“Creating an Inclusive
Summer Horseback Riding Camp”
Kimberly Mitchell

Logistics:
I. Summer Outlook
   a. How many weeks of camp in the summer?
   b. Days of the week?
   c. Hours in the day?
II. Campers and Camp Culture
   a. How many each week. Can this be a variable number or does it need to be set?
   b. How many groups – camper to staff ratio?
   c. Is the camp open to only those with a diagnosis? Siblings? Anyone?
   d. Age limits?
III. Staff
   a. How many needed?
   b. What are their roles and responsibilities?
IV. Volunteers
   a. How many needed and when are they needed?
   b. What are their roles and responsibilities?
   c. Counselor-in-Training (CIT) volunteers?
V. Advertising
   a. Where and when?
   b. Brochures, posters, sandwich board, facebook, community publications, fairs.

Staff (Examples from Little Bit TRC):
I. Staff roles
   a. Coordinator/Director. Assistant Coordinator/Director if needed.
      i. Oversees the logistics of camp
      ii. Hires
      iii. Schedules
      iv. Interacts with parents
      v. Able to fill in for counselors as necessary
   b. Counselors
      i. Directly interacts with campers, facilitates activities
      ii. Assists instructor with mounted activities
      iii. Manages volunteers
   c. Certified Instructor
      i. Teaches the mounted lessons
      ii. In charge of horse choice and oversees the tacking of horses
      iii. Manages volunteers during mounted lessons

II. Requirements
   a. Background of working with kids and people with disabilities
   b. College training in education, physical or occupational therapy, or psychology desired
   c. Two years of riding and horsemanship experience

III. Recruiting
   a. Make sure to start recruiting staff early!
   b. Posters, facebook, word of mouth, other barns, local organizations
IV. Interviewing
   a. Variety of questions – emphasize management and team player skills
   b. Teaching demonstration? Role playing questions?
   c. Ensure that staff ARE available the weeks that you are hiring them for

V. Staff Training
   a. Staff training manual
      i. Why are we here?
      ii. How to work with and manage volunteers
   b. Schedules and Activities
      iv. Policies and procedures specific to your center
   v. Working with campers
   vi. Appendices- Sample schedules, info on horses, in depth info on activities

Campers (Examples from Little Bit TRC):
I. Registration
   a. Forms – what information is necessary?
   b. Do new campers need an assessment?
   c. Make sure to have a cancellation policy
   d. Having an excel sheet with all registration info is helpful!
      i. Include name, age, height, weight, payment, phone, email.
II. Staff read camper information prior to camp week
   a. Note specific assistance needed with mobility, bathroom, dietary restrictions, behavioral issues, etc.
III. Organize campers into groups based on
   a. Age
   b. Riding ability
   c. Diagnosis – because the overarching theme is inclusion, I highly recommend grouping those with and without diagnoses together

Volunteers (Examples from Little Bit TRC):
I. Volunteers needed to assist each group for all camp hours
   a. Decide how many are needed based on the campers you have coming
   b. Assign them to groups based on their strengths
II. Extra volunteers needed for riding lessons as leaders and sidewalkers
III. Counselors-In-Training
   a. Come for a specific training at the beginning of the summer to better assist counselors
   b. Automatically builds a population of volunteers that you can hire counselors from in later years
   c. Great resume builder for high schoolers

Scheduling, Supplies and Activities (Examples from Little Bit TRC):
I. Theme weeks
   a. Activities based around the theme
   b. Able to cater to riding levels
   c. Examples – Western Week, Games Week, Horse Show Week
II. Scheduling - see “Sample Schedule” for a day long schedule
   a. All activities other than the riding lesson are flexible
   b. Activities are scheduled fairly close together to keep campers interested and entertained
   c. Plan in breaks for water, bathroom and snack
   d. Add in an optional activity time where campers make the decisions on what to do
   e. Have a list of activities that can fill down time
III. Supplies
   a. Have a list of supplies needed for each day
   b. Store your supplies for each day in separate boxes
   c. Get all of the supplies out at the beginning of each day so that you are prepared
   d. Keep an extra supply on crayons/pens and coloring sheets for down time!

IV. Unmounted Activity Ideas:
   a. Anatomy and Horse Painting
   b. Bathing
   c. Braiding
   d. Camper Barrel Racing and Pole Bending
   e. Catch and Release – Haltering in an open area
   f. Crafts
   g. Decorating Horseshoes
   h. Exploring Feed
   i. Gaits
   j. Get to Know the Horses
   k. Horseshoe Hunt
   l. Horseshoe Toss
   m. How Tall Are You? – Horse height measuring
   n. Leading
   o. Roping
   p. Scavenger Hunt
   q. Stable Management
   r. Tack Cleaning
   s. Treat Feeding
   t. TPR/Weight

V. Consider starting a blog to update the parents daily on what their campers did
   a. Include a letter and photos.
   b. Helpful for campers that are not able to vocalize what they did!

End of Camp
   I. Be sure to hand out a survey on how to improve for next year!
   II. Debrief with staff at the end of the summer

Want more info?
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