

Great Hollow Wilderness School

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Great Hollow Wilderness School (GHWS) is a branch of the Regional YMCA of Western CT, and is located on an 890-acre wilderness preserve in New Fairfield, Connecticut. Great Hollow is the oldest non-profit outdoor education program in Connecticut, and has been creating and managing change through experiential education for over 35 years. With strong foundations in adventure programming, leadership development, and diversity education to Upward Bound and other school-based/educational opportunity programs, Great Hollow also has expanded to natural awareness and primitive programs, camps for children with specific educational needs, freshman college orientations, and home school programs. Providing this variety of programming, Great Hollow serves a wide range of participants from students of all ages to corporate executives.

The driving conviction of GHWS is the belief that experiential education is conducive to the growth of individuals from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Great Hollow is unique in that we have made a commitment to serving populations historically under-represented in the world of outdoor education. Furthermore, GHWS actively works to recruit staff from under-represented populations into the field of experiential education. In doing so, the diversity of our staff group is a direct reflection of the students we serve.

Great Hollow instructors facilitate all of our programs with a focus on a strong group process. From the outset, students are told that everyone has something to contribute and that in order to succeed everyone must work together, and that if they can succeed at Great Hollow they can succeed anywhere.

Participants in the Wilderness School program go through a high ropes course, hike sections of the Appalachian Trail in NY, CT, and MA, cook over fires, canoe, rock climb, and make decisions both good and bad. Through programs and discussions, participants begin to see that they are directly responsible for their successes and failures. Students learn that their environment should not dictate their actions, and that with hard work and focus their dreams are attainable. Most of all, they learn that no matter what obstacles they are confronted with they should never lose sight of their goals. We offer young people an opportunity to be proud, to see intellect and ability where they have often seen self-doubt.

Duties

Staff members learn and share responsibility for all aspects of all the programs including logistics, working at high ropes and rock climbing sites, and instructing courses 1-14 days in length. Instructors work in teams of 2-3 and are responsible for the physical safety and emotional well being of participants during all activities. Great Hollow instructors must be committed to not only to the success and growth of the students they work with, but as role models they must be committed to personal excellence, which includes their own growth and learning, as well as that of their fellow staff members.

We are looking for hard working, intelligent, and dynamic leaders to be positive examples for students in need of strong role models. The work we do here is very challenging and very demanding, but you will receive support from the

community, and you will be trained in all technical skill areas including camping, rock climbing, high ropes courses, and other adventure activities.

Community

The Great Hollow staff spends the season as an intentional living and working community, where commitment and accountability to the staff community are crucial. Living and working among a group of 25-30 staff is definitely challenging but we confront and strive to overcome those challenges, both as a matter of necessity and intention. At the beginning of the season the staff draws up a full value contract, a statement of intention concerning how the community will function. It becomes the standard with which we hold each other accountable. It also serves as a tool that, ideally, creates a safe environment within which the group assists each other on a journey of growth and development. Not only are the staff members accountable as individual role models, but our community is also regarded as a model. We have the opportunity to model ideals that are often impossible in the larger community. By experience and example we teach ourselves and those we come in contact with tremendous lessons about what commitment, belief, creativity and resilience can bring about.

Housing

Great Hollow is a living and working community. We provide shared housing, food, and kitchen area which staff members are responsible for maintaining during the summer.

Salary for instructors: D.O.E. (\$280 - 350/week) + Room and Board

Commitment: May 19th to the end of August – (Full summer season)

\$100 less per week during staff training. That money will go toward providing the trainings you need (see below).

There are positions available for a Technical Director, Logistics and Medical Director, and a Food Supervisor. D.O.E. (\$350-400/week)+Room and Board

Commitment: May 14th to the end of August – (Full summer season)

Call for more details and to check the status of these specific positions

There are also instructor positions available during these specific dates:

- **Beginning of July to August 3rd** - Center for Attention Related Disorders (C.A.R.D.) therapeutic day camp program; Wilderness Day Camp; Youth Services agencies.

- **August 11th to the beginning of September** - College outdoor orientation programs

Great Hollow provides technical training in all areas during a mandatory 2-week staff training May 19th to June 1st, and throughout the summer. Wilderness First Aid & CPR are available May 17th, 18th, & 19th for those that need to obtain these certifications.