

TCBC Internship

At the January 2020 board meeting, the internship program was discussed. Questions were raised regarding the following topics. Our responses to these questions are below.

Onsite Supervision

Interns will be responsible to the onsite Intern Directors, Kelly Jo and Ben. During non-work and non-programmed hours, interns are responsible to behave according to the Lifestyle Agreement. Onsite Intern Directors will be available for any needs/emergencies and will regularly check in with interns during off hours. A central calendar will be posted and interns' non-work responsibilities will be listed (college classes, regular volunteer responsibilities, family vacations, etc.). Intern Directors' off-site hours will also be listed on the weekly calendar.

During off hours, interns are not required to ask permission to leave the grounds, but they are required to return to camp at a reasonable hour (as outlined in the Lifestyle Agreement) and to behave responsibly, abiding by the Lifestyle Agreement even while away from camp.

As interns are expected to "self-police" their own behavior, disciplinary action may be taken to address irresponsible behavior or any behavior that violates the lifestyle agreement. This disciplinary action ranges from discussion with the Intern Directors to immediate dismissal. As with the Summer Staff, "write-ups" will be used as a behavioral correction tool. If an intern receives three write-ups, their position may be terminated. However, three write-ups are not required in order for an intern to be terminated, depending on the severity of their irresponsible behavior.

As all interns are at least 18 years of age, supervision will be focused on helping/training interns to behave responsibly rather than on direct supervision during all hours. The focus will be on caring well for oneself, the camp facilities, the intern community, and the ministry and reputation of Trout Creek as a whole.

Exit Strategy

As with any new program, there will be significant growing and redesigning during the first few years. However, should Trout Creek find that an internship program is no longer beneficial to its overall ministry, the program can be terminated at any time. A natural break occurs yearly, bringing on a new class of interns. Should Trout Creek decide to discontinue the program, the program would simply not be renewed and applications for the following year would not be released.

Should the program need to be dissolved mid-year, interns will be given as much notice as possible and, if feasible, be provided continued housing until they are able to make further arrangements.

Employment

TCBC interns will be “hired” as volunteers, similar to summer staff. A monthly honorarium may be provided, but interns will understand that they are hired as volunteers with no guarantee of compensation. As a non-profit, Trout Creek is permitted to hire volunteer interns provided the following conditions are met:

- Interns and the employer each understand that the internship does not qualify for pay. This understanding is established prior to the start of the internship
- Interns do not displace paid employees
- Interns receive training and education similar to what they would receive in an academic setting or vocational school
- Interns receive training that is primarily for their own benefit and growth
- Interns have no expectation of a paid staff position within the organization after the completion of their internship

How long has each camp had an internship program?

This info is listed in the Updated Research Chart for the camps who responded to this question. Among respondents, the range is from 5 years (Heartland Christian Camp) to 14 years (YD Adventures).

Why is there so much variation in compensation between camps?

Some interns are hired as employees (such as at Twin Rocks and SAMBICA). This requires the camp to meet minimum wage requirements. Others are hired as volunteers (such as at CRISTA and Heartland). This allows the camp to provide non-monetary compensation, as well as a small stipend or honorarium. Some camps also increase their pay based on donors to the program and to be more competitive with internships at other camps.

How do interns serve after the internship is over, both in the short term and in the long term?

At Trout Creek: After completion of the program, interns are not guaranteed any kind of further position (paid or unpaid) at Trout Creek. However, they are eligible to apply for open paid positions, and for volunteer summer staff. We hope that many would return throughout the years to serve and support the camp in various capacities whether as summer staff, part-time summer counselors, summer leadership staff, of other kinds of service to the camp.

At Other Ministries: One of primary goals of the internship program is to train, develop, and equip future leaders in camp and other Christian ministry. We hope that many of our interns go on to study and serve in the field of Christian ministry, building up Christ’s Kingdom in a variety of capacities.