

**ELIOT INSTITUTE  
NEWCOMER HOST**  
(Revised December 2024)

**SELECTION:** Selected by and responsible to the Dean. The Dean may assign this selection to the Volunteer Coordinator.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** An experienced Eliot camper who likes meeting people, knows the campus, and is familiar with Eliot policies.

**GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:** To be in contact with newcomers before and during camp.

**TIMELINE**

**BEFORE CAMP**

- \_\_\_ Register for camp. Sign contract and Code of Ethics; return to Registrar.
- \_\_\_ Contact all newcomers identified by the registrar before camp to tell them about the orientation and to ask if they would like a mentor to meet with during the week.
- \_\_\_ Determine with the Volunteer Coordinator where the meeting will take place and when. The Orientation is always held on arrival day.
- \_\_\_ Plan the agenda (See below for ideas)
- \_\_\_ Decide if a tour of the Seabeck campus will be offered.
- \_\_\_ Invite Board Rep, Dean(s) and Volunteer Coordinator to attend. Ask if they want to speak.
- \_\_\_ Recruit campers of various ages who are willing to assist with the orientation and serve as tour guides and/or mentors. Ask the Volunteer Coordinator to ask for volunteers on the survey sent to campers prior to camp.

**ARRIVAL DAY**

- \_\_\_ Be present as much as possible at check-in desk to greet newcomers as they arrive.
- \_\_\_ Go to the registration desk and pick up enough extra maps for your newcomer meeting participants.

**NEWCOMER ORIENTATION MEETING**

- \_\_\_ Welcome Campers. Go around the room for a brief check-in; name, where from, and U-U church affiliation (if any). Ask if they have any questions: about their rooms and about meals, etc. Point out that the roster booklet may answer many questions. If time later, you can ask how they learned about Eliot, what they hope to get out of camp, etc.

- \_\_\_ If Dean(s) and/or Board Representative are present, introduce them and invite them to say a few words about their role at camp. Note: you could also ask them to address any of the topics below rather than doing it all yourself.
- \_\_\_ Intentional Community.
  - \_\_\_ Read [Eliot Mission Statement](#): *"Eliot Institute creates and supports an inclusive community of celebration, friendship, exploration, relaxation and joy for Unitarian Universalists, their families and friends."*
  - \_\_\_ Read the short version of the [Eliot Covenant](#):  
*"We, the Eliot community, are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all campers, volunteers, and the Eliot and Seabeck staff. We promise to:*
    - *Create an inclusive and welcoming community for all.*
    - *Affirm and promote the UU values of kindness, compassion, and respect for one another and the Earth.*
    - *Recognize that we all make mistakes and be generous with forgiveness. Together, we are and we make Eliot a loving community."*
  - \_\_\_ Explain how our intentional community is built at each camp. We covenant to follow rules so that camp is a welcoming and safe experience that we make together for one another.
  - \_\_\_ Rules can be found in roster and will be discussed at All Camp Meeting
- \_\_\_ Eliot History: Camps have been going since 1947. Volunteer Board (selected by the Nominating Committee and voted on by campers) sets policy. Eliot contracts with Seabeck Conference Center for use of their grounds, etc.
- \_\_\_ Newsletter: Is published daily and usually available at Social Hour or handed out at dinner. Many campers tuck it in their name tag pocket.
- \_\_\_ Make sure newcomers have the annotated map provided as a separate flyer, and quickly describe where various activities are generally held.
- \_\_\_ Open time for questions. Encourage newcomers to ask experienced campers (i.e., people who don't have a red dot on their name tag) any questions as they come up later on. Remind them that the only "stupid question" is the one they don't ask.
- \_\_\_ Encourage the newcomers to ask questions of the host volunteers at any time during the week and ask if any of the newcomers would like a mentor to meet with during the week.
- \_\_\_ Tours of Seabeck Campus. If these are to be offered, introduce tour guides, etc. (Note: for Winter Eliot, these should be offered *before* orientation, before it gets dark.)
- \_\_\_ After the meeting, return any unused maps to the registration desk or Eliot Office inside the Inn.

## DURING CAMP

- \_\_\_ Check in with newcomers and mentors mid-week.
- \_\_\_ Find time during the last few days of camp to contact new campers and get feedback on their camp experience - include any helpful tidbits in your staff report. If the person is interested in getting more involved by volunteering, have them contact the Board Representative or respond to the [“Share Your Skills with Eliot”](#) survey.

## AFTER CAMP

- \_\_\_ Within two weeks of the end of camp, submit a report to the camp Deans using the template they provide.

## IDEAS, HINTS AND TIPS

### From Steve Rosen (Long-time August host)

Orientation is usually held at the Meeting House. Even the newcomers can figure out or be directed as to how to get there. When we start tours there, we can point out Spruce and where the tennis courts are, as being one end of the Seabeck campus, and then make our way over to Colman and the opposite end.

### From July 2016 Host:

#### E-mail

First contacted each family via email. Introduced self: *“I am \_\_\_\_, the July Eliot Newcomer Host this year. I am sending this email to introduce myself and let you know how much I look forward to meeting you and welcoming you to Eliot. In addition to a short orientation meeting just before dinner on the afternoon that we arrive, I will be available all week to answer questions, help you locate events, people, quiet spaces, etc.*

They went on to tell a little of their Eliot history and ended with: *As the date approaches, the excitement level is ramping up at our house. I hope this is true at your house as well. If it is ok, I would like to call you on the phone in the near future to learn a little more about you and how I can be a more effective Orientation Host for you.”*

#### Phone call

Called each newcomer on the list within 2 weeks of sending the emails

- Repeated the invitation to attend the newcomer meeting
- Asked if they have signed up for small group, and explain the value participating in a small group
- Find out if they have a mentor or “camp buddy” to help them learn the ropes and get oriented or if they would like to be assigned one.
- Ask if they received the pre-camp newsletter and if they have additional questions

#### Phone call follow-up:

- Alert registrar to email/phone number corrections

- Let Small Group Coordinator know if newcomers want to be added to a small group
- Find a “camp buddy” for any newcomer needing one – invite the buddy to the newcomer meeting
- Sent a brief email to all the Newcomers, telling them how much I enjoyed meeting and welcoming them, and hoping to see them at a future Eliot, now that they are part of the “Eliot family”.