

A GUIDE TO CAMP MERZ FOR THE  
**COUNSELOR-IN-TRAINING**



Camp Merz, BSA  
*Allegheny Highlands Council*

5297 W Lake Rd.  
Mayville, New York 14757

# Letter from Camp Management

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Welcome!

I hope as you read this guide you find it useful in understanding the Counselors in Training program that we offer here at Camp Merz. As a CIT, you will become part of a larger team responsible for delivering an exciting camp experience to participating troops. Each season we pride ourselves in adding new aspects to our program as well as bringing back older traditions that we hope you will enjoy.

This guide was created to help set the stage for what we expect of our CITs. It also contains the information that you will need before you come to camp this summer as a CIT. Our CIT program is open to scouts age 14, who are interested in becoming camp counselors in the future. All scouts interested in this program must apply and be accepted to participate. Please read this guide carefully before you decide that this is the summer you want.

As a camp, we are very proud to offer a CIT program that allows young scouts, who are not old enough to be paid on staff, the opportunity to join staff and learn valuable skills along the way. We have created our program to be flexible allowing us to help each scout grow and develop their work ethic and personal skills.

Yours in Scouting,

Camp Management

# Job Details

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## COUNSELOR IN TRAINING (CIT)

Here at Camp Merz, we have carefully constructed a program specifically made for scouts, age 14, who are interested in possibly becoming a camp counselor in the future. The program allows scouts to participate for a minimum of **two weeks** out of the summer as a staff member. Through our program scouts will learn what it takes to work at a summer camp, specifically at Camp Merz.

Our CIT program is offered during the 5 weeks we are running our Scout program. We generally do not offer the program during Opening and Closing Staff weeks. Scouts may choose from any of the weeks offered for the program. Typically, participation is limited to 6 CITs each week to allow better integration into the camp program and staff. At the end of each week, all CITs will be evaluated on their performance as a staff member and a scout. This evaluation includes their work ethic, cleanliness, and attitude.

Since the program is on a week-by-week basis, if the CIT or camp management feels that it is not working out the CIT may go home at the end of their first week. This may not be a reflection on their work performance but may mean they are just not ready to be on staff and will be encouraged to apply for the next season. At the end of their two weeks, the CIT will have a final review. In certain situations, a CIT may be invited to stay more than 2 weeks. This is done **only at the invitation** of camp management.

Every scout in the program is expected to earn merit badges while they are participating in the program. As a Scout camp, we are authorized to offer all merit badges within our teaching range.

# CIT Program Overview

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All CITs are required to attend Beaver Day Orientation in June. See the staff schedule for date and time. Lunch will be provided. Please wear work clothes. Upon arrival, you will meet with the Program and/or Curriculum Directors to select your program areas of interest and the weeks that you will attend camp. See staff schedule for available weeks.

CITs participate in a minimum of two scout weeks of our summer season. A primary component of our CIT program is the requirement that registered scouts earn a minimum of two (2) merit badges per week. You will have the opportunity to gain experience in every available program area in camp, teaching and learning along the way.

All CITs will report to Dawson Lodge at 9 AM on the first day for the weeks that they choose.

## **Staff Events**

All CITs are invited to join the staff for the end-of-year Staff Trip and Staff Banquet. See the staff schedule for dates.

# Role Model and Behavior

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## Role Model

As a CIT, you will be helping to set the standard for what a staff member should be and should do. Please remember that campers look up to you and will imitate you.

## Behavior

Your behavior in camp is governed by the Scout Oath and Law. One person's bad mood could bring the entire group down. We chose you to be a CIT for a reason, please prove to us that you can act the part.

As a CIT, you need to keep in mind that you are not a camper, remember that you are part of the staff and cannot always be "buddy-buddy" with campers. You will need to be able to set boundaries so that campers will respect and listen to you. Be a leader and set an example for campers, help staff during merit badge sessions, help campers stay focused, and offer assistance to campers who are struggling.

# Who can help me?

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While all staff members are expected to help CITs, we feel that it is important for you to have designated staff members to answer your questions and help you solve any issues. This year we have asked two of our senior staff members to help you get oriented. These staff members will assist you in understanding your role at camp, helping you settle into staff sites and be there for you throughout your week. They will touch base with you during the week, so remember if you have any issues they are there to help you.

# Expectations

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## **Merit Badges**

Here at Camp Merz, we require each CIT to earn at least 2 merit badges per week. We offer 50+ merit badges and awards including many that are Eagle required. Please choose at least 2 merit badges to work on each week you are here. Your choices will be taken into consideration when your schedule is set up.

## **Working in Program Areas**

While you are working in a program area all tasks are assigned by the Area Director. Generally, you will be assigned to 2 different program areas, one in the morning and another in the afternoon. It is expected that as a prospective staff member, a CIT will achieve their tasks in the time allotted. Area Directors are trained on how the CIT program works and how to properly instruct CITs in a task and allow them to succeed. If the task is unclear please ask for further detail. Each week the Area Directors will evaluate the performance of the CIT they had in their area and provide positive comments that will allow them to improve their work habits.

## **Staff Quarters**

CITs will live with other staff members in the Staff Campsite. CITs will have specific tents set aside for them that they will share, two to a tent (If permitted by local guidance), with another CIT. CITs will most likely not room with regular staff members due to the constant flux of coming and going each week. While staying in staff sites EVERY staff member is expected to keep their living quarters and the surrounding area clean and clear of clutter. Staff sites will be inspected each week for health and safety and any issues will be addressed immediately. Remember if you have a concern with your tent, tent mate or anything else in staff sites please talk to the senior staff members assigned to our CITs.

## **Meal Times**

All staff are to attend all meals and participate in the mealtime program. This includes sitting with the scouts at the table (If permitted by local guidance) and setting the example for proper table etiquette. Staff will only be excused from mealtimes with permission from the Health Officer, Camp Director, or Program Director. Staff may not excuse themselves early from a meal without prior approval from the previously stated individuals.

**Termination**

Any time that the CIT feels that they are no longer interested, benefiting, or if they're not a good fit for the program, they may end their time at Camp Merz. Also, the camp management team reserves the right to ask a CIT to leave camp.

**Time Off**

See *Staff Handbook*. CITs are expected to attend the weeks to which they have committed.

**Night Out**

CITs receive one night out a week. They are dismissed at 6:00 PM after the evening flag ceremony and need to be signed back into camp no later than 11:00 PM. CITs are only permitted to leave camp with their Legal Guardian or Camp Management. Camp Management can also designate the SENIOR STAFF member(s) attached to the CIT Program to accompany CITs off camp on a walking field trip. If you would like to leave with someone other than these designated people you must fill out and turn in the Authorization form found in this document.

**Weekends**

See the staff schedule. All camp staff, including CITs, are expected to go home on the weekends.

**Cell Phones and Electronic Devices**

Cell phones and electronic devices are not allowed in any program areas. CITs may use their cell phones in their living quarters and staff lounge. If a CIT is found with an electronic device or cell phone it will be confiscated. Parents are responsible for retrieving it from the Camp Director.

# CIT Sample Schedule\*

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- 7:30 am **Staff Meeting** in the Dining Hall
- 7:50 am Line-Up
- 8:00 am Breakfast
- 9:00 am – 11:50 am **Program Area Participation**
- 12:10 pm Line-Up
- 12:15 pm Lunch
- 1:00 pm **Patrol Duties:** You will help with various tasks to maintain the camp and program.
- 2:00 pm – 3:45 pm **Program Area Participation**
- 4:00 pm-4:45 pm **Merit Badge Work for all CITs:** You may use this time to work on merit badges outside of your assigned program areas.
- 5:50 pm Line-Up
- 6:00 pm Dinner
- 7:00 pm **Evening Program.** See Camp Guide.

*\*This is a typical day for a CIT Monday-Friday. The Sunday schedule varies.*



# What to Bring to Camp\*

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- Trunk with lock
- Battery alarm clock
- At least 8 pairs of underwear
- Backpack (hard or soft frame)
- Hoodie or sweatshirt
- Lamp
- Multiple pairs of shoes (including shoes suitable for hiking)
- Pillow (mold resistant is recommended)
- Plastic totes for clothes (with lid)
- Power strip and Outdoor Electric Cord (must be orange)
- Rain gear
- Twin sheets and blanket (recommended)
- Sleeping bag for outpost
- Toiletries (including toothbrush and paste, deodorant, shampoo, body wash, loofah, etc.)
- Water bottle
- Water Shoes
- Swim Suit
- Towels
- Bug Spray
- Money for Trading Post
- Sunscreen

*\*This is a suggested list of items to bring.*

# Authorized Pick-Up and Departure Information

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All staff that are under the age of 18 years must complete this form. All information must be accurate and updated when changes occur. We understand that staff under the age of 18 may wish to leave camp without their parents for weekends or nights out. To ensure their safety we ask this form to be completed in full by your legal parent or guardian.

Staff Members Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian(s) Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Work Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

- I authorize only the parent/guardian(s) listed above to sign my child out of camp. He/she may not leave unless I sign them out.
- I authorize my child to leave camp at the discretion of Camp Management. This includes leaving camp to go to the store or with a group of friends.
- I authorize my child to attend the end-of-summer staff trip. This will include a bus ride to a nearby attraction such as Darien Lake or Splash Lagoon. *[Please note that the cost of the trip including admission to a theme park or recreation location is to be paid by the staff]*
- I authorize only the parent/guardian(s) listed above and the following people listed below to sign my child out of camp. He/she may leave if they are signed out by the following:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

*I confirm that this form is correct. Camp Merz and Allegheny Highlands Council will not authorize any pick-up unless it is noted on this form and will contact the parent/guardian(s) if an issue arises.*

*Changes to this form can only be made in written form.*

*Staff should understand that verbal permission is not allowed under any circumstance and should plan accordingly.*

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_