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Greetings!

Welcome to the guide with (nearly) all the resources you’ll need to prepare a successful trip to Mountain T.O.P.! We are thrilled that you have decided to follow Jesus to the Cumberland Plateau and serve with us. It is with gratitude that I extend my appreciation for the work you will be investing into this trip and, ultimately, the kingdom of God.

This packet contains a plethora of information, not just about the weekend of service, but about Mountain T.O.P. as a whole. Please take time to prepare yourself—and I’m not simply talking about solidifying your travel plans or payments, although those are important, too! For this reason, we have added a new FAQ section (page 12) and Resources section (page 13) with links to videos and articles about our community and mission. As a partnership ministry, we consider your commitment to being prepared as part of your contribution to the mission. Furthermore, we honor those we are serving when we choose to invest in learning who they are, what their context is, and what assets they bring to the table.

One thing I want to leave you with: I ask that you surround this process with prayer. I encourage you to pray for the hearts of your team members to be transformed by the grace and goodness of Jesus, that you will arrive with teachable hearts and open minds, and that the families of the Cumberland Plateau will be positively impacted by their interactions with Mountain T.O.P.

On behalf of the Mountain T.O.P. staff, I can say that we look forward to having you in camp soon. Whether you are building a new roof or installing windows, the transformation that happens in just a few days is incredible. The Lord is certainly capable of doing even more than we can ask or imagine. We can’t wait for you to experience it for yourself!

Thankful to serve with you,

Rachael Osborn
Senior Program Manager: Ministry Logistics
rachael@mountain-top.org
(931) 692-3999
The Foundations of Mountain T.O.P.

Mission
Through Christian community and faith-based relationships, we help meet the physical, spiritual, social, and emotional needs of all people we encounter. We see all four needs as equally important, and through Adults in Ministry, we meet those needs through Major Home Repair and Fall Festival. We serve in partnership with other agencies, churches, governments, businesses, and community leaders to help develop the communities in which we work.

Mountain T.O.P. (Tennessee Outreach Project) is an interdenominational, non-profit Christian Mission affiliated with the Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church, dedicated to rural life ministry in the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee. Each year we welcome groups that come from Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, non-denominational backgrounds, among others.

Mountain T.O.P.’s 5 Focus Areas
- Eliminating Substandard Housing: to provide direct services and organizational support that addresses severe housing issues in our service area.
- Leadership: to foster growth among staff, participants, donors, and the community.
- Community Development: to engage in solutions with community partners for holistic and sustainable community growth.
- Education: to provide and support opportunities for lifelong learning and personal growth for all ages.
- Health: to promote lifestyles that support healthy choices.

Major Home Repair
In an effort to improve the substandard housing crisis in our community, Mountain T.O.P. dedicates the efforts of our adult volunteers to substantial housing repairs. We routinely address issues of structural integrity, replace shingle roofs with corrugated metal, replace dilapidated siding, renovate interior spaces, and install new windows. We know that improving a family’s housing situation can have significant positive effects on their physical health, social connectedness, and personal wellbeing.

Ministry Production Teams (MPTs)
On Thursday evening, our staff will facilitate the breakdown of teams. Traditionally, our goal is to create teams with a mix of experience, skills, and backgrounds. This both ensures that every project will have the necessary knowledge to complete the tasks and that volunteers are stretched and meet new people. However, in light of COVID-19, our goal is to keep family units and church groups together as much as possible to minimize the risk of spreading the virus. In doing so, we want to minimize volunteers riding in vehicles other than the ones they traveled in.

On any worksite, there is work for every skill level. Because we value meeting the social, emotional, and spiritual needs of the family, we encourage Mountain T.O.P. volunteers to spend time building relationships with the families, from a socially-appropriate distance!
Furthermore, each Ministry Production Team (MPT) has a Point Person. This person is a pre-designated volunteer that serves as a liaison between Mountain T.O.P.’s Service Area Managers and the rest of the team. The Point Person may have specific experience necessary for the particular project or a plethora of Mountain T.O.P. experience that can help the group feel comfortable on the worksite.

**Fall Festival**
What started as a shoe distribution event in 2012 has blossomed into a full community fun event for families. Every year, community partners are invited to offer activities, carnival games, or giveaways for children in the hopes that parents would visit their tables to learn about programs. Mountain T.O.P. is simply the location where we can come together to create an event that meets practical needs in addition to community connectedness. Just like Major Home Repair, the Festival meets all four needs: social, emotional, physical, and spiritual. People pay $1 or give 1 non-expired canned food item per person to enter. Most items given away at the Fall Festival are donated by individuals or churches, locally and within the wider Mountain T.O.P. network. Such items include coats, shoes, socks, winter accessories, and hygiene items.

We will not be hosting a Fall Festival in 2020.

**Programming Philosophy**
We desire to expose our participants to a variety of worship styles because we value the beauty of connecting with the Lord in different ways. Built into our daily schedule are four times to worship, either individually, in a small group, or as a whole community. Each day starts with a group devotional time, led by a member of the camp community, during the day a staff member will lead a small group discussion on-site with the Ministry Production Team (MPT), and each evening ends with a time of sharing and a time of corporate worship. Community singing will be part of worship only when we are able to be outside. We will practice physical distancing during worship and community events. Participants are encouraged to wear a mask.

**Safety**
Mountain T.O.P. is committed to creating a safe environment—physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually—for all involved. Background checks are mandatory and are to be on file either at the church or with Mountain T.O.P. for all participants 18 years old and older. We trust that groups will appropriately screen their adult participants for the safety of the camp community and the families we work with.

Due to COVID-19, we have implemented several physical safety measures, as well. You can read about those specifically in the following pages.
COVID-19 Protocols

Fees, Payments, and Refunds
- Our weekend fee is $225 unless you are a former staff person or first-time participant, and then the fee is $185. There are no payment deadlines at this time; however, a registration is not complete until we have received payment.
- We will offer a 100% refund on any cancellations that are due to Covid-19 related issues.
- All are welcome during Former Staff Reunion Weekends.
- If you need to pay by check, select the “Pay Later” option during checkout. Please contact Rachael (rachael@mountain-top.org) with any questions.

Capacity
- We will have limited space available for Adults In Ministry events in order to maintain one person or family unit per room so that we can maintain physical distance in lodging. Our capacity is 28 people or family units.
- Participants must be 18 years of age or older to participate in Adults In Ministry events.

Programming & Meals
- All participants are required to bring a cloth mask. Mountain T.O.P. will have a supply of masks, hand sanitizer, and gloves to distribute as needed.
- For cooler lunches on the worksite, kitchen staff will make sandwiches ahead of time to reduce the amount of food handling.
- Meals served in camp will be offered by a serving line, a change from our family style dining practice. This is to minimize sharing serving utensils and other types of cross contamination that might come from family style dining. Servers will wear cloth masks and gloves.
- In the dining hall, no more than 6 people will sit at each table for meals.
- Ministry Production Teams will be created keeping family and church groups together as much as possible.
- Community singing as part of worship will take place only when we are able to worship outside.
- We will practice physical distancing during worship and community events.

On the Worksite
- Participants will stay at least 6’ apart from the homeowner and the homeowner’s family.
- If it is not possible for participants to stay at least 6’ apart from each other, cloth masks will be worn.

Cleaning Procedures
- As a camp community, we will be following enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures as outlined by the American Camping Association. All PPE required for cleaning will be provided by Mountain T.O.P.
Medical Procedures and Illness

- We request that all participants limit the social interactions of themselves and their household before traveling to and arriving at camp, to the extent that you are able.
- We request that all participants please monitor yourself for the 48 hours before you come for Covid-19 symptoms.
- Medical Screenings are required on arrival for all participants. These Medical Screenings will be conducted by Support Staff and will include a temperature test and the following questions:
  - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days (Note: does not apply to medical personnel, first responders, or other individuals who encounter COVID-19 as part of their professional or caregiving duties while wearing appropriate PPE)?
  - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
  - Have you had a fever of over 100 degrees in the last 48 hours?
  - Have you had any new loss of taste or smell?
  - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- If the thermometer reads consistently (3 tries with 15 minutes between tests) 100.4°F or greater or yes is answered to any of the above questions, we are requiring the person to physically isolate in a designated place in camp for 24 hours. If there is no change or a worsening of Covid-19 like symptoms, we will assess the situation for further steps based on our Communicable Disease Plan.
Expectations for Participation

Adult Self-Screening Forms
All adults ages 18 and over need to have completed a satisfactory and current (within the last 3 years) background check before they arrive at camp. Background checks can be run by the participant’s church or by Mountain T.O.P. for $10/check. If your background check is on file with your church, your form must have the signature of an on-staff pastor. If you cannot obtain this signature, Mountain T.O.P. will process a background check for you.

Dress Code
The dress code applies to all genders. Shirts are to be worn at all times. Shirts with beer, liquor or other possibly offensive subject matter should not be brought to camp. Additionally, halter or spaghetti-strap tops, bathing suit tops, sports bras, shorts with an inseam less than 4” and jeans with offensive holes are not appropriate and should not be brought to camp.

- Major Home Repair: For safety reasons, participants serving in Major Home Repair are to wear long pants (no leggings or yoga pants), closed-toe and hard-sole shoes and shirts with at least short sleeves during the workday. Scrubs are allowed.

Electronic Devices & Social Media
We discourage the use of electronic devices as they can become a barrier in the spiritual practice of building community; however, participants are encouraged to have a cell phone with them during the day in case of emergencies and to communicate with the camp staff. Devices are not to be used during any programming events. Adults should never interact with youth on social media without the permission of the parents.

Tobacco
The use of tobacco is discouraged and prohibited in some cases due to camp regulations, sensitivity and fire hazards. Anyone under the age of 18 is prohibited from smoking, using, or possessing tobacco in any form—including vaping and electronic cigarettes. Mountain T.O.P. recognizes the need to establish a designated tobacco area for those who use tobacco. This designated area is to be in a private and discreet area of camp. This is due to our desire to discourage the use of tobacco products and the need to not promote the use of tobacco as a social activity or as a part of the community process.

Alcohol & Drugs
Do not bring any alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs to camp. Those who bring such items can be sent home at their personal expense. Sharing of prescription drugs is strictly prohibited. Those who do can be sent home at the participants’ expense.

Fireworks
Do not bring fireworks into camp – these are dangerous items, especially in wooded areas.
Abuse Tolerance
Mountain T.O.P. has a zero tolerance for abuse. It is the responsibility of every participant to act in the best interest of other volunteers and community families at all times. In the event any participant observes any inappropriate behaviors (i.e. policy violations, neglectful supervision, poor role-modeling, “grooming,” etc.) or suspected abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, or virtual) it is the responsibility of each such participant to immediately report their observations to the Mountain T.O.P. staff.

Reporting Suspicious or Inappropriate Behaviors
Mountain T.O.P. is committed to providing a safe, secure environment for all people and intends to create and foster a culture of communication, reporting safety concerns, or policy violations. Any report of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with Mountain T.O.P. policies and state law, to the Department of Children’s Services and/or other appropriate agencies.

The Mountain T.O.P. Staff has overall responsibility for all activities. Therefore, camp directions and expectations given by the staff are to be followed.
Preparation & Packing Checklist

Preparation Checklist

- Register online
- Pay your camper fee by card or check prior to arrival
- Study this Core Guide!
- Seek prayer support from your home faith community.
- Email in Adult Self-Screening form prior to arrival and secure current and satisfactory background check
- Complete the Medical Form & Statement of Release, and bring TWO copies to camp
- Make travel plans that will ensure your arrival at Camp Cumberland Pines by 5:00 pm, Central Time, on the Thursday of your camp weekend.
- Enjoy your time of service!
- Debrief your experience as a mission team or individual back home. Share with your home faith community!

Packing Checklist

- Cloth mask
- Bedding for a twin bed (pillow, sheets or sleeping bag, blanket)
- Toiletries, towels, washcloths, shower shoes
- Enough clothes for the time you are here (no laundry facilities available), including clothing for home repair/painting (long pants, closed-toed shoes are mandatory)
- Jacket, rain coat (the evenings can get cool on the Mountain, especially in the fall)
- Ear plugs (will help a great deal with the potential nightly noise factor)
- Bible, journal
- Any musical instrument you play that you’d like to assist in worship with
- Flashlight
- Bug spray and sunscreen
- Water bottle and travel mug (optional, but very helpful)
- Tools (see list below)

Major Home Repair Tool Requirements

All MHR participants must bring the following tools:

- Hammer
- Carpenter’s pencil
- Nail apron
- Work gloves
- 25’ Tape measure
- Safety glasses
- Utility knife

Additional helpful tools: screwdrivers, pliers, wrenches, chisels, pry bars, wrecking bars, nail puller, framing square, levels, hack saw, chalk lines, circular saw, reciprocating saw, miter saw, table saw, electric drill (& bits), cordless drill (& bits), extension cords, air compressors, hoses, framing nail guns, cordless impact drivers. An email with project descriptions and specific tool requests will be sent prior to the weekend.
Weekend Schedule

Thursday
5:00 pm Registration, including medical screenings
6:00 pm Dinner
Community Orientation
Worship
Field Orientation
Ministry Production Team (MPT) Breakdown & Project Assignments

Friday & Saturday
7:00 am Group Morning Devotional
7:30 am Breakfast
8:00 am MPTs meet & leave for project sites
5:00 pm All MPTs return to camp
6:00 pm Dinner
Sharing
Worship
Fellowship time

Sunday
6:45 am Group Morning Devotional
7:00 am Breakfast
7:30 am Camp evaluation
Clean-up
Closing Circle
8:15 am Departure

The importance of our weekend schedule
Please try to arrive at Camp Cumberland Pines by 5:00 pm, Central Time, on the Thursday of your weekend. The preparation we do on Thursday evening lays the foundation for the rest of the weekend, so it is helpful if all volunteers are present by this time. Further, we start earlier on Sunday morning because we know that some need to get on the road as soon as possible. We appreciate if all participants do stay through Closing Circle on Sunday morning. This is especially helpful in our camp cleaning efforts as we, together, prepare our facilities for future volunteers.
Frequently Asked Questions

What are the sleeping accommodations like?
Participants stay in cabins on site. These two cabins have 10 rooms with either two sets of bunk beds or two twin beds. This year we are limiting our weekend capacity so that there will be only one person or family unit per room. There are bathrooms and a common area in each cabin, along with a refrigerator, coffee station, and beautiful porch to enjoy. Participants are responsible for providing their own bedding and towels.

How are meals provided?
Breakfast and dinner are hot meals provided in our Dining Hall. A cooler lunch will be sent to your work site for you to share with the family you are working with. All meals from Thursday dinner to Sunday breakfast are provided. Our kitchen staff can accommodate dietary needs and allergies. We ask that if you have dietary lifestyle choices that you assist our kitchen staff by providing some of your own food. Please contact Chad for further questions (Chad@mountain-top.org).

I don’t have any construction experience. Is this a good place for me?
Absolutely! This is why we create Ministry Production Teams (MPTs) so those with little to no skill can be taught by those who do. We see that there are four needs that need addressed: physical, social, emotional, and spiritual. While the physical needs will be met through the home repair work, we highly emphasize building relationships with the families. Taking time to get to know the family is important. Additionally, there are always small tasks to help with, including site clean up and safety coordination.

Where exactly am I going, and how do I get there?
The physical address for Camp Cumberland Pines is: 480 Old Hwy 56, Coalmont, TN 37313. We suggest using Google Maps for navigational purposes. You can search “Mountain Top” and it will direct you to the correct place!
Resources

Check out these videos and resources to learn more about our community and ministry:

Mountain T.O.P.’s Official Promo video
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQhGrnErLl4&t=

Beersheba Springs Medical Clinic video
> https://youtu.be/3Qqpe-zeu6A

Mastered in Grundy County: Learn about the state economic and community development board. The people in this video are actual residents and employees. The man in the beginning of the video is our county mayor.
> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHWHkYeMaE4&feature=youtu.be

In March 2019, Grundy County was featured in an online rural news outlet, the Daily Yonder. Read about local efforts to improve our health outcomes.
> https://www.dailyyonder.com/healthy-attitude-leaders-rural-tenn-county-dig-address-disparities/2019/03/19/30922/

Learn more about Grundy County’s health outcomes, provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Spend some time comparing them to your own county!
> https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/tennessee/2019/overview

“How Home Affects Health,” an article from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation about the connection between housing and health.
Debriefing your trip

We encourage all participants to find a way to debrief their trip as a way to bring closure to their experience. Here are a few ways you can approach this:

- Do some personal reflection using the following questions as a starting point:
  > What happened during my weekend that I want to remember?
  > How did you see God while serving at Mountain T.O.P.?
  > How were your preconceptions about housing, health, poverty, or others challenged?
  > How has your definition of courage changed because of your experience?
  > How will you allow yourself to be changed by this experience? What happens next?

- Often times, after we return from a mission experience people ask us “How was it?” Consider what is the one dominant theme that you would like to share about that God taught you. Take some time to form an articulate and concise response so you are ready when people ask. Every time someone asks, you have the chance to reinforce that learning in your own heart.

- During the car ride home and talk with your travelling companions about your individual and shared experiences.
  > How can you form some level of accountability between your group to hold onto these learnings?
  > How can this group that served together continue to meet together?

- Schedule a time to share with your church congregation, Sunday school class, or small group about your experience. (This also serves as a great opportunity to recruit some friends to join you next time!)
Medical Information Form

Last Name ___________________________ First __________________ MI ______

Address _______________________ City _________________ St ____ Zip _______

Phone _________________________ Occupation ___________________________

*Social Security Number _______________________ Date of Birth ________________

Church ____________________________________ Church City, State ___________

Personal Physician ____________________________ Phone ___________________

*Insurance Company ____________________ *Phone ____________________

*Policy # __________ *Insured ID # ___________ *Prescription Card # ________

In case of emergency contact:
Name __________________________________ Relationship __________________
Primary Phone: _______________________ Alternative Phone: __________________

Name __________________________________ Relationship __________________
Primary Phone: _______________________ Alternative Phone: __________________

Medication(s) you cannot take __________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Medication you are currently taking ______________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

These medications are to be administered by (circle one): Self / Staff

Allergies / special health problems or concerns ______________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Do you have a current tetanus shot?  Yes /  No If yes, indicate date _________
If no, we encourage you to get one before you come.

*In lieu of this information, you may provide a copy of the front and back of your medical insurance card. Both pages must be FULLY completed and kept in the vehicle in which you are travelling at all times.
Statement of Activities & Release Form

Mountain T.O.P. is a Christian Service ministry with the people of the Cumberland Mountains in Tennessee. Volunteers participating in the activities of this ministry will be expected to be involved in all activities and to respect the people of the Cumberland Mountains at all times.

Volunteers will participate in (but will not be limited to) home repair projects and working with local youth as need is determined and are within the capability of the volunteer service team. These activities may include the use of hand tools and the handling of materials and supplies. Power tools will only be used if the individual has the necessary skills to appropriately handle the power tool. Participants are never forced or required to engage in any work or activity in which they feel they are not able to participate safely.

Participants understand that photos and videos may be taken during the course of the camp week that may be used by Mountain T.O.P. in the future promotion of our ministries and programs.

Participants are expected to follow all guidelines of participation, philosophies, and expectations set by the organization and camp staff. Examples of unacceptable behavior include sneaking out after lights out, violating the tobacco policy, abuse or harassment, and other Mountain T.O.P. policies, going to places in the area which have been identified by camp staff as dangerous, and being disruptive to the camp life.

We acknowledge that every effort has been made in preparing the participants for this mission experience. We therefore release Mountain T.O.P., Incorporated, its agents, employees, and any and all persons connected therewith from any and all liability, claims, and causes of action of any type whatsoever arising out of or in any way connected with participation in the activities of the Mountain T.O.P., this includes releasing Mountain T.O.P. of any liability connected with COVID-19.

Further, consent/permission is given for (participant) ____________________to be treated by competent medical personnel in the event of an accident or medical emergency and to receive reasonable medical treatment as deemed necessary by a licensed physician.

In the event treatment is called for which a physician and/or other professional health care provider in the hospital/clinic refuses to administer without my consent, we hereby authorize:

MTOP Camp Director (Print full name): ______________________________
to give such consent for us in the event that we are not readily accessible by phone. If in the event it becomes necessary for either of the identified persons to give consent for us, we agree to hold such person free and harmless of any claims, demands, or suits for damages arising from giving such consent. We understand that Mountain T.O.P. requires proof of personal insurance or acknowledgment of financial responsibility for all medical expenses. We agree that our insurance company (if applicable) will be used for all necessary medical expenses and we are aware that we may be billed by the medical provider for any medical expenses not covered by our personal insurance policy and will be responsible for payment of those expenses.

This is the ______ day of ________________, 20 __________.

________________________________________
Signature (Participant)
Adult Self-Screening Form
*Form must be completed and background check administered for ALL participants 18 & older

Camp Weeked Dates ______________________
Church ____________________________________________

Last Name ______________________ First ______________________ MI ______
Address _________________________ City ________________ St ____ Zip _____
Phone _________________________ Email ______________________________

Occupation and Employer ______________________________________________

*Social Security Number ______________________ Date of Birth ______________________

1. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? ______________________
   Yes  ______________________  No

2. Have you ever been convicted or formally accused of any sex related or child abuse offense? ______________________
   Yes  ______________________  No

3. Have you had a background check completed within the past 3 years to verify the responses to the above questions that is on file either with your church or MTOP? ______________________
   Yes  ______________________  No

4. Have you read and understand the contents of the Core Guide packet? ______________________
   Yes  ______________________  No

If you answered YES to questions #1 and/or #2, please fully explain on back of form.
If you answered YES to #3, what was the date of your background check:________________
If you answered NO to question #3, you must have a background check completed before arrival to camp. If your church does not offer this service, Mountain T.O.P. will have one processed. You will need to reimburse Mountain T.O.P. for this cost for $10.

☐ YES, we need Mountain T.O.P. to process a background check for me. *SSN only needed if Mountain T.O.P. is completing background check.

I fully support Mountain T.O.P.’s effort to increase the probability of having a safe environment in our camp week for youth to perform mission work without fear of irresponsible adults who may take advantage of them or put them at risk of being hurt. I certify, to the best of my knowledge, the information that I have provided on this form is true and accurate. I authorize any investigation, including a background check, of any or all statements made on this form.

Signature ________________________________________ Date ____________
Senior Pastor Signature ________________________________________ Date ____________