

# LUETHI-PETERSON CAMPS INTERNATIONAL

## COUNSELLORS' MANUAL (4<sup>TH</sup> EDITION)

This is a manual for new counsellors. As we are constantly striving to improve our methods, none of the institutions and traditions described here should be regarded as fixed for all time, but rather as a general guide. In addition, individual camps differ from one another as the staff of each decides exactly what program is best suited to their own camp. Camps for older children also have a different structure than those for younger ones. However, the purpose of LPC remains the same.

### **LPC's PURPOSE: Goals & Aims**

„This organisation shall be a project based upon the conviction that understanding is essential to peace and that such understanding can be best realized through personal friendship and mutual respect which such friendship engenders.“

#### Bylaws, article 11

The understanding essential to peace is to be promoted by bringing together a small group of children from as many different countries, races, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds as possible to live together in a summer camp. By learning to know people of widely differing backgrounds before prejudices about unknown people can develop, these children will be better prepared to combat such influences later in life. The development in each individual of a sense of responsibility towards the camp community is an important tool in the achievement of our aims.

The counsellor's job is then to create an atmosphere in which understanding and friendship can develop easily and naturally, and as a background for these to provide common activities which will stimulate interests, the sense of responsibility, and the general development of each individual child. The warmth generated by the feeling of belonging to a community is perhaps one of the greatest rewards for both counsellors and campers alike.

### **SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW**

LPC counsellors work on a voluntary basis. A small amount of pocket money is paid to all our counsellors during the summer. All counsellors must be able to pay their own transportation costs to and from camp.

It is helpful for counsellors to be able to speak two languages with fluency. They must have had experience working with children.

Camp life is intentionally kept simple. As we expect the children to be satisfied with a few luxuries and to contribute to the community, so must counsellors be prepared to adapt to conditions and customs that may be new to them, and to help out whenever needed.

We prefer it if our counsellors are non-smokers and that those who smoke do so away from the camp house and never with the children. The use of drugs is prohibited in camp. Alcohol is of course never given to campers, and counsellors' use of it should be limited, as drinking alcohol has a detrimental effect on counsellors' efficiency.

The Director bears the full responsibility and is therefore the final authority in the camp.

### **Pre-camp training conference (PCTC)**

All counsellors are expected to arrive in camp a few days before the children, so that they can get to know each other, and so that plans for the summer can be made. During this time, the aspects of camp that are traditional to LPC will be fully explained: a brief description is included here.

### **The Family System**

The campers are divided into groups of six or seven, each of mixed nationalities, ages, sexes and backgrounds. There are usually two counsellors at the head of each family. Families eat together during the entire camp period. Families celebrate birthdays together, and sometimes prepare games or an evening program for the rest of the camp. One day a week is usually designated a **Family Day** - an

# LUETHI-PETERSON CAMPS INTERNATIONAL

opportunity for each family to spend the day together swimming, playing games, or perhaps making an excursion or taking a short hike.

## **Courses**

Typically, three or four course sessions are scheduled each day, usually for an hour at a time. Courses are taught in folkdancing, sports, arts and crafts, singing and music, etc. Although the particular course system differs from camp to camp, counsellors should come prepared to teach some courses that will hold a child's interest over a period of time. High enough standards should be set to ensure a challenge to each child. In addition it is often helpful if counsellors are also prepared to teach some courses in which a goal can be reached within one to three course sessions.

## **Language Courses**

In many camps, a twenty-minute language course is taught daily in order to familiarize campers with another language, and to help them communicate better with each other.

## **Assemblies**

The camp usually has an assembly once a week, (more often if necessary), when counsellors and campers sit down together to talk about any problems that may have arisen or to make suggestions. Campers learn that all details of camp life concern them. They learn to express their ideas and to seek solutions satisfactory to everyone.

## **Rolling Self-Government**

One of the main goals of LPC is to teach campers responsibility. A method used in camp is for the campers to begin helping with various aspects of camp life from the first day on. They learn how to prepare meals, to lead activities and games, and to organize different camp jobs. As the summer goes on, they gradually manage these things without the help of a counsellor. Towards the end of camp, a day or two is set aside for campers to try running the program completely by themselves.

## **Staff Meetings**

For a staff to work effectively together, they must communicate their thoughts and feelings to each other. To facilitate this, staff conferences are held each morning, briefly, and again after the campers are in bed.

## **Cultural Days**

In order to further understanding of the cultures and customs of other countries, each national group prepares a game, meal, or a presentation on some aspect of their culture.

## **COUNSELLOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

All counsellors will share the responsibility to keep the camp running smoothly, including waking the children up, supervising the cleaning, dishes, evening programs, bedtime, etc. Each counsellor has in addition a few jobs that are his or her special responsibility. Exactly what each job entails will be explained in detail during the PCTC, but the following brief description may be helpful:

### **Health**

One counsellor is in charge of taking care of any children who are hurt or sick during camp. This includes becoming acquainted with each child's medical history, visiting the local doctor, and making sure the children are receiving proper medical care. All counsellors will assist whenever possible.

### **Safety**

The counsellor in charge of safety will inspect the camp house and the surrounding area and compile a list of safety hazards. During the summer this counsellor will be responsible for making sure that anything unsafe is either taken care of immediately, or, if that isn't possible, that any possible danger is made clear to the whole group.

# LUETHI-PETERSON CAMPS INTERNATIONAL

## **Fire**

One counsellor will take the responsibility of finding the safest way out of the house in case of fire, and arranging and executing fire drills periodically, starting the first week. This counsellor will also point out any fire hazards s/he notices during the summer.

## **Water**

If swimming is possible, one counsellor will be in charge of giving a swimming test at the beginning of the season, to determine the campers' abilities. S/he will also check out the swimming area and decide where it is safe to swim. The „buddy system“ is usually used.<sup>1</sup>∩∩

## **Kitchen - Camp Cook**

Although all counsellors will take their turn in preparing meals, the camp cook is responsible for ordering all the food, planning the menus, and making sure the diet is a healthy and a tasty one, while still in keeping with the budget. This is certainly one of the most difficult and time-consuming jobs in camp.

## **Post**

One counsellor will be in charge of finding out about the particular postal system used in that country. S/he will buy the needed postcards and stamps and keep a careful record of each person's postal expenses. In addition that counsellor will check to see that each camper writes home regularly and that the letters are posted promptly.

## **Hikes - Excursions**

The counsellor in charge will be responsible for finding out possible safe excursions for the camp, acquiring maps etc. if necessary; planning or checking the routes and shelters for particular hikes; reviewing safety and first aid precautions and procedures with the hike leaders.

## **Town Relations**

As we find it very important for LPC to maintain a good relationship with the townspeople, one counsellor is in charge of getting to know our neighbours and taking care of any problems that may arise between the camp and the town.

## **Craft Supplies - Sports Equipment**

Two counsellors will be responsible for organizing the craft supplies and sports equipment, making sure that the materials are not misused, and that they are kept in order.

**It should be emphasised that each of the previously mentioned jobs concerns the whole staff. All counsellors will watch out when the children are swimming, all will take a turn in the kitchen, and so on.**

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

The daily schedule will vary from camp to camp. However, to give you an idea of a fairly typical camp day, the following description is given.

After wake-up, the camp comes together for a quick game or some easy exercises before getting dressed. Washing and bed-making follow while breakfast is being prepared. After breakfast comes a half-hour or so of singing, in which songs of many different languages are sung. „Putzpause“ (a general cleaning period) follows, when the camp works together to put the house in order and to do the laundry and dishes. A twenty-minute language course is sometimes set between Putzpause and the first course hour. Between the first and the second course hours a snack will be provided and

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<sup>1</sup> The Buddy System goes as follows: You can only go into the water if you find a „Buddy“ to go with you and look after you. You have to tell the counsellor who s/he is. The counsellor must be aware of how many „Buddies“ are in the water and whistles at intervals to call „Buddy up“. When this happens, all Buddy pairs have to lift hands, held together. The counsellor counts them and when they are counted, the counsellor whistles again. Buddies who don't co-operate have to come out of the water.

# LUETHI-PETERSON CAMPS INTERNATIONAL

counsellors will have a short conference. Campers will choose between three or four different activities to attend for these course hours. Lunch follows the second course hour, and then a rest hour when the house is kept quiet, so that anyone who needs to sleep can do so. After rest hour the schedule may be similar to that of the morning, or perhaps the camp will choose to spend an hour together playing a game instead of having a course. A second snack is offered in the middle of the afternoon and a conference held with any interested campers to plan the following day. After dinner and dishes, there is an evening program, followed by showers and bedtime for the campers. Counsellors will meet again after the children are asleep.

Each LPC is different, reflecting the special contribution of its members. If you have ideas about cultural days, evening programs, courses, games etc., please feel free to communicate them to the director.

The LPC brochure and history are especially helpful to new counsellors. If you have not read these, write to:

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