

Camper & Parent Guidebook: Teen Quests 2016

What's Inside:

- Camp Tawonga's Screen-Free Policy
- Camp Tawonga's Goals & Philosophy
- Guidelines for Quest Living
- Quest Logistics
- Jewish Rituals on Quest
- Consequences for Misbehavior
- Things To Do BEFORE your Quest Begins
- Clothing & Equipment List
- And More!

Questers and Parents- Please help us prepare for a safe and happy summer by reviewing this guidebook before your Quest.



Since 1925

A Non-Profit Service of the Jewish Community

Coed Jewish Teen Travel Adventures

(415) 543-2267

info@tawonga.org

The Family | Tawonga Partnership

Congratulations! You've registered for a great summer program with Camp Tawonga. We hope to make this summer a positive experience, and your help is essential. Reading this manual is a key step in preparing for the adventure ahead. This guidebook is intended to be read both by teens participating in a Quest and by their parents. Whether your family is new or returning, please carefully read this guidebook, discuss its contents together, and save it for future reference.

We also invite you to join us in May for the **Quest Orientation and Slideshow**. This slideshow is another opportunity to learn more about Quest and ways to prepare for a successful summer experience.

Camp Tawonga's goal is to help raise caring, concerned, and committed citizens of the Jewish and secular communities who have strong, positive Jewish identities. We do this by:

- ◆ Creating a loving and accepting environment in which each camper feels good about him- or herself and develops, through this confidence, a greater sense of integrity.
- ◆ Modeling and teaching group living skills like cooperation, making new friends, and getting along with people (even the ones we don't particularly like).
- ◆ Using the outdoors as a classroom where we can observe firsthand the harmony and beauty of the natural world and begin to understand our role in protecting and caring for our earth.
- ◆ Sharing the language, music, customs, and traditions of Judaism in welcoming, open, and inclusive community practice and programming.

Going on Quest involves these joys as well as challenges. Some challenges are physical, such as hiking to the top of a mountain. Others are interpersonal, such as learning how to get along with everyone in the group and collaborating to resolve conflicts as they arise. We ask your family to recognize these challenges as opportunities for growth and for building self-confidence, and to accept them in a positive way.

Whether you are a teen participant on Quest or a parent sending your son or daughter on Quest, you are entering into a partnership with Camp Tawonga. We sincerely appreciate your trust and support. Together, we can do great things for youth and for the world.

Fondly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Myla Marks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Myla Marks

Director of Wilderness Programs

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Please remember to keep this booklet. The information it contains is updated annually and will be useful before and throughout the summer. If you have any questions or concerns, call us at (415) 543-2267. After you finish reading this guidebook, please sign and return the authorization and release forms for your Quest.

Adjusting to Quest

Going away to summer camp includes fun, friendship, and adventure. It provides campers with an opportunity to learn, grow, and feel good about themselves. However, going away to summer camp also entails adjustment for campers and their parents.

Preparing for your Quest

We encourage parents and teens to talk together before the Quest about expectations for the trip. Please read this guidebook and discuss any questions or concerns you may have with each other. If you wish to discuss any concerns with our staff, please call our San Francisco office at (415) 543-2267.

Homesickness

Going on a Quest may raise issues of “homesickness.” We regard this as a normal, healthy occurrence for Questers, and refer to this occurrence as “missing home” to help disassociate missing home from a sickness. Quest leaders are trained to be aware of each Quester’s moods and emotional adjustment. If a teen is missing home, the Quest leaders will encourage him or her to talk about it and try to help the teen understand that this feeling is natural. Quest leaders will also make an effort to involve the Quester in group activities. Experience tells us that within two or three days most teens are busy having fun with newfound friends and no longer miss home.

If a Quester is missing home, her or his parents may receive a “homesick” call or letter. If this occurs, parents should not panic. This is a normal part of adjusting to a trip and most of the time these feelings pass quickly. Parents who are concerned about repeated complaints of missing home from their teens can call the San Francisco office at (415) 543-2267; office staff will follow up with the Quest leaders and let parents know how the teen is doing as soon as possible.

Missing Your Camper

Sometimes a teen’s departure for a summer program can also produce anxiety for a parent. While teens may feel “homesick,” some parents experience “campersickness.” This is a normal part of the summer camp experience. We encourage parents to project confidence and excitement to their teen as he or she prepares for the Quest, even though parents may feel nervous or anticipate missing him or her. Often a teen’s attitude about leaving home mirrors the attitude of his or her parent. Parents can contribute to the success of their teen’s Quest by encouraging him or her to have a great time.

Meeting with the Directors

We ask that teens or their parents please let us know of any special circumstances in the teen’s life. This will assist the Quest leaders and other staff in providing the best possible experience for the Quester. Sensitive issues will only be shared with the appropriate staff and never with other teens. If you would like to meet with one of the directors before camp, please call the San Francisco office to make an appointment before May 1, 2016.

After-Camp Feedback

After Questers return home, families will receive evaluation surveys by email, one for the teen to complete and one for you to complete. Filling this out together is a wonderful way for parents to learn more about their teen’s Quest experience and helps us improve our service to your family. If parents would like to speak with a director after camp to discuss their teen’s experience, they may make arrangements by calling the camp office in October. Additionally, if we have suggestions for a teen’s participation in camp programs for the next summer—like signing up for a longer or shorter camp program, a Teen Service Learning trip, or an In-Training program—we will contact you in the fall. Of course, you may always call us for help deciding which Tawonga program may be best for you.

Visiting

There is no visiting on Quest trips. This uninterrupted time away from home is important to help Questers develop their sense of independence and self-reliance. Parents can consider attending one of our weekend programs, which are open to all ages and are a great way to see what Tawonga is all about. For a list of programs offered, please visit our website at www.tawonga.org. You can also arrange to tour camp during one of our family camp weekends. To do so please call the San Francisco office at least three weeks prior to the scheduled program.

Health and Medical Information

Medications

All medications will be kept by the Quest leaders so that they may dispense them and keep a record of their use. Campers may not store or administer their own medicine, except for children with a history of asthma, who may keep an inhaler with them, children with anaphylactic allergies, who may keep an EpiPen for emergency use, and children with diabetes who may keep some supplies with them.

Any medication that your child will be taking regularly during camp must be ordered in advance through CampMeds, a prepackaging medication company founded by a camp nurse. This includes prescription medications as well as over-the-counter medications that are taken routinely, vitamins, creams and ointments and homeopathic remedies.

We are committed to making this service affordable for families.

In order to make this process as easy and cost-effective for families as possible, Camp Tawonga will cover the cost of registering with CampMeds (saving families \$50 per child), and families will be responsible for covering co-pays and late fees if applicable.

CampMeds will package each child's medications in a customized, portable, watertight CampMeds EasyPak, which will be delivered to Camp Tawonga before he or she arrives and brought to the Quest by the Quest leaders. This guarantees accurate, timely dosing and dispensing of your teen's medications while they are away from home this summer.

If your child takes prescription medication and you have Kaiser insurance, please email info@campmeds.com before registering with CampMeds. In your email, include the medication(s) that your child takes, that s/he is a camper at Camp Tawonga, and that you are a Kaiser subscriber. CampMeds will reply to your email letting you know how to proceed.

Exceptions – Medications you do not need to order through CampMeds:

- a) Emergency and refrigerated medications can travel with your teen:** e.g. albuterol inhalers, epi-pens, emergency migraine or seizure medication that must be with the camper at all times, insulin and diabetes supplies, and injectable growth hormone. Check these medications in with staff at drop-off. Please ensure that these medications are properly labeled in their original packaging and are not past their expiration date.
- b) If your teen only occasionally takes over-the-counter items such as Advil, Tylenol, Benadryl, etc. there is no need to order these, as Tawonga stocks them.** If the need for antibiotics were to arise during camp, our doctor would write a prescription and call the parents to keep them informed.
- c) Accutane and birth control pills:** Check these medications in with staff at drop-off. Please ensure that these medications are properly labeled by your health care provider and are not past their expiration date.

If you have any questions about whether your child's medication needs to be ordered through CampMeds, please contact Ben Simrin at ben@tawonga.org or 415-543-2267.

To register with CampMeds, visit www.campmeds.com. Then click the “**Register Now**” button on the top of the page and follow the **instructions**. Once you have entered all of your camper(s)' basic information, print the order confirmation page and mail it with the hard copy of your prescription to:

CampMeds
PO Box 267037
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33326-7037

Please keep in mind that all medication information needs to be submitted 30 days before your camper(s)' session in order to avoid incurring a late fee of \$25 or more.

Teens are very active on Quest, which causes changes in rates of absorption for some medications. Additionally, many Quests travel to high elevations and places where temperatures can rise to 100°F. Please consult with your doctor about adapting medications to meet these conditions. Be sure to discuss possible side effects caused by heat, exertion, sweating, etc. Your physician can call us if she or he has questions.

Quest is not the place to take a “med vacation”—teens taking medications that help them focus will succeed much more easily if they continue use during a Quest.

Working Together: Some Specific Behavior Expectations and Guidelines for Quest Living

Attitude: What We Expect from You

A successful Quester takes chances. He or she tries to make friends with new people by giving everyone a chance and voices needs and opinions in respectful, kind, and productive ways. She or he also maintains a positive attitude as much as possible.

Leaders will make decisions **for** the group some of the time and **with** the group other times. Questers who can respectfully voice their opinions and desires will help the leaders make good decisions. It is important to remember that not everyone's desires can be met at all times. The leaders will make choices based on what's best for the whole group.

It is very difficult to stay "happy" all of the time. We all have good days and bad days, moments of joy and frustration. However, what you decide to do with your discontent or joy—your attitude—will make a real difference for your personal experience and the group's.

What Quest leaders and Camp Tawonga expect from you is that you will abide by the guidelines we make together and make an effort to stay connected to the group, to stay positive, to do your share of the work, and to seek guidance from staff or a friend if you are struggling with these responsibilities. The Quest community is most often fun, but sometimes living and traveling with people is difficult. It's the new friends, skills, and experiences that you will gain that make Quest great.

What You Can Expect from Your Quest Leaders

Quest leaders are all at least 21 years old. They share the responsibilities for running a great, safe travel trip. Between them, they have wilderness medical and lifeguard certifications, experience leading wilderness adventures, and extra driver's training to drive the SUVs. We also train your leaders in the special skills of leading a Quest, including building a group, solving group problems, responding to individual needs, managing a budget, and planning appropriate menus.

You can expect the Quest leaders to keep your confidences from other campers, to prioritize your safety, both physical and emotional, to set appropriate limits, and to give you consequences for inappropriate behavior. Quest leaders will stick to the established itineraries you are sent unless bad weather or other circumstances call for a change. Most of the time, they will lead you to the places you planned to visit.

You can expect that the Quest leaders will teach you the responsibilities of Questing with patience. They will spend time teaching you our systems, like tent set-up, rotating chore groups, grocery shopping, laundry, etc. Then, after a while, **you can expect them to "hang back" a bit to let you try your new skills.** They'll be available to answer questions and help out, but they won't do everything for you. With time your skills will improve and your leaders will look forward to seeing the Quest group working together like a team.

Work Group Responsibilities

Work groups are a vital factor in the flow of the trip. Within the first three days, your Quest leaders will assign you to a work group. You and your group will share daily responsibility for all activities and aspects of the Quest, such as cooking, cleaning, and packing.

Quest chores are often set up using a work wheel or chore chart. Your leaders may make this chart in advance of the Quest or you may make it together a few days into the trip, once you've gotten to know each other.

Examples of work group responsibilities:

- ◆ **Meal crew** (under leader supervision): prepare and cook food, clean up all waste from food preparation, and prepare menus and shopping lists.
- ◆ **Clean-up crew:** boil water as soon as a meal is done, collect and soak dirty dishes, wash dishes, and put away cooking items as appropriate.

- ◆ **Trailer crew:** return the contents of the trailer to a happily organized state each day.
- ◆ **Vehicle crew:** remove trash from vehicles daily and occasionally wash the cars.

Crews rotate. You and your other crew members will decide how to divide up the work of your crew. This is one excellent way in which you'll learn to work together.

Nightly Round-Up

Communicating with each other regularly is essential to having a successful, fun Quest experience. To help promote good communication, Quest leaders will conduct a nightly "round-up." These are usually short meetings where the day is reviewed and forecasts of the coming day are given, including wake-up time, the time the group needs to have camp packed and be in the cars ready to go, and plans for the day's activities.

Separating from the Group in Public Areas

Each itinerary is planned with a city or cultural stop, usually a couple hours long. Your Quest leaders will determine the duration of your stay in these public areas. The circumstances surrounding each Quest will dictate when, where, and if there will be time to break off from the group and explore with a buddy. The maximum duration of time for "roaming" is up to your Quest leaders. Half hour check-ins are common. At no point in time is any Quester ever permitted to roam alone.

Judaism and Jewish Rituals on Quest

It is our goal to integrate spirituality and positive Jewish identification into the entire Tawonga experience. Toward these ends, campers and staff are given the opportunity to experience the richness and diversity of Jewish culture and ritual through Shabbat celebrations, Havdalah, storytelling, blessings at meals, and other special programs. Our camp community welcomes and encompasses a broad spectrum of Jewish identities and experiences. We hope campers will take the values of Tawonga with them to enrich and improve their lives at home, at school, and in their relationships. Here are some of the Jewish rituals that may be a part of the Quest experience:

- ◆ **Blessings:** Jewish rituals during Quest vary depending on the leaders and the group members. Some Quests sing the traditional Hebrew blessings before and after each meal. Others may choose to read poetry, say thanks in English, or encourage a moment of silence before enjoying a meal made together. Either way, the goal is to recognize our wealth in having access to the foods of the Earth.
- ◆ **Shabbat:** On Friday nights Questers light candles together, say a prayer over grape juice (or some other wine substitute) and usually prepare a meal together that is slightly fancier than the rest of the week's meals. The leaders help the group plan a Friday evening service to celebrate Shabbat with stories, songs, blessings, and other activities. On Saturdays, leaders will offer some reflective activities to bring the Shabbat spirit to the day, such as a "solo sit," where Questers enjoy a quiet moment in nature, or a meaningful discussion. At sunset the group will celebrate Havdalah—usually in a beautiful spot.
- ◆ **Kashrut:** We eat kosher-style food while traveling. Questers prepare meat meals sometimes and dairy meals sometimes, but never meat and dairy together. We do not buy or serve pork or shellfish.

Swimming on Quest

There are often opportunities to swim on Quest trips. Swimming on Quest trips is always supervised by a Quest leader who has current American Red Cross lifeguarding certification.

Skinny-Dipping Policy

We believe that, when approached with thoughtfulness and maturity, skinny-dipping can be a positive experience for campers. Our skinny-dipping policy was designed with an understanding that teens have differing levels of comfort with their bodies. Same gender groups, including Quest leaders, are permitted to go skinny-dipping, but only after a group discussion that emphasizes that it is an individual choice and each person may make their own decision. Skinny-dipping must be the Questers' idea and will not be suggested by Quest leaders. Additionally, one Quest leader acting as the lifeguard must keep their clothes on at all times to ensure comfort and safety.

Photos

Please note that Tawonga often takes photos of Questers to use in advertising, in our brochure and on our website. Once in a while, photos taken on a Quest are used by the camp-approved photographer in his or her personal portfolio. By signing the required Parent & Camper Authorization Form, you are giving us permission to use those photos.

Questers and Quest leaders live in close quarters; we prohibit teens and staff from photographing each other during inappropriate times, such as while changing clothes or showering. While this has not been a problem at Tawonga, this guideline is becoming standard practice for camps across the country in an effort to protect everyone's feelings and privacy. In this age of digital cameras and web postings, it is essential that the standards of respect upheld during Tawonga programs are continued throughout the year. **Therefore, it is our expectation that any pictures posted by Questers on the internet positively reflect the values and mission of Camp Tawonga, and that all individuals included in the photograph(s) are aware of and comfortable with the photos posted.**

Alcohol and Other Drugs

Alcohol and other drugs may not be possessed or used during any Tawonga program. The consequence for use or possession will be an immediate send-home from any camp program, regardless of time of day or inconvenience to a camper's family. There will not be any refund given for time missed.

Cigarettes are considered dangerous on Quests. They endanger health and they pose an immediate danger of fire. No Quester may possess any smokable substance, matches, or lighters. Consequences for use or possession of these items may range from a behavior contract and parent phone call to a send-home.

Amnesty Bag

On the first night of your Quest, the group will get to know each other by sharing a bit about themselves and creating "rules to live by" that will guide the group's behavior. The first night is also the time to dispose of any items that don't belong on Quest by putting them in the Amnesty Bag. If you have things you shouldn't have brought on the Quest, like drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes, this will be your **one and only** chance to get rid of them. No questions will be asked about the contents of the Amnesty Bag. Everything will be disposed of. If you are found with drugs or alcohol after that, you will be sent home.

Consequences for Misbehavior

Covenants and Contracts for Good Behavior

Life on a Quest is socially demanding. Questers and Quest leaders sleep as a group in tents or on a tarp, eat meals as a group, travel as a group, and share the vast majority of their time together. This requires cooperation, sharing, patience, and respect. In addition, our standards of ethical behavior are very high at Tawonga; we do not tolerate abusive or exclusionary behaviors of any kind, physical or verbal.

These expectations may present a challenge for some teens. When a teen's behavior is problematic and she or he does not respond to interventions by Quest leaders, we institute higher-level interventions. One of our tools is a "contract," which is a private, written agreement with the Quester. Contracts include Quester promises, such as things "I will do" and things "I won't do," with consequences for each. In addition, staff may add promises of their own about supporting the teen. Parents are notified when a contract includes the possibility of being sent home. Once the contract has been written and agreed to by everyone involved, it is accepted that the teen will follow it and all staff involved will support the teen's efforts in every way possible.

Another powerful tool is the "covenant" (*brit* in Hebrew). A covenant is a more profound kind of commitment, in which the entire group makes commitments about what they will and will not do, with consequences for each. In Jewish thought, covenantal relationships are among the ways that we participate in *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. In the intense community of a Quest, covenantal relationships create the environment of safety and caring that kids and parents love about Tawonga.

Every winter, the professional staff of Tawonga reviews the experiences of the prior summer and identifies campers whose behavior needs attention. If you are among these campers, we will call you and schedule a time for you and your parent to come in and discuss any issues. The result could be a contract or covenant for the following summer. In some cases, a Tawonga Quest is not the right place for an individual who may be better suited to a less socially demanding program. The Tawonga staff is committed to providing safe, fun, and meaningful experiences for campers. We look forward to working together with you to make this a reality.

Behaviors that Result in Director/Parent Contact

- ◆ Sex
- ◆ Smoking cigarettes
- ◆ Running away
- ◆ Physical violence
- ◆ Any behavior that makes you or someone else unsafe
- ◆ Any prolonged behavior that diminishes another's experience (i.e. teasing, arguing, disobedience)
- ◆ Stealing. Be aware that Tawonga **cannot** protect campers from prosecution by the store or the state in which a theft occurs.

Behaviors that Result in Sending a Camper Home Early

- ◆ Buying, using, or possessing drugs or alcohol
- ◆ Any behavior that **seriously spoils the experience of others** or threatens your safety or the safety of another

Send-Home Procedures

The following steps will be taken in the event that a Quester's behavior warrants dismissal from the Quest.

- ◆ First, leaders together with the camp directors, determine if your behavior warrants a send-home.
- ◆ Then, the Quest leaders or one of the camp directors will contact your parents.
- ◆ Next, a leader will secure a return trip to the Bay Area for you, whether by bus or by plane. The cost of the journey home will be incurred by your family.
- ◆ Finally, a director will call your parents or emergency contacts to arrange for them to pick you up at the point of arrival.

Leaders will inform you of the arrangements after all the plans are made. Your Quest group will have an opportunity to discuss the situation (possibly after you have left). Obviously, this is an incredibly difficult and uncomfortable situation for a group to face. There are no refunds when a Quester's own behavior requires that they be sent home.

A Quester who chooses to behave in a way which results in a send-home is not barred from returning to camp in the future, in most cases. We respect that growing up is hard and making choices can be confusing. However, you do have the power to **make good choices**, and we encourage you to do so.

How We Deal with Relationships and Sexuality at Tawonga

Our Philosophy

Camp Tawonga is a place for campers to grow, learn, explore their own capabilities, and create relationships with others. However, Tawonga programs are not a place to be sexually active, regardless of what is done at home.

When we talk about sexuality, it is in the context of creating an emotionally safe environment and building caring and nurturing relationships. We want teens to get a break from the sexual pressures they are exposed to through movies, school, TV, music, the internet, and advertisements. We give them a chance to be teens in a way that is responsible, but not prematurely adult. Questers are told that the limit to their behavior is “consensual hugging and kissing with all clothes on,” also known as CHAKWACO.

Relationships Between Questers

We teach all Questers to respect each other in the way they talk to and **about** each other. We do not tolerate Questers harassing each other with sexual innuendo, put-downs like “you’re so gay,” or unwanted come-ons. We want to promote caring and nurturing between individuals, while maintaining a focus on building the group.

Romance: If you are inclined to get involved with someone on a Quest, you may hike together, hold hands, sit together in the car, and simply “hang out” together when everyone is hanging out during downtime. A single friendship or budding romance, however, should not take your focus away from being a part of the larger group. There is nothing wrong with liking someone else in the group; in fact, we want you to like each other. However, when two Questers put a lot of energy into nurturing their romantic feelings towards each other, the rest of the group may feel uncomfortable or excluded.

Another hard thing about romance on a Quest is that when problems arise in your romance, you have nowhere to go. Sometimes the best way to get perspective in a troubled relationship is to take some time apart, figure out your needs and feelings, and then come back together to talk. On a Quest there is no “time apart,” so everything is harder, not just for you, but for everyone around you.

Quests, by their very nature, encourage healthy and strong friendships based on common activity and learning. If you like someone during the Quest, plan on spending quality time with them when the Quest ends. Let the romance wait and build the friendship together in harmony with the rest of the group.

Cliques: We define a clique as follows: “a group of two or more friends whose activities, conversations and general behavior exclude other members of the group from participating, i.e. makes others feel left out, or prevents them from making strong relationships with others in the group.”

Here’s an example: A girl comes on Quest with her best friend. There is only one other girl on this Quest and she doesn’t know anyone else. The two best friends spend all their time together talking about home. All of their conversations are about their common life together and the third girl feels like she cannot join in. The unkind thing to do is for the two best friends to continue to exclude the third girl. The kinder, more mature thing to do is for the best friends to begin to talk about the experiences they are all sharing on the trip together and to invite the participation of the third girl into their conversation.

We know that cliques are not usually intentional; they just happen. When cliques develop, they can be fun and fulfilling for the ones that are “in,” but the people who are left out may feel unwanted, unhappy, or uncomfortable.

The best way to make each other feel welcomed into friendship groups is to invite people into your activity or conversation. This is not to say that you may never enjoy building one-on-one friendships during the Quest; there’s plenty of time for this while hiking side by side, sitting next to someone in the car, or having a conversation at night on the tarp as you’re falling asleep.

Avoid making others feel left out by not telling secrets or making “inside jokes” that others wouldn’t understand. We know that some people will have more in common than others. When you’re in the company of the group, we encourage you to explore your differences. Check out what skills another person has that you don’t. Share your ideas about things. Listen with an open mind.

The Thick Black Line Between Campers and Staff

Every staff person and camper at Tawonga is told that there is a “Thick Black Line” that separates all staff from all campers. It is not gray or fuzzy and it is strictly enforced. This means that no romantic or sexual words, acts, or even suggestions can occur between them. If a staff person were to cross this line, he or she would be dismissed immediately and never be eligible for re-hire. If a camper were to make advances or suggestions toward a staff person, they would be directed to stop, taught why the behavior is inappropriate, put on a behavior contract, and possibly sent home.

Quest Logistics

Quest Groups

When the waiting list for a certain Quest grows big enough to offer a second Quest to the same destinations, we create a second trip and itinerary. The way we separate the registered teens into two groups is first, by gender and grade, and second, by request. Our goal is to minimize the age range and balance the gender ratio.

Itinerary

85% of a Quest itinerary, including campsite reservations, is set in advance. You will work with your leaders to make sure you are able to participate in all of these prearranged activities. As for the unplanned time, you and your leaders will decide together what to do and where to go. This is a great chance to explore new territory and come back with amazing stories.

Grocery Shopping and Meals

Grocery shopping is done every three to five days, depending on need and availability. Meal-planning is done by Questers with the leaders’ help. **Please note** that the majority of dinners on Quest will be vegetarian, except for dinners on shopping days, to ensure that meat is fresh and safe. At Tawonga our motto is “Food is King” and we have plenty of food for everyone, including vegetarians, vegans, people with food allergies, and those who are lactose intolerant. If you would like to discuss food allergies or other concerns in detail, please contact our office at (415) 543-2267 or email myla@tawonga.org.

Sleeping

On most trips Questers sleep outside all together on a large tarp under the stars. However, in some cases you may be assigned to a tent with up to five other people. Tents are private spaces; no members of the opposite sex will be permitted to spend time in each other’s tents.

Campsites

The campsites that we use on Quest vary. Most have bathroom facilities, either outhouses or port-o-lets. Some will have running water and working toilets. Some will even have showers and laundry facilities. Other campsites will be rustic with no bathroom or running water.

Showers

While you will **not** have regular access to shower facilities, there is no shortage of water and water activities on most Quests. About once a week your leaders will arrange for the group to shower, whether by stopping at a Laundromat that has pay-showers or by staying at a campsite with shower facilities. Camp will pay for these showers.

Mail

Included with your roster and itinerary will be the address(es) for your mail stop(s). Be sure to send these addresses to your friends and family members so they can send you mail. **Please tell them not to send food or candy.** You’ll be able to send mail home a couple times a week, so bring stationary and stamps.

Phone Calls

You will be permitted to make phone calls to your family occasionally during the Quest. This special privilege will only be given when it is permitted by the group's itinerary – probably once a week. The leaders will give you a cell phone to use. **Personal cell phones are NOT permitted on Quest.**

Outfitters and Release Forms

Each Quest has one or more of the following special activities: rafting, kayaking, surfing, and rock climbing. We hire guides from professional outfitters to provide us with the equipment, safety training, and expertise needed to make these programs fun and safe. Activities are set at introductory levels. **All release forms must be signed by a parent**, without alterations, in order for you to participate in these activities. **Magical Mystery Tour participants must have a parent or legal guardian present at the departure to sign these forms.**

A Note About Camper Forms

All camper forms will be available in March through your CampInTouch account at tawonga.campintouch.com. When you log in to your account, click on "Forms and Documents" to find a list of forms for each individual attending camp. Please do not create a new account for your family or try to register again. If you need help navigating the forms process, please call us. Some of these forms will be filled out online; others must be printed, signed, and faxed back or uploaded to your account as a PDF. **Every form listed is required and must be submitted by April 4, 2016.** Please contact our office at (415) 543-2267 or info@tawonga.org if you have any questions.

Screen-Free Policy

Camp Tawonga is Proud to be Unplugged

Quest is a wonderful opportunity for kids to unplug from technology and develop deep relationships and communication skills without distractions. In the past, we have been flexible about this policy, and have found that tech gadgets compete with the immersive experience that Quest creates for the campers. In addition, devices have a way of getting lost, broken, and unfortunately, sometimes even stolen on Quest.

After much thought and careful consideration, we have decided that Camp Tawonga, including Quest, will be screen-free. Quest will be one of the few times when kids can truly unplug.

Technology interferes with our stated mission of promoting socialization between campers and instilling a love of the outdoors. In addition, it creates artificial divisions between the campers who come from families who can afford expensive technology gadgets and those who cannot. Technology is all around us, but we strive to give campers a hiatus from screen-time. Their much-needed break from technology is healthy and they can certainly detox from their cellphones, tablets, iPods, Kindles, game consoles and laptops for a few weeks.

Therefore, **please do not bring electronic items on Quest. This includes, but is not limited to the following: cell phones/smart phones, laptops, electronic games, DVD players, electronic readers, or cameras with internet-uploading capability.**

Music - Music is important and is very much a part of our Quest culture. Campers can bring iPods, CDs, guitars, or any music player without a screen. iPods and other music players are only for use in the van, and only if the music is played through the speakers for everyone to enjoy. Because Quest is focused on creating a harmonious group dynamic, Questers may not listen to music on their headphones.

Books - We also highly encourage campers to bring paperback books. Please do not bring e-readers.

Cameras - Questers can bring disposable cameras, Polaroid, and/or digital cameras without Internet capability. Phones or other devices with connectivity are not permitted on Quest and cannot be used as cameras; there will be no exceptions.

We take this policy seriously and expect Questers to follow these guidelines. If Questers bring devices with them on Quest that are not allowed, **we will take them away.** They will be returned to Questers after they return to the Bay Area at the Merritt College bus stop. If you have any questions, feel free to call us at 415-543-2267.

What Not to Bring

Please do NOT bring the following items on Quest:

- ◆ Suitcases or footlockers
- ◆ Blow-dryers
- ◆ Cell phones
- ◆ Any electronics including Kindles, tablets, etc.*
- ◆ Valuables whose loss would be upsetting (such as expensive cameras or jewelry)
- ◆ Perfume or cologne
- ◆ Pornography
- ◆ Items that may cause harm or endanger campers
- ◆ Pocket knives
- ◆ Lighters
- ◆ Matches
- ◆ Fireworks
- ◆ Cigarettes and tobacco products
- ◆ Drugs
- ◆ Alcohol

If any of the above items are brought on Quest, they may be confiscated by the staff. We are not responsible for loss or damage and Tawonga will not replace Questers' personal belongings in either instance. Parents, please **do not send food or candy**.

*Electronics are not permitted on Quest, with one exception: **you MAY bring an iPod or mp3 player to use in the car.**

What to Bring

Spending Money

There are few opportunities to spend money on Quest. \$10 per week is enough to bring.

Clothing

Campers and staff dress informally on Quest. **Bring clothes that are comfortable and expendable.** We recommend the following stores if you need to purchase any items on the packing list: REI (Berkeley, San Francisco, Mountain View, Corte Madera, Fremont), North Face (Berkeley, Palo Alto, San Francisco, Santa Clara), Sports Basement (San Francisco, Sunnyvale, Walnut Creek), Patagonia (San Francisco, Palo Alto, Santa Cruz), Wilderness Exchange (Berkeley).

Optional Items

You may opt to bring any of the following items: disposable camera, books, a journal, games (cards, back-gammon, chess, etc.), Frisbees, musical instruments, watercolors & other portable art materials. You can bring a small portable music player, such as an iPod. However, its use is only permitted during car rides.

Lost and Found

Camp Tawonga **cannot** assume responsibility for lost or damaged items. Although we make every effort to help Questers be conscious of their belongings, things get lost. **Only articles that are clearly labeled with the Quester's full name will be brought back to the office in San Francisco.** We will keep labeled items in our San Francisco office for two weeks after the end of each session. You are welcome to come to the office to look for lost articles. Unclaimed items and articles left in the office after two weeks will be donated to charitable organizations.

Packing List

The following is a list of necessary clothing and equipment for all Quests. If you have questions about anything on this list, please contact our office at (415) 543-2267 or info@tawonga.org.

√	#	CLOTHING
	1	Warm jacket (lightweight, rated to 20 degree Fahrenheit weather)
	1	Raincoat (and rain pants for Northwest/Canada ONLY)
	1	Sun hat or baseball cap
	1	Fleece or wool hat
	1	Pair of fleece or wool gloves (not cotton)
	2	Long-sleeve shirts
	1	Pair of loose-fitting athletic pants or leggings for walking
	1	Pair of jeans or other comfortable pants
	2	Pairs of shorts
	5	T-shirts or tank tops
	1	Pair of long underwear (not cotton)
	8-10	Pairs of underwear
	2	Pairs of thick fleece or wool socks
	6	Pairs of cotton athletic socks
	1	Pair of hiking boots (lightweight OK; broken-in, not brand new; comfortable)
	1	Pair of tennis shoes
	1	Swimsuit
	1	Pair of river shoes: old sneakers or sandals that won't fall off (Texas, Chacos, or other rubber-soled; no flip-flops)
√	#	EQUIPMENT
	1	Medium or large backpack, internal or external frame – be sure it fits
	1	Daypack for day hikes and outings
	1	Large duffel bag (no more than 1)
	1	Sleeping bag and stuff sack, rated at 20-40 degrees, synthetic or down (cotton highly discouraged, down discouraged on Quests outside of California)
	1	Pillow
	1	Insulated sleeping pad (inflatable or foam ok)
	2	Quart-sized water bottles (Nalgene recommended. Other brands can be too small)
	1	Headlamp with extra set of batteries (Flashlight not recommended. Be hands-free!)
	1	Pair of sunglasses with strap
	1	Sunscreen, SPF 15 or higher, waterproof
	1	Chapstick, SPF 15 or higher
	1	Biodegradable soap and shampoo (Ivory, Dr. Bronner's, etc.)
	1	Toothbrush and toothpaste
	1	Lightweight cup, bowl, spoon, and fork, plus a bag to put them in. No knives.
		Feminine hygiene products
		Stationary, pen, envelopes, stamps
	4	Ziploc bags, gallon-size (for keeping small items waterproof)
	3	Garbage bags (for dirty laundry, for keeping larger items waterproof)
	1	Insect repellent
	1	Medium-sized towel or a large Pak-Towel-type "quick dry" towel
	1	Optional Camelback or other backpack-style water bag with drinking tube
	1	Optional fleece or flannel sleeping bag liner (keeps bag clean and warm)

Quest Departures and Returns

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Ten days prior to the start of Quest, you will receive detailed information and directions for drop-off and pick-up times and locations for the beginning and end of Quest.

Northwest/Canada Quest begins at the Oakland Airport. There will be a Tawonga representative at the airport to greet you and assist with check-in. The group will meet their Quest leaders when they land. **Northwest/Canada Questers must bring either a birth certificate and photo identification or a passport with them.**

All other Quests depart from Merritt College in Oakland with a 10am check-in time. The exact location will be given closer to the departure date.

Please remember to be on time for check-in and pick-up: It is absolutely essential that campers arrive on time to check-in for departures. Please call at least one hour before check-in if you are going to be late. The emergency number, used only on the Sunday morning of departure, is (415) 518-4262. It is also essential that you be on time to pick your camper up at the end of Quest. Only a legal parent or guardian may pick up a camper, unless you send written instructions and consent in advance. **We require a photo ID and signature (must match individual listed) for each camper pick-up.**

Magical Mystery Tour participants must have a parent or legal guardian present at check-in to sign waivers and release forms for all the outfitters associated with that Quest. Please see the “Magical Mystery Tour Release Advisory” (available on our website along with our camper forms) and call us if you have any questions about why we do not give out these forms in advance (it ruins the surprise!).

Departure and Return Dates

Taste of Quest
Sunday, June 19 / Friday, June 24

Magical Mystery Tour
Sunday, June 26 / Friday, July 8

Sierra Slam
Sunday, June 26 / Friday, July 8

Surf 'n' Turf
Sunday, July 10 / Friday, July 22

Northwest/Canada
Sunday, July 10 / Thursday, July 29

Rock and River
Sunday, July 31 / Friday, August 12

Questing from Outside the Bay Area

If you are coming from outside the San Francisco Bay Area, please call Myla Marks, Director of Wilderness Programs, at 415-543-2267 to make alternate travel arrangements.

Camper To Do List- Before the Quest Begins

Reading and reviewing this guidebook is the first step in preparing for a great Quest and a great summer with Tawonga. Also, be sure to complete the following steps to get ready for your trip.

- ◆ **Break in your hiking boots.** Your hiking boots should be sturdy and support your feet and ankles while you are carrying a few days' worth of clothing, food, and equipment. They do not have to be expensive. **Make sure your hiking boots are well worn in**, not new and stiff, or you'll be asking for blisters! To break in new boots, wear them and walk around in them a few times a week for the month leading up to your trip.
- ◆ **Be prepared for an active journey.** Your Quest will include both sitting (on long car rides) and hiking (all day in some cases). If you are physically active during the school year, you should be well-prepared. However, if you are typically inactive, we recommend that you spend some time outdoors hiking, jogging, playing sports, or even doing sit-ups and push-ups on a daily basis. The more fit you feel, the easier it will be to adjust to the Quest itinerary.
- ◆ **Get decent rain gear.** Good rain gear is not necessarily expensive, but it should be durable so it can work well throughout the trip. We recommend a rain coat that covers your bottom and has a hood. Remember, even in the desert, an afternoon thunderstorm is common.
- ◆ **Get all your paperwork done ON TIME.** A list of all the paperwork needed from you will be available online in March. Make sure that you have completed all paperwork and read all required materials by April 4, 2016. **You will not be allowed to participate on a Quest without completing all paperwork.**
- ◆ **Plan to attend the Quest Orientation Slideshow** in May. You will receive an invitation by email.

The week before your Quest begins, one of your Quest leaders will phone you to touch base and answer any last minute questions you may have. Of course, you may always call Myla Marks, Director of Wilderness Programs, at the Tawonga office in San Francisco with any questions. You can reach her by phone at **(415) 543-2267**, extension 126, or by email at myla@tawonga.org.

Thank You

Thank you, Questers and parents. We greatly appreciate the time you took to review and discuss this guidebook. Your effort and preparation will help make this summer a shining success! If you have any questions as the summer approaches, please do not hesitate to contact us in the San Francisco office at (415) 543-2267 or info@tawonga.org. We would be happy to help.

Thank you for choosing Camp Tawonga. We are looking forward to a wonderful summer and are thrilled to have your family be a part of the Tawonga community!