

## Expectations of JYM Junior Staff

*THANK YOU for volunteering your time, heart, gifts, and spirit!*

- ♥ JYM provides a nurturing and joy-filled spiritual experience for children. Our primary function is to be present to them, ensuring their safety and wellbeing. (It's awesome that we have a great time, too!)
- ♥ We deeply value your playfulness, energy, creativity, and joy and count on you to engage with the children! Your willingness to be with them, offering appropriate, loving hospitality and friendship, is a powerful gift. Be yourself!
- ♥ We count on you to help with carrying lots and lots of tubs, doing dishes – including pots and pans, helping at the craft table, etc. The reality is we count on you to do more lifting than some of our older staff.
- ♥ Like all staff, you must follow the child safety guidelines for NEYM's youth programs.
- ♥ Tender information that is shared about individual children or families is considered confidential and should not be shared outside of the retreat with anyone. If you have questions about what this encompasses, ask me. At the same time, if you hear or observe that a child has been or is in physical danger, or has been abused in ANY way, speak with me asap or, if you can't find me, another adult staffer.
- ♥ You are *billboards on being Quakers* for the children – from how you live your life to how you sincerely engage in conflict resolution, build friendships, share humor, quiet down during large group circles, and use technology.
- ♥ So..... Do not spend unnecessary time on your phone or other device. If you have an important call or text, of course, take it – away from the children if you can. Just like in JHYM, retreat staff and junior staff follow the media commitment. If possible, put your phone in the hanging phone holder. Obviously, exceptions happen!
- ♥ Friends who frequently jr staff tend to develop wonderful friendships with each other. While this is a bonus, please try to be primarily present to the children. (And yes, you can gently remind the adult staff when they forget!)
- ♥ Our policy is to have an *adult* in every sleeping space. If children ask you to be “the staffer” in their room, it is best to say, “I don't know where I'll be yet” and then check with me. Sometimes we may need you elsewhere.
- ♥ Do pace yourself and let me know if you need a break. Try to get a reasonable amount of sleep so that you can be present and helpful in the morning, mindful that JYM'ers wake up A LOT earlier than teenagers!
- ♥ **Please ask me and other adult staffers for help – from advice to ‘back up’ and clarification with anything!** Junior Staffers frequently struggle with feelings that JYM children do not always respect their authority or role. Truth is, this is true. They don't! While there may be a bit of ageism going on, my perspective here is that respect is generally earned through relationships over time. New adult staff struggle with the same thing – just like most substitute teachers do in school classrooms, right? It's all about relationships. That doesn't mean we shouldn't keep working on this and talking about it. I purposefully refer to you as *junior* staffers to acknowledge that you have *some* responsibilities and leadership but, *no matter how exceptional, awesome and amazing you are (and if you weren't, you wouldn't be junior staffing)*, you do not have as much authority as adult staffers do. If you ever feel that I'm asking or depending on you to take on more responsibility than is appropriate, please let me know pronto.
- ♥ Thank you for your time, generosity, and open-hearted presence. You are a gift!

*Gretchen Baker-Smith*