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Chasing Summer

[www.ChasingSummer.org](http://www.ChasingSummer.org)  
734-657-0057  
[info@chasingsummer.org](mailto:info@chasingsummer.org)

## **The Camp Tall Tree Experience: Integrating Campers with Autism into Recreation Programming**

**August 19<sup>th</sup> – August 27<sup>th</sup> 2017** (tentative – to be confirmed by 11/15/16)  
4 – 8 day experiences are available

The **Camp Tall Tree Experience** is an immersive training program, focused on integrating children with autism into typical recreation programs and/or creating autism-specific programs. We customize your experience to fit your organization.

- You choose the length (4-8 days)
- Expert training
- Facilitated breakout meetings with peers
- Ongoing debriefing after workshops
- Journal assignments
- In-cabin experience with break-out sessions and debriefing
- Experience all three programs (main camp, siblings & explorers)
- Shadow directors in challenging scenarios
- Facilitated program planning for your specific organization
- Includes all published books from our Materials & Resources library
- Includes 3 post-summer follow-up meetings to track your progress

This 4-8 day experience starts with two days of front-line staff training. Facilitated by Chasing Summer's expert professional staff, you will be led through relevant parts of our staff training with additional break-out meetings, debriefing and review periods. We also facilitate journaling time, and brainstorming sessions about your specific program and staff training at your organization. As Camp Tall Tree transitions into the camper week, you will be placed in a cabin and program area to put your training into practice. Experiencing all three Camp Tall Tree programs (Main Camp, Explorers, and Siblings), you will have time to review and reflect on the training and experience with several daily break-out meetings and brainstorming sessions. Finally, at the end of your Camp Tall Tree time, you will be led through a debrief session with the objective of creating and implementing the programmatic goals for your organization and your professional development goals in the field.

This experience includes all of the published books from our Materials & Resources library and at least three post-summer follow-up meetings to track your progress towards the growth and development of your programs.



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#### Learning Objectives:

- Participants will receive direct training on the best practices of integrating children with autism into recreation programs.
- Participants will receive hands-on experience with staff training & development, program introduction, program facilitation & delivery, one-on-one supervision, creating real-time accommodations, using specific behavior management techniques, supervision of frontline staff, and creating accessible and modified instruction.
- Participants will have an opportunity to dissect their recreation programs: camper application and acceptance procedures, staff recruitment and training, program design and accessibility, and creating reasonable accommodations.
- Participants will go through a series of debrief sessions, journaling, and brainstorm sessions designed to reflect and process in real-time the lessons learned and spur development of their home programs.
- Participants will have several opportunities for open discussion and brainstorming about potential challenges and obstacles to creating more access in their program, facilities, and organization.
- Participants will have 3-10 hours of follow-up consultation, based on the program calendar of their programs, which may include consulting on: participant applications & process, talking with families about fit, recruiting and training frontline staff, program design, program implementation, etc.

#### Curriculum Outline (8 day experience):

##### **Prerequisite prep work**

In order to get the most out of this experience, we ask that you prepare some materials and do a little reading. Please prepare the following tasks prior to your arrival at Tall Tree.

##### Home program information and materials:

- Written break-down of organization and program offerings – including the organization’s mission & vision and their goals for inclusion
- A written copy of policies and procedures for including children with disabilities into current program offerings (if you don’t have a policy like this, we will help you write one at camp)
- A written copy of staff training schedules and curriculum, including.
  - Initial hire training outline
  - List of ongoing or in-service trainings
  - List of mandatory organization trainings



- A list of certifications of employees
- An idea of pilot program or programs where inclusion will be implemented

#### Required reading

- The Chasing Summer Autism & Recreation Programs Manual
- Loud Hands, autistic people speaking (Julia Bascom)
- A Field Guide to Earthlings: An autistic/Asperger view of neurotypical behavior(Ian Ford)

#### Videos

- Sylvia's EOT video (Autistic Spectrum Disorders)

### **Staff Training**

Camp Tall Tree runs a two-day staff training prior to campers' arrival. The training is broken down (for these purposes) into autism and non-autism related content. The list below is the autism specific curriculum. The next section is the breakout opportunities that every participant will experience throughout training. A schedule of the actual training experience will be provided with other registration material.

### **Autism specific training content**

#### **Introduction to autism & recreation programming**

- Philosophy
  - The difference between offering autism specific behavior management or therapy, and creating an accessible recreation program for child on the spectrum.
  - How creating accommodations in recreation program supports the organizations mission and vision.
  - The power of acceptance and diversity for all children and families involved in the organization.
  - Bridging best practices for children on the spectrum with techniques and skills associated with typically developing children.
- Definition & framework
  - Diagnosis versus behavior based observation
  - Understanding children on the spectrum using metrics and observable behavior based on communication & anxiety
  - Defining a "successful experience" in your organization and recreation program



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## **Best practices for integrating children on the spectrum into recreation programs: Skill introduction and facilitation techniques**

- Schedules
  - Using different types of schedules – visual, writing, verbal
  - Redirecting to the schedule, time intervals, creative schedule management
- Supported transitions
  - Understanding transition anxiety
  - Using timers, warnings, and review or preview strategies
  - Creative transition ideas: games, competition, timing
- Clear & defined choices
  - Fostering a sense of power and control
  - Creating choice within structure or unstructured activities
  - Offering real choices
- Writing vs talking
  - Literal thinking and how you speak
  - Verbal processing time
  - Writing instructions and directions
- Redirection
  - Understanding redirection as a behavior management technique
  - Components of redirection: awareness of behavior, ability to get attention or focus, ideas for motivating or rewarding activities
- Creating visuals
  - Understanding the visual nature of literal thinking
  - Breaking down tasks, instructions, or directions into small steps
  - Creating a system for using visuals
  - Creating & using social stories
- Time & space (meltdowns)
  - Understanding the need for additional time and space, when children need a break or are having a hard time
  - Maintaining the integrity of a program or activity by using breaks
  - Supervision strategies when someone needs to take a break or have extra processing time
- Sensory experiences
  - Understanding a heightened sensory experience
  - Creating sensory experiences in typical activities
  - Using sensory experiences as a motivating activity



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### **Classic challenges and proven strategies**

- Inappropriate self-touch
  - Introduction to the wide variety of inappropriate touch
  - Understanding the developmental underpinnings of inappropriate touch
  - Using the skills and best practices to prevent, redirect, and/or correct inappropriate touch behaviors
  - Case study review and discussion
- “Stimming”: running, flapping, verbalizations
  - Introduction to the wide variety of stimming behaviors
  - Understanding stimming behaviors: what they do for the individual, why society has labeled some inappropriate, and what to and what not to correct
  - Using the skills and best practices to ignore, prevent, redirect, and/or correct stimming behaviors
  - Case study review and discussion
- Anxiety related aggression
  - Introduction to the wide variety of anxiety related aggression
  - Aggression as a form of communication – what does the behavior, environment, and triggers tell you
  - Using the skills and best practices to prevent, redirect, and/or correct anxiety related aggression
  - Case study review and discussion

### **Questions & Answers – facilitated discussion**

- Open forum for questions
- Facilitated activity to get embarrassing questions and engaging shy participants



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### **The Meltdown Carnival**

This is a facilitated, experiential activity that will give all participants an opportunity to work through a behavior scenario using the skills and best practices they learned in the training. After the carnival, there will be a facilitated debrief of the experience and how skills and techniques look in real time.

Sample situations:

- Inappropriate touching
- Perceived put-downs or bullying
- Socially awkward interactions
- Stim running
- Inability to sit and listen to directions
- Aggressive meltdown
- Rigid thinking and expectations

Sample debrief topics:

- What worked and what didn't – combining ideas and techniques in real time
- Reading and understanding the individual child's behavior
- Staying calm and involved
- Structure, routine, schedules, and boundaries
- Distraction and redirection
- Praise and positive attention
- Silence, time, and space
- Directions, instructions, and expectations

### **Breakout sessions**

Throughout training, every participant will experience facilitated breakout sessions, review & processing sessions, journaling time, and program and/or organization brainstorm sessions. Below is a sample of these guided experiences. Due to the nature of group oriented training and development, there may be other topics or ideas included.

#### **Breakout sessions**

- How do these techniques and ideas support access in your program?
  - What are the potential challenges to training your frontline staff?
  - What are the potential challenges to your program, facility, human resources, etc.?
- How your beliefs guide your actions
  - Creating choice for children
  - Behavior management and redirection



- Highlighting and defending inclusion programming to: parents, colleagues, and other constituents
- Weird but not wrong – The reality of inclusion and training frontline staff what to look for and what to disregard

### **Review & Processing**

- What stands out to you? Name three things you learned or think about differently now.
- How can you include these ideas into training for working with typical campers?
- What accommodations can you make immediately?

### **Journaling** (sample questions)

- What has been the most powerful idea to you during training?
- Name three ideas, techniques, or strategies that have given you pause or created instant nay-saying. Why? What could you do about it?
- Write a “for” and “against” argument for doing more inclusionary programming in your organization.
- What are three things you can do immediately when you get back to your program?
- What are some techniques or ideas you will use in your staff training regardless of inclusionary programming?

**Program and/or Organization brainstorm sessions** – these sessions will be built on the material each participant brings, issues and concerns specific to individual programs, organizations, facilities, etc., and topics inspired by the training. Sample questions, forums, and discussions include:

- Staff training
- Working with your current facilities
- Participant screening
- Organization or personnel challenges to inclusion
- Getting buy-kin from frontline staff, colleagues, and supervisors

### **Camp Tall Tree camper session**

During the camper session there will be five main experiences (participants actual schedule will be sent prior to camp):

1. Cabin placement
2. Program area planning, instruction, & management
3. Shadowing during meltdowns, “behavior” situations, and other interesting experiences



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4. Shadowing a Director
5. Out-of-program debriefing, reviewing, processing, and brainstorm sessions

### **Cabin placement**

Each participant will be placed in a cabin or group in all three of the Camp Tall Tree programs (Main Camp, Explorers, and Siblings). As a fully participating member of the counseling team in the cabin or group, each participant will experience the details of daily living, programming, and the training techniques and strategies in real-time.

### **Program area planning, instruction, and management**

Each participant will practice creating pre-program visuals and written instructions, introducing activities, active instruction and facilitation, and ongoing group and individual management during program time. (All activities will be low risk, non-certified activities)

### **Shadowing during meltdowns, “behavior” situations, and other interesting experiences**

Everyday there are many behavior situations that are uncommon at typically recreation programs. These are the moments where most people learn the most. Each participant will be given a radio and will be called to shadow during one of these experiences. There will always be a highly trained, veteran Camp Tall Tree staff member leading the interaction with the camper or campers and providing appropriate opportunities to “practice” concepts or techniques to the participants.

### **Shadowing a Director**

Like most recreation programs, the Directors at Camp Tall Tree are the behind-the-scenes actors that provide support and resources to the frontline staff. This experience will highlight the different and nuanced support and resources that inclusionary programming demands. This experience may include: helping to establish different rules or guidelines for a specific camper, creating visuals for a specific situation, brainstorming potential solutions for specific behaviors, de-escalating staff members after a particularly intense situation, and maintaining the normal program schedule.

### **Out-of-program debriefing, reviewing, processing, and brainstorm sessions**

During each program day, the participant group will meet with the Executive Directors of Chasing Summer for debriefing sessions. The content of these sessions will be based on the groups experiences. Below are examples of ideas that may be covered.





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#### Debriefing

- What happened this morning/afternoon/evening? Why? How would that have looked different in your program/organization?
- What did you learn today? What expectation did you have that was proven or disproven?
- What was surprising to you?

#### Reviewing

- What was the transition from wake-up to breakfast like in your cabin?
- When preparing for your program, what did you miss? What did you do well?
- What did you notice when you were shadowing a director that surprised you? What was very familiar?
- What stood out to you about shadowing during the meltdown?

#### Processing

- What have you learned about your own leadership?
- What is making you uncomfortable or really stretching you?
- What are you pleasantly surprised about as far as your skills?
- What are three things you noticed someone else doing that you want to emulate? Three things you want to avoid?

#### Brainstorming

- What are you worried about at your program or organization?
- What are the programs/activities you offer? List out the accommodations, visuals, or other techniques you would use to facilitate the activities.
- What training ideas should we/you highlight?
- Creating individual goals for inclusion programming

#### **Post-Camp consultation**

Each participant will have at least three one-hour, follow-up phone or video calls with one of the Chasing Summer staff members. These calls can be used anyway that the participants feel will be useful. If additional calls or consultation is necessary, an extended consultation agreement will be created. Some sample follow-up topics are:

- Presentation and buy-in about the experience and direction of inclusion to home program or organization
- Staff training development
- Creating accommodations



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- Updating program participant application, screening, and communication processes
  - Developing a pilot program
  - Bridging content into home program