



HAPPINESS IS  
CAMPING  
a camp for kids with cancer since 1982

# Parent Manual



## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide children with cancer and their siblings a residential camp experience together with sophisticated medical care for campers both on and off treatment. These special children come to this unique camp free of charge, where they can put aside their illness and do what kids like to do...have fun!

## OUR STORY

Happiness Is Camping was founded in 1980 by a group of concerned individuals who recognized a need for a very special type of resident camp for children with cancer and catastrophic blood disease. Located in Hardwick, New Jersey on 145 acres of woodland, the camp is free to all – supported by donations and volunteer staff members. Boys and girls ages 6-17 attend the overnight camp and can stay from one to all sessions, depending on their condition and the level of care required (Week 1 only, campers up to age 16 are invited). Constant medical supervision of the highest quality is provided, with facilities for children requiring chemotherapy, children at risk of bleeding and infection, and children with significant disabilities. Only children with cancer may apply and the child's personal physician must make the determination that the child is well enough to attend. Up to 80 campers can be accommodated weekly.

Although most of the 75 individual staff members, including doctors and nurses, volunteer their time and services, our expenses such as food, transportation, insurance, utilities and pharmaceuticals are quite substantial. It costs more than \$2,000 to provide one week of camping for each child. Our annual budget exceeds \$1,000,000.

Happiness Is Camping relies entirely on contributions, providing its services free of charge so that parents already burdened with extraordinary medical expenses can still give their children a normal summer camp experience. Support is received from organizations, major foundations and individual contributors. Happiness Is Camping is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization and is not a private foundation.

## OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of Happiness Is Camping is to provide young cancer patients and their siblings with a happy, rewarding and normal childhood experience in a natural setting by:

- Developing self-confidence and independence
  - living away from parents and learning to depend on themselves
  - meeting the challenge of a new environment
  - trusting there are people to help and support them
  - achieving success while surrounded by caring people in a supportive environment
  
- Developing friendships with others
  - sharing common bonds and experiences with other children with cancer
  - establishing caring and nurturing relationships with counselors
  - learning about differences: racial, ethnic, degree of illness
  - living in a cooperative environment with others

- Developing a spirit of cooperation and group identity
  - sharing responsibilities and successes
  - working, playing and being part of the group
  
- Developing skills and interests
  - trying new activities
  - mastering new and old skills and activities
  - developing knowledge in a wide variety of subjects including nature, adventure activities and performance arts
  - planning and implementing ideas and activities

## STAFF

Happiness Is Camping is proud to employ counselors from all over the globe. International staff comprise approximately 25% of our staff each summer. Many of our staff are college students or have a background in child development. All staff participate in an intensive week-long training program prior to working with the campers. Support staff work in the office, kitchen and in maintenance. Happiness Is Camping is committed to creating a safe environment for our campers. We adhere to the stringent hiring procedures and policies of the American Camp Association (ACA) and we are licensed by the New Jersey Department of Health. All staff members are subject to state and federal criminal and sexual offender background checks, as well as personal and professional reference checks.

## FACILITIES

Happiness Is Camping features extensive program facilities including a Rec Hall, an amphitheater with bench seating, playing fields, a charming pond for fishing and boating, basketball courts, a beach volleyball court, a full-size outdoor swimming pool, an archery range, high and low ropes courses, miles of hiking trails, a climbing wall with rock climbing, cargo net ascension and zip line, a gaga pit and a full service gym. Our cabins are beautiful log cabin style buildings and are very comfortable. Cabins in the International Village are home to 8-10 campers and two staff members. Each cabin has electricity, its own bathroom and a porch. The cabins are wheelchair accessible. Campers also sleep across the pond in Gramercy Lodge. Gramercy holds 40 campers and eight staff members. Campers and staff sleep in four large rooms with adjoining wheelchair accessible bathrooms. Our dining hall seats 150 in family-style comfort. The kitchen is equipped to deliver healthy and balanced meals in sufficient quantity. The kitchen and menu are designated nut free. Please inform the Camp Director if your camper has any dietary restrictions.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Campers follow a daily schedule that is designed to provide both structure for skills based learning and free time activity choices to promote independence and self- direction.

Campers begin their day at 8:15 am. The flag salute follows at 8:55 am and breakfast is served shortly thereafter. Cabin and squad cleanup follows breakfast, after which are three morning activities, a time

when each camper participates in activities they have chosen for the week. Lunch is served at 1:00pm and is followed by siesta, a rest period. Campers often spend this time reading, playing cards, or writing home.

After siesta, campers will enjoy general swim followed by a camp-wide activity. Dinner follows the activity and is served at 6:00 pm.

Evenings consist of an hour of free time followed by an all-camp night activity such as a campfire, talent show or skit. Evening activities are followed by meds, taps and lights out.

## CAMP ACTIVITIES

Campers are allowed to choose activities that they would like to participate in for the week. All activities are available to all age groups. Campers will be separated into junior/senior groups at certain times.

Some of our activity offerings are listed below. Others are added, depending on the talents and abilities of our staff.

<b>Land Sports:</b>	Basketball, Disc Golf, Flag Football, Street Hockey, Soccer, Ultimate Frisbee, Volleyball, Beach Volleyball, Wiffle Ball
<b>Target Sports:</b>	Archery
<b>Aquatics:</b>	Swimming, Boating, Fishing
<b>Creative Arts:</b>	Arts & Crafts, Painting, Drawing, Jewelry Making, Music, Dance, Drama
<b>Adventure:</b>	Climbing Wall, High/Low Ropes, Giant Swing, Zip Line

Because of the nature of camp, there are always a wide variety of creative and unique activities that are created each summer.

## ARRIVAL PROCEDURE

Campers will be transported to and from camp by their parent/guardian. Plan to arrive to drop-off your child at camp between 10:00–11:00 am on Sunday. Please park in the lot and proceed to the check-in tent for registration. A staff member will help you move in. **Do not arrive early as you will not be admitted!** Arrivals after Sunday are not allowed without prior consent from the Executive Director.

- **Notification of No Shows**

Camp staff will contact the parent/guardian of any “no show” campers after lunch on the first day of each session.

## DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

You may pick-up your child between 4:00-5:00 pm on Thursday\*. Please arrive on time! Early departures are not permitted without prior consent from the Executive Director. Park in the lot and proceed to the check-out tent prior to departing. Make sure to pick up camper’s medication at check-out tent (if

applicable). Campers may be picked up by a friend or relative only with prior written permission from parent/guardian. There are no exceptions to this procedure.

\*Pick-Up time is Friday Morning, 10:00-11:00 am for Session 5 ONLY.

## CAMP SECURITY

There will be a security person on duty near the parking lot each day during camp. The security person will ensure that all persons who enter the camp have a legitimate purpose for their visit. All visitors to camp must sign in/out. They will be given a visitor's pass that must be visible at all times.

Campers are forbidden to leave camp property with any visitors unless prior written arrangements have been made by their parent/guardian with the main office. There is an administrative staff member monitoring the camp grounds after night activity.

## HEALTH SERVICES

All levels of health care will be under the supervision of our resident doctor. She/he will supervise our resident nurses who will reside in the infirmary. The Medical Director of Happiness Is Camping will assign all doctors and nurses. These doctors and nurses are specially trained. All other camp staff qualified to give first aid will be checked by the camp nurse during staff training.

The resident doctor, along with the infirmary nurses, will handle all daily and routine medical care. In addition to volunteer medical staff, there is a full-time assistant in the infirmary for the summer.

The camp nurse or Medical Director will notify you by phone in case of a serious illness or injury. You will be notified immediately if a camper must be transported or receive medication beyond previously prescribed treatments.

- **Required Health Forms**

All campers and siblings are required to submit a complete health history and have a health exam prior to arriving at camp. Health exams must be performed within twelve months of confirmed session. Campers on active treatment must also complete health form B.

## HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness is a normal and healthy response to being away from home. Parents of younger children and first time campers should expect it. Our staff members are well-trained in techniques that help campers develop coping skills for overcoming the challenges of separation from home and family. These skills often lead to more confidence and independence, a key outcome of the camping experience. If the first letter from your child is a little down-hearted, don't be alarmed. Send a reassuring response encouraging him/her to stick with it. Resist temptation to include phrases that would lead them to believe you or other family members (including pets) are missing them or that your child is missing out on important things at home. If the problem becomes serious, we will call you. We want to involve you in developing useful strategies for your child's success. Remember that what was a crisis on day two might be forgotten by day four.

Keep your letter positive and supportive when you write. Let your child know how proud you are that they are facing this challenge. Feel free to call the camp director if you still have concerns. Putting children on the phone with parents can seriously compound homesickness issues and can make the situation more difficult; however, our staff is always willing to speak with you regarding your child's experience.

## TELEPHONE POLICY

Here at Happiness Is Camping we work to develop strong, independent young people who can function on their own as part of our community. Our staff members are ready to assist campers in dealing successfully with any challenges that arise during their stay with us. Cell phone usage by campers is counter-productive to this process. It bypasses the development of confidence in a community setting, removes the opportunity to resolve conflicts, and undermines our ability to provide guidance within a given situation. Please – do not send your child to camp with a cell phone. Give them the chance to succeed on their own. If you must get an important message to your camper, we will pass it along.

- **Official Cell Phone Policy**

Cell phone use by campers is prohibited. We will confiscate any cell phone in a camper's possession and return it at the end of the session. If a camper or sibling is found with a cell phone, they may not be allowed to attend other confirmed sessions. Any electronic device that can connect to the internet is not allowed at camp. We cannot guarantee the security of ANY electronic device brought to camp. Thank you for helping us to provide your child with the opportunity to be a confident, independent member of our community.

- **Communicating with the Camp Director**

The camp director is available through the camp office in case of emergency. Parents are encouraged to call or email with any questions or concerns.

## COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CAMPER

**Letters:** As a parent, it's nice to get letters from your camper. You can help by encouraging your camper to write frequently. Your chances of receiving mail will increase if you pack pre-addressed, stamped envelopes or postcards. Send mail to your camper at:

Happiness Is Camping  
62 Sunset Lake Road  
Hardwick, NJ 07825  
ATTN: Name of Your Camper

**Packages:** Campers enjoy receiving packages from home. All packages are opened in the presence of a staff member. Packages should be addressed in the same way as letters. Packages are delivered with camper mail.

Please Note: There is no food permitted in cabins. Food attracts animals and causes stress among the group. Many campers have allergies to common ingredients in food. Any food in the cabins will be confiscated and returned at the end of the season.

**Social Media:** Happiness Is Camping has several ways for you to stay in touch with the latest happenings at camp. You can view pictures and videos, send us a message, vote on camp surveys and so much more!



<http://www.facebook.com/hicnj>



[http://www.instagram.com/happinesiscamping\\_nj](http://www.instagram.com/happinesiscamping_nj)



[http://www.twitter.com/hic\\_nj](http://www.twitter.com/hic_nj)



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## WHAT TO BRING

The following is a list of suggested items to pack for one session at camp.

### Packing List (Required)

Suitcase or Duffle Bag	8 Shirts (2 Long-Sleeve)
9 Pair Socks	Sunglasses
1 Warm Jacket	1 Hat/Cap
9 Pair Underwear	1-2 Beach Towels or Robe
2 Sweatshirts or Sweaters	2 Pair Shoes (Sneakers)
1-2 Swimsuits	1 Pair Flip Flops/Sandals (Pool Use)
2-3 Pair Jeans	3 Pair Medium Weight Pajamas
Towels and Soap	Sunscreen
8 Pair Shorts	Raincoat or Poncho with Hat
Laundry Bag	

Camp does not provide bedding. You need to send pillows, sheets, blankets or a sleeping bag for each camper.

Camp does not provide laundry service. Please pack enough clothing for the entire stay. Camp is the perfect place to wear out your old clothes! We do not require any special uniforms or equipment.

Please label ALL of your child's belongings with their full name. The camp is not responsible for lost, torn or stolen clothing.

The camp cannot provide secure storage for ANY expensive or irreplaceable personal items. Personal belongings are best packed in a sturdy suitcase or duffel bag. Please leave TVs, electronic games, jewelry, cell phones and expensive items at home. They are not appropriate for camp. The camp is not responsible for lost or stolen personal property.

## Packing List (Desirable But Not Required)

Bug Spray	Pens
Flashlight	Stamps
Reading Material	Camera
Hiking Boots	Pre-Addressed Envelopes
Writing Paper	Post Cards

## Do Not Bring

Weapons of any kind	Alcohol, Tobacco, Illegal Drugs or Paraphernalia
Pocket Knives	Expensive Items
Matches or Lighters	Any Food or Drinks
Candy or Gum	Any Device that can record, store or play video
Cell Phone	Any Device that can connect to the Internet

## A Note on Electronic Devices

We urge you to consider leaving all gadgets at home. Many campers recall being “unplugged” as the best part of their camp experience, and it makes it easier to connect with friends, activities and the outdoors. However, we recognize that a camper who is away from home might take comfort in being able to listen to music at bedtime, or read a favorite book. If you choose to send your child with an iPod or MP3 player, it must simply be that: a music listening device. We recommend an iPod Shuffle or other small music player (without a camera or video screen) loaded with songs from home. Additionally, if your child owns a Kindle or similar reading device, be sure that it’s not Internet-enabled, or that the function is turned off via parental controls. Finally, please note: the camp cannot guarantee the safety or security of ANY device that is brought to camp. They are solely the responsibility of the camper. A small lockable bag or box might be helpful in securing a gadget inside of a trunk or duffle, but as mentioned at the top of the paragraph, consider leaving everything at home. Your camper will thank you!

## REFUNDS AND CANCELLATIONS

Contact Executive Director Rich Campbell at [rich@happinesiscamping.org](mailto:rich@happinesiscamping.org) if you must cancel. We normally have a waiting list for each session, so please try to cancel as early as you can.

## OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES

**SWIMMING:** Each camper will be given a swim test before being given permission to swim. Campers may then sign up for swim lessons and other fun pool activities when provided.

**BROVIAC:** Please note that for the camper’s health and safety, our Medical Director has prohibited swimming for all campers with broviacs.

**MEDICATIONS:** ALL medications that the camper will need orally, by injection, or intravenously must be sent to the camp with the camper! **Please leave all medications in the original packages. Please be sure to pack enough medications for your camper’s ENTIRE stay.**



**PERSONAL SPORTS EQUIPMENT:** Use of personal sports equipment by campers is prohibited. Happiness Is Camping will not be responsible for the storage of personal equipment.

**ANIMALS:** Campers are not permitted to bring personal pets and animals to camp.

**DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND WEAPONS:** Drugs, alcohol and weapons are not permitted on camp premises at any time. Staff and campers found in possession of drugs, alcohol, or weapons are subject to disciplinary and legal action. Camp reserves the right to search individual property if the health and safety of its participants is in question.

## SUMMER 2019 SESSIONS

Session 1: July 7 - July 11	Campers and Sibling (Ages6-15)/College Prep Camp (Age 17)
Session 2: July 14 - July 18	Campers and Siblings (Ages 6-15)/CAMP (Age 16)
Session 3: July 21 - July 25	Campers and Siblings (Ages 6-15)/CAMP (Age 16)
Session 4: July 28 - August 1	Campers and Siblings (Ages 6-15)/CAMP (Age 16)
Session 5: August 4 - August 9	Campers and Siblings (Ages 6-15)