



# **Family Handbook**

2008 Camp Season



**ROCKFORD  
PARK DISTRICT**



# Welcome to Nature Quest!

Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to the Rockford Park District's Nature Quest program. Nature Quest is a week-long day camp for children ages five to ten. Nature Quest is based out of the Linda K. White Center in Aldeen Park. This camp is an outdoor educational camp, designed to teach children about the importance of nature, friendship development, and many life skills that will be beneficial to them as they grow into active participants in society. Not only that, but campers will be able to experience many camp traditions that they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

I am a firm believer in the importance of a summer camp experience, because children are provided with a fun, active, and most of all a safe place to spend their summer. I pride myself in creating a program that meets the needs of the families we serve, and which upholds high expectations for campers and staff.

Thank you for choosing to send your camper(s) to Nature Quest. I hope we can continue to provide you with the highest quality of programming this summer.



*Sarah Brenner*

Sarah Brenner

**Camp Director, Nature Quest 2008**



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**By registering your child for Nature Quest, you and your camper agree to adhere to all the rules and policies in this handbook.**

## **Mission Statement**

The Mission of the Rockford Park District is to “help people enjoy life” by providing a quality park and recreation system.

Nature Quest seeks to provide campers with an exciting experience that encourages growth in all areas, and supports the development of social and lifelong leisure skills.

## **Basic Information**

**Ages:** 5-10 (as of June 1, 2008)

**Hours:** Monday-Friday, 8:30 AM-4:30 PM  
Extended Care, 7:30-8:30 AM and 4:30-5:30 PM

**Location:** Linda K. White Center  
623 N. Alpine Road, Rockford, IL  
815-398-1767  
TTY, 888-871-6171

**Fee:** \$105 per week (\$135 non-resident)  
Extended Care, \$20 per week  
Nature Quest Readers Book Club, \$5 per week

## **Staff Qualifications**

Qualified camp leaders facilitate all activities at camp. The entire program is under the supervision of an experienced camp director and administrative staff. All staff members are trained and proficient in safety areas including First Aid, CPR, and Automatic External Defibrillator. The program operates using a safety manual, which identifies specific procedures and camp activities. Campers are never unsupervised; camp staff will be present at all times, even during non-program times or breaks. The Park District performs criminal background checks for all applicants for all positions. All employees working in safety-sensitive positions are subject to random drug and alcohol testing.

# Park and Facility

The park's nature trails for hikers of all ages opened May 1, 1969. The self-guided trails range from one quarter of a mile to a mile and a quarter long. The first loop of the main trail is flat, and is suitable for people with limited mobility and/or strollers, and is wheelchair accessible.

Signs posted along the trails educate hikers on subjects such as birds, plants, springs, flowers, leaves, fungus, etc. indigenous to the area. There is a lot of wildlife in the heavily wooded park. During summer months, Nature Quest summer day camp is held at the park.

There are 35 picnic tables and seven grills available throughout the park.

The Linda K. White Center, where Nature Quest is held, contains private bathrooms and drinking fountains for campers and staff.

# Summer Camp Refund Policy

- 1) FULL REFUND – Cancellation notice must be given two weeks prior to the first day of the camp for which you've registered.
- 2) 100% satisfaction guaranteed refunds available if program does not meet customer satisfaction. Request for refund should be made prior to completion of the week-long session.
- 3) In the case of injury, illness, or family emergency, a partial refund may be requested for the camp experience.

# Required Forms

On the first day of your camper's session, the following forms should be completed and on file:

- Nature Quest registration form
- Health History Form
- Medication Administration Permission (if necessary)

If required forms are not filed at Monday's check-in, campers will not be able to participate.

*NOTE: Rockford Park District staff will not dispense medication to a minor child or other participant until the Permission and Waiver to Dispense Medication and Medication Information Form have been fully completed by a parent/guardian and submitted to the Camp Director.*



# What to Bring to Camp

The following items are optional items that could be brought to camp in a small labeled backpack or bag. The Rockford Park District will provide all program equipment.

- Hat
- Binoculars
- Rain gear
- Light jacket or coat
- Change of clothes and undergarments, if necessary (*Please notify the Camp Director if your child has any special bathroom needs.*)
- Medications\*
- Camera
- Sunscreen (will also be provided at camp)
- Insect repellent (will also be provided at camp)
- Water bottle (will also be provided at camp)

All clothing and personal items **MUST** be labeled with permanent ink or have the camper's name sewn on, so they may be more easily managed.

*\* See page 16 for more information about our medication policies.*

# What NOT to Bring to Camp

- Radios
- Gameboys/other game systems
- Comic books
- Pocketknives/Swiss Army Knives/weapons
- Toys
- Flashlights
- Other similar items
- CD players
- Cell phones
- Playing cards
- Stuffed animals
- Blankets
- Food/candy/snacks (*unless needed for specific medical reasons*)

# Dress Code

We find it essential to have a dress code in order to ensure the safety and well being of your camper.

- Please send your camper in clothes that would be school-appropriate. These clothes will get wet and dirty. Campers should wear shorts or pants and t-shirts.
- All participants must wear closed toed and closed heeled shoes (no sandals).
- Please, no shirts that show a midriff area. For girls, please do not wear tank tops or halter tops. The less skin showing the better, to prevent sunburn and minimize mosquito bites.
- If your camper comes to camp in non-camp appropriate clothes, they will be asked to change. Any clothing with inappropriate or suggestive words or images will not be acceptable.
- For the swimming field trip, swimwear must be lined, and meet RPD Aquatics Department standards.

# Check-In/Check-Out Procedures

## Check-in/Drop-off – Monday, 8:30 AM

What to expect:

- Tables will be set up in front of the building, with camp administration staff on hand to greet you.
- All forms will be checked to ensure that they have been completed and signed.
- Camper medication will be turned in to camp administration staff and secured.
- Parents/Guardians will be required to sign in their camper(s).

## Check-Out/Pick-Up – Daily, 4:30 PM

What to expect:

- One table will be set up near the lodge doors
- Camp administration staff will verify a photo ID. To protect your camper, no camper is released to anyone not listed on the “Authorized to Pick Up” form. PLEASE bring a photo ID!
- Even if you are a returning participant, we will not release your camper to you without a photo ID each and every day.
- Medication will be handed back to parent/guardian if needed.

If you come to pick up your camper before the designated pick-up time, please park your car at the gate and walk down to the Linda K. White Center. The camp director will find your camper and you will be able to sign your camper out with the proper identification. The gate is locked during normal camp hours (8:30 AM–4:30 PM) to ensure the safety of our campers.

# Separated/Divorced Parents and Guardians

Any written material mailed out from the camp office will be addressed to the individual that registered the child in our program.

Parents/guardians who are separated or divorced will need to provide copies of a current, signed court order if there are any restrictions to be enforced regarding their child’s care. Without a current, signed court order, staff will be required to release the child to the parent/guardian who registered the child for camp, or to the individuals he or she has authorized to pick up the camper.

Any issues related to the child will be shared with the authorized adult who picks him/her up that day. Separated/divorced parents are asked to devise their own methods of sharing information. Staff are not allowed to give out copies of camp documents (i.e., accident reports, and attendance sheets).

# Late Pick-Up Policy

Please be courteous to our staff by being sure to pick up your child promptly. There is a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute. For repeated occurrences, parent/guardians may be asked to find an alternative program for their child.

# Meals/Food

The certified food service leaders will prepare meals for your campers. Campers will eat in the campsites over a campfire daily. Water bottles will be provided each week, along with a breakfast snack daily and other various snacks. Weekly menus are available upon request.

# Weekly Activities

Though “Theme Weeks” allow for maximum creativity every week, there are still activities campers can count on EVERY week. Included in these traditions are:

- Camp songs
- T-shirt signing
- Craft projects
- Family Night/camper awards
- Daily cookout/campfire
- Nature room
- T-shirt tie-dyeing
- Team initiatives
- Field trip
- All camp games
- Archery
- Environmental awareness activities

# Movies

On occasion, movies may be shown at camp. Most movies are G-rated, but occasionally a pre-screened PG movie may be shown. If a PG movie has been scheduled, this information will be posted at check-in, and you may opt for your child to participate in alternate quiet activities.

# Field Trips

We will ride a licensed school bus to and from all field trips.

## Week 1 — June 13

**Rock Cut State Park** • 7318 Harlem Rd. • Loves Park • 815-885-3311

**For:** Hiking, cook-out, and playground visit

**Expect:** Varying temperatures, sun, and outdoor play

## Week 2 — June 18

**Carlson Ice Arena and Sapura PlayWorld** • 4150 N. Perryville Rd. • Loves Park • 815-969-4069

**For:** Indoor playground and ice skating

**Expect:** Varying temperatures, and potential for slips and falls

**Bring:** All children must wear socks; long pants, medium-weight jackets, caps, and mittens are recommended

## Week 3 — June 25

**Anna Page Park** • 2800 N. Springfield Ave. • Rockford • 815-987-8800

**For:** Hiking, cook-out, and playground visit

**Expect:** Varying temperatures, sun, and outdoor play

## Week 5 — July 11

**Alpine Pool** • 4310 Newburg Rd. • Rockford • 815-987-8804

**For:** Swimming and wading

**Expect:** Varying temperatures, sun, swimming, and water play

**Bring:** Swim suit and towel

## Week 6 — July 18

**Atwood Park** • 2685 New Milford School Rd. • Rockford • 815-874-7576

**For:** Fishing, hiking, and presentations on raptors and reptiles

**Expect:** Varying temperatures, sun, and outdoor play

## Week 7 — July 23

**Sinnissippi Park** • 1401 N. Second St. • Rockford • 815-987-8800

**For:** Imagination Station show at the Music Shell, with playground visit

**Expect:** Varying temperatures, sun, outdoor play, and sound amplification

## Week 8 — July 30

**Midway Village** • 6799 Guilford Rd. • Rockford • 815-397-9112

**For:** Museum tours

**Expect:** Varying temperatures, sun, and outdoor play

## Week 9 — August 6

**Discovery Center** • 711 N. Main St. • Rockford • 815-963-6769

**For:** Museum tour, and science playground

**Expect:** Varying temperatures, sun, and outdoor play

# Family Night Program

One of the oldest day camp traditions, Family Night is an opportunity to reconnect with your camper(s), meet their leaders, share a meal, and enjoy a show.

Family Night Program is **ALWAYS** on Thursday evening. Families should arrive at camp by 5:30 PM. This will allow families to spend time with their camper eating before the campfire program at 6:00 PM.

Families need to bring a picnic supper for themselves and their camper.

Family Night is a very important event for all campers, and they anxiously await their loved ones to arrive.

If no one from your family can join us, please let us know with as much advance notice as possible. You will have to pick up your camper at 5:30 PM in the lodge if you do not plan on attending family night. Please inform the staff of your arrangements.

A family night slip will be sent home during the week giving detailed specifics about the program and procedures. This form will need to be signed and returned by Wednesday to notify Nature Quest Staff of upcoming arrangements.

## Sample Schedule:

- 5:30 PM Arrive and proceed to Family Night area (picnic)
- 6:00 PM Campfire program begins
- 6:30 PM Individual Camper Awards  
Informal reception/tours of lodge and campsites  
Nature Quest group pictures for sale  
Parents and campers depart the grounds by 7:00 PM

# Inclusion Services

The Rockford Park District welcomes and supports the participation of individuals with a disability or disability related need. Through assessment and observation, varying levels of support and accommodations may be provided for a successful opportunity. Supports may include:

- Consultation on activity modification
- Behavior modification support
- Observation and evaluation
- Adapted equipment (all-terrain wheelchairs, walking sticks, hand cranked bicycles, sleds)
- Varying levels of staff support
- Disability awareness training
- Sign language interpreters
- Visual systems and sensory equipment/toys

The Rockford Park District offers this support through the Therapeutic Recreation Department. For more information or questions on Inclusion Services, call Customer Service at 815-987-8800, TTY, 888-871-6171 or e-mail [Inclusion@RockfordParkDistrict.org](mailto:Inclusion@RockfordParkDistrict.org)

# Discipline Policy

Nature Quest is committed to providing a safe, needs-satisfying, growth-oriented experience for every camper. We believe discipline is not merely a list of expectations and punishments, but rather an approach to teaching skills in self control, responsible choice-making, and appropriate community participation.

A camper may progress through three levels. A level may be reached when the camper makes a choice that is counterproductive to our expectations regarding self control and community participation within the environment established by Nature Quest and the Rockford Park District personnel.

**Level I:** The camper's behavior warrants a documented warning (write-up)

**Level II:** **A.** The camper will have a time period to develop a plan to change their behavior.  
**B.** The camp staff will notify a parent/guardian of the second level issued.

**Level III:** The camper's continued behavior results in removal from Nature Quest.

## Examples of behaviors that warrant a discipline level:

- Disruptive outburst
- Disobeying hiking rules
- Throwing objects
- Disobeying commands
- Inappropriate language
- Disrespect for adults, others, or the environment
- Inappropriate touch or conversation

# Terms of Immediate Removal

For the safety of all participants and staff, certain behaviors warrant removal from Nature Quest at the time of offense.

*NOTE: A parent/guardian will be responsible for immediate transportation from Nature Quest. If a parent/guardian is not available, alternative arrangements may be made with the Rockford Park District Police.*

## Examples of behaviors that warrant immediate removal:

- Endangerment (Any activity that could cause injury to oneself or someone else)
- Striking or threatening to strike a peer or adult
- Possessing illegal substances and/or weapons
- Blatant and flagrant vandalism
- Tampering with emergency fire system equipment (extinguishers, detectors, alarms)
- Inappropriate behavior toward the opposite sex
- Leaving the designated activity area without permission

*NOTE: No refund is granted if the camper is removed from Nature Quest. They may participate in additional sessions only with the Camp Director's approval.*

These policies apply for all participants.

The level system is a week-long system for campers ages 8-10. If the camper gets a level on Monday he/she will have that level the rest of the week. For campers ages 5-7, levels will start over each day. The difference in the level systems is based on the developmental stages of each age group.

This policy will be discussed on Monday with all campers and will be reinforced daily.

## Photo Policy

On occasion, Rockford Park District staff may photograph or videotape participants during Rockford Park District programs/classes, events, or at our facilities. These photos may be used in Park District publications, advertisements, or videos. If you do not wish to be photographed or have your child photographed, please step away from the camera and inform your child to do so. Also, please notify the Camp Director.

# Medical Matters

The health and safety of every camper is our primary concern. As such, our staff are trained and certified by the American Red Cross to recognize medical emergencies, to administer CPR (including the use of an automated external defibrillator or AED), and to administer minor first aid. Please understand that we do not call parents or guardians for minor injuries that can be easily treated at camp.

However, in the event of a medical emergency, we are fortunate to be located within a 10-minute or less drive to OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center. In cases where a camper requires immediate professional medical care, we will call 911 first, then attempt to contact the camper's parents or guardians, including alternate emergency contacts. Please understand that campers' parents or guardians are responsible for their medical expenses, including medical transport.

## Medications

We encourage campers' self-responsibility for their personal health, including care and medications. Whenever possible, we ask that campers take medication(s) before or after camp, rather than during the program.

At check-in, authorized camp staff will collect any oral medications, including over-the-counter products and dietary supplements, which have been provided by the parent/guardian. Inhalers, epinephrine auto-injectors (Epi-pens), or other prescribed medications that need to be carried at all times will be returned to the camper after check-in.

Prior to participation, a Medication Administration Permission form must be completed by the parent/guardian for each program, specifically citing medication(s) and required dosages. We will administer medications as directed, with the expectation that campers have the knowledge and skills to safely possess, self-administer, and use any medications provided by parents/guardians. Authorized staff will assist with administering medication in emergency situations (i.e. Epi-pen, asthma inhaler).

Medication must come to camp in its original container/bottle. The medication label and instructions supplied on the Medication Administration Permission form must match. The amount of medication sent to camp should not exceed a two-week supply. Please be sure that medications, including Epi-pens, have not expired.

If a prescription changes (i.e. dosage, time, etc.), a new Medication Administration Permission form must be completed. This form should be delivered to authorized staff with the medication in its original container, reflecting the prescription change. Verbal notices or instructions cannot be accepted.

Camp staff may not assist with intravenous medication, procedures that are body-invasive, or care which requires medical judgment, including dosage calculation. If such assistance is required for the camper's health and well-being, a personal care giver or family member (age 16 or older) may be provided by the family for this purpose..

# Illness/Absences

Campers not feeling well should not go to camp. This includes the following:

- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Draining rash
- Lice or nits
- Eye discharge or pink eye
- Too tired or sick to participate in daily activities

If a camper will not be attending camp due to illness, parent/guardian will need to contact the Nature Quest staff at 815-398-1767 before 8:30 AM that morning. If a camper becomes ill while at camp, a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up camper.

If illness arises, it may be possible to change sessions. Please contact Rockford Park District Customer Service at 815-987-8800 (TTY, 888-871-6171).

# Severe Weather

The camp administration staff may change the program schedule due to severe weather (i.e., severe heat, rain, wind, thunderstorms, or tornados). Nature Quest staff members are trained to identify such situations and will take appropriate measures to ensure camper safety. Programming/schedules may be altered to ensure camper safety during severe weather. If warranted, Thursday's Family Night Program may be canceled. If harsh weather appears likely, feel free to call 815-398-1767. If the Family Night Program is canceled due to the weather, we will keep your children until 5:30 PM, even if you do not have extended care.

Reuben Aldeen Park is home to the Alpine Dam, which controls flooding on the Keith Creek. This earthen dam protects people and property by draining an area of more than seven square miles in southeast Rockford. As the dam does its job, however, floodwaters can impact Aldeen Park and the Nature Quest program.

Should flooding or other weather conditions make it necessary to close the program for the day, we make every effort to notify parents promptly by telephone. This occurred once in 2007. If the park is closed, participants must not come to camp.

# Lost and Found

Lost and found articles can be picked up at camp between 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM. The Rockford Park District is not responsible for any lost items. Articles left over at the end of the summer will be donated to local shelters.

## Green Spoken Here

At the Park District's nature-based camp programs, we seek a lifestyle that lives gently on our earth, connects children with the environment, and conserves our natural resources. Our camp community will shut off lights when not needed, recycle, have one meatless meal per week, and reduce waste of food, water, and paper products. Campers will be encouraged to maintain these positive habits away from camp, and involve family members to help ensure a green future.



## For fun and safety, ACA camps set the standard

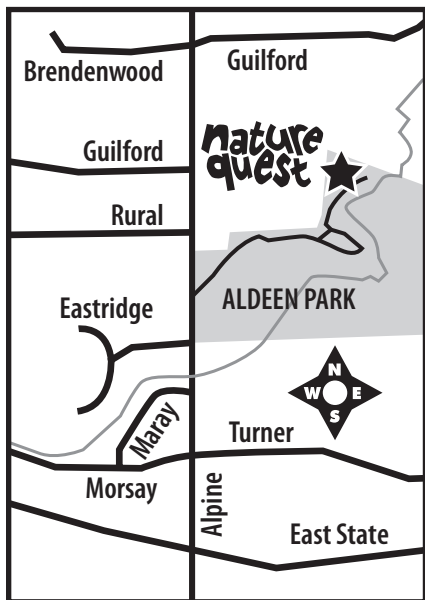
ACA Accreditation means that Nature Quest cares enough to undergo a thorough review of its operation on up to 300 standards, from staff qualifications and training, to emergency management. The American Camp Association collaborates with experts to assure that current practices at the camp reflect the most up-to-date, research-based standards in camp operation. Together, camps and ACA promote summers of growth and fun in an environment committed to safety.



**For more information, visit [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org).**







## NATURE QUEST

Located at the Linda K. White Center at  
Rueben Aldeen Park  
623 N. Alpine Road, Rockford, IL  
815-987-8800  
TTY, 888-871-6171

The Center is located at the northeast parking lot.



### ROCKFORD PARK DISTRICT

Nature Quest is a program of the Atwood Environmental Center, a facility of the Rockford Park District.

[www.atwoodpark.org](http://www.atwoodpark.org) • [www.rockfordparkdistrict.org](http://www.rockfordparkdistrict.org)

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