



# CAMP TALAHI

*Retreat & Nature Center*

CTRNC  
c/o St. Paul UCC  
26550 Cherry Hill Rd  
Dearborn Heights, MI 48127  
Camptalahi.org~ info@camptalahi.org

Hi there future Deans!

Thank you for your interest in leading a summer camp program at Camp Talahi! The Camp Talahi Retreat and Nature Center is excited to develop a closer relationship between Deans, Counselors, Site Staff, Chaplains and CTRNC Board members. Together, we can make this summer truly memorable.

What's in this kit and why do I need it?

Well, I'm glad you asked. This kit is meant to foster a greater cohesive feel across all programs at Camp Talahi. While each camp will be different, we hope that by increasing communication now, (before the campers arrive) we will be better able to reflect the shared beliefs of the Camp Talahi community and be better prepared for another jam packed summer!

This kit will provide you with important information about the expectations of a camp Dean, the Camp Talahi curriculum and summer theme, information about your budget and planning a schedule of activities.

Camp Deans work under the supervision of the Camp Executive (Ashley Finkbeiner) and the Summer Program Director. The Camp Executive will approve all camp schedules and activities no later than June 1 and the Summer Program Director will be on site to ensure a safe and successful camp session.



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## Camp Talahi Culture and Traditions

Camp Talahi is a long and proud history of being an open and welcoming place for all of our campers. We work hard to create an environment where campers can leave behind the stresses of home and find a place of where they are accepted and celebrated.

### Challenge by Choice

The CTRNC has adopted the policy of Challenge By Choice, this means that we do not force children to participate in any activity but rather use positive encouragement to persuade campers to try new activities. There should never be a punishment for a camper choosing not to participate in an activity, the camper has the right to sit out and that should be respected by his or her counselors, CIT's and fellow campers. If a camper should choose to not participate in a planned activity he or she should be given one of the following options:

- cheering on his or her cabin mates while they participate (example: not wanting to get in the lake during water olympics);
- simply sitting out that activity (example: scared of the rope swing on the adventure course);
- joining another group for the activity in question (not wanting to go horseback riding).

If a camper repeatedly chooses not to participate in activities it is time to have a larger discussion. In a quiet period, enlist the camper, his or her counselor and the program director to have a meeting to discuss how you can all work together to be sure that the camper is having the best time he or she can have at camp. There may be an underlying reason why that camper hasn't felt comfortable enough to participate (previous bad experience, homesick, bullied, etc).

## Camp Talahi Traditions

### Mail Call

As a dean you can choose when you hold mail call, but it should be done daily. Typically mail call is done during dinner but if there is a lot of mail, it can slow the evening schedule down. An alternative time might after lunch; thus the campers that get thrown in the lake will already be heading up to the dorms for FOB.

-3 letters in a single day means that the camper must sing a short silly song in front of the camp. To save time this should be done as a group and at least one adult should participate.

-5 letters or a package in a single day means that the camper will get thrown into the lake by the lifeguards into the appropriate section. If the camper truly does not want to be thrown in; he or she may nominate a CIT or counselor to be thrown in his or her place.

-Campers that receive food in a package will be asked to store it in the kitchen. They can have access during meals, snack, or camp store.



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-Deans have the option of making a Talahi Postal office (allowing campers to send letters to one another) or requiring mail to go through the USPS. Beware- a Talahi Post office might mean such a large amount of mail that everyone will get thrown in the lake!

## Closing Campfire

On the final night of each week long camp session, it is a Talahi tradition to hold a closing campfire in Fire Valley. Below are the basics for the ceremony and they should be included; however individual camps should feel free to add elements as they see fit. This can often be an emotional time for campers, and the closing campfire should be a more solemn/sentimental activity.

On the way to the fire, each camper should be asked to find a small stick, in turn each camper will toss his or her stick into the fire. They have the opportunity to address the camp at that time if they choose. After everyone has thrown in their stick, candles will be passed around and the camp will sing Pass It On as the candles are lit. The camp will then travel to the beach where they will plant their candles in the sand and say goodnight to the lake.

## Cabin Group Chats

Each day, 15 to 30 minutes needs to be set aside for cabin group chats. This is a time for counselors and CIT's to check in with each of their campers, foster a stronger camper to counselor relationship, stronger camper to camper relationships, make sure that each is enjoying their time at camp, learn what the campers are looking forward to etc. Ideal times for these chats might be right before a meal (instead of the traditional singing); during evening snack, right before bed, directly after FOB.



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## Summer Theme

The curriculum at Camp Talahi rotates through a three (3) year cycle, each year focusing on one of the following: your relationship with God; your relationship with your community; and finally your relationship with the world. In addition, the CTRNC selects a yearly theme to serve as a context for that years curriculum.

As most of our camps range in age three years, each time a camper “graduates” to a new camp it will be under the same cycle. (Ex. a camper that begins Jr. camp during a “relationship with God” year will also begin Adventure camp during a “relationship with God” year.)

### **Summer Theme: A Call in the Wilderness!**

2015 is a “you and your relationship with God” year, and we will work our campers to discuss the following ideas:

- That wild/nature can be a place to retreat to;
  - Mark 1:35 Even Jesus retreated to nature and solitude to pray.
  - Jesus in the desert.
- Hearing a call from God;
  - 1 Samuel 3:1-10
  - Isaiah 30:18-21
- The many different ways that call can take shape.
  - 1 Kings 19:11-13
  - Matthew 17:5
  - John 16: 12-1
  - Romans 10:8-10

Overall, the Vesper services should show a progression; starting with the ideas of retreating to the wild to better hear a call from God, what a God might sound like to different people and situations, to actively listening for a call or God in their everyday life.



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## Sample Schedule

What follows is a typical day at many summer camps. Really, the only things you must include are the 3 meals (at fairly typical times), FOB (Flat on Bunk- a quiet/resting time) Vespers, and a closing camp fire on Thursday night. (to take place after that evening's main activity)

Although there might be a riot if you forget swim time!

8:30 am Breakfast/Morning Announcements  
9:30 am Cabin Clean Up/ Dress for Morning Rotations  
10:00 am Morning Watch  
10:30 am Morning Rotation 1 (leave at 11:20)  
11:30 am Morning Rotation 2 (leave at 12:20)  
12:30 pm Lunch  
1:30 pm FOB  
2:30 pm Waterfront  
3:30 pm Camp Store/Change for Campers Choice  
4:00 pm Camper Choice  
5:30 pm Dinner  
6:30 pm Vespers  
7:00 pm Evening Activity  
8:15 pm Snack  
8:30 pm to the Dorms!

Please keep in mind older children will go to the dorms later (10pm)

In planning activities keep in mind the talented people you already know. Perhaps you have a friend that is skilled in karate who might want to teach a session, or friend who is a skilled/talented artist, or a yoga instructor...

### Morning Watch

is a short religious service lead by the chaplain. It often introduces religious aspects, (i.e. scripture, idea, theme etc.) that the vespers service will focus on later that day.

### Morning Rotations

typically include things like arts and crafts, canoeing, hiking, vespers planning and are done in cabin groups (8-10 campers) or family groups (16-20 campers) depending on number of campers total.

### Camper's Choice

This period gives campers a chance to customize their camp experience, and the programs offered are a bit more focused. For example a drama program in the morning might consist largely of improv games, but the afternoon session might consist of learning script.



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## Evening Activity

These programs are generally camp wide activities. Examples include: dances, carnivals, talent shows, camp fires, etc. This is part of planning a camp where you get to be your most creative! We encourage you to think beyond the suggestions given here.

## Hints and Reminders!

- Remember to build time into you schedule for campers to get from one place to another, but not so much time that they are waiting for the next activity to start.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that each activity is ready to go at its appointed time, thus much of your day will be spent preparing and setting up for upcoming activities.
- Remember Mother Nature doesn't always read the camp schedule when she plans her rainstorms- have a (indoor) back up plan just in case!
- Be flexible- sometime your best laid plans just don't work or they are just not that fun. Take a cue from your campers, if they are clamoring for Capture the Flag add it to the schedule.

## Radom Ideas!

Throughout the year, the CTRNC programming subcommittee finds camp inspiration everywhere! Below are some ideas that you may or may not want to incorporate into you camp session. Most ideas are labeled with a suggested camp or age group. If you would like more explanation about a particular idea please contact Ashley at 810 844 1499.

- drumming on paint (basically you put some paint on an upturned bucket and drum and get paint everywhere!) MADD
- React and Act- improv game where everyone submits different situations to react to (meeting a famous person). Each person then draws a situation out of a hat and everyone else guesses what they drew. MADD
- Giant Wizard Elves a rock paper scissors tag like game. divide kids into 2 teams. At the start of each round everyone will line up at the center line and act out one of the characters. Whoever loses each match up runs away from the winner. Winners try to tag losers to bring them back to their side of the game. ANY
- Sing song Ping Pong just like the scene in Pitch Perfect, use only camp songs to level the field. (MADD) Good instructions for an alternative version <http://campleadership.org/sing-down-505>
- <http://campleadership.org/butt-spelling> we will use heads or elbows.
- Spelling with musical notes- MADD [http://colorinmypiano.com/2012/05/24/spell-a-keyboard-game/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=spell-a-keyboard-game](http://colorinmypiano.com/2012/05/24/spell-a-keyboard-game/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=spell-a-keyboard-game)
- Pen Partners- pair kids and have them sit back to back. One kid gets paper and a pen and the other gets a bunch of objects. The one with the objects must describe them to the drawer. (MADD)
- Outdoor bible scavenger hunt <http://rachelwojo.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Bible-Verse-Scavenger-Hunt.pdf>



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- Family Feud links to questions: [http://lets-get-together.com/2014/02/22/family-friendly-family-feud/#\\_a5y\\_p=2752037](http://lets-get-together.com/2014/02/22/family-friendly-family-feud/#_a5y_p=2752037)
- Bow and arrow making (it looks time consuming)  
<http://www.ikatbag.com/2012/09/archery-party-bows.html>
- Glow in the dark volleyball (cut open glow sticks and inject the liquid into a cheap plastic ball) could also play soccer and other ball related games SR HIGH maybe GAS
- Amazing Race! a scavenger hunt with challenges along the way. ANY pair with some of these ideas for the challenges  
<http://goforwardwithfaith.blogspot.com/2011/04/around-world-in-80-minutes.html>
- Lifesize pac man (tape board on lodge floor use, have staff be the ghosts) might not be entertaining enough for a large group.
- Jesus mad gab  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0yHmhViu349UzFGYkY5WG1OVjQ/edit>
- Pop corn olympics to pair with movie night <http://oneshetwoshe.com/2013/03/the-popcorn-olympics-fun-activity-for-kids-she-veronica.html>
- 3 ball GAS, ADVENTURE or SR. HIGH <http://stumingames.com/2013/04/17/3-ball-stumin-teamgames/>
- Freeze frame ANY <http://stumingames.com/2013/01/08/tuesdays-game-of-the-week-freeze-frame-stumin-youthmin-games/>
- Battleship on volleyball court ANY
- Color powder could use for capture the flag, battleship, tag etc. ANY how to: <http://www.millyandtilly.com/2013/03/diy-color-powders.html>
- Scatterball <http://www.ministry2youth.com/youth-group-game-scatterball/>
- GaGa Ball this is super popular at camping conferences, we could make a pit out of tables. <http://www.gagaballpits.com/rules.html>
- Slip and slide bowling (the campers are the ball)
- WOLF a counselor hides and the campers look for him/her. Campers can howl and the wolf must howl back (but not more than once every five minutes). MINI





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## Sample Budget

This is the money section!

In planning the program budget you do not need to worry about the costs associated with feeding, housing or supervising campers. This budget is to focus on the fun stuff- like exactly how many pipe cleaners your campers will need to build an exact replica of the Lodge and how much that will cost.

Most of this budget will likely go to your evening activities and craft supplies. Your budget is set at **\$100.00 to 200.00**, if you have an amazing idea that doesn't quite fit into that limit, please contact the CTRNC and we will see if there is way to make your idea work.

## Arts and Crafts

While camp has a limited amount of some basic supplies, it is a good idea to make a complete list of *everything* each craft will need. We will supply the items but will need to know what and how many you will need of each item.

Say you want each camper to be able to tie dye a bandanna. Your list of needed supplies would look like this:

- Buckets (to hold dye)
- Dye
- Rubber Bands
- Bandanna's (60- one for each camper)
- Line (to dry bandannas)

## Evening Activities

Some activities cost very little (camp fires, dances) some cost a bit more (once we had inflatable sumo wrestling and a live band). So get creative and don't be scared to ask for a discount or favors.

Examples:

Animal Shows (Howell Nature Center)

Magicians

Improv Groups



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## Writing a Deans Letter

A Dean's Letter will be sent to campers a few weeks prior to the camping session. This letter should act as a bit of an introduction for you and your camp. The letter doesn't have to be long, but it lets parents and campers know that you have been preparing for their special week. After you write your letter, you will send it to Ashley at [info@camptalahi.org](mailto:info@camptalahi.org) and she will pass it on to the campers with the addition of basic information we provide to all campers (pick up and drop off times, basic packing list, etc)

Things to Include:

- a brief introduction of who you are and why you are excited for your upcoming camp. (Also introduce your chaplain and counselors if possible)
- any special items campers should bring (ex. white -shirt for tie-dye, fancy clothes for a formal dinner, old clothes they don't mind staining for super sloppy double dare).

## Cabin Groups

Depending on the number of campers at your camp session, you will need to divide the campers into cabin groups of 8 or 10 campers. Each cabin group will be lead by one counselor and one CIT (Counselor in Training).

Campers have the option of requesting **one** cabin mate, we do our best to honor such requests.



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## Question and Answer Time!

Please return your answers to these questions along with a list of references, resume and a tentative camp schedule to [info@camptalahi.org](mailto:info@camptalahi.org). Applications received by March 1 will be given priority.

What Camp are you interested in Deaning and why? (Your choices are Mini Camp; Family Camp 1, 2; Jr. Camp, Adventure Camp, Wilderness Adventure Camp; MADD Camp, Senior High Camp, and Young Adult Camp)

Do you have a chaplain in mind? If not, do you have specific expectations from a chaplain that will help us match you with one?

What will you do promote your sessions of camp to potential campers and volunteer counselors?

Please provide:

- a list of 3 references,
- resume
- a tentative schedule/activity list.

We understand that you may want to change your schedule, or what crafts you make but by providing this list early on in the process it gives the CTRNC time to gather supplies at greater discounts, buy in bulk, and help troubleshoot any potential pitfalls.