

## Summary of Programs for Young Adults (Final Draft)

As of: 24 Feb 2022

### Will's Hope Program Information

#### Dear prospective participant and family/caregivers:

Thank you for your interest in Will's Hope. If you meet the eligibility criteria and other requirements you may be a candidate for the Will's Hope outdoor programs that take place in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. This is an exciting experience that will allow you to have a lot of fun while giving you opportunities to gain more self-confidence, independence and believing in yourself. Numerous persons, who have participated in the past, have gained new strengths and passions.

Will's Hope is for young adults with emotional, cognitive, autism, mental illness and related disabilities or conditions. Will's Hope is a non-smoking program. Meals are provided as part of the program and during travel to and from the Yellowstone region. All medications, over the counter items and any other item taken by mouth or used for personal care must be identified and inspected by Will's Hope staff. **No electronic devices, to include Smart Phones may be taken to the Program. Participants may bring digital or other cameras. Cameras as part of a phone are not allowed.** We have found that, despite good intentions, the participants get distracted with their Smart Phone or other electronics and this significantly impacts the quality of the Program for themselves and their peers. In addition, participants should not bring anything that may distract their attention from the program (e.g., bringing 5 books to read) which affects social interaction as well as other activities.

Will's Hope Programs occur in Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) which includes Yellowstone National Park (YNP); southern Montana and northwestern Wyoming. Departure is by van on the date each program begins. Each participant, in addition to many personal growth opportunities, will have multiple days of excitement & memorable outdoor educational activities.

#### First Year/Regular Program and Advanced Program

**For first time attendees** please contact Sarah Squire at 719-210-5808 to schedule an initial interview. An application is left after completion of the initial interview. A second interview is conducted after the completed application is returned. Once the second interview is completed an acceptance letter is issued if the individual meets all requirements and in Will's Hope determination there is a good fit between the potential participant's objectives and Will's Hope mission. The application is lengthy but necessary for ensuring the success of Will's Hope. At the present time we do not offer an electronic application for completion. This eliminates electronic hacking of the information. We require an application for all participants - either first year or returning participants.

Participants attending Will's Hope are automatically grouped in the first-year/regular program. Young adults that have attended Will's Hope in the past may also be assigned to the first-time/regular program if they do not meet the higher physical and academic levels required for the Advanced Programs. We assign young adults to the program where they will have the most opportunities to be successful and for a variety of other reasons such as van seat availability, subject matter, instructor availability, staff availability, interests and other operational factors. Will's Hope reserves the right to assign young adults as we see fit taking into account all variables. In many cases it may be advantageous to participate in the first-year/regular program for multiple years because the activities change from year to year and the regular program will continue to present opportunities for the participants.

#### First Time Attendees

There is a **\$100 application fee** that must be submitted with a complete application for first time attendees. In the event the individual is not selected the application fee is refundable. In addition to the application fee (\$100), for first time attendees, there is a \$300.00 non-refundable fee once the young adult has been accepted. The **\$300.00 fee** (for first time Attendees) is due in the late February/March timeframe after they have been accepted into the program. (**Total fees** for 1<sup>st</sup> time attendees are the \$100 application fee plus \$300 fee = \$400.00)

#### Returning Participants

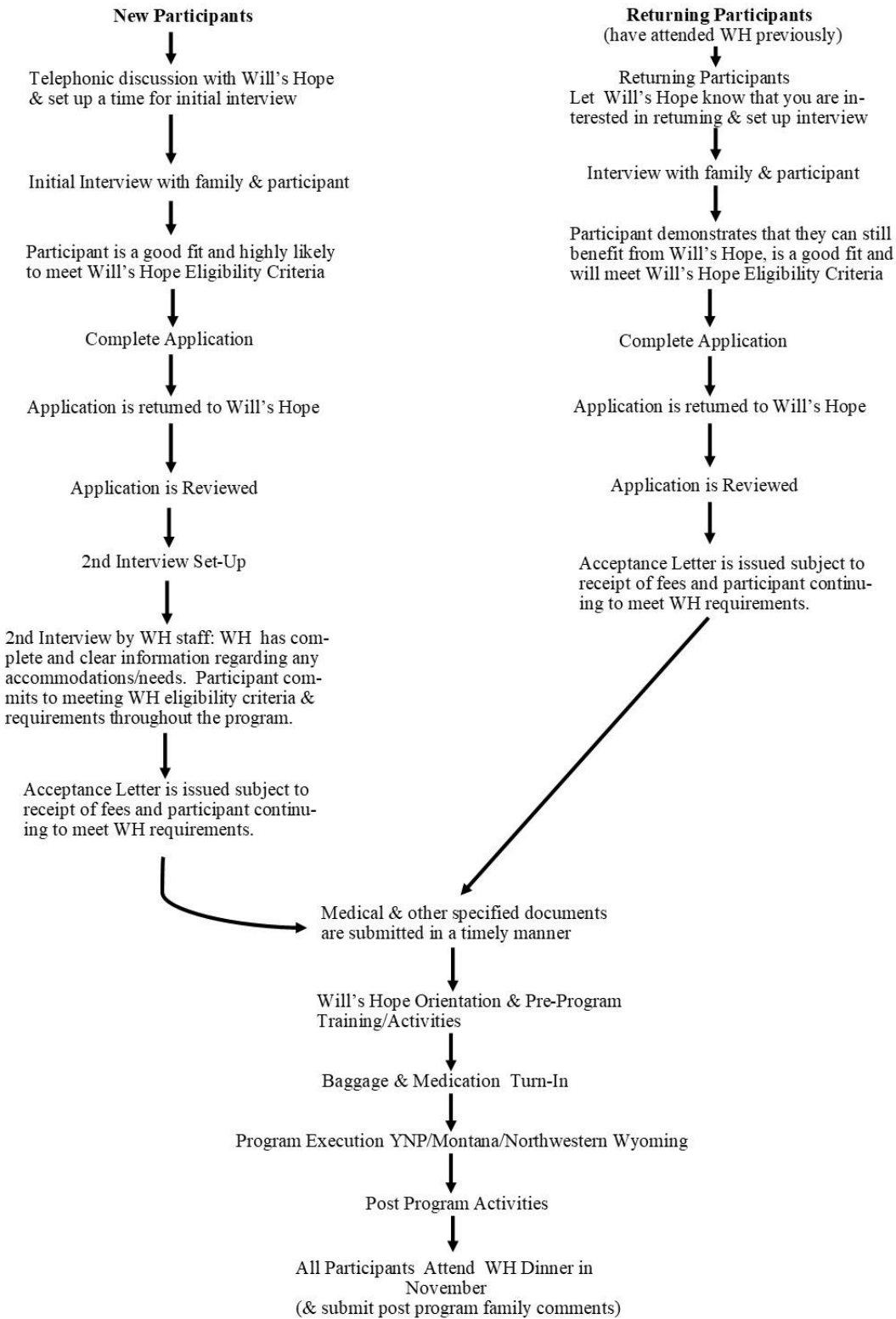
**For returning participants** - Contact Sarah Squire (719-210-5808) to confirm your interest in a Will's Hope program. The returning participant should be familiar with the mission of Will's Hope and able to articulate how Will's Hope can benefit them. If the participant continues to be a good fit for Will's Hope, they will be interviewed and provided an application to complete.

Once accepted pay the entire \$1,500.00 fee in the late February/March timeframe. The total fee for returning participants is \$1,500.00. Checks should be made out to Will's Hope & mailed to the address at the end of this document. The fee for any returning individual is \$1,500 regardless of which program they are in (Advanced or Regular). **For the application to be finalized both the Will's Hope application & releases, partner releases and forms; & other specified documents must be completed & submitted by the designated dates.** Medical forms & other specified documents should be submitted at or before the participant and family **Orientation which occurs in the March/April timeframe.**

In some cases, if a first-year attendee is very high functioning we may, at our discretion, place them in an Advanced Program.

Program dates are listed on our website ([www.willshopeopportunities.org](http://www.willshopeopportunities.org)). Will's Hope is a **voluntary program**. Participants must meet certain criteria to be eligible & continue to meet these criteria & other requirements during their tenure with Will's Hope. Page 2 is a general flowchart that shows the Will's Hope recruitment process

### Will's Hope Recruitment Process



## **Background**

Will's Hope is a Program in memory of Will Squire, who left this world on November 21, 2010 at the age of 20. Will was afflicted with multiple disabilities (emotional, cognitive, mental health and physical) and was a Special Needs Student. Despite handicaps, he had a heart of gold and could never do enough to help a person with significant disabilities; or someone less fortunate than he; and in many cases he helped individuals less disabled than he. He was shy and consistently placed his needs below those he wanted to help. He always wanted to know what he could do – to give people “Hope” and opportunities for a better life. This Program implements Will's vision.

## **Concept of Operations**

Will's Hope is an outdoor and participant-oriented program that provides opportunities for young adults to thrive in a positive environment where they are challenged by fun & wholesome activities that are largely experiential learning. Each program consists of a small group of participants, mentors, & staff. Each individual has multiple opportunities to be engaged by hands on activities where they can discover strengths, passions or other attributes. Experience has shown that individuals participating in Will's Hope are capable of accomplishing much more than what they thought they could do. Nature & Native Americans are mechanisms for self-discovery & learning not just about the outdoors but also learning about themselves. Through group interaction & other activities individuals are afforded opportunities to discover “Hope” as they experience the awe of nature & realize they can shape their future. Will's Hope Programs in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem are nine to fourteen days duration.

Research supports learning in a naturalistic environment, and has shown that individuals experiencing nature can benefit in multiple ways. Nature can enhance their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual life and wellbeing.

We use other partners and professionals to augment Will's Hope staff (typically our partners are other non-profit organizations, small firms or individuals with specialized expertise). Staff members are experienced adults. Participants will find the staff helpful, compassionate and empathetic. The sole mission of the staff of Will's Hope and Will's Hope partners are to provide opportunities and the conditions to maximize the success for each participant.

We want each individual to cherish their good memories and come to the realization that they can sustain hope for a bright future. Participants have many opportunities to demonstrate to themselves that they can do things that they previously thought were not possible.

Pre-program work consists of interviews, training & other actions/activities tailored for each session & group of participants. Spring training conducted in Colorado Springs/other locations, is necessary to enhance the program experience for each participant.

Upon completion of the program each individual will be recognized at the closing dinner/ceremony for their participation and their valuable contributions to the small group.

## **Vision**

Serve higher functioning young adults with emotional, cognitive, autism, mental illness & related disabilities or conditions. Society has stigmatized many of these individuals who, with sufficient opportunities, positive encouragement and support, can lead a near normal life and be a contributing member of society. These young adults; who are good persons, with aspirations to do well face many challenges in their daily lives. In addition, they may face varying levels of difficulties in accomplishing what are considered “normal” activities for other young adults. Will's Hope uses the outdoors, nature and Native Americans as self-enabling and self-discovery mechanisms for growth and self-development. Will's Hope provides opportunities for strengthening individuals and fostering the development of passions, self-confidence, positivity, self-esteem, skills, self-advocacy, independences and other intangibles. Small group size facilitates success. Potential participants are in the approximate age range of 18 to 30 years + old. Each young adult is assigned a mentor. We try to limit each program to 6 participants.

## **Mission**

Provide young adults with disabilities a supportive atmosphere & opportunities to see their situation in a more positive way while using the outdoors, nature and Native Americans as self-enabling mechanisms. Attributes that may be enhanced through Will's Hope include:

- Improving or developing personal awareness, skills, passions & strengths,
- Cultivating unique internal strengths to more clearly see their value to their family, school & humanity,
- Helping strengthen families of young adults with disabilities,
- Building self-esteem, self-confidence, capabilities for independence, self-advocacy, resiliency of spirit, & communications skills,
- Infusing and strengthening “Hope” in each young adult,
- Promoting individual growth, development and leadership,
- Realizing being unique is a strength to be proud of and shared with others,
- Empowering the participant to see the good in themselves and the good in the world,
- Upon returning home continuing to learn, self-advocate, educate others, be an ambassador for Will's Hope, continue to participate in Will's Hope activities, participate in service projects and help other persons with disabilities,

- Partnering with families and caregivers to assist in capitalizing on the opportunities provided by Will's Hope for the young adult to continue to learn and grow, and
- Remaining positive.

### **General eligibility criteria for acceptance into the Will's Hope Program**

Will's Hope is for young adults (approximately ages 18 to 30+). In special situations we will allow participation by individuals who are older than this age range. Key eligibility criteria for individuals with disabilities are:

- Those individuals typically included in the mainstream of society such as public school and work environments but may be impaired due to their disability. The individual may have an IEP.
- Self-esteem, self-worth and other affected attributes potentially mask their strengths and positive aspects of their life,
- May have maladaptive coping strategies/skills that make them appear isolated, aloof, or unable to engage with peers & friends,
- Have a track record of good behavior and could benefit from a program where they are the core focus,
- Are willing to learn, want to attend Will's Hope and are willing to help themselves,
- **Are able to follow instructions** - directions from leaders for activities, personal safety & protection of natural resources,
- Are cooperative and not disruptive to instructors, mentors, staff, participants and the program,
- Are courteous, use appropriate language & appropriate behavior; truthful and honest; and respectful to all persons, staff, instructors, mentors, participants & others,
- Are willing to share their observations and thoughts with peers, mentors, and staff,
- Are willing to have fun and teach others how they learn best,
- Are willing to help each other and share responsibility for performing housekeeping tasks such as sweeping floors, cleaning restrooms, cleaning up after dinner, cleaning vans upon return to Colorado Springs, cleaning the lodging facilities prior to departure so that they are turned back to the owner in the same or better condition than we received them,
- Are willing to try new behavior if mentors and staff suggest changes that may improve the young adult's life,
- Are willing to participate in post program events (e.g., service projects and other activities) to continue to grow and further Will's Hope goals and objectives of reaching a wider audience of young adults with disabilities,
- Regular program participants should be able to hike a minimum of 3 miles daily with an elevation gain of 600 feet. Hikes occur between 5,000 and 10,000 feet in elevation in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). Advanced program participants should be able to hike a minimum of 5 miles with an elevation gain of 1,000 feet.
- It is extremely important that participants exercise sufficiently prior to each year's program so they are able to fully participate in outdoor activities. Each participant is expected to have their own hiking program where they are hiking on trails & uneven terrain. Walking around the block on a sidewalk is not sufficient. In the past participants that were not properly prepared had significant balance & stamina issues. This can be a safety hazard so we are asking participants to be physically prepared for training events that precede the Yellowstone region trip as well as for the trip to the GYE. This includes hydrating sufficiently prior to & during activities to avoid potential dehydration & altitude sickness,
- Families/caregivers agree that they want their young adult to become more independent, learn to be a better adult, become more of a self-advocate as well as being able to take advantage of the opportunities presented by Will's Hope,
- Through the application, interview, recruitment and program training processes participants and their families make Will's Hope, fully aware of issues affecting the young adult, especially those that affect accommodations, personal needs, the Program, group dynamics and individual issues that may affect the participant's ability to meet eligibility criteria as well as meet other goals and objectives. Will's Hope helps individuals with diverse needs and characteristics and full disclosure is necessary at the time of the application so that Will's Hope staff can properly plan for any unique situation. This includes full disclosure for (these are examples and not a complete list):
  - Medications and updates if medications are changed prior to program execution,
  - Medical needs and the knowledge and capability of the participant with respect to those needs,
  - Personal hygiene requirements/self-sufficiency,
  - Personal situations (e.g., recent trauma, perceived trauma or things like peer bullying) that may affect the participant,
- Information provided to Will's Hope must be updated if there are any changes between the application phase and program departure (e.g., medication list). **Medication lists must be accurate.** If there are changes to a medication list, please ensure that a current list is provided to Will's Hope. Any change to an individual's medication after turnover of medication to Will's Hope must have the appropriate medical professional's authorization. In general, medications must be turned in early so our nurses have time to review the prescribed lists against the actual medications received.

**Key dates and activities: Please see our website [www.willshopeopportunities.org](http://www.willshopeopportunities.org) for the latest information.** Summer program dates are posted on the website. We encourage prospective participants and family/guardians/sponsors to contact Sarah Squire (719-210-5808) to discuss eligibility and other details. Applications are only available in hard copy and provided to the individual/family after an initial meeting/interview with Will's Hope staff. A more detailed schedule will be available with the application. During the telephonic discussion with Sarah Squire or during the initial interview dates and other details are discussed

as well as answering questions the family or participant may have. We encourage interested persons and families to contact us, if possible, at least one year in advance.

### **Annual Will's Hope dinner in Colorado Springs.**

**This is typically on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday evening in November. Please check the website for the exact date.**

Participants attend the annual Will's Hope dinner to assist in the information briefing, explain a display and help serve food and drinks. Participants accepted for Will's Hope Programs are expected to attend the Annual Dinner. We ask that families and Will's Hope attendees participate in our annual dinner and fund raiser which occurs in the November timeframe. The people that attend this dinner are very much pro-young adults with disabilities. The audience wants to hear first-hand from the participants. This will be an opportunity to talk about what you have learned and to thank the audience for donating to Will's Hope. This is an important milestone for Will's Hope and we require each attendee to agree to participate in the annual November dinner as a condition of acceptance in the program.

This is our major fundraiser. We try to keep fees as low as possible. We appreciate everyone's support in raising funds or finding organizations/individuals that can assist. The cost per each participant who attends Will's Hope is \$4,000 to \$5,000. For first year attendees the cost is \$400. For returning young adults the cost is \$1,500. The balance of the cost is picked up by Will's Hope. To continue offering this program we ask families that can afford to pay more do so. We will consider any payment above the required fee a donation & provide a receipt.

We request that family/host homes/guardians of participants provide their assessment (to Will's Hope) of benefits they observe after their young adult has returned home. This form is distributed prior to annual November dinner.

### **Commitments**

The young adult must want to attend & active family support is a necessity for success - prior to, during & after the program. While there is no guarantee you may notice that your family member is changed by the Will's Hope experience. From experience families/caregivers that capitalize on this opportunity by continuing to provide opportunities; reinforce the young adult's self-confidence & self-advocacy; and provide resources will likely see continued growth and development.

Will's Hope is based on learning & observing in the natural world. Each individual's experience is different. Will's Hope staff & partners will assist in maximizing the benefits of this program for each individual but there is no guarantee as to the results realized by each individual.

Each individual must respect other participants and be willing to listen when other participants/mentors/staff are talking. Participants must commit to appropriate behavior, being courteous, using appropriate language, following instructions and other typical social requirements/norms.

Will's Hope is a **voluntary program** & Will's Hope makes no commitments as to services provided, if any, & meeting the scope and level of those services received in the participant's home community. Will's Hope does not receive any government funding. Will's Hope is an immersion program using the outdoors, natural world, & Native Americans as self-enabling mechanisms. Results realized by each participant will vary & while we have seen significant positive changes in many participants there is no guarantee that this will occur for all individuals. We try to ensure each family, caregiver, participant & others are fully informed about the program, the opportunities it provides & to ensure we can provide any essential services that will improve the experience of each volunteer participant. Typically, we have mentors & staff that have worked with a wide range of individuals with disabilities. We cannot guarantee that any volunteer participant will have a mentor they have worked with in the past. The program is constantly evolving & improving.

We encourage families/caregivers/participants to consider being involved with Will's Hope for multiple years. In general, those individuals that have attended Will's Hope multiple times have the most opportunities for continuing to grow in so many different & positive ways. For many participants that have been able to participate in multiple years we have seen continued growth in many different areas of their life. Parents, caregivers, participants & other sponsors should consider Will's Hope as a growth opportunity that achieves the greatest benefit when the individual attends multiple years. Will's Hope is designed to have a lot of fun but in the process bonding, learning about the outdoor world/nature, Native American experiences and many other activities enhance their opportunities to become stronger as well as deepen their experiences, self-confidence, resiliency, and other intangibles.

We usually have a nurse accompany each program. Their primary mission is to oversee medications and provide basic first aid. We focus on safety & conduct various safety orientations throughout the program based on the training activity undertaken at that time. In the event a higher level of medical care or higher level of mental health/related services are required we will utilize local emergency & public safety/public health resources. As part of the application process, we ask that families & participants disclose any concerns or special conditions that Will's Hope needs to be made aware of. Full disclosure is critical. Will's Hope reserves the right to take whatever action is necessary so that a program is not impacted by a condition/situation that was not fully disclosed to Will's Hope. This could include asking the family to come to the Yellowstone region & picking up their young adult if the situation warrants such action. Will's Hope does not cover the cost related to someone going home early. We don't want this to happen so we rely on close communication with families.

## **General Information**

Upon submission of the application each participant will be screened, assessed, & interviewed as part of a structured evaluation. This evaluation is shared with other Will's Hope staff if the applicant is accepted for the program. After selection, more details will be provided to families and participants. This includes discussing individual preferences (e.g., food), dates and times for various preparatory events, emergency procedures, and detailed schedules from departure to return as well as various administrative matters. Individuals selected for the program must be able to hike and spend time in the field away from lodging facilities. To the extent possible restroom stops will be made at clean outdoor restrooms that lack running water. Purell or other antibacterial soap is available to keep your hands clean.

We realize that some young adults may have some anxiety about attending and being in a new environment without their family. Please call Sarah or Mark Squire if we can help in any way to assist in making the process easier. Usually, participants will meet the other participants and mentors and conduct several training activities prior to departure for the Yellowstone region. It is common that participants may be somewhat apprehensive but this typically diminishes quickly once they are immersed in the Yellowstone environment and activities.

Participants should be aware that there are many different activities in which they will participate during Will's Hope. They should view these as positive exciting opportunities where they can learn in a way that makes sense to them. It is not important that they master an activity. Their active participation in activities and helping the other participants is important. Group dynamics and social interaction among the young adults are significant self-development growth opportunities that can benefit each young adult. Each activity is an opportunity for deepening friendships and creating magnificent memories. We do not allow immediate family members of young adults to attend because this might skew the group dynamics.

## **Public Health precautions**

There is still some potential for Will's Hope schedules being impacted by COVID or related diseases. Hopefully, the public health situation will continue to improve. Due to public health concerns, we have reduced the number of training sessions prior to the Yellowstone region programs. We are asking each participant, family and caregiver to do their part in ensuring that their young adult is taking appropriate precautions prior to participating in any Will's Hope event/program and staying safe and healthy. We will follow CDC and public health agencies' guidance and this may include the use of masks, social distancing where possible, limited interaction with non-Will's Hope personnel/public, washing hands frequently; disinfecting the vans, lodging components such as knobs, touch points, contact surfaces, etc.; and taking many other precautions to ensure a safe environment. If possible, please take advantage of opportunities to be vaccinated.

## **Specialized Care or Issues beyond the Scope of Will's Hope**

Will's Hope is not a medical or therapeutic program. We do not work with young adults in crisis. We provide a first-class staff of compassionate adults who have significant experience with young adults with emotional, cognitive, autism, mental illness, and related disabilities or conditions. We provide basic first aid and dispensing of medications in accordance with the prescriptions. We do not provide specialized medical or mental health care. Our approach is to provide love, compassion, respect, fairness, positivity, challenges and other features so that the young adult's ability to excel are enhanced by an environment that is structured for their success.

Will's Hope believes that disabilities are not an excuse for inappropriate behavior. So regardless of the diagnosis we believe that an individual is capable of appropriate behavior. Secondly, individuals must be stable to participate in Will's Hope. For the vast majority of young adults with disabilities that are interested in Will's Hope these are not issues.

We rely on applications, information provided by family members and caregivers as well as our observations during training to assess behavior. We request the families, caregivers and guardians as well as the participants to be as open as possible so that we can develop a workable plan for the young adult's success.

This section is not intended to convey that only perfect young adults can attend. We serve young adults with various disabilities and have found that the program is very successful for those individuals that want to attend and have appropriate behavior and appropriate language. Please feel free to contact us if for any reason you are not sure or have any concerns. We want to make the Will's Hope Program a first-class experience and over the past 10 years we have seen many young adults blossom in so many different and wonderful ways.

If there are significant unusual circumstances with any participant, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can work jointly with the family/caregiver to make the Will's Hope opportunity a reality for the participant. Likewise, if you are not sure please let us know so that we can address the situation in advance.

## **Colorado Springs Training Venues**

We use the Stratton Open Space and Cheyenne Mountain State Park (in the Colorado Springs area) as training venues. We may use other parks or venues if there is a benefit.

## **Preparation for Will's Hope**

It is important that participants are physically prepared for Will's Hope. Hiking and other activities take up most of the day. First-year/regular program participants should be able to hike up to 3 miles and up to 600 feet in elevation gain. Advanced Program participants must be able to hike 5 miles with an elevation gain of 1,000 feet. Participants need to be properly hydrated. This means that they should be drinking several liters of water a day at least a week (it is preferable to start hydrating in conjunction with a regular hiking program) prior to departure for Will's Hope. We understand that this may require more rest stops but hydration is very important. Occasionally, we have at least one person who did not start hydration early enough and this has delayed the group for several hours while the individual is being treated. It is strongly recommended that participants start a regular hiking program no later than the beginning of March.

## **Help with turn-in of vans and cleaning & servicing equipment before and immediately after Will's Hope**

There is a lot of work involved in preparing for the programs and standing down after conducting several Will's Hope programs. Equipment, receivers, and binoculars need to be inspected and made serviceable (e.g., installing batteries in the receivers). Vehicles need to be cleaned & turned into the rental firm. Equipment needs to be cleaned & prepared for storage. We are looking for volunteers that can spend about a day helping do these tasks. Similarly, we can use all participants to assist with the annual dinner in November. If you are able to help, please let us know ahead of time– we appreciate the help!!

## **Out of State/Region Applicants**

Will's Hope is exploring the development of a multi-day, short duration assessment and training program that occurs prior to the GYE/Montana/Northwestern Wyoming trip. This would facilitate allowing families/caregivers/participants from outside of Colorado to participate in the program. We are also looking at other options to accommodate young adults from other locations. Please call for details.

## **Specific information regarding the Will's Hope Program at GYE/Montana/Northwestern Wyoming**

During the day participants will be out and about throughout the Yellowstone region. Communications will be very limited and most of the time it will not be possible to use cell phones as coverage is spotty to non-existent in undeveloped areas. Upon return to lodging facilities outside YNP (each night) cell phone coverage is typically good. In the event of an emergency contact Sarah or Mark Squire [719-210-5808 (Sarah) or 719-210-5625 (Mark)]. We will get back to you as soon as possible. Please do not contact the Park Service for emergencies as they are not directly involved in the Program. More information is provided at the **March/April Orientation**.

In May, June & sometimes in July it is possible to encounter extreme weather in the Yellowstone National Park region. Snow, hail, lightning, heat, heavy rain, and other extremes are possible. In addition, the weather can be widely variable within the park – for example it can be short sleeve weather in one portion of the park while blizzard conditions are occurring at higher elevations. Activities will take place at different elevations – primarily from 5,000 feet to 10,000 feet above sea level. For Advanced Programs that include camping you will need to ensure you have sufficient cold weather clothing. Please see the list of things to bring that is included in the application packet.

Participants will be fully occupied during the Program & **should not bring valuables, phones, video games or other electronic devices/games, computers, excessive books for reading or other items** that will detract from their ability to participate in the program. Participants are encouraged to bring a camera but not a phone with a camera. A notebook for writing & logging daily activities will be provided for each individual once the group reaches YNP, if not before.

Safety is of utmost importance. Safety briefings will be provided for each type of different activity. Each participant is expected to pay close attention to instructions from Will's Hope staff, and other guides/instructors and comply with those instructions. The group can have a fun and educational program while following prescribed safety measures. During training hikes in the Colorado Springs area, we will use the same hiking procedures we will use in YNP/Montana/Northwestern Wyoming.

During the YNP/Montana/Northwestern Wyoming programs transportation during the day will be in vans rented by Will's Hope.

Privacy policies and contact information:

1. Will's Hope (WH) staff will not disclose any personal information about a participant or their family. Information will only be used by staff & disclosed to other organizations (e.g., medical clinic in YNP, hospital in Livingston, MT), or to professionals involved with a young adult's care. WH is required to comply with laws or directives of law enforcement & judicial authorities.
2. Prior to program execution a contact list is disseminated to staff, mentors, families, caregivers & other persons that support the WH Programs. These lists should be treated as confidential & not disseminated to anyone outside of the WH Program.
3. Cell Phones: Sarah or Mark Squire [719-210-5808 (Sarah) or 719-210-5625 (Mark)]

## **Post Will's Hope Activities**

Participants that pay attention and make a conscious effort will find that they will most likely realize significant benefits from Will's Hope. This is a precious gift that many other persons will not be able to experience. Another way to look at this is that millions of people would like to be in the shoes of the participants but will probably never have the opportunity.

## Goals and Objectives of Will's Hope Program

1. Provide an environment conducive to learning for persons with disabilities.
2. Sessions and activities are structured to help participants learn and interact. Byproducts of these activities will help participants see more clearly their strengths and personal qualities while reflecting on their personal situation in some of the most beautiful landscapes and natural environments in the world. This insight allows participants to brainstorm, gain fresh perspectives and identify for themselves additional benefits.
3. Provide the setting, structure and tools for an individual to recognize within themselves potential strengths as they develop or expand their interests and passions. The outdoors provides the stage and scenery while the participant provides the eyes and ears. This stimulation affords a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to draw strength and instill self-confidence/self-esteem from daily occurrences in the natural world.
4. Provide a doorway for each individual to step through to observe, experience, learn and treasure the natural environment such as wildlife, flowers, insects, vegetation, trees, waterways, fish, geology, thermal features, natural hazards, Native Americans and man's interaction with nature; and learn how important humans are to the preservation of our natural world's resources and its wonderful features.
5. Provide ample opportunities for self-reflection, rest, friendship, bonding and other activities.
6. Provide an opportunity for each individual to connect with nature
7. Provide a positive, friendly, respectful, stress-free and nurturing atmosphere to ensure optimum conditions for learning and active participation so that individuals clearly see the value they add to the rest of the group.
8. Provide an environment of encouragement, mutual trust and respect for each participant. Each participant's observations and opinions are important to the small group, to the staff and for the success of each other.
9. Use the natural world, Native Americans and environment as the vehicles or mechanisms upon which participants draw hope, learn skills and identify strengths and opportunities.
10. Activities will help individuals enjoy new challenges and feel a stronger bond with the natural world which in turn nurtures and clarifies self-reflection while reinforcing a positive image of themselves. Participants learn to appreciate their uniqueness as well as the uniqueness of other persons and how this uniqueness is a strength.
11. As required, work with individuals one on one to ensure success for each participant while encouraging the young adult to share their insights with the group.
12. Identify resources for participants so they can continue to learn, cherish the world's precious resources and natural wonders; and remain "connected" to their strengths and "Hope".
13. Facilitate each individual taking their success back to their community to enable them to feel good about themselves and utilizing the experience to continue to build self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience while enhancing future opportunities.
14. Using their experiences from Will's Hope to assist other young adults or other persons with disabilities in their home communities as well as participate in other activities that promote camaraderie and provide services to others in need.
15. We may structure activities and learning experiences so aspiring young adults also gain junior leadership experience such as leading an activity, help with critical support activities (electronics, spotting scopes, etc.), mentoring, cooking, and other tasks. The scope and level of these opportunities are dependent on the young adult's desires, interest, enthusiasm, commitment, skills, abilities and other factors.
16. Pre-program activities will be conducted to provide an orientation and accomplish other tasks to facilitate successful program execution. This includes things such as hikes and orientation to specialized equipment. It will also include basic instruction in a number of activities/skills.
17. Will's Hope will provide mentors for participants. Mentors are older adults who have experience working with young adults with disabilities and have a passion for helping young adults succeed.
18. An overarching principle, embedded in Program activities and discussions, is to promote the participant's independence and self-advocacy and participants taking responsibility for their actions.

Will's Hope  
320 Cheshire Ct  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906  
[www.willshopeopportunities.org](http://www.willshopeopportunities.org)