

Quest West News

The Newsletter for Camp Quest West

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Registration Now Open!

Happy New Year! We are now announcing the opening of 2009 Registration. For those of you who want to get a kick start on summer, register early.

Like last year, we're renting Camp Ross Relles outside of Grass Valley, CA.

This year's camp theme:
Encounter with Reality

Kids Camp: Sun July 12-Sat July 18
\$450 first child until May (\$500 after)
\$50 sibling discount
\$50 friend referral rebate
Ages 8-15.
CIT (Counselor in Training) 16-17

Family Camp: Thurs July 16-Sun Jul 19
\$75 family registration fee
Plus the price of meals
\$120 adult
\$80 child 8 and up
\$50 child 4-7
3 and under eat free
Tent camping with showers, pool, meals, meeting lodge. Four cabins are available on a first come first serve basis - \$100 additional.

Registrar Excited about Online System

"I am very excited to be this year's Registrar again. For the first time we offer everything-online registration! We are all very excited about this new option. It makes my life as a registrar much easier and allows me to be more efficient, faster, and also save the life of a few trees in the process.



The registration process is extremely easy and fast: Log on to our website www.campquestwest.org , chose 'registration' and then simply opt for the registration form that applies to you, depending on the number of children you would like to register. The forms are very simple and quick to fill out, attractively designed in inviting color choices. Handy pop up windows give additional info for some entry areas. At the end of the form you will automatically be directed to Paypal for easy online payment.

Just as in past years, we are requesting a Health Form for each camper. This can be done at a later date if you are running into a time crunch when registering. Space is limited, so hurry and register now to save your slot(s) and don't miss our Early Bird Special (camp price will increase in May). For any questions regarding the registration you can e-mail me at RajaShanti@juno.com."

---Gloria Kaczmariski, Registrar

Win a Free Trip to Camp

If you're 10-13 years of age and design the back of the Camp Quest West 2009 T-Shirt, you could win a campership to Camp Quest West this year.

Tell us what color the shirt should be and use two other colors in the graphic.

Eligibility: Kids 10-13 years old
Judging based on simplicity and how well the graphic illustrates our 2009 camp theme "Encounter with Reality".

Deadline: 10 April 2009

Submit your design by email:
west@camp-quest.org

or snail mail:

Camp Quest West Contest
50 W Edith Ave #2
Los Altos, CA 94022

Be sure to include a phone number where a parent can be reached.

Winner to be announced April 19, 2009

Meet up with us at camp fairs

San Jose, March 7, Westgate Mall
San Francisco, March 14, 8th & Brannan
Sacramento, Parents Monthly, TBD

We're looking into another regional camp fair, stay tuned online at www.campquestwest.org.

Wanna volunteer? Just contact me:

Phone: (650) 917-9113
Email: c_lolos@yahoo.com
--- *Constantine Lolos, Marketing*

What's Family Camp About?



We asked our lead family camp volunteer, Julie Willey, and here's what she had to say:

"This is a great opportunity for families to connect up with other parents with similar values. What I like most about family camp is vegging out while the kids have a chance to play with others, giving them time to be outside in nature, exploring, playing and discovering."

Family Camp is a mixture of organized family activities and good old fashioned free time. We'll run some nature hikes, family challenges, ice cream making, campfires and art projects. Free time will feature swimming pool with lifeguards and gold panning! Don't you wish it was summer already?

Word From a Donor

Why do people donate to Camp Quest West? Here's what Art Jackson, long time Camp Quest West supporter had to say:

"We all know we need to involve young people in Freethought. The question is how to do that. Camp Quest has a proven model where kids can not just talk about it, but actually participate and see humanism modeled."

Want to donate? You can do that online at www.campquestwest.org or by sending a check to our treasurer:

Camp Quest West Treasurer
PO Box 225127
San Francisco, CA 94122-5127

First 30 donors to send \$100 or more will receive a commemorative "Gas Mask" T-shirt from last year marking them as a special Survivor Donor.

Sign up to be on staff!



Camp Quest West is seeking applicants to become counselors. Although there is no pay, you will have the opportunity to work with and learn from other freethinkers, to have a unique camping experience in one of the most beautiful areas of the country, and to help develop critical thinking in young people, all while having fun!

California law requires that we have an RN or LVN on site, so we are especially seeking a nurse. Although we can't pay a salary, the nurse's child can attend camp for free. Now there's an offer you can't refuse! If you are interested in becoming a counselor or camp nurse for Camp Quest West, visit our website, and click on the "Volunteer" link.

If you have questions about what it's like to be on staff, feel free to email us at west@camp-quest.org. Positions will be filled by qualified people according to when the application is received, so we urge you to apply as soon as possible.

— Joyce Sogg, Staffing Director

Meet your 2009 Camp Organizers!

We have put together an A+ team of organizers for 2009. It's never too late to join us. Each of our organizers could use a hand, so if one of these cool cats sounds fun to work with and it seems like it'd be up your alley, give us a holler.

Welcoming 2009 Newcomers:

Program Director
Cris in Roseville

Cris says, "I have a severe love of science, philosophy and the natural world,



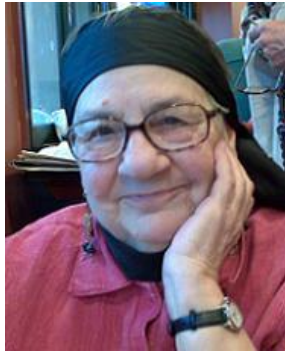
especially microbiology. Mmmmm-microbes! I am also quite smitten with the outdoors as one could imagine. I have Associate's degrees in psychology, natural sciences and biology. I am also a ceramicist and general, all-around artist. I have 2 kids ages 7 and 10 whom I stay home with when I am not in school. I am excited by the opportunity to help kids develop their own interest in, and love of, understanding the incredible world around us using the scientific method.

While I am a bit loathe to put myself into any category, I would likely be classified as an agnostic/atheist. That would be to say that while I cannot rule anything out, I also cannot see any reason to put the supernatural into my belief systems. And so I live my life with no acceptance of the supernatural. And much praise for the natural."

Staffing Director
Joyce Sogg

Joyce writes:

"Summer camp was a most important part of my growing up. I was of the generation that went to camp for most of the summer, often eight weeks, and I loved almost every minute of my time there. (To let you know how old I am, camp cost the outrageous sum of \$20.00 per week.) I still sing the songs, play the games, and tell stories about those wonderful days.



"But, there was always a problem. I have been a lifelong atheist, and every Sunday night at camp we had a religious service. I felt left out and troubled. It was clear, at least to a pre-teen, that I had to stay in the closet. It was lonely and alienating. (I've since learned that one should come out of the closet at every opportunity, but I was not so brave back then.) I once went to the minister who conducted the service to question this god, but he just put me off.

"When I learned of Camp Quest West, I knew immediately that this was important. My grandchild, now a third generation atheist, would have a place to share summer camp activities among questioning freethinkers. Camp Quest combines the best of traditional summer camp with critical thinking games and activities. I am pleased to be able to help keep this camp active so there will be a place for inquiring youth to play and learn."

Operations Director
Janie in Sacramento

Operations is responsible for all the important behind-the-scenes stuff without which camp cannot happen: insurance, site rental, field trip bus, lifeguards... and more!



Janie describes herself, "I am a super-curious 40 something with two young boys. I love the outdoors, music, reading, science, humor and learning. I encourage my kids to investigate and think for themselves and that is what drew me to Camp Quest. Once I discovered what cool and interesting people are organizing the camp I wanted to volunteer so I had an excuse to hang around all of them! Can't wait 'til July! "

Marketing Director
Constantine Lolos

Constantine Lolos is an Electrical Engineer who after spending 20 years in the Aerospace Industry decided that there had to be a better way to earn a living than being surrounded by the madness that any large corporate and / or bureaucratic environment necessitates. At which time he decided to work with material that he always enjoys, Mathematics. So inspired, since 1994 Constantine has had his own math (and



physics) tutoring company.

Constantine is particularly inspired by the metaphoric (symbolic) interpretation of the stories that the various world civilizations have given us. It was the realization that even when literal interpretations of these stories are completely absurd none the less the feelings and images from these stories have been powerful in supporting and maintaining a particular human society.

With this metaphoric view of the world's myriads of stories Constantine enjoys storytelling with the emphasis on the personal interpretation a story stirs in an individual. This metaphoric approach brings about an incredible number of possible interpretations with the actual world consequences being the sifter of their usability (to an individual or to a society) at any point in time or place.

What Constantine finds particularly interesting is that these stories functions like poems where an individual can experience from the very same story different meanings at different times (not to mention different places). Is this not what makes the world go round?

And Kudos to our Returning Veterans:

Camp Director : Chris Lindstrom
Treasurer : Adrienne Mowery
Family Camp Lead : Julie Willey
Registrar: Gloria Kaczmarski

Read more about them online at www.campquestwest.org

Camp Director's Corner



I know people are always amazed that we're planning summer camp in January - but there is a lot to do, especially this time of year getting the word out there to potential campers and staffers and getting registration open. I'm hugely encouraged by our 2009 organizing team - a better group of people I could not ask for! We're always looking for extra hands to make light work - if you can help out making phone calls, host a party for potential campers, staff a camp fair booth for an hour or two or simply send out emails to folks in local Freethought groups, let us know and we'll get you looped in.

I wanted to send a big Thank You to everyone who supported us last year. After having to cancel camp in the face of the Northern California fires, there were days I didn't want to get out of bed in the morning! Thanks to all the parents who thanked us for making the safe decision and the donors who called and asked how they could help. I'm sure we would not have had the strength to keep going without you. I do want folks to understand that we are in a solid financial position. With everyone else in the country, we're worried about the unemployment rate and it's affect on families, but we're in as good a position as anyone going into this next season.

However, last year's experience does have our Operations Team thinking about Plan B. We've got a fabulous Plan A: Camp Ross Relles with electricity, running water, cabins, main lodge, swimming pool, gold panning and the rest. But we

are exploring what we'd need for a Plan B.

If we had someone with land in the country who might be willing to stand by in case of fire at Plan A site, we could work with the local county health department to prepare a plan for getting the appropriate tents, food service, water, porta-potties, showers & busing in place for a "kickin' it old school" Plan B camp. I visited a generous humanist's 10 acres in the country last week, and, although I've decided his site won't work for us, mainly because it's not on a public road, it has started the creative juices flowing. If you know someone who has the right parcel of land and might be willing to let us use it (even for a fee) in case of fire or other natural disaster in Grass Valley, please let us know.

As always, please send ideas, suggestions, news you think parents might be interested in our way.

About Camp Quest West

Camp Quest West is a summer camp emphasizing critical thinking for girls and boys ages 8 to 17. It is affiliated with National Camp Quest (Ohio), the first secular summer camp for youth in the history of the United States. Camp Quest was specifically designed for children of atheists, agnostics, freethinkers, humanists, Unitarians, or whatever terms might be applied to those who maintain a naturalistic worldview. We are operating officially as a subcommittee of Atheist Alliance, an IRS 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization and can accept checks under the Camp Quest West name. Contents © 2008 by Camp Quest West.

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