

L.G. Cook 4-H Camp



**CAMP INFO
AND
WELCOME GUIDE**

973.948.3550
NJ4HCAMP.RUTGERS.EDU



JUST THE FACTS

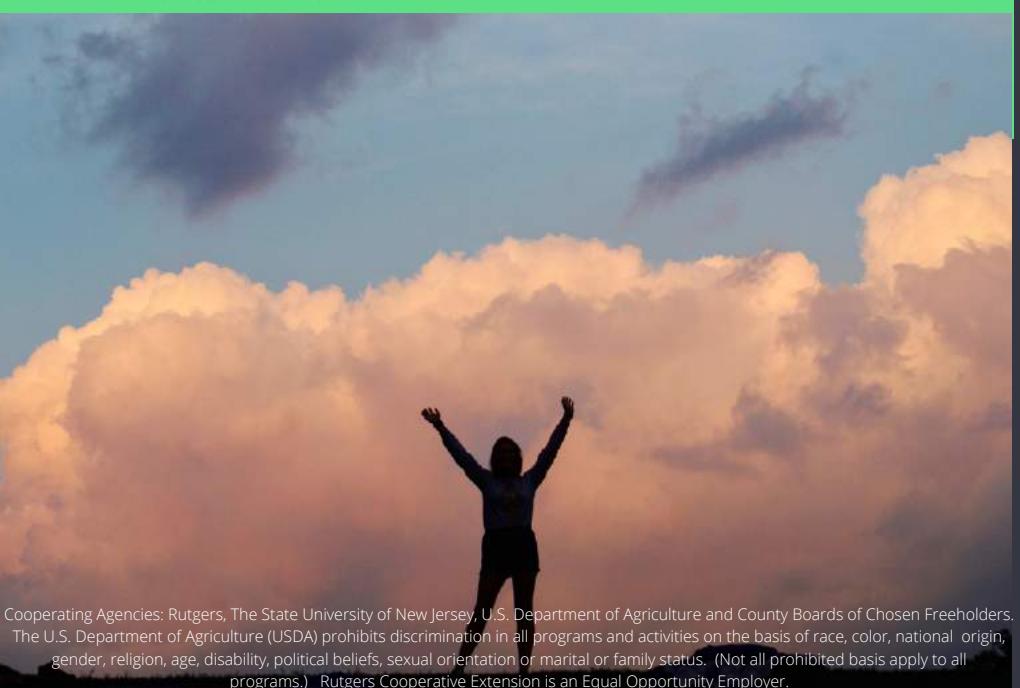
SIX DAY SESSIONS
4 SESSIONS IN JULY
AGES 8-16

EIGHTEEN DAY SESSION
IN AUGUST
AGES 10-16

OPEN ENROLLMENT: ALL YOUTH MAY APPLY

A TECH-FREE, RUSTIC SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCE FOCUSED ON MAKING NEW FRIENDS, LAUGHING A LOT, TRYING NEW THINGS AND CREATING A COMMUNITY DEDICATED TO SIMPLY ENJOYING OUR WEEK OUT IN THE WOODS TOGETHER.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY'S SUMMER CAMP



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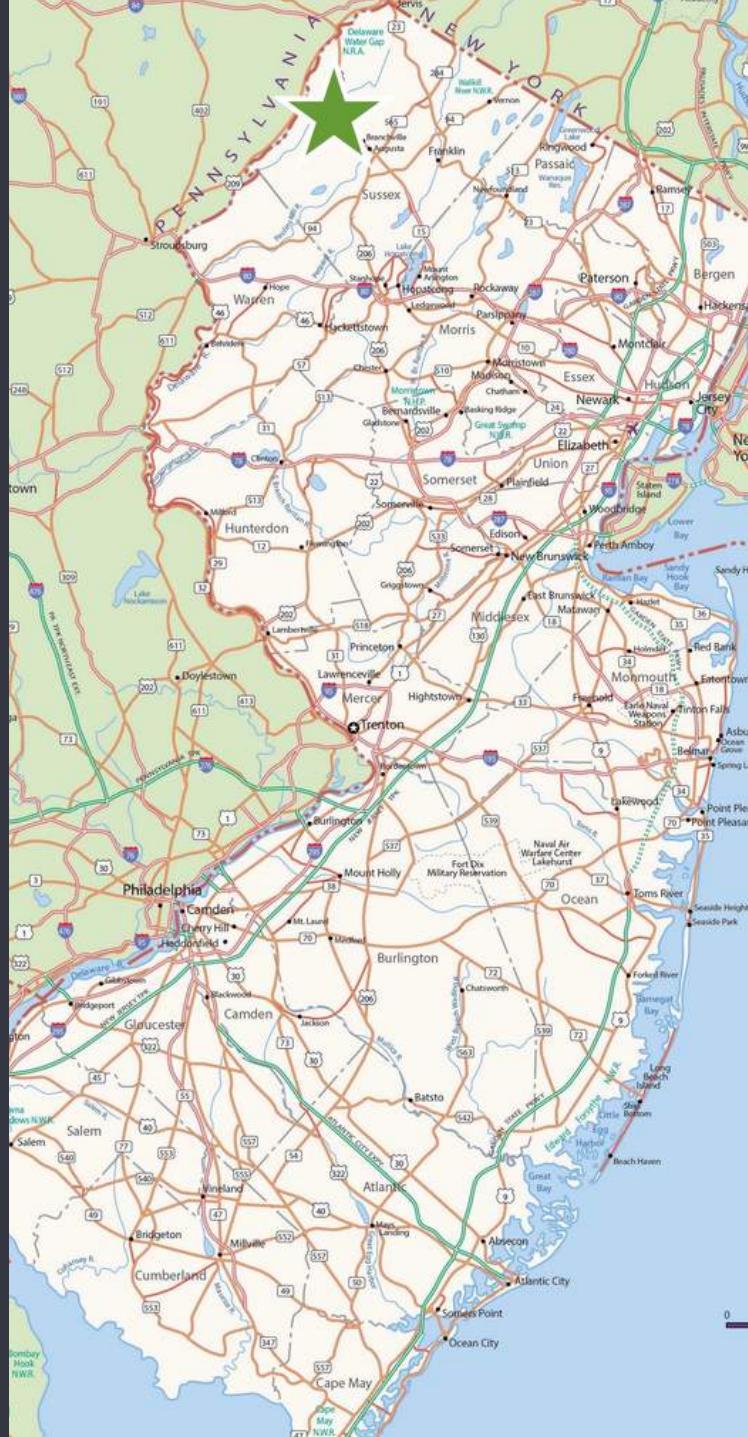
See You Next Summer!
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NEW JERSEY'S 4-H CAMP

We are the state 4-H camp and have been running weeklong, residential summer camp sessions every summer since we opened in 1951. We're an open enrollment camp, open to all youth ages 8-16. The majority of our campers are from New Jersey and the surrounding tri-state area, but each summer we welcome campers from all over the country, and all around the world.





Stokes State Forest, Northwest New Jersey

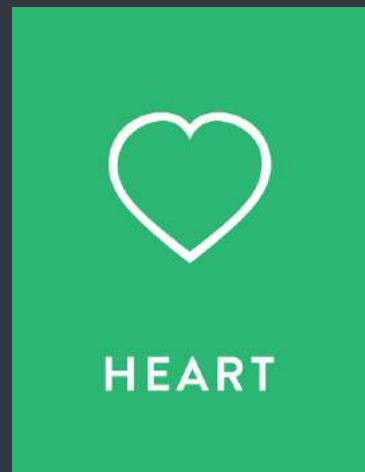
Our facility sits on 108 acres lined with hiking trails beside our own beautiful little lake, [Lake Shawanni](#). In addition to our collection of original and rustic camp buildings, 4-H Camp has archery ranges, recreation fields, campfire rings, and a ton of other areas dedicated to playing outside and enjoying the great outdoors. Though we have a giant stretch of forest to ourselves, Camp Central is quite consolidated, and all of our campers' cabins and main buildings are just a short walk from one another.



4-H CAMP IS OWNED, OPERATED AND MANAGED BY RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION. THE FOUR H'S ARE THE CENTRAL PILLARS TO THE COMMUNITY WE BUILD HERE TOGETHER EACH WEEK OF THE SUMMER.



Head is for our thoughtful and intentional interactions, clear thinking, and responsible decision-making.



Heart is for our open, welcoming environment where campers practice empathy, live together with all sorts of different people, and establish long-lasting friendships.



HANDS

Hands is for the fact that 4-H Camp is a home for all of us, and we all take care of it together. Each camper and counselor strive to be a support to their whole camp family as they work to both maintain our community and keep it moving forward, always searching for ways to be of service to one another.



HEALTH

Health is for the camp lifestyle: days chock-full of running, playing, exploring, eating good food, breathing in the fresh mountain air, and getting a good night's sleep surrounded by the sounds of the forest. Health is also the culmination of all the H's here at Camp, a healthy community we all benefit from and all have ownership of.



THE "1951" EXPERIENCE

"Classic" Camp

We've been running summer camp for 70 years, and endeavor to keep all the things that make camp great the same as they've always been. Simultaneously, each summer we look for ways to improve by adding new programs and searching to discover ways to better serve today's youth and our current population of campers.

TECH FREE

4-H Camp is a 100% tech-free environment (no phones, no screens, the works) for both campers and staff. In what is likely their only truly tech-free week each year, our campers are able to be present in each moment and focus on getting to know the people they're with. Our campers champion our tech-free approach, with our oldest campers citing their time away from social media as one of their favorite aspects of camp.

Beauty of the Six-Day Session

Campers arrive on Monday morning and depart on Saturday morning. In between, we cram in a full summer of fun. Six days is short enough to keep up our energetic pace, but long enough that we can never quite believe how much can fit into a single camp week.



There are 176 campers in a full week of summer camp. This community size is large enough that there's always new friends to meet throughout a session, yet small enough that by the end of the week we've formed one Camp Family.



While campers spend the week meeting new people in a new place, our staff work hard to support them as they face and overcome challenges, build self-confidence, and gain the tools to treat each other well and interact positively. Campers with diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences come together in our little home in the woods and discover what we all have in common.

Home Away from Home

4-H Camp's cardinal rules are **kindness** and **respect**. These tenets shape how we treat each other, our environment, and our community as a whole.





L.G. COOK 4-H CAMP

DAILY SCHEDULE



No two 4-H Camp days are ever exactly the same! But this schedule sums up what most include.

A DAY IN THE LIFE
CAMP



A JAM-PACKED SCHEDULE

Our campers love that we go-go-GO at Camp! From our optional Early-Bird Activities first thing in the morning to our evening Lights Out Programs in each cabin, there's never a dull moment in the Camp day. Meals, Cabin Hour, and our many laid-back activity options offer plenty of changes of pace, but there's always more to do and discover every time the bell rings and sends us off to what's next.

ALL-CAMP ACTIVITIES

Each night (and a few other times throughout the week), we get together for a big All-Camp game or program.

Many of these vary depending on theme of the week -- find out more in the **Theme** section of this guide!!

VESPERS

There are a few exceptions to all the loud, wild, running around at 4-H Camp, like **Vespers**. Each evening, we take a quiet hike out to Vespers Island, and sit in silence for a few moments taking in the natural scenery. Then, a staff member will share a story, sing a song, or start a discussion. It's a great moment of community introspection in a busy summer camp day.

FLAG RAISING/BREAKFAST - 8:00

CAMP CLEAN UP - 8:30

Fostering independence is an essential component to Camp, and part of that is helping to take responsibility for Camp. So, we take some time in the morning to help keep Camp clean.



SECOND ACTIVITY PERIOD - 10:45



LUNCH - 12:15

THIRD ACTIVITY PERIOD - 2:00

CHOICE REC PERIODS

In the afternoons, we let our campers choose what they want to do! During one rec, they go to the waterfront to swim, canoe, kayak or just relax on the shore.

The other rec is on land, and our counselors offer a variety of activities that range from games in our rec fields to crafts in the craft shop to archery to fishing to just about anything!

-WAKE UP/OPTIONAL

MORNING ACTIVITIES

We have several optional morning activities that campers can choose to participate in that include Rooster Run, Polar Bear Swim, Golden Eagle Yoga, and Groundhog Gardening.

-FIRST ACTIVITY PERIOD

ACTIVITY PERIODS

Campers choose three activities to do during the week. Our classes meet three times throughout the week. For a list of classes, please see our course area section.

BATTLE FOR THE ISLAND

On Wednesdays, we play our all-camp game, Battle for the Island, in place of first and second period classes. This capture-the-flag game is given our own Camp twist and has become a favorite of our campers throughout the years.

-CABIN HOUR

After a healthy and delicious lunch, we like to relax in our cabins. This is a time when campers can nap, read, play some games with their cabinmates, and prepare for activities and programs later in the week.

-FIRST CHOICE REC

-SECOND CHOICE REC

FRIDAY AFTERNOON ACTIVITY

On Friday afternoons, instead of our third period activity and rec periods, we have an all-camp game that goes with our theme of the week. This is the culmination of what the campers have been working towards all week.

DINNER - 6:00

-FLAG LOWERING/VESPERS



EVENING ACTIVITY - 7:00

Our evening activity changes day to day. Monday is our opening campfire where the campers get to learn about our camp, our staff and their color groups. Tuesday is Cabin Night when the campers get to choose what they want to do as a cabin.

Wednesday is a theme-based all-camp activity. Thursday is for our Talent Show. And Friday is our closing campfire, honor ceremony, and Camp Schmance (our version of a dance)!

-SHOWER TIME

-TAPS



CAMP CLASSES

At the time of registration, campers will sign up for THREE of more than 30 classes offered. (Our course areas are Environmental Education, Creative Arts, Recreation, Waterfront, and Community.) Classes meet three times throughout the camp week, for a total lesson plan time of under four hours. If you do 1000 things in your Camp week, classes are 3 of them! Check out this summer's class selection in our Course Offerings Guide!



WATER REC

Whether campers sign up for a waterfront class or not, they'll get to spend an hour each day at the lake. This is a free choice time, where campers can swim in the shallow or deep end, go down the water slide, canoe, kayak, or all of the above! Relaxing on shore is always an option as well. (Campers must take a swim evaluation to determine ability to swim in the deep end.)

Our classes are enthusiastically "non-academic." They focus on creativity, exploration, trying new things, building new friendships, and simply having fun outside!

LAND REC

Land Rec is free choice galore! Campers get to select exactly what they'd like to do from a wide array of counselor offerings. From some classic camp choices (fishing or archery), laid-back pastimes (book clubs or cloud watching) and wacky today-only inventions (karaoke kickball or a search for Bigfoot) to camper requests, what Land Rec brings is a daily surprise.



Cabins and Bunkmates

Our Camp Community
is spread out over 11 cabins. Each
cabin houses 16 campers and a
couple of counselors.

Cabins are divided by both age and gender, as indicated on the camper's registration form. Campers in a cabin together are all within about a year of the same age.



Campers are never in the cabin without counselor supervision. Check out our [Packing List](#) to learn what to bring (and not to bring) to ensure success in our communal living spaces.



Cabins are **rustic** - they've got bunks, shelves, windows, walls, doors and **no plumbing!** Our central bathhouse is just a short walk from the cabins.



Bunkmate Requests

Campers may request the name of one friend they'd like to bunk with. Requests are guaranteed if they are **mutual**, and both campers are **within a year of the same age**.





Our Staff is Our Heart

On average, over 70% of our summer staff attended 4-H Camp as campers and have come back summer after summer, progressing through our CIT and Junior Counselor programs. Our counselors strive to create the same transformative experience that meant so much to them when they were kids.

We maintain at least a 1:8 staff to camper ratio. However, when Camp is fully assembled in one place and we're all together, it's closer to 1:4.



The only thing that makes an exceptional summer camp is an exceptional summer camp staff.



"As a camper, I remember thinking that my counselors were so special and cool. Then, after a few summers at 4-H Camp, I realized that I was that special and cool too. I brought that happiness and confidence with me away from Camp. Now it's my turn to show all of my campers how special, funny, wild and cool they are too."

*-Erika,
4-H Camp Counselor*



Hiring is competitive, and we look for the most enthusiastic, responsible, funny, empathetic, and caring young role models we can find to join our team. All staff must be at least 18 years old and complete a Rutgers University Background check and protection of minors training. All staff are certified in First Aid and CPR and go through an intensive, weeklong pre-summer 4-H Camp staff training and orientation.

THE EXCITEMENT OF THE ONE-WEEK SESSIONS

Campers arrive Monday morning and depart Saturday morning.



We cram an entire summer of Campy fun (a whole June-July-and-August!) into our One-Week Sessions.



Campers attend just one session for the season - for campers looking for extended time at 4-H Camp, we recommend our BIG Session.



Six days is short enough to keep up our energetic pace, but long enough that we can never quite believe how much can fit into a single camp week.



More Time for Community

Our longer session allows even more opportunities for bonding between cabin mates and leisurely lakeside conversations with new friends.

We always say "there's no strangers at 4-H Camp", and the whole community gets to know each other, bond, and become one Camp Family better than ever during our new BIG session.

A Different Pace

We slow down the Camp schedule a bit for our BIG session, giving our campers plenty of time to just enjoy LIVING at 4-H Camp. Our big classes give the opportunity to really take a deep dive into one of their favorite Camp subjects, and though we're still tech-free and away from it all, campers get the chance to contact home mid-session (via our classic phone booth).



MORE CAMP!

**SESSION 5:
THE BIG SESSION
18 DAYS OF
SUMMER CAMP!**

**L.G. COOK
4-H CAMP**

WEDNESDAY EVENING – SATURDAY MORNING

DESIGNED FOR CAMPERS WHO HAVE ALREADY ENJOYED ONE WEEK SESSION PREVIOUS SUMMERS. AGES 10-16.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE NEW BIG CLASSES (20 HOURS OF LESSONS), ALL THEMED ACTIVITIES FROM THE PREVIOUS 4 SESSIONS, AND BRAND-NEW STUFF WE'VE NEVER HAD TIME FOR BEFORE

LAUNDRY SERVICE PROVIDED MID-SESSION

MORE CABIN TIME, MORE ACTIVITY TIME, MORE SLEEP TIME, MORE COMMUNITY TIME, MORE BONDING TIME, MORE FREE TIME, MORE DOWN TIME. MORE CAMP TIME!

3 Square Meals A Day

Meals are served family style, and campers assigned as KPs (Kitchen Patrol) bring the food to the table. Each meal features an entree and several side dishes. A fully stocked salad bar (or breakfast bar) is also available for every meal, as well as a few "picky eater" options.

Check out a [sample menu](#) on our website.



Our Camp Kitchen is entirely nut-free.

Every meal we offer vegetarian, vegan, milk-free and gluten-free options.



Fresh fruit is available each afternoon, and we have an evening snack as well. (And our campers would surely want us to mention our signature desserts served after dinner every night.)

Campers get to pick their own seat in our Dining Hall each meal. The way campers mix and match, the same table never sits together twice. We also enjoy a few scenic outdoor meals on the shores of Lake Shawanni.

CAMP NURSE AND THE INFIRMARY

Our Infirmary is staffed by our Camp Nurses, who are certified EMTs or First Responders. They are on hand 24 hours a day to help our campers through any bumps, bruises, or bug bites.

For campers with medication needs, we have Med Call in mornings, evenings, and at all meals (or as needed). All medications must be in the original prescription bottle or packaging and will be given to our Camp Nurse at check-in.



CAMP GOES ON IN THE RAIN!

We do our best to make every single day at Camp as close to a perfect summer day as we can get it, and we're sure not going to let weather stand in the way!

If it's just drizzling and it's more fun to stay outside - that's exactly what we do! In a little shower, we stick to the schedule as usual.



In case of a more significant downpour, we stay in the cabins for some extended bonding time, or utilize some rainday lesson plans in our Rec Hall, Craftshop, or Nature Center. For a severe thunderstorm, we all gather in our Dining Hall for a Boardgame Bonanza or other All-Camp Rainday activities.

Our tools to beat the heat are simple: the lake, the shade of the trees, plenty of hydrating - and repeat!





Every one-week session has a theme, which is just a little spice added to make each week different from all the others. The theme dictates our Wednesday and Friday All-Camp Games, the zany costumes the counselors wear, and the overall storyline of the session. (Our campers always seem to end up enjoying all of our themes pretty much equally - so pick your Camp session based on what fits your family's schedule the best.) Our BIG Session includes all of the themes from the whole summer season.

Counselor In Training Program

Our oldest campers have the opportunity to sign up for our CIT Leadership classes. This program supports participants in growing into role models here at 4-H Camp, and being conscious of the responsibility we all have in creating a kind and caring environment.

CIT I (for 15 year old campers) focuses on learning about the intentional community we build.

CIT II (for 16 year old campers) is dedicated to studying the counselor role and beginning to work with our youngest campers.



JUNIOR COUNSELORS

At 17, when a camper graduates the CIT program and ages out as a camper, they can apply to return as a Junior Counselor. Junior Counselors help support our youngest cabins, participate in running All-Camp games and programs, and spend time learning what goes on behind the scenes by working in the kitchen with meal-prep and dish-washing and assisting with camp-wide cleaning. This role can be a great way for former campers to volunteer and give back to the program, or the first steps to becoming a future summer staff member.



L.G. COOK 4-H CAMP DATES AND RATES

SUMMER 2023

Session #1: Pirates of Lake Shawanni (July 3rd-8th)

Session #2: Whodunnit? (July 10th-15th)

Session #3: Broken Time Machine (July 17th-22nd)

Session #4: CAmPaNdeMoNiUM (July 24th-29th)

BIG Session #5: S'moregasbord (August 2nd-19th)

One-Week Sessions

Polar Bear Early Registration Pricing (11/15-12/31): \$725

Standard Summer Camp Pricing: \$775

4-H/Rutgers Discount: -\$25

BIG Session

Polar Bear Early Registration Pricing (11/15-12/31): \$2550

Standard Summer Camp Pricing: \$2775

4-H/Rutgers Discount: -\$75

All registration is online at our website.

Payment in full is required for one session at the time of registration.

Payment plans available for campers attending the BIG Session.

We believe every child should have the chance to go to sleepaway camp. If your family is facing financial hardship or difficulties, please call the Camp Office at 973-948-3550 to discuss the details of applying for an L.G. Cook 4-H Camp Campership.



Now That You've Decided To Join Us...

The next few pages contain some helpful details and things to keep in mind as you prepare for your summer with us at 4-H Camp!



First Time Camper Tips

Summer Camp is an adventure away from home. We encourage parents to let their campers know it might not always be easy being away, and that it's entirely normal to miss home. We also encourage parents in turn to **encourage their camper's own resiliency** and let them know that they can do it, and at the end of their stay they'll have an accomplishment they can be proud of. We do not recommend telling your camper that they can end their session early and come home/call home whenever they'd like; instead we find it is best to positively prepare for the whole time and frame it as something they can achieve. If a camper is having sustained difficulty acclimating as the session goes on, the Camp Office will be in touch. **If you would like to discuss more strategies to prepare for your child's time away, please contact the Camp Office.** We'd be happy to chat!



The counselors are here to help! Camper's should know they can go to their counselors (and any counselor on Camp) with absolutely anything they need, 24 hours a day. Often, if there's any persistent issue at Camp, it's because the counselors are not aware of it – **campers should feel confident and comfortable going to their counselors for any support they require.**

How to Sign Up

Registration is entirely online. All pertinent information in regards to medical details and how we can make your camper's time as successful as possible is also gathered at this point. Once registration is complete, you're all done with paperwork and ready to show up on the first day of Camp!



DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP



Drop Off for our one-week sessions is on Monday mornings. Your camper will be assigned a drop-off window between 9:30-11:00 am.

During your designated arrival window, you'll be greeted by one of our staff at our gate and sign-in. You'll then be directed to the drop-off zone closest to your campers cabin where they will go through our Health Check and you'll be able to meet with our Infirmary staff, if need be. Then, you give a quick hug and say "have a great week" and our staff will escort them and their luggage to their cabin to begin their summer camp adventure.



(For families with multiple campers, both campers may be dropped off in the arrival window for your youngest camper.)

Drop-Off for the BIG SESSION is similar, but the arrival window will be between 3-5 pm on Wednesday afternoon.

During Session #1 only, an Early Sunday Evening Drop-Off option is available, with an arrival window of 7-8 pm.

Pick-Up is Saturday at 10 am! We recommend arriving to 4-H Camp around 9:30 to give you enough time to park, sign your camper out at the Dining Hall, and see our end-of-session **Nothing Ceremony** at Camp Central. We'll share a few highlights from the week, and then you'll join your camper to go back to the cabin, collect their luggage, and hit the road! **See you next summer!**



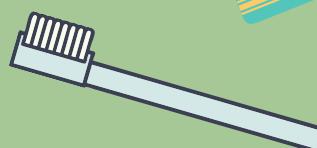
PACKING LIST

-TO KEEP IN MIND-

- You'll need less than you think! We keep our camp days jam-packed and super active. The bare necessities will get you through a week of summer camp just fine.
- Please don't bring anything you're not willing to have come home muddy, dirty, and smelling like Camp.
- Pack for six whole days and various weather conditions. Extra clothes to change into are always a good idea.
- Please use luggage that is small enough to fit under a bed, or at the foot of a bunk.
- We want 4-H Camp to be comfortable for all campers. Clothing should be appropriate for our kind, respectful, active, youth-friendly environment.

-THE "WHAT TO BRING" LIST-

- Bedding (i.e. sleeping bag, pillow, twin sized sheets, blankets)
- Socks and underwear (extra is always good too!)
- Sandals with heel straps (no flip flops)
- Sneakers or boots
- T-shirts
- Shorts
- Long pants/sweatshirts (mornings and evenings can get a bit chilly)
- 2 swim suits (so one can dry)
- 2 towels (bath and beach)
- Night wear
- Rain jacket or poncho
- Sanitary needs (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.)



-THE "WHAT ELSE TO MAYBE BRING" LIST-

- Flashlight** 
- Laundry Bag and Shower Caddy** 
- Sunscreen/bug repellent (label and give to cabin counselor)** 
- Books/journals/reading materials** 
- Camera** 
- Water bottle** 
- Stationery, postcards, stamps (if you plan on sending a letter home)** 
- We have a Dinner Extravaganza on Friday night, so feel free to pack some "nicer" clothes. (But not too much nicer; it's still Camp!)**

-THE "WHAT NOT TO BRING" LIST-



Cell phones

Laptops / Tablets

Screens of Any Other Type

Fireworks

Large Fans

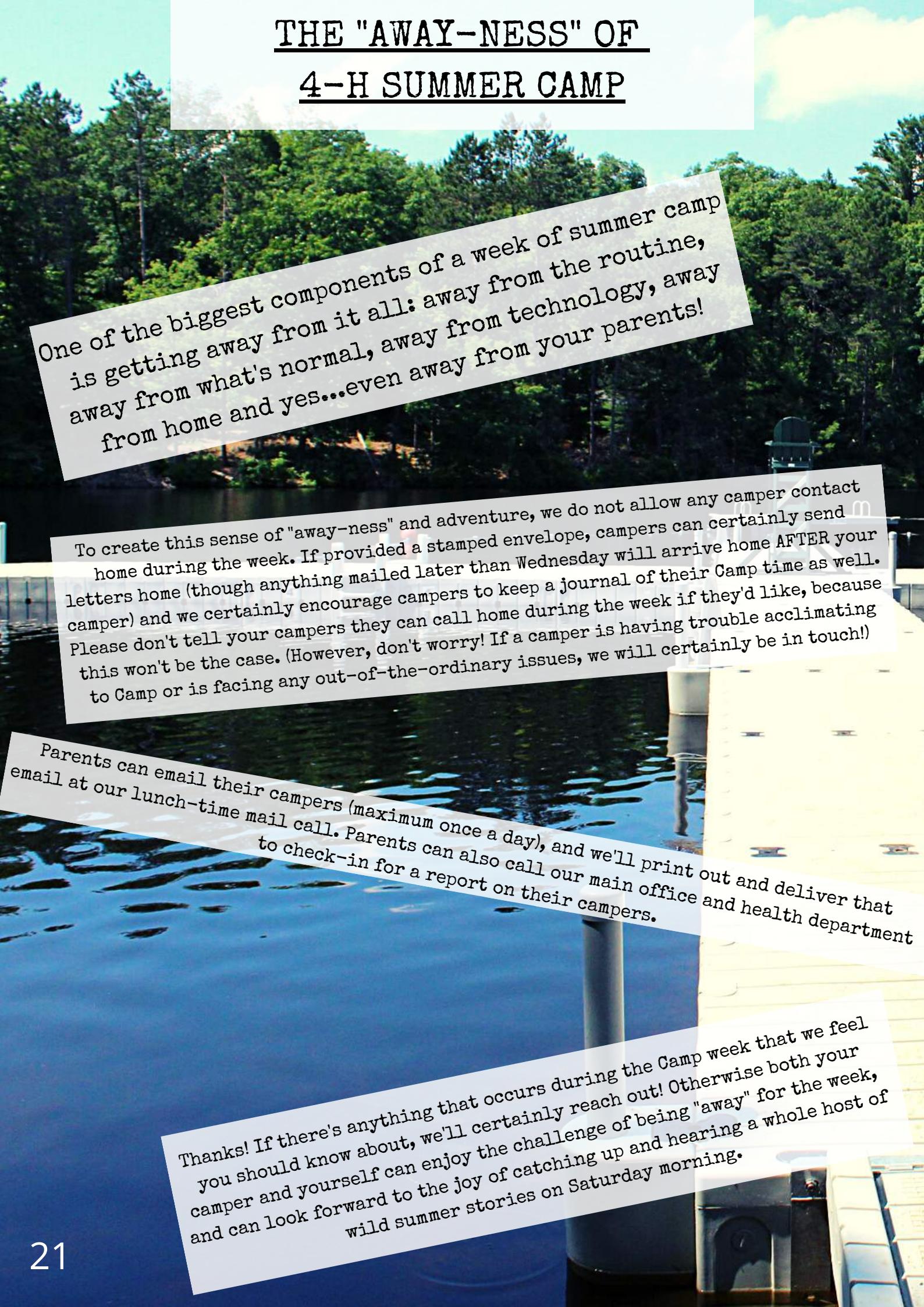
Hair dryers / curling irons

Food / candy / snacks / gum

Cash

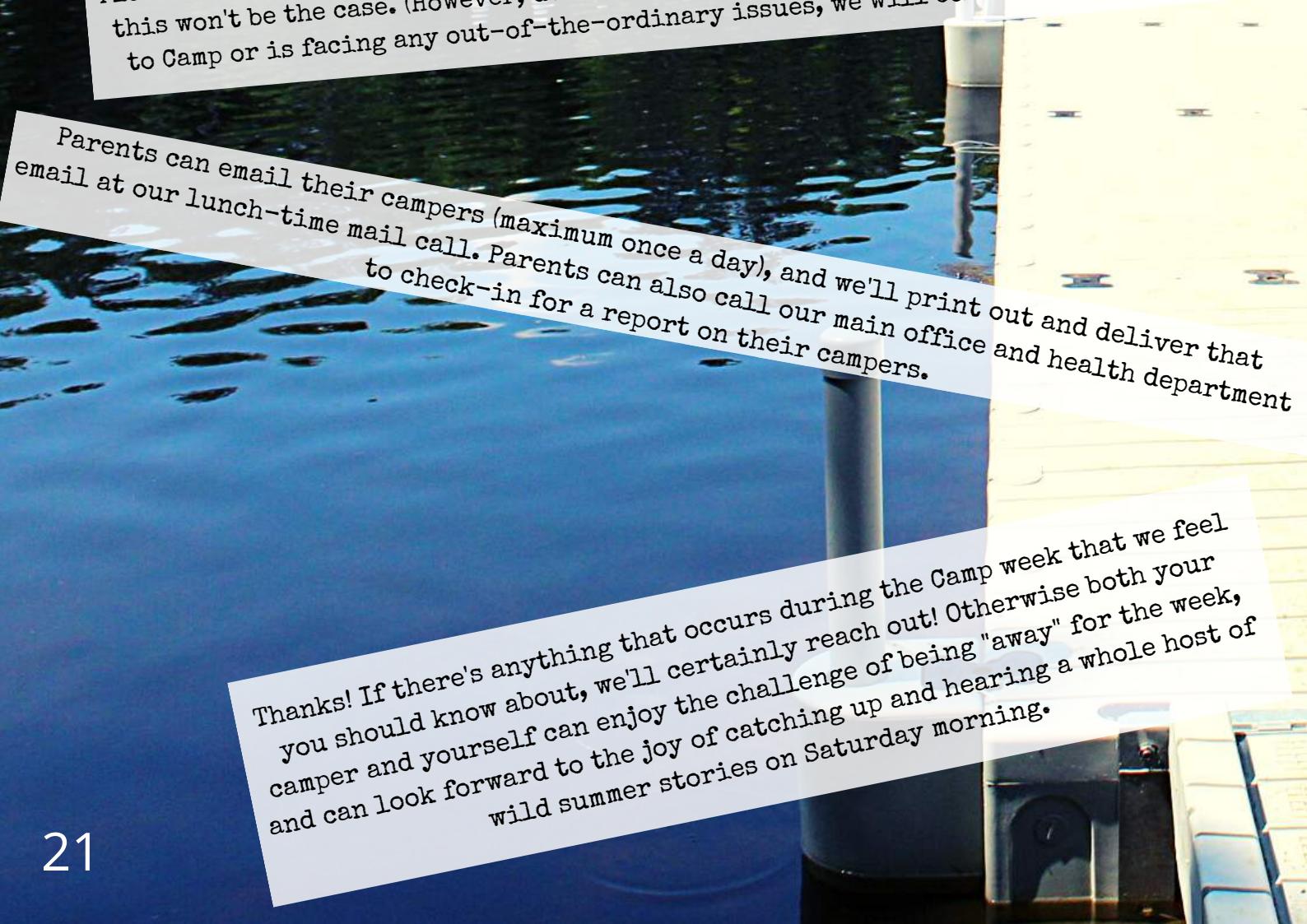


THE "AWAY-NESS" OF 4-H SUMMER CAMP



One of the biggest components of a week of summer camp is getting away from it all: away from the routine, away from what's normal, away from technology, away from home and yes...even away from your parents!

To create this sense of "away-ness" and adventure, we do not allow any camper contact home during the week. If provided a stamped envelope, campers can certainly send letters home (though anything mailed later than Wednesday will arrive home AFTER your camper) and we certainly encourage campers to keep a journal of their Camp time as well. Please don't tell your campers they can call home during the week if they'd like, because this won't be the case. (However, don't worry! If a camper is having trouble acclimating to Camp or is facing any out-of-the-ordinary issues, we will certainly be in touch!)



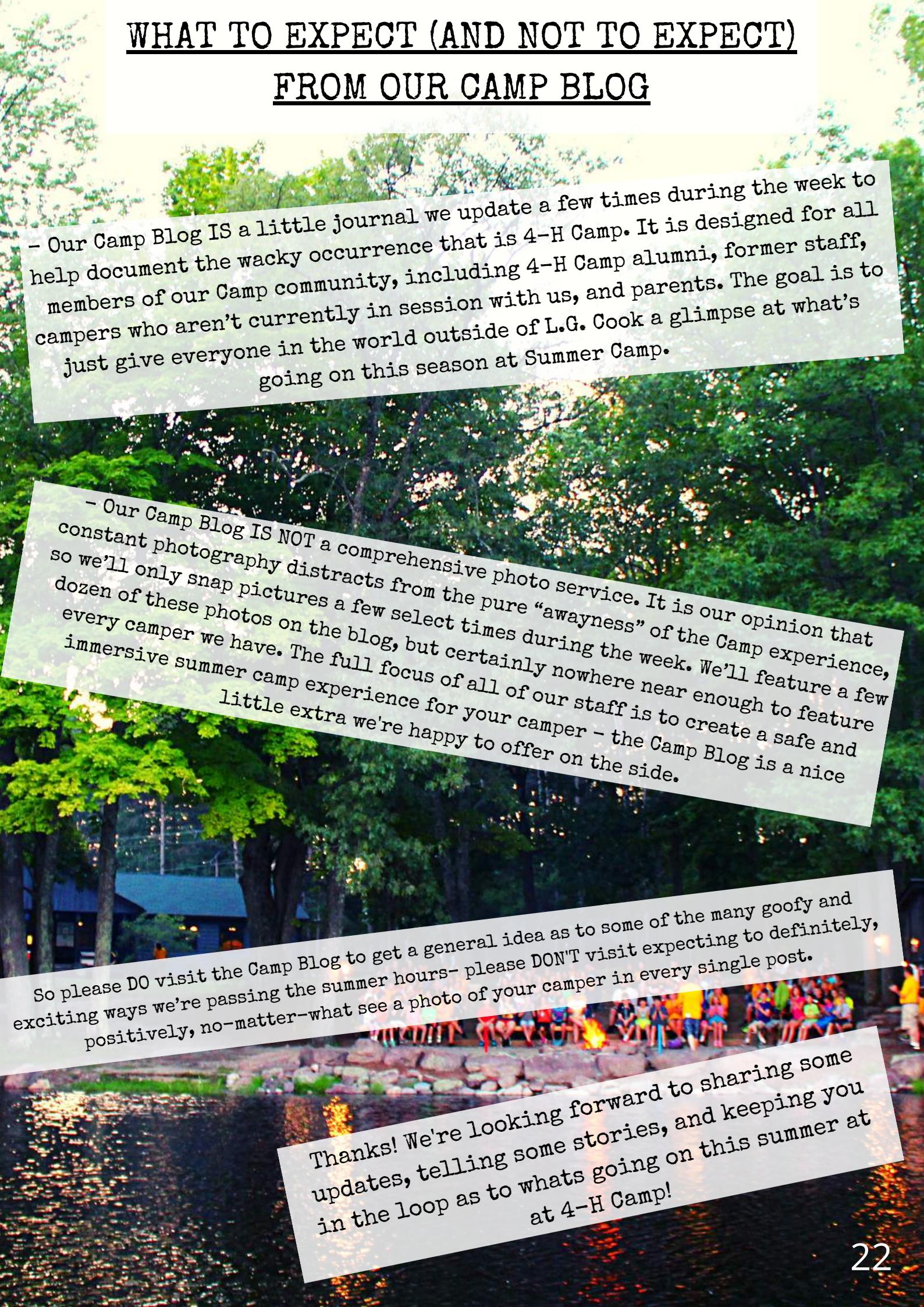
Parents can email their campers (maximum once a day), and we'll print out and deliver that email at our lunch-time mail call. Parents can also call our main office and health department to check-in for a report on their campers.



Thanks! If there's anything that occurs during the Camp week that we feel you should know about, we'll certainly reach out! Otherwise both your camper and yourself can enjoy the challenge of being "away" for the week, and can look forward to the joy of catching up and hearing a whole host of wild summer stories on Saturday morning.

WHAT TO EXPECT (AND NOT TO EXPECT)

FROM OUR CAMP BLOG



- Our Camp Blog IS a little journal we update a few times during the week to help document the wacky occurrence that is 4-H Camp. It is designed for all members of our Camp community, including 4-H Camp alumni, former staff, campers who aren't currently in session with us, and parents. The goal is to just give everyone in the world outside of L.G. Cook a glimpse at what's going on this season at Summer Camp.

- Our Camp Blog IS NOT a comprehensive photo service. It is our opinion that constant photography distracts from the pure "awayness" of the Camp experience, so we'll only snap pictures a few select times during the week. We'll feature a few dozen of these photos on the blog, but certainly nowhere near enough to feature every camper we have. The full focus of all of our staff is to create a safe and immersive summer camp experience for your camper - the Camp Blog is a nice little extra we're happy to offer on the side.

So please DO visit the Camp Blog to get a general idea as to some of the many goofy and exciting ways we're passing the summer hours- please DON'T visit expecting to definitely, positively, no-matter-what see a photo of your camper in every single post.



Thanks! We're looking forward to sharing some updates, telling some stories, and keeping you in the loop as to what's going on this summer at 4-H Camp!

A photograph showing a group of children sitting around a campfire at night. They are holding sticks with marshmallows over the flames. One child in the foreground is wearing a blue baseball cap. The scene is lit by the fire, creating a warm glow.

See you next summer!

COME VISIT!

WE OFFER CAMP TOURS BY REQUEST SEPTEMBER-MAY.

L.G. Cook 4-H Camp

100 Struble Rd

Branchville, NJ 07826

nj4hcamp.rutgers.edu

gobacktothemountains.blogspot.com

973.948.3550



RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station