

CHAPTER 10

THINKING AHEAD

CABIN ASSIGNMENTS

Cabin assignments are done just before the kids arrive. As you know, campers get to request two cabin mates. We always try (and are usually able) to oblige most of their requests. We value the importance to children of being with their friends. We also value the importance of making NEW friends and the importance of avoiding cliques and the feeling of exclusion from a group. All of this is the essence of the camp experience. The thoughts that go into making cabin assignments are diverse, including age, grade, requests, interests, cabin dynamics, city of residence, and much more and of course the camper's well being and happiness. Trust us to provide that, and please convey that assurance to your children before they come to camp. Please note that because we have been filling up so quickly in recent years, first priority is given to cabin placement in order of date applications are received. If your child does not get his/her choice of cabin mate trust us that there is a good reason for this.

APPLICATIONS FOR NEXT SEASON

We were fortunate this year to have applications pile in during the months of September and October. The truth is that most Toronto parents are very timely in getting in their applications for the next summer. Our American, European and other Canadian families tend to wait awhile and this puts them at a clear disadvantage. **Please get in your application for next year as soon as we send it to you in the mail.** There is little harm in sending it in since your deposit is refundable up to April 1 of that year, except for a minor administrative fee. It guarantees your child's space at camp and their cabin placement is given priority. NOTE: If you wish to change sessions the next season often the cabin request cannot be met, since we must first give priority to those campers from last summer in that session.

WHICH SESSION DO I CHOOSE?

Many campers choose to stay the entire summer at Manitou. Each session, of course, has it's own special traditions. Whether it is tribal games, carnivals, colour wars, midnight specials, extended canoe trips, inter-camp trips, ski shows, both sessions are purposely programmed to be as challenging and exciting as the other.

We think the last three days of camp are truly memorable. UNTIL YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED WORLD GAMES YOU CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE AMOUNT OF SPIRIT AND TRADITION THAT CULMINATES IN THOSE LAST FEW DAYS OF CAMP. When you combine that with the final plays and dance shows, the final slide show and of course the final Camper Banquet, there is no doubt that any camper will tell you that **Manitou's last 72 hours is bar none- the most jam-packed, unique and rewarding experience of a life time.** Whatever you choose we offer the same nurturing, top quality staff and programming for your child in both sessions. Please note in the event of a wait list we give priority to full summer campers over one-session campers. Note: For whatever reason many more campers wish to ski/wakeboard first month so if your child wishes to ski once or twice every day, this is much easier to accommodate second session.

Is the water warmer second session? Yes, although the lake is quite warm both sessions since it is a shallow lake, second session the water is warmer. The average lake temperature in a typical summer is 76-84 degrees F.

JUNIOR CAMPERS

ACTIVITY INVOLVEMENT, SKILL LEVELS, AND SWIMMING

Just a quick heads up as you read ahead. This is the age when some kids start to come late to activities and although we do our very best to ensure they attend activities (and have succeeded quite well in this regard) now is the time to start discussing with your child the importance of being at and participating in all their activities. By the time they are seniors and CIT's they need to gain skills that can be used to help teach younger campers. **It is always a tremendous asset for a camper to get as many swimming qualifications as possible so even though swimming is not mandatory we encourage you to have your child sign up for bronze medallion, bronze cross as junior or senior campers! Same things goes for canoe trips, this is something to be encouraged.** You should also encourage your child at camp to get as many awards as possible and to also follow up in the city in a specific skill set that can be used to teach other campers at camp when they are CIT's and on staff. Often we cannot accommodate a wonderful camper on staff because he/she does not have a specific skill that can be used at camp as a staff member. Please remember at Manitou almost all counselors work at an activity and therefore campers need to start thinking about skill areas they wish to pursue as they get older. As Junior campers they are not there yet but it is time to at least plant the seed.

SENIOR CAMPERS and FUTURE CIT'S
IF YOUR CAMPER IS 13 -16 please discuss this with your child.

THE SENIOR CAMPER YEARS

Just about every camper that comes up our ranks is a desirable C.I.T. but the actions of your child, as a senior camper is often critical in determining if they will be asked back as a C.I.T. In recent years the number of spaces in the CIT program, is smaller than the number of eligible candidates, making the selection process somewhat competitive. Often difficult choices have to be made and therefore the evaluation of your child as a senior camper is what distinguishes one camper from another. Such criteria is vast but would include, for example, the general respect shown by your child to other campers and staff, their positive attitude and their leadership potential, the degree to which policies are followed, the respect for the camp's rules and the support of the camp philosophy.

Additionally, the importance of activity involvement and their participation in the award program (and leadership program for second year seniors) is another important factor in maximizing a child's chances of being accepted back as a C.I.T. and on staff! The reality is when all things are equal, a 16 year old with awards, **swimming qualifications, canoe trip experience** or other certifications/skill levels either obtained at camp or from the "city", has a distinct advantage. Motivate your child to work hard to achieve their Manitou award levels so that by the CIT year they can achieve their 5th level (Leader's) and encourage them to go on **canoe trips** and complete their bronze cross. Make sure by this time they have some activities that they are focusing on that they can teach as CITs and/or as staff. Please have them follow up in the school year to advance in such skills.

SECOND YEAR SENIORS – SENIOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM:

We have also found that some second year senior campers want more of a challenge and want to step up into more of a leadership role. We have therefore created a **SENIOR leadership program**. This program gives an opportunity for second year seniors to take on a leadership role within camp. These campers have the opportunity to get involved with programming as well as in counseling. Whether it

be working on the first month or final banquet, or leading an evening program for the Freshkid unit, your child will be given a wonderful opportunity to lead younger children. Many children in this program will be teamed up with Freshkids as a buddy or mentor. Additionally some campers may teach or just "help out" at specific activities giving added support to the youngest campers.

When we accept back our future CIT's we will be looking at the general character traits of your child, as displayed by them as a senior camper and not just the fact that they participated in this leadership program. By getting involved with this program, however, it does give those campers an advantage if they wish to apply as a CIT the following year. It will demonstrate your child's commitment to the camp community and be a stepping-stone to becoming a CIT.

We also understand that some campers may not wish to participate in this program and that is fine. Most importantly for those campers that want more of a challenge in their last year of camping, before entering their CIT year, this program is an excellent opportunity. We guarantee it will be fun, challenging and give your child a taste of what it would be like to be a C.I.T or for that matter on staff one day!

THE C.I.T. PROGRAM:

Our Counsellor-in-Training program is for our oldest campers interested in applying for a staff position down the road. If your camper is considering this program, please note that space is extremely limited. We expect C.I.T.s to be eligible to apply back as staff the following year (regardless of intentions) based on the standards required by the Ontario Camping Association. Therefore to be a C.I.T., campers must be turning 16 within the calendar year. Campers who have accelerated or are a year younger have to return for an extra year as a senior camper. C.I.T.s will also be expected to apply early, as they will be interviewed in advance for a place in the program. C.I.T.s successfully completing the program are given preference applying for positions as Junior Counsellors. This training program is one of the most critical components of camp. Our Staff who have grown up at Manitou tend to understand the Camp's goals, philosophy and value system, and therefore are important to the success of camp.

We will always look favourably upon campers who are good role models, kind, spirited, caring, energetic, loyal and interact well with children. Nevertheless at Manitou a camper's activity skill levels or teaching skills play an important part in his/her overall profile as a CIT candidate or for that matter when hired back on staff. It is in a camper's best interest to therefore work at an activity that can take advantage of their skill set and to not fall into the trap of working at the most competitive activity where there will be numerous job applications the following year. Feel free to discuss with us in advance which activities may be most appropriate for your child to work at, and remember some activities like waterskiing are often requested by many CIT's making the hiring process more competitive in such areas.

Space is extremely limited. With a limited number of cabins and/or activities to do placements in, for the overall good of the program, we keep the program small to ensure the best training possible of those selected. **Ultimately this number is far lower then the number of our senior campers.**

When we choose the C.I.T.s each year, we have to make a subjective decision, but we also have specific criteria that such decisions are based upon. **Accordingly if you have a senior camper in both senior years, we would encourage you to let them know that their performance as a camper can have a large impact on future acceptance into the C.I.T program.** Please also discuss with them the importance of having swimming qualifications and canoe trip experience, even if they are not planning on working at a waterfront activity. N.L.S. (or if not, Bronze Cross) is the best way to differentiate yourself.

Examples of criteria for evaluation into the C.I.T program include, but are not limited to:

- General respect of campers and staff and the degree to which policies and rules are followed.
- Ability for camper to work within a cooperative environment at camp and in the cabin.
- Leadership potential (in general and through the senior year leadership program).
- Support of camp, and its philosophy. (Did the camper participate in canoe trips, inter-camp teams, camp performances, and respect the environment etc.?)
- **Swimming certifications** (Bronze medallion, Bronze Cross, Instructors and N.L.S.)- Note: N.L.S, all things being equal in terms of comparable staff, is the best way to differentiate your skills. Having staff with NLS work at any activity and having counselors with N.L.S. is a huge asset for camp.
- Activity and skill involvement, attendance at activities, achievement in awards, learning substantive skills at a few activities.
- Recognition by camp activity heads, unit heads and directors of involvement in all aspects of the camp program. Team captain recognition at colour war, and recognition at Friday Night Fireside.
- Canoe trips – length and number of trips and profile report from staff on trip.
- Length of time the camper has been to Manitou in years, and sessions.
- A letter of application indicating why the camper wishes to become a C.I.T.
- A discussion with the camper about the CIT program and the expectations of the program.

STAFF YEARS

Age 17 is a crossroad for many young adults because they arrive at that phase of their life where the rules have changed a bit. No longer can they assume a place will be theirs, even though their hearts are clearly part of that place. The decision of who is hired back is now up to camp and the camp has a mandate to hire the very best staff possible for the good of the future children who like your child attended Manitou with the expectation that their counselor would be the very best.

As you know there is a formal evaluation of every staff applicant, which includes his or her performance as a CIT and camper. There are also skill sets that are required or that will give an applicant an edge in the hiring process; one example would be lifeguard certification. As stated, we must look at subjective criteria such as enthusiasm, teamwork, attitude, initiative, responsibility, role modeling, as well as objective criteria around skill levels. The fact is many wonderful campers will not be able to be on staff if they do not have a specific activity in which they have some skills.

Parents will often ask us, is it not enough that our child has been a loyal dedicated camper? There is no doubt that being a camper at Manitou for many years usually gives you a large advantage in being hired back on staff because those applicants understand the culture and values we wish to inculcate to our campers. But it is not a guarantee by any means. We must also look at if the applicant made their best use of their time at camp, their role modeling, maturity, initiative, attitude and general character. There must also be a match such that there is a junior position available with that skill set, whether a skill at an activity or as a general counselor. **Of course having earned the appropriate Manitou level 5 instructors award at some activities, and/or having swimming certifications such as Bronze Cross and NLS, canoe trip experience and/or having other certifications and proof of skills further developed during the school year is also a clear advantage to being on staff.**

Finally, our years of experience tell us that not everyone arrives at this readiness for staff at the same time. In fact in the United States, some camps do not allow 17 year olds to be hired and ask that these young adults skip a year. In fact, it is not uncommon to find that our best staff are people that have returned to us in later years, at age 18, 19 or often in their 20's.

Manitou is always your child's home and as they grow up through to staff age, we do everything we can to try to objectively place them in a staff position but please remember the process is complicated and we have an obligation to all parents to provide not only good staff each year but the very best possible.