



Camp Shakespeare 2024 Information Packet

Two sessions:

Session I: Sunday, June 9, 2024—Sunday, June 23, 2024

Session II: Sunday, June 30, 2024—Sunday, July 14, 2024

Camp Site:

The site of Camp Shakespeare 2024 is Farmstead B & B in Round Top, Texas. Farmstead provides a comfortable country and historical setting for the experience: students enjoy the privilege of using and the responsibility of caring for these beautifully restored 19th century Texas buildings which serve as dormitories, dining, and gathering spaces.

<https://www.farmsteadatroundtop.com/>

219 FM954, Round Top, Texas

Camp Fee:

\$1,700.00

Please contact Robin Grace Soto to learn more about our scholarships and tuition support. (robingracesoto@utexas.edu)

Deadline for applications:

March 1, 2024

Plays:

Plays will be announced in March 2024.

Three public performances of each play:

Session One:

Friday	June 21	3:00pm	Crystal Theatre, Gonzales, TX
Saturday	June 22	3:00pm	Performing Arts Center, La Grange, TX
Sunday	June 23	2:00pm	Winedale Barn, Winedale, TX

Session Two:

Friday	July 12	3:00pm	Crystal Theatre, Gonzales, TX
Saturday	July 13	3:00pm	Performing Arts Center, La Grange, TX
Sunday	July 14	2:00pm	Winedale Barn, Winedale, TX

Overview

Camp Shakespeare is a two-week University of Texas residential summer camp for young people, ages 11-16,* dedicated to exploring Shakespeare through performance. "Exploring" and "performance" are key words here. They suggest that we are finding our way not through rehearsals but performances. Every moment is performance. Campers are challenged to play out their interpretative discoveries on stage.

(*The younger applicants must have reached 11 by January 1, 2024.)

All the elements of the program are intended to promote an understanding and appreciation of the works of Shakespeare, and of their extraordinarily complex and penetrating vision of human life. Campers develop, test, and transcend their sense of self through their exploration of Shakespearean characters. What we pursue here is the conviction that anyone can live life more fully through a personal encounter with Shakespeare's art.

Camp Shakespeare seeks kids who work well with others, who are inventive, elastic, eager to play, explore and take risks, and are ready to rumble when they arrive.

Camp Shakespeare accepts applications from candidates anywhere, in public, private, or home schools. Experience with theater or with Shakespeare is not necessary. Commitment to working and playing with others is. Each session will be composed of 14 students.

Daily Schedule and Activity

Campers begin their day quite early, at 6:30am with cabin-cleaning and other assigned duties before meeting in groups or with the staff to work on lines, characterization, or a scene at 7:00am. A brief period of physical and vocal exercise follows. Then breakfast. Morning and afternoon work/play sessions (from 8:15am - 4:00pm) take place in the Theater Barn at Winedale or in air-conditioned performance space in Round Top. Every lunch is a picnic, prepared and set out by campers. Late afternoon sessions (4:00pm - 6:00pm) are busy with journal writing, relaxation exercises, quiet time, painting, mask-making, text work, and preparing for the evening. Improvised "problem-solving" exercises, singing, dancing, and free improvisational play follow supper. The day concludes with film sequences of Shakespeare's plays and Cabin Time, wherein campers "unwind" and exchange responses to accomplishments of the day. Lights out: 9:15 p.m.

Camp Fee

The cost of Camp Shakespeare 2024 is \$1,700. Some scholarships are available. Please contact Robin Grace Soto to learn more about our scholarships and tuition support. robingracesoto@utexas.edu

Camp Site

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219 FM954, Round Top, Texas

Farmstead has been a successful bed and breakfast in Round Top, Texas since 1992. First owned and operated by Roland Nester and his sister Mary Nester Stanhope, known as Briarfield and home to Camp Shakespeare for many years, the property and its historic homes were purchased by the Stribling family in 2019. We are thrilled to be returning to this special place!

Staff

Camp Director: Robin Grace Soto

Robin Grace Soto is the Director of Camp Shakespeare and has been with the program for 16 years. With her decades of experience as an artist and arts educator, Robin Grace brings an emphasis on community building and play to the study of "Shakespeare Through Performance." Each year at Camp Shakespeare, she leads a team of counselors and interns in creating intentional activities that help campers feel empowered to share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas in creative and imaginative ways. She prioritizes relationship-building and encourages campers to promote one another's successes while also recognizing and developing their own strengths. Robin Grace and Dr. James B "Doc" Ayres' successful partnership in running Camp Shakespeare is highlighted in recently released, feature-length documentary film, *"Take Pains, Be Perfect."*

Director of Mission: Dr. Jim (Doc) Ayres, Distinguished Teaching Professor Emeritus, The University of Texas at Austin, Founding Director of Shakespeare at Winedale and Founding Director and Director of Mission of Camp Shakespeare.

Doc has explored Shakespeare's plays through performance with university and high, middle, and elementary schools for 54 years and taken Shakespeare at Winedale to the London Globe and Royal Shakespeare Company Swan theatres. His work with elementary students formed the basis for the current "Shakespeare Outreach Program," and his university courses on "Play and Culture" and "Teaching through Performance," won him a number of awards.

Doc and Robin Grace will be assisted by four other experienced counselors and interns each session who are former graduates of the Camp Shakespeare program.

Application Procedure

Each session will be composed of 14 students. The application process requires prospective campers to send:

1. the completed Registration Form
2. the completed Application with an essay by the applicant
 - (a) introducing themselves and
 - (b) explaining why they wish to participate in Camp Shakespeare 2024, exploring expectations/hopes/goals

3. two letters of recommendation from teachers. Applications from former campers do not require teachers' letters.

Please email all application materials, including letters of recommendation for new campers, to Robin Grace Soto at robingracesoto@utexas.edu and Doc Ayres at jayres@cvctx.com.

All application forms can be found on the website.

Application process for NEW CAMPERS

- Part One: Registration Form
Due: ASAP to register your intent to apply.
Must be received by March 1, 2024.
- Part Two: Application and Essay
Due: March 1, 2024
(Plus 2 Letters of Recommendation)
- Part Three: Phone or Zoom Interview
between February 1 and February 28.
- Final selections will be announced on or around March 4, 2024.

NOTE: Applicants cannot be considered for acceptance unless all application materials have been submitted before the deadlines listed above. **We strongly encourage applicants to get their materials in as early as possible.** Please email all application materials to Robin Grace Soto at robingracesoto@utexas.edu and Doc Ayres at jayres@cvctx.com.

Application Process for FORMER CAMPERS

- Part One: Registration Form
Due: ASAP to register your intent to apply.
Must be received by March 1, 2024
- Part Two: Essay
Due: March 1st, 2024
Final selections will be announced on or around March 4, 2024.
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NOTE: Applicants cannot be considered for acceptance unless all application materials have been submitted before the deadlines listed above. **We strongly**

encourage applicants to get their materials in as early as possible. Please email all application materials to Robin Grace Soto at robingracesoto@utexas.edu and Doc Ayres at jayres@cvctx.com.

Selection Process

We do not audition applicants. We do interview new applicants and give serious consideration to letters of recommendation.

Former Campers should be aware that their prior experience in Camp does not automatically guarantee them a place in the next Camp sessions.

All applications are reviewed by the directors. Our goal is to select a balance of new and former campers and a fair representation of all ages (11-16). We attempt to honor the applicant's first choice for session but often we must take the second choice because of the balances we seek in gender, age, and between new and former camper experience. Often, we cannot select candidates who select only one session, for the same reasons.

As we read new applications, we give major consideration to the applicant's ability to live, work, and play cooperatively and generously with others; desire for shared and disciplined play experience; a willingness to try new things, risk, and explore; and to a firm commitment to the ensemble approach. With former camper applications, we consider not only their contributions in every one of those areas, but also their leadership, their positive approach to every part of camp and to their development as a healthy and energetic community player.

Applicants are therefore applying for a play experience, not a specific Shakespearean play or part. After notification of selection, campers will receive role (character) assignments and suggestions about preparation.

Notification of Acceptance

Candidates will be notified of their acceptance on or around March 4th, 2024 and are expected to acknowledge acceptance by e-mail. To secure registration, parents of Campers selected should submit the fee payment and registration forms through the UT On-Line Registration System. The direct registration link will be shared once your student is accepted.

Camp Policies

At Camp Shakespeare, we hope to create together a highly original, extraordinary learning experience. We have a country setting for that, much like Shakespeare's forest of Arden or the wood outside Athens. There is a different clock here. This world is filled with magic, wonder, song, and words and we do it without cell phones, computers, social media, or electronic games. We are a screen free camp and ask that all electronic devices be left at home. We do encourage campers to bring musical instruments of any kind. Upon acceptance into the program, campers are notified of what items to bring and not to bring.

Telephone Contact and Visitation

Camp staff members notify parents of a camper's illness and/or problems with following the daily schedule or working with others, explaining how we are addressing those difficulties. Parents wishing to contact campers for any reason should call any of the six staff members at any time.

Preparations for Camp

Upon acceptance, campers will be sent a bound copy of the play chosen (with plenty of space for questions and annotation), role assignments, information about what to bring to Camp, a Release and Indemnification form and a Medical History report all to be submitted on-line through the UT on-line registration system. Campers prepare by reading and re-reading the play and by working toward understanding language and characterization. **Campers are expected to have memorized all their assigned lines by the arrival date.** Campers may at any time e-mail any of the staff for assistance, advice, suggestions, or answers to questions arising during this period of preparation.

Campers who arrive at Camp without the preparation noted above may be dismissed from Camp.

COVID Precautions and Preparations

Campers and Staff must submit a negative COVID test taken no more than 2 days (48 hours) before the first day of Camp to participate.

If you do not have access to a COVID test, please notify the Camp Director, robiningracesoto@utexas.edu. A rapid at-home COVID test will be sent to you.

Summary

Camp Shakespeare seeks students who:

- work well with others
- are ready and eager to speak up, make observations and respond to others from the beginning
- are inventive, elastic, eager to explore and take risks
- are ready to rumble (get involved, assist others, take initiative) when they arrive
- desire to live, work, and play with a positive attitude, cooperatively and generously with others
- have a desire for shared and disciplined play experience
- have a willingness to try new things, risk, and explore and do those
- have a firm commitment to the ensemble approach

Further Information

Our website, shakespeare-winedale.org, carries up-to-date information about the summer camp. Parents and candidates are urged to check the site weekly for new information and possible changes. Questions of any kind about Camp Shakespeare 2024 should be directed to Robin Grace Soto at robingracesoto@utexas.edu and Doc Ayres at jayres@cvctx.com.

The following observations by a former (1980) Shakespeare at Winedale student whose daughter (age 12) attended Camp Shakespeare, and the parent of a recent camper (age 13), say quite a bit about what happens at Camp Shakespeare:

"Their accomplishment [at Camp] is the more remarkable when we consider that none of these students are theater or drama students but only kids interested in working together to explore a play through performance. In the process, their play becomes a vehicle for their exploration of language, of social encounter and problem-solving, for developing self-confidence and self-esteem, verbal and written expression, and, through Shakespeare, for gaining insight into the human condition."

"Since the day we left the Forest of Arden to return home, I have been watching my child assimilate his experiences at camp and express them in words, photos and art. As a therapist, I am flooded with requests for referrals for child and adolescent therapists from worried parents....so many kids are in therapy right now! I can't help but wish that many of these kids (and parents!) who struggle with anxiety, depression and loneliness could experience Camp Shakespeare instead of the weekly hour. I think Camp Shakespeare is therapeutic on so many levels.

For my child, this summer was therapeutic because it helped him know himself deeply, connect with others deeply and gave him a profound experience of challenge, acceptance and belonging. I imagine you hear this all the time, but Camp Shakespeare grew him up in ways that I couldn't have dreamed possible for a 13-year-old! And it was therapeutic for me too—to feel how you really saw him and his potential, were invested in helping him to become the brightest and truest version of himself through an exploration of the play. What a relief and a blessing for a weary parent of teens during a pandemic!

It is no exaggeration to say that we feel like we are seeing his soul come into focus as he metabolizes his Camp Shakespeare experience and we have had that feeling since the application process. He has always been confident in his choices, disciplined in his pursuits and an enthusiastic learner. But his experience at Shakespeare brought these traits into a loving, challenging and playful community. It couldn't have been a more perfect fit and therapeutic for all of us during heavy times.

So thank you, thank you thank you. From the bottom of my heart. The work you do is essential and profoundly good."