



Questions & Answers for Counselors

Camps and Programs of The Aloha Foundation

Mission: To inspire people of all ages to learn, explore, grow, and become their best selves.

Working as a camp counselor is like no other job on earth—it combines the role of parent, teacher, big brother or sister, and friend. No written material can do justice to the many facets of this job, but we hope this information will offer insight into the demands, responsibilities, challenges, and rewards of being a counselor at the Aloha Camps.

What is The Aloha Foundation?

The Aloha Foundation is a Vermont-based non-profit organization that offers six programs:

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| Aloha | overnight summer camp for 6 th -10 th grade girls |
| Hive | overnight summer camp for 1 st -6 th grade girls |
| Lanakila | overnight summer camp for 3 rd -8 th grade boys |
| Horizons | co-ed day camp for Pre-K-7 th grade children |
| Ohana | summer camp experiences for families and an event venue |
| Hulbert | outdoor/leadership education for school groups and others and an event venue |



Each campus and program are separate and quite distinct, but the management and underlying philosophy are shared. We emphasize simplicity, the outdoors, and living in a community. Operating year round, The Aloha Foundation stewards more than 1,300 acres of woods, hills, and fields on five campuses (two on Lake Morey and three on Lake Fairlee).

We are located in Fairlee, Vermont (the east central part of the state) near the Vermont/New Hampshire border. We are 20 miles north of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Are the Aloha Camps accredited?

Yes. The Aloha Camps are accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). This means that we participate in an ongoing, rigorous evaluation process and comply with 300 industry-accepted and government-recognized standards related to health, safety, and program quality. ACA collaborates with experts from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Red Cross, and other youth-serving agencies to assure that current practices at the camp reflect the most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operations.

Do the Aloha Camps specialize in certain activities or skills?

Mrs. Gulick, who founded Aloha Camp with her husband in 1905, was fond of saying, “Other camps specialize in tennis or swimming; we specialize in children.” Our primary focus is on the growth and development of each individual camper. Each child receives detailed, personal attention. This is made possible by our industry-leading, 2 to 1 camper/counselor ratio. Campers build “hard” skills as well, like those needed for swimming, sailing, and archery, but these lessons come within an overarching framework of helping campers become their best selves.

One of the tools we use in working with children (and people of all ages) is an approach called “Success Counseling.” Developed and refined by The Aloha Foundation over the past 25 years, Success Counseling focuses on self-evaluation and creative problem-solving to help people make good decisions and act constructively to achieve their goals. All counselors receive training in Success Counseling.



What do counselors at the three resident camps do and where do they live?

At any of our three overnight or “resident” camps—Aloha, Aloha Hive, or Lanakila—counselors have three main job responsibilities:

Living in a Camp Unit

Children and counselors at camp live in groups called “units.” Some units are determined by age while others include campers of mixed ages. Most counselors share a platform tent with three campers, known as your “tent family.” Overseeing their general well-being and happiness is your most important responsibility. You would most likely be in charge of one tent family for the full session of 7 weeks, or two different tent families for two half sessions of 3 ½ weeks each. Hot water and electricity are available in a central wash house in each unit, but not in the tents.

Younger counselors who are not yet in college may act as assistants in a unit and do not have tent families. You might live in a counselor tent with other staff or in a cabin as a second counselor. You would fill in for counselors on days off and assist with all groups.

Teaching in a Department

Everyone at the resident Aloha Camps also works as a teacher in a department like swimming, sailing, canoeing, arts and crafts, tennis, archery, performing arts, nature, land sports, campcraft, and hiking. Each camp has some activities that are unique, so your departmental placement is worked out individually with the camp director.



Serving as a General Counselor

General counseling covers a lot of territory and includes living, eating, playing, and working with the campers throughout the day. You are expected to set the example and participate enthusiastically in all camp activities, whether it is a special evening program, a carnival, the camp birthday party, or other events.

What about counselors at Horizons Day Camp and Ohana Camp?

At Horizons Day Camp, counselors generally live in the local area. You might be a teacher in a department or an assistant counselor moving with a group of campers from activity to activity. We have limited housing available for a few program leaders.

At Ohana Camp, counselors live in dedicated staff housing and not with campers. A day for an Ohana counselor might start with leading camper activities in the morning, lifeguarding in the afternoon, and helping in the kitchen in the evening.

What are the other counselors like? Are there many first-year counselors?

This is an important question. One of the real joys of working at the Aloha Camps is the diversity and abundance of talent found among the staff. Along with students and recent college graduates, each camp has a strong core of senior staff who have been with the camp for years. This assures you of adequate back-up and support. Good leadership and a strong staff also means you're not going to be thrust into situations where you're expected to handle large groups or take charge of an activity until you are ready.

Staff members range from high school graduates and college students to graduate students, professionals, and senior citizens. In general, about 25% of our staff are new each year, 25% are permanent or senior staff, and more than 50% are returnees.

How is salary determined? How much will I earn?

If you're looking to get rich quick, camp counseling is probably not for you and the Aloha Camps are no exception! For the resident camps, salary is determined by your age and year in school. Generally, for college students, this ranges from \$2,265-\$3,290 for eight weeks. At the resident camps, counselors receive free room, board, and laundry service. It is possible to supplement your earnings by coming early or staying on after the camp season.

What about clothing?

Campers and counselors at The Aloha Camps wear a camp uniform. We find this reduces social barriers and simplifies the issue of what is and is not appropriate dress. Counselors are expected to provide their own uniform, but we've made a serious effort to keep costs down and to make the clothing functional for use out of camp as well. There is also a limited amount of rental clothing available. You will likely need to spend about \$100 for uniforms.

How long is the camp season? Is there time off during the season?

At the resident camps, your commitment will be for at least eight weeks—six days of training before campers arrive, the seven-week season, and a day or so after camp to close things up.



At Horizons, the commitment is for nine weeks—eight weeks of camp and one week of pre-camp training. Horizons counselors generally have evenings and weekends off, with occasional exceptions.

One of the key demands of a resident camp counselor job is its round-the-clock nature. If you are a person who needs lots of privacy and personal space, this is probably not the place for you. During the day, you are with campers from early morning until their bedtime.

There are breaks in the day for staff, usually around mealtime, but it is still a demanding role, emotionally as well as physically. You must be prepared to live in what is truly a “child’s world.”

With the exception of the first and last weeks, each resident camp counselor is encouraged to take one day off each week beginning at 8:00 am. This does give some opportunity for recharging your batteries and visiting some of the beautiful New England countryside around us.

What is special about the Aloha Camps? Why do people keep coming back?

New counselors single out four facets of the Aloha Camps as being most noteworthy:

- 1) Staff: You will be working with some of the finest fellow staff members and directors that you can imagine. Being part of a team of high quality people is an experience like no other.
- 2) Traditions: The Aloha Camps date back to 1905 and have a rich heritage. Campers and counselors enjoy being part of a community with a long history and a legacy that is being carried on and adapted to modern times.

- 3) Caring for each individual: You won't find high-powered competition at the Aloha Camps. We try to create environments and objectives through which everyone can be a winner. Attention to detail is an all-important trademark at our camps. If done well, this makes your job both more challenging and more rewarding.
- 4) Music and humor: The Aloha Camps have a strong musical tradition dating back to their inception. A light touch—skits, crazy costume parties, silly songs—is part of what makes an Aloha summer fun for you and the campers.

Are there restrictions? To what extent is my social life regulated?

Our camps are for the campers and to this end, we try to maintain them as a “child’s world.” Our daytime jobs are demanding. To make sure we get enough rest to perform our jobs well and provide the necessary camper supervision through the night, we do request resident camp counselors be in their living units no later than 1:00 am. While alcohol may be served at occasional staff parties to those legally able to drink, abuse of any kind is not tolerated and the use of drugs is cause for dismissal. All property that is owned by The Aloha Foundation is smoke-free and tobacco-free.

What’s in it for me?

To succeed in this job, you must be more interested in what you can give than what you can get. If you are looking for immediate personal gratification, being a camp counselor is probably not for you. What you can receive from a summer is immense satisfaction from contributing your full energy and talents, and seeing children literally grow and change before your eyes.



Our high camper/counselor ratio of 2 to 1 makes it possible for you to work with individual children and help them overcome problems. Even more important, you will find tremendous resources among your fellow staff members. The wealth of skill and experience shared by senior staff can be a real asset in seeking to effectively help a child.

How do I apply? Do I need special qualifications?

Experience and special training are desirable attributes in a prospective counselor, but neither is necessary. We are looking for counselors who can teach by example, have a sincere interest in children, and possess the stamina and sense of humor to make the group living experience a joyous one.

Your first step is to submit an application at alohafoundation.org (click on “Employment”) and arrange for us to receive two references. If you wish, you may include supplementary information about your interests, experience, certifications, or other background. It is particularly helpful if you can describe your skills in various teaching areas. Once we have heard from you and your references, we will be in touch.

In conclusion

Words cannot convey the spirit, traditions, and character which are so much a part of our camps. At best, these questions and answers can begin to identify some of the nitty-gritty issues you need to consider. We urge you not to stop here, however! Check out other jobs and other camps. Ask them about size of their staff (and experience and age mix), the type of program they have, and salary and benefits. Before you decide to work with us, we want you to be happy with your choice, and convinced, as we are, that the camp where you work is the best of its kind.

Contact information is listed on the following page.



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Aloha

(resident camp for girls 12-17)

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(802) 333-3410 ext. 3412

Sarah Littlefield, Director

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Hive

(resident camp for girls 7-12)

846 VT Route 244
Fairlee, VT 05045

(802) 333-3420 ext. 3422

Kathy Plunkett, Director

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Lanakila

(resident camp for boys 7-14)

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Bryan Partridge, Director

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Horizons

(coed day camp pre-K-7th grade)

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Stuart Fairbairn, Director

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Ohana

(family camp for people of all ages)

341 Quinibeck Road
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Vanessa Riegler, Director

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Hulbert

(leadership/outdoor education)

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