Camp Shakespeare '14

Camp Shakespeare is a two-week University of Texas residential summer camp for young people, ages 11-16, dedicated to ensemble playing with one another and with the plays of Shakespeare. Performance is all. We do not rehearse or stage plays. We explore them through performance, discovering as we play the richness of Shakespeare's words, the complexities of his characters, and the wonder of their worlds.

Here, we celebrate the creative process in everything we do.

Camp Shakespeare is not an “acting” or “theater” camp or “summer stock.” We perform plays, Shakespeare's personae, and versions of ourselves. We do not do “shows.”

Camp Shakespeare seeks kids who work well with others, who are inventive, elastic, eager to play, explore and take risks, and are ready to rumble when they arrive.

The following observations by a former (1980) Shakespeare at Winedale student whose daughter (age 12) attended Camp Shakespeare, and the parent of a recent camper (age 16), say quite a bit about what happens at Camp Shakespeare:

Their accomplishment [at Camp] is the more remarkable when we consider that none of these students are theater or drama students but only kids interested in working together to explore a play through performance. In the process, their play becomes a vehicle for their exploration of language, of social encounter and problem-solving, for developing self-confidence and self-esteem, verbal and written expression, and, through Shakespeare, for gaining insight into the human condition.

Looking in from the outside, it's a pretty risky thing that Camp Shakespeare is doing. I actually think that's why it works. It creates the right community for those kids – it's not about me, it's about us; it's about the play. The kids realize what amazing stuff they can accomplish in just two weeks' time by letting go. The camp empowers kids to be themselves and use what they've got, and puts faith in them that they can do it. Believing they can do it, they do!

Camp Shakespeare accepts applications from candidates anywhere, in public, private, or home schools. Experience with theater or with Shakespeare is not necessary. Commitment to working long hours daily at play with others is.
CAMP DATES

Camp Shakespeare will offer two sessions for Summer 2014

Session #1: Sunday, June 8 -- Saturday, June 21
Session #2: Sunday, June 29 – Saturday, July 12

CAMP FEE

The cost of Camp Shakespeare '14 is $1,000.00. Some scholarships are available.

CAMP SITE

The site of Camp Shakespeare '14 is Briarfield B & B Retreat & Conference Center, near Round Top, Texas. The Inn provides a comfortable country and historical setting for the experience: students enjoy the privilege of using and the responsibility of caring for these beautifully-restored 19th century Texas buildings which serve as dormitories, dining, and gathering spaces.

DAILY SCHEDULE AND ACTIVITY

Campers begin their day quite early, at 6:30 with cabin-cleaning and other assigned duties before meeting in groups or one-on-one with the staff to work on lines, characterization, or a scene at 7:00. A brief period of physical and vocal exercise follows. Then breakfast. Morning and afternoon work/play sessions (from 8:15-4:00) take place in the Theater Barn at Winedale and the air-conditioned Henkel Hall in Round Top. Every lunch is a picnic, prepared and set out by campers. Late afternoon sessions (4:00-6:00) are busy with Journal writing, relaxation exercises, quiet time, painting, mask-making, lines, and preparing for the evening. Improvised “problem-solving” exercises, singing, dancing, and free improvisational play follow supper. The day concludes with film sequences of Shakespeare’s plays and Cabin Time, wherein campers “unwind” and exchange responses to accomplishments of the day. Lights out: 9:15 p.m.

THE PLAYS

Session 1: The Comedy of Errors
Session 2: Twelfth Night.

PUBLIC PERFORMANCE

Public performances of the plays will be held for Session 1 on Thursday, June 19, at the Crystal Theater in Gonzales, Tx; on Friday, June 20, at Henkel Hall in Round Top, Tx; and on Saturday, June 21,
at the Winedale Historical Center's Theater Barn; and for Session 2, on Thursday, July 10, at the Crystal Theater in Gonzales, Tx; on Friday, July 11, at Henkel Hall in Round Top, Tx; and on Saturday, July 12, at The Winedale Historical Center's Theater Barn.

STAFF

Director: Professor Jim (Doc) Ayres, Founding Director of Shakespeare at Winedale, Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus of The University of Texas.

Co-Director: Robin Grace Thompson. Now in her 7th Camp year, Robin assists Doc in all planning, administrative, scheduling, teaching and directing activities and is coordinator of staff. Robin holds a B.A. in Theater from St. Edward's University and is a graduate of the Actors Theatre of Louisville apprentice program. Robin is also a full-time teacher for ACE Academy in Austin.

Associate Director, Austen Hyde. Austen is a senior at Brown University, in his fourth summer with the Camp staff.

Assistant Director/Counselor: Kendle Butterworth is excited to return to Camp! She has been a counselor at Camp Shakespeare since 2005 and was a member of the college program in 2004. She has a BA in the Plan II Honors program from UT Austin and a MA in Geography from CU Boulder. She is a certified elementary teacher and currently teaches in Troy, New York.

Assistant Director/Counselor: This will be Kris’ third summer with Camp Shakespeare. A student in the Shakespeare at Winedale program in 1983, Kris holds a B.A. in English from the University of Texas, Austin. She has been an elementary educator with Humble I.S.D. for 15 years, and is directing for the second year an after-school Shakespeare Club for 4th and 5th graders.

Senior Interns:

Gabe Colombo is a freshman in the Plan II Honors program at the University of Texas at Austin. Gabe aspires to work in the urban design field and is currently involved in the Plan II theatre troupe, The Broccoli Project, and the Butler School of Music's Symphony Band. An alumnus of Camp Shakespeare, Gabe enjoys performing, reading, watching, and teaching Shakespeare and is excited to continue giving back to Camp as a member of the staff.

Malena Pennycook is a theatre major at New York University. She attended Camp Shakespeare for four wonderful summers and will be returning for her third summer as a counselor. Away from the script, Malena loves travel, outdoor adventure
and games! She looks forward to an incredible summer exploring words and worlds with everyone at Winedale.

CAMP POLICIES

At Camp Shakespeare, we hope to create together a highly original, extraordinary learning experience. We have a country setting for that, much like Shakespeare's forest of Arden or the wood outside Athens. There is a different clock here. This world is filled with magic, wonder, song, and words and we do it without cell phones, computers, ipods, radios, or electronic games. The only TV game show here is Shakespeare. We do encourage campers to bring musical instruments of any kind. Upon acceptance into the program, campers are notified of what items to bring and not to bring.

TELEPHONE CONTACT AND VISITATION

Camp staff members notify parents of a camper's illness and/or problems with following the daily schedule or working with others, explaining how we are addressing those difficulties. Parents wishing to contact campers for any reason should call any of the three staff members at any time.

APPLICATION

We hope that applicants will apply to Camp Shakespeare for the opportunities it offers for play, for playing with others and for playing Shakespeare.

Each session will be composed of 12 students. Applications are available on the shakespeare-winedale.org website for both prospective campers and former campers.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The completed file should be sent to Professor Jim Ayres, P.O. Box 202, Round Top, Tx, 78954, before April 15.

SELECTION PROCESS

We do not audition applicants. We do interview new applicants and give serious consideration to letters of recommendation.

All applications are reviewed by a committee composed of the director and the counselors/associate directors. We will select equal
numbers of boys and girls, a balance of new and former campers and a fair representation of all ages (11-16). We attempt to honor the applicant's first choice for session but often we have to take the second because of the balances we seek in gender, age, and between new and former camper experience. Often we cannot select candidates who select only one session, for the same reasons.

As we read applications, we give major consideration to the applicant's ability to live, work, and play cooperatively and generously with others; to a desire for shared and disciplined play experience; a willingness to try new things, risk, and explore; and to a firm commitment to the ensemble approach.

Applicants are therefore applying for a play experience, not a specific Shakespearean play or part. After notification of selection, campers will receive role (character) assignments and suggestions about preparation.

NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE

Candidates will be notified of acceptance by April 20, '14 and are expected to acknowledge acceptance by e-mail. To secure registration, parents of Campers selected should send the full ($1,000.00) fee payment to Professor Ayres, Camp Shakespeare, P.O. Box 202, Round Top, Tx, 78954. Checks should be made "TO" The University of Texas and marked "FOR" Camp Shakespeare.

PREPARATION FOR CAMP

Upon acceptance, campers will be sent a text of the play chosen (with plenty of space for questions and annotation), role assignments, information about what to bring to Camp, a Release and Indemnification form and a Medical History report (to be returned by mail before arrival). Campers prepare by reading and re-reading the play and by working toward understanding language and characterization. Campers are expected to have memorized all of their assigned lines by the arrival date. Campers may at any time e-mail any of the staff for assistance, advice, suggestions, or answers to questions arising during this period of preparation.

Campers who arrive at Camp without the preparation noted above may be dismissed from Camp.

A SUMMARY

Camp Shakespeare seeks kids who:

- work well with others

- are ready and eager to speak up, make observations and respond to others from the beginning
-are inventive, elastic, eager to explore and take risks
-are ready to rumble (get involved, assist others, take initiative) when they arrive
-desire to live, work, and play cooperatively and generously with others
-have a desire for shared and disciplined play experience
-have a willingness to try new things, risk, and explore and do those
-will have a firm commitment to the ensemble approach

FURTHER INFORMATION

Our web site, shakespeare-winedale.org, carries up-to-date information about the summer camp. Parents and candidates are urged to check the site weekly for new information and possible changes. Questions of any kind about Camp Shakespeare '14 should be directed to Doc Ayres at jayres@cvctx.com.