

## **What is Camp Sunshine?**

Camp Sunshine's mission is to "provide a camping experience for persons with developmental disabilities in an inclusive environment that embraces their recreational, emotional, physical, spiritual and relational needs." The camp provides an atmosphere that honors all people with total acceptance and unconditional love that is promoted through words and actions. Campers range in age from 12-50 years old with mild to moderate cognitive impairments and each camper is paired with a counselor. This one-to-one relationship between camper and counselor continues to be the most essential component for the success of the program.

## **When in the program is this opportunity available?**

This opportunity is available during the summer semester.

## **Who can participate?**

The program is available to 2nd year DPT students in good academic standing.

## **Where does this opportunity take place (i.e. CHS)?**

Camps are offered at Camp Henry in Newaygo (about 45 mins from GR) and Camp Blodgett in West Olive (about 40 minutes from GR).

## **What is the average time commitment for this opportunity? (weekly, monthly, and/or semester)**

It is a five day commitment with one day spent at orientation and four days of camp.

## **Who is the best person to contact to obtain more information on this opportunity?**

A third year student who volunteered at the Camp Sunshine.

## **Does this opportunity cost anything to the student(s)?**

There is not cost and all meals will be provided, however you must be able to transport yourself to the facility.

## **To learn more, click on the link below:**

<http://campsunshine.info/>

## **Testimonials:**

- *I thought the hands on experience with a camper gave me a better insight into what a family must endure. Specifically, my camper had ADHD. By the end of camp I was exhausted because he loved to run everywhere. However, it taught me how to be able to adapt tasks on the fly and how*

*to get him to do an activity for longer than 5 minutes. The atmosphere of camp is something that you do not experience anywhere else everyone is so supportive and celebrate what you can do while still pushing the limits of what you struggle with. I believe this was great to experience because it is something that should be applied in all clinic settings.* - Dustin (Class of 2018)

- *My camper had attended camp before, and was not a fan of many of the bigger activities they provide. While I tried to convince her on multiple occasions to try something outside her comfort zone, she had her mind made up. I braided my campers hair the first morning, and each morning after that she would ask me to do it again. When her parents picked her up, her parents were extremely surprised to see her hair braided, and said that she has never let them do/touch her hair. Although this is a very little thing, and may not have much meaning to other people or her future life, I realized how much it took for her to let me do it the first day and that I had gained her trust to do something she hadn't let her parents do before. So even though I was not successful in getting her to do the "big" activities, she did go outside her comfort zone in this way (and other ways) during our stay, I just had to adjust my way of thinking to notice them.* - Maddie (Class of 2018)
- *Each camper at Camp Sunshine has so much to teach us as individuals but especially as those going into the healthcare field. From this experience, I have gained more contact with individuals with disabilities and learned more about the similarities that these individuals have to each one of us despite the disability that they have. These campers, as well as the amazing staff, truly teach all of us to love each other regardless of differences and I found that very humbling. As healthcare professionals, we will work with individuals just like this and getting to connect with each of them on a deeper level during camp was one that will truly be unforgettable. The differences become minimal and you realize just how much in common you have with these individuals and how much love they want to give after knowing you for just a few short days.* - Alyssa (Class of 2018)