

MDI teens hone leadership skills at summer camp

MOUNT DESERT – Eight MDI High School students will be among the 31 summer staff members gathering at Camp Beech Cliff (CBC) this week. All have been CBC campers and several have participated in camp’s Counselor-in-Training (CIT) program. “There’s no better summer job I could ask for,” says senior Aaron Poirier, “five days a week with kids and performing arts outdoors in the sun. What I enjoy most is having the opportunity to help create lasting memories for kids. For me it’s morally satisfying. There aren’t many other jobs like that available for 18-year-olds. It’s a great stepping stone transitioning from high school.”



MDIHS students (left to right) Aaron Poirier, Hannah Dewey, Ariel Bothen, Jordan DeSalvo, Dylan Greenleaf, Addie Maxwell, Cullen O’Brien, and (not pictured) Stephen Palazola will be counselors at Camp Beech Cliff this summer.

earn certifications such as CPR, First Aid and Lifeguarding during staff training.

What really keeps drawing them back to CBC? “The place, the activities, the funny skits,” Aaron is quick to say, “and the traditions like Camper Bucks and Fracky Fridays.” For Stephen, who will be heading up the Archery program at camp this summer, it’s the people: “As a camper, I really looked up to a few of the counselors who were very good at things I was interested in,” he says, “I like being able to continue going to camp and I’m ready to try to be one of those people for the next generation of kids.”

Taking on the responsibility of being a positive role model for younger kids is both challenging and highly rewarding. Interested students who are at least 15 years old might consider applying to CBC’s Counselor-in-Training program this summer. Fill out a regular camp registration form (www.campbeechcliff.org or (207) 244-0365) and we’ll send you a CIT application.

End note about the three students who contributed to this news release: After the summer at CBC, Aaron will go off in the fall to the International Studies program at the U. of Maine at Farmington. Addie will head to Goucher College in Baltimore, MD, as a Latin American Studies Major. Stephen will explore his interests in economics, engineering and genetics at Brown University in Providence, RI, where he plans to “take in everything and see where it leads.”

Camp Beech Cliff is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit Outdoor Education and Recreation Center located in Mount Desert, Maine. For more information about our summer camp and school year programs, visit www.campbeechcliff.org or call (207) 244-0365. For more information about job possibilities next year at Camp Beech Cliff, please contact Camp Director Kevin Downey at kevin@campbeechcliff.org.

In the process of taking on new roles and responsibilities at Camp Beech Cliff, students develop real-world skills that will be important throughout their lives, as community members as well as in whatever career they choose. Aaron and two other MDIHS graduating seniors, who all worked as junior staff at CBC last year, shared some of their insights about the value of that experience:

“Working with kids and other staff members,” says Addie Maxwell, “you learn a lot of people skills like problem-solving, compromising, being an effective leader – and how to keep the fun in all of that.” Aaron and Stephen Palazola add patience, flexibility, effective ways to communicate, balancing free rein with safety, and developing good relationships with co-workers to the list. Being a counselor at CBC also provides the opportunity for students to