SHARE YOUR LOVE
OF THE OUTDOORS

AN INTRODUCTION TO SPRING & FALL EMPLOYMENT
Outdoor Environmental Education, Conferences and Retreats
YMCA CAMP ORKILA
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.
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 (i.e. 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 Orkila began as a summer camp for a handful of inner city Seattle boys in 1906. Owned and operated by the YMCA of Greater Seattle, Orkila now serves thousands of children, adults, and families each year. Its programs still include summer camp, as well as Teen Leadership Programs, Family Camps, Y Guides, Retreats and Conferences, Community Programs and the Outdoor Environmental Education program.

The Orkila OEE program began serving just a few schools as a site for environmental education programs in 1971. In 1984, the YMCA developed its own environmental education program for schools. Since then, the OEE program has grown and continued to develop. This year, it will host approximately 7,000 students from 70 different schools within the Pacific Northwest.

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 four core values into our program and the way we work together: respect, responsibility, caring, and honesty.

Located in the San Juan Archipelago

Living on an island is a wonderful way of life! Orkila is settled on the Northwest corner of Orcas Island in the San Juan Islands, which means that we enjoy views of the Canadian Gulf Islands and spectacular sunsets every night. To get to the island, one must take an hour-long ferry ride from Anacortes to Orcas Landing.

Facilities & Staff Housing

YMCA Camp Orkila consists of 285 acres of forests, field, farm, pond, and marine environments, as well as a 110-acre private island and 10-acre mountain retreat within Moran State Park. Orkila’s facilities include an 18,000-gallon marine tank, forest trails, pond community study center, organic garden, salmon hatchery, high and low ropes courses, 1000-foot zip line, climbing tower, softball and soccer fields, archery range, basketball and volleyball courts, crafts center, campfire circles, covered program shelter, and a half mile of beach-front property. Staff live together in three of our Dederer Retreat Center buildings. Each building, nestled in the forest slightly away from main camp, has four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a complete kitchen, and a comfortable living room.

Healthy Food Service

Our staff and guests eat family style in the Larry Norman Lodge overlooking President Channel. 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 dinner
- Poultry, fish, vegetarian and vegan entrees
- Breakfast bar, including healthy hot and cold cereals, fruit, and a full hot breakfast.

Staff will also be able to request food from a set menu from the kitchen to use when cooking for themselves in their houses on their time off.
LIFE AS SPRING & FALL STAFF

This is a brief, but certainly not all encompassing detailed job description for working here at YMCA Camp Orkila with the environmental education and family camp 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 Orkila 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.

We will work each season on a rotating schedule in two or three different groups. On average, you will work 5 days and have 2 days off. You can expect to work a combination of weekdays (teaching environmental education) and weekends (working with conferences and retreats).

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 7:30am to 9:00pm. 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!

You must have a sense of humor about being here too!
Environmental Education (weekdays): Typical Schedule
The following is a typical day’s schedule while teaching environmental education here at Camp Orkila. 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.

7:00AM 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.

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

7:45AM Time for 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 2 or 3 meals during the week.

9:00-10:30AM Your first class of the day begins. You may be teaching pond, beach walk, geodesic dome, initiatives or one of the other 30 classes that we offer. We train staff on all of these classes during staff training. Each class is an hour and a half 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 environmental education program office.

10:30-12:00 Class number two. Most of the time you will have the same study group the entire time a school is here. This way you can establish a connection with the group and learn the most effective way to work with those students. Usually parents and teachers tag along with your group to help with behavior and to observe the awesome things you are doing with the students. This is a chance for you to shine!

12:00PM  KPs and two staff members meet in the lodge to help set the tables for lunch.

12:15PM 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.

1:30-3:00PM Class number three begins. Camp is located on 285 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!

3:00-4:30PM The final class of the day. Students can be worn out at this point. Make sure classes are a great mix of teaching and action so that the focus is on the class and not the two hundred sticks on the ground.

4:30-4:45PM Classes are done for the day. Now it is time for open recreation. This is your chance to check the schedule and see what open rec activity you have been signed up to do.

4:45-5:45PM Many activities are offered during this time. You might be running boating with two other staff which means you are helping to hand out life jackets, carrying boats down to the water or driving the dock boat in case someone needs help. You might be running archery in which you are helping students load arrows, perfect their shots and enjoy the activity safely. You may be in the arts and crafts building helping students to make
lanyards, collages, paintings or nature frames. The Marine Center is another spot. Here you will hang out and answer any questions about the fun creatures in the touch tank. This is a great place to get curious minds thinking about ocean life. Another duty is cleaning bathrooms around camp. You and two other people will head to all the bath houses and make sure toilet paper is stocked, counters are clean and toilets are unplugged (not the most glamorous job- but one of the most important!).

5:45PM  KP’s and two staff meet in the lodge to set up for dinner.

6:00PM  Dinner- if you are not doing an evening activity then you can choose not to come to dinner... as long as you don’t have a job at the meal.

7:30-8:45PM  Evening program! You might be doing a science fair, Star Wars, running a dance, a camp fire or a night hike. Many times we have three or four 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  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: This primarily happens on Wednesdays and Fridays when the schools leave. 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 Environmental Education Class Offerings

LIFE: Life science classes study the interactions within the living world.

EARTH: Earth science classes study abiotic factors that impact the living world.

CHALLENGE: Challenge classes address human interactions, communication, team-building and adventure.
Conferences and Retreats (weekends): Typical Schedule

Our weekend program serves families as well as conference and retreat groups. Working with this program is different than doing environmental education, however this program is equally as rewarding because of the opportunity to work with families as they learn and have fun together.

As a staff member, some of your work days will fall on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. Here is an outline of our weekend program and what your schedule might look like on those days:

On Fridays, whatever staff is working that day will meet with the Conference and Retreat Director to discuss the upcoming weekend. At this point you will all review the schedule for the weekend and discuss any details that may be important. Usually on Fridays someone drives our luggage truck and mini buses (you will be trained) to the ferry landing to pickup the luggage and weekend guests. The rest of you make sure cabins are set; the lodge is ready and guests are checked in.

Saturday 7:45am: One staff member along with the Conference & Retreat director will set up the lodge and make sure its good to go!

8:00am: Breakfast begins and guests start arriving at the lodge. The guests on the weekends eat buffet style. Staff take turns helping to run the meal to make sure that everyone gets a chance to eat. Expect at least one meal duty during the weekend.

9:00am: Staff gather for a program assembly to introduce themselves to guests and share where they will be during the morning.

9:30am: Program areas begin! There is archery, riflery, arts and crafts, row-boating, Life in the Forest (a large group tag game), the Giant Swing, and the Marine Center. Families come to the various activities, participate, and then venture onto the next activity. Often families are very interested in staff and what you do and where you are from- this is a chance for you to make some really neat connections with the guests.

12:00pm Lunch! Staff sit at their own tables but still help out with meal duties.

1:30pm Program areas begin again. You will be working in a different program area from the morning.

3:30pm Rotate to another program area! We don’t want you working the same thing all day so you will mosey to your next location to facilitate something new.

6:00pm Dinner!

Evenings: Either help manage a campfire the group is hosting or you and a coworker will put on a show for the guests. Work the evening is usually done by 8:30pm.

Sunday 7:30am: Breakfast- during this meal guests (and you) make sack lunches for the afternoon as lunch is not served on Sunday.

9:00am: Program Areas open. Less things are run on Sunday since most guest have left and others leave on the 12:20am ferry.

11:00am: Once the guests leave, all the staff who are on that day are responsible for cleaning camp (much like the cleaning discussed earlier for Friday’s once a school leaves). Once the cleaning is done on Sundays, you will work on projects to get ready for the following week. Then enjoy the rest of your afternoon!

Our weekend program is an extremely successful program here at Camp Orkila. Families come to enjoy the beauty of this place, the activities we provide and the positive and fun atmosphere we create. Each of you, as staff, are important to making this program something families look forward to each year.
Pay and Benefits

In addition to a starting pay of $250/week, spring and fall staff enjoy many benefits at Orkila. During the season, we provide staff with room and board. We also encourage staff to help plant and harvest in our large organic garden. Staff will also have an opportunity to use our Orkila sea kayaks. There will be an optional staff kayak training which will allow you to use kayaks to explore the surrounding area with other staff during time off.

Spring & Fall Dates

We start hiring for the spring season in mid-October 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 two seasons:

Spring: mid-March to mid-June
Fall: early September to late October

THANK YOU!

Contact Information

Thank you for taking the time to learn about spring and fall employment at Camp Orkila. 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:

Haley Cruz Winchell, Outdoor Environmental Education Site Director
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