



**MOUNTAIN SHEPHERD  
ADVENTURE SCHOOL**

# GEMS: DIGGING DEEPER

GEMS Digging Deeper is a five-day overnight experience during which GEMS will be challenged to step outside their comfort zones. This experience begins with a review of the seven survival priorities. Then, preparation begins for 2-night backpacking expedition along the nearby Appalachian Trail. The week concludes with canoeing on Craig Creek, which allows girls to explore and prepare for situations that may be out of their element. GEMS Digging Deeper presents new challenges and and girls will move forward with a deepened sense of courage, confidence, and compassion.

## Adventure Highlights

- 5 days/5 nights
- Outdoor fun!
- Survival Skills
- Team-building
- All meals included
- Memories to last a lifetime
- Small group environment (10 maximum)
- Hands-on learning

## Travel Arrangements

Each session begins on Sunday afternoon between 5:00 and 6:00 pm and wraps up on a Friday afternoon at 4:00pm. Airport pick-up and drop-off from Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport (ROA) is also available with prior notice.

## Activity Level

### Moderate

Your camper will spend the first part of the week exploring Mountain Shepherd's 100-acre property, which has varying terrain. During the middle of the week, the group will backpack for 2 nights on the Appalachian Trail, which has some steep and ruggedly beautiful terrain.

## Who Chooses This Course

Outdoor experience levels do not matter. Campers with no experience, weekend day-hikers, and seasoned wilderness warriors are all welcome to partake in the Girls Empowered experience. No matter what experience you arrive with, we hope each girl leaves feeling empowered by the benefits of outdoor learning. This program is designed for girls entering grades 7 and up. Each session is open to mixed age groups for a unique peer-to-peer experience.

## What's Included

### Gear

The only required items are comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing and a pair of walking/hiking shoes or hiking boots, and river-appropriate footwear. Closed-toe shoes are required; no flip flops, sandals, or other open-toe shoes. To avoid blisters and other injuries, we don't recommend campers bring brand-new shoes or boots to wear during camp. Our packing list specifies required items and offers some suggestions for optional items. We provide basic toiletries, towels and linens, and all outdoor equipment.

### Meals

Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks are provided daily. Campers enjoy delicious, balanced home-cooked meals, and we can accommodate for allergies and dietary restrictions as needed.

### Overnight accommodations

All GEMS campers are housed in Mountain Shepherd's cozy bunk rooms with private bathrooms attached for a portion of the week. During GEMS: Digging Deeper, we will camp together in tents on our backpacking expedition.





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## PACKING LIST

### Provided by Mountain Shepherd:

- Shampoo, conditioner, body wash
- Towels, washcloths, sheets, blankets, pillow
- Sunscreen, insect repellent
- Feminine hygiene products (limited supply for "just in case")
- Basic over-the-counter medications & first aid products
- Backpacks (multi-day and daypacks)
- Sleeping bags, sleeping pads
- Tents, hammocks
- Flashlights, headlamps, helmets
- Camp field journals
- A growing GEMS library of age-appropriate books to borrow!
- All other necessary outdoor equipment for program
- Yummy meals, snacks, and drinks
- Educational fun and adventures!

### Required Items for Campers to Bring:

- 5 pairs of comfortable, outdoor-appropriate shorts (not too short, not too tight)
- 5 short-sleeved t-shirts (non-cotton, quick-dry fabric is ideal for outdoors)
- 1-2 long-sleeved t-shirts
- 1-2 pairs of jeans or long pants
- 1 sweatshirt, light sweater, or fleece jacket
- 7 pairs of underwear (5 days + extra)
- 2-3 sports bras
- 7 pairs of socks (5 days + extra), wool is best for hiking
- 2 sets of pajamas - 1 lightweight set, 1 warmer set
- Rain jacket with taped seams - "Waterproof"
- 1-2 pairs of comfortable, broken-in, closed-toe shoes (2 pairs of appropriate shoes is ideal in case one pair needs to dry out.)
- No sandals or flip flops; lace-up athletic sneakers or hiking boots are preferred over shoes like Vans, Keds, Converse, Toms, and other slip-ons.
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Hairbrush and hair accessories as needed

- Feminine hygiene products, if necessary
- Deodorant, if necessary
- Eyeglasses and/or contact lenses, contact lens solution
- Refillable water bottle (32 oz is ideal)
- Prescription medications in original container with dosage information
- An open mind, positive attitude, and sense of adventure!

### For Backpacking:

- Hiking pants/shorts
- Wool socks
- Camp shoes – closed toe, slip-on to rest feet like Crocs, Keen Sandals, Sanuks
- Hiking shoes/boots – please break-in before coming to camp \*can be same pair as above

### For Canoeing:

- 1 pair of quick-dry shorts or board-shorts
- 1 lightweight, quick-dry shirt for sun protection
- 1 swimsuit (one-piece or two-piece, comfortable)
- Sun hat or baseball cap, sunglasses
- 1 pair of old sneakers or closed-toe sandals (KEEN brand-style) \*can be same pair as above
- 1 lightweight towel – quick-dry camp towels are great!

### Optional/Suggested Items:

- Any personal toiletries, sunscreen, insect repellent (especially if you have sensitivities to general products)
- Flip-flops for shower shoes only
- Extra pair of eyeglasses and/or contact lenses
- Bag for dirty laundry
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Disposable camera or basic point-and-shoot
- Books, magazines, small crafts, instruments, coloring books, puzzles, card games – bring things to share with the group!
- Stuffed animal or other comfort item such as photos from home
- Cell phone – can be brought but will be stored by staff in safe space and given to campers for plenty of opportunities to call parents (Only Verizon-connected cell phones will operate at Mountain Shepherd.)

### Equipment and Property Care Policy

Campers are responsible for the equipment issued to them and should care for it like their own. Equipment is expected to be returned in the same condition in which it was issued. Campers should be proactive about contacting staff to fix damaged equipment. Issued equipment varies depending on the GEMS level, but may include: backpacks, tents, knives, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, camping stoves, flashlights or headlamps, first aid kits, and other gear provided by Hollins University Outdoor Program (HOP) or Mountain Shepherd.

Campers are expected to respect Mountain Shepherd property, indoors and outdoors. Bunks and bathrooms should be kept tidy, trash should be put in garbage cans, and gear should be stored properly. While outdoors away from Mountain Shepherd, campers and staff will practice

Leave No Trace ethics







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## DIRECTIONS

**From the North:** Interstate 81 South towards Roanoke, Va. Take Exit 141. Take a left at the stop light. The next light is Route 311. You'll see the Orange Market on the left. A BP and Subway on the right. Take a right. Follow Route 311 for 12 miles to a left on Route 621/Upper Craigs Creek Road. Follow Route 621 for 9.3 miles. Set your odometer, as it is a long and winding 9.3 miles to our sign on the right. Our property is lined with a brown wooden fence. Take the right on Hemlock Ridge Lane and stay straight through the red gates. Get a bit of momentum heading up the hill. Parking area is at the bottom of the circle driveway.

**From the South:** Interstate 81 North towards Christiansburg/Blacksburg, Va. Take Exit 118B Us-11/US 460 towards Blacksburg. Follow US 460 approximately 15.8 miles to a right on Route 621/Craigs Creek Road. Watch for a brown Jefferson National Forest sign on the right. The right turn on Route 621 is just past that sign. Follow Rt. 621 for 11.9 miles to our sign on the left. Just before the turn on Hemlock Ridge Lane you will pass a white church on the left. Our property is lined with a brown wooden fence. Take the left on Hemlock Ridge Lane and stay straight through the red gates. Get a bit of momentum heading up the hill. Parking area is at the bottom of the circle driveway.

**From the West:** Take 460 East to a left on Route 621. (If your GPS directs you to turn on Route 42, avoid it. You will end up on dirt road. Stay on 460 until you reach Route 621!) Watch for a brown Jefferson National Forest sign and a sign for Pandapas Pond on the right. The left turn on Route 621 is just past that sign. Follow Rt. 621 for 11.9 miles to our sign on the left. Just before the turn on Hemlock Ridge Lane you will pass a white church on the left. Our property is lined with a brown wooden fence. Take the left on Hemlock Ridge Lane and stay straight through the red gates. Get a bit of momentum heading up the hill. Parking area is at the bottom of the circle driveway.

**From the East:** Travel to Interstate 81 and follow the directions above from the north or the south.

**EXPLORE**  
WITH  
**CONFIDENCE**

