allowing the camper and counselors to unpack and make the bed gives the child a chance to begin building a rapport with his/her counselors. It also helps the camper to find his/her things again once the session is underway! You will have more time to visit camp with your child on closing day.

CLOSING DAY

Please note the exact day your child's camp session closes. We do not have a visitor's day during camp but encourage you to join us on closing day for a friendship circle in your child's cabin and a closing campfire program. Plan to arrive between 9:30 and 10:00 AM which will give your child time to show you his/her special places around camp. We feel this time together as a family brings a sense of closure for your child, and also gives you a "taste" of his/her experience. The morning closes with a campfire program highlighting the session and an optional buffet lunch. No reservations are necessary (adult \$5, children \$3, campers free). During the closing of C1, we do not have a closing campfire, nor offer lunch for our families. We ask that no gratuities be extended to the counselors nor to any member of the staff. If you would like to show appreciation, we ask that your contributions be made to the Endowment for Gwynn Valley Camperships. We will be glad to forward any donations and earmark them in honor of an individual.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays occurring while at camp are celebrated by the camp community with a personalized song and a cake for your child and his/her cabin. You may leave a present for your child on Opening Day which will be delivered on his/her birthday. A small gift such as a game, markers, bubbles, etc. for the cabin group is also a nice idea.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Gwynn Valley has a Health Care Center (HCC) with recuperation/isolation beds, examination area, secure medication storage, and housing for the nurses. A physician and two nurses live on the property each session. The physician sees campers after meals and wears a radio to be reached at other times as needed. Our Staff Training contains components to teach staff safety and injury-prevention strategies and the majority of our counselors are certified in 1st Aid and CPR.

Communication

The health-care team will call you if your child is prescribed a medication while at camp, has to spend the night in the HCC, or whenever they deem a matter "significant." Any use of medical consultants / diagnostic testing will be discussed with you prior to (if possible) and after visits. Health personnel are available on closing day for discussion of any health matters which may have occurred. Please stop by the HCC with any concerns.

Medications

All medications including vitamins, minerals, diet supplements, homeopathics, as well as prescription medications must be left with the health care team as part of the check in procedure on opening day. Medications will then be dispensed to campers by the nurse at appropriate times. In some cases, inhalers, topical medications or epi-pens may be exceptions to this rule if deemed appropriate by the camp physician. It is very important to bring prescription medications in the container in which the pharmacy dispensed them, or if your physician dispensed samples to you, he/she must also include instructions for use on the blue health form. Please do not bring common over the counter medications such as Benadryl, Advil, Tylenol, Immodium, or cough medications that you feel your child "might need". The HCC keeps these items in stock and will provide them if and when needed.

Costs

Almost all medical situations which arise while your child is at camp are handled on-site at the HCC at no additional cost to you. More advanced diagnostic testing or sub-specialty consultations, when needed, are easily accessed in the Brevard/Hendersonville/Asheville area, using your family's health insurance. Prescription medications are selected with cost awareness and will be added to your camp store bill.

ROUTINE HEALTH FORM INFORMATION

HEALTH FORMS MUST BE SENT TO CAMP BY MAY 1! The 4-page Health Form must be **COMPLETE** in order for your child to attend camp (as per ACA Standards). All information should be current, **updated no earlier than 4 months before camp attendance, and must be signed by parents annually.** Please note that the IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION IS IN YOUR PARENT SECTION, not in the physician's section. Current immunizations are required. The Health Examination segment is valid for two years from the date of the examination, and must be signed and dated by your physician.

To make sure your child's Form is at camp by **May 1**, please avoid dropping the form by the physician's office for signature with the assumption that it will be mailed to camp in a timely fashion. Health Forms are due to camp by MAY 1 so that this information can be reviewed and important questions or suggestions be resolved prior to your child's arrival. **Please be sure to make a copy of your child's Health Form before mailing it in case it doesn't arrive on time.**

Special Health Needs

Campers with special health needs should have their situation summarized in writing and sent to the camp office well in advance of summer. We may wish to set up a phone conference with you. The details of our mutual plan will be reviewed with you on opening day.

General First Aid

Cabins and activity areas have first-aid kits for on-the-spot treatments of minor abrasions, bee stings, etc. Routine preventives such as insect repellent and sun-screen are handled as personal care items and will be managed directly by the cabin counselors.

Special Dietary Needs

With our emphasis on healthy, well-balanced meals, children are able to try new or different foods in the dining room and on cook-outs. If, for medical or religious reasons, your child requires a specified diet, please communicate this prior to arriving. With advance communication, we can work with you to determine what we can accommodate, and what you need to supplement.

CABIN PLACEMENT

Children are placed in cabin groups according to their grade in school and age. Parents are encouraged to provide other suggestions regarding social and physical maturity so that a proper placement is made. Sometimes a cabin group is all one grade; other times it is a mixture of two grades, allowing for some flexibility of placement. It is ideal for most children to come to camp without any friends from home because the campers can then be individuals without someone else defining who they are. Also, they are completely free to make new friends and to learn the most from the diverse community at camp.

However, we recognize that some campers may need the security of knowing that someone will be there whom they know or want to be with such as a friend, cousin, or sibling; therefore, requests for placement with a friend are considered. We do our best to place the two together providing both families have made the request. The request must be written on the application or be received in writing before May 1. When there is a cluster of friends from the same town, the process gets complicated. In these cases we need your help to establish which campers can best be paired together. It is very important that you discuss these matters with your child and his/her friend's family, so as to avoid any potential conflict. Please communicate clearly your wishes and then allow for some flexibility, as we attempt to satisfy everyone within the confines of what is best for each child.

To ensure that your request is noted, please write it on the application which is consulted carefully in the placement process. If changes occur after you submit the application, you may write to request that your child's application be amended. Anne Bullard, Director, will make the final decision in the cabin placement process.

Whether a child is on the Hillside or Brookside section of camp depends on the grade completed in school, camp experience, and ages of campers in that session.

HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness is neither a dislike of camp nor evidence of camper maladjustment; it is normal. In fact, it is very healthy for the camper to relate back to the home setting with strong emotional feelings as s/he makes the initial adjustment to camp. The newness of the camp environment, making new friends, and the natural longing for the "old and familiar" make moments of homesickness happen for many.

Experience has taught us to expect the symptoms of homesickness to occur over the first few days at camp, often during quiet, reflective times. Body language and facial expressions often give us the clues as to who "needs to talk". Most often with a few conversations (or rather "listenings") and with the security of new friends and activities, the homesickness dissipates.

If you receive a letter relating homesickness, remember that letter writing often occurs during rest hour and the camper's thoughts naturally return to you and home during those quiet times. If you have a more dramatic child, the letter may even voice a grief reaction to separation from you. Try to bring your own separation feelings into proper perspective, then sit down and write your child an encouraging response. Ask about camp activities, counselors, campfires, skits, etc., and, above all, set a positive, encouraging tone. Express your confidence in his/her ability to cope and that camp is there to assist. If you are worried, please call the office. The Head Counselor will check on your child and return your call to talk with you and determine the best plan for helping your child to be successful.

Appropriate pre-camp preparation is the best "medicine" for homesickness. Assure your child that you will be there on closing day and that you are looking forward to seeing all of his/her favorite places at camp. Please do not tell your child you will come pick him/her up if homesick. We find that this does not set your child up to succeed. A positive family attitude, discussions of expected camp activities, and gentle encouragement that missing home is "ok" will usually suffice to give your child the tools needed to make the camp transition a valuable growth experience.

WHILE YOUR CHILD IS AT CAMP

Communication: You may telephone us anytime during camp. Leave a message and the appropriate person will return your call as soon as possible. Our goal is to partner with our parents and do everything we can to help insure a successful, happy experience for your child. However, direct phone calls to campers are discouraged. Parental phone calls may trigger homesickness or interfere with camper adjustment and scheduled activities that have already been established. The most meaningful communication with your child is letter writing, emails, or a fax.

Mail: Mail arrives and goes out daily, but can move slowly as our post office is inundated with mail because of all the camps in the area. Mail is very important to campers! Each day they hope for a note from home, so write soon and regularly; also encourage relatives to do the same. If possible, include the cabin name on the envelope; you will receive this information on opening day. If mail arrives prior to your child's session, we will hold it until the first full day of the session, or **you may leave a letter(s) in the office on opening day** to be put into the camp mail. We accept e-mails/faxes which are put in mailboxes at 1:00 for a charge of \$1 per page. **When sending an email, address it to: camper@gwynnvalley.com and put your child's full name as the subject. Do not send any attachments; we are unable to open or deliver them.** Thank you for your help in this matter.

SEND LETTERS ONLY-----NO PACKAGES

Camp has a **no package policy**. Children love to receive mail, and having a letter each day really helps their morale. Please limit your correspondence to cards and letters. Any packages which are sent will be held unopened until closing day and given back to the parent. Anything larger than a letter or greeting card is considered a package. Should you need to mail a book or if your child should forget an item and you wish to send it (shoes, clothes, etc.), **please address it to the attention of Anne Bullard, Director.** As the children are an integral part of

bringing food from farm to table at Gwynn Valley, we strongly value our philosophy of helping them maintain a healthy diet, free of "junk food". They are more likely to try fresh, wholesome foods if hungry at meal times. Candy and gum undermine our efforts and can attract critters in the cabins. Thanks for your help in this area. Remember, the best "package" of all is the gift of a camp experience.

LETTER WRITING TIPS

A cheerful, short note can provide an infusion of love from home. The younger campers enjoy the independence of being able to read their own letters. However, be aware that phrases of missing your child too much may bring a twinge of guilt that s/he has left family at home.

Please keep in mind that we have a **no package policy**, but there are creative items you may include with a letter (see list below). In our efforts to help the children learn self-sufficiency and independence, we teach them to rely on their ingenuity and creativity. The camp experience encourages living close to nature, enjoying an atmosphere free of materialism and technology, and develops a sense of responsibility to help take care of our world. These are values we attempt to maintain in the Gwynn Valley environment. Please help us with our endeavors.

Some ideas for items to include in letters:

- * a favorite comic strip
(or add your own "bubbles of conversation")
- * an original doodle from a sibling
- * a sports clipping of a favorite team, or the league standings
- * a family-generated crossword puzzle or word search
- * a photograph
- * use your imagination!!

MOUNTAINSIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

As children grow, their areas of interest begin to emerge and develop. Campers who are finishing 4th, 5th, or 6th grade have the option to attend Mountainside the following summer, a separate program for 5th, 6th, and 7th grade campers. We ask our cabin counselors who work with campers who have completed 4th –6th grade to make recommendations for the following summer based on their knowledge of our programs and their experience with your child. We will send our recommendations for the next summer in the application packet so we can reach a joint decision about which program would be best for your child. Since you know your child best, we value your knowledge and feedback in reaching decisions about future years at Gwynn Valley.

FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS

We are always open to feedback and suggestions from our campers and families and hope you will take the time to share it with us. Every child and family experiences camp in a different way, and it is helpful to our growth to hear the positive aspects of our program and the areas in which we can improve.

After your child's session, you will receive an on-line questionnaire designed to provide feedback about your child's experience at camp. We appreciate you and your child taking the time to complete the form together. Your family's input helps us continue to do the best possible job at Gwynn Valley. The survey itself is hosted by a company called Constant Contact. We checked them out thoroughly before utilizing their services to ensure there would be no repeated advertising or sharing of emails by the company. Thank you for taking time to complete the survey.