

GETTING TO KNOW THEM

We, at Camp Kinderland, strive to work and exist as a community. Program staff (counselors, group leaders, specialists) and campers may, to a certain extent, achieve this. However, non-program staff such as kitchen, maintenance and the infirmary, are often left out of our narrative. UnCOR wanted to begin to change that narrative by hearing those people speak, and sharing their voices with all of camp. In an attempt to do this, several UnCOR members interviewed people during the last weeks of camp, and have recorded those interviews. We know this comes very late, and that it is only a small first step in changing our narrative, but it is, we hope, a good-faith beginning.

We apologize to Csenge Tar, an invaluable member of the maintenance staff, whom we never got to interview.

The people responsible for these interviews are:

First Year CITs: Georgia Reed-Stamm, Frieda Hynes, Nikita Schkwalb

14s: Clarissa Fara, Naia Owens, Talia Varenik

Dance Adventure: Eleanor Faison

Seniors: Emile Regnier-Kline

We greatly appreciate the time that these hardworking interviewees took from their work or their little free time to allow us to interview them.

We hope to continue this project in 2019!

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DENNIS CORMIER

Dennis came to camp in 1980, to work for Joe Sargent (Sarge), then the head of maintenance. When Sarge vanished, Dennis had to take on the role, and it is initially through his labor and creativity that the physical plant -- the camp we love and need -- has endured and flourished. He spent years not merely fixing, but redesigning so many of our buildings, adding beautiful porches, fixing problems major and minor -- and basically saving the camp. Luckily, he was joined by a hardworking staff, and, for years under his supervision and with their labor, the physical camp weathered crisis after crisis. (Malfunctioning wells! Septic systems! No Water! Lightning! Falling trees! Leaking roofs! Washed-out bridges! Bunks needed! - -and that's not even the half of it!)

His favorite spots in camp are Chaney and Rose, because he knows so many stories about them. He's also spoken with the granddaughter of the man who built many of our bunks, and has wonderful stories to tell, of a time there were so few trees that you could see the doctor's house directly across the lake.



Bucky, Aviva, Dennis, Cindy, Jeff

CINDY TRUE

I came to camp after answering an ad that said "Peace-oriented summer camp seeks kitchen staff. Call Alice." That was 20 years ago -- 1998! I soon worked my way onto the maintenance crew, picked up building and repair skills, and then became Facilities Manager.

My workday doesn't end or begin -- my work goes around the clock, because the physical plant never rests. My daytime work -- aside from getting Clarisse ready -- is a little of analyzing and surveying camp's needs, delegating responsibility, empowering a crew and a little of long-term planning and a lot of responding to bunk needs, making repairs, and fixing and upgrading. In the

summer it's about maintaining the status. In the off-season, it's about improving the plant. My creative joy on an ongoing basis is the garden

My favorite spot in camp is the porch of Bob Marley.

I don't have a different life outside of camp, because I work at camp all year. However, instead of living here, we live in our house down the road. I play saxophone in a community band. Dennis, Clarisse and I like to explore the woods around the house and at camp, and to cook together. Clarisse's favorite thing to do when we get home is to play with her train set.

My future is here at camp. I can't think of anywhere else I would want to do the same work. When I came here as a young person, I found my family here. Someday, I suppose I will retire and maybe travel.

The way you can make my job easier is by paying attention to taking care of camp in the ways that one would expect: Pick up garbage and stuff; bring forks and spoons and bowls to the dining hall. Treat camp and others the way you would want to be treated.



Cindy, Austin, Csegej, Clarisse

MIKE SALOP

I've been coming to camp since 1980. My dad found out about camp from his girlfriend and he said, "You're going to camp!" Since then, I've been on and off (but mostly on), a camper, a CIT, a counselor, a group leader, canteen guy, Ira's assistant, play director and more. I started doing some version of office work as a part-time worker twelve years ago, and I became full-time Administrative Director about five years ago.

I wake up every day at 5:30 and am in the office at 5:45, where I work till 7 – 7:45. I get up that early to make up for time away from my desk to take care of Primo and Cluny. At work I usually enter receipts, do bookkeeping, correspond with parents, pay bills, sort mail and give tech support. My life outside of camp is similar: I work for camp and I play with my kids.

My favorite spot in camp is the porch of Chaney – it has a nice view of camp and it was the first bunk I ever lived in. Here's my story: Chaney is a big bunk, and I, being a new camper, was

placed with two other kids in a room by ourselves. We were definitely isolated and left out of the group. Nevertheless, I persevered! 😊

My hobbies are writing and watching TV and movies. I don't have as much time now, with two kids. For my future, when the kids are older, I'd like to do more writing. Also, if self-driving cars do come out, I would like to rent (or buy!) one. Something I'd like you to know about me is that my beard is not an aesthetic choice, but a product of laziness.

One way you could make my job easier is for the CIT to sort mail; there's not much else. I find general friendliness from the campers.

For me, camp has been a great success. I've found so many friends, I met Raquel, I think camp is great! I just want to say: if you see a problem, go to staff. Communication is key.

DAVE RENDELL

Camp found me! I was looking for a job at a summer camp, when Alice Shechter called me up and offered me a job. That was 18 years ago, in 2001, just a few months before the twin towers were destroyed.

Driving is a big part of my job. My day is unpredictable: there are trips to the doctor, the dentist, the ER, there are so many people being sick. Sometimes I'm running choices, or I'm taking as many photos as possible, especially of major camp events. At the beginning of every day I check with Cindy and Mike to see what I need to do.



My favorite spots are the porch of Maddy's house and the big rock in the pines by the lake.

During the year I live in Southern New Jersey. I used to be the head of the audio-visual department, but the company went bust. I got another driving job, and then worked at camp. I do a lot of volunteer work for Amnesty International.

I have another family in England: my mother, who's 91 years old, brothers, 3 nephews. I enjoy photography, nature, watching movies – like Academy Award winning films – and traveling. In two weeks I'll be going to Greenland. And, of course, I like going to protests. Also -- there was a time when my hair wasn't long.

My future plans are coming back to camp, traveling to far-away places, and going to England to visit my family.

What you can do to make my job easier is to clean up in the dining hall – and stop getting sick!!

I find working in camp eye-opening and emotional. It gives you hope for the future, seeing youth activism

MAT BUSSLER

I found out about camp when a high school friend applied nine years ago, and she passed the job over to me. I didn't even know it was a left-wing camp, but I love it. I've been working here since 2009. My first four-five years I did all the cleaning; now I do more responding to the daily chores and quality of life tasks. There is no such thing as a typical day except collecting garbage at 3 p.m. I've also directed a couple of plays at camp.

My favorite thing to do in camp is to look out at the middle of the lake.

I would say that I am the same person in and outside of camp. I am more artsy outside of camp, but in camp I do more hands-on, responding to problems. I am an actor and director in a theater program. I majored in that in college. One of my many hobbies is video games.

Something I think I'd like people to know about me is that I grew up on a goat farm.

There are many ways you can make our jobs easier: Do an intro to staff on how to do simple things like tying laundry bags. Tell us about toilet problems, break down cardboard, say "please" and "Thank you," write "Thank you" notes, but mainly, be mindful of what it takes to maintain camp.

My plans for the future are to someday have a family.

I've had good experiences at camp – I think it's great.



AUSTIN YELLINEK

I found out about camp through my friend, Mat, who brought me to work with him. This is my third year; I've only worked maintenance, but each year I help with the plays, doing lighting and sound, and providing tech support.



I get up at 7, clean the bathrooms, the rec hall and the office (depending on the need), have breakfast, do the laundry, fix things, and, after lunch, do more cleaning, fixing and garbage collecting. After dinner I like to go to share.

My favorite spot at camp is up at the well; it's nice and quiet and cool.

During the year I teach at a theater for 6- to 18-year-olds. I love Grateful Dead shows a lot, enjoy tie-dying, and I like tinkering and making things. My goal is to improve my teaching and, finally, to own my own theater.

The way you could make my job easier is to break down your boxes, put lids on trash cans (it does rain!), pick up trash, and say “Hi!” I feel invisible sometimes. It’d be more worth cleaning up people’s messes if they were friendlier. And I like having fun. Don’t hesitate to come up and say “Hi,” and start a conversation.

Working in camp has been good – hard, but worth it. It would be better if staff did more activities together, more talking to international staff. I sometimes don’t get to know someone till it’s too late.

BUCKY PHILLIPS

I found out about camp because my brother, Jeff, used to work here, and I’ve known Dennis a long time. I’ve been working with maintenance for 11 years. In the mornings I take care of kitchen trash and whatever else comes up: weed-whacking, laundry, mowing, whatever needs to be done.

My favorite spot in camp is by the big tree near Morris Rosenfeld – it’s nice and cool.

During the year I live in Dalton, Mass., and take care of my house. I like to play horseshoes, and I like to watch kids have fun at camp. I plan to work here for a while longer, then retire.

One way you could make my job easier? Don’t litter!

My experience at camp has been fun! I want everyone to get along.

ANNA MacEWAN

I always knew about Kinderland. When I was growing up, I knew kids that went to camp, and when I was looking at camps for Olive and myself, I looked at the values, peace and social activism, to teach her. I’ve worked here the past two years, for the 3-week session

My schedule varies: there are a ton of people here, so it’s difficult. I’m an early riser; I run and walk before breakfast, then I need to care for the people in the infirmary. I give out medications at meals, make phone calls to the parents of sick kids, organize doctor’s visits. Every day is different.

My favorite spots in camp are at the picnic tables by the waterfront, where you can see the lake, and also my room.

I’m a nurse practitioner, a mom, I work at a K-12 school-based primary care clinic in Cobble Hill, sponsored by SUNY Downstate. My favorite hobbies are exercise, running, swimming and

yoga. As far as my plans are concerned, I already have a professional life, so my future plans are for traveling with my family. I grew up in Massachusetts, so I'd like to visit some places in the United States -- New Orleans and the Great Plains -- and I'd also like to visit Puerto Rico.

One thing I'd like people to know about me is that I love going out for sushi with my daughter.

TANYA RICOT

I work at Kingsbridge Hospital in Massachusetts, and I looked up jobs for camp nurse. I saw Camp Kinderland, but I had never heard of it, so I went on the website to gain knowledge. I talked to Cindy and people at camp beforehand about the politics of Camp and I found that my values and camp values aligned.

It's busy from 8 am until I go to bed. I wake up early, call my family, set up morning meds, prepare snacks and water and refill necessities in the infirmary. I often talk to kids before breakfast; they come to me and say hi. And I feel it is my responsibility to talk to them; they often just want to be heard. I talk to the kids who are homesick. For many, I fulfill that morning motherly role. I do not often get time to myself outside of this summer at camp, and I've used it to retreat, doing things for myself, writing a list of my life positives and negatives. You are never too old to work on yourself. I also bond with the non-program staff, like the kitchen staff.

My favorite place in camp is Share; it represents what camp stands for. I appreciate the values of camp and love to see them acted out by kids and staff. Having a daily meeting where we come together is such an important part of camp life for the kids. I am very happy my kids were able to be a part of it during the Olympics and seeing the hype surrounding the teams on Share. My kids were on Black Lives Matter and The Uprising of the 20,000.

I am Haitian and from Kissimmee, Florida. I am known as Mother Teresa. I like to help a person, that's who I am. I always have a Thanksgiving dinner for my family and friends and for those who are not fortunate enough to have their own celebrations with their biological families. I also send lots to Haiti; I sent three barrels of foods/goods with my own money/effort. I ask others, for things such as feminine care products, diapers, food; things that will help besides money. In the future I want to continue to be a humanitarian and help in the way that I do, giving to my family and friends. Helping my coworkers. Continuing to provide for my sister who has a school in Haiti. I am often told that I cannot save the world but I believe the help I provide truly makes a difference and that people chipping in to help is essential.

I am very conscious of my race and try to not limit myself because of how I present to people or how people treat me. I aspire to be as successful as I can and have become that person in a lot of ways for my kids and family. I believe having a mindset free of restriction is very important for people of color.

I have learned to speak up for myself more. I feel bad about it at times because giving is in line with the person that I am. I speak up for myself however, so that others may also learn to speak up for themselves. A person having a voice is important to me.

Camp is a first time for me. I am allowed to be by myself and really do for myself. I usually spend a lot of time being there for others, but I am finding it more and more important that I am helping the person stand on their own feet rather than doing the task for them.

I am a huge shopaholic and usually spend four hours in the mall. I like my son to have the newest Jordans and newest clothes. I also really enjoy spending time with my family; I have a younger brother, about eight years younger, who also has kids. They recently toured Boston, and I went apple picking as well as whale watching for the first time in my life.

There is no way to truly make my job easier. I believe the work I do in the infirmary is my responsibility and I accept and hold that responsibility proudly. I feel that those who work in the infirmary have a purpose. No matter the hour, they have to be there for the children. They are the ones that have to remind the kids that it will be okay no matter the hour or the injury. "We are all moms." None of this seems to be new for them, it comes as instinct.

As far as my experience in camp goes, I have encountered lots of children at camp that are different in behavior than what I am familiar with. I often get less pleases and thank yous than I give and am used to hearing. Some of the bunk staff say it is because of privilege but I do not find that to be true. I don't fully understand what the staff is getting at. What does privilege mean? To me a lot of the behavior has to do with home learning. A simple "Thank you" goes a long way, as does "Excuse me" and "Good morning." I do not like that people say "Hey you" or "I need this/Can I get this?" without a greeting. I attribute this to me growing up in the South as well as with a West Indian background, but also just the emphasis my parents placed on respecting others. People in general at camp could go a long way by just giving me a good morning in return or politely asking for my name if they do not know it.

CLAUD GENTY

I learned about camp when my sister came to visit and told me about it; this is my first summer. My normal job is in health care; I go to people's houses, cook, take care of them, do their laundry. I deal with sick people and the elderly. This is my first time working in a camp; I am meeting new people and seeing a new culture. I also clean more here than I normally do.

My day is always busy: I start at 7 and finish at 4. I clean everything – I clean the condos, the linen room, the rec hall, Robeson, many of the other buildings in camp. It takes me two days to do the windows, clean up all the trash.

My favorite spot is the rec hall.

Some things I'd like you to know about me? It's my first time living in such a big land. There are so many places to explore. I love music, especially Jazz. I sing in the shower. I'm a hard worker. At home, I walk every day; I clean, cook, go to church, take care of my kids. I relax watching TV; "Days Of Our Lives" is my favorite show.

It would make my job easier if my job was split up more, and my salary was better. It should be more fair, maybe pay by the hour and by how much you actually work. I work long days, sometimes till 9 – 9:30, and I just make a living wage.

Camp is not good, but not bad. People don't disrespect me and I don't disrespect people. I like camp; most of the kids are friendly, and say "Hi."

MAGDA CEBULA

I learned about camp on the computer; this is my first summer.

When I'm not working, I sit in the office or talk to my friends. My favorite spot in camp is the lake – when it is nice weather!

At home I like to cook; I'm also interested in cocktails, because I used to be a bartender. I also like listening to music. I live in Poland and, at the university, I study tourism and life science. I want to finish my studies, but right now I want to go to England or the Netherlands and work.

There are many meals that take a lot of time to prepare; it would make my life easier if we'd stop making those meals! Otherwise I've had a good time so far in the kitchen, but I wish I had more time to spend at activities with the campers, like at arts and crafts. We feel a little cooped up in the kitchen

BRIAN HYNES

Because my daughter is close to the same age as Lulu, I met Ira and Val at a playground in The Bronx, and they told me about camp. I've been working here for three years.

My day starts at 6 am. I come into the kitchen, check on things, start the coffee maker, get ready for staff at 6:45. At 8, we put out breakfast. After we clean up, we have a break till 11, when we prepare for lunch. The dinner shift starts at 4. When I'm not working, I talk to campers and bunk staff about the meals, and I attend share.

My favorite place in camp is the waterfront, but I haven't been there since visiting day.

I live in The Bronx; we run a healthy food business to help control diabetes. In my spare time, I like to camp, to hike, and to play music. On my days off here I hike around the area.

When I was a young adult I became interested in radical and political thought and anti-war activities. I began questioning society, which all relates to why I like Kinderland.

My plans for the future are just to wait and see. I'm happy with my business, my daughter is in high school and will be transitioning to college. My father is old, and I need to take care of him. I'm waiting for the next phase of life.

My job would be easier if I had more advance notice of trips, or of evening activities that require food preparation (for example, making 'smores). I would also like any constructive feedback, for example, things you'd like to see us cook.

My time in camp has been excellent. I spend all day with the staff in the kitchen – there have been ups and downs, staffing changes, but I don't see how you could avoid that. We have a good team now – a couple of young people from The Bronx, who we're happy with.

BORGLARKA KISS (BOGI)

I found camp through a program called "Camp Leaders." Last year, Cindy found my file and chose me. This is my second year here; I stay for seven weeks. During breaks from work I come to the office and communicate with my friends and family on line.

I live in a small city in Hungary. I just graduated. I studied economics and business, and would like to stay in that field. I will start working when I go home. I want to be happy about what I am doing, as well as make enough money to be able to travel. I like reading, listening to music, traveling and hanging out with friends.

I liked camp Olympics; I just cheered, even though I don't know how to play. I liked Lake Compounce, and the kids in general; they are so cheerful.

What might make my job easier is if I had exact working hours and a job description. I would also like the kids to say "Please" and "Thank you."

DORA PUNK (DORI)

I found out about camp through a friend who was working here, who arranged a job for me. I've been working in camp for 6 years. I started when Tofu Tim was the cook. I remember when you campers were Inters.

I wake up at 6:20 so I can be at work by 6:45. First I check the news to see what's going on, then I work till about 9 or 10. I have a break until 11, then go back to prepare lunch. I work until 2, and have a break till 4. I finish work about 7 – 7:30. Then I hang out, maybe go to the lake, go to sleep. My favorite spots in camp are the waterfront – it's beautiful -- and the office (for the Wi-Fi).

You ask who I am outside of camp: I'm a university scholar in Budapest, studying logistics management. My hobbies? I like writing letters to my pen pals, listening to music – especially dance music. I love to travel; I've been to 15-16 countries.

How can you make my job easier? Stop running in the dining room – it’s dangerous and blocks the way – and be more respectful when asking for food and other things. Be polite, and ask, don’t demand. Often people do not see there are high demands made on us, and sometimes people are rude. When people say “Thank you,” it makes me happy.

NASHAWN SHIRLEY

I wake up at 5:30, shower and get dressed, then work from 6:30 to 9:45. I go back to work from 11 to 2:30, then am off till 4, work till 7:30. After work, I play basketball, go to share, interact with the campers, then go to my cabin. I found out about camp through my cousin, Giovanni – Gio; this is my first year here.

My favorite place at camp is the infirmary, because it has Tania, food (fried chicken!) and Wi-Fi.

You can make my job easier a few ways: bring dishes to the dishroom, not the first counter. Be clean – I’d like less food on the floor – and say “Thank you!”

My Hobbies? Basketball and chess. I’m really good at chess – I beat everyone and I’ve won trophies! What I’d like people to know is that I’m friendly. Don’t ignore me -- Don’t be afraid to say “Hi!” Don’t just walk past.

JHON PAULINO

On a regular camp day, I wake up, work, hang out with kids or go to my cabin, work, chill with campers, work, shower, change, chill with the kids, and play basketball. I’m happier on the last shift because it ends earlier. I found out about camp through a line of people: Lamel told Gio who told Nashawn who told me – then Cindy hired me.

My favorite spots at camp are the basketball court and the infirmary. My hobbies? Writing and listening to music. My favorite type of music is rap and hip hop.

My camp experience has been really good – it’s been a great experience! But what could make my job easier is if it would start later!

MATT ROSEN

This is my first year at camp; I found out about it from my family, who’ve gone here. I have the same schedule as everyone else, but at night I go to the rec hall – which is my favorite spot at camp. I like to go to sleep early.

You can make my job easier by smiling and being cheerful (but not too cheerful), saying “Thanks!” and also by stacking things together that belong together.

Outside of camp, I play guitar, play video games, and hang out with friends. What I’d like people to know about me is that I’m a heavy metal guitarist.

EMESE

This is my first year; I saw an ad on Facebook, Camp Leaders. I have the same schedule as everyone else in the kitchen. I do everything to set up the salad bar. After dinner I like to chill in the office and use Wi-Fi. Or go to the lake to swim and canoe – and sleep.



My favorite spots in camp are the linen room and the lake. I like working in camp, because I used to cook at home for my dad. My hobbies are reading, watching movies, sports -- running, gymnastics, skiing -- chilling with friends and photography. This is my last year as a student in physiotherapy; I plan to become a physical therapist

I've had a good experience at camp, but you can make my job easier by not making a big mess at the salad bar,

I'd like people to know that I'm a twin!