



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# SHARE YOUR LOVE OF THE OUTDOORS

**AN INTRODUCTION TO SPRING EMPLOYMENT**  
**Outdoor School, Conferences and Retreats**

## YMCA CAMP COLLINS

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# WHO WE ARE

**Our program and philosophy is centered on the development of the whole person—in spirit, mind and body. Our staff are the primary motivating force in encouraging people, especially children, to further assume responsibility for positive and sustainable lifestyle choices. Therefore, we are interested in hiring people who model such a lifestyle.**

**Working at a resident camp is truly one of the most difficult, yet rewarding, opportunities you are likely to experience. Our task of accomplishing the program goals is not an easy one. Creative, compassionate, self-motivated individuals can best achieve these goals.**

# **YMCA of Columbia-Willamette**

## **CULTURE OF INCLUSION**

**The YMCA of Columbia-Willamette staff, volunteers, members, participants and guests thrive in culturally diverse and vibrant communities. The YMCA of Columbia-Willamette embraces all individuals and families and is inclusive and welcoming to all people regardless of the following protected classes**

- **Ability**
- **Age**
- **Background**
- **Ethnicity/race**
- **Faith**
- **Gender**
- **Gender identity**
- **Gender expression**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Income**
- **HIV or Hepatitis C**
- **Breastfeeding**
- **Whistleblower**
- **Marital status/familial status**
- **Sex / Pregnancy**
- **The presence of sensory, mental, or physical actual disability or perceived disability**

**The YMCA believes that, in a diverse world, we are stronger when we are inclusive, when our doors are open to all and when everyone has the opportunity to be part of the YMCA mission and our cause. Our staff and volunteers are members of these communities we serve and are integral to ensuring that the YMCA of Columbia-Willamette remains a vital resource to our members.**

# OUTDOOR SCHOOL GOALS

- To create opportunities for positive social interaction among students and teachers in a resident camp setting by encouraging cooperation, communication, and a sense of community.
- To help students develop positive feelings and respect toward the natural world in order to feel comfortable interacting with it.
- To build within students a basic understanding of ecological principles—adaptations, food pyramids, interrelationships and systems—and of the interrelationship of humans and the natural world.
- To provide opportunities throughout the program aimed at strengthening a sense of self-reliance and self-esteem within students.
- To help students assess how their personal choices and actions affect other communities, both natural and social, and to realize their responsibility to the sustainability of these communities.
- To help students learn how to put their ideas for sustainability and environmental quality into action in their own personal lives and communities.
- In the YMCA tradition, to encourage people to build strong communities and to develop to their fullest potential in spirit, mind and body.





# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

## A Northwest Tradition

YMCA Camp Collins began as a summer camp for a handful of inner city Portland boys in 1926. Owned and operated by the YMCA of Columbia-Willamette, Collins now serves thousands of children, adults, and families each year. Its programs still include overnight summer camp, day camp, teen leadership programs, family camps, retreats and conferences, and the Outdoor School program.

The YMCA Camp Collins Outdoor School program is being fully implemented for the first time 2018. In 2011, Collins began working with private schools and charter schools to lead programs. In response to Oregon Measure 99 which allocated funding to 5th or 6th grade schools, Camp Collins decided it was a good time to implement a vision for Outdoor School.

## The “YMCA Way”

The YMCA was originally founded in 1844 as the Young Men’s Christian Association. However, today the YMCA includes everyone -- young and old, women and men, people of all faiths and spiritual beliefs. The one aspect that still holds true is that we are an association of people who strive to help others develop to their fullest potential in spirit, mind, and body. As part of this mission, we try to incorporate our core values into our program and the way we work together: love,, respect, honesty, responsibility, and service.

## Located in the Sandy River Basin

YMCA Camp Collins is located just outside Gresham, OR, a town of over 100,000 people. The camp is about 40 minutes from downtown Portland. Mt. Hood is about a 45 minute drive and it’s about 2 hours to the Oregon Coast. There are plenty of outdoor and urban adventure opportunities to enjoy.



## Facilities & Staff Housing

YMCA Camp Collins consists of 130 acres of Douglas fir forest along the banks of the Sandy River. Camp Collin’s facilities include forest and river trails, organic garden, high and low ropes courses, 450-foot zip line, climbing tower, archery range, basketball court, sand volleyball courts, crafts lodge, campfire circles, and much more. Staff live together in Rusty’s Red Bird Lodge staff housing. Each room has two beds with personal clothes storage. There are shared restrooms with showers, a complete kitchen, laundry, and a comfortable living room.

## Healthy Food Service

Our staff and guests eat family style in the Collins Memorial Lodge. With an emphasis on health and variety, our kitchen staff creates nutritious meals serving:

- Fresh fruit at least once a day
- Full salad bar with every lunch and dinner
- Poultry, fish, vegetarian and vegan entrees
- Breakfast bar, including healthy hot and cold cereals, fruit, and a full hot breakfast.
- Real juice and low-fat milk
- Whole-grain breads
- Alternatives to red meat

# LIFE AS SPRING STAFF

This is a brief, but certainly not all encompassing detailed job description for working here at YMCA Camp Collins with the outdoor school and retreat programs. This description is an honest attempt to let you know the realities of one of the most rewarding jobs you will ever have.

YMCA Camp Collins is a not for profit organization which provides environmental education, conference and family programs and a summer camp experience. While working here you will be working with all types of groups—which can take a lot of your energy. The love, excitement and value of what we are doing here makes it all worthwhile.

On average, you will work five days and have two days off. Your primary focus will be working with Outdoor School students teaching environmental education. There will be an occasional Saturday you will be asked to support our retreat programs.

Our Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace Policy exists to ensure that we, as cause driven leaders, are always providing a safe and nurturing environment for youth development and are modeling healthy living and positive behaviors. All staff will be required to take a drug test during their first week of training and will also be subject to random drug testing throughout the season.

While working here you must have the ability to work long hours. We work some days from 7:30 AM–9 PM. This can be both emotionally and physically draining. Our days are long and we DO realize that we ask a lot from you, that's why we hire only the best.

One of the key requirements to working here is that you must have a love for kids. If you're annoyed with chatty kids in a restaurant, kids playing at a park when you are trying to read or the students in your classroom when you were student teaching then this job is not for you. Kids and education are the reason that we are all here!



# OUTDOOR SCHOOL (WEEKDAYS): TYPICAL SCHEDULE

The following is a typical day's schedule while teaching environmental education here at Camp Collins. Please know that this schedule is subject to change at a moment's notice- flexibility is a key characteristic of our successful staff. This schedule will give you a brief look at what is expected of you and what the kids are involved in while they are here.

**7AM | Rise and Shine.** Students wake up and take showers and staff begin to prepare for the day, looking over schedules and getting ready for classes.

**7:30 AM | Breakfast Setup.** KP's (Kitchen Patrol) and two staff members meet in the lodge to set tables and make sure everything is ready for breakfast.

**7:45 AM | Breakfast.** All staff are expected to attend breakfast. We eat together as a staff and the kids sit together with their own table groups. This is a chance for us to start the day as a community, answer any questions for schools, each other and students and get the day off to a great start. At each meal, when we clean up, staff post at the dish room and in the kitchen to help with the flow of traffic. Two staff members do dishes during each meal- which means that you will doing dishes about two or three meals during the week.

**9 AM–12 PM | Session One.** You may be teaching lessons in the core areas of plants & trees, water and earth, animals, team building, outdoor skills, or activities. We train staff on all of these classes during staff training. Each class is two and a half hours long. Preparation for the class should be done prior to teaching time. All the resources that you will need for the classes, including lesson plans, activities and supplies, are located in our outdoor school supplies.

**12 PM | Lunch Setup.** Two staff members meet in the Dining Hall to assist KP students and make sure everything is ready for lunch.

**12:15 PM | Lunch.** With each meal there is always a vegetarian option. You also have the option of bringing your own food to the meal if you choose, however there are not facilities in the lodge for you to do personal cooking. We do have a refrigerator to store any extra things that you want to bring to a meal.

**1 PM | Recess.** This activity time is led by the volunteer cabin leader and could include ga ga ball, basketball, games, planning time, and more.

**2 PM–5 PM | Second Session.** Camp is located on 130 acres which means that many of the activities are spread out. This is great because you have your own space to teach and be as creative as you want but it also means that you have to be a great positive motivator in moving your group from place to place or you will spend the whole day walking. The key to this is to be as creative as possible- make everything a game!

**5:15 PM | Dinner Setup.** Two staff members meet in the Dining Hall to assist KP students and make sure everything is ready for dinner.

**5:30 PM | Dinner.** Two camp staff assigned to each meal to supervise the group and oversee clean up.





**7:30 PM–8:45PM | Evening program.** You might be doing a science fair, Leadership Program, Life in the Forest, running a dance, a camp fire or a night hike. We may have 1 large school or two or three schools here at a time. Each of these schools do a different evening program so we often have lots going on in the evenings. Typically (but not always) you work two evenings a week and have the other nights off. You get to choose which evenings you work and what activities you lead- so if campfire is your thing, then go nuts!

**8:45PM | Clean up.** Return all supplies from the evening program and make sure all costumes that may have been necessary are returned. Look over your schedule for tomorrow, gather any books or lesson plans you may need to read over for the next day and head home up the hill.

Part of the day also includes:

- Behavior management especially in regards to safety.
- Doing occasional office work and light maintenance.
- Writing outlines on new material you introduce.
- Cleaning: Though we have the students contribute to cleaning their living space, we need to do some deeper cleaning once they depart camp. This involves cleaning cabins, bathrooms, facilities and the lodge—we know you have a college degree, but if the camp isn't clean, schools don't come and we have no one to teach- it's all part of the big picture. Often staff split up into cleaning teams, grab some great music, and attack a particular part of camp!.
- Each of you will have Friday Duties as well—which means you might be in charge of cleaning the arts and crafts building or refueling boats or gathering all lost and found and washing it. As long as you have a great attitude, this can be one of the best parts of the week. Camp is a beautiful place and we love to keep it that way.
- Each Friday afternoon, we all sit down as a group and review the week, give each other hoorays and generally feel good about the work we have just done. We look to what is coming ahead for the next week, receive schedules and sign up for duties for the next week.



After hours and weekends are the bulk of the time we have to prepare for classes and evening programs. But not to fret, we are all in this together; by sharing resources, ideas, knowledge and experiences, we can enjoy learning as much as the kids we work with during the week. Come prepared to share your knowledge and turn interests into amazing stuff to use with the kids during the week.

Our program is only as good as we make it, and we can only make it good by an absolute commitment to each other on the staff. We need the help, knowledge and support that each one of you can provide. From this commitment, we hope to cultivate a working environment in which all of our staff learn new professional skills, develop long-lasting friendships, and have the opportunity to share their knowledge with each other. If this job sounds like it's a perfect match for you then please submit a resume—we look forward to hearing from you!





## OUTDOOR SCHOOL CLASS OFFERINGS

### Earth & Water

While hiking along the Sandy River canyon, students will observe the forces of nature that have shaped the earth around them. They will discuss the effects of earthquakes and volcanoes and learn what causes them, and will study the various steps in the water cycle and relate the importance of water conservation to their lives at camp and at home. Students will also gain a greater understanding of renewable and non-renewable resources, and the importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling.



### Outdoor Living Skills

Students will explore the undeveloped woods that surround Camp Collins and will hypothesize various survival techniques. Students will work in teams to accomplish various survival goals, including navigation and building shelters, while also learning about water purification and gathering food. They will develop skills for making fire and may prepare and cook food.

### Animals

While hiking the trails around our property, students will observe animals in their natural habitats and discuss various adaptations that help them to survive. An emphasis is placed on behavioral and physical adaptations, and how these can change over time. Students will also search for evidence of animals in particular areas, and will use both tracks and scat to identify the animals, their diet, and their size. Students will work together to discover microhabitats and draw the organisms that they observe.

### Trees & Plants

Students will explore Camp Collins' wooded trails on the quest to understand the forest. They will see firsthand the effects of natural disasters and timber harvesting and learn ways that they can help to prevent and manage the forest. Students will visit and learn to identify many important species, including some that were used by the first peoples of the Northwest.

### Team Building

Students work together to solve problems that challenge them both mentally and physically. The group starts with simple initiatives requiring basic communication and problem solving skills. Groups work up to more difficult tasks that utilize trust and reliance on one another. Activities range from non-prop and prop initiatives (use of physical items to facilitate the activity) to group efforts on a low element initiatives course. The course is composed of obstacles that require the groups to cooperatively problem solve and devise safe and effective solutions. Progression through the elements is dependent on the group's ability to work together safely.



### Activities

Through the exploration of new experiences, students are pushed outside of their normal routines and learn to set goals for themselves while encouraging others. Students are provided the opportunity to challenge themselves on the rock wall, and work to achieve their own climbing goals. Students are encouraged to learn from both instructors and their peers to improve their archery skills. An emphasis on the character values of love, respect, honesty, responsibility and service during the arts and crafts activity provides time for reflection. Students will use the candle they make representing their core value of choice in a closing ceremony at the end of the week.

## PAY AND BENEFITS

Starting pay is \$400-\$450/week. The many benefits for seasonal staff at Camp Collins are listed below:

- One week in-depth training of science curriculum, initiatives and low ropes, and outdoor activities.
- Access to plant and harvest in our garden.
- Caring, fun, adventurous and experienced co-workers.
- Housing and meals while you are working.

## EMPLOYMENT DATES

We start hiring for the spring and summer seasons in November of the previous year. Our fall staff is usually comprised of returning staff from the previous spring and summer. The following are typical dates for our employment seasons:

**Spring Outdoor School** : early April to early June

**Summer Camps**: mid June through Labor Day—contact the Summer Camp Director for information

**Fall Programs**: mid September through early November

## TO APPLY

Apply online at [ymcacw.org/careers](http://ymcacw.org/careers) and search for Program Leader—Outdoor School Instructor

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Thank you for taking the time to learn about spring employment at Camp Collins. Are you interested in learning more? Do you feel like you would be a good fit for our program? Please send your resume and cover letter to:

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