Dear Camp Courage/Camp Erin – St. Louis Applicant,

Thank you so much for your interest in volunteering for the grieving kids of Camp Courage and/or Camp Erin – St. Louis. Being a part of creating this safe, fun, welcoming week for kids who are deeply in pain will probably be like nothing you have ever experienced. You will laugh at your goofiness on the main stage, play hard at sports and challenge courses, create in arts ‘n crafts right alongside the campers, tear up as they share their stories, and witness some of the most profound examples of resilience. You will have a fun, energetic, exhausting time where you will witness newfound friendships and incredible courage. The kids you meet will inspire, teach, and most of all, love you. They are aware of the time and energy it takes for you to join them at camp. You will feel their appreciation through a sparkling smile that lights up your day, a warm embrace tinged with tears, a handmade gift created only for you, or a shared story never told. Undoubtedly, you will not leave camp the same person you were when you arrived; you will be an enriched person knowing that you made a difference in the life of a child who needed you the most.

Camp Courage and Camp Erin are each a four night/five day overnight experience for kids ages 6-18 who are surviving the death of someone significant. The cause of death varies from long term illness, short term illness, suicide, murder, and accidents. The length of time since the death varies as well. Some campers arrive not knowing anyone else while some attend with their siblings. The campers represent families of lower socioeconomic means, as well as middle class families. The common thread that runs through each of them is the death of someone they love.

A week in a camp environment as a cabin counselor or arts and crafts volunteer is hard work. However, you will most definitely return home feeling more energized than when you left. Your time at this camp will not be filled with sadness, depression, and tears but instead by laughter, hope and newly discovered friends. Your mere presence conveys a message to the campers of acceptance and encouragement. That in itself will foster a new understanding that the campers are not alone in their grief, that their grief is OK and survivable, and that there is hope in tomorrow. That is the magic of making a difference in the life of a child who needs your care and support.

Camp Courage serves campers who will be 6-11 years of age. The dates for Camp Courage…Cruisin’ on the Seven Seas! counselors are Saturday, June 3rd at 9 AM – Friday, June 9th at 4 PM, after the campers leave. The campers will arrive Monday, June 5th and leave Friday, June 9th.

Camp Erin serves campers who will be 12-18 years of age. The dates for Camp Erin…Cruisin’ on the Seven Seas! counselors are Saturday, June 10th at 9 AM – Friday, June 16th at 4 PM, after the campers leave and the supply truck is loaded. The campers will arrive Monday, June 12th and leave Friday, June 16th. If you are applying for both camps, the dates for you will be Saturday, June 3rd – Friday, June 16th.

Both camps will be held at Camp Wartburg in Waterloo, IL. It is located across the Jefferson Barracks Bridge into IL. From the Kirkwood area, it takes about 40 minutes to get there.

The greatest need is for cabin counselors, yet we definitely need arts and crafts volunteers and nurses. Cabin Counselors are assigned a cabin of campers along with three to four other counselors. They are responsible for those campers 24 hours a day for five days. The counselors accompany the campers to every activity and event. The ratio of Cabin Counselor to camper is 1:3 or 4.
Arts and Crafts volunteers are assigned to the arts and crafts area. There will be 3-4 volunteers in arts and crafts. All the volunteers will work together to plan, host and organize arts and crafts activities, and should communicate with the Camp Directors regarding supplies needed. When arts and crafts is “closed” in the evenings, the volunteers will assist cabin counselors. One major difference between the cabin counselor role and the arts and crafts role is the type of relationship you will probably experience with the campers. Cabin counselors will get to know 9-12 campers very well while arts and crafts volunteers will meet almost all the campers but probably not get to know them quite as well.

The camp nurse will administer meds, bandage scrapes and cuts, and provide tender loving care when a camper simply needs a hug. The nurse may volunteer for one week, both weeks, part of one week, or part of both weeks.

After your application is reviewed, you will be contacted to schedule an interview with Annie’s Hope staff. You will be notified about acceptance after the interview. If you are accepted, you will be sent an electronic copy of the training manual before camp starts. You will be given a hard copy training manual when you arrive at camp.

Prior to camp beginning, there will be a pre-camp party for potential campers and volunteers to attend. This will give you an opportunity to meet some of the campers and fellow volunteers. Plus, the parents/guardians of the kids are often anxious about sending their children to an overnight camp with “strangers”. Meeting you will greatly alleviate some of their fears.

Please know how grateful we, and the campers, are for your interest in helping kids in a time of need. Call for any further information.

Peace,
Becky Byrne, Executive Director & Camp Director
Camp Photo Gallery

“When I’m at Camp, I get to meet other kids who have had someone die”

At camp “we let our feelings flow”.

“Going to the support sessions helps me to remember the good things”

“I have never been to a camp like this before”