Frequently Asked Questions from Potential Volunteers

When is Chicago’s 2016 MDA Camp?
For volunteer counselors, Camp begins Saturday, June 11th and ends Friday, June 17th, 2016.

How much does camp cost?
Camp does not cost anything. The fundraising that the MDA does throughout the year covers the cost of camp for campers and counselors, which is about $800.

How long is camp?
6 nights/7 days.

What is muscular dystrophy?
Muscular dystrophy describes a group of diseases that involve progressive muscle weakness. Symptoms can range from mild muscle weakness to complete paralysis of all voluntary muscles, including those used for breathing and swallowing. Among these diseases, the age of onset varies and life span after diagnosis can be as short as a year or as long as several decades.

What is my role as a volunteer counselor?
Volunteers are paired one-on-one with a camper. As their “buddy,” you’ll be by your camper’s side day and night so that they can do all the fun activities that summer camp offers. You’ll push wheelchairs, lift and transfer youngsters, and provide assistance with daily living activities and personal care as needed.

Where is Camp Located?
MDA rents Timber Pointe Outdoor Center (TPOC) in Hudson, IL for the duration of our camping program. TPOC is located approximately 2 hours southwest of Chicago, just a few miles off of I-55 near Lake Bloomington.

How do I get to camp?
All volunteer counselors are responsible for their own transportation to and from camp. MDA is not able to provide transportation.

Can I attend for a couple of days?
Unfortunately, camp is a full week commitment to ensure all kids have continuity of care and the best possible week at camp.

How old are the campers?
Camp is open to any child with a form of muscular dystrophy covered under the MDA umbrella between the ages of 6-17. We do separate campers by age and gender for cabin assignments.

Is there medical staff at camp?
Yes, we have a physician and nurses on camp premises at all times.
What are the cabins like?
Cabins range from rooming between 4-10 campers in addition to their counselors so that they can be of assistance 24 hours a day. Campers sleep on the bottom bunk of a bunk bed with their counselor in the top bunk (except in cases where campers require a hospital bed). All cabins are accessible and have air conditioning.

What kind of activities will be available?
Activities vary each year. Swimming, fishing, boating, archery, horseback riding, hockey, arts & crafts, and a dance are just a few examples of what can be done at camp. All activities are made accessible.

How many campers will be there?
There will be ~100 campers present at our camp session. Campers’ cabin placement will be arranged by gender and age (i.e. boys 6-7, boys 8-9, teen girls, etc…). Female counselors are paired with a female camper or with a male camper age 6-9. Male counselors are only paired with male campers.

What if I don't have experience working with children with special needs?
Experience working with children with disabilities is not a requirement, although it is helpful. Don't worry though – volunteers will attend an orientation before camp where we provide all the training and education you will need to be a successful camp counselor.

What do we pack?
We will send a packing list in your acceptance packet. Please don’t plan on bringing the following items: cell phones, TVs, video games laptops, iPads, iPods, etc.

Does MDA Camp provide service hours?
MDA will sign off on 144 Service Hours upon the completion of Summer Camp. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to follow up with the Camp Directors with any required paperwork or documentation for the service hours.

When is the deadline for applying?
Volunteer counselor applications are due no later than May 6th, 2016. The earlier you get your application in, the better.

How do I apply?
The MDA summer camp volunteer process includes a completed online camp application, an interview with an MDA staff member, a reference check, a criminal background check and a completed physical by your medical professional within the past 12 months. To obtain access to an online application, call Alicia at 312-873-1440 or email her at asanteralli@mdausa.org. Being a MDA Camp Counselor is a privilege and we only accept the highest quality candidates

I know someone who’s interested in volunteering as a counselor – what should they do?
We are always in search of new volunteers, especially male volunteers. Interested individuals who are 16 years or older, can contact Alicia at 312-873-1440 or asanteralli@mdausa.org to apply.

What if I still have questions?
Feel free to contact us at 312-873-1440 or asanteralli@mdausa.org.