



November 1, 2023

Dear Prospective Counselor,

Thank you for your interest in working at Camp Tahkodah. I am excited that you are considering being a part of this incredible ministry.

It is no secret that Christian camping contributes much to the spiritual formation of the children and teenagers who choose to spend part of their summer at camps like Tahkodah. It is also true that a camp is only as good as its counseling staff. I believe that the quality of the counseling staff is more important to a great camp than equipment, scenery, and facilities combined. The positive impact that Tahkodah has had on campers through the years has been a direct result of the character of those who have served as counselors. Counselors fill a crucial role in making camp run smoothly and creating an environment in which campers can grow in their desire for, and their relationship with, God. Counselors and assistant counselors are paid, but I hope your reasons for applying go far beyond the benefits to you.

Camp Tahkodah is a Harding owned facility in use year-round. The caretakers are Jason and Beckie Clark. They maintain the camp property, help with summer camp, and host the rental groups from August to May. I direct the summer Christian youth camp that consists of five sessions lasting a total of eight weeks in June and July. The attached application is for persons seeking a position of counselor or assistant counselor for one or more of those sessions.

Camp Tahkodah is rustic by design, and I believe that kids benefit spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically when they are led to experience personal growth activities in a safe and structured environment surrounded by God's creation. To grow in their faith, kids need role models who will take them seriously and treat them respectfully. The goal is to make a difference in the lives of the campers who choose Tahkodah, and I am looking for mature, fun, responsible, and Christ-like young adults to help in that mission. Being a counselor at Tahkodah is a ministry role in which you are called on to form relationships with campers, to be an intentional example to them, to live with them in a cabin, and to supervise recreational activities. It is almost a 24/7 role, but one that you will undoubtedly find rewarding.

Thanks, again, for your interest in this ministry. Please be praying about this; I will be. Also, please review the attached application and contact me with any questions you may have. If you would like to talk to former counselors, I would be glad to supply you with the names of those who have filled these roles before. If you need additional copies for other people who you think would make great counselors, the application form can be downloaded from www.harding.edu/tahkodah. I look forward to hearing from you.

Travis McNeal
Director, Camp Tahkodah
tmcneal@harding.edu
501-279-4564

Counselor Selection Process

(You may keep this page to refer to throughout the selection process).

Counseling Staff Qualifications

1. The applicant must be a Christian. More than merely church-goers, we are looking for fully-devoted disciples of Jesus.
2. Counselors must be at least 18 years of age. (One year of college is preferred).
3. Assistant Counselors must be at least 17 years of age.
4. Applicants must receive good recommendations from references.
5. This position requires an individual to be a member in good standing of the church of Christ. (Federal law recognizes the right of church-related institutions to seek personnel who will support the goals of the institution, including the right to select members of the church to which the institution is related.)
6. During the interview phase of the application process, applicants will be asked to indicate whether they can meet all responsibilities of a Camp Tahkodah Counselor, with or without reasonable accommodation. Applicants are not required to disclose the specifics of any disabilities unless and until they request accommodation for such. Applicants who accept a job as counselor and wish reasonable accommodation must make a formal request to the Director of Camp Tahkodah and must be prepared to provide documentation substantiating the claimed disability.

Compensation

Though Tahkodah counselors are paid, but we hope that you are pursuing this opportunity primarily for ministry reasons. In addition to a salary, Camp Tahkodah will also furnish members of the counseling staff with lodging, a T-shirt, and all meals while in camp. During two-week sessions, counselors and assistant counselors each receive one day off (10:00 a.m. - 6:45 p.m.)

Application Process

1. Fill out the application portion of this document (pages 2-6). All information will be kept confidential. If you have not worked at Tahkodah before, the application must be filled out completely and three references provided. **Applicants who have worked at Tahkodah before need to complete only Sections A, B, C & G. No references are required.**
2. As part of this application process, you must read the document entitled "Responsibilities of Counselors" located at www.harding.edu/assets/www/events/tahkodah/pdf/counselorduties.pdf. This document contains a detailed description of counselors' responsibilities as well as a Camper Protection Guide. The Camper Protection Guide exists primarily for the protection of our campers; however, these guidelines also serve to protect counselors and other staff from false accusations of abuse. You will be asked to sign a statement at the bottom of the last page of the application indicating your knowledge of and willingness to comply with the responsibilities detailed in this document.
3. If you have not worked at Tahkodah, supply reference forms to three persons who will serve as references for you. One copy of the form is on pages 7-8 of this application. It is located at www.harding.edu/assets/www/events/tahkodah/pdf/counselorreference.pdf. It is customary, as well as courteous, to ask permission prior to sending a reference form to someone. It also would be courteous to supply your references with a stamped return envelope addressed to Camp Tahkodah, HU Box 10844, Searcy, AR 72149.
4. Mail completed application to HU, Box 10844, Searcy, AR 72149. If you are on the Harding campus, you may also deliver it to Ezell 104B. If no one is in, just leave it with the secretary.
5. For those selected, interviews will be conducted in January & February.
6. Those offered a position will be given a contract.
7. If hired, you will be asked to sign the following statement on your contract: "I verify that I have read, understand and will abide by all Responsibilities of Counselors and the Camper Protection Guide as detailed in the document titled, Duties of Counselors located at www.harding.edu/tahkodah."

Application Timeline

1. **All applications are due for both counselor and assistant counselor positions by January 31.**
2. **Interviews** will be conducted in January & February.
3. Our goal is to send out **Counselor contracts** no later than the Friday before Harding University's Spring Break; although, some contracts may go out a little later.
4. Contracts can be revised if additional sessions become available.

Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Social Sec # _____ - _____ - _____ Email: _____
 H# _____ (if HU/HA student) HU Mail Box # (if any) _____
Classification: HS: Jr Sr College: Fr So Jr Sr Grad Sex: F M

For Office Use Only:
 Interview date: _____
 References Rec'd: 1 2 3
 Act Areas: 1 _____ 2 _____
 T-Shirt: S M L XL 2XL
 Cabin: Y M O Class: Y M O

Camp Tahkodah Counselor Application
 Return to: Camp Tahkodah, HU Box 10844, Searcy, AR 72149 or Ezell 104

Section A: Availability

I am applying for: _____ Counselor (must be 18 years + 1 yr. college) _____ Asst. Counselor (must be 17 years)

<u>Sessions</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Rank Preferences</u> (Circle one for each session)
Orientation	May 26 - May 31	Required unless granted special permission to miss.
Session One	June 2 - June 7	1 2 3 4 5 NA
Session Two	June 9 - June 21	1 2 3 4 5 NA
Session Three	June 23 - July 5	1 2 3 4 5 NA
Session Four	July 7 - July 19	1 2 3 4 5 NA
Session Five	July 21 - July 26	1 2 3 4 5 NA

"NA" indicates "Not Available."
 "1" indicates most preferred session.
 "5" indicates least desirable session.

Have you read, "Responsibilities of Counseling Staff" located at www.harding.edu/tahkodah under "forms?" _____ yes _____ no

If we are unable to hire you for the entire summer, are you able to come and go, or do you need them to be consecutive?
 _____ My sessions do not need to be consecutive _____ My sessions need to be consecutive.

Dates of any weddings, family reunions, events, etc. that you will need to attend: _____

Names of other applicants you would like to work with: _____

Are you currently under any type of probation with your academic institution? _____ yes _____ no

What age group would you prefer to live with in a cabin and supervise? (rank all that apply, using 1, 2, 3)
 _____ 8-10 years old _____ 11-14 years old _____ 15-18 years old

In a Bible class setting, what age group would you prefer to teach? (rank all that apply, using 1, 2, 3)
 _____ 8-10 years old _____ 11-14 years old _____ 15-18 years old

Section B: Personal Information

Birth date _____ - _____ - _____ Age at camp time? _____ T-Shirt size: S M L XL 2XL

Name of School _____ City _____ State _____

Address where you would want your check mailed _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Major(s) & Minor(s) (if in college) _____ Cumulative GPA _____

Have you ever been convicted of a crime other than minor traffic violations? No _____ Yes _____ If yes, please explain.

Searcy area Church (if HU student) _____

Home Church _____ Office Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Email _____

Favorite Sonic Drink _____

Section C: Activity Areas

Activity Areas at Camp Tahkodah (You need not have experience in every activity within an area to work that area)

- Nature** includes horseback riding, archery, hiking, riflery, laser tag, & fishing.
- Waterfront** includes swimming, diving & canoeing.
- Crafts & Games** includes assisting campers with craft construction, overseeing the distribution and use of craft materials and tools, supervising the distribution of games.
- Sports** includes games such as volleyball, dodge ball, basketball, soccer and involves refereeing and supervising the play.

Supervising an Activity Area fills about four hours per day. Using 1, 2, 3 & 4, rank your preferences for these activity areas:

_____ Nature _____ Crafts & Games _____ Waterfront _____ Sports

Why do you prefer to work in the activity areas you chose as your 1st and 2nd preference?

I am certified in CPR.	yes	no	I am a certified lifeguard.	yes	no
I am willing to become certified in CPR.	yes	no	I am an experienced lifeguard.	yes	no
I am willing to receive training in First Aid.	yes	no	I am willing to become a certified lifeguard.	yes	no

Specific Abilities

For each activity below, put an "E" for experienced and willing, a "W" for willing but not experienced, and a "U" for uncomfortable, unqualified or not interested (**Mark as many as apply**). It is important for your satisfaction as well as camp's well-being that you give us an accurate representation of your experience and willingness with regards to these activities.

Large Group Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Leading worship songs <input type="checkbox"/> Leading a silly song <input type="checkbox"/> Presenting a devo to entire camp <input type="checkbox"/> Participating in a skit for the entire camp	Crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Lanyard tying <input type="checkbox"/> Art <input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing	Games <input type="checkbox"/> Ping pong <input type="checkbox"/> Foosball <input type="checkbox"/> Board games <input type="checkbox"/> Card games
Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer <input type="checkbox"/> Run Tourney <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball <input type="checkbox"/> Laser Tag <input type="checkbox"/> Teach _____ skills	Nature <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking <input type="checkbox"/> Riflery <input type="checkbox"/> Archery <input type="checkbox"/> Horseback riding <input type="checkbox"/> Saddling horses	Waterfront <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming Skill level: Strong / Avg. / Low How many strokes do you know? ____ Ever been on a swim team? ____ <input type="checkbox"/> Diving board <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing <input type="checkbox"/> Life-guarding
Small Group Leadership <input type="checkbox"/> leading a cabin devotional <input type="checkbox"/> skit direction <input type="checkbox"/> conducting share time (30" group discussion with opposite gender) <input type="checkbox"/> teaching a Bible class (same gender - Tahkodah provides curriculum)	Other abilities you possess that you feel could be useful at camp . . .	

Section D: Experience

Summer Camp Experience

Year(s)	Camper or Staff?	Name of Camp	Duties	Director's Name & Phone

For Office Use Only:

Employment History

Dates	Employer or Supervisor	Phone	Nature of Work

For Office Use Only:

Section E: References

(Previous Tahkodah Counselors do not need to supply a reference)

Provide the names and addresses of the three persons (not relatives) to whom you are sending your reference forms (pages 7 & 8 of this document). To qualify as a reference, a person must have at least one-year knowledge of your character, maturity, and ability. References should not be acquired from friends/peers. References should send completed forms directly to the HU address on the form.

	Name	Email address	Phone
Youth minister or HU faculty member			
Elder or preacher of home congregation			
Employer (if no employer, a Christian adult different from above)			

Reference Form

Tahkodah Applicant's Name: _____

(Applicant should copy this & give to three individuals or have them download from <http://www.harding.edu/tahkodah>)

REFERENCE INFO

Name _____

Position _____

Phone(s) _____

Email _____

RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO:
 Camp Tahkodah
 H.U. Box 10844
 Searcy, AR 72149
 ~or~
 tmcneal@harding.edu

The applicant listed above has applied for a position on the Camp Tahkodah counseling staff. Tahkodah counselors serve as the primary supervisors of 8-18 year old children on a 24/7 basis and are responsible for their overall well-being. Your name has been given to us as a reference for this applicant. We would appreciate your completing this form and returning it to us as soon as possible. **Your reply will be held confidential; applicants will not have access to your responses.** Thank you very much for your assistance with this inquiry. If you wish to discuss this applicant further, I invite you to contact me. My contact information is listed below.

1. In what capacity do you know the applicant? _____ How long? _____
2. If employer, what was the reason for termination?
3. How would you feel to learn that your own child was going to be supervised by this person?
4. How would you rate this applicant's performance? (check one column for each row below)

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	ACCEPT- ABLE	BELOW AVERAGE	WEAK	UNKNOWN
Spiritual Maturity						
Integrity / Character						
Emotional Stability						
Common Sense						
Initiative / Self-Motivated						
Ability to Relate to Children						
Displays Good Judgment						
Responsible / Conscientious						
Attendance / Punctuality						
Open to Supervision						
Leadership						
Flexibility						
Conscious of Self-Presentation						
Enjoyable to Be With						
How would you rate this person's overall potential to perform the job being applied for?						

Reference form Continues . . .

The things that have most impressed me about this person are: _____

If I had to choose, the things that most concern me about this person serving in this role are:

Please write additional comments you feel might help us discern the suitability of this applicant.

Have you had an opportunity to witness this person interact with children or teens? Yes / No
If so, please describe the nature and quality of such interactions:

- I **recommend** this person for a position as a counselor at Tahkodah **with no reservations**.
- I **recommend** this person for a position as a counselor at Tahkodah **with some reservations**.
- I **do not recommend** this person for a position as a counselor at Tahkodah.
- Please **call me** to discuss my recommendation. (Phone: _____)

Signature of Reference

Today's Date

I thank you for serving as a reference.

Travis McNeal, Camp Tahkodah Director
tmcneal@harding.edu
501-279-4564 (w) or 501-827-0080 (m)