



60 Denton Lake Road
Holmes, NY 12531
Office: 845-878-6383
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Holmes@HolmesCamp.org
www.HolmesCamp.org

Thank you for registering your camper for the 2019 Summer Camp program at Holmes Camp & Retreat Center. We look forward to your camper being with us this summer!

Before Arriving to Holmes for Check In

- Complete and return the Camper Health History, including the Physician Pages
In order to provide the possible care for our campers, we use the website CampDoc.com to collect health information. This is a centralized and secure location that our nurse and camp administration can access from anywhere! If you have not already, you will receive a "Welcome" email from CampDoc. There are questionnaires for you as the parent/guardian as well as a location to upload the physician's pages that must be signed by a licensed physician. Immunization records are required (including month, day and year completed). These forms must be scanned and uploaded into CampDoc.com, or returned to the Camp Office two weeks before your camper's session at Holmes. This will allow our Health Center Director to prepare for your camper.
- Review the What to Bring list, taking note of any special items for your camper specific program
- Complete any additional forms required for your program- such as activity permission forms
- Return all camp forms to the Camp Office no later than two weeks before your camper's session at Holmes.

Check in Day

Before you leave home, be sure:

- You have labeled your camper's clothes and they are packed securely.
- You have completed and returned the Camper Health History, including the Physician Pages.
- You have uploaded to CampDoc.com, or have a photocopy of, **both sides** your Health Insurance Card.
- All medications are in the original, labeled containers** and readily accessible to turn in once you arrive.

If you are arriving by train, please call at least 48 hours before check-in so we can arrange pick-up service from the train station. Train service to Holmes is out of Grand Central Station through the Harlem Line of the Metro North to the Southeast Station (last stop). ***No camper should be sent unescorted to camp, and we will not send any camper home unescorted.*** Parents should expect to come to Holmes with their camper to Check-In and Check-Out. There is a \$20 charge for round trip van service from Southeast Station; taxi service is also available from the Southeast Station.

Check in times are as follows:

Day camp 9:00am (early arrival and late departure are available with prior arrangements for \$10 per service per day)

Faithbuilders, Camp Q, Godspeed, Spiritfire, Eco Hero, Night Owls 3:00pm

When you arrive

- Follow the signs and staff direction to the Lodge
- Drop off your luggage in the designated area to be brought to your tent
- Check in for your program!
- Check in with the nurse to hand off medications and answer any questions she may have
- Visit the camp store ("Canteen") where you can deposit money into your camper's account – campers should not carry money on them. The Canteen has camp shirts, postcards, stamps, basic toiletries, and other keepsakes. Money unused from the Canteen will be donated to the camp.
- Give your camper a hug, say "Goodbye!" and have safe trip home!



Departure Day

Check Out Times are as Follows:

Day Camp 5:00pm (early arrival and late departure are available with prior arrangements for \$10 per service per day)

Overnight Camps, including Family Camps 10:00am

Faithbuilders, Spiritfire Camp 5:00pm

Pick Up

- Have identification on you and be sure whomever is picking up the camper is in the camp system for pick up
- Retrieve any medications from the Health Center Director
- Check lost and found for any misplaced items
- Retrieve luggage from the luggage drop off area
- Have a safe trip home!

Communication with Your Camper While at Camp

Telephone Calls and Cell Phones

We work hard to build a sense of community among campers. We design the programs, activities and experiences so that they can get away from the distractions and busyness of the everyday world, and to be in a place to grow. Camp is a time and place of self-discovery and testing one's independence. Experience has shown us that allowing campers to have telephone contact with friends or family outside of camp distracts from their experience at camp, is counterproductive to our mission goals and disrupts our ability to build community at camp. For these reasons, we do not permit campers to carry cell phones, make or receive phone calls (unless accompanied by a staff member after consultation with camp administration).

Know that if a situation with your camper arises that warrants parental involvement, be it severe homesickness, a behavior issue or a healthcare concern, we will contact you as soon as possible. If you have an emergency and need to contact your child, please call the camp office at (845) 878-6383.

Care Packages

Care packages that do not contain food or candy are great! Campers are served delicious and nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day while at camp. Including food or candy in care packages encourages insects and animals to find their way into cabins and platform tents where they do not belong. Care packages containing food or candy also create challenging situations that upset the sense of community that counselors work hard to build among their group of campers. If you do choose to send a care package with food or candy, those items will be held until the end of the camp session when your camper leaves.

Sending Mail

Campers love receiving letters from home! Parents are encouraged to write their camper regularly while they are at camp. We find that the best messages are ones where you tell your camper how proud of them you are and how you are looking forward to hearing about their time at camp. Refrain from telling your camper how much you miss them, or other phrases that might cause homesickness. It's always good to close with "See you on Saturday". Mail is distributed each afternoon. To mail your camper a letter, use the following address:

Holmes Presbyterian Camp

Camper Name, Session Name

60 Denton Lake Road

Holmes, NY 12531

Holmes Camp & Retreat Center
60 Denton Lake Rd · Holmes, New York 12531 · 845-878-6383 · Fax: 845-878-7824 · www.holmescamp.org

There's no place like Holmes!®

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Email

You can also send email to your camper. Emails will be printed out and delivered with the mail each afternoon. Remember, campers do not have access to computers and will not respond to your email, unless they write a letter home. When sending an email, include your camper's name and camp name in the subject line. Email can be sent to: campers@holmescamp.org

Bible Study and Worship

We enthusiastically welcome children of all faith backgrounds, as well as those with no previous experience in a faith-based setting. As a ministry of the Presbyteries of Hudson River, New York City and Long Island, Holmes Camp & Retreat Center is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA). We value this relationship and it shapes many aspects of our program. Our goal is to create a safe place where children and youth can think about, explore and talk about faith-related issues. Our curriculum is carefully selected to ensure that the material is theologically sound and age-appropriate. Often, particular lessons are adapted to fit the unique program and facility resources found here at Holmes. Questions and doubts are encouraged!

The curriculum selected for this summer is titled Peace Works. Peace Works was written by camp professionals for camp professionals. The daily themes are designed to help campers think about peace and peacemaking from a different perspective. Daily themes include *aloha* for hospitality, *Ubuntu* for connectivity, *heiwa* for self-awareness, and *sí se puede* to remind us that peace pushes us to change, grow, and unite.

Living in an Outdoor Setting

One of our program goals is that campers will "form an interest in exploring and enjoying the natural environment." Whether it's a nature hike or cooking their own meal over a fire, there are numerous opportunities to accomplish this goal. The camp lifestyle involves exploration, self-expression, discussion and celebration. Realizing that spending a lot of time in the outdoors is easier for some than others, we work hard to help campers with this transition. Ensuring your camper is prepared to spend the great majority of time outside, rain or shine, can help us with this goal. Using the "What to Bring to Camp" list, you can set your camper up for success by making sure they have appropriate clothing for whatever the weather brings.

The outdoor setting and goals of our program are also why we ask your child to leave electronics like cell phones and e-readers at home. We know that adjusting to life without these devices can be challenging for many campers. However, besides the reality that electronics tend to not fare well in a camp setting, our experience is that not having them around helps the community form, and ensures that campers interact on a deeper level with each other. Please help us with this policy by making sure your camper leaves electronics at home.

The reality of being on 550 acres of forests, streams and lakes means that we are likely to encounter some animal life. Campers watching beavers at Westminster Lake in the evening or finding red-spotted newts on the trails. After dark, it's not uncommon to hear owls hoot in the treetops or watch bats fly in the night sky. We are also aware that we share this land with some less popular creatures, like mosquitos, spiders, snakes, ticks, and mice. As stewards of God's natural world, we strive to be good neighbors with all of these creatures and train our staff on how to avoid unpleasant encounters with these animals, and just as importantly, what to do when they happen despite our best efforts. You can help your camper prepare by packing non-aerosol bug spray and encouraging them to respect all of God's creation. You can help us keep animals out of cabins, tents and other buildings where they don't belong by making sure your child leaves any food, candy or snacks at home and not sending any food, candy or snacks in care packages.

Day Camp

Day Campers have access to cubbies in the Lodge at Westminster Lake, where they may leave a change of clothes during the week; make sure to label all of your camper's things, particularly anything you choose to leave during the week! If your camper loses something, it may turn up in Lost and Found, so make sure to check Lost and Found! Unclaimed items are disposed of or donated to charity on October 1st.



Check-In and Check-Out times are set up for the benefit and safety of your camper and the camper group. If for some reason there is a need to adjust these times for an appointment or emergency, please provide this information in writing at check-in or contact the camp office. If you are dropping off your camper late or picking up your camper early, please stop at the office so we can connect your camper with their family group or escort your camper to you.

Early arrival for day camp is available as early as 7:30 am and includes breakfast; late pick up until 7:00 pm and including dinner is also available. Each is \$10 a day, or \$20 a day for both. Early arrival campers will be dropped off at Robinson for breakfast, and late pick up will be arranged at Check-In the first day of your session.

Small Group Camping at Holmes

At Holmes, we focus on building community and the give and take that goes along with it. To that end, the small group is at the core of our program. Campers and counselors join together to create family groups, which are typically composed of 5-10 campers and 2 counselors. With this group, campers participate in activities together, eat meals together and live near each other. We find this model allows campers to form meaningful friendships and counselors to get to know their campers better, creating a genuine sense of a close-knit community. Within the group, each person has the opportunity to find their role and to contribute to the well-being of the whole group. Campers learn to recognize and appreciate the uniqueness and inherent value of each individual in the group!

Although there are family groups, there will also be choice time for our campers. This is when we will allow campers to choose activities based on their interests. We believe including children and youth in this process helps build competence and confidence. There is still a general schedule designed to give campers a well-rounded camp experience, while still allowing them to explore their areas of interest. Below are some sample schedules to give you a sense of what a day might look like.

Campers are encouraged to participate enthusiastically and to the best of their ability in all aspect of camp life, even if the activity or decision made by the group is not their favorite. No camper will be forced to participate in activity they don't want to, or are not comfortable with. We call this "Challenge by Choice."

Sample Daily Schedule

Sample Day Camp Schedule		Sample Overnight Schedule		Sample Night Owl Schedule	
9:00 am	Check-In	8:15 am	Breakfast	12:30 pm	First Meal
9:15 am	Daily Congregation	9:15 am	Daily Congregation	1:30 pm	Daily Congregation
10:15 am	Breakout Activity	11:15 am	Breakout Activity	2:30 pm	Breakout Activity
11:15 am	Arts and Crafts	12:30 pm	Lunch	4:00 pm	Swimming
12:30 pm	Lunch	1:30 pm	F.O.B. (rest)	6:00 pm	Second Meal
1:30 pm	Bouldering Wall	2:30 pm	Choice Time	7:00 pm	Choice Time
2:30 pm	Swimming	4:00 pm	Archery	8:10 pm	F.O.B. (rest)
4:00 pm	Music/Drama	6:00 pm	Dinner	9:00 pm	Archery
5:00 pm	Check-Out	7:00 pm	Water Games	10:00 pm	Cookout Dinner and Night Hike
		8:15 pm	Vespers	12:30 am	Night Games!
		9:00 pm	Bedtime Prep & Cabin Devotions	2:00 am	Vespers
		9:45 pm	Lights Out!	3:00 am	Lights Out!



Helpful Tips for Parents

Homesickness is something that can occur with any age camper, at any time!

Homesickness is the distress caused by actual or anticipated separation from home or beloved objects or people. During their time at camp, many campers will experience some kind of feelings related to this separation. Even our counselors and staff experience these feelings sometimes! The good news is that most campers overcome this distress and have a wonderful time at summer camp and Holmes counselors and staff are well-trained to respond to homesick campers.

There are a number of ways parents/guardians can help prevent homesickness:

- Talk honestly about your expectations for your camper and of camp before camp starts. Help your camper set realistic goals for things that they want to learn or ways that they want to grow while at camp.
- Help your camper think about all the fun to be had. Talk about meeting new people and how much is learned from making new friends. Help your camper to remember how they have made new friends in similar situations in the past.
- Talk about the length of their stay at camp in perspective to other positive overnight experiences they have had (for example, spending a few nights with family, a vacation far from home, etc.).
- Visit the Holmes website and Facebook page to look at pictures and videos. Share information from this Welcome Packet, particularly regarding what to expect while at Holmes. Talk through probable changes to bedtime and morning routines; most of us don't share a room and bathroom with 5 – 8 other people! If they have questions that you can't find an answer for, call us at the Camp Office!
- Suggest keeping a journal while they are at Holmes; keeping track of all they have done can help campers focus on their experiences at Holmes and not focusing on what they might be missing back home.
- Consider packing a personal item from home, such as a stuffed animal. Remember that things often get dirty and sometimes lost at camp, so be careful when sending your camper with some valuable, even if sentimentally valuable.
- Share with them that you are interested in all that they will learn and experience while at Holmes, and look forward to hear about everything when you pick them up at the end of their session!

If a camper does get homesick, our staff will work in a caring manner with them to help them get through it. Assure your camper that if they feel homesick, they should talk to their counselor about how they are feeling. Please do not promise or tell your child they can call home whenever they wish, as campers do not have access to the phone. If homesickness persists for more than 24 hours, we will call you (the parent/guardian) and discuss the situation. Together, we may decide that talking with a parent is the best course of action. If either you or the camp decides that it is best for your camper to leave camp early, we will affirm the camper for what they have already accomplished. Please note there are no refunds should a camper be released early.

Packing Tips

Packing with your child is a great opportunity to build excitement about camp! It also allows you to talk about anxieties or concerns your camper may have about their camp experience. Plus, you can make sure they pack everything that they need to bring and leave at home the stuff that should stay at home.

Pack everything in something that you can carry a short distance, from the parking lot to the Luggage drop-off area. We will transport all luggage to the cabins or tents for you. Storage space in cabins and tents is limited. Soft-sided luggage, like a duffel bag or back-pack that can easily be stuffed under beds or in small spaces is ideal.

Be sure to label your camper's luggage, as well as everything that they bring with them. If your camper loses something, it may turn up in Lost and Found. Make sure to check Lost and Found when you pick up your camper! Unclaimed items are disposed of or donated to charity on October 1st.

Pack clothing that is comfortable in hot summer weather, suitable for active outdoor play and has the potential to get dirty or wet. Old, well-worn clothes and shoes are optimal. Campers should not pack suggestive or revealing outfits nor articles of clothing that promote alcohol, tobacco, drug use, sexual behavior or contains inappropriate language. Campers are active at the waterfront, be sure to consider this when picking swim wear-worrying about swimsuits hinders the fun and games! Campers may also wear T-shirts over their swimsuits if they would feel more comfortable doing so.



Things You Can Do To Help Your Camper Succeed At Camp

Discuss the camp's policies with your camper beforehand. Make sure they both understand and are able to honor them.

Talk with your camper about their concerns and what they are looking forward to. Acknowledge their concerns positively. Let them know that you understand that they are anxious, unsure or nervous and that it is okay to feel that way! Resist the temptation to rescue your camper from homesickness. Acknowledge in a positive way that you will miss your camper and you are confident that they will be able to complete the camp session.

Share your own positive experiences at summer camp and what you hope they will get to experience while at Holmes. Don't be afraid to talk about anxieties you may have had from a similar experience when you were their age, but make sure to highlight all the positive things that came from your experience.

Let your camper know that the camp staff are here to help them. Make sure they understand that if they have a problem, they should let their counselor know.

Prepare your camper for spending time away from home at camp. Visit the Holmes website and Facebook page with your child and look at pictures. Encourage your camper to ask questions about camp. Practice being away from home overnight by having a sleepout in the backyard or at a friend's house. Talk about the length of their stay at camp in perspective to other positive overnight experiences they have had (for example, spending a few night with family or a vacation far from home).

Avoid These Things

Avoid making deals or using bribes. For example, avoid saying "If you don't like it, Mommy will come pick you up" or "If you stay at camp, Daddy will get you a new bike when you come home."

Avoid statements or actions that conflict with camp policies. Avoid saying things like "If you get homesick, you can call me," when camp has a policy that does not permit campers to call home, or allowing your camper to pack a digital music player, e-reader or cell phone when the packing list says to leave it at home.

Avoid keeping helpful information from camp staff about your child. For example, not letting staff know that your camper is prone to bedwetting or is anxious during thunderstorms is counterproductive. By providing our staff with as much information as possible, you help us help your camper! Having information ahead of time saves us from having to "troubleshoot" a puzzling situation in search of a solution; instead we can be proactive.

Avoid taking your child off of prescription medications for their week of camp. Camp is a less structured environment than your child may be used to at school. Children are more active and stay up later at camp. If your child requires medication while at home under normal circumstances, it is beneficial to talk with their doctor about remaining on those.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the camp!

Call the office at 845-878-6383 or Email at holmes@holmescamp.org