



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Skyland Camp for Girls

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### When was Skyland founded?

Skyland has been continually operating as a summer camp since 1917.

The main building at Skyland Camp for Girls is the “Big House,” a building that originally opened as a grand hotel in the late 1800s. Skyland’s founder Susan Courtney “Granny” Harris had become devoted to the hotel where she and her children vacationed each summer in the early 1900s. While vacationing here in 1916, Granny Harris learned that the failing hotel was on the auction block and the property was being sold in pieces. Still years before she could legally vote in the United States, Granny Harris marched on to the front porch, stood behind the auctioneer and boldly called out the winning bid: “I’ll give you three thousand dollars for the whole kit and caboodle!” And with that, she was named the highest bidder and had just acquired a hotel and its surrounding land.

From her winter home in Florida, the resourceful mother of five organized friends and neighbors to join her in the mountains the following summer, and Skyland Camp for Girls was officially launched.

### What makes Skyland unique?

Skyland’s small size and multigenerational community sets us apart. With no more than 65 campers, Skyland is one of the smallest camps of its kind. It is an environment in which each individual is an important member, and even the youngest and newest campers have opportunities to grow, lead, and contribute.

Skyland’s family roots set the foundation for our multigenerational community. For nearly a century Skyland has been owned and operated by the women of the same family. Similarly, many Skyland families have been sending their daughters to Skyland for that same amount of time. It’s not uncommon to have current campers who are walking the same steps that their great-grandmothers walked in the 1920s.

While campers are housed by grade, there is much opportunity to be with and learn from campers and staff of all ages. In fact, the entire camp is together during our three daily meals, on campouts and hikes, and as part of team competitions.

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Staff plays a critical role in this multigenerational community by providing plenty of individualized attention that helps campers find mentors in all types of incredible girls and women. It is not uncommon for a camper to leave Skyland feeling like she has gained a few grandmothers, lots of cool moms, aunts, and older cousins, and scores of sisters. These are often relationships that hold strong throughout the rest of her life.

## What is Skyland's Mission?

Through traditional camp programs, Skyland Camp for Girls inspires girls to be curious, creative, confident and connected to each other, and to the world.

Whether a hike to breathtaking views or quiet conversations around the campfire, Skyland's mission is at the core of all we do.

What does this mean for your camper?

- She will learn new skills and develop her interests and passions.
- She will work as part of a team and collaborate with others to achieve group goals.
- She will make new friends, learn about their lives, and celebrate their differences, as well as their similarities.
- She will increase and stretch her imagination through outdoor exploration, experiential learning, storytelling, skits, creative dance and more! She will try new things, and try again if she's not successful the first time.

The kind of personal growth that a camper experiences during her time at camp depends on her individual starting point. What is monumental for her in her first year may become a daily occurrence in her second year. When she comes home from camp, the passion and growth she has experienced will come with her, too.

## Why just girls?

Girls approach life a little differently than boys, and they excel in environments where their unique needs and styles are understood and respected. In a camp environment, where campers create their own identities and self-concept, an all-girls setting can be especially beneficial. As girls move into adolescence, it becomes more and more critical for them to retain their voice and begin to develop the leadership skills and strengths that will carry them forward in life.

In Skyland's all-girls environment, campers discover enormous amounts of inner strength, pride, power, potential and flexibility. They learn to take risks and manage consequences. They gain confidence, cultivate grit, and explore their authentic selves.

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## Can you recommend a camp for my son?

Yes. If your camper has a brother who is ready to have his own camp experience, let us know. We are very familiar with camps in this region and can help you find one that fits your son's interests. Call us for more information.

## Is Skyland Camp for Girls accredited?

Yes. Skyland Camp for Girls is fully accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). This accreditation is a voluntary process, and to become accredited by the ACA, camps must meet up to 280 health and safety standards. Accredited camps are responsible not only for meeting state and local laws, but also for meeting ACA standards in the areas of food service and safety, transportation, health and wellness, operational management, human resources and programming. For more information about accreditation and the ACA, please visit [www.campparents.org](http://www.campparents.org).

## What is a typical day at Skyland?

8:00 a.m. Morning Reveille	2:15 p.m. Rest Hour
8:25 a.m. Flag Raising	3:30 p.m. Three activity periods
8:35 a.m. Breakfast	6:00 p.m. Dinner
10:00 a.m. Three activity periods	7:00 p.m. Free Time
12:25 p.m. Free Time	8:00 p.m. Clubhouse
1:00 p.m. Mail Call	9:30 p.m. Lights out - younger campers
1:15 p.m. Dinner	10:00 p.m. Taps/Lights out for all

On most days, Skyland has a structured activity schedule that includes activities such as archery, culinary arts, horseback riding, musical theatre/dance, recycled arts and crafts, swimming, tennis, volleyball and other court/team games.

Campers select three elective activities that can change each week if they would like. All campers participate in Musical Theatre, Games and either Swimming or Recycled Arts (depending on the week).

Free time, which is before and after meals allows campers to take advantage of unstructured time so they can explore, play, and be independent. To end each day, the entire camp gathers for the evening Clubhouse, with activities ranging from scavenger hunts to carnivals to dance parties.

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## How will my camper be supervised?

With a camper-to-staff ratio of 3:1, each camper receives individual attention and is helped to immediately feel at home among new friends. A minimum of two staff members are assigned to any group of campers, whether in cabins or at activities. Additional staff will be assigned for bigger cabin groups, off-campus trips or activities that require more instructors, such as horseback riding. In addition to designated cabin and activity staff, campers get to know Skyland's directors, nurses, chefs, and administrative staff who are active participants and contributors to camp life.

## Where will she sleep and shower?

Skyland's youngest campers live on the second floor of the Big House, the original Victorian hotel that was repurposed into Skyland's main lodge. Campers keep their belongings in one of the original hotel rooms and sleep on the large screened wrap-around porch. Older campers, who are typically 6<sup>th</sup> grade and older, live in nearby cabins which have living rooms with shelves for clothes, bathrooms and screened porches.

Each of the cabins and the Big House contain modern restroom facilities. Campers have access to hot showers either in their cabin's personal shower or in the centrally located shower huts. We pride ourselves on keeping our spacious living and bathroom facilities clean and comfortable.

## Can I stay in touch with my camper?

We encourage parents to send letters and emails.

Mail Call, a daily tradition just before the mid-day meal, is an opportunity for campers to receive letters and emails from friends and family back home. Years later, alumnae still flip through scrapbooks of their old letters to and from home and recall fun memories of mail call, writing letters, and learning how to address an envelope.

In addition, some "behind the scenes" efforts are in place to help parents feel connected with their camper while still encouraging her to gain independence.

Skyland's dedicated parent liaison stays in touch with parents all summer long. She is available for phone calls, texts and emails with parents who would like to check in to see how their camper is doing. Because of Skyland's size, it's likely we will be able to tell you what she ate for breakfast, who her newest friends are, and a few accomplishments in her favorite activity. Many parents also enjoy viewing daily camp photos that are posted on a password-protected website. This provides a glimpse in to daily life at Skyland and allows an opportunity to see your camper engaged in some of her favorite activities.

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## **What if my child needs medical care?**

A Registered Nurse oversees the health of campers and staff, as well as distribution of daily medications. Nurse assistants support the camp infirmary to ensure 24-hour coverage. Staff members are trained in First Aid and Adult/Child CPR. There is a Regional Medical Center just three miles from camp, as well as a superb pediatrics office in the same complex.

Parents will be contacted if their camper needs medical care from an outside provider.

## **What will my camper eat at Skyland? Do you accommodate food allergies?**

When you think “camp food,” do you think local produce and wholesome, made-from-scratch food? How about home cooked meals and family-style service? If not, think again. That’s what your camper will enjoy at Skyland Camp for Girls! Our meals are home cooked by culinary professionals and served family-style. Fruits and vegetables are plentiful at each meal and it’s not uncommon to see fresh fruits on the all-day snack table, a healthy salad bar at supper or an oatmeal bar at breakfast.

Unfortunately, Skyland is not able to accommodate severe or life-threatening food allergies, but does provide vegetarian options, as well as options for gluten and dairy sensitivity. (100% gluten and/or dairy-free cannot be guaranteed). If your camper has specific dietary needs, let us know and we’ll be happy to discuss options for her ... or even help find a camp that will support her unique needs.

## **Does Skyland have a religious affiliation?**

Skyland is an independent camp and has no religious affiliation. Campers of all faiths and beliefs are welcome to join and strengthen our community.

In its early years Skyland (like many camps in that era) adopted some Christian practices. While most are no longer in practice, some of those rich traditions are still present today. You’ll see those traditions in the pre-meal blessings, or songs of thanks, as well as in our Sunday night Vespers service and some choir songs.

## **What is Vespers Service?**

Vespers is a Clubhouse event held on Sunday evenings. It is a non-denominational service in which values such as friendship, loyalty, gratitude, and stewardship for the earth are honored. Vespers is also a beautiful opportunity to learn about, celebrate and respect the traditions of religions and cultures from across the world.

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## What is your approach with electronics?

One of the greatest gifts we give our campers (and staff!) is the opportunity to unplug from social media grids and practice the art of being “fully connected” ... with each other, with nature, with their thoughts, dreams and curiosity.

Each cabin has a CD player and CDs for campers to enjoy music together, and the Skyland library is always stocked with great books and games. Campers may bring CDs with their favorite songs, and/or a basic MP3 player. They may also bring a digital camera that does not have an Internet connectivity option.

## What if my daughter gets homesick?

While some campers report never feeling homesick, others may experience mild to moderate homesickness during the first few days of camp. This is completely normal and is actually considered a healthy part of youth development. In fact, campers gain an enormous amount of confidence, and are better prepared for obstacles they may face in the future, after they've overcome even the mildest of homesickness.

Skyland's counselors and staff are well trained in time-tested techniques that help campers successfully navigate homesickness and fully immerse themselves in the camp experience.

## So my daughter will be fine, but what if I get kid-sick?

We also realize that the overnight camp experience is sometimes harder for those “back home” than it is for the camper. (We know how quiet that house can be when your camper is away!) We are committed to ensuring the camp experience is as fulfilling for you back home as it is for your camper on Skyland Hill.

During camp, parents are welcome to call, email or even text with Skyland's parent liaison.

Many parents have LOVED reading Michael Thompson's book *Homesick and Happy* either as they prepare for camp or while their daughter is away at camp. We recommend it to all new parents and it is a valuable tool that helps readers learn and understand the value of the camp experience for the camper, the parent, and the entire family. It is a fabulous resource and one that many Skyland parents have recommended to others.

We also have resources and references if you'd like other things to read or if you'd like to connect with other Skyland families.

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## What does the camper tuition fee cover?

All fees are covered in the camp tuition except weekly laundry service, an optional white-water rafting trip for older campers, purchases at the camp store, and spending money for offsite trips.

## What if she needs something? Do I send spending money?

Skyland's camp store is open at various times during the week and contains general items such as Skyland apparel, stamps, stationery, toiletries, etc. If a camper needs something that is not in the camp store, she can request her need and it will be delivered the following day.

Purchases are deducted from camper's spending accounts, which is established by the parent before camp. Campers do not use cash and should not bring money to camp.

## What is your refund policy?

A deposit is due at the time of registration.

- Prior to April 1, the deposit, less a \$200 processing fee, is refundable.
- After April 1, the deposit is non-refundable.
- The balance of camp tuition is due on or before June 1.
- Prior to June 1, all camp fees are refundable, less the total deposit amount.
- After June 1, no refund will be issued.
- Should a camper need to withdraw for health reasons after April 1, we will give full credit toward the following year's registration (minus the \$200 processing fee) or refund ½ of the total tuition paid.
- In cases of homesickness, dismissal or voluntary withdrawal, no refunds will be issued. No refund will be available if you attend a program and are dissatisfied with its presentation or content.
- If, for whatever reason, Skyland Camp for Girls does not open for the registered term(s), full refunds will be issued.

## How do you select and train your counselors?

With decades of experience, we know it is always the people who make a summer camp experience special. As a result, we take extra care in our recruiting and selection process, hiring only those who display high levels of creativity, integrity and passion for teaching, mentoring and supporting youth development.

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Staff members are carefully screened with at least two interviews, reference checks and extensive criminal background checks. Training begins several weeks before camp with customized videos and readings on essential topics from experts in the field.

On-site orientation begins the week before campers arrive and covers everything from creating a supportive cabin environment to emergency procedures to lesson planning and delivering dynamic activity options.

## **How can I help my child prepare for camp?**

There are many ways to help prepare your child for camp, starting when you first consider it an option. Engage your child in conversations about camp. Tell her all about what she will do at camp, the new friends and counselors she will meet, and the new adventures she will have. Include her in the camp selection process and make sure she likes and trusts the people at camp just as much as you do. Does she want to go to camp with a friend or sibling or will the adventure be completely her own? As camp nears, plan a couple of test-runs for her to sleep away from home. Maybe she spends a weekend with her grandparents or goes on a trip with a friend.

The whole process of preparing for camp should be supportive and positive. You will likely have your own concerns as a parent, and expressing those concerns to your camper can leave her feeling anxious or afraid. Instead, make getting ready for a camp a bonding experience. Maybe you want to give camp a test run at Skyland's Mother-Daughter Weekend, or you spend quality time together packing her trunk and picking out stationery so she can fill you in on all she is doing!

## **This document has been great, but what if I have more questions?**

While we have included the most frequently asked questions, we realize you may have additional questions or unique situations. If we have not addressed one of your questions, or if you would like additional information, please call (828-627-2470) or email ([mailbox@skylandcamp.com](mailto:mailbox@skylandcamp.com)).

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