

TOM SAWYER CAMPS, INC.

707 WEST WOODBURY ROAD, #F, ALTADENA, CA 91001

626-794-1156

www.tomsawyercamps.com

Fall 2009

Dear Desert Trip Campers and Parents

Thank you for your interest in the Desert Trip. Over the years we have learned a lot about how to share a camping experience with campers and have put together the enclosed information for you. Your attention to this information before the trip will add to everyone's fun on the trip.

Enclosed are the Enrollment Form and the Equipment List. Please complete and return the Enrollment Form to us as soon as possible. Please read the packing instructions carefully and have your camper participate in getting ready for the trip. This extra preparation helps campers to mentally prepare for five days away from home.

It does get cold at night (25° - 35°), so if you are in doubt about the warmth of your sleeping bag, call the office for suggestions.

All campers will learn basic outdoor living skills so that they can begin enjoying the life-long thrills of camping. We will cook our own meals, have campfires, put up tents and keep ourselves safe and healthy throughout the week of hiking, adventure, and exploring history. Campers are closely supervised as they help carry out camp chores.

On December 26, please arrive at the TSC office all packed and ready to go at 8:30 A.M. so that all that is left to do is to load, answer roll call, and pull out. We will leave promptly at 9:00 A.M. If something comes up on that morning and you cannot arrive on time, please call the office. We will return with the campers (a bit dirty and hungry perhaps) at 4:00 P.M. on December 30 to the camp office. The cost of the trip is \$370.00. A \$100.00 deposit will hold a spot for your camper and should be included when you return the enrollment form. The balance is due December 12.

Note to parents: Enjoy yourself - don't worry. We have done this many times with hundreds of children and know what to expect. We have been taking this trip for the last 30 years, and I am a 12-year veteran of the TSC trip to Death Valley! We encourage you to call us if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours

Marah

Marah Lyvers
Director/ Trip Leader

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DESERT TRIP ENROLLMENT FORM

Camper's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip code _____

Age _____ Sex _____ Grade _____ School _____

Parents' Names _____ Family email address _____

Home Phone _____ Business Phone _____

Cell Phone (Parent #1) _____ Cell Phone (Parent #2) _____

Alternate Contact _____ Phone _____

Date of last tetanus shot _____ Any allergies? _____

Any conditions we should know about your camper *including dietary requirements/restrictions*?

Any medications (including over-the-counter) to be taken on the trip?

Glasses or contact lenses? _____ (Please send an extra pair.) Shirt Size _____

Permission to give Tylenol? _____ Motrin? _____ Benadryl? _____

Parent's Authorization:

In the event I cannot be reached in an emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician selected by the Tom Sawyer Camps' Trip Leader to secure proper treatment for my child as named above. To my best knowledge, this child is in good health.

Date _____ Signed _____

(Parent or Guardian)

DESERT TRIP PACKING INSTRUCTIONS

One of our main objectives for the Desert Trip is to help campers learn self-reliance and responsibility for themselves and their gear.

As a parent, your involvement prior to the trip is critical. The more parents show their campers about the gear, the more confident the campers are during the trip. This confidence will help campers overcome any growing homesickness on the trip because they understand their gear and can help take care of themselves when they are cold or tired.

Tom Sawyer Camps provides all the group camping equipment. Campers are responsible for providing themselves with the equipment on the enclosed list. **Campers need to know what they have, where it is and what it is for.**

Here are some specific suggestions for things to do with your camper the days before the trip:

1. Let them put on all their clothes at once — long underwear, shirt, sweater, jacket, hat and mittens. This helps them understand how to layer their clothes for warmth.
2. Together, organize everything carefully in a large duffel bag. **Have the camper practice packing and unpacking his/her clothes and other gear.** Use large zip locks or other bags to help organize small items (e.g., put socks, gloves and hat in one bag). **Practice rolling and unrolling the sleeping bag.** Let them sleep in their bag and on their pad one night at home.
3. **The simpler everything is, the better.** Eating utensils are a great example of this. One big plastic bowl, silverware and a big plastic mug with a large mitten-friendly handle are all that's necessary. Try eating a meal at home this way. Remember your camper will be washing all this after each meal, so simplicity is crucial. **Have your camper decorate all his/her dishes with colored tape, permanent markers or nail polish so they can recognize it in a big pile of everyone else's cookware before mealtimes.**
4. Every morning there is lost and found. Often, campers do not recognize something that belongs to them. Two things will help them with this situation. **First, clearly label everything. Second, familiarize your camper with everything they are bringing so they can easily identify it.** Campers share tents with others and often it looks like a tornado hit inside their tent, so quick, easy identification is important for campers and staff.
5. The more campers “play” with their stuff beforehand, the better prepared they will be and the more time they will have for making friends and playing when we're in camp, rather than looking for their fleece hat and gloves or organizing the gear in their tent. A little preparation before goes a long way on the trip.

EQUIPMENT FOR THE DESERT TRIP

Clothing

- 2 pair long pants
- 1 pair sweat pants
- 2 - 3 T-shirts
- 1 long-sleeved shirt (or 2nd sweatshirt)
- 3 - 4 pairs socks (1 pair wool or fleece)
- 3 - 4 pairs underpants
- 1 pair shorts
- 1 sweatshirt or sweater (with a hood adds warmth)
- 1 warm jacket (large enough to fit over sweater or sweatshirt)
- 1 fleece knit hat and mittens or gloves
- 1 sun hat or baseball cap
- 1 - 2 pair sturdy shoes (tennis shoes, boots, etc.)
- 1 set long underwear

The clothing that is worn on the day of departure is included in the above list. **Please mark all items with the camper's name.** Do not send extra clothing as it only gets lost, dirty and takes up space.

Other Items

- Sleeping bag (*if in doubt about warmth, please contact the office*)
- Ensolite pad (1/2" thick) (we don't need air mattresses or air pillows as there are ways of being plenty comfortable without these items)
- Plate with at least 1" sides (plastic Tupperware bowls work great; metal bowls get dropped when hot food is put in them)
- Plastic cup (large plastic coffee type mug with mitten sized handle)
- Knife, fork, and spoon (label all parts so your camper can identify them after clean-up; we use colored plastic tape or nail polish)
- Toiletries (lip balm, tooth brush and small tube toothpaste, comb, soap, etc. There are no showers!)
- Small towel
- Small notebook and pencil for a trip diary (optional)
- 1 qt. Water Bottle, large mouth plastic is easiest to fill (Nalgene style works great)
- Flashlight with new batteries
- Camera and film (optional; please no digital cameras... they don't do well with sand)
- Day pack (empty, for use on day hikes)
- Bandanna (optional)
- "Heat Factory" hand and feet warmers (sold at Sport Chalet) - instant heating packs (great for cold nights!)

Check with the office before sending any additional articles and please do not send anything that is elaborate or of high value. Please do not send expensive personal toys such as game boys, i-pods, CD players etc. The whole purpose of this trip is to "un-plug." Plus, cell service in the valley is fairly non-existent!

Again, PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING YOU SEND ON THE TRIP!!!