



# LA VIDA

## AT GORDON COLLEGE



# LA VIDA PARTICIPANT AND PARENT INFORMATION PACKET

**For questions, please contact:**

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La Vida Adirondack Expeditions Base Camp, 460 County Route 50, Lake Clear, NY 12945

Map Links: [Google Maps](#), [Apple Maps](#)

# Dear La Vida Participants and Parents,

Congratulations! We are excited to invite you into the La Vida program. We commend you for your desire to grow as a leader and person. The La Vida program will be a memorable way to spend a week or two of your summer, and we are confident that this will be an incredible experience for you. As a part of Gordon College, we have many great resources to help make this experience exciting and challenging.

Since La Vida's beginning in 1970, many participants of all ages have said that La Vida is a life-changing experience and one they will never forget. We hope this program will be just that for you, and we will do our best to that end. We place a lot of importance on the community experience and value each member of the group for their unique personalities and contributions. You will be in a group of approximately six to 10 participants along with two La Vida staff. The focus of the program will be on developing your faith, leadership skills, character, a positive identity, and a commitment to serve and care for others.

Your expedition will be coordinated by the La Vida Adirondack Expeditions program in one of the largest state parks in the nation, the Adirondack State Park. La Vida Adirondack Expeditions has a 74-acre base camp located in Lake Clear, New York, where you will start and end your expedition. This program is a certified camp under the New York State Department of Health.

If you have any questions, call us at the La Vida Office, 978.867.4111. Thanks again. We hope you have a great spring. See you this summer!

Sincerely,

**Abby Stroven // Executive Director**

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**Rosie Marshall // Assistant Director of Outdoor Education**

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**GORDON COLLEGE | LA VIDA CENTER FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP**

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# CONTENTS LIST

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The following materials are included to help you prepare for your expedition. Please review them in detail.

- La Vida Introduction
- Frequently Asked Questions
- La Vida Camp Information
- Meningococcal Parent Information
- Children's Camps in New York State
- La Vida Essential Eligibility Criteria Explanation
- Hygiene Needs on La Vida
- Equipment List

**Items that need to be completed:**

- Release Forms (2 pages): Risk, Photo, HIPPA, Meningococcal, Sunscreen, Insect Repellent
- Confidential Medical History and Emergency Form (4 pages)
- Essential Eligibility Criteria

# LA VIDA INTRODUCTION

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## PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

One of the best ways to prepare for your La Vida Expedition is to be in good physical condition. We recommend some walking, running, biking, and/or swimming before your trip. The expedition is designed to be challenging, so preparing ahead of time can be helpful.

Another way to prepare is to think about your goals. Think about the things you want to get out of your experience. Begin considering physical, social and spiritual goals for yourself, and how your group may help you achieve those goals. If you feel apprehensive about some aspects of the Expedition, you should also begin identifying just what you are apprehensive about, and how your group may be able to help you. Each participant will be asked to complete a goal-setting exercise at the beginning of their expedition and will be part of the development of a group Full Value Contract or Covenant.

It is very powerful to identify a mentor for this experience. This should be someone with whom you can share your goals and apprehensions before the trip, and then process the experience with afterward.

## SOLO AND FASTING

The solo is a 1-2-day period towards the end of the trip where you will have the opportunity to practice the classic disciplines of solitude, simplicity and silence as well as fasting and prayer. It is a unique chance to step back from the normal distractions of life and evaluate what is important to you, set goals for the future and realize what you are thankful for in your life. Participants are placed approximately 150 feet from each other and given the space to read, journal and spend time in nature while under the close supervision of the La Vida Trip Leaders. Many students say this is the most impactful time of their experience.

One element of solo that adds into the experience is fasting. Most people, but not all, do fast on their solo unless they are diabetic, hypoglycemic or have an eating disorder. Your leaders will prepare, support and encourage you to challenge yourself in this experience. They will be checking on you a few times during the day. Fasting has a long history, especially in the church, and many others before you have chosen to try it. It is a chance to give up something so that you can grow in your faith. If you choose not to fast, food can be provided or you can do a partial fast with a smaller amount of food. We strive for open and approachable conversation regarding solo, so please initiate a conversation with your leader if you need to make any of these modifications.

The solo experience is managed very closely by the leaders. All students are within a short walking distance of the leaders' campsite. Students are checked on a minimum of twice a day and are given water and any medications that need to be distributed. Students who are a little more anxious about the experience are placed closer in proximity to the main campsite. Students wear a whistle at all times in case of emergency and are given a strobe light to turn on if they have to blow their whistle in the middle of the night.

## CAMPING AND WILDERNESS TRAVEL

You will be camping outdoors every night of the trip and canoeing or backpacking most days of the expedition. This means that you have chances to see the lakes and rivers of the Adirondack State Park, develop your canoeing and backpacking skills, set up tents at different sites and become efficient travelers. Groups travel approximately 5 miles a day; however, each itinerary is different.

You will canoe or backpack with all your gear as you travel to different campsites. This gear includes your personal gear as well as group gear: food, cooking utensils, camping equipment etc. The packs can weigh between 40-50lbs initially but will get lighter throughout the trip as the food is a majority of



the weight. Students should only carry 30% of their body weight, so the group will work together to distribute items as necessary.

Maintaining hygiene in the woods is easily attainable if you have the right supplies. We ask that you bring two travel-sized bottle of your own hand-sanitizer to prevent the spread of germs. Students are welcome to bring one travel size biodegradable soap as long as they follow [Leave No Trace](#) ethics. You can also bring unscented baby wipes. Once used, these are considered trash and must be carried with you until you get to base camp where you can throw them away. Your leaders will review hygiene and LNT principles at the start of your trip and you can review additional hygiene information later in this packet.

#### CONTACT DURING THE EXPEDITION

You will not have access to communicate with family once you have arrived to the base camp. We encourage students to be fully invested in the experience and to remain present throughout all activities. Our philosophy of "Be Here Now" starts from the time you arrive for La Vida to the time you depart and hopefully is implemented in your life after La Vida.

#### SPECIAL NOTE TO PARENTS

Likewise, the La Vida staff will not be sending regular updates to parents during the expedition, nor will we be able to deliver non-emergency related information to your son or daughter. Once your student arrives to the base camp, our attention is 100% on them to ensure a seamless experience. We try to send out one email update towards the end of the trip, but cannot always guarantee this. Although we recognize that this time apart can be difficult for both parents and students, you can trust that your student is in good hands with our staff. Our program has had an impeccable safety record during our 50 years of ministry, and we are consistently seen as a model camp in the ADK's.

If you have questions or wish to contact La Vida during the program, you can contact the La Vida Adirondack Director at the La Vida Base Camp in Lake Clear, New York:

#### **La Vida Base Camp:**

PO Box 219, Lake Clear, NY, 12945

**P:** 518-891-4188

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **Is the program safe?**

Safety is very important to us. La Vida has been in operation for 50 years and has a very good safety record. If you have additional questions about this program, please contact our office at 978.867.4111 or email the director.

## **If I hurt myself, who is qualified to help me?**

Your leaders will be certified by the Wilderness Medical Associates at the Wilderness Advanced First Aid or Wilderness First Responder level. The Department of Environmental Conservation Rangers in the Adirondacks can also be called in for emergencies and there are phones posted at ranger stations throughout the park.

## **How many participants will be on an expedition?**

Groups range from 6–10 participants per group and two La Vida leaders per group. These small groups allow for participants to be active in the group, form new friendships, and learn new leadership skills.

## **Are there male and female counselors who can meet the potential personal gender needs of participants?**

Yes, each group has one female and one male La Vida Trip Leader. The average student to leader ratio is 4 or 5:1.

## **Are meals provided?**

All meals are provided except for lunch on the travel days to and from New York. For these travel days, participants should bring \$30 for food.

## **If I'm afraid of heights, do I have to rock climb or rappel?**

No, not necessarily. La Vida incorporates challenges designed to promote growth and perseverance on a "challenge by choice" basis, and no one is forced to complete them.

## **What is meant by 'Challenge by Choice'?**

You will be presented with many challenges while on La Vida, and it is up to you how you will respond to those challenges. All we ask is that you give your best effort. No experience or above average physical strength is needed—just a desire for growth, adventure and fun. La Vida has redefined success. It is not always dependent upon completing activities and is not based on comparison. La Vida creates encouraging environments that motivate participants to push themselves past their preconceived limits. We do not use (nor allow others to use) peer pressure to coerce people into doing activities.

## **What if I have never camped before?**

Most people who do La Vida have never camped before. Your Trip Leaders will teach you effective camping skills and the group will work together to accomplish the daily camp chores.

## **Which is harder? Hiking or canoeing?**

Both hiking and canoeing are challenging in their own ways. We recommend that people who have a history of knee or back problems choose a canoe trip.

## **Will we travel every day on the expedition?**

You will be canoeing or backpacking most days of the expedition part of the program. This means that you have chances to see the lakes and rivers of the Adirondack State Park, develop your canoeing and backpacking skills, set up camps at different sites and become efficient travelers. You will canoe or backpack all your gear as you travel to different campsites. The groups travel approximately 5 miles a day; however, each itinerary is different.

## **Where will we sleep?**

Most nights you will sleep in tents that are separated by gender. Under some circumstances you will spend the night in a lean-to or under a large tarp where males and females are separated.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)

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### **Are there any showers?**

No, there is no running water while you are on the expedition. You may clean up in a stream, but soap can only be used 150 feet away from any lake, river, or stream. You will have plenty of opportunity to rinse off in the water. In addition to this, you can bring baby wipes and hand sanitizer with you on the expedition. You will be able to change into clean clothes before departing from the La Vida base camp on the final day of your trip.

### **What is the solo experience?**

The solo is a unique chance to step back from the normal distractions of life and realize what is important to you, set goals for the future and realize what you are thankful for in your life. The solo also offers participants the chance to practice the classic disciplines of solitude, simplicity and silence as well as fasting and prayer. Participants are placed approximately 100 feet from each other and given the space to read, journal and spend time in nature while under the close supervision of the La Vida Trip Leaders.

### **Do I have to fast on the solo?**

The majority of people do fast on their solo unless they are diabetic, hypoglycemic or have an eating disorder. If you choose not to fast, food can be provided or you can do a partial fast with a smaller amount of food. Your leaders will prepare you, support you and ask that you give it a try. They will be checking on you a few times during the day. Fasting has a long history, and many others before you have chosen to try it. It is a chance to give up something so that you can grow in your faith.

### **What is the final challenge?**

La Vida's final challenge is a run, not a race. You may want to challenge yourself and run the whole way for your own personal record or you may run with a small group or a buddy. Many do not run the whole way, but run a little and then walk some. Again, all that we ask is that you do your best.

### **What if I have medication that I need to take daily?**

All medications will be placed in the first aid kit and must have an accompanied prescription label. The Trip Leaders will log and dispense according to directions. We cannot dispense unlabeled medication. Additionally, we are not allowed to give out OTC medications on an "as needed" basis to anyone under 18 years of age. OTC medications may only be dispensed if a written prescription from a doctor is provided. If you are under 18 at the start of your expedition and need to take medication, you must have your physician fill out the Authorization for Administration of Medication at Camps.

### **What if I have a food allergy or bee allergy?**

If you have an allergy that requires the use of an EpiPen, you will need to bring your own EpiPen in addition to the ones the leaders carry in the first-aid kit. Our staff have handled many allergies and can accommodate most food needs. Please contact [lavida@gordon.edu](mailto:lavida@gordon.edu) to discuss your food options. We cannot accommodate food preferences but can assist with medical dietary needs.

### **What if I can't afford all the equipment? Can I borrow anything?**

La Vida has a large assortment of boots, socks and clothing that can be rented for a small cleaning fee if you prefer to not buy all your own equipment. Quantities are limited, though, so if you have a need, please let us know and we can reserve them for you.

# LA VIDA CAMP INFORMATION

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## **New York State Regulations**

This trip will be coordinated by La Vida Expeditions, a certified camp under the New York State Department of Health. The Department of Health requires all participants receive information about camps in New York State. Please see the "Children's Camps in New York State" form for more information.

## **Current Physical and Immunization Records**

- Each camper must complete the Medical History Form prior to the start of camp.
- The La Vida Physical Form needs to be signed and dated by your doctor.
- All camps in New York are required to have medically authorized immunization records.
- Immunization records **MUST** be current, completed, signed and dated by your doctor or they will not be valid.
- You may provide a photocopy/fax of the participant's immunization records as long as they are up to date and include your doctor's signature and date of signature. Alternatively, you may transcribe the immunization records onto our form and have your doctor sign and date our form in the space provided.
- All participants must be covered by a health insurance provider. Please include a copy of the insurance holder's insurance card.
- Participation in La Vida is not possible without these completed forms.

## **Medicine at Camp**

All patrols will be carrying a medical kit during the expedition. In order for the leaders to dispense any prescription medicine participants bring with them, we are required to have you and your doctor complete an Authorization for Administration of Medication at Camp form. Please complete this form and return it with your La Vida Physical Form.

**We are NOT authorized to distribute non-prescription medications at camp.**

## **Meningitis Information**

The New York State Department of Health requires that all participants be informed about the risks of meningitis. You will find information about meningitis and a letter from the La Vida Expeditions director in this packet.

## **Equipment List**

It is important for each participant to have the right clothing and equipment for their expedition. Clothing and equipment do not need to be brand name, and many things on sale racks at sport stores will suffice. The Equipment List is a recommended guide to packing for the expedition. The clothing and equipment list will be reviewed during the first two days of the program. Pack all of your personal clothing and equipment in a duffel bag, backpack or a labeled garbage bag that can be transported with you to the La Vida Base Camp in a van or trailer. Participants who are borrowing gear from La Vida will check it out at base camp and will have a chance to pack their things to be ready for the expedition. Luggage not needed on the expedition will be stored in a designated location at the base camp.

## **Fees and Money**

Participants must bring a refundable \$20 cash equipment and deposit fee to cover any potential lost or damaged equipment. Additional money (\$20) should be brought to spend on lunch and snacks for the trips to and from New York.

## **La Vida Contact Information May 16<sup>th</sup>-August 20<sup>th</sup>**

Participants will not be able to receive phone calls or mail during their expedition. If letters are sent to participants, they will receive them at the final celebration. If you have questions or wish to contact La Vida during the program, you can contact the La Vida Expeditions Director at the La Vida Base Camp in Lake Clear, New York:

## **La Vida Base Camp:**

PO Box 219, Lake Clear, NY, 12945

**P:** 518-891-4188

# MENINGOCOCCAL PARENT LETTER AND INFORMATION

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## DEAR PARENT,

I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningococcal meningitis. New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) §2167 and Subpart 7-2 of the State Sanitary Code requires overnight children's camps to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to all campers who attend camp for seven or more consecutive nights.

La Vida at Gordon College is required to maintain a record of the following for each camper, signed by the camper's parent or guardian, which documents the following:

- A response to receipt of meningococcal disease and vaccine information; **AND EITHER**
- A record of meningococcal meningitis immunization; **OR**
- An acknowledgement of meningococcal disease risks and refusal of meningococcal meningitis immunization.

Meningococcal meningitis is rare. However, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. Meningococcal disease can cause serious illness such as infection of the lining of the brain and spinal column (meningitis) or blood infections (sepsis). The disease strikes quickly and can lead to severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, and limb amputation, in as many as one in five of those infected. Ten to 15 percent of those who get meningococcal disease will die.

Meningococcal disease can be easily spread from person-to-person by coughing, sharing beverages or eating utensils, kissing, or spending time in close contact with someone who is sick or who carries the bacteria. People can spread the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease even before they know they are sick.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but certain people are at increased risk including teens and young adults 16-23 years old and those with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system.

**The single best way to prevent meningococcal disease is to be vaccinated.** The meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY) vaccine protects against four major strains of bacteria, which cause about two-thirds of meningococcal disease in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a single dose of MenACWY vaccine at age 11 through 12 years with a booster dose given at age 16 years. The meningococcal B (MenB) vaccine protects against a fifth strain of meningococcal bacteria, which causes about one-third of meningococcal disease. Young adults aged 16 through 23 years may be vaccinated with MenB vaccine and should discuss the MenB vaccine with a healthcare provider.

Information about the availability and cost of the vaccine can be obtained from your healthcare provider. La Vida does not offer meningococcal immunization services to those who participate in the camp's activities. I encourage you to carefully review the enclosed materials. It is also available on the New York State Department of Health website at <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2168>. **Please complete the Meningococcal Vaccination Response Form and return it along with the other paperwork in this packet for processing at least 30 days before your child's departure for La Vida.** If for any reason the Response Form is not returned 30 days prior to your child's trip, please send it directly to La Vida's Base Camp in New York (address below).

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, contact your child's physician. You can also find information about the disease at the website of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/index.html>

Sincerely,

Abby Stroven and Rosie Marshall



### **What is meningococcal disease?**

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria called *Neisseria meningitidis*. It can lead to serious blood infections. When the linings of the brain and spinal cord become inflamed, it is called meningitis. The disease strikes quickly and can have serious complications including death.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease. Some people are at higher risk. This disease occurs more often in people who are:

- Teenagers or young adults
- Infants younger than one year of age
- Living in crowded settings like college dormitories or military barracks
- Traveling to areas outside of the United States, such as the "meningitis belt" in Africa
- Living with a damaged spleen or no spleen
- Being treated with Soliris® or who have complement component deficiency (an inherited immune disorder)
- Exposed during an outbreak
- Working with meningococcal bacteria in a laboratory

### **What are the symptoms?**

Symptoms appear suddenly – usually 3 to 4 days after a person is infected. It can take up to 10 days to develop symptoms. Symptoms may include:

- A sudden high fever
- Headache
- Stiff neck (meningitis)
- Nausea and vomiting
- Red-purple skin rash
- Weakness and feeling very ill
- Eyes sensitive to light

### **How is meningococcal disease spread?**

It spreads from person-to-person by coughing or coming into close or lengthy contact with someone who is sick or who carries the bacteria. Contact includes kissing, sharing drinks, or living together. Up to one in 10 people carry meningococcal bacteria in their nose or throat without getting sick.

### **Is there treatment?**

Early diagnosis of meningococcal disease is very important. If it is caught early, meningococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics. But, sometimes the infection has caused too much damage for antibiotics to prevent death or serious long-term problems. Most people need to be cared for in a hospital due to serious, life-threatening infections.

### **What are the complications?**

Ten to 15 percent of those who get meningococcal disease die. Among survivors, as many as one in five will have permanent disabilities. Complications include:

- Hearing loss
- Brain damage
- Kidney damage
- Limb amputations

### **What should I do if I or someone I love is exposed?**

If you are in close contact with a person with meningococcal disease, talk with your health care provider about the risk to you and your family. They can prescribe an antibiotic to prevent the disease.

### **What is the best way to prevent meningococcal disease?**

The single best way to prevent this disease is to be vaccinated. Vaccines are available for people 6 weeks of age and older. Various vaccines offer protection against the five major strains of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease:

- All teenagers should receive two doses of vaccine against strains A, C, W and Y. The first dose is given at 11 to 12 years of age and the second dose (booster) at age 16.

- It is very important that teens receive the booster dose at age 16 in order to protect them through the years when they are at greatest risk of meningococcal disease.
- Talk to your health care provider today if your teen has not received two doses of vaccine against meningococcal strains A, C, W and Y.
- Teens and young adults can also be vaccinated against the "B" strain. Talk to your health care provider about whether they recommend vaccine against the "B" strain.

Others who should receive the vaccine include:

- Infants, children and adults with certain medical conditions
- First-year college students through 21 years of age living in residential housing
- People exposed during an outbreak
- Travelers to the "meningitis belt" of Sub-Saharan Africa
- Military recruits

Please speak with your health care provider if you may be at increased risk.

### **What are the meningococcal vaccine requirements for school attendance?**

As of September 1, 2016, children entering grades 7 and 12 must be immunized against meningococcal disease strains A, C, W and Y according to the recommendations listed above.

### **Is there an increased risk for meningococcal disease if I travel?**

- Meningococcal disease and outbreaks occur in the United States and around the world. The disease is more common in the "meningitis belt" of sub-Saharan Africa. The risk is highest in people who visit these countries and who have prolonged contact with local populations during an epidemic.
- To reduce your risk of illness, wash your hands often, maintain healthy habits such as getting plenty of rest and try not to come into contact with people who are sick.

### **Additional Information**

Travel and meningococcal disease: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/meningococcal-disease>

Learn more about meningococcal disease: <https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/>

More information about vaccine-preventable diseases: <https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/>

# NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CHILDREN'S CAMPS

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In New York State, summer camps must have a state, city or county health department permit to operate legally. These permits are issued only if the camp is in compliance with the state's health regulations. The permit to operate must be displayed in a conspicuous place on the premises. The camp must be inspected twice yearly by a health department representative. At least one inspection must be made during the time the camp is in operation. Each camp is checked to make sure that the physical facilities are safe and that supervision is adequate.

*When choosing a summer camp for your child, consider the following:*

## STAFF CREDENTIALS/SUPERVISION

### ***What are the qualifications of the camp director?***

The New York State Health Code requires that the director of an overnight camp be at least 25-years-old or hold a bachelor's degree; a day camp director must be at least 21-years-old.

All directors must have experience in camping administration or supervision. Camp directors' backgrounds are screened by the Office of Children and Family Services Central Register Database for reported incidents of child abuse and maltreatment. Their backgrounds are also screened by the Health Department for criminal convictions. Only individuals who are considered to pose no risk to campers are accepted by the Health Department as camp directors.

### ***What are the qualifications of the camp counselors and how are campers supervised?***

Counselors must have experience in camping and supervision of children or have completed an acceptable training course. Stringent counselor-to-camper ratios and staff qualifications are mandated for supervision of swimming, archery, riflery and camp trip activities.

At overnight camps, 80 percent of the camps' counselors must be at least 18 years old; up to 20 percent may be 17 years old. There must be at least one counselor for every 10 children age 8 years or older, and one counselor for every eight children younger than 8 years old.

At day camps, counselors must be 16 years of age or older. There must be a minimum of one counselor for every 12 children.

Camps that must provide at least 10 counselors may choose to use counselors-in-training (CITs) to meet 10 percent of the required number of counselors. These CITs must be at least 16 years of age at an overnight camp and 15 years of age at a day camp. They must work with senior staff, have had previous experience as a camper and complete a training program. Ask the camp operator if any of their counselors are CITs and how they are used to supervise campers.

*Ask about the camp's staff and supervision procedures, including discipline policies. Do they meet your expectations?*

## HEALTH

### ***Ask about medical coverage and when you will be notified if your child becomes ill or injured. Is a doctor or nurse in residence or on call for campers at all times?***

Physicians or nursing services must be available. All summer camps in New York State are required to have a health director and a written medical plan approved by the Health Department. The written plan must include, among other things, provisions for medical, nursing and first aid services. Injuries and illnesses must be reported to the Health Department and are thoroughly reviewed.

### ***Does the camp require medical records for campers?***

Camps must keep current medical history reports on file for all campers. Be sure to detail your child's history of immunization, illness, disability or allergy. Specify special diets and activity restrictions. Provide instruction for any medication your child must take.

## CAMP SAFETY

### ***Are the camp facilities and activities safe?***

The camp operator must develop a written plan to include maintenance of facilities, provisions for training staff members and orientation of campers, supervision of campers, campsite hazards, emergency procedures and drills, safety procedures and equipment for program activities.

## SWIMMING

### ***Are waterfront personnel qualified?***

### ***Are campers always supervised while in the water?***

All waterfront activities at camps in New York State must be supervised by an experienced certified lifeguard or water safety instructor. On site one qualified lifeguard is required for every 25 bathers. All aquatic staff are required to be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

# NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CHILDREN'S CAMPS (CON.)

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Camps that use off-site pools or beaches operated by others must make special arrangements to provide a safe activity. Even off-site the camp remains responsible for supervising campers.

Some children's camps use sites for swimming that are not inspected by local health departments. Parental permission is required in these instances, and the camp must follow established guidelines to protect campers.

While campers are involved in aquatic activities on site, there must be one counselor for every 10 campers 8 years of age or older; there must be one counselor for every eight children ages 6 and 7; and one counselor for every six children younger than six years old. When swimming off-site, there must be one counselor for every eight campers 6 years or older and one counselor for every six campers younger than 6 years.

***Are bathing areas marked off for various swimming skills? Are campers tested to determine their level of swimming ability before participating in aquatic activities? Are non-swimmers kept in water less than chest deep? Is the buddy system used? Are campers required to wear life preservers when boating or canoeing?***

New York State regulation requires that the answers to all these questions must be "yes."

## CAMP TRIPS

***Are camp trips supervised by counselors who have the maturity and experience to make decisions that could affect the safety of campers?***

All trips must be supervised by a trip leader who is at least 18 years old and competent in the activity. Counselors must accompany trips and all staff must review the safety plan prior to the trip.

Counselors should have the skills and expertise in the camp activity (canoeing, rock climbing, etc.) to handle any emergency that might arise. Ask whether the camp has conducted similar trips in the past without incident.

In New York State the drivers of camp vehicles must be licensed and at least 18 years old. Seat belts must be worn when provided and vehicle capacities not exceeded. When transporting children in a truck, only a truck cab can be used.

## SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

***How are activities in craft shops supervised, especially when campers are using dangerous tools such as power saws and lathes? Are archery and rifle ranges at a safe distance from activity centers? Are spectators protected at baseball fields and similar areas? Do players wear protective equipment?***

State regulation requires that archery, riflery and horseback riding be supervised by counselors with special training in those activities.

## FIRE SAFETY

***Are there periodic fire drills for both campers and staff? Does each floor of every building have fire exits in two different locations? Are flammable materials (gasoline, pool chemicals, etc.) stored away from activity centers and kept under lock and key? Are functioning smoke detectors located in every sleeping room?***

All of the above are mandatory in New York State.

## LOCATION AND FACILITIES

***Are barriers erected against such natural hazards as cliffs and swamps? Are foot trails located away from such dangerous areas and from heavily traveled roads and highways? Do the camp facilities (bunks, bathrooms, mess hall, recreation facilities) meet your aesthetic tastes and those of your child? Is the camp located in an area that will not aggravate your child's allergies? Will your child be required to perform chores such as cleaning or cooking?***

For information on the camp's location and facilities, visit the camp or interview the camp operator by telephone prior to making a decision to enroll your child at the camp.

## NUTRITION

***Are good health practices observed in the camp kitchens, dining areas and food services? Does the camp serve food your child likes?***

At camps in New York State, food must be prepared from inspected sources. Food preparation and handling activities are reviewed to assure safe and sanitary practices. Kitchen employees must be healthy and follow hygienic practices. Potentially hazardous food must be maintained below 45°F or above 140°F.

# NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CHILDREN'S CAMP (CON.)

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## Rights and Responsibilities

The regulatory program of the New York State Department of Health places specific responsibilities on camp operators and on local health departments that enforce department regulations. Following is a summary of rights and responsibilities:

### Rights of Parents and Guardians

- To be informed by the camp director, or his or her designee, of any incident involving your child, including serious injury, illness or abuse
- To review inspection and investigation reports for a camp, which are maintained by the local health department issuing the camp a permit to operate (present and past reports are available)
- To review the required written camp plans. These are on file at both the camp and the health department issuing the permit to operate

### Responsibilities of the Camp Operator

- To inform you and the local health department if your child is involved in any serious injury, illness or abuse incident
- To screen the background and qualifications of all staff
- To train staff about their duties
- To provide supervision for all campers 24 hours a day at overnight camps and during hours of operation for day camps
- To maintain all camp physical facilities in a safe and sanitary condition
- To provide safe and wholesome meals
- To have and follow required written plans for camp safety, health and fire safety
- To notify the parent or guardian with the enrollment application or enrollment contract that:
  - The camp must have a permit to operate from the New York State Department of Health or the designated permit-issuing official
  - The camp is required to be inspected twice yearly

- The inspection reports and required plans are filed (address of state, county or city health department) and available for their review

### Responsibilities of Local Health Departments

- To review and approve the required written camp plans for compliance
- To inspect camps to assure that: (1) all physical facilities are properly operated and maintained; and (2) adequate supervision exists to provide a healthy and safe environment in accordance with the New York State Sanitary Code
- To issue a permit to operate when the required plans and inspection results are satisfactory
- To investigate reports of serious incidents of injury, illness and all allegations of abuse or maltreatment
- When requested, to provide parents or guardians of prospective campers an opportunity to review inspection reports and required plans

The time and effort spent in selecting the camp your youngster will attend is important. Keep in touch, especially if it is your child's first camp experience. If possible, visit the camp before and during the camping season.

### Information

For further information about New York State health laws relating to summer camps, call the State Health Department's Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection in Troy at 1-(800) 458-1158, ext. 27600



# LA VIDA ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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If viewing digitally, complete your EEC form [here](https://form.jotform.com/230336041529146). If not, go to [form.jotform.com/230336041529146](https://form.jotform.com/230336041529146)

We are so excited that you are considering a La Vida Expedition! Most La Vida participants have rarely, if ever, gone on a camping trip before and may find that this experience will stretch them. That opportunity for growth through challenge is exactly what makes an expedition so unique and powerful! With that being said, the location and activities of a La Vida Expedition are remote and exposed to outdoor elements. Due to the rigorous nature of the activities, we invite you to thoughtfully review the criteria below regarding various challenges associated with a La Vida Expedition:

The health and safety of our students and staff are a top priority, along with the educative quality of the program experience for all participants. The Essential Eligibility Criteria are applied to all students on a La Vida Expedition. If an applicant does not meet the specific criteria, La Vida may be able make some modifications to the expedition only if they do *not*:

- Jeopardize the health and safety of the other program participants or staff
- Place an undue administrative or financial burden on La Vida
- Severely alter the programmatic goals and methods used

Requests for modifications to the expedition must be discussed with La Vida staff **at least one month prior**. Modifications are not guaranteed; La Vida will work with the requestor to determine the feasibility of the request. A final plan must be reviewed and approved by La Vida. Requests that are sent in within a month of the expedition start date are less likely to be approved given the challenges in making late modifications to the expedition.

Each individual La Vida participant, and guardian, if participant is a minor, are responsible for reviewing the relevant Essential Eligibility Criteria below. As you read the criteria below, consider your ability to meet these requirements from a physical, mental health, cognitive, and emotional perspective.

## **Participants should be able to...**

- Understand and follow verbal and visual instructions individually, and in a group setting.
- Comprehend hazards and safety concerns when explained, and adhere to safety policies and procedures even when staff and trip leaders are not immediately present.
- Identify hazards posed by the environment (steep terrain, sun, cold, etc.) and other participants (fatigue, state of mind, etc.).
- Effectively communicate to others personal distress, injury or need for assistance.
- Stay properly hydrated and nourished, and learn skills for self-care, including proper hygiene and use of clothing and equipment.
- Refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, controlled substances, and any misuse of prescription or over the counter drugs.
- If using prescription drugs, self-administer medications under staff supervision according to New York State Department of Health regulations.
- Contribute to a safe social and learning environment and maintain appropriate relationships with other group members and instructors.
- Refrain from harassment, bullying, and all other behavior that disrupts the learning of others or the cohesion of the group.
- Abstain from cell phone use for the duration of the program.
  - La Vida staff carry communication devices for emergency situations but, otherwise, a La Vida Expedition is a cell phone-free program
- Wear a climbing harness, helmet and any other safety gear correctly after instructed.
- Live and function in an outdoor camp setting without access to electricity for up to 12 days.

- *No prior camping experience is expected nor necessary. This criterion is meant to address students who have medications or other medical interventions that require access to electricity.*
- For participants bringing a personal medical device (i.e. glucose monitor, hearing aid): function in a wilderness environment, knowing it is at risk of water damage.

**Backpacking Activities: Participants should be able to...**

- Walk continuously for up to 2 miles at a moderate pace (2 mph) over steep and uneven terrain unassisted while carrying a backpack weighing 30-50 pounds, and then repeat following 5-15 minutes of rest (up to 9 miles total in one day).
- Not have immediate access to advanced medical care facilities for the duration of the backpacking portion of a program. Participants may be up to an 8-hour hike from definitive care.

**Water Activities: Participants should be able to...**

- In the event of a capsize, independently get out from under capsized canoe, remain face-up in water with personal floatation device, and identify, make progress to and ascend shoreline with or without instruction.
- Carry a canoe with another person ( $\approx$  75lbs) over uneven terrain for up to 1.5 miles with periodic breaks.
- Get in and out of a boat from the shore or from the water independently or with a reasonable amount of assistance.
- Swim in water, while wearing a personal flotation device.

If you have any questions on these Essential Eligibility Criteria or about your ability to meet one or more criteria, please contact La Vida at [LaVida@Gordon.edu](mailto:LaVida@Gordon.edu).

# HYGIENE NEEDS ON LA VIDA

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Hygiene can easily be maintained while in the woods for extended periods of time, so here are answers to our most frequently asked questions about all things related to hygiene!

## **Will we shower on La Vida?**

Participants and leaders will not have access to showers or bathtubs throughout the trip. Hearing that you can't shower for 12 days can be intimidating! Keep reading for tips on how to stay clean while living in the woods for almost two weeks.

## **How do I stay clean?**

For your safety and health, it is vital that you wash your hands with soap and water before preparing each meal and before and after you go to the bathroom. Here is a list of biodegradable and environmentally friendly products that we suggest for your backcountry expedition:

- Unscented, alcohol-based gel hand sanitizer
- Organic Pure Castile Liquid Soap (Baby Unscented) Dr. Bronner's
- Wilderness Wash—Sea to Summit
- Ez Wyp Biodegradable Non-Alcohol Wipes

If you plan to wash during the trip, you'll have to carry a bucket of water 150 feet off trail so that you do not leave any soap residue in the body of water. Everything brought into the woods, must be packed out, so we suggest bringing an extra Ziplock or two to carry personal trash with you throughout the trip. You can throw this away in trash bins at the La Vida Base Camp when you return from the woods.

## **How will we go to the bathroom?**

The great outdoors is your bathroom! We'll teach you more details when you arrive, but basically, you are going 150 feet off trail to go to the bathroom. If you have to go poop, you will dig a hole (we provide the shovel!) that is at least 6 inches deep and then bury your waste and toilet paper in that hole.

## **Brushing teeth**

We advise that every person brush their teeth twice a day and floss once a day. Neglecting to brush your teeth will not only deter your peers from quality conversations, but also put you at risk of serious health concerns such as gum disease and cavities. Leaders are trained to deal with medical emergencies during your La Vida trip, but an infected gum or molar can result in an immediate removal from trip. If you have recently had oral surgery (i.e. removal of wisdom teeth), please inform the program director prior to arriving for your expedition.

## **What if I wear contacts?**

We highly recommend using glasses for your trip. If you do want to bring contacts, bring daily contacts plus solution. You'll just have to make sure that your hands are really clean before putting them on. Bring your glasses as well just in case you lose the contacts or just want to give your eyeballs a break.

## **Why can't I bring deodorant?**

Wearing deodorant has become a daily practice that is hard to imagine living without. While on your La Vida trip, it is common for multi-day hikers to leave their antiperspirants at home. For the following reasons:

1. The smell and ingredients of deodorant attracts bugs and other curious wildlife.
2. Deodorant does two things to counteract unwanted bodily odors. It kills the bacteria that lives within armpit hair (the source of the smell). Antiperspirants prevent sweating by clogging the pores. Because you will be constantly sweating on trip with no access to showers, the application of deodorant with an antiperspirant can clog your pores so much that it would be unhealthy for your skin. Rashes and irritation can occur if too many layers are applied without continual cleaning of that area.

## **What if I have hair that requires more maintenance?**

The risk of tangled/knotted hair is real and uncomfortable. We encourage participants to bring a small hairbrush or comb. Wearing your hair in braids can also help eliminate tangles. Although we would love to think that your trip will be sunny every single day, we know the reality is that you will experience some rain. For those

on canoeing trips, the possibility of getting your hair wet is even greater. If you have hair that does not do well with being wet, think ahead on how to prepare for those situations.

### **What if I get my period on the trip?**

Having your period during a La Vida Expedition is not a big deal. It just takes a little preplanning. In order to be confidently prepared and to avoid yeast infections and urinary tract infections we recommend packing the following:

- Thin panty liners: Instead of bringing many changes of underwear, which take up more space, thin panty liners are lightweight and can be disposed of every day.
- Compact tampons and/or pads. Pads with wings and extra sticky strips are good because they will stay in place as you move.

#### **Packing Tips:**

- Remove all of these items from their cardboard boxes before packing.
- It is important that **every** woman brings the supplies mentioned because new types of physical exertion and the proximity of other women who might be on their periods can cause you to get yours unexpectedly.
- Use one Ziplock bag for unused, clean items and another zip-lock bag for used items. Store both bags in a small bag or stuff sack. You can wrap used products in tin foil and store in a plastic bag. This will eliminate odor. La Vida sells stuff sacks for \$3 during gear check-out at base camp on the first day of your trip.

Read more of our FAQ's here: <https://lavidacenter.org/adk/faq/>

# LA VIDA EXPEDITION EQUIPMENT LIST

**Read this document completely before you shop! Many questions you may have can be answered in this document. All gear listed below is important to bring, but items that are marked with an asterisk (\*) are absolutely essential.**

Use this as a checklist and a guide as you pack for your La Vida Expedition. Some items below may be rented from La Vida on the first day of the trip (listed on page 2). Be prepared for a wide range of weather conditions. The temperatures can vary substantially in different summer months: in May there may be snow at higher elevations, and temperatures can range from the teens at night to the 70s during the day; from June through August they can range from the 30s at night to the 80s during the day. In addition to the items you pack, you will carry some shared group equipment and up to eight days of food. Keep this in mind as you pack your personal items. Your leaders will ensure that you have all the needed equipment before your expedition begins.

## FEET

- \_\_\_ 1 pair hiking boots that have plenty of ankle support (Base Camp has limited rentals)\*
- \_\_\_ 1 pair camp shoes (old running shoes, Crocs, Chacos, Tevas, etc)
- \_\_\_ 1 pair running shoes for the final run\*
- \_\_\_ 3 pairs wool, polypropylene, or Merino wool socks\*
- \_\_\_ 3 pairs sock liners

## LOWER BODY

- \_\_\_ 3-5 pairs underwear\*
- \_\_\_ 1 pair hiking pants (no jeans)\*
- \_\_\_ 1 pair hiking/athletic shorts \*
- \_\_\_ 1 pair rain pants

*Warm Layer:*

- \_\_\_ 1 pair long underwear bottoms

*Warmer Layer:*

- \_\_\_ 1 pair warm, wool or fleece pants

## UPPER BODY

- \_\_\_ 3 polyester or nylon/cotton blend t-shirts\*
- \_\_\_ 1 long underwear shirt
- \_\_\_ 1 lightweight, warm, long-sleeved wool or fleece top
- \_\_\_ 1 warm, fleece or puffy jacket\*
- \_\_\_ 1 rain jacket\*

## HANDS AND HEAD

- \_\_\_ 1 wool or fleece cap that covers the ears\*
- \_\_\_ 1 pair wool or fleece gloves or mittens

## TOILETRIES

- \_\_\_ Travel-sized toiletries: toothbrush/paste\*, non-scented wipes
- \_\_\_ 1 package of moleskin for blister care
- \_\_\_ 1 small bottle of insect repellent (No aerosol)
- \_\_\_ Any medication prescribed by a doctor (must be in original container with prescription label and will be carried in the first-aid kit and dispensed by instructors)\*
- \_\_\_ Epi-Pen if any possibility of having an allergic reaction to stings or food products\*
- \_\_\_ 1 travel size hand sanitizer

## MISCELLANEOUS GEAR

- \_\_\_ \$20 cash for equipment deposit\*
- \_\_\_ \$30 for food during travel to and from New York Base Camp\*
- \_\_\_ ID and Insurance Card\*
- \_\_\_ 2 sturdy water bottles, like a Nalgene (32 oz.)
- \_\_\_ 1 small flashlight or headlamp and extra batteries\*
- \_\_\_ 1 small, durable Bible containing both Old and New Testaments\*
- \_\_\_ 1 40-50 gallon plastic contractor bag
- \_\_\_ 5 gallon-sized ZIPLOCK bags
- \_\_\_ 5 quart-sized ZIPLOCK bags
- \_\_\_ 2 pens or pencils\*
- \_\_\_ 1 set of travel clothes



## GEAR LA VIDA PROVIDES

In addition to sleeping, cooking and eating supplies, La Vida also provides the following personal gear items that do not need to be reserved in advance:

- **Sleeping bag with stuff sack:** A three-season synthetic fill bag, rated for 25°–35° Fahrenheit (15°–20° for May), with a nylon stuff sack for storage.
- **Sleeping pad:** A full-length 1/2-inch-thick foam ground pad.
- **Backpack:** An internal frame pack, 70-85 liters, for backpacking or a waterproof backpack for canoe patrols.
- **Water bottles:** One-liter plastic water bottles.

- **Bug net:** Nylon with no-see-um proof netting.
- **Emergency whistle:** with high-decibel sound.
- **Optional gear provided:** There is a **\$2 cleaning fee** for borrowing fleece clothing. Those who don't have a rain jacket or pants can **rent them for \$3**. All fees are deducted from the security deposit. Optional items include:
  - Fleece pants/sweaters
  - Fleece gloves
  - Boots
  - Warm hats
  - Rain pants/jacket

### USE OF OWN GEAR

Students may bring and use their own gear while on a La Vida Expedition if they wish; however, the quality of that gear must be equal to or better than the equipment La Vida issues, and it must fit well and be in good repair. The wilderness is no place to experiment with untested or low-quality gear. La Vida reserves the right to require use of La Vida gear over a student's personal gear if we feel a particular piece does not meet appropriate standards.

### ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT NOTES

#### Canoe Items Needed

Everyone on a canoe patrol should consider bringing these additional items. Some of these items replace what is listed on the first page of the packing list.

- \_\_\_ 1 pair water shoes or sandals for walking in water (replacement for camp shoes)
- \_\_\_ 1 pair of lightweight boots with ankle support (replacement for high-top hiking boots)
- \_\_\_ Quick-drying shorts and shirt
- \_\_\_ Swimsuit (consider the athletic nature of La Vida when selecting a swimsuit to bring)
- \_\_\_ Sunblock (SPF 30 or higher), SPF lip balm

#### Optional Equipment:

Camera, harmonica/recorder, sunglasses, camping hand towel, pack cover, instant coffee, nylon drawstring-style backpack (useful for day hikes), lightweight camp chair, knife or multi-tool, bandanas, baseball cap, hammock, lip balm.

#### Label Personal Items Before Your Trip

Label belongings with your first and last name before you pack the items in a duffel bag or garbage bag. Labeling your personal items allows the La Vida office to get your gear back to you if lost.

#### Glasses or Contacts

Bring an extra pair of glasses to serve as a back-up to the pair you wear routinely. If you plan to bring contacts, pack an extra pair and plenty of solution.

#### What Not to Bring

Shampoo, deodorant, make-up, cotton clothing, sheath knife, hatchet, watches, electronic devices.

#### Equipment Security Deposit

Each student checking out La Vida gear must pay a **\$20 cash** equipment deposit the first night of the trip during gear check out. If all equipment is returned in satisfactory condition, the deposit will be returned before the group returns to Gordon from the La Vida Base Camp. The cost of any damaged/rented equipment will be taken out of this fee.

#### Where to Shop

We recommend exploring various options for discounted outdoor gear. Some options include Sierra Trading Post, REI "Garage Sales", thrift stores, Facebook Marketplace, Decathlon, and Craigslist. Remember that we do offer a lot of gear to rent or borrow from the equipment building at base camp.

#### Cell Phones

Cell phones can be used during transportation to and from the base camp but will be collected upon arrival and left at the base camp during the expedition. Please bring an actual camera if wanting to take photos. Phones will be returned before you depart from the base camp the last day of the trip.

### **Canoe Items Needed**

Everyone on a canoe patrol should consider bringing these additional items. Some of these items replace what is listed on the first page of the packing list.

- \_\_\_ 1 pair water shoes or sandals for walking in water (replacement for camp shoes)
- \_\_\_ 1 pair of lightweight boots with ankle support (replacement for high-top hiking boots)
- \_\_\_ Quick-drying shorts and shirt (nylon, polyester or cotton/nylon blend)
- \_\_\_ Swimsuit (consider the athletic nature of La Vida when selecting a swimsuit to bring)
- \_\_\_ Sunglasses
- \_\_\_ Sunblock (SPF 30 or higher), SPF lip balm

### **Optional Equipment:**

Camera, harmonica/recorder, sunglasses, camping hand towel, pack cover, instant coffee, nylon drawstring-style backpack (useful for day hikes), camp chair ("Crazy Creek" style recommended), knife or multi-tool, bandanas, baseball cap, hammock, lip balm.

### **Label Personal Items Before Your Trip**

Label belongings with your first and last name before you pack the items in a duffel bag or garbage bag. Labeling your personal items allows the La Vida office to get your gear back to you if lost.

### **Glasses or Contacts**

Bring an extra pair of glasses to serve as a back-up to the pair you wear routinely. If you plan to bring contacts, pack an extra pair and plenty of solution.

### **What Not to Bring**

Shampoo, deodorant, make-up, cotton clothing, sheath knife, hatchet, watches, electronic devices or other valuables.

### **Equipment Security Deposit**

Each student checking out La Vida gear must pay a **\$20 cash** equipment deposit the first night of the trip during gear check out. If all equipment is returned in satisfactory condition, the deposit will be returned before the group returns to Gordon from the La Vida Base Camp. The cost of any damaged/rented equipment will be taken out of this fee.

### **Where to Shop**

If you would like to purchase some outdoor gear, Decathlon often has some of the best prices and is fairly high quality. We recommend exploring various options for discounted outdoor gear. Some options include Sierra Trading Post, REI "Garage Sales", thrift stores, Facebook Marketplace, and Craigslist. Remember that we do offer a lot of gear to rent or borrow from the equipment building at base camp.

### **Cell Phones**

Cell phones can be used during transportation to and from the La Vida base camp but will be collected upon arrival and left at the base camp throughout the expedition. If you typically use your phone as your camera, please bring an actual camera instead. Phones will be returned before you depart from the base camp the last day of the trip.

# LA VIDA EQUIPMENT RATIONALE

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## Equipment Philosophy

The focus of the La Vida Expeditions is on the inner person and on living simply, so equipment should be functional, dependable and lightweight is possible. The focus is not on what you look like, smell like or how greasy your hair gets. The focus is on what you contribute to the group in terms of character, gifts, faith, commitment, etc. Remember that patrols carry or paddle all their personal and group equipment. Below is a description of the quality of gear you should choose.

**Fabrics:** Do not bring any clothing or gear that is 100% cotton. When cotton gets wet, it stays wet and does not keep you warm. Check labels and choose fabrics with a high percent synthetic (polyester, fleece, polypropylene, nylon) or wool. Many synthetics absorb little or no water and they wick moisture away from the body and insulate even when wet.

**Hiking boots:** This is one of the most important pieces of equipment you will bring. The fit is very important! For mountain patrols, boots should extend above the ankle and be either leather/fabric or all-leather. Boots should be waterproofed and fit comfortably with two pairs of socks (a light synthetic liner sock and a heavy wool sock). Make sure boots are broken in before you arrive, otherwise you are prone to chafing and blisters. Walk at least 6 miles in the boots before coming to base camp.

**Socks:** To best avoid getting blisters, treat your socks as two distinct layers. You should wear a lightweight synthetic liner sock against your foot, which helps pull moisture away from your foot. On top of this you should wear a wool/nylon-blend hiking sock. Since wool doesn't absorb water, it passes the moisture from your foot outwards, keeping your feet dryer. If feet stay damp, they get wrinkled and are more prone to blisters. Having two sock layers means that your socks will slide against each other so the friction from your boots is between the sock layers, not against your skin. Friction against your skin could lead to blisters.

**Running shoes, sneakers:** Bring athletic shoes for the final run. If desired, bring camp shoes or sturdy outdoor sandals for walking around camp. Chacos, Tevas, and Crocs are allowed but not while carrying canoes or

cooking because they do not give sufficient protection for your feet.

**Rain jacket:** There is a wide selection of decent rain jackets available from most outdoor stores. Avoid rubberized or canvas jackets; they are too heavy and will make you hot and sweaty. Avoid plastic rain coats/suits; they are too weak and will tear.

**Insect repellent:** Repellents with high concentrations of DEET may be hazardous to your health! Choose products with no more than 35 percent DEET, or use a non-DEET repellent. Do not bring aerosol cans.

**Sunglasses:** Dark polarized lenses with a lanyard are suggested.

**Sleeping bags:** A three-season synthetic fill bag is best for a La Vida Expedition. We do not recommend goose down bags. Sleeping bags should have a nylon shell both inside and outside. Lining your stuff sack with a sturdy plastic bag will give you added protection from water. Bags should be rated for 25°–35° Fahrenheit (15°–20° for May).

**Sleeping pads:** Full length 3/8–1/2-inch-thick closed cell Ensolite or inflatable Thermarest™ type pads are great. They provide both padding and insulation from the ground.

**One backpack or internal canoe pack:** Packs should have padded shoulder straps and a hip belt. Internal frame packs should be 70-85 liters and may be used for mountain or canoe patrols. Be sure your pack fits well and all straps and zippers are functional.

