

what is **SubClub**?



The Aloha program is designed intentionally to serve youth in grades seven through ten, curating for them an experience that allows campers of different ages and backgrounds to make connections and learn from each other. SubClubbers are ninth-grade graduates who choose to come to camp for either three and a half or seven weeks, living in mixed-age units and serving as leaders and role models for the camp community as a whole.

While the residential set-up on the hillside has included mixed-age units going back to the early years of our history, campers over time have developed nicknames for their age groups that were born from their building excitement to participate in the Club program.

Club: 10th-grade graduates

SubClub: 9th-grade graduates

DubSub: 8th-grade graduates

TripSub: 7th-grade graduates

With the capstone summer after 10th grade as the pinnacle Club experience, each nickname builds off of that. Club has existed since the 1920s and SubClub since the 1980s, with the other nicknames being a more recent, organic evolution.



INTRODUCTION TO SUBCLUB

Young people crave opportunities to become leaders in the world in ways that are aligned to the people they are. As campers progress through their summers at Aloha, they take on more significant responsibilities with each successive year, culminating in becoming a first-year counselor-in-training during Club summer.

Clubbers commit to a seven-week experience, usually in the summer after their 10th-grade year, and sometimes after 11th grade. The building blocks for Club are set in preceding summers as campers become accustomed to the increased, age-appropriate freedoms and responsibilities that are woven into community life at Aloha.

Campers make daily choices about how to spend their time, both with friends and independently, and they take on an increased role in caring for their environment and one another through practices like daily community service (squad), greater skill-building and risk-taking through departmental rank work, projects guided by mentor counselors, navigating “free time” regularly throughout the day, and developing a comfort and confidence in their sense of place on the Aloha campus.

SubClub summer is meant to introduce campers to increased leadership possibilities at the small-group level, providing purposeful opportunities for them to volunteer, step forward, and work together in organizing and executing activities at the unit and all-camp level. Introductory team-building and leadership exercises take place at the start of each session so that the group can get to know each other and begin working together as a team and as leaders.

Most SubClubbers have just completed the ninth grade in school, although occasionally we have 10th-grade graduates who opt to participate in SubClub rather than committing to the more intensive, seven-week Club program. SubClubbers may enroll at Aloha for either a three-and-a-half or seven-week session.



Younger campers began to look up to me during my SubClub summer. This feeling was really empowering—it's nice when you are able to recognize the impact you have on someone's life.

WHY IS SUBCLUB SUMMER IMPORTANT?

SubClub summer is an experience campers look forward to because it allows them the chance to participate actively in the organization and execution of a variety of camp-wide events, and because it provides them with new challenges, increased recognition, and enhanced skill development.

Having just emerged from their first year of high school, and (for many) having acclimated to a new school environment, SubClubbers begin the experience eager to step up as leaders in the community while also wanting to take advantage of the respite camp provides from many of the social and academic challenges of the school year.

Whether in the tent field, department activities, or the community as a whole, SubClub summer seeks to meet the needs of this unique age group in both technical and interpersonal arenas. As the oldest campers in our mixed age residential setting (Clubbers, the oldest campers, reside in a separate part of the tent field), these campers act as immediate leaders and role models within the units. Such a presence allows SubClubbers the opportunity to embrace increased responsibilities and practice those leadership skills that they will further develop and strengthen during their Club summer, while also allowing ample opportunities for collaboration and recognition, as well as the flourishing of friendships with different age groups.

WHAT UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE TO SUB-CLUBBERS?

There are many opportunities throughout the summer for SubClubbers to practice their budding leadership skills as they engage with peers and the camp community at large—executing intricate, high-level programs under the guidance and supervision of experienced mentor counselors.

At Aloha, one of our core values is that we take responsibility—for ourselves, our actions, our environment, our mistakes, and our learning.

SubClubbers have the opportunity to step into several leadership roles in small groups through planning a camp-wide or unit-specific event. Some examples include planning and implementing a meal or activity for the entire camp community (like Aloha's Birthday or a pancake breakfast); contributing to the easy flow of unit life (working on a unit night activity or composing a song to present at our closing Banquet); or preparing a contribution to share with our extended Aloha family (at the Sunday Assembly of Show Weekend or All Aloha Night).

Regardless of the events or activities each camper chooses, all SubClub experiences are intended to engender confidence, cultivate a sense of responsibility, allow practice with leadership skills, provide opportunities for individual and group recognition, aid in the development of strong social and group organizational ability, and deliver ways to contribute to the magic that is a summer at Aloha.

We hear time and again that the skills learned in SubClub not only serve to unite the group as a whole in preparation for Club summer, but they contribute to a renewed sense of confidence, courage, and resilience that creates positive momentum for campers as they move into the 10th grade.

My SubClub experience helped me expand my view of leadership. I learned that the best leader is sometimes the person who is able to step back and give people room to explore.

TECHNICAL SKILLS AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

Adolescence is a crucial period in the development of any young person, and often a time for teens to identify and pursue budding interests in a variety of areas. SubClubbers may choose to:

- Focus on skill-building by getting the second or third rank in a department.
- Dive more deeply into a pastime or hobby from home (like swimming or tennis).
- Develop a passion first learned at camp (like kayaking or sailing).
- Explore beginner ranks as a way to experience new activities.
- Undertake independent projects, such as leading a trip, working on an art exhibit, or preparing for the around-the-lake swim at the end of the summer.

In all settings, our campers work closely with counselors as mentors and guides, and the maturity of our SubClub population lends itself naturally to a depth of individualized instruction, as well as increased self-reflection and introspection.

A number of the activity departments at Aloha offer a series of levels called ranks as a way to hone skills, and about one-quarter to one-third of our camper population chooses various ranks to pursue.



why choose **SubClub?**

We hear again and again from our counselors at Hive and Aloha that the two-year counselor-in-training program that begins in Club is one of the most transformational experiences of their lives, leading to increased self-confidence, group awareness, resilience, creativity, and mindfulness.

SubClub is meant to give campers a taste of what comes next in the Club program while still allowing them the uninhibited freedoms that are an essential ingredient of the Aloha camper experience.

My SubClub summer taught me so much not only about who I am and where my strengths are, but about how to be a genuine friend and leader in my community.

SubClubbers may choose from all offered activities at camp without needing to fulfill the specific program requirements of a counselor-in-training (CIT), while at the same time often being the first people asked to substitute occasionally for Clubbers in different leadership roles.

SubClub summer helped me to discover parts of myself that I didn't even know existed.

SubClubbers know that they are our community leaders in mixed-age units, and they enjoy having a taste of camp leadership and privileges while still enjoying the carefree fun that is so integral to camp life.

Camp is a place to take safe risks in an intentional, scaffolded environment, and where they are surrounded by people who are excited to help them learn and grow.

For campers in the SubClub group, the chance to learn and practice skills in a low-stakes environment is something that gives them renewed independence, courage, and self-assurance as they return home for another year of high school.

A camper who can lead their peers in a game of Capture the Flag will become a young person able to run for student government or public office. And a teen who can stand in front of a unit of friends or the entire camp community to share something they have practiced is someone who can find a voice for the causes and projects they cherish as their interests and skill sets expand.

