

CAMP TIDNISH
Information
&
Pre-Employment Guide
2024

Hello!

We are so excited you're interested in working at Camp Tidnish!

Camp Tidnish is a special place to thousands of campers, staff, volunteers and families. Each summer we hire approximately 20 seasonal employees to be part of the camp magic! Working at camp is so much more than a summer job. Your days will be full, participating and facilitating activities with campers and ensuring a high quality of care to our campers, many of whom have medical, social and emotional needs.

Just as we encourage first time campers to prepare for their camp experience it is important staff are equally as prepared.

We don't expect applicants to be experts in disability support, recreation or behaviour management. What we are looking for are applicants who are mature, friendly, nonjudgmental, self-aware, responsible and fun!

Camp Tidnish staff must be independently capable of caring for their own physical and emotional needs and able to discuss any concerns that arise during the camp season with the Camp Director. We are an inclusive work place and will not discriminate based on sex, gender identity/expression, race, religion, nationality, or disability.

If you have questions please contact Camp Director, Justin Dubreuil by e-mail, camping@easterseals.ns.ca or phone, 902-453-6000 ext.227. You can also follow Camp Tidnish on Facebook, Instagram @camptidnish, Twitter and TikTok.

What is Camp Tidnish?

At its core Camp Tidnish is an overnight summer camp!

What makes Camp Tidnish unique is our commitment to providing children, youth and adults with disabilities with a traditional summer camp experience. Our camp site and programs have been designed to be accessible and barrier free with paved walkways between buildings, low camper/counsellor ratios, an onsite nurse and extensive staff training. By paying attention to details we provide campers with an experience that is both safe and fun.

Camp Tidnish is a partnership between Easter Seals Nova Scotia and the Rotary Club of Amherst. These two organizations work together to ensure facilities and programming are the best they can be.

Who is Camp Tidnish?

Campers

Close to 200 campers attend Camp Tidnish each year.

The summer is organized into sessions divided by age and ability. Most sessions are seven days and six nights in length. Our Explorers session for our youngest campers is five days and four nights. Camp Tidnish is the only barrier-free summer camp in Nova Scotia and campers travel from around the province to attend. We welcome campers as young as six and some of our campers are well into their 60s and have been attending camp for more than fifty years!

Many of our campers share a diagnosis but each has their own individual interests and support needs. Diagnosis you might encounter over the summer are; Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, Multiple Sclerosis, Down Syndrome, Global Developmental Delay, Autism and Brain Injuries.

Some of our campers have both a physical and intellectual disability.

We do our very best to support campers based on their individual needs, however, we are unable to support campers who present as a flight risk, do not sleep through the night or are violent/aggressive towards themselves or others.

Summer Staff

It takes a team of dedicated, hardworking and passionate individuals to make camp run smoothly each summer. Between our Nursing, Kitchen, Counselling and Leadership Staff we hire approximately 20 individuals from mid-May until the end of August. Staff come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. We all work together to create a safe, fun and inclusive environment!

Our Camp Director

Justin Dubreuil works year-round with Easter Seals Nova Scotia as our Camp Director. Born and raised in the Atlantic provinces, the outdoors has always been a big part of his life. He loves the outdoors, from kayaking on pristine lakes to hiking the Canadian shield. He has a Bachelor of Secondary Education as well as a Diploma in Recreation and has been working the outdoor and camping industry for over 15 years.

"Every person deserves a chance to be part of the magic of camp! Cozy campfires, silly songs and toasted marshmallows are only the start. We are a unique camp, so our programming is also unique. Our campers choose Camp Tidnish because we have created a strong community where you can be your unique self, accepted and celebrated for who you are. At Easter Seals Nova Scotia we believe that our volunteers, staff and campers are more than able if given the opportunity and support to thrive."

Alumni

Hundreds of people have worked at Camp Tidnish over the last eight decades and many credit their experience working at camp to developing skills that helped them to succeed in their chosen careers. For some, hands on experience helped them stand out when applying to graduate school and others discovered a passion for advocacy and inclusion after getting to know our campers.

Where is Camp Tidnish?

Camp Tidnish is located approximately 20 minutes outside of Amherst, Nova Scotia. The physical address for camp is 130 Irwin's Point Road, Baie Verte, New Brunswick. Our site is at the very end of the road and borders both the Tidnish River and The Northumberland Strait. Camp Staff are responsible for their own transportation to and from the camp site.

Why Camp Tidnish?

That all depends on who you ask!

To many of our campers Camp Tidnish feels like a second home. It's a place where they are accepted for who they are and can safely step outside their comfort zone to try new things. For our adult campers camp is a vacation! They come to camp to savour a cup of coffee on the deck with friends, swim in the pool and enjoy a boat ride. Children and youth experience summer camp like many of their neurotypical peers with silly games, elaborate theme days and a chance to build confidence and develop independence away from home.

To our camper families we help provide a sense of 'normalcy' in lives that sometimes revolve around medical appointments and disappointment when places aren't accessible. Camp offers families an option for extended respite care, giving them an opportunity to rest or travel on their own.

To our staff camp is a place where hard work is rewarded with the satisfaction of making a difference and contributing to the world in a positive way. Our Nursing and Kitchen staff are already professionals in their field and love the large scope of practice working at camp provides. Our counsellors bring along a diverse range of experience and interests – some want hands on experience working with people who have a disability or a marginalized population, others are motivated to have a summer job full of fun and adventure and some counsellors choose Camp Tidnish because their brother, cousin, aunt or uncle worked here 20 years ago and still considers it the best job they've ever had!

Tell me more about...

The Food

Camp Tidnish is able to accommodate most dietary needs and some dietary preferences. If you have dietary restrictions/preferences it's important to let the Camp Director know well in advance of your arrival at camp so the information can be shared with the Food Service Team. In the case of severe allergens Camp Tidnish may not be able to guarantee the absence of these allergens from the camp site. In the case of dietary preferences staff may be asked to provide their own alternatives for the kitchen to prepare.

Meals at camp are planned to be nutritious, tasty and provide both campers and staff with adequate portions.

When camp is in session counsellors eat meals and snacks with campers. Food Service staff, Health Care Staff and Senior staff often eat at a slightly different times based on their schedules.

Food is not provided to staff that choose to stay on site during session breaks. There may be leftovers available as designated by kitchen staff however staff planning to stay on break must plan and provide their own food.

The Accommodations

We don't claim to be a five star hotel but it is important for staff to feel at home during the summer! The upper level of our main Lodge (aka the Bee Hive) is a designated staff space and is divided into two dormitory style rooms. Senior Staff, Health Care Staff and Food Service staff have separate bedrooms and may share with one other support staff member. You will have your own bed and space to store clothing and personal items. When camp is in session counsellors rotate between sleeping in camper cabins and sleeping in the Main Lodge.

There are four full bathrooms in the Bee Hive shared between all staff and occasionally used by campers during the day.

The Schedule

The Camp Season kicks off with Staff Orientation. The whole team arrives for Staff Training and we spend a week getting to know each other along with the practicalities of the job. We'll talk about disability awareness, strategies for behavior management, practice our communication skills and develop trust within our team that will ensure everyone has a wonderful summer!

Staff can remain on camp property between sessions on their break with the clear understanding that even on breaks there is zero tolerance for alcohol and drugs on site.

Staff are expected back at camp the day before campers arrive, we call this Day 0. On Day 0 counsellors receive their cabin assignments, have time to review camper files and prepare for the week. There will also be time for further staff development and/or team building activities.

Campers arrive on or after 3:00pm on Day 1 and staff are required to remain onsite for the duration of the camp session. Campers leave on the morning of Day 6 between 9:00am and 11:00am, and staff are finished between 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. which is the beginning of Session Break.

The Activities

Campers come to camp to have new experiences and participate in old traditions. And our camp staff is expected to participate right alongside campers! The Program Coordinator plans daily activities tailored to the interests and ability levels of the campers in each session. Some campers get more enjoyment from low impact activities – Bingo, Boccia, Coffee Houses, Cards and sharing a cup of tea on a sunny afternoon! While other campers thrive on high energy activities – soccer baseball, dance parties, scavenger hunts, GaGa and Talent Shows. All our campers look forward to weekly boat trips, wagon rides, movie night and swimming in our indoor, heated pool!

The Facilities

Camp Tidnish has five camper cabins. Cabins vary in size and can sleep between 6 - 8 campers; each cabin has a counsellor room for the counsellors on Sleeper Duty, a full bathroom and a camper sleeping area. The Bee Hive is our main building, it's where you'll find the Directors' Office, counsellor dormitories, support staff bedrooms, Arts & Crafts room, bathrooms, as well as the kitchen and dining hall.

Our heated pool is enclosed both to protect it from the elements and to allow us to swim in all types of weather!

Linen Land is where all the laundry happens at camp – we provide linens (towels, bedding, and pillows) to our campers during their stay and have washers and dryers onsite. Camp Staff may use the washing machines and dryers at camp for personal use during designated times and the staff has received an orientation on how to properly use the industrial machines from the Camp Director or designate.

The Health Lodge is equipped to meet all medical needs of campers while they are at camp. Our Head Nurse's living quarters are also located in the Health Lodge ensuring they are easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

The Camp Director lives onsite during the summer months in a cottage designated for their use. Additional bedrooms for support staff are located in the Rotary Building.

Our grounds include a Gazebo with a fireplace and loading area for wagon rides. Two playfields, one situated beside our playground and the other closer to the waterfront next to our in-ground trampoline and campfire area.

Our dock includes access to our pontoon boat and a kayak/canoe launch. Around the camp there are numerous sheds designated for specific storage – boating, sports equipment and maintenance.

The Paycheque

Camp Staff are paid through direct deposit on the same schedule as all other Easter Seals Nova Scotia employees which is every two weeks.

Standard deductions are made each pay period.

Time Off

There is no paid vacation or sick days for Camp Tidnish staff during the summer. Staff will have 2-3 days off between each camper session. While campers are on-site staff will have breaks scheduled according to the needs of campers and the program but of course, senior staff will do their best to find ways to give staff more time to take breaks as possible.

Requests for time off during camp sessions may be approved at the discretion of the Camp Director so long as the camp program can continue to operate safely in the staff member's absence.

Please note preference is given to applicants who are able to commit to the full summer and staff training is mandatory.

Day in the Life

No two days at camp are ever the same! Activities change based on camper needs and interests and Lights Out is adjusted based on the age group. We do have a general schedule that we follow and most days look a little something like this...

7:00 – Rise & Shine!

8:30 – Breakfast is Served!

9:30 – Cabin Clean Up / Cabin Inspection

10:00 – Morning Activity #1

11:00 – Morning Activity #2

12:00 – Lunch Time!

1:00 – Rest & Relax Period

2:00 – Swim Rotation #1

3:15 – Swim Rotation #2

4:30 – Free Time

5:00 – Supper!

6:00 – Evening Program

8:00 – Snack!

8:30 – Campfire

9:00 – Daily Debrief & Ready for Bed

10:00 – Sleep Well, see you in the morning!

WANT TO JOIN US FOR SUMMER 2024?

Next Steps...

Applying for a Position...

Staff Applications can be found online through the following link: <https://www.camptidnish.org/our-staff> You will be asked to specify which position you are applying for and a couple of other questions that help us determine if you might be a good fit. You'll also be asked to upload a copy of your resume and cover letter. We receive many applications and are not able to respond to each one, only applicants invited for an interview will be contacted.

Interview...

If you've completed your application in full and it sounds like you might be a good fit we will request an interview. We anticipate all interviews for 2021 taking place virtually or over the phone. The interview is a chance for you to learn more about Camp Tidnish and us to learn more about you. You'll be asked to share about your previous experience, what interests you about working at Camp Tidnish and answer some situational questions that will help give you an idea of what kinds of things to expect if you are hired.

Reference Check...

If at the end of the interview you are still interested in working at Camp Tidnish and we think you'll be a good fit we will go ahead and check your references. We ask that you submit three references who can be contacted on your behalf to verify your skill set and/or character. Your references cannot be family members but could be current or former teachers, employers, coworkers, volunteer supervisors, coaches or mentors.

Follow Up...

Our goal is to get back to you within five business days. All applicants who complete the interview will be contacted whether or not they receive a job offer.

Job Offer...

If you receive a job offer we expect you to accept or decline the offer within 72 hours. We understand and appreciate camp staff may need some time to make a decision regarding the offer of employment. Unfortunately we are unable to hold positions for any longer as we need to ensure all positions are filled by the beginning of staff training. Your job offer will be contingent on completing a Criminal Record Check including a Vulnerable Sector Search.

Accepting the Job...

Welcome to the Team!!! You'll receive a Staff Package in the mail with paperwork you need to complete prior to starting – Employment Contract, Tax Forms, Emergency Contact Information. You'll also be asked to submit a copy of your Criminal Record Check/Vulnerable Sector Search in addition to copies of any certificates relevant to your position – First Aid & CPR, Food Handlers, Canoe/Kayak, Lifeguard etc.

Communication

Applicants are welcome to contact the Camp Director with any questions or concerns. In accordance with professionalism and confidentiality the Camp Director will only communicate directly with the applicant during the hiring process.

Covid Protocols

The one thing we know for sure is camp won't look exactly as it has in the past. Our number one priority is always the safety of our staff and campers and we will only operate as long as it is safe to do so.

Easter Seals Nova Scotia has a policy in place making Covid vaccinations mandatory for all staff, volunteers and program participants unless otherwise exempt for a documented medical or cultural reason.

GOOD-TO-KNOW CAMP TERMS

Maybe you've already had a chance to talk with current or former staff and campers and found yourself spending half the time trying to make heads or tails out of a sentence like this "I was in Binns during Commanders and we were having so much we almost missed Tuck!" We sometimes use a lot of jargon in the camp world here's a few terms that we use at camp that will help understand what it is we're so excited about!

Commanders – This is a camper session for adults with primarily a physical disability over the age of 25. We have two of these sessions each summer.

Wayfarers – This is a camper session for adults with primarily an intellectual disability over the age of 25. We have two of these sessions each summer.

Voyageurs – This is a camper session for young adults with primarily an intellectual disability. This session is high energy and designed for people between the ages of 25 – 39. We have one session each summer.

Explorers – These are our youngest campers, between the ages of 6 - 13 they could have a physical or intellectual disability. This is a shorter session and campers stay at camp for five days instead of seven. We have one session each summer.

Challengers – This is our session for teens and young adults with primarily physical disabilities. Campers are between the ages of 13 and 25; we have one of these sessions each summer.

Navigators – This session is for teens and young adults with primarily intellectual disabilities. Campers between the ages of 13 and 25, we have one of these sessions each summer.

Support Staff – Counsellors make up the largest percentage of our Camp Staff. Support Staff is an easy way to refer to the Kitchen, Nursing and Leadership Staff as a collective group.

Session Break – The days between each camp where camp staff are off and not expected to perform any job related duties.

Tuck – The Tuck Shop is open three times during each session. Some campers choose to purchase a treat from the Tuck Shop in lieu of the snack being prepared by the kitchen for that day. Camp T-Shirts, group and cabin photos are also available for purchase.

Binns, Tower, Armoury, Palace, Castle – These are the names of our five cabins at Camp Tidnish.