Dear Summer Search Families,

Greetings from all of us at Sierra Nevada Journeys! We’re thrilled that your teen is going to 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 has been developed to help participants and families get ready for their camping experience. You’re going to 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, please feel free to call us at 530-832-1085. Accompanying this handbook is a number of documents to be returned so that your child’s enrollment is officially complete.

Please complete and submit the following documents to us no later than April 25, 2021:

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 Petaluma) on the following dates, depending on which session you signed up to attend:

- **Session 1:** Sunday, June 20, 2021, by 10:00 a.m. PDT
- **Session 2:** Wednesday, July 7, 2021, by 10:00 a.m. PDT
- **Session 3:** Saturday, July 24, 2021, by 10:00 a.m. PDT

Participants should arrive with a brown bag lunch and bring everything listed on the packing list; Sierra Nevada Journeys will be transporting participants from Oakland/Petaluma up to our Grizzly Creek Ranch camp in Portola, California.

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

- **Session 1:** Sunday, July 4, 2021, between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. PDT
- **Session 2:** Wednesday, July 21, 2021, between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. PDT
- **Session 3:** Saturday, August 7, 2021, between 10:00am and 11:00 a.m. PDT

**Important Transportation:** If there are separate arrangements from the logistics arranged by Sierra Nevada Journeys and Summer Search, we ask that you inform us of these situations in writing, before the start of the program. It is important to us that all participants are safe and accounted for at all times.

**Transportation to our Campus 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 they are placed in an environment in which they are comfortable to be themselves, try new things, gain new skills and confidences. 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 that takes place 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 which will serve as 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 at camp, the group would be driven to the trailhead where we will travel and camp for throughout the session with two Sierra Nevada Journeys instructors. The final night of the excursion will be back at Grizzly Creek Ranch for a debrief, reflection, and retuning the gear at base camp.
Our program focuses on both the participants’ experience and the transferability of that experience back to their life back home. Students develop critical thinking skills, independence, an understanding of the value of teamwork and a sense of stewardship for both their environment and their 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 to one another. Our actions can have positive and negative effects on both our local and global natural communities. We have the responsibility to make thoughtful and sustainable decisions.

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

**Leadership:** Many projects and initiatives in life cannot be completed alone. Leadership, communication and collaborative problem-solving skills are crucial to self-improvement and positive change both individually and within the group-setting. Students learn that with the right mind-set and work ethic they can be tomorrow’s leaders.

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**Behavior Expectations**

The primary mission of Sierra Nevada Journeys is to provide an environment in which youth are comfortable being themselves, trying new things, developing confidence and making new friends. To set this tone, campers and staff establish a “Full Value Contract” shortly after everyone has settled in. The most important thing that 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.

In order to ensure a positive experience for your teen and the rest of the camp participants, it is essential that all campers obey the following “non-negotiable” rules:

- Participants will not undertake any actions that involve danger to one’s self, another camper, 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 and may result in immediate separation or dismissal without refund of tuition. Please discuss the “Full Value Contract” and these “non-negotiable” rules with your teen prior to arrival.

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

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**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, let your teen know it is normal, but try not to dwell on it. Focus on the great opportunities they will have 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 on and not on the experiences they will have.

Even though we do not allow phone calls home, 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 many times parents 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. We will contact you if a behavioral, medical, or other issue arises. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions over the course of the week or would like to check in. For non-emergency phone calls, please call 530-832-1085 between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., 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:** In order to ensure a positive experience for your teen and the rest of the participants, it’s essential that all participants 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 and all medications must be kept and dispensed by qualified Sierra Nevada Journeys health member. Participants will not leave the program without permission at any time. Violations of these important rules will be dealt with firmly and decisively and may result in immediate separation or dismissal without refund of tuition. Please discuss these non-negotiable rules with your teen prior to arrival to Sierra Nevada Journeys. If dismissal is necessary it’s the parent’s responsibility to make arrangements for their child to be picked up.
Gear Packing List: Please see supply list provided by Summer Search [here](#).

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 re-supply or when the 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 Backcountry Leadership
5900 Grizzly Road
Portola, CA 96122
Attention: Your child’s name here

Our contact number at camp is 530-832-1085 and our e-mail 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 star-gazing; orienteering; team-building challenges; bird watching; 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 life guard 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 prior to 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 health care, 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 on 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 that are 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. Please put all medication bottles to be used during camp in a clear 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 their own coverage for any illness, accident, or dental occurrence that requires medical intervention.

**Camp Health Center:** We have an on-site health center that is 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 Logo’d Gear**
Would you be interested in purchasing a Sierra Nevada Journeys’ sweatshirt for $28 or a hat for $10?
Please circle below:  
Yes  No

- Sweatshirt (adult size)  S  M  L  XL  XXL  Ball cap, 1 color Blue, 1 size
- T-shirt (adult size)  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