



Camp Thunderbird Program Staff Opportunities Handbook

Mission and Values



Honesty, respect, responsibility, caring and inclusiveness are truly at the heart of everything we do. Our Mission is to work together to enhance individual and community potential through participation, learning and leadership. We provide opportunities for young people to challenge themselves, build their self-awareness, social skills, take a break from technology and reconnect with themselves, others and the natural environment.



What we do

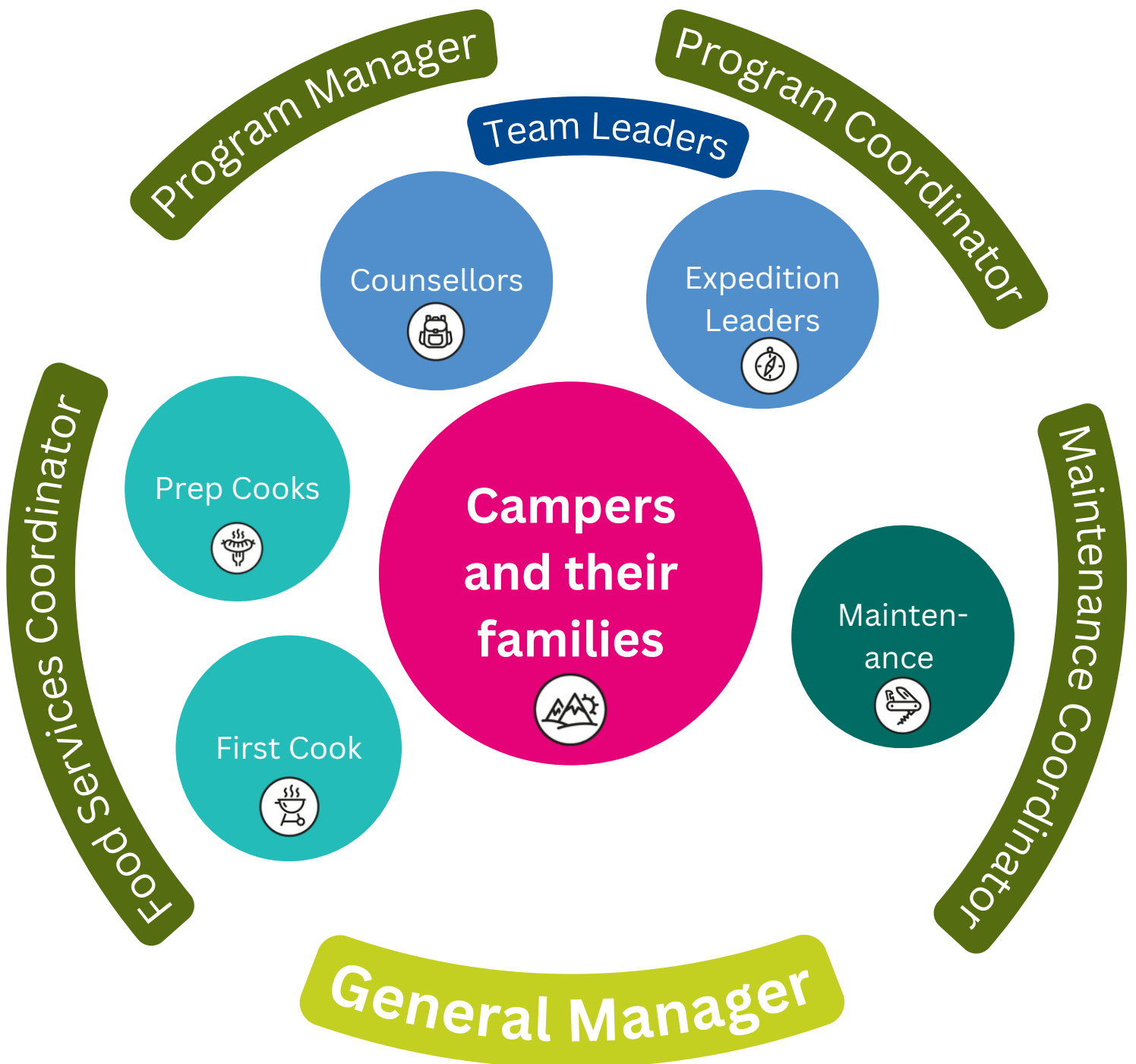
At the Y Outdoor Centre, we believe that high-quality mentorship, small group experiences, time spent being physically active in natural spaces, democratic group living, and community service are key elements in the healthy growth and development of young people. During May and June, school and community groups visit camp for 1-4 day experiences where they participate in outdoor activities led by our staff. During July and August, we operate day and overnight camps, ranging in length from three to nineteen days. Children can attend Day Camp after completing Kindergarten through to Grade 8. Overnight camps are offered for children and youth completing Grades 1–10. Activities include archery, orienteering, hiking, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, stand up paddleboarding, rock climbing, group games, singing and campfires, nature learning and appreciation. Families can also choose camps with overnight camping out-trips/expeditions, both on our property (Grades 3–8) and in natural areas around Vancouver Island (Grades 6–10). Our staff to camper ratio is between 2:14 and 2:10.

Who we are

Camp Thunderbird staff are, above all, kind, welcoming and caring folks. About 60% of staff have either come up through Thunderbird as campers, or are returning to their role from previous years. Forty percent of our team is new each year, and bring a diversity of backgrounds, ideas and energy to the team. We believe that each staff member brings their unique experiences and strengths to their role, and we encourage all staff to share their interests and creativity with campers and the team.

Organizational Chart

Our dedicated team works together to care for and support campers, their families, as well as schools and community groups who participate in camp programs.



Daily Living at Camp



Three meals per day with set menu, breakfast bar, salad bar, dessert and snack. Dietary restrictions accommodated.



Shared, rustic accommodation. Summer counsellors sleep in cabins with kids.



Camper groups of 10-14.
Ages 5-15.



Full days outside.
Counsellors lead programming from 7am-9pm.



Work with a co-counsellor (summer), or chaperone (outdoor ed).



Screen free living. Wifi and cell reception is limited and staff can only use their phones on time off.



Feedback, growth and support. Team Leaders supervise counsellors.

What makes a successful Thunderbird staff?



Camp Thunderbird is an amazing and unique summer job, and knowing what makes a successful staff member will help you be prepared and know what to expect, and what is expected of you. Camp Thunderbird staff:

Are great with children. Being able to form genuine and caring mentorship relationships with your campers is key to a safe and enjoyable time for you and your campers. You will be trained in our respectful child guidance philosophy and coming already with a high sense of caring and empathy is important.

Manage risk thoughtfully. Keeping safety top-of-mind always, through active supervision, risk assessment, and adherence to YMCA and BCCA standards for safety in camping is paramount.

Bring a sense of fun and belonging. Sharing the joy of being outdoors in nature, collaborating creatively with peers and children to instill a love of camp and the outdoors is a rewarding part of the job.

Model a growth mindset. Mistakes are beneficial opportunities to learn and grow. Camp staff who value their own and others' mistakes, and take feedback, can model this for children and help children build confidence.

Demonstrate flexibility. We pride ourselves on being a flexible employer and we ask that staff work with us to meet the needs of camp. This means things like: recognizing that plans and needs may change and therefore duties may also change (e.g., working directly as a counsellor regardless of position for which you were hired, should camp need you to), getting written approval for all time off requests, and being willing to change your plans and expectations to help your campers have fun.

Know that camp can be hard work. You will be responsible for children 24 hours per day, up to 12 days in a row. We expect staff to take at least an hour-long break each day, and we allow staff to self-manage their breaks (if you need more, please take more). Ask for help when you need it.

Accommodations



Staff Accommodations



Camper Cabins



Benefits



All staff receive the following perks and benefits:

- Free membership to the Y for the duration of their contract: access to gym, pool with hot tub and sauna, and fitness classes.
- Room and board: while working, all meals and accommodations are provided at no cost to you.
- Live, work, and play in the gorgeous Sooke Foothills with access to unlimited wilderness hiking. Camping gear available to borrow.
- Access to program facilities when not used by campers: grab a camp friend and go rock climbing, take out a SUP on the lake or relax on the dock.
- Supportive team of peers and leaders.
- 4% vacation pay on each pay cheque.
- Weekly evening “staff snack” events that include fun food, community building, and relaxation.
- Only a 40 minute drive to downtown Victoria.

What is a Live-In Camp Leader?

- Camp counsellors, lifeguards, and team leaders fall under the category of Live-In Camp Leaders under the BC Employment Standards Act and are paid a daily wage.
- Wage ranges can be found in the job postings.

The Application Process



Steps from start to finish:

1. Submit a resume and cover letter to hr@vancouverislandy.ca
2. Submit a completed application form
 - a. Either with resume and cover letter or directly to managers after receiving an invite to interview.
3. Receive an invite to interview via email, from camp managers
4. Follow the steps in that invitation email including:
 - a. Complete the pre-interview survey
 - b. Book yourself for an interview (link provided once you complete the survey)
 - c. Submit a complete application that includes 3 professional references
 - d. Watch the pre-interview video (or read the transcript)
 - e. Prepare for the interview by thinking of stories that demonstrate your work with children, resilience, and fit for work at camp
5. Attend the interview - you will receive an MTeams link
6. Follow up to ensure references are done (you will hold responsibility to ensure your references submit to us).
7. If successful, receive an offer of employment and respond promptly
8. Prepare for a fun summer!

Questions? Contact Us at hr@vancouverislandy.ca