

MALE COUNSELOR | CABIN MENTOR

Dates: June 21 - August 8, 2026 **Type:** Residential/Live-in Position **Compensation:** \$450 per week + bonuses

This Is More Than a Summer Job.

There's a real shortage of positive male mentors — and that gap has consequences. Kids between the ages of 7 and 12 are at a critical stage of development, and it's important that they have role models that demonstrate strength, respect, accountability, and what it means to take care of the people around them during those formative years.

Camp has always been one of the best environments for that kind of mentorship. The American Camp Association has documented for decades what outdoor recreation professionals already know firsthand; that counselors have a lasting developmental impact on the children they work with.

You don't need a military background to carry the values of honor, duty, and respect. But those values are in the DNA of VFW Camp Trotter, a camp owned and operated by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of Michigan. Our organization understands what it means to lead with integrity, ask for help when you need it, and take care of the person next to you without thinking twice about it.

If you recognize those values in yourself, and you want to spend a summer living them in front of kids who need to see it, you're exactly who we're looking for.

About Camp Trotter:

VFW Camp Trotter is a non-profit residential camp in beautiful northern Michigan where kids are encouraged to try new things, stay true to themselves, and grow in confidence within the shared experience of community. Our mission is to cultivate **courage, community, and curiosity** in children and youth through outdoor programs that build resilience, foster belonging, and inspire hands-on learning.

Important: While we proudly prioritize military families, our doors are open to all youth who share a spirit of service and curiosity. **You do not need any military affiliation, VFW connection, or veteran background to work at Camp Trotter.** We're building an inclusive, welcoming community focused on child development, outdoor education, and creating meaningful summer experiences. Camp Trotter is a nonreligious program that celebrates diversity and welcomes staff and campers of all backgrounds and beliefs.

This is a brand-new program. While the camp has been around for 75 years, this is a brand new program. You'll have the opportunity to shape Camp Trotter's culture, contribute your ideas, and build a lasting legacy in the camp industry. We're looking for experienced, passionate camp professionals who want to be part of something meaningful.

Location: 5566 E 86th St, Newaygo, MI 49337 (on Bills Lake in northern Michigan)

Camp Sessions: 5 one-week sessions

- Week 1: July 5–11
- Week 2: July 12–18
- Week 3: July 19–25
- Week 4: July 26–Aug 1
- Week 5: Aug 2–8

Campers: Approximately 88 co-ed campers per session, ages 7-12

Position Overview:

Camp Counselors are the heart of Camp Trotter! You'll live with and supervise a cabin group of campers, lead activities, and create a positive, memorable camp experience. We're looking for energetic, responsible individuals who love working with youth and want to be part of building a brand-new camp program from the ground up.

Key Responsibilities:

- Supervise and mentor a cabin group of campers 24/7
- Lead and assist with camp activities including:
 - Art and creative projects
 - STEM activities (science, technology, engineering, math)
 - Archery
 - Canoeing and swimming
 - Sports (capture the flag, kickball, baseball, basketball, 4 square)
 - Team building and orienteering
 - Tie-dye and rocket building
 - Campfires, storytelling, and s'mores
 - Skit Night and Summer Camp Olympics
 - Geocaching, treasure hunting, and star gazing
 - And so much more!
- Ensure camper safety, wellbeing, and positive behavior
- Build positive relationships with campers ages 7-12
- Assist with meals, cabin cleanup, and daily routines
- Participate in all-camp events and evening programs
- Communicate with parents as needed
- Model camp values of courage, community, and curiosity
- Work collaboratively with other staff
- Contribute your own skills and ideas to help build our program

Required Qualifications:

- Minimum 18 years of age
- Previous camp counselor or youth work experience not required
- High energy, enthusiasm, and positive attitude
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to live in rustic cabin conditions
- Self-aware, organized, and motivated team player
- Open to feedback and committed to professional growth
- Willingness to try new things and support campers in doing the same
- Must pass background check
- Ability to lift up to 50 lbs and work on your feet

Preferred Qualifications:

- Previous residential camp counselor experience
- Experience leading specific activities (archery, arts, STEM, sports, waterfront, etc.)
- CPR and First Aid certification
- Lifeguard certification
- Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder training
- College degree in education, recreation, or related field
- **Have a skill or activity you'd like to share? We're open to your contributions! Help us grow and bring your unique talents.**

What We're Looking For:

We're building an inclusive, peer-to-peer mentorship environment where staff can develop and grow professionally together. We value team contributors who:

- Show initiative and take responsibility
- Are organized and self-aware
- Accept and apply feedback constructively
- Stay focused on campers and program responsibilities
- Bring positive energy and motivation
- Work collaboratively and support group dynamics
- Are willing to learn and develop professional proficiencies

Compensation & Benefits:

- **Base:** \$450 per week
- **Bonus Pay Available:**
 - Basic proficiency in a musical instrument: +\$5/week
 - Associate's degree: +\$15/week
 - Bachelor's degree: +\$25/week
 - Military veteran status: +\$25/week
 - 2+ years experience in camp/experiential/outdoor/youth education: +\$20/week

- Camp Trotter returning staff: +\$20/week
- Lifeguard certification: +\$20/week
- Wilderness First Aid (WFA): +\$20/week
- Wilderness First Responder (WFR): +\$20/week
- EMR/EMT/Paramedic: +\$25/week
- Room and board provided in cabin with campers
- Off-duty quarters available for scheduled days and nights off
- All meals included
- Opportunity to build a meaningful legacy in a new program
- Professional development and training opportunities

Training:

2 weeks of paid staff training: June 21 - July 3, 2026

Training will cover camp philosophy, safety protocols, activity instruction, child development, behavior management, emergency procedures, and team building.

To Apply:

Submit resume and 3 professional references to: **Garrett Sieloff** camptrottedirector@vfwmi.vet

Note: 2 references must be from previous camp, experiential education, outdoor education, or youth-development positions to qualify for experience bonus pay. Proof of certifications and college degree required to confirm bonus pay eligibility at time of offer.

Applications accepted on a rolling basis. Video interviews will be conducted. **Positions will be removed once filled.**

Why Camp Trotter?

This is more than just a summer job—it's a chance to make a lasting impact on children's lives while building something meaningful from the ground up. VFW Camp Trotter is a welcoming, nonreligious camp where kids from all backgrounds can grow in courage, community, and curiosity. You don't need any military affiliation or VFW connection—just a passion for working with youth and a commitment to creating an inclusive, supportive camp community.

Join us in beautiful northern Michigan for a summer you'll never forget!

VFW Camp Trotter is a nonreligious program. We celebrate diversity and welcome staff of all backgrounds and beliefs. No military affiliation required.