

The L.I.F.E. Guard Experience

Philosophy:

Each element of a camp session at Camp Akita, from arrival to goodbyes, is specifically designed to create an atmosphere in which campers feel the message of a loving God. L.I.F.E. Guards assist in creating this “Akita Spirit” by lovingly placing the needs of the campers before their own. You will complete tasks with the gracious awareness that your first and foremost job is to serve whenever you are called to do so. This principle, while not often easy, embodies a true servant and gives L.I.F.E. Guard its name: **Last Is First Eternal**. In the ninth chapter of Mark, Jesus calls his disciples to follow this call:

*“Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.”
-Mark 9:35*

While L.I.F.E. Guards encounter the same “Akita Spirit” as the campers, L.I.F.E. Guards spend their time much differently. L.I.F.E. Guards remain behind the scenes to set up programming for campers and complete projects that support Camp Akita as a whole. This means serving meals, cleaning the buildings, and doing work projects around camp. Often this work is difficult, lacks recognition and receives little thanks.

That said, there are few other ways to grow closer to one another, to learn about ourselves, and to encounter our faith than through service. L.I.F.E. Guards come to find they are deeply connected through the work they perform, and that caring for Akita is not just a list of jobs, but rather, a labor of love. Most of all, the L.I.F.E. Guard program will challenge you to “take Akita home” in a new way: to continue to serve outside the Akita gates. In the end, you will come to find that once you are a L.I.F.E. Guard at Camp Akita, you are a L.I.F.E. Guard for life.

Reflections:

As you look forward to your Guard experience, here are some questions to think about before you arrive:

- 1) When was the last time you felt completely accepted and loved? How can you help others feel this way through your actions, words or presence?
- 2) How will you handle a job you don’t really like? Will your reaction create community, or create challenges for others?
- 3) Mother Theresa said, “There are no great things, only small things done with great love.” What small things will you bring with great love to your Guard experience that will impact the lives of others?



L.I.F.E. Guard: Guidelines for Living Together

Drugs, Alcohol & Tobacco:

Camp Akita has a strict no drugs, alcohol or tobacco policy. Anyone found with drugs, alcohol or tobacco will be sent home immediately. **There are absolutely no exceptions to this rule.**

Living Areas:

All L.I.F.E. Guards will stay in the upper level of the Lodge: boys on the Dining Hall side and girls on the Vesper Hill side. The L.I.F.E. Guard Lounge, where the whole group will gather for meetings and downtime together, is on the Dining Hall (boys') side. Girls are permitted in the L.I.F.E. Guard Lounge during daytime hours, but must return to their side after lights out. Girls are not permitted in the Lounge after lights out and are never permitted in the boys' rooms. Likewise, boys are never permitted into the girls' rooms or lounge.

Lights Out:

There will be times when the L.I.F.E. Guards are able to stay up for fun activities, but on most nights, you will return to your sleeping areas at the last bell with the rest of camp. Lights out will be soon after. Getting enough sleep is crucial in order to fully participate and work hard.

Camp Equipment:

Much of the work done by L.I.F.E. Guard involves camp equipment including tools, cleaning supplies, program props, and sound equipment. L.I.F.E. Guards must model good stewardship of the entire camp by respectfully and responsibly caring for all aspects, including equipment. Listen carefully to the L.I.F.E. Guard Leaders' instructions and respect the tools you use.

Snacks:

Because of severe allergies, Camp Akita is a nut-free facility. If you choose to bring snacks to Camp Akita, know that they may not contain nuts, traces of nuts, or processed in a facility with nuts; if they do, those snacks will be discarded. In general, bringing snacks is not encouraged. L.I.F.E. Guards will be provided with plenty of food throughout the day.

Participate, Don't Anticipate:

Full participation is expected for every aspect of the L.I.F.E. Guard program unless a participant is ill. This includes work projects, meals, meetings and any other activities planned for the group. Whether this is your first L.I.F.E. Guard experience or you are a veteran, we encourage you to get into the mindset of living in the moment instead of asking what comes next.

Cell Phones:

The L.I.F.E. Guard program provides a unique opportunity to live in the moment, grow as an individual, and build relationships with those around us. We find that cell phones are distracting, exclude others, and prevent participants from fully experiencing Camp Akita and the L.I.F.E. Guard Program. Therefore, L.I.F.E. Guards will be asked to store their cell phones in a group "cell phone box" until the end of each session, a practice we use for the Akita Staff as well. Cell phones will be returned for the bus ride home, including time between sessions. If you use your cell phone as an iPod or camera, please bring alternative means of listening to music and taking photos.

L.I.F.E. Guard Daily Schedule

The schedule for L.I.F.E. Guards will change depending on the age group of the campers and the elements of program for that session. Below is a rough schedule of what the L.I.F.E. Guards will do, however the L.I.F.E. Guard Leaders will assign new and more specific tasks daily. Focus on participating, not anticipating!

- ♦ Wake-up and ring the bell
- ♦ Set-up for and eat breakfast
- ♦ Serve and clean up breakfast
- ♦ Morning work projects (cleaning)
- ♦ Morning meeting and journal time
- ♦ Set-up for and eat lunch
- ♦ Serve and clean up lunch
- ♦ Afternoon work projects (maintenance)
- ♦ Hydrate!
- ♦ Shower and relax
- ♦ Set-up for and eat dinner
- ♦ Serve and clean up dinner
- ♦ Set up for evening programs
- ♦ Participate in or help facilitate evening programs
- ♦ Clean up evening programs
- ♦ Snack
- ♦ Sleep!

Packing List:

Items to bring:

- ♦ **Reusable and/or disposable masks (enough to last you through the camp session)**
- ♦ Closed-toed shoes
- ♦ 2 reusable water bottles
- ♦ Rain gear
- ♦ Sun screen
- ♦ Insect repellent
- ♦ Swim wear
- ♦ Baseball hat. L.I.F.E. Guard may be assisting in the kitchen, and a hat is required.
- ♦ Work clothes including **long pants** and several old t-shirts (these should be items of clothing that can get dirty or stained)
- ♦ Camp-appropriate clothing for the duration of one week: modest clothes that contain no references to drugs or alcohol
- ♦ A jacket or sweatshirt for evenings (it gets chilly!)
- ♦ Bedding for a twin-sized mattress or a sleeping bag and pillow
- ♦ Disposable or digital camera that is not a cell phone
- ♦ A watch or alarm clock
- ♦ Toiletries and shower gear
- ♦ A towel
- ♦ Work gloves
- ♦ Any prescription medications you require that are outlined on your medical form

Items not to bring:

- ♦ Tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- ♦ Knives, axes, firearms, pyrotechnics, or other weapons
- ♦ Any valuables or items of sentimental value
- ♦ CELL PHONES: (see policy on page 2). If you bring a phone, we will store it away until the end of your session, as we do with staff phones. Therefore, we strongly urge you to leave it at home.