

# Camp Costanoan

Camp Costanoan is a residential camping program for adults and children (ages 5 and older) with developmental and physical disabilities. The Camp, founded in 1954, is a program of **Via**. Camp Costanoan is nestled in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains in Stevens Creek County Park, located 15 miles north of San Jose and 50 miles south of San Francisco. On Camp Costanoan's 13 acres are located six lodges equipped with bathrooms, showers, and heaters. A spacious main lodge is centrally located where dining and large group programs take place. To provide campers with the most well-rounded camping experience available, Camp Costanoan offers a playground, nature trails, barbeque pit, campfire circle, petting zoo, horseback riding ring, amphitheater, creative arts building, rhythm and drama building, paved sports court, a rustic upper campsite, two heated pools, and a health center.

The Camp offers weekend respite programs from October to May during the school year, as well as a traditional summer camping program. Weekend respites begin at 5:00 p.m. on Fridays and end at 3:00 p.m. on Sundays. Summer sessions begin on Sundays and last for either four or six days. Sessions and lodges are divided by age in order to enhance peer socialization and appropriate programming. Camp Costanoan serves 65 to 120 campers every session.

Camp Costanoan believes that camping is a "stepping out" process. First, it serves as a testing ground for practicing and supporting independent living skills. The lodge group living experience is a good example of campers developing a sense of responsibility to themselves as well as to their lodge mates. It encourages the use of these life time skills permitting campers and their parents/care givers the opportunity to realize strengths and interests which might be overlooked in the home or school process. Second, camp provides an opportunity to develop life long leisure skills that can be utilized in their home and community. Skills such as shaping clay, riding a horse, playing baseball, or learning to swim for the first time are just small examples of what can occur at camp and can be developed further at home. Finally, camp is experiential education for all those involved. Campers learn by doing, motivators and reinforcers are built into the process. Concepts and theories are replaced by facts, colors, shapes, and sizes. Campers realize such social skills as listening, as they interact in their lodge group. Physical growth and development occurs as campers test their endurance, strength, flexibility, and coordination during fundamental tasks and camp activities. The purpose of our programs is to provide the opportunity for campers to experience an outdoor group environment. This will enhance their leisure skills and abilities, while encouraging self-expression and independence. During this time the interaction with the natural environment as well as the human commodity will enable the campers to grow as individuals and as contributing group members. Additionally, Camp provides much needed respite for families and is vendorized by the Regional Centers.

Camp Costanoan recruits a professional staff of counselors and program instructors. The majority of our staff are undergraduate and graduate students in education, allied health, recreation, or some field of human services. A limited number of high school juniors and seniors serve as volunteer counselors. A registered nurse is on premises at all times during program. All Camp staff are committed individuals with a sincere interest in helping individuals with disabilities. Each staff member is highly qualified, and reflects the diversity of our camper population. Staff are given an orientation and training period prior to working within the program.

Registration for all programs are taken on a first-come first-serve basis; sessions fill **quickly**. Authorizations from Regional Centers or any other funding agency **do not** replace the need to register the camper with **Via** to secure placement in one of our sessions. Additionally, campers and parents must arrange their own funding through the Regional Centers. The Camp **does not** contact or arrange funding with the Regional Centers.