

■ by Linda Graham

Adapting to Changing Times


Happy New Year 2022! A year of great unknowns is ahead as we enter into planning for camp in a world that was changed by COVID-19. We're all tasked with developing strategies for our camp and conference ministries. Yesterday's handbooks will all be updated. Increasing house-keeping staff will be a standard. Cleaning will become a higher camp priority than it was ever

before. We're prioritizing the health of our guests and staff, such as having their temperatures checked each morning and our medical staff will be trained for detection and prepared for quarantine measures. Yes, a new era in hospitality is upon us.

And while we're welcoming guests this winter and spring, we know summer 2022 is coming! With these challenges, they also bring great opportunities to serve our guests. What are some of the new ways that human resources will structure our team environment? Here are a few ways our team will continue to adapt to the changing times:

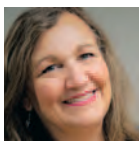
1. Extending orientation.

We've decided to lengthen orientation for our summer staff, knowing greater training will be required than in previous years. We will include education about the virus and the steps we will actively take to prevent its spread on our property. Something I've learned, especially since last summer, is the value of front-loading information for the staff. By giving them the background for decisions, we're providing transparency and building trust so when certain situations take place, staff will have a deeper understanding of our camp's protocols.



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Photo courtesy of Mount Hermon (2021)



Linda Graham's first experience with Christian camping was as a junior high girls' counselor. She began her camping career at Hume Lake Christian Camps (Hume, California) and later moved to Camp Siloam (Siloam Springs, Arkansas), serving in a variety of roles. She also previously served in a corporate setting as a human resources director, and now works with an amazing team at Eagle Sky of the Ozarks (Piedmont, Missouri).

Critical steps we're taking for summer 2022

2. Setting expectations.

How do you take an environment that's so used to big hugs and high fives and ask for staff to maintain distance, but not live in fear? For us, we've tried to set expectations upfront and promote safety for staff and guests. We will give health screenings to all our volunteers and learn new procedures while keeping a flexible mindset as to learning new techniques and strategies in preventing the spread of germs.

3. Focusing on the vision.

The virus has changed us, but we won't forget it has not changed the mission and vision or who we are. We have the opportunity to continue the legacy that was started at the ministries where we serve. Be encouraged! The staff will be ready to share the good news! They will overcome the hardships that are before them because they know the great reward of changed lives during guests' experiences. Camp will still be fun, the food delicious, and the chapels will set souls on fire for the gospel. Campfires will still be ablaze, and morning sunrise hikes will remind us of how great our God is.



Our world is adapting to new measures, which means that our staff will already be accustomed to these procedures. Your program teams are actively creating new games that are more in line with the new mandates. God has allowed to us to be in the position to host guests to share the gospel. This summer we will be positioned to adjust the facilitation of our camp programs, knowing that the Lord will be right there with us, guiding and leading us along the way. ■

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