Title: Aquarist Intern

Company/Organization: Camp Emerald Bay, Western Los Angeles County Council, Boy Scouts of America

Location: Camp Emerald Bay, Santa Catalina Island, CA. 33° 28' 08" N, 118° 31' 52" W

Duration: May 30 – September 1, 2010

Pay Rate: Room and board provided for the duration of the internship in camp style housing and dining facilities as well as a small weekly stipend.

Description: The Camp Emerald Bay - Pennington Marine Science Center Aquarist Internship is designed to provide instruction and opportunities to learn aquatic animal husbandry skills. These skills can be marketed to a number of organizations and businesses such as public aquariums, research groups, aquaculture production facilities, aquarium service businesses, and the ornamental fish trade including retail and wholesale production levels.

The job of aquatic animal keepers, also known as aquarists, is a physically active job. Besides the potential for SCUBA diving, other job duties include lifting boxes of frozen fish (50 lbs), climbing up and down stairs or ladders, bending over, carrying buckets of water, restraining and netting animals. Days are frequently spent standing on your feet and usually consist of feeding, monitoring, and otherwise caring for aquatic animals. Aquarist Interns may clean, disinfect, monitor water quality, and design or build exhibits. Additionally, aquarists may keep records of feedings, treatments, and animals received or discharged.

Aquarists have an extremely varied set of responsibilities, and therefore need an equally diverse range of knowledge and skills to do their jobs. The personal characteristics aquarists identified as being important for this profession also reflect this variety: self motivation, creativity, a willingness and ability to learn, resourcefulness, intuition, thoroughness, and the ability to work with others are just some of the key qualities that aquarists believe are important in order to do their jobs well.

As a summer staff member of Camp Emerald Bay and the Pennington Marine Science Center, you will be involved in many different aspects of camp and aquarium operations including: animal care, record keeping, facility maintenance, merit badge instruction and camp staff required work activities. Through your participation, you will gain many specific skills, experience working with captive animals in an educational setting, and something new to put on your resume. If you choose to get the most out of working here you will have the knowledge of a basic aquarist; however, you will also gain a strong background in animal behavior, animal health and husbandry, public interaction, and be exposed to much more. Like most things in life, how much you get out of this experience will depend on how much you put in.

Emerald Bay is located on the West End of Catalina Island. A far cry from the bustling tourist destination of Avalon, the West End offers camp staff unparalleled opportunities for diving, hiking, trail running, swimming, snorkeling, mountain biking, kayaking, camping, and many more activities that are just a plus of working on this end of the island. The nearest town is Two Harbors, with about 20 year-round residents, and is a 30-minute car ride on dirt roads. Because of our isolated location applicants must consider this since it’s very difficult to “run into town” for anything and while there is one general store, the emphasis must be placed on “general”. Creature comforts are hard to come by, but the island’s spectacular beauty and atmosphere more than make up for any lack of modern conveniences.

During the summer, the Aquarist Interns assist the Marine Science Director in aquarium maintenance and operations, teaching aquarium related BSA classes, and all aspects of maintaining a healthy, diverse aquarium. Additionally, Aquarist Interns will be asked to perform camp staff tasks as needed; these duties are required of all
staff, camp wide, no matter which area they work. Aquarist Interns must have a strong scuba background since they will be assisting on the remaining specimen collection dives as well as experience operating small boats in the ocean under varied conditions.

Two Aquarist Interns will be competitively chosen on the basis of knowledge, abilities, experience, attitude, reliability, punctuality and recommendations. We recommend contacting your registrar’s office in order to earn college credit for this internship. Preference will be given to those who can stay for the duration of the internship and that meet the qualifications above. Aquarist Interns will work on a research project of their choice and report the results by the end of the internship.

Drug Testing: PMSC staff must understand that if they are involved in a workplace accident or it is determined by their supervisor or the camp director that there is a reasonable suspicion that they are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, the intern may be subject to saliva drug testing.

If interested, please contact the Marine Science Director by email or phone for an application.

Applications are due by Friday, March 12, 2010.

**Requirements:** A successful applicant will possess the following:
- Undergraduate, graduate student or recent graduate in/with a related degree.
- SCUBA certification. The more experience the better. Must own mask, fins, and booties. All other gear is provided.
- Strong writing skills and organization.
- Mechanical aptitude / willingness to work with your hands.
- Strong background in record keeping with Microsoft Excel.
- Interest in marine aquaria, marine conservation, and the teaching of marine science.
- Ability to work with a variety of people in close quarters for long hours as well as independently.
- A sense of adventure.

**Contact:** Kevin Erickson, KErickson@BSA-LA.org
Marine Science Director
Pennington Marine Science Center
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