



Camper Handbook

About This Handbook

The purpose of this Camper Handbook is to help campers, including their families and caregivers, prepare for and understand what to expect at Camp Promise this summer.

We encourage campers (and their families and caregivers, as needed) to thoroughly read this information, which will explain the type of activities and care they can expect to receive from our staff, and what campers can do to help ensure they have a magical and memorable experience at camp.

Any questions or concerns related to the content of this handbook should be brought to the attention of our Camp Directors.



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About Camp Promise

Mission

The mission of Camp Promise is to provide a barrier-free, weeklong overnight camp for kids, teens, and adults with muscular dystrophy or select neuromuscular diseases—regardless of age, capability, or ability to pay. We are committed to providing Camp Promise in a professional, safe, and respectful environment with a leadership team, trained volunteers, and licensed medical staff to support the needs of each and every camper.

Vision

We seek to:

- Create a welcoming community where campers learn from and support each other, fostering new and lasting friendships that extend beyond camp.
- Provide camper-focused programming that builds independence, confidence, and life skills through traditional camp activities and by bringing campers new experiences through adaptation, technology, creativity, and special guests.

Values

Professionalism. We provide a professional camp experience. We are committed to delivering a professional camp program, complete with well-trained staff and clean, accessible facilities that meet the highest of standards. We expect all staff and campers to exhibit professionalism at all times.

Integrity. We conduct all camp business ethically and with a commitment to moral integrity. We expect our entire camp community to hold high moral and ethical standards.

Respect. We respect one another and value the diversity, uniqueness and dignity of each individual within our camp community.

Independence. We promote and foster independence. We believe in greater independence for all people with disabilities, and continually seek to create opportunities that will enhance the independence of our campers.

Growth. We encourage campers and staff to grow personally and professionally. We are in the business of "people development" and we empower everyone to reach their full potential, to stretch for things they never thought possible by taking risks and expanding their comfort zones.

Guiding Principles

Safety comes first. We take safety very seriously and expect everyone on our team to do so as well. The physical, emotional, social, and medical safety of our entire camp community is of utmost priority and informs all of our plans, actions and decisions.

Camp is a launchpad. We believe camp is a stepping stone on our campers' journeys to success. Our programs and activities are intentionally designed to deliver social skills, as well as hard and soft skills that will set them up for future success.

Campers come first. Everything at camp is camper-oriented. From serving campers first at mealtimes to letting them be first in line at activities, we are intentional about putting our campers' needs first at all times.

Teamwork. We are better together. We work, learn, and grow as a team. We support each other and think of our team before ourselves. We function in an efficient, ethical and professional manner using our diverse backgrounds, experience, knowledge and skills.

Innovation. We strive to provide new, creative, and innovative experiences for campers. Instead of limiting our thinking by starting with "what activities are already accessible", we start the conversation by asking our campers what they're interested in, and then take it upon ourselves to create and innovate new and accessible activities.

Passion in all we do. We are driven by passion, and this energy is present in all we do. Our passion is a powerful and inspiring force that encourages us to give 110% in all we do.

History

Camp Promise, a program of the Jett Foundation, was started in 2009 when many summer camps were closed due to the H1N1 (aka “swine flu”) outbreak. These cancellations were last-minute, swift, and nationwide, leaving many would-be campers (and volunteers) without a camp option that summer. Partnering with the Jett Foundation, volunteers put together a weeklong, overnight, replacement program called Camp Promise-West. In its inaugural summer, Camp Promise welcomed 27 campers and 35 volunteers to camp in Vaughn, WA.

Since then, Camp Promise has grown in size and location. In 2012, Camp Promise expanded to the East Coast, opening Camp Promise-East in Connecticut. And, in 2015, Camp Promise opened its third site, Camp Promise-Rockies in Colorado.



The Jett Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization, and the Camp Promise program relies on the generosity of donors, supporters, volunteers, foundations and individuals to meet its mission. We are 100% funded by grants and donations.

While there is no minimum donation required to attend as a camper, we do ask families to include Camp Promise in their giving plans and financially support our unique program so we may continue to provide camp to all campers free-of-charge.

What makes Camp Promise special?

Camp Promise remains the only camp in the United States exclusively for individuals of all ages with muscular dystrophy or select neuromuscular diseases. All of our facilities are wheelchair accessible and staffed by highly trained volunteers and a complete medical team. Thanks to our generous supporters and a full staff of volunteers, Camp Promise is provided free-of-charge to all campers.

Here are just a few way in which Camp Promise is unique:

1. No upper age limit. While many camps have age cutoffs, Camp Promise welcomes kids, teens, and adults with eligible diagnoses. This allows campers to continue coming to camp even during adulthood.
2. No geographical restrictions. Campers and volunteers come from all over the country and eligibility doesn't depend on one's state of residence.
3. Constantly evolving programming. Camp Promise has its staples, its oldies and its favorites, but each camp session mixes it up with new and exciting activities for everyone.
4. Transition Program. Camp Promise provides special age-appropriate programming geared towards older campers (16+) to promote independence and life skill development for those transitioning to adulthood.
5. We are volunteers. While we may call them "staff", the truth is that our counselors, and members of our medical, program, kitchen, and logistics teams all donate their time to camp.
6. One-on-one counselors. Camp Promise offers a 1:1 camper-to-counselor ratio so that each camper can have their own counselor to assist with their activities of daily living and engagement in all camp activities.

Camper Selection

For more information on camper eligibility and qualifying diagnoses, please see the [Who We Serve](#) section on our website.

While we would love to accept every applicant that applies, space is limited. Campers are accepted in the order in which their completed applications are received. We also prioritize campers who are unable to attend any other camps and campers who can attend the full week of camp. All applications are reviewed and considered by our Camp Directors and decisions are made based on space and resource availability.

Camp Staff and Counselors

All summer staff at Camp Promise are volunteers. These giving individuals serve as counselors and members of our Program, Medical, Logistics and Kitchen Teams. Prospective staff members are recruited through colleges, universities, specialized training centers, and word of mouth. All of our staff are highly screened volunteers who complete a competitive application process, including interviews, reference checks, and criminal history background checks.

Prior to camp, all staff are required to participate in a mandatory pre-camp orientation and training session, during which they learn about camp, our campers and our community. Staff members also learn about neuromuscular diseases, safety and emergency standards, policies and procedures for Camp Promise, and how to care for someone with a neuromuscular disease. Our training includes, but is not limited to, lifting and transferring, wheelchair use, and providing personal care such as assisting with feeding, assisting with toileting and bathing, and dressing campers.

Campers are closely supervised at all times with a 1:1 camper-to-counselor ratio. This means that each camper can be assigned his or her own one-on-one counselor for the week of camp. The Camp Directors carefully match each camper with a counselor for the week of camp, and all counselors are provided pertinent registration information before camper arrival. This allows camp staff to get to know each camper better.

The first responsibility of every staff member is to assure that each camper receives these basic needs:

1. Safety
2. Shelter, food, clothing and hygiene
3. Acceptance
4. Recognition
5. A sense of accomplishment

All of our counselors and camp staff are engaging, enthusiastic, and motivated individuals who will be a camper's buddy for the week. We love them and know campers will, too!

Health and Safety

The health and safety of each camper is our primary concern and begins even before the first day of camp. Here are some of our health and safety procedures:

1. We speak with all campers (or their parents/guardians) prior to camp in order to answer all questions and make sure we are prepared to make the camper safe and comfortable at camp. The Medical Team also reviews all camper medical forms and medication lists prior to camp.
2. Camp is staffed 24-hours a day by a qualified Camp Director and leadership team, as well as by a Medical Team comprised of currently-licensed nurses. Some camps also have respiratory therapists, doctors, EMTs, physical therapists, and/or occupational therapists on site.
3. Campers are always supervised. We provide a 1:1 camper-to-counselor ratio such that each camper is assigned his or her own one-on-one counselor for the week of camp, including in the pool.
4. Our camp radios are an integral component of our safety and security plans. Camp leadership team members, Unit Leaders (ULs)s, and Medical, Logistics and Program Team members all carry radios at all times.
5. All staff members are trained in and use **universal precautions** when dealing with bodily fluids and providing personal care to campers. Infection control measures such as gloves, antibacterial soap, hand sanitizer, and bleach spray protects both campers and staff from disease-spreading micro-organisms.
6. The Camp Director, Medical Team, counselors, and all staff manage the health of all campers by following all parent/physician instructions as documented in the camper's application and on their medical form.
7. Campers receive a health screening at check-in where the Medical Team evaluates each camper for illness, injury or communicable diseases, verifies health information and collects all medications.
8. All medications remain locked in the nurse's station and are administered by the camp nurse. This includes all prescription medications (such as steroids, antibiotics, birth control pills, asthma medications, insulin, etc.) and all non-prescription medications and vitamins (such as allergy pills, cold tablets, antacids, etc.).
 - a. ***A note about medications:** Medications (prescription and non-prescription) that are brought to camp must be in their original container, must not be expired, must have the camper's name listed on it, and the label must include the dosage and frequency of administration.
 - b. Our camp nurse will only administer medications listed on the camper's medical form according to the dosing and time instructions found therein. If there is a change in the camper's medication list and/or dosing from what is listed on the medication form, **campers must obtain an updated prescription list signed by their physician.** Packaging with hand noted changes cannot be accepted.
9. The Medical Team is responsible for administering medications, providing first aid and seeking emergency medical treatment in the event of an emergency. The

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Medical Team is able to evaluate and treat most minor illnesses and injuries, as well as stabilize serious medical conditions. Should it be necessary, the Medical Team will also arrange transportation and admittance to a hospital in case of emergency or for an issue that cannot be treated at camp.

10. Every precaution is taken to ensure a healthy and safe camping experience for all campers. However, accidents and medical problems do occur. In the unlikely event of a serious injury or illness requiring immediate, specialized medical attention, camper care will be turned over to the local emergency medical service. The use of ground or air ambulance service may be required. Services provided by the Camp Promise Medical Team are offered at no cost. Campers needing additional medical attention on or off property (e.g., prescriptions, doctors, or hospital visits) will be billed for services rendered at their expense. All expenses associated with this additional treatment become the responsibility of the camper and/or their parent(s) or guardian(s), preferably handled through their personal health insurance or supplemental accident insurance. The following procedures will be followed if emergency care is necessary:
 - a. A camper's parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified of any serious illness or injury as soon as possible. In the case of a severe accident, parent(s) or guardian(s) will be contacted as soon as possible after administering or securing proper medical care.
 - i. In the event that a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the camper's Emergency Contact(s) will be notified. In the event the Emergency Contact(s) cannot be reached, the Camp Director and Medical Team will make decisions on their behalf.
 - b. A staff member will accompany campers requiring medical services off camp property. The staff member must obtain the camper's medical form and copies of their health insurance card from the camp office before leaving camp.

Camp Policies

Camp counselors and staff are the primary instruments through which the objectives, goals, and philosophy of Camp Promise are transmitted to the camper. All campers, counselors, staff, and general volunteers are expected to be aware of and abide by the following policies:

1. **TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT:** Camp Promise camps and facilities are tobacco-free environments. Smoking or chewing of tobacco is not allowed in any camp facility or on any camp property, this includes vapor cigarettes. Please ask the Camp Director for the designated smoking area. Staff should promptly relay any knowledge of any incidence of smoking or other tobacco use by guests or staff to a Camp Director.
2. **ALCOHOL/DRUG-FREE ENVIRONMENT:** The possession or use of alcohol, illegal, or illicit drugs is not allowed on site or in vehicles and will result in immediate dismissal. This policy also applies to marijuana, even in states where it may be legalized. Staff members are not allowed on site if impaired by the after-effects of drugs or alcohol. Any staff supplying minors with alcohol or any illegal drugs, either on or off site, will be immediately dismissed.
3. **CLOSED CAMP:** Once camp is in session, everyone is required to remain on site. Visitors are not allowed at camp without prior permission from the Camp Director. Any camper who needs to leave camp property during a session must receive specific permission from the Camp Director and arrangements must be made in advance.
4. **GUESTS:** Due to the short duration of our camp sessions and in order to maintain the safety of our camp community, there are limited opportunities for guests and family members to visit while camp is in session. When possible, all visits must be approved by the camp director prior to the first day of camp. All guests and visitors must sign in with the Camp Director or a member of the leadership team. Camp Promise reserves the right to ask anyone to leave the property at any time.
5. **FACILITIES AND VANDALISM:** Campers and staff are responsible for care of the camp's buildings and equipment. Camp Promise does not tolerate marking on walls, cabins, or bunk beds, slashing or carving trees, or other forms of vandalism.
6. **RELATIONSHIPS AND DATING:** Camp is all about the campers and staff are expected to conduct themselves in a way that respects the dignity, personal worth and rights of others, including campers. Camper-counselor relationships are absolutely prohibited.
7. **CAMPER SUPERVISION:** Staff members are required to supervise camper groups at all times and it is camp policy that campers are never left alone and unsupervised. Individual discipline problems impeding positive group life should be reported and discussed with the Camp Director. Staff are expected to care about their campers, to know where they are, what they are doing, and how they are adjusting to camp life.



8. **ABUSE AND NEGLECT/CAMPER PROTECTION:** As a youth- and young adult-serving organization, Camp Promise has a unique opportunity to help protect all campers. We have adopted a comprehensive set of policies and procedures designed to ensure that Camp Promise continues to be safe for all campers and staff. Camp Promise has a zero-tolerance policy for incidents of child abuse. We understand that protecting campers is our most important responsibility, and that our programs serve no positive purpose if we do not ensure their safety. Should a camper have any concerns about their assigned 1:1 Counselor or any staff member at camp, they should speak with the Camp Director immediately and without fear of retribution. In every case, reports of molestation and/or abuse, or suspected molestation or abuse, will be treated with absolute priority. As part of our prevention efforts to keep campers safe, all staff are background checked on an annual basis and trained annually to identify and report suspected abuse.
9. **CODE OF CONDUCT:** All campers are required to read, understand, and adhere to the expectations and Discipline Policy outlined in the Camper Participation Agreement (see Appendix 1). Camp Promise expects these rules and policies to be followed at all times during the week of camp. Camp Promise reserves the right to dismiss a camper if, in the sole discretion of the Camp Director, the camper is not behaving in a way appropriate for a camper at Camp Promise.
10. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** In working with our campers, staff will be privy to information that is confidential in nature, including but not limited to that concerning campers and their families, personal and medical information, and medical records. This information is shared on a need-to-know basis and all are required to maintain strict confidentiality. Professionalism must be maintained at all times and staff are asked to only share information about campers with other staff on a need-to-know basis and in a private setting (out of earshot of other campers or staff). Our commitment to confidentiality continues even after camp.



Notification of Parent/Legal Guardian

Camp Promise shall take immediate and necessary action to protect campers from harm and shall immediately notify the participant's parents or legal guardian, when one of the following occurs while in the care of Camp Promise:

1. A camper sustains a head injury.
2. An accident or injury requiring professional medical care occurs.
3. Any other instance where the parent or legal guardian has made special arrangements to receive notifications of an incident of event.

Accidents and injuries other than those specified above shall be reported to the participant's parents at end of camp.

Notification is given in events involving minors and adults with appointed legal guardians, or at consent of adult participants.

Personal Care

Each camper is assigned his or her own counselor for the week of camp. Our 1:1 camper-to-counselor ratio allows for each camper's physical, social, behavioral and medical needs to be addressed. Camp counselors are responsible for being a friend and for assisting campers with their personal care. All counselors are trained in lifts and transfers, wheelchair use, and providing personal care such as assisting with feeding, using the bathroom, getting dressed, and more. When assisting with personal care away from the rest of the group, counselors are instructed to have another staff person with them in order to protect both parties. We call this The Buddy System.

We also train our staff to involve the camper in their care, ask what they need, and respect their camper's privacy. We therefore ask campers to communicate their needs and preferences with their counselor to the best of their ability.

What To Pack

Please see the Packing List included in the Welcome Packet for a detailed list of what to pack. Below are just a few special notes about some of the important things all campers will need at camp.

Clothes and Personal Items

Campers should be sure to pack enough clothing, personal items, and toiletries to last the entire camp session. Laundry will only be available for emergency purposes. We recommend packing layers to accommodate various types of weather. Please be sure to clearly mark and label all personal belongings prior to camp.

Linens

Campers will also need to provide their own sheets, blankets, pillows and towels. If extra pillows are needed for positioning, or if an egg crate, mattress topper, or alternating pressure pad is used, please pack those, too.

NOTE: Campers at our Camp Promise-East location in Connecticut DO NOT need to pack sheets and pillows as these two items will be provided by the facility. While blankets are also available, the air-conditioned cabins are sometimes chilly at night and therefore we recommend campers bring their own blankets/sleeping bag. Towels are not provided by the facility, so campers should bring their own. If extra pillows are needed for positioning, feel free to pack those, too.

Costumes

We also encourage everyone to pack costumes and accessories to match each day's theme. Rest assured, campers will receive their Welcome Packet via email with a list of theme days with enough notice to stock up on themed attire!

Medications

Please pack enough medicine for the entire duration of camp + two days. Remember that all medications must be labeled, identifiable, and brought to camp in their original packing. Original bottles and labels are required for ALL medications, including supplements, vitamins, over-the-counter medications, prescription medications, etc. Weekly pillboxes will not be accepted. All medications will be turned in and reviewed by our camp nurse during camper check-in and will be administered by the camp nurse during the week of camp as described on the camper's medical form.

If there is a change in the camper medication list and/or dosing from what is listed on the camper's medication form, **campers must obtain an updated prescription list signed by their physician.** Packaging with hand noted changes cannot be accepted.

Medical Equipment

Campers should bring any and all medical equipment that they use at home so that their time at camp can be as comfortable and safe as possible. This may include wheelchairs, Hoyer lifts and slings, alternating pressure pads, mattress toppers and egg crates, shower chairs, braces, walkers/strollers, pillows, wedges, etc. Don't worry, we have room for it all!

Guide to Check-In

Check-in day is an exciting day at camp. Please review the procedures outlined below so we can work together in making it a smooth and exciting experience for all. Here's the process for checking campers in and out of camp:

1. Parents or guardians are asked to bring their camper to camp at the drop-off time provided in their confirmation letter. **If campers arrive earlier than the designated check-in time, they will be asked to leave and return at the designated time.**
2. Upon arrival, cars will be met by a staff member who will direct campers and their families to a parking spot or drop-off point. The camper's assigned counselor will introduce himself/herself and a crew of bellhops will also be available to unload the vehicle and move the camper's bags and equipment to his/her cabin.
IMPORTANT: Make sure to remove any medications from bags and luggage before the bellhops deliver it all to the camper's cabin, as all medications will need to be turned in to the nurse as part of the check-in process.
3. While our bellhops do the heavy lifting, counselors will escort campers and their families through the following check-in process:
 - a. **Table 1:** Complete a check-in form, ensure all paperwork is set and confirm camper's contact information for the Camp Promise yearbook.
NOTE: If the person who will be picking up the camper at the end of the week is not a parent or guardian, now is the time to tell our staff.
 - b. **Table 2:** Pick up a copy of the week's activity schedule, sign up for electives (if applicable), and grab a piece of Camp Promise swag. This is where caregivers and families will learn how they can stay in touch throughout the week.
 - c. **Table 3:** Meet our nurse(s)! Complete a quick health screen, turn in medications, review dosing instructions, and discuss any special medical concerns or needs.
4. Once checked-in, counselors will show campers and their families to their cabin where campers can unpack, set up their bed, and meet other campers in the cabin. This is also a good time for campers, parents, and caregivers to share any special instructions or routines with their counselors, including a demonstration of how campers like to be lifted and transferred and any stretches or treatments campers do.
5. After campers are unpacked, families and caregivers will have the opportunity to say goodbye to campers and start their return trip home. Campers will then proceed with their counselor to lunch or arts and crafts.
6. Lunch will be provided to campers on check-in day, usually at 12:00pm or 12:30pm. Families are asked to depart camp prior to lunch.
7. A camper's first job at camp is to make a nametag, so head on over to Arts and Crafts!

Camper Pick-Up

The last day of camp is always bittersweet with lots of hugs and “see you soon’s.” Please refer to the confirmation email for exact times and locations. Here is the general process for checking out of camp:

1. Parents and caregivers are asked to arrive at 10:00am on the last day of camp. An earlier pick up can be arranged by calling camp at least one day in advance, but the earlier the notification, the better.
2. All campers and caregivers must stop by the following tables before departing:
 - a. **Table 1:** Camp Nurse—Pick up remaining medications or empty bottles.
 - b. **Table 2:** Lost and Found—Please check the lost and found table for any items that may have been misplaced during the week. Any unclaimed lost and found items that lack camper identification will be donated after camp.
 - c. **Table 3:** Camp Store—Check out our camp store and purchase camp t-shirts, hats, water bottles, bandanas, pins, bracelets, necklaces and more!
3. Counselors and bellhops will assist with loading luggage into camper vehicles.
4. Campers should check out with their Counselor, Unit Leader and the Camp Director.
 - a. ***Please note**, our staff cannot accept tips. If campers or their families wish to show appreciation for the care and service our staff provided, please contribute to Camp Promise online or by seeing the Camp Director at checkout.



A Day In The Life At Camp

At all of our camps, our days are filled with traditional camp activities, like swimming, fishing, boating, arts and crafts, nature, science, sports and wheelchair soccer, pranks, etc. Each session also has a Casino Night and a Prom dance at the end of the week. We also like to mix things up and provide unique and creative activities. While our programming is ever-evolving, in the past we've done wheelchair accessible hot air ballooning, adaptive bicycling, live-band karaoke, and more.

Sometimes campers will hang out and do activities with their cabin, and at other times we'll do things all together as a group. For example, camp-wide activities have included scavenger hunts, music trivia, Jeopardy, dueling pianos, and guest entertainers such as improv groups, rock bands, swing dancing troupes, and more. In general, we have a flexible schedule that allows campers to choose what activities they wish to engage in, and there's plenty of time for just hanging out with friends and cabin mates.

We also have a Transitions Program for our 16+ campers that promotes independence and personal decision-making. In the past, this has included sessions on self-defense tailored to our campers' needs and abilities, adaptive technology, dating and relationships, attending college, applying for jobs, and resume writing.

Sample Schedule

7:30am	Wake up, get dressed and ready for the day.
8:30am	Breakfast
9:15am	Flag raising
9:30am	Activity block 1 (e.g.: arts and crafts, music, science)
10:30am	Activity block 2 (e.g.: drama, archery, fishing)
11:30am	Elective (e.g.: filmmaking, computer science, journalism/camp newspaper)
12:30am	Lunch
1:30pm	Hangout Hour
2:30pm	Camp-wide activity (e.g.: capture the flag, trivia, wheelchair soccer)
3:30pm	Swimming and free choice
6:00pm	Dinner
7:00pm	Camp-wide night activity (e.g.: campfire, Casino Night, camp dance)
9:00-11:00pm	Cabin-based curfews and hangout time



We think of our camp schedule as a buffet of options for camper. While campers are required to be with their counselor at all times, campers are not required to attend all events as scheduled. Our schedule provides flexibility and there are often multiple activity choices for campers to choose from.

Swimming At Camp

In order to keep all campers and staff safe during the week, the following swimming policies have been established:

1. State law and camp policy require the presence of a certified lifeguard for all swimming and boating activities.
2. Camp Promise policy dictates that there is a 1:1 camper-to-counselor ratio within the pool at all times. All counselors must also stay within an arm's reach of their assigned camper at all times while in the pool.
3. Any person showing evidence of any communicable skin disease, sore or inflamed eyes, cold, nasal or ear discharges, or any other communicable disease may not swim in the pool.
4. Any person with excessive sunburn, open blisters, cuts, or bandages may not swim in the pool.
5. Anyone experiencing or recovering from diarrhea or who has had any signs or symptoms of a gastrointestinal (stomach) disease in the past 14 days should not enter the water.
6. All persons in diapers must wear plastic pants with snug fitting elastic waist and leg bands. ***Please ensure that campers pack a pair of plastic or rubber pants if the camper uses diapers and will want to swim while at camp. Participants without these pants will not be able to participate in aquatic activities.**
7. Conduct that endangers the safety and comfort of others shall be prohibited.
8. Any additional aquatic facility rules will apply on a facility-to-facility basis.
9. Participation in all aquatic activities is at discretion of camp lifeguards and other aquatic facility lifeguards and staff.
10. Life jackets and pool noodles will be provided, but we recommend that campers who use special life jackets or pool equipment to bring their own to camp.

General Camp Info

Cabins

Campers are divided into cabins based on age and gender. This means that male campers bunk with male campers, and female campers bunk with female campers. Our 1:1 counselors sleep in the cabins with their campers and provide any night care needed. Our female campers are always assigned 1:1 with a female counselor, so our female camper cabins only have female counselors. For male camper cabins, some have co-ed counselors while others may have male-only staff. Please be sure to include counselor preferences on the application and during the Camp Promise interview.

Cabin assignments vary each year based on camper enrollment and space availability. All cabins are color-coded and typically divided in the following ways:

Green: Youngest male campers

Orange: Young adolescent male campers

Blue: Older adolescent male campers

Black: Oldest male campers

Purple: Female campers

Cabins differ slightly across our three sites, but most cabins have central heat and air or are temperature controlled. All cabins also have outlets for charging wheelchairs and any medical equipment needed at night.

Campers sleep on the bottoms of bunk beds, single beds, or in hospital beds, based on preferences expressed in each camper's application and interview. All hospital bed requests must be made at least one month prior to camp. Storage areas for campers' belongings are also available. Each cabin has accessible toilets and roll-in showers. Camp has a limited number of shower chairs to share, so it may be helpful for campers to bring their own, especially if they require one with a headrest.

Camper's Belongings

Camp Promise is not responsible for any theft, loss, or damage of personal property. Every effort is made to keep camper's property and clothing together, including keeping cabins clean and organized. In spite of all precautions, items may be lost at camp. To keep track of belongings, we recommend labeling camper's clothes and personal items. Please do not use other's personal belongings without explicit permission from their owner.

Laundry

Camp Promise does not provide laundry service during camp. Laundry will be done for emergency laundry needs only. Make sure to pack enough clothes for the entire week of camp, including the theme days and special events planned. Please don't expect campers to return with all clean clothes, and we recommend campers bring a laundry bag or plastic bag with them to camp to use for dirty clothes.

Lost and Found

Lost and Found items will be collected throughout the week and stored in a central location. At the end of each week, all remaining Lost and Found items will be displayed during camper pick-up. Campers, parents, and caregivers are asked to double-check the cabins, activity areas, and the Lost and Found table before departing. Any Lost and Found items that lack camper identification will be donated after camp. Camp Promise is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Contacting Campers At Camp

For parents and caregivers who wish to let a camper know they're thinking about them while at camp, the following are ways to reach campers at camp:

1. By Mail: See Mail section below for site-specific addresses.
2. By Phone: To foster a sense of community, we ask all campers and volunteers to turn off their phones while at camp. Please call the Camp Directors to speak with a camper or camp staff. **Camp Phone: 405.459.PIGS (7447)**

Mail

Some campers love to receive mail. Each camper receives a mailbox at camp that is used for intra- and inter-camp mail. Parents, caregivers, family and friends may leave pre-written mail with the camp staff during check-in to be delivered to campers during the week. Or, they may send letters using traditional mail. Please ensure that the mail is sent early in order for the camper to receive it during his/her stay at camp. We do not forward mail after the camper has left. See below for the mailing addresses below for our three camps:

Camp Promise-East (CT): Camper Name, Camp Promise
c/o Channel 3 Kids Camp
73 Times Farm Road
Andover, CT 06232

Camp Promise-Rockies (CO): Camper Name, Camp Promise
c/o Rocky Mountain Village
2644 Alvarado Road
Georgetown, Colorado 80444

Camp Promise-West (WA): Camper Name, Camp Promise
c/o Camp Stand By Me
PO Box 289
17809 S Vaughn Road KPN
Vaughn, WA 98394-0313



Meals

Our goal is to provide high quality food in a well-balanced menu. The kitchen staff provides three meals a day plus snacks, and is well versed in the needs of modified diets, including consistency changes, vegetarian diets, gluten-free diets, dairy-free diets and food allergies. Individuals with special dietary requests should include this on their application and in their interview. Please remind counselors of any dietary needs upon arrival at camp. In some cases, campers may need to bring supplemental food items to satisfy special needs.

All counselors are trained to aid campers who may require assistance with feeding. Campers should review mealtime needs with their counselors upon check-in.

Tips and Gratuities

We expect our staff to treat all campers equally. Therefore, our staff are asked not to accept tips or gratuities from parents, caregivers, or family members of campers. Campers and their families that wish to show appreciation for the care and service our staff provided are asked to contribute to Camp Promise online or by seeing the Camp Director at checkout.

Electronic Devices

Camp Promise discourages the use of electronic devices while at camp (with the exception of medical equipment). Please leave portable video games, iPads, laptops, and cell phones at home. We're roughing it for the week and there will be plenty of entertainment at camp. For those who bring their cell phones, we ask that they be placed on airplane mode and only used for photos, appropriate music, and alarms. Please note that there is no Wi-Fi at camp and due to our large campuses and remote locations, cell phone service may not extend to every area of camp.

Camp Promise does not take responsibility for any electronic devices brought to camp. Assistive devices are permitted.

Weather

Camp operates rain or shine. Campers should pack and be prepared for any weather. In the event of severe weather, campers will resume activity in shelters and/or buildings. Please pack layers as we are outside the majority of the day.

Transportation

Camp Promise does not provide transportation to and/or from camp, but we can work with campers as they explore their transportation options. At no time are campers to be transported in private staff vehicles; in the event of a health emergency, 911 will be called and used for transportation. Please contact our office with any questions.

Sunscreen and Bug Spray

Campers will be outside the majority of the day and are required to wear sunscreen

while at camp, so please make sure to pack enough sunscreen for the week. Due concerns regarding Lyme Disease and deer ticks, we also encourage campers to pack bug spray. While we are able to provide some sunscreen and bug spray for campers, if campers have sensitive skin, we ask that they provide their own. If campers would not like us to use sun block or bug spray on them, please notify the Camp Director.

Curfew

Camp Promise operates a curfew policy for both campers and staff. These guidelines are intended to allow adequate rest after the day's events and enough sleep to keep energy levels up to ensure a quality experience and care for all participants. The curfew is set by the Camp Director and posted on the camp schedule.

Social Media

We understand that the use of social media is a common method for sharing information and experiences with parents, caregivers, and our greater camp community. However, Camp Promise must also ensure the confidentiality and dignity of our campers, and the integrity of our organization is preserved in public forums. We encourage campers and their family and friends to "Like" and follow Camp Promise on Facebook (we have four accounts: Camp Promise, Camp Promise-East, Camp Promise-Rockies, and Camp Promise-West), Instagram and Twitter. When camp is in session, Camp Promise will post photos daily on Facebook and Instagram. We will not tag campers nor post camper names, but welcome campers and families to tag themselves.

Pranks

Pranks are a popular tradition at Camp Promise and add a dimension of fun and creativity. All pranks must be pre-approved by the Chief Prank Approver. Pranks that physically or emotionally hurt others, or that destroy others' property and possessions are prohibited.

Golf Carts

Golf cart use is reserved for the Leadership, Medical, Logistics and Program teams only. All golf cart operators must have a valid driver's license on file with Camp Promise. At no time will campers be permitted to ride in golf carts.

Service Animals

We welcome service dogs at Camp Promise but require advance notification from campers who are planning to bring theirs to camp for the week. Vaccination records must also be submitted for each service animal prior to camp. We recognize that these helpers are here to work and will likely go everywhere with their owner. Please be sure to pack their leash and vest, enough food for the week, bowls for food and water, plastic bags for picking up after them and their dog beg (if applicable). Camp does not provide food for service animals.

Camp Evaluations

Camper evaluation of our program, staff, and facility, is very important to us. After camp each summer, campers will receive an email with a link to our annual camp survey. Camper feedback is crucial to making camp better year after year, and we use feedback received to improve our program from year to year. We cannot fix things at camp if we don't know where the problems are. So, no matter how minor something may seem, we want to know about it!

We ask that campers be candid about their experience at camp. Campers will have the option to leave their survey anonymous, or to complete the contact section at the end so we can follow up on questions we have.

Camp Testimonials

"I tried archery for the first time at Camp Promise-West...I loved it immediately, it just felt so powerful. I've never felt like I had done something so raw and powerful." - Amin, 28, Camper

"The best part of respite care is coming back to an exhausted son who talks my ear off the entire hour and a half ride home. He tells me about his entire week. I do not hear stories about feeling like an outcast or being stared at. I hear stories about his days. He talks about getting to know the other guys better. He talks about the counselors making it the best week ever and the general debauchery that takes place. And I know that it is all safe and healthy and done out of love for these guys. Duchenne takes the fun out of most days when medical needs outweigh the normalcy of our lives, but Camp Promise puts the fun back at the forefront." - Meghan, Mother of a camper

"As the parent of a child with special needs, knowing that Lucas is in good hands with people he adores and who adore him, is a heart-warming feeling. Sending him to camp for the week is also a true break for me and my husband." - Karla, Mother of a camper

"Camp Promise is a place where I do not have to worry about accessibility and I know fun will always be had. It means so much to me because there is no guarantee of something so special like this during the rest of the year. Camp is like another family that I get to be a part of for an amazing week!" - Yomara, 24, Camper

"Our son, Ryan, came home from Camp Promise with renewed self-confidence and a giant smile on his face! He also gained a greater trust of others and a sense of self-worth. He couldn't wait to tell us how he rocked the talent show and how much fun he had with the games, competitions, daily swimming and activities!" - Linda, Mother of a camper

“Camp Promise is invaluable to us. Since our son was too old for his previous camp, he didn't have much to look forward to in the summer. Now he's back to counting the weeks and days until he can enjoy himself with peers without feeling different or frustrated at what others do that he can't participate in. I just don't think he's missing us nearly as much as we're missing him while he's there.” Kristen, Mother of a camper

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

At what age do campers "age out" or graduate from Camp Promise?

The short answer—they don't. Camp Promise has no upper age limit for campers and accepts campers of any age, making us the only camp in the country specifically for people of all ages with neuromuscular disorders.

My child is starting to transition to a wheelchair, should we bring it to camp?

Our number one goal is to make sure our campers are getting the most out of camp. Often times, we've found that in an environment like camp where there's lots of space and a large campus, it's easiest for campers to move around independently and keep up with their peers when they have a powerchair or scooter.

Is transportation provided by camp?

Camp Promise does not provide transportation to and/or from camp, but we can work with campers to explore possibilities for arranging transportation. Just contact us!

Who will manage campers' medical needs at camp?

At Camp Promise, we provide a medical team of nurses whose job it is to help ensure all campers stay safe and healthy while they're having fun. Our medical staff review each camper's application prior to camp to make sure they understand the camper's healthcare needs. If any questions arise, they will be in touch with campers prior to arrival at camp. They will also be present at check-in on the first day of camp to meet campers and answer any questions. These nurses will be on site 24/7 throughout the week of camp and are responsible for providing first aid, administering medications, and taking care of sick or injured participants.

Will I have my own counselor for the week?

Yes! We provide a 1:1 camper-to-counselor ratio so that each camper can be assigned their own one-on-one counselor for the week of camp. All of our counselors are highly screened volunteers who complete a competitive application process, including interviews, reference checks, and criminal history background checks.

Prior to camp, all counselors and volunteers complete intense orientation and training sessions, during which they learn about neuromuscular diseases and how to care for someone with a neuromuscular disease. Our training includes, but is not limited to lifting and transferring, pushing wheelchairs, and providing personal care such as assisting with feeding, using the bathroom, getting dressed. Additionally, our counselors are engaging, enthusiastic, and motivated individuals who will be a camper's friend for the week.

What should I pack?

See the What To Pack section and the packing list at the end of this handbook. But in short, campers are asked to bring clothes and toiletries for a week, costumes, linens, medications and all medical equipment they use at home so that their time at camp can be as comfortable and safe as possible. This may include wheelchairs, hoist lifts and slings, shower chairs, braces, walkers/strollers, pillows, wedges, etc. Don't worry, we have room for it all!

Can I visit camp to see what it's like before attending as a camper?

Yes! We love introducing Camp Promise to new campers and their families. Since we only run three weeks of camp each summer (one week in each location), please contact us and we will schedule a time. If it's before camp, we can set up a site tour to check out the cabins, dining hall, the general camp grounds, and more. If campers or their families would like to visit a session of Camp Promise during the summer, we can personally provide a tour of our facilities, introduce campers to our leadership staff and counselors, and show off some of our programming to illustrate what it is like to be a Camp Promise camper. We often have a Visitors Day at each camp during the summer for just this purpose. Just give us a call to set up a visit!

What activities will we do at camp?

For a description of our intentional programming and a sample schedule, check out the A Day in the Life At Camp section of this handbook. Check out our [photo gallery](#) and some [camper testimonies](#) on our website for more information.

What kind of facilities and amenities are there at camp?

Our three camps take place at different facilities (because they are in three different states!) and each one has its own unique amenities. All three camp facilities are 100% wheelchair accessible, and each has cabins or lodges for sleeping, a dining hall for meals, an arts and crafts shack, campfire pits, and accessible pathways. However, some of the facilities have an indoor pool while others have an outdoor pool, and one is on a river, another has a pond, and the third camp is on a bay. Some have fishing and boating, while others have fishing or boating, and some have archery while others have accessible climbing/zip-lining towers. Please see the Welcome Packet (sent via email) for maps of our campsites.

Contact Info

Drop us a line, we'd love to hear from you!

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Friday
9AM - 6PM EST

OFFICE LOCATION:

68 Evergreen St, Suite 1
Kingston, MA 02364

EMAIL:

info@camppromise.org

PHONE:

(405) 459-PIGS (7447)



Appendix 1: Camper Participation Agreement

Camper Participation Agreement

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Camper Name _____

Camp Promise has set forth specific expectations that campers will be expected to follow during the camp program. Campers and their parents/guardians (when applicable) must sign this agreement and submit it along with their waivers.

Please check each box as you read it.

- I will arrive and remain at camp with a positive attitude, open to meeting new people and trying new activities.
- I will work with staff (Unit Leaders, Camp Directors, Logistics, Facility Staff, etc.), counselors, and cabin mates toward creating an environment that is safe and welcoming for all of us.
- I agree to treat everyone in the camp community with respect at all times, including showing respect for others' personal belongings, privacy, and feelings.
- I agree to respect the camp's facilities and equipment and not take, damage, or destroy camp property.
- I agree to remain in the presence of counselors and staff at all times unless given permission to travel in the main camp area by camp staff.
- I agree to refrain from using obscene or foul language or gestures.
- I agree not to engage in any activity, which may put myself, campers or staff at risk.
- I agree to follow all camp rules, including wearing a seatbelt if I use a wheelchair (with the exception of near the pool or waterfront). I understand that these rules are in place for my safety and the safety of everyone at camp.
- I agree to participate fully in the camp community by turning off my cell phone unless it is during a designated approved time; if I should need to use my cell phone for an important call, I will ask the appropriate staff person.
- I agree to let the Camp Director know about any inappropriate behavior I witness that may be hurtful or harmful to my self or others.
- I agree to help keep my cabin and camp clean.
- I agree to wear my nametag at all times.
- I agree to do my best to be ready to start all activities on time.
- I agree to abide by curfew and lights out in my cabin and to help facilitate getting to bed in a timely fashion.
- I will be respectful of privacy and only take photos or videos in public spaces. I agree not to post these photos and videos online until after camp is over and understand that Camp Promise has the right to ask me to remove this content if they deem it inappropriate.
- I understand that Camp Promise takes the safety of campers and the camp community as a whole very seriously. If I do not feel safe or comfortable at camp, I understand that I have the right to see a camp director immediately without fear of retaliation, including dismissal.

The following behaviors are considered very serious and may result in immediate dismissal from camp:

- I agree not to bring alcohol, tobacco products of any kind, controlled substances, illegal drugs, firearms, weapons, drug paraphernalia to camp.
- I agree to turn in all medications, vitamins, and over-the-counter drugs to the camp nurse. If the nurse grants me permission to carry medication for a potentially life-threatening emergency, I agree to do so responsibly and discreetly.
- I understand that my actions and words have a direct impact on others and will remain respectful to everyone; refraining from any behavior or language that could be interpreted as demeaning or harassing and I agree not to bring sexually explicit material.
- I agree not to physically or verbally abuse anyone, including hitting, kicking, or biting.
- I agree to follow counselor and staff instructions and understand that failing to do so in a way that puts anyone in danger will result in my immediate dismissal.
- I agree to stay on camp property at all times and will not invite guests to camp unless they are pre-approved by the Camp Director.
- I agree to act in a way that does not interfere with the quality of program other campers are receiving.
- I agree not to threaten to harm myself or others.

Camp staff retains the right to include other items that may not be listed above to ensure that a safe camp atmosphere is maintained for all.

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Camp Promise Camper Participation Agreement
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DISCIPLINE POLICY

Camp Promise reserves the right to dismiss a camper if, in the sole discretion of the Camp Director, the camper is not behaving in a way appropriate for a camper at Camp Promise. Such instances include, but are not limited to, neglect, abuse, possession and/or use of alcohol, drugs, or other controlled substances, possession and/or use of a weapon, bullying, theft, and inappropriate conduct. In reaching a decision as to appropriate disciplinary procedure, Camp Promise may consult with the individual participant involved, with his or her parents or other involved program staff. At the discretion of Camp Promise, a corrective disciplinary plan, specifying an acceptable time over which improvement is to take place, may be implemented. In addition, for minor infractions, and when deemed appropriate, in the sole discretion of the Camp Director, Camp Promise may follow a three-strike policy. When a counselor or staff member experiences an inappropriate or unsatisfactory behavior from any camper, that camper will be given a strike for their behavior and the camper and volunteer will work together to create a plan on how to correct it. If a camper receives a second strike, he/she will go to the Camp Director to discuss the plan. If a third strike occurs, parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive a telephone call to address the situation and make arrangements to immediately pick up the camper. In all situations, campers and their parents are responsible for the camper's travel to and from camp.

By signing this form below, I agree that I understand and will follow the Camp Promise policies as outlined by this Participation Agreement and Discipline Policy.

Camper (ALL campers must sign this form, or have a representative sign it for them)

Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian (if camper is under 18 or has a legally appointed guardian)

Signature _____ Date _____

