Guided Discoveries, Inc.

Position: Counselor – Catalina Sea Camp

Location: CIMI @ Toyon Bay, Catalina Island, CA

Work Year: Summer

Responsible to: Camp Director/Assistant Camp Director/Head Counselor

Minimum Qualifications:

1. Must have completed one full year of college.
2. Must be at least two years older than the oldest camper age group (oldest camper=17 years old).
3. Past experience working with youth as a camp counselor, recreation leader or other similar experience.
4. Must have strong communication and human relation skills.
5. Certification in lifeguard training, first aid and CPR preferred (not required).
6. Able to accept supervision and guidance and assist in activities where needed.
7. Desire to live and work in remote camp community.
8. Desire to work with children and ability to supervise them in related activities.
9. Good character, integrity, flexibility and adaptability.
10. Enthusiasm, sense of humor, patience and self-control.
11. Must be able to successfully perform the essential functions of this position.

General Responsibility:

The counselor is responsible for the needs of the campers and to assist in the supervision and facilitating of programs, camp rules and regulations.

Specific Responsibilities (Examples of Duties):

1. Learn the names and likes/dislikes of your campers. Be knowledgeable about the needs of campers including special diets, eating habits, etc.
2. Assure the cleanliness of dorms and areas daily.
3. Counsel campers when necessary.
4. Create a cohesive bond within camper group.
5. Supervise and participate in recreation programs, keeping control of the group.
6. Adhere to safety rules and company policies and procedures for the well-being of the campers and staff.
7. Assist groups with programs. This may include lifeguarding, conducting hikes or other recreational activities during all recreational periods.
8. Assist with meal supervision of food services, including set up and clean up. Sit with the campers during meals.
9. Assist with group arrival and departure procedures as assigned.
10. Be able to respond to emergency situations when necessary.
11. Assist with other departments when available.
12. Other duties as assigned by Camp Director, Assistant Camp Director or Head Counselor

**Essential Functions:**

1. Must be able to effectively work with the campers, counselors, supervisors and other staff.
2. Ability to communicate any problems with staff or campers to Camp Director, Assistant Camp Director, or Head Counselor.
3. Ability to assist campers and staff in the transition of camp life.
4. Good physical condition with mobility, visual and auditory skills to maintain control of 8-10 campers in a variety of environments (in the dorms, on hikes, in learning sessions, in the water, etc).
5. Ability to lift, carry and move heavy objects when necessary.
6. Good communication and organization skills are necessary to ensure a good experience for the staff and campers.
7. Ability to properly respond to emergency situations and enforce appropriate safety rules.

**Benefits:**

1. Housing
2. Full meals at the camp dining hall when the kitchen is in operation.
3. Workers compensation insurance and State disability insurance.
4. Ability to participate in camp programs.
5. Opportunity to live and work in a beautiful outdoor environment.
Would I Make a Good Counselor?

**Why are we showing this to you?**

We want you to be happy  
We want you to be successful

Who wouldn’t want to spend 10 weeks on picturesque Catalina Island? Well, unfortunately, being a summer camp counselor is not for everyone. There is an immense amount of responsibilities and tremendous amount of expectations placed on your shoulders. Being a counselor is both physically and mentally draining. Please thoroughly read these forms to see if you would be a valuable member of our Counseling team.

A Sea Camp Counselor needs to be able to put their needs behind the children’s and camps for the whole summer – 10 weeks!  
Great Counselors enjoy that kids are EVERYWHERE.

You will eat with kids, share housing with kids, shower with kids (separate stalls), teach kids...there is almost no escape. They will be so close to you that you will breathe their breath. That should be something that excites you, and not something that aggravates you. If personal time is something you need everyday, you are not going to be happy here.

♦ **Beach example**

You will be on the beach for 4 hours at least once a week a couple times during the summer. On beach days, you will need to be present with the kids, move around, make kids comfortable and play with the campers. While on the beach, sitting by yourself, sleeping, talking to the other staff, reading, listening to headphones, and anything else that is not interacting with the campers is not okay.

♦ **Relationships at camp**

If you find yourself with someone during the summer, it is difficult to find time for each other, the community, and the campers. There are more needs than can be satisfied, and someone usually gets hurt. You must agree to spend no more time with your new love (except on your day off or discrete time off) than you would with 30 other people at camp. Your character must stand up to the test. Campers always come first naturally.

**Sea Camp requires flexible people happily ready to chip in to do anything.**

You may find yourself doing, or even teaching, an activity that you never dreamed you’d do. You may find yourself on an overnight camping trip sleeping on a plastic tarp being woken up by a herd of buffalo, performing on stage in front of 250 people dressed as a roll of singing toilet paper or being woken up at 2 AM by a 9 year old camper who vomited in his sleeping bag. Take the “we don’t exactly know what it is, but you should come prepared to do it” clause seriously and with reflection. Whatever it is, you need to approach
it with, “Alright, let’s go get it done and have fun!” If you fake it, you won’t be happy. This is a rare, but vital, quality to possess. If you don’t have it, you will find your happiness severely challenged.

**Children and camp can be stressful – you Need to be able to deal.**

All of the following have happened in the last 3 summers. These are not typical or even common, but they did happen here. The vast majority of kids are just fine.
- Camper urinated on another campers pillow.
- Camper said she was the victim of physical abuse at home.
- Social cruelty – push kids out of group, teasing, and being verbally and non-verbally hostile.
- Teens tried to sneak off together to make out.
- Camper with learning disabilities, developmentally delayed.
- Camper was homesick and crying for 7 days despite everyone’s best efforts.
- A camper stole things from other campers in the cabin.
- Camper defecated on himself during a hike.
- Camper huffed aerosol deodorant by spraying it into a pillowcase.
- Camper brought contraband to camp; i.e. drugs & alcohol.

**Community is appreciated, but not loved.**

You’ll experience a small, tight community, which is a very rare experience in today’s world. The joys (shared values and goals, mutual influence, people belong, home) and troubles (rumor mills, personality issues, we’re stuck with each other) that go along with that will be yours to treasure and endure.

Most people would like to think that they love strong, tight communities, but often the feeling is one of appreciation not love. Just a few of the realities of community are:
- On days off, everyone usually does things together, or in small groups. No one is left out – a community ethos. Sometimes this requires great organization, compromise, and planning, which must arise from the staff.
- When the staff is spread thin due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, the community needs more than your already heroic contribution.
- Undoubtedly, you will find people you appreciate and appreciate less, but you must be loving to both. Time must be spent with the whole group, and not a sub-group. That is a powerful human tendency to resist, but the health community requires it. For the non-community minded, this is torture. Yes, it will torture you.
- The Quads & Dogwood (staff lounge) are the main shared spaces. It is as filthy or clean as everyone makes it. It is nice for it to be clean, and that requires constant diligent effort on everyone’s part. When you see a mess you didn’t create, clean it anyway.
- There are 3 washer and driers (free) for everyone. That means that the community must work on this task together. When clothes are wet and need to be transferred to the drier, the next person who wants to wash does it. If you want the drier and clothes are in it, you fold the clothes, which are not yours, and then put your clothes in.
Emotional support is everyone’s responsibility. When this is not done, the community suffers.

In day-to-day camp life, when you see that other people need a hand, you are the person to help them, because you noticed. We all do many jobs, and we help each other out.

**Characteristics of staff who work out (Generally Speaking)**

- Have lived away from home before.
- Have worked with children a lot.
- Fighting grudges, angry words, talking behind other people’s backs, gossip...all not your style
- People describe you as someone who is warm, a people person.
- You are upbeat. You brighten people’s day. You find the humor, even when it is hard to find, and you laugh at yourself.
- You are inclined toward the service of others, and you have examples to back up your intentions.
- Wake up everyday with the thought “What can I do today to make the campers feel special?”
- Go to sleep thinking “What can I do tomorrow to make the campers feel even more special?”
- Need to be ready to covered in sand, dirt, thrown in the ocean, covered from head-to-toe in paint and sing loudly and by yourself – even if you sing really poorly.
- Instead of children sapping your energy, they feed it. The more time you are with kids, the happier and more energetic you feel. They are always excited to devote their time to children; it’s why they are at camp.
- Energy level is proven working 16-18 hour days, for six days in a row, for 10+ weeks. Sprinters crash and burn at camp, and find themselves exhausted for the rest of camp, and unhappy. You can be happy running a marathon.

**Reflect on these writings. You want to live, work and play in a place where you will be happy and successful.**
FAQs For Cabin Counselor Applicants

1. Do I have to be Lifeguard, First Aid or CPR certified to be a cabin counselor?
No, it is not a necessity. A lifeguard certification, first aid and CPR are great tools to have in your back pocket, but as a counselor, it is not necessary. All of our instructors are lifeguards, first aid and CPR certified.

2. Do staff have access to the internet?
The answer is yes but our bandwidth is EXTREMELY LIMITED! We ask that staff use the internet for email and very basic usage. Streaming and downloading is not available on our system.

3. Will my cell phone work in camp?
No. Toyon Bay does not have cell service. Emergency calls can be directed to the camp office.

4. How isolated is the camp?
Our campus is very isolated, but there is a small resort town called Avalon located on the island. In Avalon there are grocery and drug stores where essentials can be purchased. Also, counselors will go to Long Beach each week during the first 4 weeks of camp.

5. Is there a training week?
Yes, training week occurs prior to the campers’ arrival in June. It is approximately 6 days long. Training week consists of camp setup, learning the ins and outs of children age 8 to 17, learning the daily Sea Camp routine, and bonding with other staff members.

6. Is there a dress code?
Yes and No. We do not require that you wear a uniform however we do ask that you dress modestly and appropriately. In regards to swimwear, women are to wear full coverage bottoms and no speedos for men. We ask that staff not wear low-rise pants or crop top/midriff baring shirts. Also, please ensure that you are not showing butt cleavage. We also ask that you not wear any clothing advertising an alcoholic beverage, a bar, tobacco, drug usage, culturally or religiously insensitive references, or any profane slogan.

7. Can I have extended time off due to other commitments during the summer?
No. You will be directly in charge of a group of children. Your presence is paramount and imperative to the success of camp as a whole.

8. My school year ends after camp has started, can I still be a counselor?
No. Your presence is required at training week and subsequent weeks while campers are in camp. Typically University of California, University of Oregon and Oregon State are not eligible for employment at Catalina Sea Camp due to their schedule. Please look at your university’s academic calendar to see when the year ends before applying.

9. What do you look for in potential staff?
We ask that counselor applicants have some professional experience working with children ages 8 to 17. We are also looking for personality. We want to work with passionate, outgoing, silly and weird people who are motivated to work with children in the outdoors.