

Parent Handbook



Circle Pines Center Summer Camp

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Mission of Circle Pines Center

Our mission is to teach peace, social justice, environmental stewardship, and cooperation through work and recreation. The aim of the center is to demonstrate cooperative alternatives for economic and social issues and to teach cooperation as a way of life.

Program Goals and Objectives

Summer camp programs should inspire and energize campers to engage with the natural world and with each other. We aspire to foster self-confidence and self-expression within a close, diverse community. Campers will learn the value of work, the relevance of social issues, and the importance of fun! Circle Pines Center maintains the larger objective that skills and perspectives developed amongst the young minds here might help change and shape our larger society for the better.

History

Circle Pines Center began with the Central States Cooperative League, a group of people interested in economic reform, peace education, and the growing cooperative movement. They met at the Ashland Folk School (1882-1938) of Grant, Michigan. In 1938 the group needed a new place to meet, so Chief Noonday Camp was rented. In 1940 the Stewart Farm was purchased, where Circle Pines remains to this day.

A Quaker work camp helped to ready the site that first summer, and the next year people were able to gather at their own cooperatively-governed Center. Their mission is not so different from ours today, to show the "superior advantages of cooperation as a way of life." Circle Pines has seen many phases; in the 40's and 50's, Circle Pines flourished as a folk school and family camp. Blues musician, Big Bill Broonzy, was on summer staff when Pete Seeger came to visit in 1957. The turbulence of the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam era anti-nuclear peace movement in the 60's and 70's brought activists, veterans, and concerned observers. More recently Circle Pines has been increasing it's interest in the environment by strengthening links with the natural, organic, and local food movements.

Summer camp at Circle Pines is full of traditions and history from our 78 years of cooperation. Some originate from the Danish Folk School, others from labor movements, some got started by accident; regardless, they are all unique perks that make Summer Camp at Circle Pines special and memorable to all who participate.

Contact Information

Circle Pines Center
8650 Mullen Road
Delton, MI 49046

269-623-5555

summercamp@circlepinescenter.net

Parent Testimonials

“My daughter will be participating in an urban gardening project here in the city this summer. I think a lot of her social consciousness was developed at Circle Pines and I am so proud of that. She always returned from camp happier, healthier, more focused and more inspired. You guys do great things up there, and I always recommend the program. Someday I hope to establish a Scholarship fund for Circle Pines as I truly believe her first time there literally saved her life. She was in a dark, dark place, and your counselors showed her how to be comfortable in the skin she’s in. You have no idea how grateful I will always be to you all.”

“Besides all the activities etc. that they engaged in during camp last summer, the biggest benefits our children got was the chance to meet, interact, and live with a bunch of other young people who share our values of peace through global, social, and economic justice.”

“It helped my grandson a lot. He gained a lot of self-esteem about himself. It was like paradise to him to get away from our neighborhood that is looking bad for children who are trying to make a difference in our world today. He loved it because he stated that he enjoyed talking to the other campers and learning from their backgrounds of home and city life. I just think it gave my grandson a whole lot of positive attitudes toward things.”

“My son’s whole attitude toward himself, and his life improved greatly. A real new sense of self- assurance and calm came from the special place he found and the friendships he made and greatly anticipates renewing. The intimate setting and numbers was perfect for him!”

“Every single time [my child] attends Circle Pines, he comes home more mature and more self-confident.”

“CPC does a great job of allowing kids to experience the freedom of living without parent supervision with the support of caring adults. Over the years, the things my girls appreciate most was talking with other kids and adults, learning to appreciate different viewpoints, having the freedom to ask questions and talk about controversial topics in safety.”

“There is no doubt in my mind that doing the work projects that they did has helped them become more confident and capable people.”

“[My daughter] comes home so relaxed and happy and confident, willing to help out around the house a little more, take on new tasks, try new things.”

Registration and Pick-up

Each session begins on a Sunday. Check in time is 2:00 – 4:30 Eastern Standard Time (1:30 – 3:30 Central Standard Time).

Camp programming begins at 5pm EST, so please arrive no later than 4:30. **Notify directors as soon as possible if your camper is arriving by public transportation, with someone other than their legal guardian, or outside of the designated check-in times.** We cannot accept campers who arrive without the written release of their legal guardian. Thank you for leaving your pets at home or in your car during drop-off and pickup.

Packing

As you are packing for camp, please be mindful of any contact your camper's belongings may have had with bedbugs. As an overnight recreation facility, Circle Pines Center is vulnerable to whatever visitors and campers might bring with them. Prevention is our best strategy for dealing with bedbugs, so please help us to keep the center infestation-free by leaving any questionable bedding or clothing at home.

Luggage

When you arrive, a greeter will meet you on the road. They will direct you to turn left off Mullen Road toward the white farmhouse and answer any initial questions. When you arrive please drop your camper's luggage on the tarp marked with your camper's unit (Acorns, Juniors, Youth, YAL). Tags will be available as well to ensure everything ends up in the right place. Please mark EVERYTHING with your child's name to avoid missing items. **If it is raining**, pull past the driveway and turn right off Mullen Road toward the Rec Hall. Staff will be posted along the road to direct you in the event of rain. Below you will find camper ages associated with each unit.

Acorns: 7 – 10

Juniors: 11 - 13

Youth: 13 - 15

YAL: 16 - 17

Registration

The Registration table will be under a sign that says "Registration." Here we will record your arrival, make sure all of your camper's forms are in order, and give you a checklist for the rest of registration day. It is mandatory that camper health forms be complete before arrival. If you have questions about these forms, contact CPC before registration day.

Camp Fees and Camp Store Account

There will be another table labeled "Camp Store". A Circle Pines staff member will settle any final payments and set up a store account for you. The camp store carries supplies such as goggles, sunscreen, bug spray, etc. as well as CPC merchandise. All campers begin with \$5 from CPC in their store accounts. Plan to add an additional \$5 to \$50 per camper if you can.

Health Check-In

All campers must have a health check-in upon their arrival at camp. Campers will be directed to lice check stations. Trained staff will have to ask that camper's ponytails and/or braids be taken down for thorough lice checks. Next, families have a private opportunity to meet and talk with the health officers about *any* medication, vitamins, allergies or other medical needs a camper may have. If your camper does not take medication, their intake process will be abbreviated to reporting any symptoms of current or oncoming illness along with a quick physical exam. **All medications must be in the original packaging or container bearing the camper's full name and prescription.** The Health Officer cannot dispense medicine that has been removed from its original container. All information shared with the Health Officer is confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Kitchen Check-In

In addition to reporting any allergies to the Health Officer, all dietary restrictions, concerns or food preferences should be reported to our Kitchen Leaders.

Director Check-In

The Summer Camp Directors will be available for parents and campers to meet with. This is an opportunity to go over the Camper Confidential form and ask any additional questions they may have about activities, the daily schedule, communication, etc. This will be the last station you meet with. Please have your check-list fully completed before meeting with the Directors.

Staff

All Circle Pines staff will be wearing Circle Pines t-shirts and nametags, which identify them and their position. They will be engaging arriving campers in sports games, making nametags and crafts, or singing songs. All staff will be ready to greet you and answer any questions about registration and camp.

Camp Tours

There will be two opportunities for staff led tours of the Circle Pines property. This is a great opportunity to see where your camper will be staying and get a feel for the beautiful grounds. Tours will be held at 2:45pm and 3:45pm, leaving from the deck.

Pick Up Day

The end of each session is on Saturday at 11am Eastern Time. Check out time is between 11am and 1pm (10am to noon Central time). Campers will have eaten breakfast and packed their belongings before check out. Please be prompt, as virtually all of our staff are given time off after 1pm. Parents who have not picked up their children by 1pm will be charged at the rate of \$10/hour and \$5/meal for each child left in our care.

Evaluation

At the end of the session, we ask that you and your camper fill out a digital survey evaluating your summer camp experience. Feedback is an important way for us to constantly improve our programming. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, comments or concerns that you may have, whether before, during, or after camp.

Discipline Policy

All campers and parents sign a “Cooperation Agreement”, which outlines the expected behavior at summer camp. These expectations are taken very seriously by Circle Pines Center in order to create a safe and fun environment for the benefit of all campers and staff. In the event that a camper does not follow this agreement, and other behavior management techniques have not garnered improvement, we may have to send that camper home early.

The expulsion of a camper will always be a last resort. Before a camper is removed, the Camp Directors and staff will make every attempt to clearly communicate the problem as well as some clear steps for improvement. The Camp Directors will discuss the behavior issues with a parent/guardian, seeking insight and including a timeline of incidents and responses. If unacceptable behavior continues and a decision for removal is made, the parent/guardian will be notified immediately. The Camp Directors will also follow up with a letter stating what actions were taken and why. The registration fee for the current camp session will be forfeited; any future session fees that have already been paid will be refunded minus a 25% processing fee.

If a camper becomes dangerously belligerent or displays threatening violent behavior toward any person at camp, staff is to immediately contact a Camp Director and the local authorities will be called. Circle Pines Center does not train staff in physical restraint and if such a level of behavior management is necessary it is our policy to turn the camper over to the authorities. The Camp Directors will work closely with the Unit Staff to try to help all campers have a successful and enjoyable summer. Hopefully, no campers will be sent home, but if it needs to happen then the decision will be made with input from those working closest with the camper.

If the camper’s parent/guardian does not respond to Circle Pines’ attempts to contact them, and no transportation has been arranged within 12 hours, Circle Pines will make arrangements to transport the camper to the home address listed on the camp registration form. We will then bill the parent/guardian for travel expenses related to the transportation. If, upon arrival at the camper’s home, no one is available to whom the camper is authorized to be release, local authorities will be alerted and the child will be turned over to the custody of child protection agents.

Communication and Emergencies

Camper Confidential – What you can tell us.

Any problems that your child may be having at home could affect their behavior at camp. Please inform us of any important information such as a recent move, divorce, new school, etc. so that we can be sensitive to your child's needs. Additionally we encourage you to give us as comprehensive a picture as possible on your camper confidential form. Details are just as important as big picture items and the more we can get to know your child before they arrive, the better. Any information of a confidential nature will be shared on a need to know basis only. That being said, we are neither equipped nor staffed to work with special needs children, children who need constant one-on-one support or have great difficulty in managing their behavior in a group setting. Circle Pines facilities is likewise unable to meet the needs of mobility limited campers.

Confidentiality

Circle Pines Center respects the rights of each family to privacy and confidentiality regarding health, behavioral and developmental records and information regarding their child. Maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic ethical policy of Circle Pines.

Illness / Accidents / Emergencies

If your camper is exhibiting any signs or symptoms of illness prior to coming to camp, especially vomiting, diarrhea, or head lice, please be considerate to others by keeping your camper at home. Consult a physician to determine if your camper's symptoms are contagious. We will still welcome any symptom-free camper who arrives late!

If your camper becomes ill during camp, they will be assessed by the Health Officer, separated from the other campers and offered a quiet, private bed to rest on in our Health Hut. If a camper is injured, first aid will be administered and a note will be made in the camper's health log. In addition to our Health Officer, all Circle Pines Summer Camp staff are trained in Red Cross Basic First Aid. There are also staff that are trained in CPR. If there is an illness or injury which requires prescription medicine or further analysis, a staff member will transport the camper to an Urgent Care facility. Parents will be notified of minor incidents when they pick up their camper. Any incident involving vomiting, head injuries, an overnight stay in the Health Hut, or off site medical attention will warrant an immediate phone call to parents.

If the parent cannot be located, the camper's emergency contact will be notified. Parents may be asked to pick up campers early if their injuries or symptoms do not improve within 48 hours.

Contacting Your Camper

When will you receive a call from the CPC staff?

- As a general rule, we discourage campers from making phone calls. We support their transition and suggest that they write letters home if they experience homesickness. *
- To inform you if your camper is at risk of being sent home. You will have a chance at this point to speak with your camper about their behavior.
- If your camper was in the health center overnight, vomiting, or taken to Urgent Care or the Emergency Room.
- If your camper has expressed a persistent interest in staying for another session.

* We are not equipped to provide phone time to all campers. Phone calls can be disruptive to the transition for campers struggling with homesickness. If there is a pressing matter that cannot be relayed by directors, campers will be given phone time after dinner between 7pm and 7:30pm EST at the discretion of the directors.

Writing

As the camp is very spread out, it is difficult for us to reach your camper if you attempt to call them during the day. The best way to communicate is to send them a letter. Staff will pass out letters on a daily basis after lunch. If you need to send an urgent message you may send an email to your camper with the subject line "ATTN: CAMPERS NAME" to the Summer Camp email address (below)*. Email is also the best way to contact camp directors as they are supervising and engaging in activities and meetings throughout the day and may miss a phone call. Please, do not arrive unannounced to visit your camper during the session. Circle Pines must approve all visitors in advance to ensure the safety of all campers.

Mail: Camper's Name
Circle Pines Center
8650 Mullen Road
Delton, MI 49046

E-mail: summercamp@circlepinescenter.net
(Please remember to put your camper's name in the subject line)

*You may have noticed the addition of "Camp Grams" to our CampDoc account. Circle Pines will not be participating in this new feature, and campers will not receive messages sent this way.

Child Protection

The Michigan Child Protection Law, 1975 PA 238, MCL 722.621 et.seq. requires the reporting of child abuse and neglect by certain persons (called mandated reporters) and permits the reporting of child abuse and neglect by certain persons. The Child Protection Law includes the legal requirements for reporting, investigating and responding to child abuse and neglect. This document is to assist mandated reporters in understanding their responsibilities under the Child Protection Law. For copies of the Michigan Child Protection Law, please contact the local DHS office or go to <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs>.

As a childcare facility, each Circle Pines staff member is a Mandated Reporter. This means that they are required to read and sign a statement clearly defining child abuse and neglect in accordance to state law and outlining the staff member's personal responsibility to report all incidents of child abuse or neglect according to state law. Should you suspect child abuse at our facility, a report of suspected child abuse must be made to the county department of social services, police department or another law enforcement agency in Barry County or Delton, MI.

Social Media

It is beyond the capabilities of Circle Pines staff to monitor Facebook, MySpace, Twitter or any other social networking sites and apps. Though all staff is trained and committed to maintaining appropriate boundaries with minors, Circle Pines Center does not take responsibility for outside communication between campers and/or camp staff outside of camp.

Tips for New (and old) Campers

- As a parent/guardian, emphasize that your child is *getting* to go to camp, rather than being *sent* to camp.
- While trying to paint a promising picture of camp, remember to discuss some of the not so glamorous realities of rustic outdoor living. There should be no surprise when a child discovers their name on the chore chart, a spider as a cabin mate, or that a trip to the outhouse may be a bit of a hike. They should likewise be prepared to try different kinds of food at camp.
- If your camper is coming with a friend from home, remind them that camp is a great opportunity to make new friends as well. While existing friends offer a support system, new friendships are a wonderful and important part of the full cooperative camp experience.
- Homesickness symptoms may occur, especially if this is your child's first time away from home. Speak openly about it before camp. Homesickness is natural. Once this is understood your child may accept homesickness with less anxiety.
- Try to avoid such statements as "if you don't like camp you can come home." Children who have a tough time adjusting to camp tend to compound the problem by closing their minds and focusing immediately on going home. Encourage your camper to apply his/her self and to ask counselors for help and guidance. Develop a strategy or timeline for what to do when they feel low. Some campers are easier to read than others and we want every child to get the attention they require.
- Heighten your child's interest by pointing out some of the things you remember about your "away from home" experiences. Try to be positive about how you were able to handle being away from your family. Tell stories of the friends you made.
- Circle Pines hosts a "sharing night" every session. Encourage your camper to bring or consider something from their "regular life", whether it be a poem, a story, a song, a dance or a trick, that they might be excited to share with the group. We've had everything from language lessons to juggling to staring contests! All skills are welcome.
- Circle Pines also hosts a Folk Dance and a Dance Party every session. This is a fun opportunity for campers to dress up. They may choose to wear fancy clothes, silly clothes, or a costume. No one is required to dress up, but any camper who enjoys dressing up should come prepared with a special outfit.

Restricted Items

Cell Phones / Electronics

Cell phones are **not permitted** during summer camp. We understand that cell phones play an important role in many campers' everyday lives and we wish to be sensitive to that; but camp is a time to engage with the community and natural environment. Drawing focus away from cell phones makes for more mindful, active, and present campers. Cell phones also present issues of privacy and security that we strive to eliminate at summer camp. Remind yourself why your child is coming to camp. Giving them a "break" from regular home life during the summer includes an opportunity for campers to be more interactive with each other without texting friends back home. It's one of the things that makes camp special. Parents with campers who are staying for more than one session have the option to leave their camper's cell phone in the safe care of directors so that their camper can have access to their phone during changeover weekend. **Ipods, mp3 players, video games and other wi-fi capable devices are also forbidden.** Wifi-disabled electronics like eReaders and digital cameras are highly discouraged but not prohibited. Their use is restricted at camp.

Food / Candy

We stress that you do **not** send your camper with food / candy **or** send it in a care package. Food / candy is often the source of arguments, litter, and pests. Insects, mice, raccoons, skunks and other critters are attracted to these items. It also creates a form of privilege within the unit. Any food that does come to camp in the mail will be kept out of reach and returned to guardians on pickup day. Campers will also be provided with yummy deserts on a regular basis. If you think your camper may require access to food outside of meal times, please contact directors in advance and we would be happy to accommodate them.

Vehicles, Pets, and Sports Equipment

Campers are not permitted to bring their own vehicles, pets, or high-risk sports equipment to Circle Pines. Examples of high-risk sports equipment include roller skates, skateboards, climbing equipment, paddleboard, bicycles, etc. Staff are neither trained nor able to supervise campers in possession of these items.

Packing List

1 Raincoat or poncho
1 Hat
1 Sturdy pair of work shoes
*1 Pair of sneakers with a closed toe
1 Pair of flip flops / sandals
14 Pairs of socks
*14 Underpants
3 Sweaters or sweatshirts
1 Jacket
*1 Thick/protective long pants for work projects
4 Shorts
4 Long pants
8 -14 Short sleeve shirts
2 Long sleeve shirts
2 Pairs of sleep clothing
Dressy/silly wear for folk dance / dance party
*1 Sleeping bag
*1 Pillow
*1 Pillowcase
*1 Twin-sized sheet
1 Pair of sunglasses
*Non-toxic bottle of sunscreen (non-aerosol)
Non-aerosol insect repellent
*1-2 Beach towels
*1-2 Shower towels
2 Washcloths
1 Laundry bag
*2 Bathing suits (required for acorns and juniors)
*1 Day backpack
Soap and soap dish
Comb or brush

Shampoo / Conditioner
*Toothbrush and toothpaste
Tote bag for toiletries
*1 -2 Flashlights
Extra batteries
*Water bottle

Other Ideas

Frisbee
Favorite soft toy
A game to share
A book or two
Binoculars
Songs to share
Musical instrument (non-expensive)
Stationary supplies
Addressed and stamped envelopes
Camera (camera phones are not permitted)
Menstrual products

Do NOT Bring

Cell phones
Candy or Food
iPods/MP3 players
Wifi enabled devices
Cash
Weapons (including knives)
Aerosol cans
Alcohol
Tobacco
Illegal Drugs
Fireworks
Large sports equipment
Pets
Video games

Notes:

- We strongly discourage bringing any expensive items (digital cameras, etc.)
- CPC does not accept responsibility for damaged, lost, or stolen personal items.
- Everything should be marked with the camper's name.
- Expect clothes to get dirty and stained.
- We are unable to provide laundry for campers. The only exception is if a camper is staying through "Change-over." Bring enough for the entire session.

This list is for 2-week session.

*** Starred items are required.**