

Entry Deadline Extended: 'Teamwork, Commitment and Pride' Is Theme Of ISP Team Illinois Youth Camp

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a three-part series this weekend on the ISP Team Illinois Youth Camp coming soon at Principia College in Elsah).

ELSAH - There is a week-long camp on the Principia College campus in Elsah - the Illinois State Police Team Illinois Youth Camp (TIYPC) - that will commence with a

Sunday, July 16, check-in at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville and conclude on Saturday, July 22, at Calvary Baptist Church in Alton. The camp has left a forever lasting impression on many young men and women.

Long-time Illinois State Police Trooper Master Sgt. Calvin Dye will talk more in-depth in a separate story about his experiences with the camp, including one person who became a college football star - Dominic Lovett - and others.

ISP's Troop 8 Administrative Assistant Sandy Voytas received a new role with the state police, but asked if she could continue her camp experience because it has meant that much to her. She will also talk in a separate story about her experiences.

Because of sponsors, the camp fee is only \$20. The camp is conducted by the ISP and local police and sheriff's offices, social service agencies and the Illinois National Guard.

After the check-in at SIUE, the campers are transported via bus to Principia College. Males and females are housed separately in dorms and those are staffed by ISP male and female personnel.

Thankfully for other area boys and girls, the camp deadline has been extended by the Illinois State Police to next Friday, June 23. There are also some spots still open for anyone who wants to participate in the camp.

The philosophy of "Teamwork, Commitment and Pride" is introduced to the Cadets through activities that promote teamwork, goal setting, and "esprit de corp." Upon completion of the camp, Cadets participate in a formal graduation ceremony and are provided with a certificate of completion and individual and group photos.

For additional information about the camp, contact the Recruitment Office at (217) 785-4370 or (217) 685-4752.

Camp goals are:

- To provide an opportunity for area youth and Law Enforcement Officers to form long-lasting positive relationships by creating a bridge of understanding between both groups.
- To provide a safe, structured environment that creates opportunities for encouraging positive behavior, leadership skills, positive self-esteem, and the skills for youth to resist violence, gangs, drugs and other societal pressures.
- To positively change the lives of area youth through our dedication and desire to motivate them to succeed.

For Dye, a long-time state police officer, and Vohtas, the camp has deep meaning and they have been a part of it for many years.

In 2003, the Illinois State Police (ISP) started the Team Illinois Youth Police Camp (TIYPC) with the primary purpose of establishing interpersonal relations between at-risk youth and law enforcement in order to create a bridge of understanding between the two groups. The first camp began in the East St. Louis area and is still currently held at Principia College in Elsah, Illinois. In 2017, a second TIYPC was held at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois and a third camp was held in Carbondale, Illinois in July 2020.

The camp is a highly structured week-long residency program and the kids are housed on campus dormitories. The camp, transportation, and activities are provided to kids free of charge. The camp is based on a strict model of discipline and includes para-military drills (formations & marching), physical fitness exercises, and classroom instruction on resisting various societal pressures, dangers of drug & alcohol abuse, hygiene, team building principles, leadership and other life-enhancing skills.

Dye said the camp has made a huge difference in many young men and women's lives.

Voytas agrees and said the camp is "one of the favorite parts of my job."

Camp Schedule includes:

- Teen Suicide Awareness
- Alcohol, Opiate and other Drug Addiction
- Personal Hygiene, Dental Care, and Healthy Lifestyle Habits
- Dangers of Social Media
- First Aid and Hands Only CPR
- Bullying and Cyber Bullying
- Boys and Girls Scouts of America
- Flag Etiquette w/ the Illinois National Guard
- Teambuilding with the Illinois National Guard to include the Rock Climbing Wall, Ropes Confidence Course, as well as other related exercises.
- Safety Days - local police department, fire department, rollover simulator, golf cart with DUI Goggles and texting while driving, K-9 Demonstration, ISP Motorcycles, and the Air Methods Medical Transport Helicopter
- Daily uniform and room inspections
- Fishing and Bowling

Stay tuned this weekend for part two with Dye and part three with Vohtas on their personal experiences with the Team Illinois ISP Youth Police Camp.

