

COASTLINE CHALLENGES CAMP

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Camp Intake Coordinator:

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www.bgcvic.org/youth_justice/coastline_camp.htm

(check out our slide show on this web page)



Boys & Girls Club
Services of Greater Victoria
A good place to be



**Coastline Challenges is a journey
of challenge, reflection, discovery, and triumph.
A journey through Coastline Challenges starts from within!**

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Coastline Challenges is a wilderness-based experiential education program that operates out of Victoria. Coastline Challenges is managed by Boys and Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria: a local, non-profit, community-operated registered Society. Coastline Challenges is a contracted service to the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

The aim of our program is to teach young people a range of personal & social skills that will enhance their personal living in their own homes and communities. Coastline Challenges uses wilderness experiences and adventures to challenge participants to find their untapped abilities and discover their true potential. Through extraordinary opportunities of adventures and exploration, Coastline Challenges provides young people an experience away from the usual distractions of their lives, where they can take a new look at themselves through self-discovery and personal growth.

Who attends Coastline Challenges?

Coastline Challenges is designed to work with youth, both male and female, who have been before the Court, convicted of an offence under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, and are court-ordered to attend and successfully complete this program. Any teenager (age 13-18) with a normal physical and mental capacity can usually expect to successfully complete the Coastline Challenges program. *The most successful candidates are motivated and sincere about making positive changes in their lives and choices.*

Participants normally exhibit some of the following challenges:

- * Poor interpersonal skills (listening/communication);
- * Difficulty accepting authority or following directions;
- * Difficulty dealing with decisions or making commitments;
- * Difficulty expressing anger without violence/intimidation;
- * Lack of respect for people, property and surroundings;
- * Difficulty accepting responsibility for one's own actions.

Despite their challenges, participants will also have the capacity to make positive changes in their behaviour and choices.

The program attempts to reach inside youths to help them develop inner strengths, recognize their own self-worth, grow in self confidence and self-reliance, overcome personal barriers, and gain insight into their ability to take charge of the direction of their own lives. Youth are constantly faced with the reality of personal responsibility and the need to contribute in a meaningful way. While living in a group setting, youth discover and experience the benefits of positive teamwork, mutual support (helping others and also accepting help from others), as well as learning to trust themselves and others.



Some specific changes we hope to achieve are an increase in:

- ✓ responsible decision-making;
- ✓ respectful interpersonal skills with peers and adults;
- ✓ leadership skills;
- ✓ self-confidence & self-esteem;
- ✓ personal responsibility for actions;
- ✓ awareness of how our choices impact others;
- ✓ cooperation & communication;
- ✓ commitment to completing tasks;
- ✓ impulse control;
- ✓ anger management skills;
- ✓ physical fitness;
- ✓ and the feeling of success!!

How are groups compiled?

When compiling groups, consideration is given to the gender, age, needs and nature of offences of each individual. Certain violent or sex offences may exclude a youth from this program. The Intake Coordinator will make final decisions about the appropriateness of a youth for individual programs, and participants will be assigned to the earliest suitable course. A maximum group size is 10 youths. Groups are not co-ed.

Youths in the midst of chronic substance abuse will best be served if they participate in a meaningful period of detox prior to attending Coastline Challenges.

Youths with significant physical, emotional or medical limitations may be deemed unsuitable for Coastline Challenges, due to the physical & emotional demands of the program. Girls who are currently pregnant will not be accepted into the program.

Coastline Challenges operates on two different models:

26-Day Programs

Most of our programs run for 26 days. During the first introductory days, the group participants learn and practice outdoor skills and routines in the base camp (located in rural Metchosin) to prepare for wilderness living and travelling. During this time, participants also begin some team-building activities, participate in group challenges, and begin some physical conditioning which includes jogging, running, and push-ups. These first days are followed by a series of progressive canoe out-trips (generally 13 days of canoeing in total), a 5km run, 48-hour solo, a backpacking trip (generally 5 days), a 10km run, and finally a graduation celebration on the 26th day.



Short Programs

Once a year, a 9-day "Grad Program" runs as a *voluntary* opportunity for previous Coastline graduates. Grads return and reconnect with wilderness adventures and further develop skills in leadership and teamwork.

Occasionally, a 9-day or 15-day program is offered for specific client groups. These shortened programs include a compressed orientation and conditioning phase in the base camp, followed by one extended out-trip, a 5km run and graduation celebration on the final day. Due to the compact nature of these programs, there will be a focus on only one element of wilderness travel (canoeing or hiking).

Instructors and youths work together to enhance the quality of life and comfort that the group experiences. Living in the wilderness provides effective learning opportunities about how we each impact people around us with our actions, and natural consequences play a role in the development of the group. Individual actions can affect the entire group, both positively and negatively:

- * If group members cooperate and pitch in to help, a fire will get started and a meal cooked more quickly.
- * If the group breaks camp on time in the morning, there will be more time at the end of the day for leisure activities.
- * If the cook is not paying attention, the group's meal gets burned.
- * If you don't use care & effort when building a tarp shelter, it will leak or blow down while you are trying to sleep.

Participants have many opportunities for providing input and feedback about their care throughout the course of the program, both on an individual and group basis. Staff are open and receptive to one-to-one questions and feedback from participants. As well, a nightly open forum is routinely an opportunity for everyone in the group to provide feedback and address any concerns or questions raised from their experiences.

If a youth misses part of the program, due to illness or unwillingness to comply with the basic rules, expectations, or procedures of the program, he/she may have to start all over again in the next available course.

Where does Coastline Challenges take place?

The base camp for Coastline Challenges is nestled on a 98-acre property in rural Metchosin (outskirts of Victoria), owned by the Boys & Girls Club Services of Greater Victoria. The property consists of forests, trails, fields, ponds, a challenge ropes course and climbing tower, and provides an excellent training centre for Coastline participants to gain the skills necessary to live comfortably in the outdoors. Every program begins and ends on this site, but the majority of the program takes place away from base camp, out in the wilderness.

We are so fortunate to live on Vancouver Island, surrounded by the Pacific coastal waters, world famous in the eco-tourism industry for the natural coves, harbours, peninsulas, fjords, beaches and clusters of smaller islands. In this spectacular marine environment, many Coastline Challenges participants have shared amazing experiences of having close contacts with seals, porpoises, whales, sea lions, and otters, as well as exploring tidal pools and low-tide shores for a variety of sea-living creatures.

We are also fortunate to be so close to amazing trail systems through both mountain terrain and near the coast. Backpacking trips take place in regions whose beauty include thick stands of Douglas Firs and Western Red Cedars, lakes, rivers, valleys, and impressive views from mountain peaks. The forest experience is rich in wildlife, including eagles, hawks, owls, deer, and raccoons. Occasionally, groups even have a glimpse of a black bear.

Destinations (location & duration of each out-trip) for individual Coastline Challenges programs are chosen based on the time of year, weather patterns & forecasts, and the abilities of the group members.

Examples of areas used in the program include:

Canoeing:

- * Gulf Islands; Desolation Sound; Broughton Archipelago;
- * Clayoquot Sound; Barkley Sound (Broken Group);
- * Lake Cowichan; Nitnat Lake; Kennedy Lake; Buttle Lake.

Hiking:

- * Juan de Fuca Trail; Cape Scott Trail; Carmanah Valley;
- * Mt. Albert Edward; Strathcona Park; Mount Arrowsmith;
- * Bald Mountain; Mount Finlayson; Sooke Hills.

What outdoor skills will I learn?

Outdoor skills may include (but are not limited to):

Camping skills: fire-building, shelter-building, knot-tying, wilderness survival, and first aid.

Environmental stewardship & wilderness courtesy: respecting all living things, "no trace" camping, and leaving every wilderness area better than how we found it.

Canoe skills: safety techniques, strokes, canoe rescues, chart reading, navigation, route planning, assessing & responding to tidal & weather conditions.
Canoe certifications will be awarded, when earned.

Hiking skills: safety techniques, compass reading, map reading, route planning, personal foot care, assessing & responding to environmental conditions.



Challenges Course: The base camp also offers a state-of-the-art challenge course that includes a multi-skills 45-foot climbing tower and low ropes course; activities such as climbing/belaying, and trust/challenge initiatives are the highlights here.

The intent is not to train youths to become experts in a given area, but rather to use the outdoor activities as a way to develop self-esteem, enhance character, and learn and practice skills in areas such as cooperation, teamwork, communication and anger management.

What physical challenges will I face?

Programs may include: morning dips in a pond (even in winter), jogging/running (starting at 2 km, increasing to 10 km), canoeing, backpacking/hiking, rugged camping, loading/unloading gear in and out of canoes, rock-climbing & rappelling, swimming, participating in challenge activities on a low ropes course and climbing tower, and doing work projects.

Living outdoors will present its own challenges due to weather. Coastline Challenges operates wilderness courses in all types of weather, on a year-round basis. Depending on the time of year, trips are carried out in conditions of snow, rain, wind, or hot sun, and in temperatures ranging from sub-zero to mid-30's. An emphasis is placed on each youth taking responsibility for his/her personal care (such as keeping dry, warm, clean, hydrated, sun-protected, and maintaining personal hygiene).

How rugged is rugged?

Participants build and sleep under their own tarp shelters (there are no tents or cabins), cook meals over open fires, pack and carry all of their belongings in backpacks, camp on remote beaches or along hiking trails (not in Provincial campgrounds) and may have to adjust to altitudes of up to 7000 feet. The program provides all required equipment and appropriate clothing for all weather conditions, to allow for comfortable living.



Camping destinations take us away from the usual comforts of home, including electricity and running water. Groups will be away from hot showers for most of the program. A quick dip in the ocean is your opportunity to get clean.

"Solo"

Towards the end of a 26-day program, participants will experience a supervised personal reflection time (called "Solo") which is approximately 48 hours (2 nights). Each youth is given a minimal (but adequate) amount of food, is separated visually from each other and is placed in his/her personal camping area within close proximity of the instructors. The boundaries of each solo site are clearly defined, and emphatic directions to "*stay within your boundaries*" are given to each youth. This rule challenges both self-discipline and personal responsibility. Each youth is provided with an emergency whistle for personal safety. Staff "check in" with each participant periodically to ensure emotional security and physical safety, as well as to take the opportunity to spend some one-to-one time talking about individualized issues. Each youth is responsible for his/her own maintenance including setting up his/her own site, building and lighting a personal camp fire, building a personal tarp shelter and preparing his/her own meals, using camping gear and knowledge obtained throughout the program. Often participants use this solo time to reflect on the past, ponder the personal growth and behaviour changes they have experienced during the program, and look ahead to creating positive change for future success.

What are some rules of conduct?

Coastline Challenges expects that all participants demonstrate respect towards themselves, others, property and the environment. This includes refraining from the use of foul language and abusive behaviour. **There is no tolerance for physical or verbal intimidation or violence.** Physical fighting = an early exit from the program.

A **NO SMOKING** policy is in effect. No tobacco products are permitted whatsoever.

Participants are expected to not use alcohol, illegal drugs, stimulants or depressants during the program. **If illicit drugs are discovered with any participant, camp staff are obligated to report all circumstances to the R.C.M.P. and charges may be laid.**

Participants are expected to conduct themselves safely and responsibly. Participants are also expected to *abide by all directions and safety instructions* from the staff, as this will create safety for all members. Ongoing non-compliance with instructions and/or rules can jeopardize the safety of group members, and may result in a youth being exited early from the program.

In the event a youth refuses to participate or abide by the rules while in the program, the Support Instructor will be contacted and arrangements made to remove the youth at the first appropriate and safe opportunity. Clearly, refusal to attend is a breachable offence and will be dealt with accordingly. *The program is an "attendance program," and not a "custody" setting; the instructors do not have the authority to detain or physically restrain participants.*

An exit from the program can result due to:

- physical violence or physical intimidation;
- ongoing non-compliance, especially with safety directions;
- ongoing negativity & disregard for the positive will of others;
- drug use

Guardians/caregivers must be prepared to receive their son/daughter back home at any time during the program, in the event of an early exit. Where possible, guardians/caregivers will share the responsibility for making arrangements for transferring the care of the youth from Coastline Challenges back to the family's care.

It is important to note that this program is not a custody setting and, therefore, presents the opportunity for a youth to go Absent

Without Leave (AWOL). An AWOL is a serious and dangerous matter. In the event a participant goes AWOL from the program, the instructors will attempt to locate the youth and reintegrate him back into the program. If attempts to locate and reintegrate a youth into the program fail, the instructors will contact the Camp Coordinator and inform him of the incident. The Camp Coordinator (or instructor) will also attempt to contact the guardians and appropriate authorities. The Probation Officer will be notified and informed of the AWOL, which is a breachable offence.

How can my family/friends support me?

We encourage each youth's supportive circle (family, caregivers, friends, Probation Officers, Social Workers, Youth Workers) to write letters during the program, and deliver them to the administration office (Coastline Challenges, 1240 Yates Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 3N3). Mail can be delivered to the group members, several times during the program.

Upon completion of the program, there will be a graduation ceremony at the base camp in Metchosin (Victoria). Families, caregivers, Probation Officers, Social Workers, and friends are encouraged to attend. The graduation will begin at 11:00 a.m. on the final day of the program. Families and guests will be given directions to the base camp prior to the graduation.

How is safety managed?

Staff adhere to strict standards of safety, both in precautions and practice. To maximize safety for all participants, programs strictly adhere to the government safety guidelines of SPOWA (Standards and Policies for Outdoor & Wilderness Activities). Staff use familiar routes and camping locations, support staff are well-informed of the planned travelling routes, instructors carry a variety of emergency and communication equipment, and the instructors are in contact with support staff minimally twice per day.

Participants are expected to conduct themselves safely and responsibly, which includes abiding by all safety instructions.

Despite safe practices, living and travelling in the wilderness presents natural risks. Possible accidental injuries include (but are not limited to) strains or sprains, cuts, bruises, broken bones, sun burns, cooking burns, and allergic reactions. Staff are trained in wilderness first aid.

What staff will I meet at Coastline Challenges?

Coastline Challenges staff are committed to guiding youth with compassion, sensitivity, respect, fairness and discipline. The Wilderness Instructors and Program Manager each excel in skills & expertise in: outdoor experience and knowledge, youth counselling/mentoring, group management, and maintain advanced certifications in a range of wilderness skills.

The **Wilderness Instructors** live with the group for the entire 26 days (there is no shift work involved - the same instructors will normally be with you from beginning to end). Wilderness instructors will provide ongoing supervision, support, feedback, counselling, mentoring and wilderness training. At the end of the program, the wilderness instructors write a final evaluation of each youth, and this report is sent to the youth's Probation Officer.

The **Community Support Instructor** is involved with the group's early team building and provides a huge range of support to the Wilderness Instructors and youths throughout the program. The Community Support Instructor typically does not travel with the group, but is in daily contact with the Wilderness Instructors throughout the program.

The **Program Manager** supervises and oversees program delivery in all of the Youth Justice programs in the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Victoria.

The **Intake Coordinator** contacts each youth and a guardian prior to the program's start-up to discuss the program, assess each youth's abilities/needs, and determine which program is best suited for each youth.

The **Logistics Coordinator** organizes and prepares the clothing, equipment and groceries for every group member.

What information is included in my final evaluation?

The wilderness instructors write a final evaluation of each youth that includes details of overall behaviour & attitude. The Probation Officer can submit this report to court, if relevant to a future court appearance. The youth's final report will contain details such as: interactions with youth/staff/public; ability to get along; cooperation; following rules and directions;

responsible decision-making; significant challenges & strengths; managing anger; accepting personal responsibility for actions; safety; respecting people/property/wildlife; development of outdoor skills; significant incidents of concern or success; glorification of crime; desire to make positive lifestyle changes; and recommendations for the youth's successful transition back to his/her home & community.

Is there any financial cost?

Coastline Challenges attempts to ensure that there are minimal added financial demands to parents. We will pick up youths or arrange transportation to and from the program wherever possible. All camping equipment and food will be supplied to the participants. Youth are asked to bring a minimal list of personal clothing. Appropriate layers of clothing and all camping equipment are provided to each participant. Each person is responsible for the safe-keeping and care of all their issued gear.

What if I have medical needs?

Medication: For the purpose of safety and security, staff will carry all prescription and non-prescription medications, and will be responsible for dispensing medications as per dosage instructions.

Prescription medications must be supplied in a labelled container, including name of medication, dosage and youth's name.

Non-prescription medications must be accompanied by a letter of permission from the guardian, including dosage instructions.

Medical emergencies during the program may be managed with a range of responses. Depending on the severity of the circumstance, this may include general first aid treatment from the wilderness instructors, consultation with a doctor or pharmaceutical professional, or an evacuation from the program for medical treatment.

It is also important to note that, more common than is realized, youths attend our program who have problems with bed-wetting at night time. Due to the nature of a wilderness program, laundering facilities are usually not readily available. If a wet sleeping bag goes undisclosed and gets packed away without being dried out, it can create a safety issue in terms of the youth becoming wet and chilled in cold overnight conditions. As well, the eventual odour can create emotional stress for the youth involved. Therefore, it is essential that youths with bed-wetting problems take a **pro-active** role in their comfort and safety, and work out

preventative steps with the staff. This may include strategies such as: avoiding evening beverages, having a late night wake-up by staff to allow for one final urination, and/or the wearing of Depends undergarments, which can discretely be made available. Advising the Intake Coordinator ahead of time is helpful, as it allows the staff team time to plan for *discrete management* of the problem.

What is the bottom line?

Coastline Challenges is designed to be a meaningful and positive *opportunity*. We can offer you an experience of adventure, challenge and discovery that will stay with you for many years to come.

Come with an open mind and a willingness to *work hard*, but also to *play hard*.

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COASTLINE CHALLENGES CAMP

RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

All participants are expected to abide by the following rules.
Failure to abide by the rules can lead to an early exit (and a BREACH):

1. There is NO SMOKING allowed during the program.
2. No physical fighting or violence is allowed in program.
3. No physical or verbal acts of intimidation are allowed in program.
4. No drugs or alcohol are allowed in the program.
5. No knives or weapons are allowed in the program.
6. Participants' belongings may be searched for contraband by camp staff at any time during the program.
7. Respect others and yourself:
 - foul language (swearing/name-calling) is not acceptable.
 - respect the personal space & belongings of yourself and others.
8. Participants are expected to follow all instructions, rules and procedures as outlined by the staff.
9. No cel phones. Participants' use of a telephone will not be allowed except under extenuating circumstances.
10. For safety purposes, instructors will carry all medications, but participants will self-administer approved dosages.
11. No jewellery – rings, watches, necklaces, bracelets, etc. – they can easily go missing or get damaged and are also potentially dangerous (such as in climbing). Please leave them at home.

CLOTHING LIST - 26 DAY COURSE

ALL CLOTHING WILL BE HARD USED. NO NEW/SPECIAL CLOTHING PLEASE!

Please bring:

- 4 pair wool socks
- 6 pair undershorts
- 2 t-shirts (no words/pictures representing drugs or violence)
- 1 pair shorts
- 1 pair swimming shorts (nylon dries fastest)
- 1 pair running shoes
- 1 pair water sandals/shoes (*summer only*)
- 1 ball cap
- 1 full set of clean clothes (for grad and to go home in).
- 1 towel, 1 toothbrush.

Coastline Challenges provides a standard issue of all required wilderness clothing (suitable for west coast excursions). Issued gear includes rain gear, hiking boots, rubber boots, and multi-layered warm clothing of pants, shirts, jackets, toques, and mitts (polypropylene, wool and fleece). Synthetics absorb very little moisture and dry easily, making it suitable for insulation. Wool is capable of providing insulation even when wet.

DO NOT BRING: Heavy cotton clothes, such as jeans and cotton sweat shirts or hoodies. They absorb and retain moisture, making it extremely difficult to stay warm and dry when camping. YOU WON'T BE ALLOWED TO WEAR THEM! Instructors have the authority to decline clothing brought in by youths, and those clothes will be kept safely locked up until the end of the program.

Coastline Challenges provides all equipment, including sleeping bags, ensolites, backpacks, shelter supplies, and specialty gear as required by activities.

Do not bring personal items such as iPods, money, cameras, jewellery, valuables, gum, pocket knives, cigarettes, lighters or illicit drugs.

PARTICIPANTS ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOST or DAMAGED CLOTHING.

COASTLINE CHALLENGES CAMP

CONTACT NUMBERS:

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Mailing address:

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* 24 hour pager (250) 480-3050 *
(when camp is in session)

The pager is the most direct way to reach camp staff at most times, as we are mobile and often away from the administration office.

Please do not hesitate to phone for clarification or to get an update on the participant.

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