



Chesterton House

FAQ for La Vida 2017

What is La Vida?

Chesterton House at Cornell is partnering with Gordon College's La Vida Expeditions to provide wilderness-based experiences that encourages exploration of one's personal relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ in the context of Christian community. La Vida strives to provide students with meaningful and transformative experiences that assist in the first-year transition to their collegiate years.

Our expedition begins at Cornell's campus and travels to the Adirondack Mountains in upstate New York. This six-million-acre preserve—roughly the size of Massachusetts, with sparkling mountain streams, quiet lakes, challenging peaks, and plenty of space for solitude and reflection—creates the perfect environment for growth, adventure, self-discovery, and growing deeper with God.

Is the program safe?

Safety is very important to us. La Vida has been in operation for 45 years and has a very good safety record. If you have additional questions about this program, please email info@chestertonhouse.org.

How many participants will be on an expedition?

Groups consist of ten participants and two La Vida leaders (Sherpas). These small groups allow for participants to be active in the group, form new friendships, and learn new leadership skills. There is a female and male group leader.

Are meals provided?

All meals are provided except for lunch on the travel days to and from base camp in the Adirondacks. For these travel days, participants should bring \$20 for food.

What if I have never camped before?

Most people who do La Vida have never camped before. Your Sherpas will teach you new camping skills, and the group will work together to accomplish the daily camp chores.

Will we travel every day on an expedition?

You will be backpacking most days of the expedition part of the program. This means that you have chances to see the lakes, mountains, and rivers of the Adirondack State Park, develop your backpacking skills, set up camps at different sites and become efficient travelers. You will backpack all your gear as you travel to different campsites. The groups travel approximately 5 miles a day; however, each itinerary is different.

Where will we sleep?

Most nights you will sleep in tents that are separated by gender. Under some circumstances you will spend the night in a lean-to or under a large tarp where males and females are separated.

Are there any showers?

No, there is no running water while you are on the expedition. You may clean up in a stream, but soap can only be used 150 feet away from any lake, river, or stream. You will have plenty of opportunity to rinse off in the water. In addition to this, you can bring baby wipes and hand sanitizer with you on the expedition. You will be able to change into clean clothes before departing from the La Vida base camp on the final day of your trip.

What is the solo experience?

The solo day offers a unique chance to step back from the normal distractions of life and realize what is important to you, set goals for the future and realize what you are thankful for in your life. The solo also affords the opportunity to practice the classic disciplines of solitude, simplicity and silence as well as fasting and prayer. Participants are placed approximately 100 feet from each other and given the space to read, journal and spend time in nature while under the close supervision of the La Vida Sherpas.

Do I have to fast on the solo?

The majority of people do fast on their solo unless they are diabetic, hypoglycemic or have an eating disorder. If you choose not to fast, food can be provided or you can do a partial fast with a smaller amount of food. Your leaders will prepare you, support you and ask that you give it a try. They will be checking on you a few times during the day. Fasting has a long history, and many others before you have chosen to try it.

What if I have medication that I need to take daily?

All medications will be placed in the first aid kit and must have an accompanied prescription label. The Sherpas (trip leaders) will log and dispense according to directions. We cannot dispense unlabeled medication. Additionally, we are not allowed to give out OTC medications on an “as needed” basis to anyone under 18 years of age. OTC medications may only be dispensed if a written prescription from a doctor is provided. If you are under 18 at the start of your expedition and need to take medication, you must have your physician fill out the Authorization for Administration of Medication at Camps.

What if I have a food or bee allergy?

If you have an allergy that requires the use of an EpiPen, you will need to bring your own EpiPen in addition to the ones the leaders carry in the first-aid kit. Our staff members have experience handling many allergies and can accommodate most food needs. Please contact lavida@gordon.edu to discuss your food options. We cannot accommodate food preferences but can assist with medical dietary needs.

If I hurt myself, who is qualified to help me?

Your leaders are be certified by the Wilderness Medical Associates at the Wilderness Advanced First Aid or Wilderness First Responder level. The Department of Environmental Conservation Rangers in the Adirondacks can also be called in for emergencies, and there are phones posted at ranger stations throughout the park.

What sort of equipment do I need?

There is a packing list [here](#). LaVida provides all group gear as well as the following personal gear items: sleeping bag with stuff sack, foam pad, backpack, water bottles, bowl, spoon, whistle, ground sheet, and solo tarp.

What if I cannot afford the equipment? Can I borrow anything?

La Vida has a large assortment of boots, socks and clothing that can be rented for a small cleaning fee if you prefer to not buy all your own equipment. Quantities are limited, though, so if you have a need, please let us know and we can reserve them for you.