

Frequently Asked Questions!

When does training begin and end? When does the season end? Are there opportunities for year-round work?

Spring training begins in late February and the season ends in mid to late June. Training for Fall begins in late August and the season ends in the beginning of November. There are some opportunities for folks to stay at camp for up to a month or two after the season ends in fall. These additional months are completely optional but give folks an opportunity to live on site and work 10 or so hours a week for maintenance or curriculum development as a trade for housing. This is a nice option for folks looking for their next job, or for those who want to work on the peninsula, Gig Harbor, or Tacoma for a little bit of time. If you would like to stay at camp for nine months, there is potential to stay on for the summer program as well.

What are the ages of the students/adults that you serve?

Our largest demographic involves 4th- 8th graders, but we also serve a couple high school groups. On weekends, we host conference/retreat groups (i.e. university residential life planning) or family camps, which include kids from infant to adults (and yes, some of the adults revert to childhood upon their arrival to camp!).

What are your primary areas of focus when it comes to curriculum?

We have 4 main themes - Marine, Forest, Outdoor Skills, and Challenge Education. Within each theme, teachers can choose from 3-4 classes, which can be tailored to meet their curriculum requirements. Instructors are trained in all classes, and expected to be able to teach all of them when required. Research and preparation is expected throughout the season.

How long do students spend at Camp Colman?

Typically, students spend 2 nights and 3 days here, with some variations.

How many staff work at Camp Colman?

We have 5 full-time, year-round staff (Camp Director, OEE Director, Summer Camp Director, Food Service Coordinator, Facilities Director), 2 Assistant Directors and 6-8 OEE Instructors (depending on the season). We are also just down the road from Camp Seymour and work/socialize with them (i.e. Ultimate Frisbee!) - they have about 8-9 Naturalists and 2 OEE Directors.

Can you describe a typical work-day and a typical work week.

Here's a run-down of our schedule, keeping in mind that we try to make sure you are getting a block of time off in the long day so that you are not burned-out.

We start at 7:40 with breakfast duties, breakfast at 8, and 2 classes from 9:00-12:00. Classes are almost all outdoors, on the beach, in the forest, or on the ropes course/climbing wall. You would have a group of 14-16 kids with at least one

chaperone/teacher, and be responsible for teaching a variety of classes or facilitating a challenge course group.

Lunch at noon, siesta time, and then 1 more class from 2:00-3:30. Recreation time (boating, archery, sports courts, arts & crafts) from 3:45-5, and dinner duties at 5:10. Dinner at 5:30, kids in cabins with their chaperones until 7:45 when evening program starts. This may be a campfire, a night hike, a Dork Dance, a game of Alpha Wolf, etc. We try to wrap up between 8:45 & 9, and the kids head back to cabins with chaperones. If you have "night duty" it means that you stay on camp for the night, and are available if the teachers need help in an emergency situation. Director staff also live here, and support those on night duty.

As far as the week goes, we start our Mondays at 9 AM, the schools arrive about 11 AM, and we get rolling. Tuesday is full, Wednesday is full and usually a transition day to a new school, Thursday is full, and Friday tends to be shorter, with the school leaving about 1:00 - we wrap up about 4:00-5:00. During the week, we try to make sure you have 2-3 evenings off. We also host weekend groups, so if you are scheduled to work during the weekend, we try to give you two days off during the week. It's definitely a rotating schedule, but our goal is to make sure that everybody gets adequate time for their own personal lives and fun. Supporting out conference and retreat program includes running program areas and strong customer service skills.

Sample school schedule:

Day of Arrival:

11:00	School Arrives
11:20	Camp Tour (students and OEE Instructors)
12:00	Sack lunch, orientation, recycling rendezvous, ort skit
2:00-3:30	Class 1
3:30	Snack (optional for additional fee)
3:45-5:00	Recreation Time (staff at A&C, Archery, Waterfront)
5:10	Dinner Duties (KP, Flag, Weather)
5:30	Dinner
7:45-9:00	Night Program

Second Day

7:40	Breakfast Duties (KP, Flag, Weather)
8:00	Breakfast
9:00-10:30	Class 2
10:30-12:00	Class 3
12:15	KP Duty
12:30	Lunch
1:15	Rest Time
2:00-3:30	Class 4
3:30	Snack (optional for additional fee)
3:45-5:00	Recreation Time (Instructors at A&C, Archery, Waterfront)
5:10	Dinner Duties (KP, Flag, Weather)

5:30	Dinner
7:45-9:00	Night Program

Departing Day

7:40	Breakfast KP
8:45	Evaluation and Clean-up
9:30-11:00	Class 5
11:15	KP Duty
11:30	Lunch
12:30	Closing Ceremony
1:00	Say Goodbye!
1:01	Staff Celebrates

Can you describe the staff housing? Will I be sharing a room? Is there access to phones and computers? Are there kitchens in the staff housing?

Staff housing consists of shared rooms that open to a sitting area in a BRAND NEW staff house! There will be a kitchen in the new staff house and the camp kitchen is also open and accessible at all times in order to make meals (this is a great privilege). Meals are provided when there is a group in camp and staff are welcome to food from the camp kitchen.

The staff share a phone line, but there are 2 office lines and a third guest line if needed. Access to the Internet is provided via a staff computer along with a wireless internet connection! If you have your own laptop, I highly recommend it.

Can you describe the meals at Camp Colman? Are vegetarian options available? Do staff eat all meals with campers? I have chosen a primarily organic diet, and am wondering if I would be able to continue with it.

The meals here vary, to be honest. We are always provided with a vegetarian option, and for the most part, they are quite good. If we choose, we can always make our own meals - the kitchen is very understanding and friendly about that. You do not eat at the same table as the campers, but we do eat in the dining hall at a staff table. Your presence at every meal while you are working is required.

As far as staying organic - we do supplement some kitchen food with our garden, but it would be difficult to rely solely on the camp food to maintain an organic diet - you would probably need to supplement most items! We are beginning to integrate some of our organic garden's produce into our meals, which is great, but certainly doesn't account for all nutritional needs. Food and its quality are integral parts of our meal program, so we try to be as accommodating as possible, keeping in mind the need to feed large amounts of people on a YMCA Budget.