

Position Title: Dorm Mom/Counselor

Work Location:

Dormitory on a college campus

Purpose of the Position:

As “Dorm Moms,” Tech Trek’s *in loco matris*, you will provide the emotional foundation these girls-becoming-women need while on their Tech Trek adventure. You are both advocates and enforcers – looking out for the girls’ best interests and representing their needs, making sure they get where they need to be and do what they need to do, having fun, following the rules and staying safe.

Responsibilities and Duties:

Each Dorm Mom will be responsible for 7-12, twelve to thirteen year old girls, all of whom will be entering the eighth grade in the fall. They come from all over the area and are a very diverse group, varying greatly in life experience and personality. Some have never been away from home, some will be homesick. Others might be hyperactive, shy or have special needs. Some may get sick, get their periods, sprain an ankle, cut a finger, etc. The most important things are to keep them busy, keep them safe, and treat them with respect and concern.

You are expected to attend all staff meetings, generally held each day in the morning. This is when you will be informed of the details for that day and the next. Things change during camp and schedules may need to be adjusted.

You are also expected to hold dorm group meetings with your girls each day. This is when you inform them of any changes to the schedule, review the day and touch base with the group. One of these meetings will be devoted to explaining how to, and helping the girls, write thank you notes to the branches that provided them with their scholarships.

Several camps have a skit night where the girls depict either women in history or science. They will need help in developing their skits and you should review them before the night of the event. This is one opportunity to build group cohesion.

Other camps have additional activities involving the dorm group and you will be the leader for those.

You are expected to know the whereabouts of your girls at all times. Some campuses allow the girls to leave the dorm in groups after informing their dorm mom. Other campuses do not allow the girls to be without a staff member while outside the dorm. These campuses will require more of their dorm moms than the others.

It is very important that the same message be sent to all of the girls. With this in mind, a careful review of the contract that the girls have signed is in order. There are additional rules unique to each campus situation that the camp director will make you aware of. The living and eating facilities are different at each campus and require an adjustment of rules. Sometimes, this will not become evident until arrival on campus.



If you experience any difficulty with one of your girls, seek the assistance of the camp director(s) or camp nurse. The teachers may report any problems they encounter during core class to you. Do not call the camper's parent without consulting with your camp director.

Qualifications:

Be an AAUW member. This is so you are covered by insurance.

You will need to have your fingerprints taken via the Live Scan procedure. Your camp director will provide you with the form and a list of locations to have this done. This needs to be done at least 6 weeks before your camp begins to allow for processing. This is a requirement of our insurance carrier.

One of the most useful attributes of a good dorm mom is flexibility. Things change because of unexpected opportunities or schedule problems with our many volunteer presenters. Sometimes the rooms and times of events will change. It is important for you to keep informed.

Some campuses are more physically challenging than others. Most camps require a great deal of walking (5 miles a day is not uncommon). You must be physically capable of keeping up with active campers. You will need to provide a medical release form and biographical information to the camp director(s).

Commitment Expected:

You are expected to be on campus for the duration of the camp. Some camps require the staff to arrive the day before the girls so their week would go from Saturday to Saturday. Other camps only require their staff to be on site from Sunday through Saturday morning. It is very important for the well-being of the campers that you remain at camp unless there is a personal or family emergency.

Although, officially, you are not on duty when the girls are in class or on field trips, a certain number of adults are needed as chaperones on the field trips. You should try to visit the classrooms and workshops to see what your girls are doing to better facilitate a dialogue among you.

Your most important commitment is to the campers. For the week of Tech Trek, their needs come first.

Training:

Before arriving at camp, you will receive a list of items to bring, maps and directions to the campus and a tentative schedule.

For the camps that ask dorm moms to appear the day before camp, that day is spent in training. Other camps do the training Sunday morning before the campers arrive. You will be given a walk through of the facilities, a list and biography of your campers and introduction to the rest of the staff. You will also be asked to fill out some forms, including a W-9. At this time, you should review the camp rules and the contract the campers and their parents have signed.

New dorm moms are generally assigned to work with a more experienced dorm mom. This helps maintain consistency and gives each of you someone to turn to with questions. Keep in mind that the camp director(s) are very busy the week of camp keeping things running smoothly. They do need to be kept informed but not overwhelmed with the details.

Benefits:

While the week at camp is a very busy time, it is also a time to make new friends, explore an interesting campus and, most of all, to enjoy being with dozens of delightful Tech Trekkers.



Other:

To volunteer contact Tech Trek Project Coordinators at: techtrek@aauw-ca.org