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Dear Parents:

The entire staff of The Mosaic Project eagerly awaits the arrival of your child! This season, your child and her/his class will be attending The Mosaic Project's outdoor school at the Enchanted Hills Camp in Napa, California. We are dedicated to providing our students with an inspiring learning experience with rewards they will carry throughout their lives.

The Mosaic Project, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was created to provide children with essential skills to thrive in an increasingly diverse society and empower them to help create a better future. Our entirely unique outdoor school unites 4th and 5th-grade students of diverse backgrounds in each dynamic 4-night, 5-day session. While typical outdoor schools focus on environmental education, ours focuses on addressing issues of difference and on building self-esteem and community.

In this packet, you will find information to prepare for this exciting program. This packet includes:

- Basic information about The Mosaic Project and our programs.
- Information about communicating with your child during the program.
- Information about the facility, health and safety, supervision, and medical procedures.
- Information about how to minimize homesickness.
- A list of what to bring and what NOT to bring to the outdoor school in Napa.
- A student information sheet. (This form must be completed and returned to your child's teacher no later than _____.)
- A medical form. (BOTH sides of this form must be completed and returned to your child's teacher no later than _____.)

Your child's class will leave school at about 9:30 am on _____, and return before 4:00 pm on _____. Your child's teacher will accompany the students to Napa and will remain with them throughout the week. ***Please send a bag lunch with your child on the first day.*** All other meals during the week will be provided.

We are extremely excited to welcome your child and her/his class to The Mosaic Project and look forward to sharing this unforgettable experience with them. If you have any questions or concerns, please discuss them with your child's teacher who will bring them to our attention. Thank you for joining us!

Sincerely,

Lara Mendel
Executive Director

The Mosaic Project
works towards a peaceful
future by uniting children
of diverse backgrounds,
addressing issues
of difference,
and building self-esteem
and community in our
unique human-relations
outdoor school.

About the Organization

The Mosaic Project, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, works towards a peaceful future by reaching children in their formative years. We unite young children of diverse backgrounds, provide them with essential skills to thrive in an increasingly diverse society, and empower them to strive for peace.

We create a microcosm of the diverse, inclusive, just world we want to see and show our young students that *peace is possible*.

We seed the future population of middle schools, high schools, and all the venues of adult life with thousands of individuals who have seen a new possibility of what the world can be. Not only are our students inspired to work towards peace, they have been given concrete skills to do so and are empowered to take action.

Our Outdoor School

Mosaic's principal program is our unique human-relations outdoor school. This dynamic 4-night, 5-day experience for fourth and fifth graders is offered during the school week. Three classes from schools that differ markedly in socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic make-up participate in the program together, giving the students the opportunity to experience firsthand a diverse setting in which all are welcomed and respected. While typical outdoor schools focus on environmental science, ours addresses issues of difference and builds self-esteem and community.

Our students never forget this inspiring learning experience. We reach them before negative attitudes surrounding difference become entrenched and we enable them to live with, learn from, and befriend others with whom they would not ordinarily interact. Together in a beautiful, natural setting, they begin to recognize their commonalities and gain respect and appreciation for the uniqueness of all individuals, including themselves. They are encouraged to overcome ignorance and insecurities which can lead to fear of difference, prejudice, discrimination, hatred, and violence. We provide our students with the profound, personal experience of building an inclusive, egalitarian community across race, culture, and class barriers, empowering and inspiring them to create such communities throughout their lives.

Our Supporting Programs

In-School Workshops and Assemblies

To prepare students for our outdoor school program, we partner with schools to coordinate ongoing in-school workshops and assemblies that begin as early as kindergarten. These programs continue after the intensive outdoor school experience to reinforce lessons learned.

The Youth Leadership Project

We offer leadership training for high-school students who serve as mentors for the 4th and 5th graders at our outdoor school. The Project's curriculum addresses issues of difference while building leadership skills. The youth leaders undergo extensive training prior to arriving at the outdoor school. Once there, the training continues and they serve as cabin leaders for a session, putting theory into practice.

Custom Designed Workshops and Trainings

We create and facilitate programs specially designed for educators, classrooms, and youth groups. Popular topics include developing empathy, appreciating differences, positive discipline, assertiveness skills, and addressing bullying.

Our Curriculum

All of our programs emphasize building self-esteem and community and empower students to create a peaceful future. In particular, we focus on four themes:

- The celebration of diversity and awareness of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination
- Respect for and appreciation of self and others
- Teamwork and cooperation
- Communication and nonviolent conflict resolution
(including listening skills, expressing feelings productively, assertiveness, and empathy)

Our innovative curriculum is experiential. Learning at Mosaic becomes a magical adventure as the curriculum comes to life through hands-on activities, interactive theatre, games, role-plays, discussions, stories, and original songs. Our musical curriculum has received rave reviews and is available on CD.



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COMMUNICATION

Except under the most unusual circumstances, students will NOT be permitted to talk with their parents over the telephone for the following reasons:

- 1) We find that these conversations often increase homesickness and delay children's adjustment to the outdoor school. Additionally, when one student talks to their family and the word spreads that they have done so, homesickness can spread throughout the entire community. Homesickness is contagious!
- 2) We will keep the students very busy during the program. We do not want to have to pull them away from their groups to come to the phone.
- 3) There are limited telephone lines at the site that we must share with the permanent Enchanted Hills staff. We want to keep these lines as open as possible in case of emergency.

In case of an emergency, families may call (707-224-5435).

THE FACILITY

The Enchanted Hills Camp is located in Napa, California. It is a beautiful site complete with redwoods, meadows, a pond, and a creek. It includes 10 cabins for students to sleep in, restroom and shower facilities, hiking trails, creative playgrounds and climbing structures, a campfire circle, and last, but definitely not least, a swimming pool. Weather permitting, we will give the students the opportunity to swim each day with a certified lifeguard present. The site also has a large dining room where delicious, healthy food will be served family style.

SUPERVISION

The students' physical and emotional safety and well-being are our primary concerns. The students will be supervised 24 hours a day. Cabin leaders will sleep in the cabins every night. Our staff to student ratio is approximately 1 to 6.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Because your child's safety is so important to us, we must strictly enforce our rules regarding safety. Any child who cannot comply with these rules must be removed from the program by their parent or guardian.

Our staff is trained in First Aid and CPR. Some staff members hold advanced certifications such as Wilderness First Responder. A full-service hospital is located nearby in downtown Napa. Because the children will live in close quarters in the cabins, please **do not send a child with a communicable disease** such as strep throat, flu, chicken pox, head lice, etc.

MEDICATION

Students with severe allergies and/or asthma will keep their bee sting/extreme allergy shots (Epi-pens, Ana Kits) and asthma inhalers with them in their cabins and one allergy shot/inhaler will be kept with our staff. **ALL OTHER MEDICATION MUST BE GIVEN TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER** who will administer it to the students when needed. **Medication sent with your child must be in its original container with complete instructions** for administration. Please discuss your child's medication needs with her/his teacher.

We are equipped with many over-the-counter medications for headaches, stomach distress, and colds, so it is not necessary to send these types of medication. If your child needs over-the-counter medication during the week at the outdoor school, we will administer it **ONLY** with your written permission on the medical information form. Please be sure to fill this out completely, with specific information regarding physical limitations, allergies, and medication.

NOTE** *If your child has any special physical, medical, or dietary requirements, please write them on the medical form as well as discuss them with your child's teacher so that we can assure your child receives the best possible care.*

An Important Note to Parents:

We have learned that several local schools have had problems with lice this year, and that this has been the worst year for lice infestations around the world. **We would like your help in keeping The Mosaic Project's outdoor school a lice-free environment!** Please check your child for head lice every day the week before s/he goes to Mosaic. If lice are found, please follow the directions below. You may NOT send your child to Mosaic with live lice or nits. Thank you!

Things to Know:

- Head lice have nothing to do with the cleanliness of a house, personal hygiene, or parenting skills. Anyone can get lice.
- Lice are spread by head-to-head contact, although sharing hats, combs, and other hair accessories may also spread head lice.
- Head lice are wingless and cannot jump or fly, but crawl quickly.
- Head lice only live, feed and breed on the human head. They do not live on animals or birds and cannot survive for more than 48 hours off the human head.
- Live lice are about the size of a sesame seed, usually brown, and move quickly away from light. They are very difficult to see.
- Nits are tiny, yellowish-white oval eggs firmly attached at an angle to the hair shaft. You are more likely to find nits in your child's hair than live lice. You will usually find them close to the scalp.
- Be sure not to confuse nits with hair debris such as DEC plugs (bright white irregularly shaped clumps of dandruff stuck to the hair shaft), or hair casts (elongated segments of dandruff encircling the hair shaft).

How to check for head lice:

- Begin by separating the hair into small sections.
- Using a natural light or high intensity lamp and magnifying glass if needed, examine the hair behind the ears, back of the neck and scalp for crawling lice or nits.
- If no lice or nits are found in these areas, continue to inspect the rest of the head.

If head lice are found on your child:

- Check all others in the household for signs of head lice or nits. There is a 90% chance that other household members will also have lice.
- Choose an effective head lice treatment. Head lice may be treated with shampoos specifically labeled for head lice. ***Read and follow the directions carefully.*** (<http://w3.mesd.k12.or.us/shs/headlice/children.htm> and http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final_Michigan_Head_Lice_Manual_103750_7.pdf are great resources for choosing a treatment.)
- Remove nits from the head by combing with a fine-toothed comb. This is the most important lice control measure. Complete nit removal is time-consuming but is critical for successful treatment.
- Wash bedding and recently worn clothing in hot water (above 130°F) and dry in high heat for 30 minutes. Combs and brushes should be soaked in hot water (not boiling) for 10 minutes.
- Avoid lice sprays! Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from furniture, rugs, stuffed animals and car seats.
- Put pillows, stuffed animals, etc. in tightly sealed plastic bags for two weeks.
- Perform daily head checks, remove nits and vacuum and wash frequently for six weeks until head lice are gone. Continue to check your child weekly to detect reinfestation.
- Notify your child's school, camp, child-care provider, play partners, and neighborhood parents and **check for lice on a regular basis.**
- If you have difficulties treating the head lice on your child, please contact the school, local health department, or your child's physician.

The best way to prevent head lice transmission:

- Keep your child's hair pulled and tied back.
- Teach children not to share combs, brushes, hair ties, hats, scarves, headsets, helmets, etc.
- Do not try on other people's hats (even in department stores).
- Teach children to hang coats separately - placing hats and scarves inside coat/jacket sleeves.
- Conduct regular lice checks of your child.

Minimizing Homesickness

For many of our students, their week at The Mosaic Project's outdoor school marks the first time they have been away from home for an extended period of time. This is an extremely special and rewarding occasion!

Missing home, family, and even pets, is natural for children, especially when it is their first time away from home. Most students experience a short adjustment period to outdoor school. Soon, they get caught up in the excitement of new friends, activities, and adventures. Our staff is expert at supporting students as they adjust to life at The Mosaic Project. We are happy to say that after working with over 3000 students, we have never had to send a student home because of homesickness. Often the secret ingredient in helping students to overcome a bout of homesickness is preparation by their parents. Here are some tips for how you can help your children adjust quickly and easily to being away from home:

- Start while your children are still at home and help them to be proud of being independent and ready for The Mosaic Project's outdoor school.
- Talk about what your children are looking forward to learning at Mosaic. Reinforce their interest in and excitement about the program and about meeting new friends.
- Share stories about your own first experience away from home (keeping the spin positive!).
- Point out what your children do well and how that will be an asset to the Mosaic community.
- Plan for your children to stay the whole session. **DO NOT** tell them that they can call home, come home, or that you will pick them up if they are homesick. It sets them up for failure instead of success. It prevents them from becoming fully integrated into the outdoor school and can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Have them "practice" things they'll do at Mosaic such as taking quick showers and writing letters home.
- Have them practice being away from home by having overnights with friends or family.
- Pack a favorite personal item and a family picture.
- While your children are at Mosaic, send them cheerful letters that focus on how much fun they are having and less on what they are missing from home. Let them know how proud of them you are for spending the week at Mosaic! (Be sure to post a letter one or two days before your children leave home.)

It can also be difficult for parents to be away from their children for a week. Here are some tips to help you adjust quickly and easily to having your children away at outdoor school:

- Before your children leave, make a list of things you are going to accomplish while they are enjoying their Mosaic experience (things you have not gotten around to doing).
- Write to your children.
- Visit our website (www.mosaicproject.org), watch our videos, and remind yourself of the growth, development, and independence you want for your children.
- Talk with other parents who have experienced the same feelings when their children left for the first time.
- Take time for yourself! Just like your children are trying new things and experiencing personal growth, be sure you do the same so you can be reenergized when they arrive home with all of their great Mosaic stories.

TO BRING OR NOT TO BRING?

That is the Question!

We are hoping to have warm weather in Napa, however the weather in the redwoods can be quite variable. Evenings may be very cool. Students should be prepared for everything, including rain! Clothing that is comfortable and functional is much more important than name-brand, stylish outfits. Please follow this list closely. Children will carry their own luggage; please pack everything in only ONE suitcase or duffel bag (sleeping bag can be carried separately). Most importantly, be sure to **LABEL EVERYTHING** including disposable cameras.

To Bring:

- sleeping bag & pillow
- 1 warm jacket
- 2 warm sweaters or sweatshirts
- 1 set of long underwear, top and bottom (in case it gets very cold)
- 1 warm wool/fleece/knit hat for cold nights
- 1 **WATERPROOF** rain jacket or poncho (the \$2 ponchos you can get in the camping section of Target or Longs work really well!)
- pajamas
- 2 - 3 long-sleeved shirts
- 4 t-shirts or tank tops
- 3 pairs long pants
- 2 pairs shorts
- 6 pairs underwear
- 6 pairs socks
- 1 bathing suit (optional: we may have the opportunity to swim)
- 1 baseball cap or visor (for sun protection)
- 1 pair of closed-toed, comfortable, sturdy hiking shoes (sneakers are fine)
- 1 pair of old worn shoes or sandals
- 1 day pack (back pack)
- 1 plastic water bottle (be sure it doesn't leak!)
- 1 flashlight
- 1 bath towel
- toiletries (soap, shampoo, hairbrush, toothbrush, toothpaste)
- sunscreen, chapstick, and lotion
- 2 plastic garbage bags

To Bring If You Feel Like It:

- shower sandals
- camera and film
- a book
- letter-writing supplies
- sunglasses

NOT to Bring:

(We will confiscate the following items should they be brought to Napa. We will return them only when the program is over.)

- ✓ food, candy, or gum – We will provide plenty of healthy food. Food brought by students will be taken the first night since food in the cabins is an invitation for raccoons to visit.
- ✓ knives or other weapons
- ✓ matches or lighters
- ✓ curling iron (fire hazard)
- ✓ make-up or perfume
- ✓ electronic games
- ✓ cell phone or pager
- ✓ Walkman, Discman, or radio
- ✓ money
- ✓ **ANYTHING VALUABLE**