



OUTDOOR LAB



THE CLEMSON UNIVERSITY OUTDOOR LAB is a camp and conference center located on a peninsula of Lake Hartwell in the heart of the 17,000-acre Clemson Experimental Forest. It is part of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management within Clemson's College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences.

Since 1972, the Outdoor Lab has served children, teenagers and adults with disabilities. In 2018-2019 alone, more than 700 children and adults participated in residential camp programs. More than 85 percent of those campers had a disability.

A primary goal of the Outdoor Lab is to provide Clemson students with hands-on learning experiences that enhance their classroom education. The Lab hires between 30 to 40 staff members each year to work, live with and care for campers. Although most of the staff are Clemson University students, others come from colleges and universities from across the United States.

Students working in the Outdoor Lab learn valuable skills, including:

- Communication and collaboration.
- Critical thinking, problem-solving and adaptability.
- Leadership and responsibility for others.
- Capacity to work and live within an organization for the betterment of its staff and clientele.

Civic organizations, including Rotary, Lions International, U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce and Sertoma International, support the various camps that the Outdoor Lab staffs and operates. Most campers attend the Outdoor Lab for free or at reduced cost. While here, they are led, nurtured and cared for by University students gaining valuable life experiences that cannot be taught in the classroom. It is a combined experience that is life-changing for the students and the campers they serve.

NEED FOR SUPPORT

The Outdoor Lab will be 50 years old in 2021. It was created through the private support of thousands of generous South Carolinians and through civic organizations that believe people with disabilities and their families deserve a beautiful place for learning, rest and growth.

The Outdoor Lab depends on conference center activities to fund the majority of its operating budget. In order to ensure our continued service, we need financial support — particularly related to funding for permanent staff positions and for the continuing care of our facilities.

We ask the Clemson Family to consider support for this remarkable program at Clemson. Your gift will be life-changing for our students and for a special group of South Carolinians who greatly benefit from their time at the Outdoor Lab. As the Lab celebrates 50 years of serving the people of our state and community, we ask for your partnership as we prepare for the next 50 years.

For more information on how to help, contact John Pezdek, Director of Development for the College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences, at jpezdek@clemson.edu or 315-794-4483.



Having the opportunity to work for the Clemson Outdoor Lab was a truly rewarding experience and has had a huge impact on who I am as a person. My time spent at this camp helped me to develop a strong compassion for others and has led me to the path that I am on today as a speech pathology graduate student working with individuals with disabilities.

- HANNAH VOYLES '19