

COUNSELOR IN TRAINING

- WHO: Teens entering grade 11
- WHEN: Program runs each session 2-5. Refer to your particular registration dates.
- WHERE: Program is based on Main Camp. You will live in your assigned camper cabin.

Welcome to the McGaw YMCA's Camp Echo Counselor in Training (CIT) Program. Because of your age, this is a big transition year for you at camp and this program is here to smooth your shift from camper to counselor. Through this program, you will have many more responsibilities than you may have had at camp before, but at the same time, you are a paying camper and will have special opportunity to gain valuable learning from this unique position. When you arrive at camp, you will be assigned to a cabin of up to 11 campers and a counseling team. Your role in the cabin is to work with the team of counselors to help supervise, create activities for the group, and to do whatever else is necessary to help make the cabin experience great for your group of campers. Moreover, you will have opportunities to interact with your peers during activities; included in this time at camp will be a chance to experience the high ropes course, have a night out, and meet daily with your directors to hone your counselor skills.

TRAVEL TO CAMP: CITs will ride to Camp Echo on the buses departing from the McGaw YMCA, if not already at Echo for layover. Please make note of the bus schedule in the Parent Information Booklet.

SPECIFIC DUTIES OF A CIT: This can be a very hard but rewarding job and no one is expecting you to be perfect or know all of the answers. Your co-counselors have had more experience than you and should be looked to for answers, they are your best teachers – use them. It will be presented to the campers that you are a full-fledged staff member and they will respect you as such. However, you are still a paying “camper” according to state law, and we are not allowed to have one camper left fully in charge of another. This means that at no time should you ever be left supervising the campers alone. One of the other members of your counseling team needs to be present. Because you are classified as a camper, there are some things that staff members will be able to do that you will not. Some of these are because of state regulations; some are because you are still a developing staff member. Your time off must be supervised; this means that a staff member over the age of 21 will take you off camp property for your night out. You will only be able to attend staff snacks twice a week and you will have a curfew set by your facilitator - you must be in your cabin by this time. You will have scheduled time off during the day. Other responsibilities you will have include: staffing a program area during one campativity period a day, working a program area during either Fun Swim or Twilight Fun, and reporting to your CIT meetings. Finally, you will play an integral role in a lost swimmer or camper drill. You will be expected to report to the Dining Hall and be ready to count campers as well as help with anything the Senior Staff person asks you to do. As a budding camp staff member it is important to remember that flexibility is the key. If you are asked by someone to help with something, DO IT, if you are able.

A COMMON QUESTION: *Why are we (Camp Echo) making you (CITs) pay, if you are doing work for us?* We understand this may seem “unfair”. However, you are enrolled in phase two of a leadership training program and you will receive guidance and mentoring from your facilitators and you will be gaining valuable service learning experience through hands-on practice with campers and program areas. Your payment helps cover your facilitators' and counseling team's salaries and transportation costs. We hope that you can see the value of a session or sessions in this rich learning environment and don't consider the payment and restrictions placed on you as a punishment. You have an opportunity to learn a lot during this experience; bringing your insights to an application process of becoming paid staff next year.

TRAVEL HOME: CITs will take the bus from Camp Echo to the McGaw YMCA in Evanston. Bus departure information and progress is posted and updated every 30 minutes on the Camp Echo website. In order to meet your child on time and avoid waiting at the McGaw YMCA for the busses to arrive, please check the website frequently. Participants signed up for another Echo program next session may spend the two nights at home or register to stay as a layover camper.

LIFEGUARD REBATE OPTION: CITs have an exclusive opportunity to enroll in Echo's Lifeguard Plus, which is a heavily discounted opportunity to enjoy camp and get your lifeguarding certification. CITs can also be reimbursed by Camp Echo at the McGaw YMCA class rate for any Lifeguard class successfully completed within one year. Sign up for a Lifeguard class, and save your receipt. Submit a copy of your receipt and your Lifeguard "card" to the Camp Director after you complete the course. Be sure to indicate to whom, and at what address, the reimbursement should be mailed.