

LA VIDA CENTER FOR OUTDOOR EDUCATION & LEADERSHIP Adirondack Program Prospective Staff Packet

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ADIRONDACK (ADK) PROGRAM STAFF GENERAL INFORMATION

The information listed below on La Vida ADK summer staff positions is designed to assist you in the important decision of serving with the La Vida ministry. Your skill level, physical abilities, leadership capabilities, financial needs and what you will gain from the experience all need to be carefully considered. Along with prayer, we recommend you consult with former Adirondack staff, friends, family, a pastor and/or a mentor for their guidance. It is important that you seek guidance as you consider this mission-focused ministry experience.

Working in the ADKs for La Vida takes a lot of effort and hours are long by anyone's standards. The program requires people with a mature Christian commitment and desire to serve under all sorts of conditions. Living and working in tight quarters and working with other leaders in a service-oriented community are crucial aspects of your La Vida summer experience. Therefore, only those who get along well with others and can be supportive of the overall mission of the program will positively add to the La Vida ministry. We ask and expect a great deal from the La Vida staff, but we believe you will be more than satisfied with what you receive in return.

Because of La Vida's investment of time and effort into our staff's training and development, we ask that summer staff consider a two-summer commitment to the program. We have found that staff who come back for a second summer (does not need to be consecutive) have much more to offer the program and can also help train new staff members. And although not required, returning for a second summer is contingent on each staff member's leadership capabilities and how they fit in with the rest of the La Vida staff.

As a ministry, La Vida relies on the financial support of many people to help fulfill the mission of the program. We ask each summer staff member to send 15 support letters to family, friends, and others to supplement stipends, help pay for specialized training, and care for the base camp property. All donations will pass through Gordon College so a tax-exempt receipt can be issued to each supporter.

STAFFING DATES:

- **Summer ADK Staff: May 24–August 4, 2024**
- **August Gordon College Expeditions: August 8–24, 2024**
- **Other Staffing Opportunities:**
 - **June College Expeditions: June 16–June 29, 2024**
 - **July College Expeditions: June 30–13, 2024**
 - **Late July College Expeditions: July 14–27, 2024**

PROSPECTIVE STAFF TIMELINE

Complete the Application Process:

1. Fill out the ADK staff application online: <https://lavidacenter.org/jobs/adk/>
2. Receive confirmation email from ADK Director that contains essay questions; submit essay question answers using provided link (check spam!)
3. Recommendation Form: all **new staff** need to have 3 different people fill out an online recommendation form <https://airtable.com/shrNTERpHFhivwr0S>
4. Complete all the above steps by: December 14, 2023
5. If application is accepted, the ADK Director will contact you to schedule an interview.
6. Hiring notification letters will be sent out sometime in late January/early February 2024

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 of authority and a willingness to help out regardless of whether tasks lie within your specific job description or not.*

Program Coordinator—The program coordinator(s) assists the ADK director and assistant director with the training, supervising, mentoring, evaluating and pastoral care of the staff. They are also responsible for program logistics, securing necessary permits, maintaining good public relations with the DEC, managing logistics with the end of trip run and resupply, and supervising the ropes course. They work with the director and assistant director in maintaining program paperwork and the office, trip planning, staff, and program evaluation, and organizing the final celebration. In addition, the program coordinator will aid the ADK director in all administrative duties and support other aspects of the program as needed.

Kitchen Coordinator—The kitchen coordinator oversees all meal planning, food purchasing and supervision of meal preparation for on-property meals. In addition to general kitchen maintenance (cleaning, upkeep, meeting Department of Health standards), they are also responsible for managing base camp staff personnel and any other work crew members in food preparation and cleanup, overseeing the Base Camp kitchen facility, overseeing the final celebration meal each session as well as other aspects of supporting the logistical needs of each La Vida trip (belaying at the ropes course or rock climbs, resupplies, etc.).

Trip Food Coordinator—The trip food coordinator is the person in charge of all the nutritional planning, food purchasing, preparation, and packaging for all La Vida wilderness trips. They are also responsible for maintaining and updating the Microsoft Excel program designed to assist in the purchasing, planning and packaging of trip food. In addition to the above-mentioned duties, the trip food coordinator will assist the kitchen coordinator with the celebration meal and keeping the trip food room organized and under Department of Health regulations. Other aspects of supporting the logistical needs of each La Vida trip may also be required.

**The Kitchen Coordinator and Trip Food Coordinator may be combined into one position that could be shared between two people.*

Equipment Manager—The equipment manager is responsible for maintaining and organizing all ADK program equipment and gear. This includes, but is not limited to, facilitating gear check-out/check-in each session, keeping a current inventory of all equipment, repairing/replacing broken gear, ordering, and organizing all participant gear orders, assisting in staff trainings regarding proper use/field maintenance and care of all equipment.

Property Manager—The property manager is responsible for maintaining the entire ADK Base Camp property (landscaping, buildings, grounds), and property equipment (including vans, trailers, lawnmowers, etc.). The property manager should have basic carpentry, plumbing, painting, and electrical skills. They will work together with the ADK director, equipment manager, and program coordinators in the supervision and training of the base camp staff.

**The Equipment Manager and Property Manager may be combined into one position that could be shared between two people.*

Photographer, Social Media and Guest Relations Coordinator—The person in this position ensures that all aspects of an ADK summer are documented well and represented on all of La Vida's social media sites. They work with the Outdoor Education Core Registrar to maintain consistent and meaningful posts. They also work with the ADK director to provide all guests with a positive stay at the base camp property. Duties include prepping guest spaces, being available to answer questions from guests, cleaning guest spaces and representing the La Vida staff to all base camp property visitors.

Curriculum Coordinator—The curriculum coordinator is responsible for the successful implementation of all La Vida and spiritual curriculum, both onsite with La Vida staff but also on trips. They help train all La Vida summer staff to ensure consistent understanding of La Vida's curriculum. They also assist trip leaders in the brainstorming and planning of their trip's curriculum. Following trip, the curriculum coordinator will meet with each leadership team to debrief and process their trip experience, specifically focusing on curriculum.

Base Camp Staff—In addition to the above-mentioned positions, there are also general base camp positions. These people serve in no specific role all the time, but instead fulfill many roles in the various aspects of the program. These tasks include, but are not limited to, belaying at the ropes course and rock climb sites, assisting in equipment maintenance, food preparation for on and off site, etc.

Trip Leaders—La Vida trip leaders strive to be inspiring servant leaders as they travel 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).

QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL ADK SUMMER STAFF

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**)
- Gordon College mini-bus license (preferred)

Responsibilities of All Staff:

- Attend (unless you do not reside in the North Shore, MA area) all spring semester staff training sessions. These sessions typically occur in the evenings every other week during the spring semester for about 2 hours.
- 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.

What age group do I enjoy spending time with?

Regardless of what type of trip you went on, did you know that La Vida leads expeditions for more than just college groups? If you come to work with us, you'll be interacting with participants ages 13 to 21. You may work with a parent-child trip, or with high school students, or church groups.

How do I deal with being 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!

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 likely will still need to help cook a meal 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.

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 care about giving to an intentional community?

At La Vida Base Camp, we are working, eating, and hanging out together for most of the day. It can often be a lot 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.

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!

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.

STAFF APPLICATION FAQs

1. 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 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.

2. 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.

3. 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). We will require you to bring or buy the following items: your own boots, flashlight/headlamp, water bottles, pocketknife, rain and warm weather gear, and 100 feet of nylon cord (p-cord).

4. 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.

5. 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 offers Wilderness Advanced First Aid and Wilderness First Responder courses which include CPR training during summer training as well.

6. What does the time commitment look like for La Vida?

In general, the minimum time commitment to work for La Vida is 2 weeks which would encapsulate working one full "session" and includes both pre-trip preparation and

planning as well as post-trip clean-up and processing. However, many staff members decide to stay for longer periods of time which allows them to work multiple sessions.

7. What is the summer schedule?

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

8. 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!

9. What will I get paid?

For staff who only work one session their pay will be \$650 – \$850 depending on your position and experience level. For those working the entire summer (minimum of 2 months) stipends range from \$2600 – \$3300.