

Realistic Job Preview

La Vida Expedition Trip Leader

Purpose and Role of Program

The La Vida Adirondack Expedition program is a ministry of the La Vida Center for Outdoor Education and Leadership. During 8-12-day wilderness trips, participants grow through facing individual and team-focused challenges within the context of Gospel-centered practices and discussions.



Specific Tasks

Tasks include but are not limited to the following: guiding participants through the Adirondack wilderness, teaching participants the basics of minimum-impact camping, canoeing, hiking, and rock climbing, encouraging participants to appropriately challenge themselves physically and emotionally, resolve interpersonal conflict on expeditions, and making intelligent and timely risk management decisions concerning the physical and mental safety of participants.



Orientation (Summer Staff)

Orientation is 3 weeks total and includes 1 week of training, including rock climbing and high ropes course belay training, equipment care and standards, as well as spiritual lesson preparation, La Vida curriculum, and trip planning and execution, four days of Wilderness Medical Associates training, and a one-week training trip with fellow trip leaders to practice teaching and wilderness travel skills.



Nuts and Bolts of the Job

All local staff will attend specific training evenings during the spring. During the first three weeks of employment during the summer, you will most often be training. Hours are generally 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (not including meal prep/clean-up). During the remainder of your employment for summer you will typically be leading trips on the following schedule: 13 days working, one day off. New August Trip Leaders should not expect to receive a full orientation to trip leading but will instead learn on-the-job through observation and guidance of co-leader. When not leading an expedition or participating in training you will be serving alongside base camp staff.



Emotional Engagement

The model of relationship between trip leaders is a partnership, where each has the responsibility to use their respective gifts and abilities. Trip Leaders share responsibility with a co-leader for a group of students' physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being while navigating the Adirondack trails and waterways. Staff are expected to communicate daily during an expedition with their fellow trip leader regarding each other's well-being, thoughts, and plans. They are expected to teach La Vida curriculum to participants with a range of cultures, physical and mental abilities, ages, and enjoy the experience of seeing participants grow and connect during their expedition.



Challenges of the Job

The job can include 10+ hour work days while at Base Camp, working outside in rain, cold, heat, and a steep learning curve for new hires. Staff are responsible for participant safety and learning 24/7 while leading trips and may be asked to assist in general programmatic needs besides trip leading. There is very limited time to communicate with friends and family outside of La Vida, as well as limited time for leaving base camp property. There is no time off for holidays.



Highlights of the Job

Staff will be working outdoors for the majority of the summer in a spiritually rich community. Staff are given the chance to connect with others who are committed to their faith in Jesus, witness large amounts of student growth firsthand, and make long-lasting impact on the lives of participants. This is an opportunity to learn a wide-range of skills and work with a deeply mission-driven organization. All meals are shared together, and you will often have an hour of devotional/personal time in the morning while on base camp. Staff will receive investment from leadership in training, trip debriefs, and shared life. All staff get the privilege of working in the legacy of a 50-year-old program that has served hundreds of staff and thousands of participants.



Spiritual Component

The La Vida Adirondack program offers a unique opportunity for staff members to develop their leadership skills, mature their faith, and build a strong sense of community. Participating in this program requires a willingness to be vulnerable, trust others, and pursue a relationship with Christ while leading. Staff members are expected to have a strong commitment to Christ. A summer can develop your relationship with Christ through engaging in the community and program.