



Dear Summer Search Families,

Greetings from all of us at Sierra Nevada Journeys! We're thrilled that your teen will be part of our Outdoor Leadership Program. This program will introduce high-school youth to the outdoors and provide a truly inspiring backcountry experience. We hope you are as excited about spending time on the trail as we are. Know that your child's physical, mental and emotional safety is our number one priority during the time they spend with us. This handbook was developed to help participants and families prepare for their camping experience. You will be a part of an incredible, rewarding, and fun-filled trip. In this handbook, you will find answers to frequently asked questions and a wealth of other important information. Whether you are new to Sierra Nevada Journeys or returning from another program, we ask that you read this handbook carefully. If you have questions after reading the handbook, don't hesitate to contact us at 530-832-1085.

Don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions you have. We can't wait to work with your student!

Andy Stephens
Programs Director

775-530-9729

programs@sierranevadajourneys.org



Dates, Times, and Transportation Information

Pick Up: All participants will be picked up at a predetermined location at the start of their trip date (in Oakland and Santa Rosa). On the following dates, depending on which session you signed up to attend:

Mentor Session: Sunday, June 11, 2023, by 1:00 pm (Participants provide their transportation to camp)
Session 1: Sunday, June 18, 2023, by 11:00 am (Oakland) & 1:30 pm (Santa Rosa) PDT
Session 2: Sunday, July 2, 2023, by 11:00 am (Oakland) & 1:30 pm (Santa Rosa) PDT
Session 3: Wednesday, July 19, 2023, by 11:00 am (Oakland) & 1:30 pm (Santa Rosa) PDT

Participants should arrive with a brown bag lunch and bring everything on the packing list. Sierra Nevada Journeys will transport participants from Oakland/Santa Rosa to our Grizzly Creek Ranch camp in Portola, California.

Drop Off: All participants will be dropped off in either Oakland or Santa Rosa on the following dates:

Mentor Session: Wednesday, June 14, 2023, by 10:00 am PDT (Participants provide their transportation from camp)
Session 1: Friday, June 30, 2023, by 11:00 am (Oakland) & 1:30 pm (Santa Rosa) PDT
Session 2: Friday, July 14, 2023, by 11:00 am (Oakland) & 1:30 pm (Santa Rosa) DST
Session 3: Monday, July 31, 2023, by 11:00 am (Oakland) & 1:30 pm (Santa Rosa) PDT

Necessary Transportation: If there are separate arrangements from the logistics arranged by Sierra Nevada Journeys and Summer Search. Please inform us of these situations in writing before the start of the program. It is important to us that all participants are safe and always accounted for.

Transportation to our Camp and Trailhead: Sierra Nevada Journeys provides participants with transportation to and from Grizzly Creek Ranch and the trailheads in Sierra Nevada Journeys' fully insured vehicles driven by one of our employees.

Overview

Sierra Nevada Journeys was founded on the premise that youth learn best when placed in an environment where they are comfortable being themselves, trying new things, and gaining new skills and confidence. Our mission is to deliver innovative outdoor, science-based education programs for youth to develop critical thinking skills and to inspire natural resource stewardship.

Sierra Nevada Journeys Outdoor Leadership Program is a rewarding educational program for high-school youth in Northern California on the north slope of the Sierra Nevada range. This experiential program provides students with hands-on, kinesthetic opportunities to explore the natural world as they learn about leadership, the environment, and their sense of place in a backcountry context.

The group (up to 12 participants) will start their time at Grizzly Creek Ranch in Portola, California. It will serve as the base camp for gear outfitting and an initial challenge course experience to bond the team before we head into the backcountry. After that initial day and night on Campus, the group and their Sierra Nevada Journeys instructors will head to the trailhead, where they will travel through and camp in the Tahoe National Forest. Our trip offers spectacular vistas of granite spires, numerous alpine lakes to swim in, scattered pines, and fields of wildflowers. Upon returning to Grizzly Creek Ranch, participants will partake in various activities, including a challenge course, kayaking, archery, swimming, and exploring. Participants will then head



back to Grizzly Creek Ranch for a debrief, reflection, and retuning the gear at base camp. Our final days at Grizzly Creek Ranch will be filled with opportunities for kayaking, archery, swimming, and day hikes. We will also participate in a service project with a local non-profit, providing help and resources for the local community.

Our program focuses on the participants' experience and the transferability of that experience back to their home life. Students develop critical thinking skills, independence, an understanding of the value of teamwork, and a sense of stewardship for their environment and community. A service-learning project will be incorporated at the end of the trip to reinforce the lessons once at home. Personal growth and self-reflection are a cornerstone of the experience.

Our programs encompass three guiding educational philosophies:

Sense of Place: We are a part of nature, not simply bystanders. All elements of the natural world are connected. Our actions can positively and negatively affect our local and global natural communities. We have the responsibility to make thoughtful and sustainable decisions.

Inquiry-based learning: Methods ensure that participants drive their learning with their questioning minds. Some scientific methods and processes help us accurately and analytically discover the world. The first step in this process is a sense of curiosity about the world we are a part of.

Leadership: Many projects and initiatives in life must be completed with help. Leadership, communication, and collaborative problem-solving skills are crucial to self-improvement and positive change, individually and within the group setting. Students learn that they can be tomorrow's leaders with the right mindset and work ethic.

Behavior Expectations

The primary mission of Sierra Nevada Journeys is to provide an environment where youth are comfortable being themselves, trying new things, developing confidence, and making new friends. To set this tone, campers and staff establish a "Community Agreement" shortly after everyone has settled in. The most important thing we want campers to take away from the agreement is *respect for ourselves, each other, and the environment*. Please explain to your teen the importance of speaking up if they have a question, request, or problem. Self-advocacy is a great skill to learn and practice during this program.

To ensure a positive experience for your teen and the rest of the camp participants, all campers must obey the following "non-negotiable" rules:

- Participants will not undertake any actions that involve danger to themselves, another camper, a staff member, or any other individual.
- Participants will not steal or harm camp property, facilities, or the property of other campers or staff members.
- Participants are **NOT** allowed to bring weapons, illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco, electronics (cameras are okay), food, or beverages.
- Prescription and over-the-counter medications (all medication is kept and dispensed by qualified camp staff).
- Participants will stay in a supervised area unless told otherwise by a group leader.



Violations of these important rules will be dealt with firmly and decisively. They may result in immediate separation or dismissal without a refund of tuition. Please discuss the "Community Agreement" and these "non-negotiable" rules with your teen before arrival.

****If dismissal is necessary, the parent's or guardian's responsibility is to make arrangements for their camper to be picked up immediately. ****

Homesickness and Communication

Advice to Parents Regarding Homesickness: The biggest advice we can give you in helping to prepare your child for time away from home is to BE POSITIVE! The more encouraging and engaging you can be with them beforehand, the more ready they will be for the trip. Don't treat homesickness like an issue to be swept under the rug. Confront it directly, and let your teen know it is normal, but try not to dwell on it. Instead, please focus on their incredible opportunities during the trip. Do not promise the "helicopter rescue" (i.e., "try it for a few days, and if you don't like it, we'll pick you up"). They will then only focus on the day you agreed to pick them up rather than on the experiences they will have.

Even though we do not allow phone calls home, please encourage your child to keep in touch by writing letters or taking pictures that can be shared once they are home. It is also important to remember that parents often have a greater issue related to homesickness and separation than their children.

Phone Calls: Homesickness and other issues are often exacerbated when campers call home. For this reason, such calls are not allowed. However, we will contact you if a behavioral, medical, or other issue arises. Don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or want to check in over the week. For non-emergency phone calls, please call 530-832-1085 between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm or email programs@sierranevadajourneys.org.

In the event of an after-hours emergency, please call our Programs Director, Andy Stephens, at 775-530-9729. Please, only call this phone number if it is a true emergency.

Cell Phones: Participants may bring cell phones, but they will be collected, and campers will not be able to make calls on them during the program. They should also bring a charger.

Program Course Rules: To ensure a positive experience for your teen and the rest of the participants, all participants must obey the following "non-negotiable" rules.

Participants will not undertake any actions that involve danger to another participant, a staff member, or any other individual. Participants will not steal or harm property or facilities, the property of other participants or staff, or the property of others. Participants are not allowed to have prohibited items. Participants will not keep any prescription or non-prescription drugs in their packs or on them. A qualified Sierra Nevada Journeys health member must keep and dispense all medications. Finally, participants will only leave the program with permission at any time. Violations of these important rules will be dealt with firmly and decisively. They may result in immediate separation or dismissal without a refund of tuition. Before arriving at Sierra Nevada Journeys, please discuss these non-negotiable rules with your teen. If dismissal is necessary, the parent must make arrangements for their child to be picked up.

**Gear Packing List:**

Summer Search will be supplying you with a packing list.

Sierra Nevada Journeys Provided Equipment: Sierra Nevada Journeys will provide the following equipment to each camper. We ask that all participants care for the equipment and return it in the same condition in which it was received. If you are planning on bringing any of your gear to replace the below gear, please let us know ahead of time, and we will be happy to accommodate you.

1 Backpack – 360-70L size

Food throughout the course

1 Sleeping bag

1 Sleeping pad

1 mess kit (bowl, plate, spoon, fork, knife, cup)

1 tent that sleeps 2-3 people

Water filtration system

Camp stoves (to be shared with fellow participants)

Communication: Each program will have a resupply of gear and provisions in the middle of their trip. If you wish to send a letter to your child, it can be delivered to them at the resupply or when they return to Grizzly Creek Ranch. Please do not send anything larger than a letter. Please do not send anything via express or certified mail. We cannot guarantee that a staff member will be available to sign for mail.

All mail should be sent to:

Grizzly Creek Ranch c/o Summer Search

5900 Grizzly Road

Portola, CA 96122

Attention: *Your child's name here*

Our contact number at camp is 530-832-1085, and our email address is programs@sierranevadajourneys.org. In the event of an after-hours emergency, please call 775-530-9729.

General Camp Information

Activities: All participants will take part in a wide range of land, water, and adventure activities that may include preparing and planning for extended backcountry travel and living; use and care of tents and other backcountry gear; backcountry cooking; low impact camping; swimming; rafting; forest ecology; geology; astronomy and stargazing; team-building challenges; and more.

Swimming: Our swimming protocols follow American Camp Association safety guidelines. Campers may have the opportunity to swim in lakes and streams while out on the trail (with open water lifeguard present). An initial swim test is given to all participants to evaluate their swimming ability in our camp pool. The test includes swimming laps in various strokes and treading water.

Gratuities: We ask that you do not monetarily tip Sierra Nevada Journeys employees. However, a thank you note sent post-program from the participant to staff members is always appreciated.



Health

Mandatory Health History Information: Please make sure you have filled out the health information on the online registration form. All vaccinations must be up to date. Sierra Nevada Journeys' medical staff will review this information with the parent and guardian at the pick-up location. If someone else will be dropping off your teen, please let us know so we can review this with you before the start of the camp session.

Emergency Contact Information: If we need to contact you during camp regarding medical, behavioral, or other issues that concern your teen, we will use the contact information provided on this form. Please note if the phone numbers listed are home, cell, or work numbers.

Permission to Treat: By signing the "Authorization for Treatment" form, you are giving Sierra Nevada Journeys' trained and qualified staff permission to provide your camper with routine healthcare, administer prescribed and over-the-counter medications (that have been sent with the camper), and provide emergency medical assistance.

Medication: Campers are not permitted to keep medications of any kind in their possession. Epi-pens and inhalers are the **ONLY** exceptions to this rule. This rule includes prescription drugs and over-the-counter items such as Tylenol®, Sudafed®, or cough drops. All medications brought to camp will be given to the qualified camp health staff at the beginning of the program. All prescription and over-the-counter medications need to be sent **in the original bottle with the doctor's name, dosage, and usage** instructions on the bottle, if applicable. In addition, please put all medication bottles to be used during camp in a transparent re-sealable storage bag with your child's name and instructions for administration on it. Qualified camp staff will dispense all necessary medications as needed.

Health Insurance: Parents must provide coverage for any illness, accident, or dental occurrence requiring medical intervention.

Camp Health Center: We have an on-site health center overseen by a registered nurse and staffed 24/7 by a trained health professional. The nearest hospital is 5 miles away in downtown Portola.

Arriving in Good Health: If your camper has a fever on drop-off day or has been exposed to contagious illness, please keep them at home.

In the event of an after-hours emergency, please call our Programs Director, Andy Stephens, at 775-530-9729. Please, only call this phone number if it is a true emergency!

Sierra Nevada Journeys Gear

Are you interested in purchasing a Sierra Nevada Journeys sweatshirt for \$38 or a hat for \$20?

Please circle below:

Yes No

Sweatshirt (adult size, \$38) S M L XL XXL

Ball cap (adult size, \$20) 1 size

T-shirt (adult size, \$16) S M L XL

Return this page along with a check made payable to Sierra Nevada Journeys to:

Sierra Nevada Journeys

5900 Grizzly Road

Portola, CA 96122