



## Special Challenge Camp Staff and Volunteer Information Revised 2025

### Get involved with Special Challenge Camp!

For over 40 years, Special Challenge Camp at the Claggett Center has offered a week of fun and relaxation for adults with developmental disabilities from all over the region, especially those local to Frederick. Special Challenge Camp is a highlight of the year for campers, many of whom have attended for decades, and staff alike, and running a successful camp depends on volunteers who share their time and gifts.

**First and foremost, Special Challenge Camp is an experience of life in community for both campers and counselors** who span a wide range of age, experience, and skills/areas of knowledge. This community--eating, worshiping, sharing living space, and even moving between activities together with a diverse group of caring and attentive individuals--is what makes camp truly special. There are several ways to volunteer, with detailed information provided below. **Roles include:**

- **Counselors:** stay overnight and provide support to campers during all aspects of camp life, including daily tasks such as hygiene, meals, and transitions. Organize, lead, and assist with activities as detailed on each day's schedule. **For a full description of counselor roles, responsibilities, and eligibility, see pages 3-4.**
  - Families with children are able to volunteer as a family unit--see page 5 for information.
- **All Saints Episcopal Church Volunteers:** serve together for specific activities during camp, including Arts and Crafts, special games, and the dinner-dance. All Saints volunteers are coordinated by an ASEC parishioner, who serves as a liaison with Claggett. For more information, see page 2.
- **Drop-in and Short Term Volunteers:** may be approved to provide support to campers and activities during part of camp. Short term volunteers are supervised by the Camp Director and are required to complete an application and background check. For more information, see page 2.

#### All Staff and volunteers must:

- Complete an application form and Praesidium background check no later than one month before camp begins
- Complete a short interview/intake call with the Camp Director
- Attend pre-camp training: **required** for overnight counselors and strongly encouraged for all others.
- Complete online Safe Church, Safe Communities training in line with requirements of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland (every two years)



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### **Volunteer--All Saints Episcopal Church**

All Saints Episcopal Church in Frederick, Maryland has partnered with Claggett for many years to provide fun and fulfilling daytime activities for Special Challenge Camp. All Saints coordinates the following activities:

- Arts and Crafts
- Woodworking
- Olympics
- Dinner-Dance photography
- Other special activities as planned in advance with the Programs Director

An All Saints parishioner serves as Volunteer Coordinator each year and liaisons with Claggett and All Saints to schedule and coordinate ASEC-led activities, manage sign-ups from the church, and communicate with Claggett leadership regarding volunteer identities, numbers, and any programmatic needs.

All Saints' Parishioners sign up to help with specific activities through church sign-ups, at times specified by the volunteer coordinator. They must complete a background check through the Diocese of Maryland every 2 years in keeping with diocesan standards, consent to all volunteer health and safety guidelines, and are strongly encouraged to attend all-staff training. The ASEC Volunteer Coordinator collects and shares volunteer information with the Programs Director, and when on-site, ASEC volunteers generally report to the ASEC volunteer coordinator or other designated activity leader for guidance during volunteer shifts.

ASEC volunteers may be of any age. Children under 14 must be accompanied by a responsible adult and supervised at all times. Volunteers serving for a full day or during the dinner-dance receive lunch/dinner.

### **Short-term Volunteers and Visitors (non-ASEC)**

**While volunteers may attend for only a few hours, including the dinner-dance, they must be signed up and scheduled with Claggett leadership and must check in at the Welcome Center on arrival. "Drop-in" visits are not permitted without advance notice and proper screening, and volunteers are to provide assistance to campers and/or activities.** Social visits are not permitted. All volunteers must be approved in advance by the Program Director and complete required application/background checks and any arrival health protocols, regardless of the length of time volunteering. Unapproved visitors will be asked to leave.



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### Overnight/General Counselors

For many years, Special Challenge Camp was staffed entirely by volunteers, and this ministry still depends on people who give generously of their time, skills, and energy to serve as companions for campers. Overnight counselors now include both volunteers and members of Claggett's summer camp senior counselor team, who are employed for the duration of the summer. Summer staff and volunteer general counselors share the same roles and responsibilities: Overnight counselors are first and foremost responsible for creating a welcoming, safe environment for campers in every aspect of their experience at camp.

#### Arrival, Training, and Setup/Cleanup:

**All overnight staff are required to attend training and orientation at one of two opportunities.**

Pre-camp training is essential to clarify roles, answer questions, and get ready to jump into serving our campers on check-in day! **Trainings will be held:**

- **Saturday, July 26, 2025 from 2 - 5 p.m. (preferred/primary training).** Overnight lodging and meals will be provided. Training will run from 2 - 5 p.m., with activity planning and preparation in the evening.
- **Saturday, June 7, 2025, 9 a.m. - 12 noon (make-up training).**

**Counselor responsibilities begin at 9:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 27.** Counselors should expect post-camp cleanup and staff meeting to finish by 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 31.



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### Roles and Expectations

**All counselors, volunteers and staff, report to the Program Director. Some responsibilities vary by experience and individual, but all counselors, volunteer and summer staff, are responsible for the following:**

- **Meals:** counselors are assigned to tables with campers, and alternate serving duty in the buffet area.
- **Morning and Evening Routines:**
  - Counselors are assigned lodging in cottages in rooms adjacent to camper rooms.
  - Assist campers with daily routines by giving verbal reminders and physical assistance as needed, including:
    - Morning routines: wake up, get dressed, brushing teeth, bringing needed items for the day
    - Evening routines: Putting clothes away, shower time, lights-out
    - Some campers may need more assistance than others with hygiene tasks such as using the toilet or bathing. Adult counselors receive training to safely support sensitive hygiene tasks.
- **Transitions and Activities:**
  - Helping campers get safely between activities
  - Helping to plan and lead activities, especially evening programs
  - Helping campers choose activities and participate according to their needs

### **ALL Counselors are expected to:**

- Attend pre-camp orientation and training
- Reside at camp in assigned cottage room for the duration of the session (any periods of absence must be pre-determined and approved by Program Director)
- Fulfill roles as designated on daily schedules.
  - Volunteers with special skills or interest in leading particular activities or aspects of camp, (such as a special craft, music, assisting the nurse, etc), should discuss these with Program Director during intake call.
  - Exemption from certain activities or responsibilities shall be discussed and approved in advance with the Program Director during intake call.
  - A daily two-hour break will be scheduled for each volunteer or family unit.



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### Additional Information for Families With Children

Volunteers of all ages are welcome at camp, and volunteering together can be an incredible experience for whole families. For the protection of volunteers who are minors, and of campers, the following policies are in place:

- Volunteers under 18\* must be accompanied by a responsible adult (parent/guardian or their designee), who shares housing with them and is accountable for supervision of their child during camp.
  - Families will be scheduled together for activities, including a daily two-hour break. As age appropriate, older children and youth may participate in activities and offer support around campus more independently, with supervision of other adult staff--this will be discussed during the family's intake call.
- Minors are not to be responsible for campers' sensitive personal hygiene, such as toileting or showering.

*\*Volunteers age 14-17 who are active in the summer camp program may participate in Claggett's Junior Counselor program, which includes separate housing and is supervised directly by the Program Director.*

### Information Regarding Claggett summer staff

Special Challenge Camp is one of seven weeks of Claggett's summer camp season. Summer Camp ministries provide sacred space for children, youth, and adults to grow their faith, confidence, and skills. Camps throughout the summer are headed by the "senior counselor" team of up to ten young adults. Counselors undergo ten days of training and work with different teams of volunteers each week to facilitate safe, inclusive, and creative camp environments for the summer.

Summer camp staff are both employees of Claggett and participants in an intensive leadership and spiritual formation program for the entire summer.

The structure of Special Challenge Camp differs in many ways from other camp sessions, which serve primarily children and youth and have a different staff structure. **At Special Challenge Camp, all counselors (staff and volunteer) have largely the same roles and responsibilities, with noted exceptions for age and ability.**

Special skills and knowledge summer counselors hold include:

- Close knowledge of facility, processes, and working relationships with Claggett permanent staff
- CPR/First Aid/AED and Camp Mental Health certifications
- Training to facilitate high adventure activities such as canoe/kayak and assistance on the Ropes Course.