

## CHAPTER 3

# KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR GAILD

## MAIL

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Kids love mail. Adults love mail. So send lots of letters and **send them even before your kids are at camp**, so that when they arrive a letter is waiting for them. **The mail will take at least one week from Toronto and 10 days from elsewhere.** Please talk to your children about how long mail will take to reach them. Please remember to use their full name and cabin number on each letter. Your child will let you know their cabin number in their first letter or post card. Just as postal codes speed the daily mail in the real world, at Manitou cabin numbers help speed up our sorting process. **Please do not phone us for a cabin number prior to camp. We will not know your camper's cabin.** All mail without camper cabin numbers is sorted anyway.

### OUR MAILING ADDRESS IS:

**Happy Camper, Cabin #**

(Don't worry if you don't know your camper's cabin # for the first week or so!)

**Camp Manitou**

**10 Camp Road, R.R. #1**

**Parry Sound, ON P2A 2W7**

Mail from your child is just as important. We encourage them to write often and hope that they will impart to you some interesting information other than "I'm fine. How are you? Love Joe". However, if you don't receive mail, don't be alarmed and assume something awful has happened to your child - they're probably too busy having a good time, or have just written three letters that you'll receive all at once. **Letter Writing Days are mandatory** for campers at least once each week.

If you want to receive mail from your children, make it easy for them. Send them, no matter what age, with pre-addressed stamped envelopes. Often mail does not get to you because campers are too busy to write a letter home or the address is unreadable or wrong so please do the work for them by pre-addressing their envelopes and putting the appropriate stamps on their envelopes.

**Do not be concerned if you receive a negative letter.** Often campers will use their letter writing to express a frustration arising from a specific incident that has been handled 10 days prior to you receiving the letter. Rest assured that if there is really an issue and it has not been resolved we would contact you if we feel the safety or ultimate contentment of your child is of concern. If you do receive a concerning letter feel free to contact Jen and she will let you know first hand how your child is doing.

## FAXES/E-MAIL and communication for campers outside of Canada

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There is nothing better than good old-fashioned mail even if you live outside of Canada. However mail outside of the country does get tied up at the border for a few days so we now allow campers to communicate to you via fax or email twice a week on letter writing day. Your child will write a normal letter and we will then send it to you. We prefer fax, as our email is satellite and often will not work in storms. Please give us a fax number or alternatively an email for us to send you their mail to.

Also you can fax to your campers as well to 705-389-2348. **DO NOT FAX IT TO OUR MAIN FAX LINE.** The best time to send a fax is at night, when the machine is less busy. As with letters, please include your child's full name and cabin number on the fax.

If you do not have access to a fax we can arrange email but delivery is dependent on the weather.

U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL STAMPS ARE NOT REQUIRED.

DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT OUR ON-LINE WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS AT [WWW.MANITOUCAMP.COM](http://WWW.MANITOUCAMP.COM)

## **FAXES and communication for campers in CANADA.**

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### **Incoming communication from home to camp:**

We are delighted to receive faxes but we cannot accept more than two faxes per week per child, otherwise we will have to stop the faxing of letters for our Toronto campers. We cannot sort up to 700 faxes a day! This service was created initially for our American and European campers and should not be over-used, especially by camper parents who reside in Ontario. Furthermore sending too many messages creates a reliance on mail and fax and can make children homesick. If you do decide to fax a letter we will only give it to your child if it is sent to our camper fax line: **705-389-2348. DO NOT FAX IT TO OUR MAIN FAX LINE.** The best time to send a fax is at night, when the machine is less busy. As with letters, please include your child's full name and cabin number on the fax.



### **Outgoing communication from camp:**

Generally campers cannot fax home although campers from outside Ontario may have permission to do so. Additionally if parents in Ontario have not received a letter in a week just give Jen a call and we will arrange to have your child fax a letter home.

## **COURIERS AND PACKAGES**

### **MANITOU'S PACKAGE POLICY- IF WE FIND IT WE DONATE IT TO CHARITY!**

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THIS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED - DO NOT STUFF games, stuffed animals, or candy in these envelopes. PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR CHILD DOES NOT NEED A PACKAGE BUT IF YOU FEEL YOU MUST SEND ONE IT MUST BE READING MATERIAL. The arrival of packages, unless for an urgent matter, creates undue competition and commotion. We can appreciate the good intent of a package but there can be a negative effect when the volume of packages gets out of control. It leads to disappointment, competitiveness, and campers feeling neglected or left out. It also puts pressure on parents.

Please ensure the following:

- **NO PACKAGES other than reading material - any package must be approved by Jen.**
- No Boxes! Use envelopes only. They must be flat and no larger than 9X12 inches.
- Send only books, magazines, unless for a birthday (please notify us in this event, in advance.)
- **All boxes and non-flat envelopes will be donated to charity.** If more than one package is received it will be donated to charity. Tell aunts, uncles and grandparents please.
- **NO FOOD, NO CANDY OR GUM to be sent up!**
- If you use courier, **DO NOT USE UPS.** As their packages are held up at the border and duty is charged, we cannot accept them. We do not keep cash in the office and will not accept a package where duty must be paid or where the package is COD. Please use Purolator or Federal Express only **BUT YOU MUST LET JEN KNOW otherwise the package will be returned.**
- We cannot be responsible for lost packages. Hang on to your "way bill" to track a missing package and contact your courier company.
- The only exceptions to the package policy are birthdays and necessities. If you are sending a birthday package or items that your child needs (i.e. glasses, clothing, bedding), please call ahead and let the office (Jen) know.

**To send by courier (i.e. Purolator)**

Camp Manitou  
110 Camp Road  
McKellar, ON P0G 1C0

**To send by Canada Post/USPS:**

Camp Manitou  
10 Camp Road R.R. #1  
Parry Sound, ON P2A 2W7

We will not be able to “track” mail from camp. Please do not call to confirm we have received a package, letter or fax. Our staff need to focus on campers concerns and do not have the time to track mail. It is not recommended to send any items that need tracking by our staff unless arranged in advance for a specific item needed for a camper.

Note: As guardian for your child, we have the authority to open up any mail if we believe it could include something that could jeopardize the contentment and safety of campers. For example, any food since it could contain nut or nut traces.

## **FOOD PACKAGES- DO NOT SEND! THAT INCLUDES CANDY**

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Firstly, kids will be kids, some like to share their things and others don't. When inequities exist it can lead to temptations that are hard to resist, often leading to cabin problems, jealousy and unhappy campers. Secondly, stock piling all these goodies in camper cabins encourages the natural inhabitants of the forest to enter cabins in search of the source of all the delicious smells! Raccoons, chipmunks and squirrels, although very timid little animals, are curious enough by nature, we really don't want to encourage them anymore, not to mention ants and mice. Finally, food packages can lead to problems with other children in the cabin that may be sensitive to certain foods, especially peanuts. We outline our concerns more fully in Chapter 6, but not being aware of products that may contain traces of peanuts can be life threatening!

So, **FOOD IS NOT ALLOWED TO BE SENT TO CAMPERS OR BROUGHT INTO CAMP.** As you are aware, we do have a wonderfully stocked TUCK SHOP where goodies are available frequently so there is no need to “stock up” in the cabin. We will continue to enforce this policy very strictly and any food sent will go directly to a local shelter. **Please do not embarrass your child by sending food into camp, and please have respect for the rules. Thank you!**

## **E-MAIL**

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**WE TAKE A HOLIDAY FROM E-MAIL DURING THE SUMMER.**

Please communicate to us by mail, fax or phone, as all office e-mail will not be answered. We cannot rely on it up in McKellar.

## **PHONE CALL POLICY**

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We do not permit campers to call home except in emergencies and on a camper's birthday. In our experience it is very disruptive for a child who is learning to get the most of the summer if he or she knows a phone call is available. For any child prone to homesickness- with whom we work harder than anyone to help overcome- phone contact in 95% of cases is regressive. If you wish more detailed information on this policy please request our COMMUNICATION POLICY PRINTOUT or read the article on our web site [www.manitoucAMP.com/campcommunication.htm](http://www.manitoucAMP.com/campcommunication.htm).

Feel free to give Jen a call if you have evidence of an issue (a concerning letter) and she can let you know how your child is doing. If there is an issue that is not resolved, we can also arrange a call between you and a unit head. Jen will often be able to answer your questions or give you immediate feedback on a particular issue.

If you do not hear from us right away, please understand we may have to arrange to call you back. Often the Camp Directors and other staff will be busy and assuming your child is doing well, you may not get a return call until the end of the day, or the following morning, when we can catch up from the day's events. So please be patient if we do not call you right back. Remember no news is good news.

**CAMPER BIRTHDAYS:** Campers (not their siblings) can phone parents on their birthday only (not on their parent's birthday). All camper calls to parents on their birthday are made **AFTER Lunch between 1:30 and 2:00**. Campers also receive a birthday cake, special all camp "Happy Birthday" sing along, special cabin get together, along with a spin of the famous birthday wheel (where they can win a movie night, special snack and other great prizes).

**CELL PHONES: NO CELL PHONES, SMARTPHONES, OR IPHONES ARE PERMITTED IN CAMP.** If your child is coming by plane and therefore has a cell phone please instruct him/her to hand in their phone as soon as they are greeted by our staff at the airport by giving the staff their cell phone along with their passport, and ticket and valuables.

## **EMERGENCY NUMBER:**

If it is a life and death situation, you can call Jeff and Janice's cabin at **705-389-2792**. This number should never be used unless it is an **ABSOLUTE EMERGENCY** and you need to get a hold of us right away (after 8:00 p.m. at night). If there is any abuse of this emergency number it will leave us no choice but to resort to the regular camp numbers. We sincerely hope this number will never be used.

## **"WHEN WILL I HEAR FROM YOU? IT WOULD BE NICE TO GET SOME FEEDBACK AFTER THE SUMMER"**

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**CHECK OUT OUR WEEKLY PARENT NEWSLETTER EACH WEEK AT [WWW.MANITOUCAMP.COM](http://WWW.MANITOUCAMP.COM)**

If there is a problem, whether of a behavioral, social or medical nature, we will call you to discuss the matter, in the event a counselor, unit head, director or physician feels that it is in the best interest of the camper or parent. As indicated in our medical section, we will call you if your child is in the health center for any significant length of time, or put on antibiotics, and so on. For our Freshkids and 1<sup>st</sup> time campers, the unit heads will call within the first 3-4 days of camp.

We do not provide "camper letters" from counsellors because in the long run this does more harm to the camp and your child than the goodwill and PR we get out of it. For (senior) counsellors to write campers letters once per session it means realistically (without the use of a computer) they have to spend on average about 6 -10 hours minimum to provide a proper letter. This means that our counsellors for a few days have to find 3 hours during the day that would otherwise be used to supervise and manage their campers. When counsellors provide camper letters the end result is poor supervision and unhappy campers. We already demand so much from our staff that we feel it is imprudent to provide these letters. **All counsellors do complete detailed camper profile forms and if you wish to inquire about these forms feel free to contact us after the summer.** We are more than happy to review these forms with you. If we have serious concerns we always contact the parents in any event but if you wish to review your son or daughter's form we can give you the counsellor and unit heads view on many matters. For example, leadership abilities, respect for campers, staff and camp, adherence to camp rules, hygiene, ability to connect with kids in cabin, favourite activities, medical issues and much more!

## ***WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU IF IT'S A GOOD REASON BUT.....***

*Every moment we take to spend time on the phone with parents to report- whether directors or unitheads means the supervisors can't be out monitoring the safety and contentment of your kids. So please use discretion- don't contact us to ask, "I heard the weather is bad- how bad is it?" Please keep our unitheads free to look after substantive issues. At the same time if you have reason to believe your child has an issue of course call us at any time! We are one of few camps that give new camper parents a phone call but after that call we need to be out there with the kids!*

## **"WHO WILL I HEAR FROM?"**

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**We pride ourselves on having one of the most dynamic and experienced leadership teams that you will find at a summer camp. In addition to hearing from Mark or Jeff you may also hear from your child's unit-head or one of these other camp leaders.**

**JEN MURDOCK:** Our Administrative Director and full time member of the Manitou family. A former Activity and Unit head we are delighted to have such an experienced person involved with camp full time. Never flustered and always willing to give the benefit of the doubt, Jen is there to answer questions of any and all types. This will be Jen's 11<sup>th</sup> summer at Manitou.

**CHRIS McKIBBIN:** Our "Head Counsellor" is the point person for all camper concerns. Working closely with our Unit Heads, he reports directly to Jeff and Mark. Chris has been a key member of our leadership team for many years. A former Manitou counsellor, Unit Head and Activity Director, he has become an expert in conflict resolution, and offers advice and support to counsellors and campers in all aspects including self-esteem, cabin bonding, and inclusion. Campers may know him best as the guy up at the "mic". This will be Chris' 12<sup>th</sup> summer at Manitou.

**DAVID (LUIGI) SHEFFE:** "Luigi" is our Associate Director, he likely knows more about the "in-and-outs" of camp life than anyone else on staff. A former Unit Head and Program Director, Luigi plays a multi-purpose role, as the Director of our off-season groups, managing our facility and playing a large role in monitoring campers, often working on camper issues. This will be Luigi's 13<sup>th</sup> summer at Manitou.

**MARKUS FEHR:** Our Assistant Director, focuses on staff hiring, training and supervision, but assists Jeff and Mark with all aspects of the camp program. Markus coordinates all areas of staff development both in the city and at camp. Markus works full time in our winter office, speaking with parents throughout the year and is front and centre in all aspects of staffing matters, as well as promotional publications. This will be Markus' 15<sup>th</sup> summer at Manitou.

**DENISE (MAMA D) GREENWOOD-GEORGE:** Our Activity Director manages over 30 activities and is busy with the director team also managing camper and staff issues. With experience at Manitou as a counsellor, Unit Head, Activity Head and Administrative Director, Mama D brings a wealth of knowledge to camp. This will be Mama D's 14<sup>th</sup> summer at Manitou.

**JAY WENGLE:** Our Program Director who spearheads all of the camp wide programs and also helps out with programming for unit evening programs, cabin activities and is the creative source of much of Manitou's programming magic. Jay may also assist on specific camper or staff issues as he has been at Manitou for years now in many different roles specifically as our renowned Freshkid Unit Head and most recently started our new Greenhouse Program. This will be Jay's 14<sup>th</sup> summer at Manitou.

**LEIGH BRYANT:** Our Associate Director who leads our Senior Leadership program, coordinates with Jay on many camp-wide events, manages Intercamps, develops staff rec programs and keeps us all in the loop at Flagpole. Leigh has also been a Manitou counsellor and Activity Head and is always a great resource for camper and counsellor issues. This will be Leigh's 5<sup>th</sup> summer at Manitou.

We pride ourselves on having such a large team of Directors, allowing Jeff and Mark to be able to continually monitor what is going on in camp, every single minute of the day and night!

