



Adirondack Program Prospective Staff Packet

Hello!

This packet is designed to guide your decision about applying to join La Vida Adirondack Programs. **Our mission is to catalyze character formation, cultivate community and develop servant-leadership skills in individuals**, groups and organizations through outdoor experiential education. Please carefully consider your skills, physical abilities, leadership potential, financial needs, and what you hope to gain from the program. We encourage, along with prayer, consulting former Adirondack staff, friends, family, pastors, or mentors for their input. Receiving advice is essential as you contemplate this ministry opportunity.

Serving in the Adirondacks (ADKs) is tough and involves long days. **The program seeks individuals with a mature Christian commitment and willingness to serve in diverse conditions.** Living and working closely with others in a service-oriented community is a key aspect of the La Vida summer. If you work well in teams and support the program's mission, you'll be an asset to La Vida. We ask much of our staff, but the experience is extremely rewarding.

If you are joining for a single session (often May or August), ensure you understand the associated responsibilities. Summer Session staff get weeks of training; single-session leaders only a few days. Be prepared for an intensive preparation period before you begin. We may ask more of your time before the summer to equip you better for your session.

If applying for summer:

Because La Vida invests significantly in staff development, **we ask you to consider committing to two summers.** Returning staff members (not necessarily consecutively) bring more value and can help train others. This is encouraged, not required, and depends on leadership capability and fit with the team.

We are asking Summer Staff to stay through the August session, our largest college session. For 2026, we've shifted the summer schedule to start later in June, making it easier to participate in August. If you can't commit to August but are available for the summer, note this on your application, and we'll discuss options.

As a ministry, La Vida depends on broad financial support. **Each summer staff member is asked to send 15 support letters to family, friends, and others to help with stipends, advanced training, and camp maintenance.** Donations are processed through Gordon College, providing tax-exempt receipts to supporters.

I have witnessed God's provision in past summers and look forward to the team He assembles for 2026!
Blessings,

Rosie Marshall // Adirondack Program, Director

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STAFFING DATES:

May Gordon College Expeditions: May 17 – 28, 2026

Summer ADK Staff: June 8th* – August 23, 2026*

August Gordon College Expeditions: August 5 – 22, 2026

PROSPECTIVE STAFFING TIMELINE:**Application Process Open (End of October):**

- Fill out the ADK staff application online: <https://lavidacenter.org/jobs/adk/>
- Complete essay questions; submit essay question answers using the provided link
- Recommendation Form: all **new staff** need to have 3 different people fill out an online recommendation form <https://airtable.com/shrNTERpHFhivwr0S>

DUE DECEMBER 12, 2025

Interviewing (starting Late November)

- If selected to continue in the application process, interviews will start

Staff announcement (End of January/Early February)

- Staff will be notified of their employment to the 2026 ADK Summer Program and in what capacity
- There will be 2 weeks to sign and return contracts

Qualifications of All Staff:

- Mature commitment to following Jesus Christ
- Ability to calmly facilitate conversations
- Working knowledge of Scripture and basic Christian doctrine (i.e., gospel, atonement, sanctification)
- Completion of one year of college
- Experience or desire to gain experience in leadership
- Good judgment and safety consciousness
- Ability to relate to and work with adults, peers and high school youth
- Strong desire to serve
- Physical health that would allow one to lead wilderness expeditions
- Commitment to consider working for two summers

Certifications of All Staff:

- Gordon College van license (**required; if ineligible, please contact the ADK Director**)
- Level 1 belay certified (recommended; if unable, please contact the ADK Director)

Responsibilities of All Staff:

- Attend (unless you do not reside in the North Shore, MA area) all spring semester staff training sessions.
- Understand and adhere to all La Vida philosophies, policies and procedures
- Believe in, adhere to and recommit to the [Gordon College Statement of Faith](#)
- Be a positive representative of the La Vida program to the public
- Send at least 15 prayer/support letters to family, friends, etc. (to help supplement stipends)

IS WORKING FOR LA VIDA A GOOD FIT FOR ME?

Is my spiritual life at a point where I can encourage others towards a relationship with Jesus?

At La Vida, we play an instrumental part in the development of students in their walk with God. Trip leaders especially will be sharing devotionals and will often be asked for spiritual advice as well. Prayerfully think through your own personal relationship with God and if you can care for others physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Do I aspire to push myself to grow?

Working at La Vida can be a challenging experience, ranging from long days of work, uncomfortable weather, or difficult tasks and conversations. These are all areas that will require a conscious effort to push through your uncomfortable environment. These are also the conditions that can create lots of growth through embracing the uncomfortable.

How do I deal with being uncomfortable (or out in the rain or around bugs)?

Your participants are not the only ones who will need to grow through facing challenges in the outdoors! As a trip leader or base camp staff, you will be out in the elements working with the participants. So, whether that's rain, cold, or mosquitos, you'll need to support each other through the difficulties of living outside!

Do I care about giving to an intentional community?

At La Vida Base Camp, we work, eat, and hang out together for most of the day. It can often involve much more interaction than you might be used to in your day-to-day life. Consider if you are willing to step into a community that desires a lot of quality time together. Are you willing to step in and be engaged with a tight-knit staff? This often takes a willingness to be vulnerable and trust others.

Am I willing to be flexible and go with the flow when the workday doesn't always look the same?

You may be hired for one position, but just because you were hired to help with trip food, you will still need to help cook meals or belay at a rock climb. Or, depending on the number of trips per session, our trip leaders sometimes need to stay and work with base camp staff. We do our best to set expectations for the schedule, but there are often changes throughout our programming. Be here now is just as difficult when working for La Vida as when being a participant!

Am I able to work hard?

Living in a community, especially one like La Vida, requires a level of sacrifice and effort that is different from most other jobs. As either a trip leader or base camp staff, you will be responsible for a lot of the students' experience during their expedition. This requires focus and a dedicated work ethic.

Can I think on my feet and problem solve?

Think through your ability to step up and problem solve when the situation requires some creative thinking. If you work for base camp, you will need to be able to see the bigger picture and help where you're needed most.

Am I a good team player/co-leader?

Consider if you can take charge when given additional responsibility. At the same time, think through your ability to be humble and follow the guidance of others. Each staff member will have specialties during our work at La Vida and we need to transition between taking charge and listening to others to do our work well.

Do I enjoy being outdoors?

As you may already know, La Vida is an experience built for the outdoors. Whether you're leading trips or with the base camp staff, you'll be outside for a lot of the time. Hopefully that is exciting to you and sounds like a good fit!

LA VIDA ADK PROGRAM STAFF POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

**Please note that responsibilities for all positions listed below may overlap with each other and not all positions may be hired for the season. Working for the ADK program requires flexibility and a willingness to help out regardless of whether tasks lie within your specific job description or not.*

Trip Leaders—La Vida trip leaders strive to be inspiring servant leaders as they travel with and instruct groups in the wilderness. They are the primary responders for counseling participants when needed and providing encouragement. All trip leaders should be able to instruct participants in general outdoor skills, growth in faith, and leadership development. They are also responsible for group safety and all medical field emergencies. Trip Leaders also need to be willing to work as base camp staff if required (number of needed leaders per session may vary depending on number of trips).

Base Camp Staff—La Vida Base Camp staff are involved in a broad range of enterprises during their time at Base Camp. They assist professional staff with equipment management, belaying, maintenance, meal preparation and cleanup, and other tasks. They may participate in ropes course and rock climbing training sessions to gain skills in these areas. Working and living in a community with other La Vida staff, they develop flexibility, patience, and physical skills, including those related to outdoor adventure activities. Base Camp staff are expected to empower and include their fellow staff members, respect their privacy, and hold one another accountable.

Please see Realistic Job preview for more info ([Trip Leader](#) + [Base Camp Staff](#))

STAFF FAQs

How “fit” do I need to be to work for La Vida?

It's not uncommon to hear from prospective staff that they don't think they're mentally or physically “fit” enough to work for us. No doubt, working for La Vida is a physically demanding job and there is a baseline need for health and fitness to meet the requirements of your job. Is your knee bothering you? Are you worried about your asthma? Have you struggled with anxiety or depression in the past and wonder how you might support students on La Vida? Reach out to us and we'd love to figure out if La Vida is the right fit!

What are the living conditions like?

The conditions at Base Camp are rustic and not what most people are used to. Men and women will have separate cabins with full bathrooms. The cabins have an open floor concept that will require flexibility and sensitivity on the part of the entire staff. Personal storage space is limited in the cabins, resulting in staff having to give consideration of what they pack for the summer.

When will I have days off?

Days off do not occur on a regular basis except for one day off between trip sessions. We will establish a vacation schedule based on when people are leaving and La Vida's needs. We also do our very best to schedule some time off during sessions if the program schedule allows for it.

Do I need all my own equipment?

No. We will loan you what you need. If you would like to buy your own backpack, sleeping bag, etc., you can reference our staff packing list and pro deal guide to assist in your purchases (distributed to all hired staff members).

Can I commit to a wedding or family vacation during the summer?

A La Vida summer is incredibly full. You can only get away for events like these by informing us at the time of application or during your interview. It will be up to the ADK Director to determine if La Vida is able to accommodate your request. In some cases, it is not possible. The same applies to those with early departure dates.

Do I need prior wilderness experience?

No. All hired staff go through in-depth and extensive training that covers not only the technical skills needed to lead wilderness trips, but also other topics such as small group facilitation, risk management, and La Vida curriculum. La Vida also offers Wilderness Advanced First Aid and Wilderness First Responder courses which include CPR training during summer training.

What does the time commitment look like for La Vida?

The minimum time commitment to work for La Vida is two weeks. This includes one full session, covering both pre-trip preparation and planning, as well as post-trip clean-up and processing. Many staff choose to work multiple sessions. Each two-week session can take place during the May or August trips, while the summer session requires a longer commitment. You may work any combination of sessions based on your availability and La Vida's needs.

What is the summer schedule?

We begin the summer ministry with three weeks of training/preparation that include medical training, a training trip, and workshops focused on group facilitation, spiritual impact and growth, and other interpersonal skills. There are sessions of 8-, 9-, 10-, or 12-day trips, as well as the 12- or 13-day May and August College Expeditions.

Is there internet access at Base Camp?

There is internet access for staff at Base Camp, however the wireless network is not made available in hopes that staff will not seclude themselves with their computers away from the community. In addition, we have computers available at Base Camp. It should be known that summer at La Vida's Base Camp is going to be a time of less frequent communication with the outside world. We do recognize the need for people to keep in touch with friends, family and others regarding school, work and future plans, but hope that ties to technology can be reduced for a few months. Please let your current correspondents know you will not have as frequent access to email through the summer months.

Have another question?

I understand there are many factors in determining if the Adirondack Program is the right fit. Please reach out to Rosie.Marshall@Gordon.edu and we'd love to answer or discuss other questions, concerns, or ideas!