

Rocky River Ranch Trainee Program Overview

Our three-year Leadership Program begins with the Trainee level. Campers who are rising ninth graders are automatically placed in this level. As these campers enter their teenage years, Trainees are at an ideal age to spread their wings in a controlled, active, hands-on environment. We consider it an incredible honor to play a pivotal role in nurturing a girl's growing sense of independence and interest in taking care of herself and assisting younger campers.

Welcome to the Rocky River Ranch Leadership Program! We are so excited to grow and learn with you.

Training

- Effective communication
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Setting up and running activities for campers
- Group facilitation
- Peer mentorship
- Team building/personal growth exercises (High Ropes)
- Group initiative games

The camp directors have an ongoing training and evaluation plan for each Trainee.

Included are these steps:

- Post-camp Self Evaluations
- Trainees are monitored and feedback is provided on their development as they work with their camp Little Sister.
- Periodic check-ins may be held with each Trainee and focus on the Trainee's progress in working with their cabin group, comfort in leading activity programs, relationships with staff members and other Trainees, and any other concerns or challenges the Trainee might have.

Programming

Each Trainee is assigned to one or two of our youngest campers in the Big Sister/ Little Sister program. The Trainees are an integral part of facilitating a smooth transition into camp life for these small and sometimes anxious campers. The Trainees will walk their Little Sisters to their classes on the first day, check in with them before bedtime, and plan and host a Big Sis/ Little Sis party for the girls to enjoy.

It is important that the Trainees arrive at camp with the understanding that they are now role models at camp. They will attend regular classes and may assist their teachers when appropriate to do so. Their responsibilities include taking care of their Little Sisters, planning and facilitating the Carnival Capers evening program (deciding on and managing game stations), leading the camp in songs, attending Trainee meetings, Counselor for a Day (shadowing a staff member), and participating in High Ropes at the Texas State GOAL Ropes Course (going to the course and participating in the team building aspect is required; participating on the high ropes elements is optional).

Housing

Trainees are housed in Western Empress with their “Trainee Moms”- staff members who have been specifically chosen by the Camp Directors to help coordinate the program. Western Empress often houses both eighth graders and ninth graders, with the Trainees being pulled out for special activities or meetings.

Promotion

Trainees who have reached their goals and have done well through the evaluation process will be promoted and invited to participate in the next level as a SIT1 (Staff-in-Training, first year). Trainees who have shown that they are not right for the Leadership Program (either through behavior or rule breaking) will not be invited to continue in the leadership program. Each Trainee will have the full support of the Trainee Moms and will be given every opportunity to succeed. Promotion letters are mailed in the fall.

Benefits

The benefits of this program are hard to number. It is an asset on college applications and the alumni network in the workplace and on college campuses is far-reaching. The independence and confidence the girls gain will help them in every aspect of their lives. We are proud of our program and proud of the wonderful young women who are part of it.