

# **4-H Tri-County Camp Counselor Handbook**



***St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve &  
Washington Counties***

## **Counselors**

### **(Counselor Coordinators, Counselors and Assistant Counselors)**

Camp life as a Counselor offers you a unique opportunity to have fun, to discover new and satisfying experiences, and to get the most from the job in the way of personal growth and education.

#### **Duties:**

1. Responsible to the adult leadership team for performing your duties throughout the camp.
2. Set the example: Be adaptable and dedicated to the program which means you should think of the campers instead of yourself first. Remember, as a counselor you receive no “special favors”.
3. Know the campers.

Being a counselor is not a “vacation”. It gives you the opportunity to work hard and to assume real responsibilities. Campers soon know that counselors who enjoy being in camp themselves are the best kind of leaders.

The purpose of the camp can be the same for you as a counselor as for the camper. Having fun, new experiences, meeting new friends, seeing old ones, learning new skills and enjoying nature can be part of your time as counselor.

While the program and activities are enjoyable to you, you must remember that the camp is for the CAMPERS – your own enjoyment must be a by-product. You can increase your own enjoyment by knowing your responsibilities as a leader and knowing your campers well enough to help them have fun and find satisfaction and growth through their camp experiences.

***Your return for a job well done will be personal growth, wide interests, new skills and an appreciation of friendship and leadership.***

Some of the qualifications a counselor:

1. Be in good health, both mental and physical. (Sleeping is key)
2. Must be interested in and sympathetic to the campers and willing to take them as they are.
3. Must show respect and consideration for everyone in camp.
4. Must be fair-minded and impartial.
5. Must show good judgment, don't be afraid to say no.
6. Must be enthusiastic and encouraging. If you aren't the campers won't be **guaranteed!**
7. Must be adaptable to a changing program.

## What is YOUR job?

### *A camp counselor is:*

1. One who works
2. One who listens
3. One who suggests.
4. One who guides
5. One who becomes interested the campers around them.
6. One who helps each to become a member of the group, adjust him/herself to the various activities and learn to live with other people.

### *General Responsibilities:*

1. Living with a group of campers, taking part in small group life. Counselors will take the lead in letting campers know what is expected of them. It is everyone's responsibility to be consistent about enforcing rules. It is your job to make sure they know what is expected and required, and to do this in a pleasant way.
2. There will be as few rules as possible and those will be necessary for the health, safety and convenience of all campers. It is therefore, important that you understand the need for the ones we have.
3. For the period of camp, the camp becomes home and your group becomes family. You need to get to know each member of that cabin group. You can get this info talking with the campers.
4. Be alert, especially on the first day and night for homesickness or unhappiness of any kind. Just be interested and let group members know you are interested in them. Let them talk. Include them in everything without too much urging. Your interest and enthusiasm will give them a feeling of security.
5. See that no one is left out.
6. Help to create a desire for good table manners.
7. Be ready for changes in schedules due to weather or other things. Having activities ready to go at a moment's notice will help avoid that instant panic thought of "Now what do we do?!"
8. Don't let bad behavior continue without finding the reason for it.
9. Be positive in your comments. Offer constructive criticism, suggestions or instructions. Too many "don'ts" discourage.

## 4-H TRI-COUNTY CAMP ASSISTANT COUNSELOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Purpose: To assist counselors with campers, assist with kitchen duties and assist in setting up various camp activities. To learn the various counselor skills needed to move into a camp counselor role in the future. To be able to participate in camp activities when not needed in leadership role.

### Responsibilities:

1. Work as a team of assistant counselors to create a workable kitchen helper system.
  - Work with Counselor Coordinators to set up schedule
  - Show up in the kitchen on time to assist with duties – fill pails for dishes, get milk from cooler, help cook put out food
  - Keep a cheerful attitude while completing these tasks
2. Assist in setting up various camp activities.
  - Refer to camp schedule for activities your team is responsible to set up.
  - Have activities set up and ready to go before campers arrive.
  - Be flexible as camp schedules sometimes run on a different clock.
3. Help camp counselors with their campers.
  - Assist with getting groups to activities on time and help with activities/events.
  - Assist with disciplinary issues, calling for a counselor if needed.
4. Encourage all campers to be involved in camp activities.
  - Watch for shy camper with appropriate activities
  - Calm over-active campers with appropriate activities
  - Watch to see all campers participate in all activities-encourage appropriately
5. Get to know each camper and help them become a part of your group.
6. Actively participate in training activities during camp
7. Be prepared for rainy days with appropriate activities.
8. Provide coverage in cabins during the morning get up time and evening settle in time.
9. Work as a team member of the counseling staff by carrying out other responsibilities. (Examples, campfire, clean-up, flag ceremonies).



## 4-H TRI-COUNTY CAMP COUNSELOR JOB DESCRIPTION

**Purpose:** To guide and counsel young campers

**Responsibilities:**

1. To provide for the health and safety of all campers.
  - be alert for homesickness, bedwetting, other common problems
  - see that campers eat regularly, get enough sleep and maintain personal hygiene
  - know what to do in case of emergency – severe weather, accident or someone getting hurt, allergic reaction to food, poison ivy or other plants
2. Help campers know what is expected of them and be consistent enforcing the rules.
  - don't have favorites
  - review camp boundaries with campers
  - review camp rules with campers
3. Be available to all campers in your cabin group and know where they are.
4. Encourage all campers to be involved with camp activities.
  - watch for shy campers with appropriate activities
  - calm over-active campers with appropriate activities
  - watch to see all campers participate in all activities – encourage appropriately
5. Get to know each camper and help them become part of your color group, “your family.” See that no one is left out or teased.
6. Be prepared for rainy days and camper cabin group time with appropriate activities.
7. Help campers respect one another
  - take care of personal property
  - abide by quiet times
  - use table manners
  - do not tease one another
8. Help with skill sessions when appropriate.
  - assist lifeguard during swim time.
  - assist with arts and crafts sessions
  - assist with outdoor recreation
9. Guide and work as a team member with the assistant counselors by carrying out other responsibilities. Examples: campfire, clean-up, flag ceremonies
10. Act as a positive role model.
  - listen to the campers
  - encourage the campers
  - be enthusiastic and get involved in activities
  - have energy
  - be creative – try new skills
  - **SMILE**
  - try to help campers have fun



11. Abide by camp rules
  - do not leave cabin after lights out
  - do not bring smoking items or alcoholic beverages or other drugs to camp
  - do not use foul language
  - do not bring weapons to camp
  - do not bring valuables to camp
12. Work as a team to develop and implement meaningful camp program and activities.

**Qualifications:**

1. Must be an active 4-H member of Washington, St Francois or Ste Genevieve Counties in good standing within your own 4-H club.
2. Must be age 14 or older at the time of camp.
3. Experience in working with children in a group setting.
4. Responsible, friendly, enthusiastic and willing to learn.

**Responsible to:**

Counselor Coordinator(s)  
4-H County Staff



# 4-H TRI-COUNTY CAMP COUNSELOR APPLICATION

*(Application due: June 1, 2009)*



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Age (as of Jan 1) \_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Grade in School \_\_\_\_ Yr in 4-H \_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

T-Shirt Size (adult sizes- ✓ one): \_\_\_\_S \_\_\_\_M \_\_\_\_L \_\_\_\_XL \_\_\_\_XXL \_\_\_\_XXXL

Have you previously attended a Camp Counselor Training Workshop? \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No

If yes, when and where? \_\_\_\_\_

There are two positions for counselors that you will be considered for:

Assistant Counselor or Counselor

*(4-H Staff will assign level of counselor you will perform)*

Do you want to be considered for the Counselor Coordinator's position? \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No

What skills would you bring to the Counselor Coordinator position? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you currently have a Red Cross First Aid Certification Card: \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No

Are you currently a Red Cross Certified Life Guard: \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No

List Camps (4-H and Non-4-H) which you have attended:

Name of Camp	Year	Camper	Counselor

What age of camper do you prefer to be a counselor for? \_\_\_\_8-9 \_\_\_\_10-11 \_\_\_\_12-13

***Camp Activities:***

Which of the following are you comfortable leading at camp (✓ all that apply):

- Arts and Craft     
  Campfire Programs     
  Canoeing     
  Mud Cave  
 Flag Ceremonies     
  Swimming     
  Games/Recreation     
  Dances  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your experience with three of the camp activities you identified (These could be other than at camp):

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Explain why you want to be a camp counselor?

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What do you want to learn from your experience as a camp counselor?

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If you have special dietary needs please describe:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Applicant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Completed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

Please return completed application to: **Ste. Genevieve County University of Missouri Extension**  
**255 Market St.**  
**Ste. Genevieve, MO 63670**



## 4-H TRI-COUNTY CAMP

### 4-H SUMMER CAMP COUNSELOR CONTRACT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, accept my appointment to the position of **Camp Counselor** at the 4-H Tri-County Camp held at Camp Butterfly and will try, to the best of my ability, to fulfill the responsibilities as outlined and discussed in counselor training.

I also understand that my stay at camp in this capacity is dependent upon my ability to conduct myself in a responsible manner, to follow the camp and counselor rules, respect property and provide appropriate supervision, care and leadership for campers under my direction.

Failure to do so will result in a termination of my appointment and may require that my parents provide for my transportation home from Camp Butterfly.

Counselor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_