

2010 Big Sky Summer Adventure Program at a Glance

Academics: Because of the variety of outdoor activities, expeditions and the travel schedule that comprise the Big Sky Summer Adventure Programs, it is not possible for students to work on academics as a part of the curriculum.

Airline Travel: We recommend flights be scheduled in and out of Spokane, Washington. This is a 260 mile round-trip journey to drop off or retrieve someone from the airport. Therefore, any travel to or from Spokane outside of our normally scheduled arrival and departure dates and times is subject to additional transportation fees. **We strongly request that when making airline travel arrangements, departure and arrival times fall between the hours of 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM, Pacific Time.** Travel dates for the 2010 summer program are:

Pre Summer: Rolling enrollment starting May 17th

Girls Summer Wilderness Adventure Course: Arrival June 25th, Departure, August 15th

Older Boys Summer Wilderness Adventure Course #1: Arrival June 23rd Departure August 13th

Younger Summer Wilderness Adventure Course #2: Arrival June 21st Departure August 11th

Women's Empowerment: July 8th – August 1st

Personal Leadership: July 6th – July 26th

Post Summer: August 11th -- September 6th

Birthday Celebrations: Our traditions surrounding birthdays are family-oriented. We celebrate with a special dinner and dessert. Please keep in mind that during the course of our summer program, it is most likely that the birthday person's birthday falls on an expedition day. Other members of the group take part in preparing the meal. In choosing gifts to send for the celebration, we ask that you keep things moderate. Elaborate, expensive gifts are not needed and we encourage parents to make gifts creative, growth-enhancing, and supportive of your child's interests. Family members are welcome to call on birthdays (if the student is scheduled at HomeBase) and can, of course, send birthday cards.

Summer Program Facility: All program offerings operate out of our HomeBase facility which is also home for our central office and residential program. The facility consists of 80 acres, half forested and half meadow. There is a large log home where the students share many meals and is also living quarters for our residential students and the site for the business office. On the property, there is a staff office, logistical food center and outdoor gear center from which we outfit all trips and expeditions. There are Native American styles Tepees on the property where the students and staff sleep when at HomeBase between expeditions. There is an outdoor kitchen pavilion, a basketball court, a shower house, a large garden and a climbing wall.

Business Hours: We greatly appreciate parents containing their calls regarding billing or administrative needs to business hours between 9:00am- 5:00pm Mountain Time. Calls regarding your child's progress are scheduled. You will be mailing the dates and times at a later date. Please keep in mind that office personnel do not have direct contact with the students and therefore, will not be able to answer questions about student participation.

Community Service: During the course of the summer, all students take part in a community service project. Students will generally assist with highway clean-up along our designated section of highway and will also take part in trail maintenance or work project in one of the various areas in which we conduct our trips.

Consultant Updates: Most parents retain an educational consultant to assist them in locating appropriate

educational and/or therapeutic options for the upcoming school year and are using their child's participation in this program as a determining factor. If so, we will be making regular contact with these professionals as a part of the program. Our therapist or director will share observations surrounding your child's emotional work, communication skills, current issues, behaviors, social presence, group effort, and attitude.

Expeditions: We believe that the wilderness setting fosters self-confidence through personal challenges, non-competitive activities, positive group-building and personal responsibility. Therefore, our summer curriculum operates in outdoor and wilderness settings as much as possible. Students are involved in a number of outdoor expeditions which range in length from 4 to 14 days. Trip offerings might include bicycling, canoeing, river floats, backpacking, rock-climbing, rafting, and trail maintenance work.

Parent & Student Expedition: Annually, Explorations offers a week long wilderness trip for a parent and student. This is designed to be an experience where parent (or surrogate parent) have an opportunity to connect with their child, away from the distractions of every day life in nature's classroom. A forthcoming mailing will cover the specifics. Parents will need to bring their own personal outdoor gear as per a specific list. A parent's participation is contingent upon their child's behavior in the program. The expeditions are scheduled for:

Girls: July 23rd – 29th (Travel days for parents are July 23rd & 29th)

Older Boys: July 17th – 23rd (Travel days on July 17th & 23rd)

Younger Boys: July 11th through July 17th (Travel days on July 11th & July 17th)

Home Visits: Due to the nature of this short program, students do not visit home during the course of the program. Instead, we set aside two days for family conferences at the end of the program.

Mail: Written correspondence is an important part of the summer program. Students will be allowed to receive mail only from family members during the summer. We ask that you do not give the address out to friends as we believe any correspondence from those other than family provides significant interruption with your child's progress in the program. Staff will be there when any mail is opened and available to discuss the contents of the letter. **Please do not send any money, credit cards, airline tickets, payments, or important information in your child's personal mail.** Please send any administrative information directly to the office.

We encourage your child to write letters home during the summer and use these letters as therapeutic tools. All students' outgoing mail will be monitored. We ask the students to leave their mail unsealed and reserve the option of reviewing it before it is mailed. If a student is unwilling to write an appropriate letter home, be advised that the letter will not be sent if it contains abusive or manipulative language. If you receive a letter that appears to have been mailed from anywhere other than our office, please phone and notify us immediately.

Medications: It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the correct quantity of each medication is sent at the onset of the program for the entire summer. Unnecessary and potentially dangerous side effects can occur if a student runs out of medication. Program duration is 52 days. Be advised, that we are obligated to dispense medications as indicated on the bottle. If a dosage change occurs near the onset of the program, we require a physician's written order to dispense accordingly.

Music: Students are not allowed to have personal music and/or I-pods, walkmans or discmans while in the summer program. If a student arrives with any of the above, the items will be confiscated and put into storage or sent home.

Parent Visits: At the end of every summer program we have scheduled time for a family and parents conferences:

Girls: August 15th, 2010
Younger Boys Group: August 11th, 2010
Older Boys Group: August 13th, 2010

We invite parents to travel to Explorations and experience first-hand some of the activities your child participated in during the summer and meet together in a family group. This group time will be facilitated by one of our therapists or counselors and will highlight the progress made during the summer as well as provide a safe and structured environment for family members to share with one another their feelings. If recommended by our program coordinators, we encourage your visit and will support this time spent together as a family. Keep in mind that your visit is contingent upon your child's progress. Final recommendations will be made regarding this visit during the final phone call during the summer. We suggest that if you choose to purchase airline tickets prior to the recommendation, you should purchase changeable or refundable tickets in the event that your child sabotages the visit through his/her behavior.

Phone Calls: There will be scheduled phone calls with the parents during the course of the summer. We use these calls and letters as therapeutic tools and therefore request that parents adhere to the guidelines set forth. **Calls** will be collect from the student to the parent's home phone number unless otherwise specified. For the first 10-15 minutes, a member of our staff will update you about your child's progress. Staff will comment on your child's emotional work, communication skills, current issues, behaviors, social presence, group effort and attitude. Afterwards, your child will speak with you for approximately 20 minutes. A staff member will be in the room with your child as she/he speaks to monitor the content of the conversation. Abusive and/or manipulative language will not be allowed and the call will be terminated if a student begins dialogue along those lines. If that occurs, our staff will hang up the telephone, spend time speaking with the student, and will phone you back to update you. Please direct your questions and concerns appropriately during these calls. We suggest that newsy information be shared in letters to make the best use of this phone call time.

Keep in mind also that we will be trying to facilitate a number of parent calls and it is difficult to schedule a precise time for phone calls. Generally speaking, we begin in the afternoon with East Coast and Midwest calls being first and work into the evening with West Coast calls. Calls will generally not be scheduled after 9:00 PM Mountain Time. **If for any reason, you receive a phone call from your child that is not scheduled, please notify us immediately.**

Letter's: We will ask parents to write 4 specific letters to their child. The first being what we refer to as an impact letter. (See Impact Letter instructions for more information). The second will be a focus letter and the third will depend on the dynamics of your son/daughter. The last letter is what we refer to as a direction letter. (See Direction Letter instructions for more information).

Packages: We expressly ask that you do not send any goodie packages during the summer program. Packages are only appropriate if it is your child's birthday or if we request that you send a specific gear, personal or medical item.

Pocket Money: Please do not send any money to your child. Any money your child brings with him/her at the beginning of the program will be stored away and given back upon his/her departure. Parents will be billed additionally should your child need anything throughout the course of the summer that is not covered through tuition.

Program Duration: Because of the short nature of the summer program, we request that students arrive and depart on the scheduled dates and times to minimize disruption with the group. Any arrival or departure date different than those posted must be cleared and agreed upon by the Program Director prior to admission into the program. Be advised, additional transportation and/or individual care fees may apply. Students entering later or leaving early will not be credited tuition for those days.

Student Search: To maintain a safe environment, we reserve the right to search a student's belongings at any time during the duration of the program.

Wilderness Intervention: Occasionally, a student enrolled in the summer program will become disruptive to the point of interrupting other students' experience or will engage in behaviors that undermine the safety of himself/herself or the group at large. In these instances, that student will be removed from the summer program as early as possible and it may be recommended that the student be enrolled on a wilderness intervention. This intervention may take on various formats, but the student could be placed in a 1:1 situation with a staff person or enrolled in a separate program offering, the Wilderness Assessment Course. The Wilderness Assessment Course is 26 days in length and is solely a backpacking experience. Parents will be notified as early as possible if their child is not appropriately responding to the summer curriculum and if a change needs to be made that is in the student's best interest.