

Hi! Thanks for your interest in working at Kirkwood Camp.

Below, you will find some information on what you can expect. We hope this helps you make the best decision possible for the upcoming summer.

So--you want to work at Kirkwood.

That's great! But you should probably know a few things first. Working at Kirkwood is an amazing experience, but it's not for everybody. Long hours, a wilderness environment, and a high level of emotional stress are just a few things that can really derail a positive experience here for a lot of people. If you think you can handle it, or want to know more, read on.

The Basics:

- You will live at Kirkwood in our housing and eat our meals for the work periods you are agreeing to. For most people, that will be from the beginning of June through the beginning or middle of August
- Your job will be to be a positive Christian role model for kids, within our guidelines. This means you need to profess the Christian faith--and we are pretty open about what that means, but it is still a requirement. We will talk more about that in the interview
- We will go through almost two weeks of training to help prepare you to do that job well
- There will be limited opportunities for time off and rest
- Occasionally, we will have a "break week," where we are not requiring you to work, and you will need to stay somewhere else during that time. Most people who work here are college students, and just go home
- You will need to be able to thrive in an outdoor environment that is somewhere between unkempt city park and backcountry wilderness
- You will need to be in reasonably good shape physically, as the nature of the job demands running, jumping, lifting up to 50 lbs., twisting, bending, and generally walking a lot and playing a lot of games outdoors
- You will need to be in reasonably good shape with your mental and emotional health, too. Summer camp can be a grind, and the physical toll it takes on your body can mess with your head sometimes, too. Plus--taking care of a bunch of kids, sometimes who need extra TLC or have really rough home situations--that can wear you down in other ways.
 - We intend to hire people with good attitudes, with a healthy appetite for challenging themselves. Please do not apply if you are just looking for a summer job.



Our Program

Kirkwood has operated a Summer Camp program here at our site in Stroudsburg since 1960. Right now, we generally run a 10-week program, including training, and a bit of a mid-summer break over the week of July 4. Pretty much all of our staff live on site here for

the duration, with some additions and subtractions to our staff team as the summer goes on, and our needs fluctuate. Last year, we welcomed 235 campers of our own, and served over 100 campers and guests of our partner organizations.

We are owned and operated by PC(USA), the largest denomination of Presbyterians in the US. Our program is mostly generically mainline protestant Christian, and though we occasionally welcome PC(USA) pastors for the week, our staff and campers do not have to be Presbyterian to be here.

The mission of Kirkwood Camp is to “Build bridges which connect people to God, creation, and each other.”

...and that dictates how we run our program. Although our camp program started almost 60 years ago, and really hasn't changed too much since then, we believe that people need places like Kirkwood now more than ever. This is especially true with kids--instances of mental illness and emotional difficulties are skyrocketing in kids, and this is matched with declining participation in mainline protestant churches.

Small Group Christian Camping

During summer camp, we organize all our campers into what we call “Small Groups.” The small group consists of two counselors, usually one male and one female, and each of those counselors is responsible for anywhere between 2-8 kids (so, total between the two counselors, 4-15 or so). You obviously sleep in separate areas, but spend almost all your time together during the week, choosing activities as a group, having group bible study daily, etc.

The small group works well especially in 2020 because of the fragmented nature of our society--busy schedules and addiction to technology keep our relationships shallow, and only loosely committed. The small group is a beginning-to-end journey through the week of just you and your campers--leaving time to learn about each other, grow together, and become comfortable enough with each other to deepen the relationships to be meaningful.

Activities and Stuff

You: “Okay.....but what do we *do*...?”

Me: “Thanks for asking. Let me tell you.”

Generic schedule:

- Wake up/get dressed and stuff/eat breakfast
- Morning Gathering (short devotional)/Capers (small group tasks to keep camp looking good)
- Activity blocks
- Lunch
- Rest Time
- Activity blocks
- Dinner
- All-camp game
- Evening Worship
- Small group time/pre-bed-stuff/bed

Pretty simple. Activities for activity blocks include things like arts and crafts, boating, high ropes, team building, games, hiking, “adventure time,” archery, etc.

We also do a lot with the outdoors--all groups do one cookout over a campfire and sleep out in tents/under the stars once during their time here. There are specialty camps that we offer that do more of the activities, or push the boundaries of normal camp in different ways--more outdoor living skills and experiences, staying up later, doing a ton of art, dressing up and battling other groups with pool noodles.....yeah, read the summer camp brochure if you need more info on that stuff.

Please note that having fun is a huge part of what we do at camp, and the activities listed above help us do that--it is summer camp, after all. However, they are a means to an end, the end being our mission stated above. If you are looking for a camp that is fun + activities first, check out the YMCA or one of the other 50 camps in the Poconos. We intend to create *meaningful experiences*...with God, in nature, and between people here at camp. Again, “fun” is something we do almost always, but is not necessarily the point.

Where do we stay?

Ah, yes. Basically, look here: <https://kirkwoodcamp.org/facilities/>

Most camps stay in Stroup or in the Cabins. Bunk beds inside, pretty solid restroom facilities inside, air conditioning, newly built or updated. Honestly nicer than you would get at a lot of summer camps.

Some camps sleep out in our platform tent villages. Platform tents consist of a raised, wooden 16 x 16 platforms with large canvas tents suspended over them with bunk inside. Some people love them, some people hate them, but if you accept a job here, you are signing up for platform tents just as much as you are staying inside. Most people learn to love them.



What we're looking for in a staff member:

- **A good attitude.** We like people who are positive and have a willingness to learn.
- **Appetite for challenge.** Camp is hard. Sometimes we do things “the hard way” because the camper experience will be that much better. Sometimes we do things “the hard way” just to see if we can do it. We hope a summer on staff will change you for the better.
- **“Team spirit.”** Really cliché, but couldn't think of anything better. At Kirkwood, we are a community, and we need people who can act not as individuals, but as members of a team, working for a larger goal. To be frank, no amount of skills or experience will keep you on our staff if you can't act in the best interests of the group.
- **The ability to act decisively and with good judgement in situations of ambiguity** (What a mouthful!). You will be taking care of somebody else's kid. We provide you training to help prepare you for the summer, but somebody won't always be there to make decisions for you. For whatever reason, this is really scary for a lot of people.
- **Self-starting.** Similarly, there is a lot of work to be done at camp--and your job doesn't end whenever you accomplish a task. Working together as a team, no one is done until everyone is done. Isn't that just great?
- **Professes Christian Faith.** Any denomination or non-denominational is ok. We usually have a mix on staff (yes, we've had Catholics every year, relax). We are a welcoming place for all people, including those who may not be heterosexual and/or conform to binary gender roles. We have had staff members of all kinds do very well here, and we do not discriminate.



Compensation specifics

Working at camp is a missional role at a ministry. We don't want you to work here for a paycheck--we want you to work here because that is your calling. You will have the opportunity to be changed for the better--and to effect positive change in those around you. That's a pretty big deal, right?

With that being said, we get that you have a life, and you have needs. Here's what we can offer:

- **Starting pay for small group counselors is \$225/week, which includes training.** Other positions or returning staff may receive more. If you feel called to our ministry, but need a different amount to make it work, please let us know and maybe we can work something out.
- **Room and board (food) throughout your stay.** You get to stay here the whole time (except during occasional breaks, when we may ask you to leave site for a few days, a week or more), and we feed you.
- **60-90 minute break per day.** Long hours for sure, but we make sure you get a solid break every day to do whatever it is you need to do to stay sane/be a mature adult. There is wifi in limited spots on site.
- **24-36 hours off after each session.** Same as above.

- **Resume building and references.** Yeah, it's not an internship in your major field. So what? Camp is a great place to demonstrate your abilities for future employers. For them, just like for us, it will always be about attitude, capability, poise, judgement--and we are the perfect place to help you refine those qualities and have fun at the same time. When you apply for that first "real job," you'll have a solid reference in us, too.
- **New friends.** Ok, we can't *promise* you'll make friends. But, overwhelmingly camp friends are friends for life--people who learn more about you in two weeks than some people have in their whole lives. Late-night campfire talks, working through tough small groups, amazing trip memories--yeah, that'll do it.
- **New year, new you.** Or whatever. Look, camp is for the campers--but there are similar benefits for staff. At camp, you'll probably grow in your faith among people with different perspectives. You build your confidence, whether you have a lot already or not, mastering the art of the campfire cookout, facilitating team building, or camping out in the woods. You'll sweat, hike, sing, pray, play, laugh, and sleep soundly every night. Two and a half months of all that, and you can bet you will be different coming out the other side.

So why work at camp this summer?

This isn't just any summer job. This isn't even just any *summer camp job*. Kirkwood is a place where lives are changed. You don't always get to see it--sometimes, the experiences a person has at camp changes them over time. It's going to change you, too.

We believe that the world needs more goodness, more community, and more peace. We believe that kids need more and different opportunities to experience the love of God, especially in relationship to their lives and identity. We believe that one of God's greatest gifts was creation, and that we still have a lot to learn from nature, and how to better care for our world. We believe in being weird, being creative, playing hard, singing loud, getting messy, and going crazy during the summer (we believe in introverts too, please don't run away and hide).



If you share some of the above beliefs, and want to sign on for amazing and challenging experiences, you might be a good fit. To be clear--this is not a job for everyone. It can be highly stressful if you are not a good fit. Please be honest with yourself, and us, about how suited you are for a summer at Kirkwood.

If you think you can handle it, we look forward to meeting you and talking more. You can fill out our application through our website at www.kirkwoodcamp.org . There is no deadline, except when we fill all of our positions--usually around May 1.

APPLY HERE: <https://kirkwood.campbrainstaff.com/>

Hope to hear from you soon! --Kirkwood Staff