May 28, 2020

Dear SSP Liaison,

We are excited your group will be joining us for the first time in building community online.

Please read this packet thoroughly. It includes detailed information vital to getting your group ready for this experience. Outside this packet, you can find current information about the summer on our website at SierraServiceProject.org.

Your group can also stay current with what's going on at SSP by following us on Facebook (Sierra Service Project) and Instagram (@SierraServiceProject). Each summer team also has its own Instagram, where staff post updates:

Smith River: @SSPsmithriver2020   **Lake County**: @SSPlakecounty2020
San Diego: @SSPsandiego2020   **Tsaile**: @SSPtsaile2020
Chiloquin: @SSPchiloquin2020

If you have additional questions, don't hesitate to reach out. We want to help you prepare as best as possible! We are grateful to be on this journey of building community and growing in faith with you.

All the best,

Veronica Russell

Veronica Russell
Director of Volunteers & Outreach
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Sierra Service Project

Preparation Packet
Online Summer 2020

Important Information for:

Liaisons
Adult Participants
Youth Participants
Parents

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Liaisons: Timeline & Checklist

June 2
- ❑ **Confirm your group's registration for the online program.** In-person 2020 registration details will be visible on your group's account, but are "read-only." Previously registered groups for in-person sessions:
    - o **Weeks 1-4** will automatically be re-registered for the online program for the same session. Liaisons must adjust group numbers to reflect updated participation in the online program.
    - o **Weeks 5-7** must re-register for an earlier week to participate in the online program. Liaisons can register where space is available during any open session, including dividing into multiple groups as needed to fit various participant schedules. Please note that as Week 1-4 groups adjust their current participation numbers, additional spaces will become available.
    - o **Note:** We ask for a lower ratio of adults to youth for the online program (1:9). We encourage greater adult participation as there is interest.

Two Weeks Prior to Your Session
- ❑ **Enter participant details** into the MySSP roster (available June 8), ideally at least two weeks before the start of your session. All rosters will be blank for the new online program; please re-enter details to reflect current participation. Be sure to check your entries for accuracy.
    - o **Adult participants**: Name, email address
        - - Anyone 18 or older by the start of the SSP program they are participating in should be entered to the roster as an adult.
    - o **Youth participants**: Name, parent/guardian name, parent/guardian email address
- ❑ **Remind parents/guardians and adults to complete their electronic forms** (due one week before your session) via the emails sent to them from SSP.
- ❑ The liaison will receive an email to schedule a call with your SSP Site Director.

One Week Prior to Your Session
- ❑ **All electronic forms are due two prior to your session** on MySSP. Please send reminders to your parent/guardians and adults in advance!
    - o Verify the completion of all participant forms, and other needs on the roster on MySSP. Confirm all participant information is correct and complete.
    - o Liaisons can view and download each participant's electronic forms directly from the roster page.
- ❑ The liaison will receive a call from the SSP Site Director. On the call they will confirm your roster information, and share specific information concerning your week with SSP. They will also go over any missing participant forms for your group. Please make sure your contact information on MySSP is accurate.
    - o If the liaison is not participating during the week, communicate which of the adult participants should be the main contact for the SSP Site Director.

Monday of your SSP Week

Your week will begin on Monday at 10am Pacific with an orientation to SSP's online program. You will meet your site's staff team and the participants from other groups.

Your SSP Week

Fellowship, learn, reflect, pray, and play!

Participation Survey

At the end of each week, participants will receive an email with a link to an online evaluation survey. We will send a 2020 "Grounded"theme sticker to each person who completes the anonymous survey.

Session Expenses

The online program is available at no additional cost to groups previously registered for summer 2020. You can increase your numbers at no extra cost to include anyone previously unable to participate. To help facilitate this program, we will be sending each registered group "**SSP in a Box**." This will be mailed to the liaison to distribute locally to each participant, and will include a participant journal based on our 2020 theme, "Grounded," and individually bundled program supplies. We can accommodate participants who need an "SSP in a Box" package mailed directly to them, separate from their group's package. Liaisons, please inform your contact in the office if this is the case.

Please see our Summer 2020 Update for questions about finances for the cancelled in-person program.

T-Shirts

Every year, SSP produces a custom-designed T-shirt. Under normal circumstances, the full volunteer fee covers the expense of producing these in bulk, which is why they are usually included as part of the typical SSP week. Unfortunately, without the balances we typically receive from June final payments, as well as portions of the March second payment we are crediting towards future trips for groups, we are only able to produce T-shirts for this year on a pre-order basis, separate from registration and trip fees.

Participants and supporters can pre-order T-shirts on our online store. Each shirt costs $15 plus tax and shipping - free shipping is available for orders over $100. The first order will be placed on June 4th, and mailed directly to the purchaser. Additional orders will be placed throughout the summer.

Accessibility & Participant Needs

SSP is committed to making our programs **accessible** for any youth who wants to participate. To that end, we do our best to accommodate all disabilities or other needs. In order to do so, we ask that participants notify SSP in advance of **any disabilities or other restrictions** by entering the pertinent information on their **electronic participant forms** in MySSP. Group liaisons should be aware of these and any other physical, emotional, or relevant needs, and confirm them with the Site Director prior to arrival.

Adult Participant Requirements

Who should serve as an adult participant at SSP? Adults play a vital role at our youth-focused programs! They facilitate group conversations on faith and social justice, help enforce rules and guidelines, and motivate youth to learn and practice social skills. One of the most important decisions a liaison will make is deciding which adults will participate. They should know the youth's names, have some experience interacting with them, and be suitable to work with youth in general. Adults should be youthful in spirit, as SSP is a high energy experience!

Please give adults a clear picture of what they are signing up for. They should be prepared to participate in all aspects of the SSP online week.

Enter adult information to the MySSP roster at least two weeks prior to your session so they can complete their electronic forms. Anyone 18 or older by the start of the SSP program they are participating in should be entered to the roster as an adult.

Forms and Community Safety

Forms: In order to protect the youth we serve, we require adult participants to complete a set of electronic forms, which are sent to the email address provided by the liaison in MySSP. **Be sure all electronic participant forms are completed one week before your session begins.** *Liaisons, please enter roster details as soon as possible after they are available on June 8 to allow plenty of time for participants to complete all these items ASAP.*

Background Screenings: While staff have undergone background screenings, these will not be required for adult participants in our online program.

Safe Community Policy: Safety of youth and adult participants, staff, and community members is equally important to us this year in our online format as it is in-person. Please share our Safe Community Policy with all participants.

Participant & Parent Online Meeting

Communicating with all participants and parents is essential to ensuring everyone is well informed and prepared for the online program. At these meetings, you should plan to do the following:

1. **Notify parents and adults they will receive an email link to complete all required forms electronically**. Show an example of this process if necessary using an adult participant's roster entry and email. The emails will be sent immediately to anyone entered on the MySSP roster, starting June 8.
2. Discuss the new SSP online experience, daily and weekly schedules, types of program experiences, and teams.
3. Go over expectations for being in community online and interacting with community partners.
4. Be open to questions. You may not have all the answers, but are welcome to bring questions to the SSP office on your group's behalf.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is SSP's mission?
"Building faith and strengthening communities through service to others."

Who can attend?
As an ecumenical Christian service program, SSP encourages middle and high school groups, adult groups, families, and individuals to participate. SSP fosters affirming spaces and welcomes participants of all backgrounds, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, religions, and abilities. *The only requirements to attend SSP are a willingness to grow and openness to new experiences.*

Who is in charge of SSP?
SSP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, ultimately run by a Board of Directors and full-time office staff. During the summer, each SSP site team is operated by five to six energetic and welcoming young adult staff persons, who are eager to spend a week with you!

Who are SSP's community partners?
Nonprofit organizations, tribes, and churches located in our partner communities who are actively involved in serving their local communities. We are working with them to identify how SSP participants can serve remotely, supporting their ongoing local efforts.

Will my group have direct interaction with local community members?
Yes! Although we are not physically present this year, we have still coordinated with local speakers from our partner communities to share about their work. Valuable connections will be formed as participants learn how to advocate for and support these communities.

Can I choose what online activities I participate in?
All participants, youth and adults, are encouraged to actively engage during all online activities during their scheduled week. We know there will be some conflicts which will be unavoidable. The online experience, similar to in-person sessions, is based on a tight-knit community that grows together over the course of the week.

What does adult participation look like?
To maintain SSP's safety policies, two adults will be present in all SSP online activities. Adult participants are needed in a lower ratio than for in-person sessions; one adult for every nine youth or less is required. One staff or more will be present in all online activities, decreasing the pressure on adults who are unable to miss work or who have other commitments. In the afternoon from 1 to 5pm, adults are encouraged to participate, but not required as two staff will be leading each activity. See the schedule on the following page.

How are we divided into teams?
Each participant is placed in a team of ten people or less. Each team will have at least one adult participant. We form teams by mixing groups, focusing on building separate middle school, high school, and adult participant groups (for intergenerational groups). We want you to get to know new people, so you might not be in the same team as other members of your home group.

I have a question that hasn't been answered...
Feel free to contact the SSP office if you have further questions or concerns. Call us at 916-488-6441, or email Info@SierraServiceProject.org.

Online Daily Schedule

*Welcome begins at **10am Mondays**, with Tuesdays-Fridays beginning at 9am. The program runs through **6pm Fridays**. All times are **Pacific Daylight Time** (PDT).*

Time	Activity & Description	Gathering type: Platform
9:30-10am	**Breakfast Club & Spiritual Awakening** Age cohort gatherings with an optional breakout for Spiritual Awakening to focus spirit and mind, getting ready for the day.	*Site-specific: Zoom meeting with breakouts*
10:15-11:15am	**Community Crossing** Focused on your site's community partners. Learning through community speakers, engaging with connected service and creative components. Team time breakouts led by staff.	*Site-specific: Zoom meeting*
12-12:45pm	**Lunch & Spiritual Sandwich** Lunchtime team building discussion. One participant is designated to guide the conversation each day. Staff will be present to help facilitate as needed.	*Site-specific: Zoom meeting with breakouts*
2-3pm	**Choose Your Own Adventure** A variety of freetime activities led by summer staff, including cooking tutorials, music sessions, crafts, games, and just hanging out together. In the morning you will select their top 3 out of 9 options offered during each hour. Assignments will be made to ensure a balanced group size in each. Adults are encouraged, but not required to be present, as two staff will be in each session.	*All sites: Zoom meetings*
3:30-4:30pm	**Choose Your Own Adventure** New freetime activities this hour! See above description for details.	*All sites: Zoom meetings*
5-5:15pm	**Songtime** Gathering of all participants across the 5 sites for 15 minutes of singing from the SSP songbook. Led by a summer staff guitarist and moderated by other staff who will screen share lyrics and take song requests. Each site will rotate hosting songtime once a week. Hosted on a Zoom webinar and live streamed to SSP's Facebook account, shared with the entire SSP family. Friday's will begin at 4:45!	*All sites: Zoom webinar*
5:20-6:20pm	**Program** Faith exploration related to the daily and summer theme: Grounded. The Spiritual Life Coordinator will open and close the group as a whole, with staff leading team time in the middle.	*Site-specific: Zoom meeting with breakouts*
8pm	**Bedtime story** A light-hearted, optional way to end the day. Every night a summer staff will read a bedtime story or other short message for the entire SSP family to tune into on Instagram.	*All sites: Rotating Instagram accounts*

Descriptions

- **Participants:** Youth and adults from registered groups and individuals engaging in SSP's week-long online summer 2020 program.

- **Session:** A week engaging with SSP online activities led by summer staff.

- **Session types:** All sessions will be open to all group types. Participants will be divided into teams that align with their age range; this is where small group discussions and activities will take place. Through the merging of weeks, there will be no middle school only, high school only, or combined sessions this year.

- **Site:** Participating groups and individuals will be assigned to a site which is connected to one of SSP's long-term partner communities. Activities throughout the week will highlight each site's community partners, advocacy, and meaningful ways for participants to connect with our partners' ongoing local efforts.

- **All sites:** Gatherings where all 5 sites join together for activities.

- **Summer staff:** Sessions will be designed and led by young adult staff members assigned to each site. They will provide a fun, engaging, and relational space for all participants to explore their faith and the partner community they are connected to. Some staff have spent a summer living in their partner community in previous years.

- **Zoom meeting:** All program activities will be hosted through private Zoom meetings. Links will be sent directly to all participants and will not be accessible by the public. Each activity will begin in a full site Zoom meeting where the staff will gather the group and provide context and instructions, then participants will be separated into breakout rooms with their team. All Zoom meetings will have at least two adults present: one staff plus one adult participant, two or more staff, or two or more adult participants.

- **Zoom webinar:** All songtime sessions will be hosted on the webinar platform where only the song leader and staff can be seen or heard on video. Staff will take song requests and share the lyrics.

- **Facebook:** Daily songtime will also be live-streamed to Facebook. Updates about program and community partners are also shared regularly.

- **Instagram:** Nightly bedtime stories will be live-streamed on Instagram. Updates about program and community partners are also shared regularly. See cover letter for account details, including site-specific accounts run by summer staff.

Teams & Community Partners

Teams

Teams will comprise ten or fewer participants. Prior to your group's week, SSP staff use roster details to assign participants to a small group for the week. They will consult with adult participants on Monday morning to ensure all special needs are met.

- **We intentionally mix groups** into different teams, combining your participants into teams with people from other groups. This helps everyone get to know each other, enhances the session's overall community atmosphere, and discourages exclusivity, encouraging participants to get to know people from many groups. Please let the Site Director know of any special cases where participants should or should not be paired together intentionally.
- **Teams meet on Monday morning** for the first time.
- **One adult participant will serve as the leader** for each team. Youth focused teams may have two adult leaders. In the case of adult-only teams, one participant will be selected to be the leader. Each morning, the adult leaders from each team will check in with the Site Director in a staff/adult meeting during Breakfast Club.
- **Team assignments** will account for the differing developmental needs of younger and older youth. To that end, staff do their best to create groups of younger youth (typically 6-8th grade) separate from groups of older youth (typically 9-12th grade). Intergenerational groups may be mixed to have young adult specific and all-adult teams. In this case, the team might choose one or two adult leaders to represent their group at the daily staff/adult meeting, or rotate who attends.

Community Partners

Despite being physically distant from our partner communities, we know there are many ways to engage with and learn from local nonprofits and leaders. Throughout the week, participants will hear from community members to more deeply understand the current and historical challenges and strengths. These leaders have been actively engaged in their communities, working to improve the lives of all living things (including plants!) and are very enthusiastic about bringing new people into their work.

Advocacy is a valuable form of service, as it requires actively listening to groups in need and lifting up their voices. Each participant will end their week with greater knowledge and appreciation for our partner communities. Staff will also equip participants with the resources and empathy to move out into the world to live out their faith through advocacy. Examples of issues discussed by community partners might include:

- Racism
- Colonization
- Food insecurity
- Housing inequality
- Environmental justice
- Immigration and border issues
- Public health and resource access
- Access to services for aging individuals
- Return to traditions, including language and culture
- Many families and individuals living at or below the poverty line

Expectations & Rules for Being in Community

Each week, SSP becomes an intentional Christian community made of participants, staff, and our partner communities. The following rules and guidelines help us meet the needs of everyone in our community.

- All participants are expected to be emotionally and mentally present for the entire week. The expectation is for participants to be actively engaged in all activities to the best of their abilities, and minimize distractions.

- The SSP summer staff has overall responsibility for all activities of the session. Please show respect and cooperate with all instructions and requests from staff.

- Adult participants are responsible for monitoring the emotional, spiritual, and physical safety of the youth on their team. If the safety of minors is in question, staff will contact the group liaison and parents as appropriate.

- Adult participants are assigned to guide their teams in various activities to keep the program running smoothly.

- Taking screenshots, photos, or recording video or audio of the community representatives or other participants may be done only with their permission. Always ask in advance.

- SSP does not tolerate harassment, abusive language or behavior, or discrimination of any type. See our [Safe Community Policy](#) for a list of prohibited behavior. Staff will provide training during the first staff/adult meeting.

- SSP has the right to remove any participant from weekly activities who does not adhere to the SSP rules.

- Unregistered participants are not invited to any online activities. Please do not share video access instructions with others outside your registered group.

SSP's Inclusion Statement

SSP is an affirming and welcoming community that celebrates the lives and love of all people. We welcome LGBTQ+ individuals and people of color who have too often been excluded from leadership and full participation within traditional communities of faith. We are rooted in the unique experiences and identities of all members of our community, which form the foundation of our work.

As people of faith, we strive to live in tandem with creation, rather than in opposition to it. To do so means welcoming all people to be a part of our community as their authentic selves, regardless of race, socio-economic status, gender and its expression, sexual orientation, or ability. Our passion for justice, love, and equality has no limits. Together we seek to be bearers of goodness, so we might truly open minds, hearts, and doors.

Electronics

The SSP week at in-person sessions is normally electronics free. Although we are relying on technology to bring us together this summer, it can also be a distraction or barrier to building relationships with one another. We ask that all participants focus on the current activities and minimize multitasking online. We will prepare participants for how to create sacred space during your week with SSP.

Youth and adults are encouraged to follow SSP's Instagram accounts and use the hashtags **#GroundedSSP, #SSP2k20**, **#ExploreBuildGrow**, and **#SierraServiceProject**.

Parent/Guardian Instructions

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are excited your child will be joining the Sierra Service Project for a week of growth and reflection this summer! There are a few things we ask of you as you prepare:

Available June 8:
- **Complete your child's electronic participation forms**.
  - Participant forms can be **accessed on the MySSP volunteer portal**, after your group liaison adds your child to the group roster. Please confirm your preferred email address with your liaison.
  - These are **due one week prior to your session.** This also allows us to prepare for any additional needs your child might have, plan age-specific programs, and create team arrangements. Only SSP staff and group liaisons will have access to these forms.
  - Forms must be **completed and signed** *by* **the parent/guardian**, with youth present to review the details. We will send a link to access these to the email your liaison provides.
    - Even if your child is 18, anyone attending our program as a youth participant must have their forms completed by the parent/guardian.
  - If you are unable to locate the paperwork email, please search your **inbox and spam folder** for an email from **Admin@SierraServiceProject.org** (add this to your safe senders contact list).
  - Once completed, the forms entry should read "**roster updated**" and "**forms received**." Anything else indicates the forms are still incomplete.
  - If you would like to retain a copy of these forms for your records, you may download them after completion directly from your child's MySSP page.

Prior to Attending:
- Learn about the history and culture of our partner community you're assigned to
- Be ready for change and a new challenge! This will be the first time an SSP summer has gathered online. Have a positive attitude, an open mind, and make new friends.

Ways Parents Can Support:
- Be ready for transformation! We hope your youth have a reflective and energizing week with SSP.
- Stay current with SSP via Facebook (Sierra Service Project) and Instagram (@SierraServiceProject):

Smith River: @SSPsmithriver2020	**Lake County**: @SSPlakecounty2020
San Diego: @SSPsandiego2020	**Tsaile**: @SSPtsaile2020
Chiloquin: @SSPchiloquin2020	

We look forward to growing with you this summer!

Veronica Russell

Veronica Russell
Director of Volunteers & Outreach
Veronica.Russell@SierraServiceProject.org

Adult Participant Instructions

Dear Adult Participants,

Thank you for signing up as an adult participant with Sierra Service Project. We could not do the work we do without dedicated adults like you! We realize many of you are using vacation time to participate, and hope this is a new rewarding experience for you. Following are some expectations from our Safe Community Policy we have for you while participating with SSP:

- Model respectful behavior and language
- Participate in all SSP activities, and encourage youth to do so as well
- Assume a leadership role for youth if participating in youth-focused sessions
- Build an affirming environment that promotes healthy risks
- Respect the authority of SSP's young adult staff
- Be safety conscious

- No prior convictions of:
  - Sexual assault or harassment
  - Physical abuse
  - Any crime against children

- Within the last seven years:
  - No drug-related convictions

Available June 8:

- **Complete your electronic forms**.
  - Participant forms can be **accessed on the MySSP volunteer portal**, after your group liaison adds you to the group roster. Please confirm your preferred email address with your liaison.
  - These are **due one week prior to your session.** This also allows us to prepare for any additional needs your child might have, plan age-specific programs, and create team arrangements. Only SSP staff and group liaisons will have access to these forms. We use secure transmission protocol to ensure your personal data is protected.
  - We will send a **link to access your forms** to the email your liaison provides. If you are unable to locate the email, please search your **inbox and spam folder** for an email from **Admin@SierraServiceProject.org** (add this to your safe senders contact list).
    - If you are a **liaison attending as an adult participant**, you can access your personal forms **directly from the roster page** using the "update" link next to your name.
  - Once completed, the forms entry should read "**roster updated**" and "**forms received**." Anything else indicates the forms are still incomplete.
  - If you would like to retain a copy of these forms for your records, you may download them after completion directly from MySSP page.

Your Team:

At the beginning of the week, you will be assigned to a team. Please be sure to empower each team member to participate, making sure everyone gets a chance to share about their journey and learn from each other!

Above all, we ask that you be flexible. Our staff works hard to plan and help facilitate the online program. Although SSP office and summer staff schedule the week in great detail, it's inevitable for challenges and unexpected circumstances to arise. Remember to be open-minded, go with the flow, support the staff, and enjoy yourself.

Adult Participant Instructions
(continued)

While Participating:

- Participate as an active member of the SSP community! This means having fun, and growing closer in your relationship with God and others.
- Be a positive role model. You are expected to set a positive and mature example for youth. Participating in all SSP activities, and encouraging others to do so as well, is a part of this! Activities include games, devotions, and leading and participating in discussions.
- Work together with SSP staff. Adult participants are considered partners with SSP staff, and your leadership is also needed, whether to maintain online safety, follow direction from staff, or help facilitate activities.
- Remember each person is on their own journey. When facilitating conversations about faith and other topics, be respectful to both youth and other adults – cultivating community means working *well* alongside people who are different from ourselves!

Sharing Feedback:

- Your Site Director will be glad to work with you to ensure your needs and the needs of your team are met. Please don't hesitate to ask questions or share constructive feedback with them during the week.
- At the end of the week, everyone will be asked to complete an online evaluation. Any participants who complete the survey will be mailed a sticker featuring our 2020 theme, "Grounded!"
- We also welcome and value any additional feedback you may want to share with us after you've completed your session! To do so, please email Veronica.Russell@SierraServiceProject.org.

We look forward to growing and empowering youth alongside you!

Veronica Russell

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