

CURIOSITY CAMP -- SUMMER 2024 INFORMATION & PACKING SUGGESTIONS

Dear Camper,

We are excited that you will be attending this summer's Curiosity Camp!

You should plan to arrive on campus between 11:00 am and 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 14. If you arrive in Great Barrington earlier, please wait until close to 11:00 before coming on campus. If you foresee travel problems, please let us know beforehand. If you run into travel difficulties during the day on Sunday, please call our Campus Safety office (413-528-7291) and ask them to let us know when you will be arriving.

Registration will take place at Hill House, the camp residence hall (a map is available here: <https://simons-rock.edu/student-life/map-and-directions/index.php>). No activities are planned for families, aside from helping their son or daughter get settled in the dorm.

Dinner for students and staff will follow at 5:30. After dinner, at 6:30, there will be an introductory meeting where the Campus Life staff will meet with all students to discuss the various social, cultural, and recreational opportunities available during the two weeks, as well as to review social policies and expectations pertaining to your residency on campus.

The rest of this letter outlines various pre-camp considerations. As always, we're happy to answer any questions you may have.

COMPUTERS

If you have a laptop or tablet or Chromebook we highly recommend that you bring it with you. Dorm rooms can be locked, which means your equipment will be safe. Students will also have access to a (very) few Macs and PCs in the dorms and library. Public computers, however, are limited (the college's philosophy has always been to encourage students to bring their own equipment). Printers will also be available in the dorms and library when it comes time to print out your work. Wireless access is available in various campus buildings (e.g., classrooms, the library), as well as in the dormitories. If you prefer not to use Wi-Fi, you should bring an Ethernet cable. This will allow you to plug your computer into the Ethernet jack in your dorm room. After you arrive on campus, you will be given a group password that will allow you to access the campus network during your stay here. Please keep in mind and adhere to the following advice from the ITS department at the college (**not doing so could mean not being able to use the campus network or not being able to link your computer to the campus printing system**):

MESSAGE FROM ITS: All computer (Mac or Windows or Chrome) operating systems (OS) must be fully up to date, including all security patches, etc.) Failure to do this could mean having problems with the printing system used at the college. It will also be the responsibility of computer owners (other than Mac owners) to have an up to date anti-virus program running (especially machines still running Windows 7). Windows 8, Windows 10, and Windows 11 include a built-in anti-virus program called Windows Defender, but **anyone running an older Windows OS MUST install an anti-virus program**. An anti-virus program is required before you can join the campus network with a non-Mac computer. One possibility for those not already running Windows 8 or above is Microsoft Security Essentials (MSE). This program is free and has a very good score on all of the detection tests it has been put through: <http://windows.microsoft.com/mse> If they wish, Mac (Apple) users can download a free version of Sophos Anti-Virus from: <http://www.sophos.com/en-us/products/free-tools/sophos-antivirus-for-mac-home-edition.aspx>

To repeat: Those using Windows computers not running Windows 8 or higher must install an anti-virus program before they arrive on campus. Anti-virus programs are optional for Mac users.

CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

Please bring a large (150 page, 8 x 11) spiral notebook, or a few smaller ones (but still 8 x 11). Bring plenty of your favorite pens as well. We will supply paper for the printers. It's advisable to bring a thumb drive/flash drive with which to back up your work.

CLOTHING

Dress throughout the camp is summer casual. Plan on warm (sometimes hot and muggy) days and cooler nights (nights can be chilly, for example, if you are outside on the lawn for a play or campus bonfire). No formal clothing is needed during the two weeks, but you might want to have some casual but slightly nicer summer clothing for any indoor cultural events you might attend. Be sure to include sneakers, sandals, shorts, sweatshirts or sweaters, umbrella or raincoat, If you enjoy swimming, be sure to bring a swimsuit and towel.

DORMITORY SUPPLIES/DECORATION/ETC.

The college will supply pillows, blankets, linens, and towels (though these are institutional quality and may not be as soft and cozy as what you are used to at home). The mattresses are standard size singles (in case you prefer to bring your own bed linens). There are no wastebaskets in the rooms. Instead, trash cans and recycling bins can be found in the halls and lobbies. College dorm rooms are also spartan. If you have room in your suitcase, you might want to bring some things that will help make it feel more like home (pictures, a nice bedspread, etc.). Tapestries or other flammable materials may not be hung on the walls. In the past, many students have also found it useful to bring (or buy once here) a small desk lamp and an extension cord. Other things to bring: a few hangers, toiletries, an alarm clock (if needed in addition to your phone), and a portable fan if you have one (**the dormitory rooms, unlike the classrooms, aren't air conditioned**). Feel free to bring board games you enjoy, and non-electrical musical instruments. Having a book or two to read in your spare time might also prove useful. You may also check out books from the college library while here. Please do not bring TVs or large stereo systems. Cell phones are welcome!

INSECT REPELLANT

Although bugs don't seem to pose much of a problem for those of us who live in the area, some campers have mentioned that they wish they had brought insect repellent with them. If you're particularly "bugphobic," you might want to include some as part of your camp supplies. You can, of course, buy insect repellent in town once you're here.

WRITING SUPPLIES, PERSONAL ITEMS, ETC.

The college has a small bookstore on the premises, but its hours and supplies will be limited in the summer. In short, students won't have easy access to basic supplies, whether of an educational or personal nature. Remembering to bring some basic supplies with you is therefore important. On the weekends, however, students may walk into town and purchase supplies there, so long as they follow the established protocols when leaving campus. Depending on when you arrive on Sunday for registration, you and your family might be able to go into town to pick up anything that didn't make it into your suitcase.

PHONES/CELL PHONES

Cell phone reception is spotty on campus, but there are a number of "hot spots" that will quickly become known to you and your fellow students. Please expect to be frustrated initially when first trying to use your cell phone, but within a day or two you should be able to use it without any problem. Texting usually works even when calling doesn't. There are landline phone hook-ups in the dorm rooms. You're welcome to bring your own landline phone. That way your family and friends can call your room directly. You won't have access to the campus voice mail system, however, which means that if your family wants to leave messages, you will need a phone that's equipped for such. In addition, you will need to have a calling card number or a phone card to make long-distance calls using a landline. In recent years, as one might suspect, landline phones haven't made it into too many student suitcases.

MAIL

Your mailing address while here is simple: Your Name, c/o Curiosity Camp, followed by the college's address: Bard College at Simon's Rock, 84 Alford Rd., Gt. Barrington, MA 01230.

LAUNDRY FACILITIES

Washers and dryers are available in the dormitories. There is no charge for using them. You will need to provide your own laundry soap, however.

VISITORS

Your family may be able to visit you during the camp (preferably weekends) if you are not involved in class or other activities. **Please notify us beforehand of any planned visits.** If you go off campus with your family, you will need to inform your Community Director of your plans and sign out with the Campus Safety staff. We ask that you restrict your visitors during the three weeks to members of your immediate or extended family. A personal friend might be allowed to visit but only under the following conditions: 1) The friend is accompanied by adult family members or other adults known to you and your family; 2) Permission has been granted by the Community Director.

HEALTH SERVICES

The College's Wellness Center will have somewhat limited hours during the summer. Our registered nurse will be available for a limited number of hours each day to deal with minor medical issues and questions. We also have a summer contract with a local medical practice for those who require additional medical care. There is also a hospital within five minutes of campus in case of any emergencies. If you are bringing prescription medicine(s) with you, we assume you will be responsible for administering these yourself. We do not have enough staff to take on responsibility for administering medication.

Because there is always a chance that you might require off-campus medical attention, you must have some form of health insurance coverage in order to participate in the camp. International students must be sure their insurance is applicable in the U.S. If not, they should purchase temporary travelers' insurance (or something similar).

DINING SERVICES

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are served from Monday through Friday. Brunch and dinner are served on the weekends. Generous portions will be available at meals. We will also provide suitable vegetarian and vegan alternatives as a regular part of the cuisine. There are refrigerators in the dormitory lounges where snacks can be stored. Microwave ovens are also available.

ATHLETICS/RECREATION

Our athletic center will be available for use in the afternoons and on weekends. This includes tennis courts, indoor swimming pool, weight room, basketball court, climbing wall, etc. If you plan to make use of the facility, please bring appropriate clothing and equipment (some equipment can be checked out or rented as well). The soccer field will also be available for pick-up games, Frisbee, etc. If you enjoy bicycling, there are lots of back roads in the area. Be sure to bring a helmet if you decide to bring your bike. (You won't need a bike to get around campus, however.) Hiking shoes might also come in handy if you enjoy going for walks. In the past, the staff has organized some easy hikes in the area.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

We will provide many extra-curricular activities, both structured and unstructured. It will be up to you to decide which of these you want to participate in, from using the athletic center, to sharing your music or writing at open mic nights, to attending film showings, to participating in off-campus cultural excursions. A number of these off-campus trips and events (a play or two as well as some less expensive afternoon outings) are included in your tuition. You will be expected to pay for any additional off-campus activities that you choose to participate in. On Sunday evening of arrival day, the Campus Life staff will provide you with a comprehensive calendar of the various events and activities available during the three weeks. Please keep in mind that it is impossible for us to take everyone on every off-campus excursion. We will do our best, however, to see that everyone has an opportunity to participate in a few of them.

SPENDING MONEY

How much spending money to bring? This is difficult to answer since students' needs and interests (and parents' resources) will vary. You will need some spending money for such things as laundry detergent or snacks or attending additional off-campus events not covered by your tuition (off-campus activities are optional rather than required). On the average \$125-\$150 should suffice (though in the past some students have spent less, some a bit more). It's worth keeping in mind that students in the camp come from a variety of economic backgrounds. Spending large (ostentatious) amounts of money while one is here is not always conducive to fostering the kind of community spirit that we feel is a valuable aspect of the camp experience. Debit cards appear to be increasingly popular among summer students as a way to have money on hand for various needs (rather than large sums of cash -- not a good idea). We also have an ATM machine on campus that you can access with a bank card and pin (there is a fee, of course).

DEPARTURE

Campers are expected to depart campus no later than 1:30 pm on July 27.

FORMS THAT NEED TO BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

-- As previously indicated, the Medical Forms must be returned (must arrive at the College) **no later than July 6**. Please adhere to all the instructions outlined on the cover page of the form.

-- Please download, complete, and return the other 3 forms listed here **no later than July 6**. We're always happy to receive them well ahead of the deadline.

-- Please return the Flight Information form (if applicable) via e-mail as soon as you know your airline schedule.

1. A Rooming Questionnaire designed to aid us in assigning rooms and roommates **(due July 6)**.
2. Student and Family Contract and Liability Waiver (both you and a parent or guardian must sign page 3) **(due July 6)**.
3. The Photo & Publication Release form (signed by you and a parent/guardian) **(due July 6)**.

Send all materials via regular mail or as scanned e-mail attachments (please, no photographed copies) to: Curiosity Camp, Bard College at Simon's Rock, 84 Alford Rd., Great Barrington, MA 01230. Email: curiositycamp@simons-rock.edu