

Dear LIT Applicants and Parents:

Thank you for your interest in the Leader in Training program. The purpose of this letter is to help families of prospective LIT applicants understand a little more about the program and our expectations of the LITs. In order to be considered, applicants must be at least 16 years of age, or entering their junior year of high school in the September following the summer during which they will participate in the LIT program. Once the LIT application form and three reference forms have been received by the camp office, the Camp Director, Leadership Director, or designated representative will contact the applicant to discuss the application. Placements will be made on a rolling basis throughout the winter and spring.

It is not necessary to ask someone associated with YMCA Camp Hi-Rock to fill out one of your reference forms. However, if you do choose to ask someone associated with Hi-Rock, you should make sure that they can provide a written reference and can comment on your abilities based on direct observation and experience (it should be someone who was in your Unit or knows you well).

Although space is limited, we will work very hard to place you into one of our two LIT programs. If your parent has provided deposit payment information with the registration, we will sign you up and mail confirmation materials once you are interviewed and accepted into the program. The fees for the 2015 LIT program are: Tier 1 - \$2,380, Tier 2 - \$2,225, Tier 3 - \$2,070. Applicants cannot sign up for the LIT program through the normal camper registration form or via online registration; only a typed or handwritten version of the LIT-specific application form will be accepted.

LIT applicants can request one of two sessions, each lasting 4 weeks. The first session will take place during the first four weeks of the summer (June 28-July 25, 2015) and the second one will take place during the last four weeks of camp (July 26-August 22, 2015). LITs will participate in workshops and experiences designed to build their leadership ability, increase their skill competency, build their self-esteem, and educate them about the needs of children. The Leader in Training program will be run by the Leadership Director, who will work in conjunction with the camp's administrative team.

As part of the program, LITs may go on an adventure trip that includes a hike and a campout along the Appalachian Trail. They may also spend time with the teen leaders at other YMCA camps. They will work together in a variety of team-building activities throughout the program. To develop new skills, they will plan an Evening Program for the entire camp and help with Weekend Programs. LITs are in training and are not considered to be staff members during the program, nor are they campers. Instead, they are considered to be in a special and unique category with unique privileges, responsibilities, and requirements.

Some of the training topics will include Group Work, Communication, Leadership, Child Abuse Prevention Training, Child Developmental Stages, the Mission of the YMCA, and more. LITs will participate in all of our Emergency Procedure training and will be trained to assist the rest of the staff with a lost swimmer or camper drill.

A recreational day off camp will happen half way through the LIT program. Camp staff members will supervise this and any other trip offsite.

Each LIT will be assigned to a cabin group. This will allow them to work directly with campers and to learn from counselors and Unit Directors. During this time spent with their cabin groups, they will be in training, but will also be expected to plan an evening devotion session and to run a cabin activity. They may also assist in teaching Coaching Periods. LITs will never have the sole responsibility for supervising a group of campers during their four weeks as an LIT.

Throughout the program, the LITs will be evaluated by their peers and the staff, and will be given feedback to help them become aware of both their strengths and their areas for improvement. At the completion of their four-week program, the LITs will leave camp in order for the next leadership program to begin. If we can accommodate volunteers, the staff and administrators may ask LITs who demonstrate outstanding leadership, are highly skilled, and fully represent the YMCA values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility to stay on as volunteers during the last four weeks of camp. Because some LITs are placed as volunteers, we will conduct criminal offender (CORI) and sexual offender (SORI) background checks on all LIT applicants who are over 17. If an LIT is asked to stay as a volunteer, his or her parents will be mailed a consent form with a detailed description of the volunteer role, which must be signed by both the parent and the volunteer.

Not all LITs are necessarily asked to stay on as volunteers. If you are not asked to stay on as a volunteer, it does not indicate failure for you, or for the program itself. LITs who are not placed as volunteers are welcome to apply for staff positions next summer. Please do not make your summer plans assuming you will be placed as a volunteer. Both the LIT and the parent will be notified of the outcome during the last week of the program. LITs who are not placed as volunteers may apply to participate in the LIT program during the second half of the summer at the full cost of the program.

If you have any questions about the program, please email the Camp Director at seniorcampdirector@camphirock.org, or call (413) 528-1227 x14. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I hope you are looking forward to a great summer.

Sincerely,
Tanya Gaudette
Camper Service Specialist