

Your Clinic and the Mission of Camp

Some Facts About "Activity"

- Bike riding has decreased by 30 percent over the past few decades.
- In a typical week, only 6 percent of children ages nine to thirteen play outside.
- Children at 8-years-old can identify 25 percent more Pokemon characters than wildlife species.
- Average youth between eight and eighteen spend more than forty-five hours a week with electronic media.
- Obesity in American children has increased from about 4 percent in the 1960s to close to 20 percent in 2004.
- 70 percent of the mothers reported playing outdoors every day when they were young, compared with only 31 percent of their children.
- Free play and discretionary time declined nine hours a week from 1981 to 2003.
- 71 percent of adults report that they walked or rode a bike to school when they were children, but only 22 percent of children do so today.

So, What Are Clinics & Why Do We Have Them?

At Camp Augusta our daily schedule, in general, contains four clinic times and a Playstation, from which the campers can decide what they would like to do. We like to offer lots of diversity and options to the campers and also love to hear their requests of new and exciting things to do. Our main reason for having clinics is that we hope to ignite passion in campers, whether that be with a new activity that they enjoy, or a newfound desire for life and living.

Some other camps run their programming very differently. The cabin may stick together for the entire time at camp and do all of their activities as a group, or campers may sign up for a themed session where all of their activities will be decided ahead of time and they're handed a schedule to keep to. So why do we do it this way?

- At Camp Augusta we believe in choice. Choice is empowering. The campers make the decision of what their day will look like entirely for themselves, based on their own interests and what they feel in the mood for.
- It encourages independence in campers – they don't have to sign up to clinics with their friends or the activities their parents want them to learn. They learn to find what THEY love, not what their friends do.
- Their day is varied – if they don't enjoy something, they don't have to do it again. If their reason for not trying something again is "failure" or something not embodying true personal choice, we counsel the child on trying again, often with a note to the instructor.
- Ultimately they can learn a lot in a day and will sleep very well at night!
- Campers will find something they like and want to excel in it. By doing sign-ups, they have the opportunity to do that activity every day if they so choose, and really develop their skill to an advanced level.
- Campers know their own personal needs better than we do. Our activities range from highly active, to creative and "chill." If they know they are low on energy in the afternoons, they can sign up for more chilled out clinics.
- We get feedback as to what clinics activities are hits and misses, and in future years we can use this data to come up with programs that mirror camper choices.

The Mission of Your Clinic

A study was undertaken which revealed that surgeons who played video games were better than those who did not. The idea being that they developed a dexterity through play. However, what would be the difference between a surgeon who played outside at a summer camp compared to a surgeon who played video games? Even without the credibility of a study, I think we can all be pretty sure that the surgeon who played outside would be a safer bet to take care of your operation, and there are good reasons why. Take archery for example, both intense focus and coordination are necessary to hit the center of a target at 30 meters. Dozens of muscles must be in harmonious synchronicity. The mind must be still and focused. In sword fighting, quickness of reaction time, nimble body, and awareness of more than a single focal point are just a few of the abilities necessary. Or, when creating a fine piece of wood working, playing the kalimba, sensing the wall of your clay pot on the wheel, or being in tune with the flow of liquid and color in silk painting, one's mind and body are becoming more unified and connected.

In teaching your clinic, pay attention to the grace and beauty with which you demonstrate, practice, and coach. There is more at stake than the finished product of an art, the flight of the arrow, one's seat in riding, conquering the Tower, or perfecting the J stroke.

Levels

Not all clinics have levels – they are not always necessary. In arts, for example, the creation essentially forms the same purpose as the bracelet. For those clinics which do, levels are beneficial because:

- They provide campers with set goals to achieve and work towards - they can have pride in themselves
- They are a solid benchmark for skill levels – campers will know how well they are doing in relation to the difficulty of the activity
- They provide a tangible symbol of progression. When campers see proof of acknowledgment that they are getting better at something, it will enhance their self confidence. They can also serve as talismans.
- Campers don't have to sit through a talk about the basics every time they sign up for the same clinic. Once they pass level 1, they can move on to level 2, etc.
- They allow us to tailor clinics to the needs of the campers. If many campers pass levels 1 and 2 in the first couple of days, we know to offer a more advanced level 3 clinic (or we know to make it harder!)
- Since leveled activities are tailored to ability to pass the previous level, this helps with the safety of some of the more advanced moves, shots, etc that are in higher levels.

When passing a level, a camper receives a “level bracelet” to show that they have passed. This is both for their own achievement, a mark of pride, and so that we know they are ready for the next level. For more detailed information on how this relates to the camp philosophy on competition, please refer to the Competition document.

An Inspiring Clinic, or a Boring One?

Qualities of a good clinic:

- You are prepared to teach – you have the knowledge and are ready with the equipment!
- Priorities in order: safety, fun, learning.
- You are passionate about the activity and full of energy to teach it!
- You are focused on the task at hand and while being aware of the group, you are attentive to the individual
- You adjust to the needs of the campers and their progression
- While you are open to learning something new yourself

The above qualities can drastically show a difference in the same activity led by two different people. They can be the difference between a camper finding a new passion and love for being in the outdoors, and a camper being bored and thinking about their video games back at home. Imagine what kind of character can be built in a camper who discovers a new HEALTHY activity at camp that s/he loves and then pours their heart into it! Imagine the rush of excitement s/he feels at doing that activity, or even thinking about it. How full will their experience be? How rich will the memory and future-told stories about it be? Now imagine the same clinic taught with a ho hum attitude and a dull and listless sense of adventure When one's heart, body and mind are fully committed to something, their spirit will shine, and so will yours if you are so lucky as to be the one who inspired it.

The Beauty of Teaching Clinics

Unlike some other camps, we aim to vary your time as much as the campers. We would like for you to teach the clinics you want to teach and gain variety to your day, both for your own benefit and for that of the campers. It's good for campers to experience the social aspect of having different leaders to the clinics they sign up for. You get to know more of the campers, and they get to know more of us! Also, with everyone's different style of teaching and unique creativity, the campers have the potential to learn much more.

At camp, you have the opportunity to learn many of (or hopefully all) the clinics you would like to teach. We also have plenty of KM to assist you with learning many of the skills and safety points we have learned over the years. However, what we don't expect is that you teach the clinic as an EXACT clone of how you were taught to teach it. The beauty of Camp Augusta is the diversity, and we all have something unique to offer in teaching each clinic. Bearing in mind safety procedures and level requirements which are important, you are highly encouraged to infuse YOUR own clinic with a personal and unique brand of energy and enthusiasm. Teaching does wonders for your own mind, body and spirit J YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE.