



## **CAMP NERINGA, INC.**

### **PERSONNEL POLICIES**

#### **Mission statement**

Neringa is rooted in the charism and mission of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who founded and sponsor Neringa.

Camp Neringa is bilingual and provides for a religious, educational, and cultural experience for children, youth, and families. It has a special focus on the Catholic faith, Lithuanian culture, and personal development for various age groups. Each session creates educational opportunities not only for leadership skill development, but also provides an experience of community (vs anonymity), cooperation (vs competition) and creativity (vs passivity), attributes often missing in our milieu.

Camp Neringa is a bilingual, non-profit organization, functioning in a Christian and Lithuanian cultural atmosphere.

Given the changes in society, Neringa has also become a place where being countercultural is natural:

- faith values are espoused by incorporating an awareness of God's existence vs promoting a life without norms;
- the importance of ecology is acknowledged by employing recycling, using/reusing inventory, respecting and maintaining order and cleanliness, avoiding waste;
- consumerism is replaced with creativity rather than purchasing ready-made consumer goods;
- the beauty of character is emphasized rather than focusing on the physical;
- the significance of community, family and otherness is encouraged rather than the selfie culture.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Camp Neringa was founded by the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In 1936 five Sisters from Lithuania came to established their community in the USA. In 1943 they accepted seven girls to spend their summer vacation at the Sisters' residence in Villa Maria, Thompson, CT. and an idea was born. The following year, the Sisters organized the first summer camp and (55) girls came to their convent grounds in Putnam, CT. This was the beginning of Camp Immaculata. After 25 summers in Putnam with over 100 girls in attendance, the Sisters purchased an abandoned camp ground in Marlboro, VT and relocated Camp Immaculata. Retaining the several old cabins, they built new cabins designed for camp purposes: cabins for campers, shower houses, and the main lodge. Later, they added the pavilion, infirmary, caretaker's home, chapel and Sisters' residence.

The new site in Vermont was named Camp Neringa and in 1970 the first summer session for Lithuanian speaking girls and the first Lithuanian heritage session for English speaking boys and girls took place. Year after year, sessions were added: Lithuanian speaking boys, students, and Lithuanian speaking families; the sessions also varied: all girls, all boys, later combined into a coed session, and even a third week was added to both children's sessions because the demand for being at Neringa

was so great. Soon a family camp for Lithuanian heritage families was added and a session for adults with a special interest in art and poetry (Meno8Dienos). Thus, the entire summer is filled when sessions start at the end of June and continue to the end of August.

In 1996 Neringa was incorporated in the state of Connecticut, with permission to operate in Vermont and in 2016 a new corporation registered in Vermont was inaugurated.

A unique spirit flows through Neringa. A spirit that fuels creativity, encourages personal development, helps discover individual skills and inspires spiritual growth. The spirit of Neringa challenges individuals to foster group cooperation and community. The environment helps to focus on spirituality and foster essential values, using technology at a minimum away from the encumbrances of city life. A greater understanding of one's ethnic heritage strengthens every one's personal identity.

An integral part of Neringa are the staff and counselors and the quality of their dedication that they bring to the campers, even though a lot depends, on their own competence, their loyalty, and their morale. This is equally important as was the Sisters' efficiency and dedication. No matter what your duties and no matter how directly or indirectly you are involved with campers, we hope you will find it satisfying to join with others in a common effort.

This policy is prepared for your information to guide you in your work. You will be given further directions concerning the details of your work, most notably in your job description and any supplemental rules and guidelines as provided by the Executive Director.

Your generous cooperation and dedicated services are deeply appreciated.

Camp NERINGA Management

## **ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN**

The highest level of the Neringa Corporation are the individuals who have an avid interest in Neringa, pay annual dues to the corporation and by so doing are Members of the corporation. The Members have an annual meeting during which they elect a Board of Directors. The Directors manage and control the business affairs of the Corporation and perform their duties according to the By-laws and appoint the Executive Director and Resident Manager. They approve long-range planning, review activity and budget reports, etc. The Executive Director is directly responsible to the Board for everyday operations and is assisted by the Assistant Executive Director each according to their respective job description.

The responsibilities at Camp are carried out in four specific areas: the Program Coordinator, the Summer Manager, the Head Cook, and the Resident Manager who are directly responsible to the Executive Director. Counselors/Instructors, Counselors-in-Training (CITs), and Volunteers are directly responsible to the Program Coordinator according to their job descriptions. Assistant cooks are responsible to the Head Cook. The Summer Manager is responsible to the Executive Director, and works in co-operation with the Program Coordinator, Head Cook, and Resident Manager according to his/her job description.

The Executive Director is ultimately responsible for the performance of all staff members.

All problems relating to your duties should be brought first to attention of the person responsible for your area. You are free to consult the Executive Director/Assistant in any matter you consider important.

## **TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT**

Since Camp is in operation seven days a week, twenty four hours a day, work time must be scheduled to provide full-time coverage. There are two types of compensated workers: independent contractors, who are compensated at the close of the term, and salaried or waged employees, compensated bi-weekly.

In addition to the paid staff members there are volunteers, who donate their time and provide services according to their interest, expertise, and the needs of the Camp, with no compensation as well as CITs.

## **Application for work**

All staff is hired and all volunteers are accepted by the Executive Director. Applicants are hired on the basis of experience, training, personal background, Camp needs, and the potential for growth within the Camp. Staff may sometimes be required to perform tasks of additional duties that differ from what is listed in their job descriptions. The specific qualifications for service at Camp Neringa may require fluency in Lithuanian language and culture, as well as a commitment to upholding Roman Catholic values.

All staff members and volunteers have to submit to a criminal background check (every four years) and complete the Virtus "Protecting God's Children" program. Each hired staff member and volunteer must sign an agreement or contract for job responsibilities (outlined in your job description) as well as acknowledgment of intent to uphold Neringa's Mission and these Policies. A health form is requested from all staff members to facilitate assistance in emergencies.

## **BENEFITS**

Employees and volunteers receive free lodging and meals every day.

All employees are covered by workers' compensation in accordance with state law requirements. This covers on-job accidents only. Therefore, it is extremely important for you to remember that you must report any accident to the Executive Director/Assistant at once. If you are in need of first aid, ask the camp medical counselor to assist you. Camp Neringa does not provide health insurance or compensation for non-employment-related medical treatment.

## **GENERAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Respect, good manners, simple human consideration, competence in your work, and co-operation all combine to make campers and staff feel comfortable, and create a welcoming atmosphere.

Confidentiality is of utmost importance when you have received privileged information re camper or staff member. Do not reveal private data (e.g. family situation, health problems, etc.) about campers to other campers or outsiders, as such information is of a confidential nature. Only the Executive Director/Assistant, camp medical supervisor, Program Coordinator should be informed about any

behavioral, medical or other such problems. Because of stringent privacy laws, no one is permitted to post photos which include pictures of campers on their Facebook page or other such media, without the permission of the child's parents.

## **Safety**

All unsafe conditions should be reported to the Executive Director/Assistant or Summer Manager immediately to prevent accidents to campers, staff, or visitors.

First aid for staff members as well as campers is available from the medical counselor. For real medical emergencies, dial 911. Various staff members (including the summer manager, executive director, assistant executive director, and any counselors identified during orientation) are certified for CPR and to use the automated external defibrillator (AED) (mounted on the kitchen wall). These first responders should be located immediately in the case of a medical emergency on campus to assist until an ambulance arrives.

An emergency and disaster plan is presented to each staff member and posted in the dining room. Carefully note the locations of fire alarms and extinguishers.

Unaccompanied strangers on the grounds should be referred to the appropriate supervising staff member. In the case of unwanted intruders on camp grounds, immediately refer the situation to the Summer Manager, Resident Manager or other administrator and if necessary, dial 911.

Please use common sense at the waterfront. Do not swim alone. Minor campers are never allowed to the waterfront unaccompanied by a counselor. For emergency assistance during scheduled swimming times, please refer to the lifeguard on duty.

Child safety is a paramount concern at Neringa. Staff members should never leave children unattended.

Incidents relating to suspected abuse and neglect, security, property loss or damage, fire protection deficiencies, equipment and utility malfunction, or other suspected problems should be reported to the Administrations to be investigated and corrected in a timely manner.

While every precaution is made to protect the personal property of staff, Neringa assumes no responsibility if personal property is lost or destroyed.

There shall be no vending or soliciting at Camp Neringa or on its grounds without permission of the Executive Director.

## **Harassment**

Neringa respects the rights and dignity of our staff and campers and makes every effort to maintain a workplace and environment free from harassment, including physical, verbal, or psychological abuse. We uphold laws regarding sexual harassment, which may include verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when such conduct creates an intimidating environment, and prevents an individual from effectively performing the duties of their position. Sexual harassment is illegal. Individuals who

engage in acts of sexual harassment may also be subject to civil and criminal penalties (Title VII of the civil rights act of 1964, Vermont laws; see the Vermont Fair Employment Practices Act).

Definitions.

*Acts of violence:* fighting, hitting, slapping, kicking, biting, pushing, shaking, striking, or any other physical act of aggression that may cause harm to another.

*Act of harassment:* being rude, condescending, swearing, demeaning another person's character, using telephone, mail, facsimile or computer network to cause annoyance or alarm to another person, or any other improper behavior, which in management's opinion is disruptive or threatening.

*Examples of sexual harassment* include, but are not limited to the following: unwelcome sexual advance, verbal or physical contact of sexual nature, request for sexual favors, touching or grabbing a sexual part or individual's body, unwanted hugs, kisses, sexual jokes and banter, pornographic drawings, offensive literature, indecent exposure, or any improper behavior which is abusive, disruptive and shows disrespect towards the other. Retaliation of any kind for having filed or supported a complaint of sexual harassment (e.g. ostracizing the person, or pressuring the person to drop the complaint) will not be tolerated.

If you feel that you have experienced harassment, report the incident immediately to any person (in management) with whom you feel comfortable. Any person, who becomes aware of an incident of harassment, whether by witnessing the incident or being told of it, must report it immediately to the Executive Director (978-582-5592, [regina@neringa.org](mailto:regina@neringa.org)) or Assistant Executive Director ([dana@neringa.org](mailto:dana@neringa.org)). You may also contact the State of Vermont Attorney General's Office, 109 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05602 (888-745-9195 or 802-828-3665).

Management will promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially investigate each complaint. If an allegation of sexual harassment is found to be credible, management will take appropriate corrective action on all confirmed violation of this policy, up to and including discharge.

All staff have to complete the "Virtus" program and adhere to its directives. In the case of sexual harassment of a minor, management will inform the minor's family and report the incident to the Vermont Department for Children and Families.

As mandated in the state of Vermont, Neringa workers must report any minor's report of abuse (whether it happened on Neringa grounds or not) as well as cases of suspected abuse to the Vermont Department for Children and Families. Camp management will facilitate mandated reports.

Neringa will not tolerate any acts of violence, threats of harm or harassment, and will take whatever actions it deems necessary to protect campers, counselors, and staff from all physical, verbal, or psychological abuse. Neringa is committed to providing an educational environment and workplace free from unlawful conduct.

### **Use of Alcohol, Drugs, and Smoking**

Vermont law prohibits alcohol consumption by anyone under the age of 21. During the children's camp sessions, Camp Neringa will be **alcohol-free**.

The use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited at all times, Neringa is a **drug-free** work place.

Staff may smoke only in the work shed and never in the presence of children. No smoking is allowed in other buildings or anywhere on the grounds.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

We encourage communication and practice an “open door” policy where information can be exchanged freely, and issues and concerns may be raised. If you have any questions or problems concerning your work, or if you have any good suggestions, discuss this with the Executive Director/Assistant or Program Coordinator. Address questions about policies or compensation directly to the Executive Director.

## **JOB PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

We maintain a job description for each position in Camp and we inform all staff of their duties and responsibilities. At the end of the contracted time each staff member is evaluated in light of Camp Neringa’s Mission, the specific job description, and adherence to these Policies. The Program Coordinator, together with the Camp Director, verbally evaluate your performance at the end of the camp session.

## **Grievance procedures**

It is the policy of Neringa to identify and correct the causes of any dissatisfaction, which may arise out of the working conditions. We want to assure that everyone receives fair and equitable treatment. All written grievances are confidential. If you have a grievance or a dissatisfaction, bring it to the attention of the Program Coordinator or Camp Director who will review, assess and resolve the situation as possible.

## **Disciplinary action**

Disciplinary action may be used for infractions of policies and regulations or for poor performance. These may include: counseling, reprimand, verbal and/or written warning, withholding or reduction of payment, suspension, and discharge.

The Administration will review all pertinent facts, and the staff member will be given an opportunity to explain his or her conduct before any decision is reached.

If satisfactory change in behavior and/or work performance does not occur immediately, your employment may be terminated. Some incidents may result in immediate termination without prior disciplinary action.

## **VISITORS; TELEPHONE, INTERNET, AND ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE**

Counselors and other personnel may not receive visitors at Camp without prior approval of the Executive Director/Assistant or Summer Manager. Private telephone conversations and computer/Internet use should take place during program hours and should be away from campers. Other electronic devices may be used outside program hours, away from campers, in a way that does not interfere with the spirit of Neringa’s no electronics rule for campers.

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