

Pre-Camp Training for Living History Staff Members Chapter 1

Bienvenidos! Welcome to Philmont!

If you are a returning staff member, welcome HOmE. If this is your first summer, congratulations! Since 1938 Philmont Scout Ranch has served over a million participants, thus speaking volumes regarding the legacy of Waite Phillips and his gift! You are all a part of this important time in Scouting's history as we work towards touching the lives of the next million Scouts!

You have been selected to serve in one of the most sought after positions on the Philmont staff. These positions are both unique and extremely rewarding. You are going to be an interpreter of the life and times of the 19th and 20th Century pioneers who blazed the trails to the magical Sangre De Christo Mountains.

So that you can “Be Prepared” for your summer adventure Philmont Scout Ranch, in cooperation with consultants, have developed some short online training documents that will help you understand the philosophy and methods of the various interpretive programs that you will present to participants. Please watch for these emails, there will be six chapters, including this one. If you received them last year, please read them again to refresh your memory. If you like, you can print them out and bring them with you to Philmont at the end of May and use them as a resource through the summer.

Philmont's mission is to “Deliver Wilderness & Learning Adventures That Last a Lifetime.” We take this responsibility very seriously! As high school age young men and women hike the trails of this wonderful place, they share challenges and victories, learn to work as a team and personally grow in body and spirit. Their lives are forever changed!

As I visit with Philmont participants from all over America, one question I always ask is, “What was the most memorable part of your Philmont experience”? Almost without fail somewhere in the conversation they fondly mention the Philmont Staff! You provide that wilderness experience that will last a LIFETIME. And we will be coaching you to do it well.

There are 5 more chapters designed to help you with your roles this coming summer. They are:

- Chapter 2. Creating your historical character.
- Chapter 3. Costumes and props
- Chapter 4. Living the program
- Chapter 5. The uniqueness of your camp
- Chapter 6. Making the program come alive

You will also receive some email attachments with some of the chapters. With chapter two you will receive a Camp Profile that gives you the time period, historical significance of your particular camp and a list of characters for your camp. The profile is the outline of your interpretive program. With chapter three you will be sent a size survey to fill out and return as well as some photos that show the interpretive clothing for your camp, as well as online sources for any supplemental items you may want to purchase for your use before arriving at Philmont. (Philmont provides interpretive clothing for all staff.) With chapter five comes a list of all the interpretative camps, their dates and themes.

If you like, you can print out these chapters with their attachments and bring them with you to Philmont. They will be helpful to you during your living history training here and during your summer at your camps.

You along with your camp director will decide which character you will portray. PC's: If you have not been in contact with your camp director yet, please email David O'Neill so that he can give you contact information. Do not be worried if you have not had acting experience. Many interpretive sites around the world are staffed by weekend volunteers who have thoroughly imbibed the people and events relevant to their interpretations; yet they would never consider themselves "actors" per se. Being on a stage might not be comfortable for them even though they are completely at ease on their interpretative roles.

To get you started, look at the videos that have been posted on Philmont's website that cover the interpretation programs as well as interpretive character development and more.

There is also a wonderful video covering our living history program that was produced by our very own Marketing and Photography Services posted there as well. <https://youtu.be/Qacw6v9gSBI>

Philmont and all the backcountry management is committed to presenting a living history program that is complete, correct, professional and that meshes with our Scouting ideals. You will find that presenting your programs as a historical character can be very fun as well. See this link for some tips on how to work with our guests and find ways to remain professional in dealing with a variety of situations.

<http://blogs.aaslh.org/a-few-simple-tips-for-public-historians-working-with-confrontational-visitors/>

As you imagine yourself as part of the Philmont living history camp team this summer, reflect on these six principles of interpretation as outlined by Freeman Tilden in his book *Interpreting Our Heritage*.

1. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
2. Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation, based upon information. But, they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation contains information.
3. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is to some degree teachable.
4. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
5. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole person rather than any phase.
6. Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.

There will be further references to these principles in the chapters that follow, and during your training time at Philmont. In the meantime, think about them and what they mean to you.

As you read these online chapters and do your own independent research, don't hesitate to email Tim or myself if you need help or clarification. The time you spend now reading these chapters, doing research for yourself, as well as the

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continued hands on training we will provide for you at the ranch will all help you in becoming prepared for this exciting new role you will play!

Another opportunity you will learn more about in a separate message is the Philmont Certified Interpreter program. This is a fairly new process that will allow each of our staff members to earn a certification that signifies a commitment to learning and using that learning to be effective interpreters in our living history programs. There is an application process with certain requirements to fulfill at the ranch, and independently through an online session as well. There is a patch and certificate that can be earned to signify completion of the program. More information to come soon!

We are going to have another great summer interpreting history at all of our interpretive backcountry camps and delivering wilderness experiences that last a lifetime!

Our very best regards to you ...

David O'Neill

and

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