

SPRING ODYSSEY APPLICATION 2016

An Adventurous Journey

Outdoor Program Contact
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Spring Odyssey Facilitators
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INTRODUCTION

The Spring Odyssey is based on a rigorous wilderness challenge. With over 40 years of history at St. Paul Academy and Summit School, Odyssey is an important part of our educational tradition. The Spring Odyssey will allow students to participate who otherwise could not due to academic, athletic or other reasons. SPA faculty members who have extensive wilderness experience and first aid training lead the Odyssey program expeditions. (Students need not have any camping experience and SPA provides the majority of the needed gear.)

Odyssey is both a journey in the wilderness and an inner journey designed for personal growth. Odyssey is about putting your life in perspective and discovering what is really important. Students will test and extend their limits of physical and emotional endurance, have responsibilities that demand action, build self-awareness and self-confidence, learn about their natural environment and their own relationship to it, and develop mindfulness, understanding and compassion for themselves and others.

Utilizing wilderness areas in the Utah Canyonlands, the course provides an opportunity for students to experience an extraordinarily beautiful part of our country.

THE CORE OF THE COURSE IS A STRENUOUS SEVEN DAY BACK-PACKING EXPEDITION.

DATES

The expedition will take place from Friday, March 18th to Saturday, March 26, 2016. There will be a required "shakedown" preparation overnight on in Afton State park in early March. Training begins the third week of January and will occur both on one or two Saturday mornings and/or after school from 3:00 – 5:00 PM one or sometimes two day a week. A weekly schedule will be supplied once participants and schedules are determined. Training dates can be a little flexible, though we want students to attend all of the trainings as much as possible.

ELIGIBILITY

All students entering grades 10 through 12 are eligible, provided they:

1. Are in sound physical and mental health.
2. Have permission of parents, advisor and school administration.

No experience is required, either in backpacking or camping. Participants will be taught skills needed for the expedition

There will be a maximum of ten students per course.

GROUP SIZE and SELECTION

1. Because of limits placed on the practical size of groups in wilderness areas and the amount of equipment the school can provide, the group will be made up of no more than ten students with two adult leaders.
2. An effort will be made to establish a balance of girls and boys.
3. Since part of the adventure of the Odyssey is the social dynamics of the course, effort will also be made to select a diverse group of students from among those who apply.
4. Applications will be accepted through December 11th, 2015, after which the group selection will be made and all applicants notified during that week.

WILDERNESS EXPEDITION

The seven-day expedition will consist of three parts:

- A. The *expedition* with instructors – the first three days students use map and compass to navigate on a prearranged route. The route involves strenuous backpacking, wilderness camping and cooking, and attention to the needs of all members of the group. This section of the trip will focus on learning wilderness skills and learning how to work together as a group. Instructors spend time helping students prepare for the solo experience.
- B. The *Solo* - a period in which each student is alone for about two days and nights with sufficient equipment and supplies, including food, to be protected from the elements. During the solo, instructors check students at intervals determined by conditions, but essentially it is a part of the course devoted to contemplation, isolation, and self-sufficiency.
- C. The *Group final expedition* without instructors - a two day trip during which the students travel as a group without the instructors if the group is ready and conditions are safe, utilizing the skills and experience gained during the pre-trip planning, the expedition with the instructors, and the solo. Instructors follow the student group at a distance of 2 – 3 hours foot travel, in case of emergency.

PRE-EXPEDITION PLANNING AND PREPARATION

During the planning and preparation leading up to the expedition, students will spend roughly 6 weeks and one weekend overnight acquiring the knowledge and skills they need during the expedition. These training sessions will include instruction in:

1. group dynamics
2. personal goal setting/emotional needs
3. physical conditioning
4. use of map and compass
5. first aid skills
6. clothing and boots
7. use of sleeping bags, stoves, water pumps, tarps and other equipment
8. food planning, purchasing, and packing

An overnight camping trip is held in early March during which time the students can test their skills, clothing, and equipment. Attendance on this “shakedown” trip is a prerequisite to going on the Odyssey expedition.

EQUIPMENT

The school will provide each participant with the following equipment:

1. Sleeping bag.
2. Foam sleeping pad.
3. Backpack.
4. Compass & maps.
5. First aid supplies.
6. Stuff sacs
7. Solo tarp & ground tarp

SPA will also provide group gear such as stoves, sleeping tarps, water pumps, and cooking kits. Each participant will need to provide:

Personal clothing to include good hiking boots and rain gear.
(a detailed clothing list will be distributed to participants)

COST

The estimated cost to be billed to each student is between \$900-\$1000. This figure includes food during the expedition and cost of air fare to Utah and ground transportation within Utah. The family is responsible for the cost of outdoor clothing and boots that may need to be purchased. Students will be held financially responsible for any school equipment damaged, stolen or lost.

Scholarship money may be available to students receiving financial aid. Please contact Heather Ploen directly if you have questions about financial aid eligibility. Students who do not attend the Odyssey trip for any reasons after plane tickets are purchased are responsible for the cost of their airfare.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Applicants and their parents should understand that wilderness travel is not without risks. There is the possibility of injury and at times the group will be as much as two days travel from rescue services. Unpredictable weather presents the possibility of encountering hot sun, rain, or even snow on this trip.

Much of the training for the expedition is devoted to learning how to travel safely in wilderness and coping with various weather conditions. Emphasis is on learning how to minimize risks and how to react to emergencies should they arise. As part of their training, students will learn:

1. How to assess weather and travel conditions and to recognize possible danger.
2. How to eliminate or minimize risks.
3. How to give first aid for cuts, burns, choking and hypothermia.

In addition, the following precautions are taken:

1. A route plan will be filed at the school and at the wilderness agency nearest the expedition site. Thus, at any given time during the expedition, the location of the group will be known both by the school and by local officials who supervise the area.
2. Students will be checked twice daily during the solo.

TRIP LEADERS

Haseena Hamzawala is certified as a Wilderness First Responder. She has extensive camping, rock climbing, and trail experience. She has instructed fall and spring Odysseys in the Utah Canyonlands for the past six years.

Matt Edens has achieved the rank of Master Voyager for his work with the Lutheran Pioneers' Boundary Waters program. He is Red Cross First Aid certified. He has coached at SPA for a number of years and has also participated in the SPA exchange program where he led a student trip to Germany. Matt has co-lead two Spring Odyssey trips.

APPLICANTS: Please complete the attached application and return it to Haseena Hamzawala at school. Applications must be submitted NO LATER than 3:00 PM on Monday, December 15th, 2014. You can reach Haseena via email hhamzawala@spa.edu.

Group members will be selected and notified the week of December 14th. Training will begin in January.

SPRING O D Y S S E Y 2016

Application Form

FULL LEGAL NAME

GRADE

DATE

E-MAIL ADDRESS

CELL PHONE NUMBER

INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

1. Answer the two questions below.
2. Obtain signature of a parent and your advisor.
3. Return to Haseena Hamzawala NO LATER than 3:00 PM, Monday December 14th, 2015.

Why do you want to participate in Odyssey and what do you hope to gain from it?

Describe your wilderness experience, such as camping, backpacking, training in first aid, or use of map and compass? (NO experience is necessary)

Parent Signature

Advisor Signature