

A Day in the Life of a Joni and Friends Family Retreat Short Term Missionary (STM)/Volunteer at Spruce Lake

We are excited that you are considering serving with us as a Short Term Missionary (STM) at Joni and Friends Family Retreat at Spruce Lake. It is our hope and prayer that God will not only use you in the life of families affected by disability during your week of service, but that He would plant the seed of disability ministry in your heart.



If it is your first time serving people affected by disability, it is natural that you may be feeling a little bit anxious wondering what you signed yourself up for. You will be taken through a thorough training and orientation beginning on Sunday at 11 am that will answer many of the questions you may have. STM Coordinators and Program Staff will be available throughout the week to help you at any time! In the meantime, here is a brief rundown of how your days may look (there is a lot of flexibility needed at Family Retreat, so your experience may vary):

Potential STM Assignments (Given Out Monday Morning):

- **Family Assignment** – many STMs are assigned to a family who has at least one member with a disability. Each family affected by disability is unique, so you may be asked to serve alongside a child or adult with a disability (often called a “camper”) or you might support another member of the family who is not disabled (usually a sibling). Depending on the needs of the family, you may serve as the only STM with the family or as part of a team of two to four STMs.
- **Age Group Programming**- You may be assigned to work in one of the age group programming areas (Pre-School, Children’s, KAOS (Jr. High), or Impact (young adults)) to assist the leader with their daily plans. Part of your responsibility in this area will be to help keep everything running smoothly – whether that means running a particular part of the program, spending time with a sibling who does not have an STM, or getting the members of the group engaged in activities.
- **Floater STMs**– These STMs are often the glue that holds the week together! Floating STMs will have the privilege of getting to know many of those who come to camp and may cover for other STMs when they need breaks, provide back-up to an STM who may need additional support with their assignment, and assist with some of the non disabled siblings who may not have a STM, but may need some extra “TLC.” Your flexibility is appreciated in this role, because your assignment might change several times throughout the day!

Daily Schedule:

Each day will begin the same for **every STM** when we gather together at 7:30 am to review important details for the day and worship together.

If you are a Family STM, after devotions your day might go something like this:

MEALS - Meet your family at an agreed upon time and location to share a meal together. Ask the parent how you can be most helpful as you go through the meal and be available to help with clean up, getting additional drinks or dessert, etc. If you and the family are comfortable and your camper needs it, we encourage you to

help with feeding. During meals, if you are working with a child, help your camper tell their family about the activities they participated in and prepare them for the events to come in the next part of the day.

PROGRAM - You will go from breakfast and lunch to the age group program area for your camper. You are responsible to stay actively involved with your camper throughout the programming times. The leader of your programming area will have all activities planned with schedules available for each day. Please help your camper participate in the activities to the best of their ability. If you are unsure how to do this, please ask the group leader or STM Coordinator.

If the family member you are working with is having difficulty in the program, you may take them for a walk around the circle area, keeping in the eyesight of others. *Please be sure to let the program leader know what you are doing and where you are going. After you both take a break, try to re-engage the child/young adult in the program.*

FREE TIME – Each day you will have two hours of free time (3 to 5 pm, typically) while the family spends time together. You can use this time to rest and refresh yourself, whether that looks like sleeping, reading, swimming, hiking, etc. Please stay on Spruce Lake grounds unless you let the STM Coordinator and /or Directors know of your need to leave the camp property (and are over age 18).

EVENINGS – Most evenings there are family activities (Ice Cream Social, Campfire, and Talent Show). You will attend these activities with the camper/family to which you are assigned. Once the evening activity ends (generally about 8:30 or 9 pm) you are “off duty” (apart from Monday evening debrief) and may feel free to rest, enjoy the snack bar, game room, etc.

Monday evening after the Ice Cream Social, all STMs will gather together for a time to debrief the day. Friday morning all STMs will meet together for a final debrief of the week. Each debrief time will provide the opportunity to ask questions and share how you saw God at work!

For more information contact:

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