

## **FAQ's About The Awaken Project // Updated 3/28/24**

### **General Information**

- **Where is The Awaken Project located?** The Awaken Project (TAP)'s gap year program is located on the campus of Mount Carmel Ministries – a family camp and retreat center – in Alexandria, Minnesota.
- **What kind of organization is The Awaken Project?** TAP is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in the state of Minnesota. The Awaken Project is a Christ-centered, Gospel-focused organization that seeks to witness the irrefutable fruits of Jesus' Gospel in young adults' lives.
- **What does The Awaken Project do?** TAP provides a gap year program for students between the ages of 18 and 25 looking to explore a career in ministry, study the Bible at the undergraduate level at an affordable rate, travel throughout North America, and grow in their Christian faith. The program starts in the beginning of September and runs through the end of April. TAP also hosts a podcast called The Awaken Project Podcast, which can be found on all major audio platforms.
- **Who participates in The Awaken Project?** The individuals who apply for, and are accepted, into the gap year program are called *students*. Please see the entries for FAQs about student life, below.
- **How can I (or someone I know) apply to be a student with The Awaken Project?** Visit TAP's website ([www.theawakenprojectmn.com/application](http://www.theawakenprojectmn.com/application)) and click on the green "Click to Apply!" button, which will take you to the application. Steven Wagner, our Gap Year Director, will be in touch with you shortly after you have submitted your application.
- **What is the total cost for being a student in this program?** The cost of the program itself – which covers tuition, teachers' compensation, insurance, and various other student expenses – is \$4,500 in donations made to TAP, which can be fundraised periodically or with a one time donation. All students must be fully funded (have sent at least \$3,500 to The Awaken Project) by the end of the calendar year in which they were accepted into the program. We recommend that students have approximately \$1,500 budgeted for food throughout the year (purchasing and preparing their own meals is the student's responsibility). Students do not need to have \$1,500 fundraised for meals at the beginning of the gap year. Students may look for part-time work during the year to help offset the cost of the program.
- **Are scholarships available?** We are developing a scholarship/financial assistance program and will gladly help any student that may need financial assistance. Please contact Steven Wagner with any financial aid questions for the gap year program.

### **Student Life**

- **What can a TAP student expect to do throughout the year?** In the fall, students will take week-long Bible-school classes. These classes are taught by individual instructors brought in by TAP for each class. On some weekends, students will assist with programming and hospitality needs for Mount Carmel's fall retreats. Students will be given at least one day off per week (usually Saturday), but this date is subject to change based on the needs of Mount Carmel's retreat programming and TAP's class schedule. In the spring, students will primarily travel to Quake Events to assist with production, leading workshops, and relational ministry with Quake students.

- **What are Quake Events?** Quake Events are weekend retreats for middle school and high school church youth. These events feature a speaker, contemporary worship music, workshops, and phenomenal weekend youth activities (life size hungry-hungry hippos, nine square, dance parties, board games), all packed into convention hotels across the country. These events occur annually between January and April. Here is the website for Quake Events: [www.quakeevent.com](http://www.quakeevent.com).
- **Where do students live during the year?** Students will be housed on-site at Mount Carmel Ministries. On the west end of Mount Carmel's campus, there are winterized cabins that have two bedrooms, a full kitchen and bathroom, and a living area. Students do not pay rent to live on Mount Carmel's campus. As part of a student's experience with TAP, volunteer and service hours are completed throughout the school year to give back to Mount Carmel for hosting the program. Because students live on their own (no resident assistant figure in the cabin with them), students are responsible for cleaning the insides of their cabins, but any maintenance requests can be submitted to Mount Carmel's Facilities Director for repairs.
- **Will students have roommates?** Yes, students should expect to have one or two roommates in their cabin for the duration of the year.
- **What is a typical day/week like for a TAP student?** *Fall Semester (Bible school):* students will begin the day with morning prayer at 9:00am. Morning sessions for classes will run from 9:30am to 11:00am. Small group discussions and individual question-asking and support will be from 11:00am to 12:00pm. Lunch hour is from noon to 1:00pm. The afternoon session will begin at 1:00pm and run until 2:30pm. An additional small group discussion and individual question asking/support will be held again from 2:30 to 3:30pm. Communal worships/service projects will happen occasionally once the academic day is over. Other events throughout the day may occur based on the activities scheduled at Mount Carmel during the week. *Spring Semester (Quakes):* students can expect to begin traveling to a Quake event on a Thursday (unless otherwise communicated). For events that are farther away from campus, students will stay at the event hotel Thursday night, and occasionally a host home on Thursday night. Students assist with all things related to Quake from Thursday load-in to Sunday load-out. After most Quakes, students can expect to return to Mount Carmel late on Sunday night. For events farther away from campus, students can expect host home stays in between travel days to and from each Quake.
- **What are the responsibilities of a TAP student?** Students are expected to cook for themselves, do their own laundry, and manage their academic tasks on their own. Students are expected to have their own transportation if they desire to get a job in or near Alexandria, or travel on their days off. Transportation can be arranged for students whose basic needs (groceries, pharmacy trips) need to be filled in town.
- **How are day-to-day meals handled?** As stated above, students are responsible for their own food. With that being said, there will be community meals throughout the week (students cooking for one another) and some weekends with students sharing meals with retreat groups that come to Mount Carmel.
- **What transportation does TAP provide to students?** TAP will provide transportation to any Quake Event/any function that is directly related to ministry of The Awaken Project.
- **Can a student apply for college/seek out future opportunities while in the program?** Yes! We encourage students to discern their next steps while still a part of TAP. We will gladly help out with applications/research/discernment for life after TAP.

- **Can a student leave for a period of time to attend to a family emergency?** Students are allowed to plan travel for any family emergencies. Any travel for a family emergency will be covered by the student, and any duties that are the responsibility of the student must be delegated to another student/group far enough in advance before leaving for travel.
- **Will students be disciplined one-on-one?** Yes! We have both staff and volunteers that will serve as spiritual formation mentors for students on a one-on-one basis.
- **What is Mount Carmel's internet like?** Mount Carmel has internet in all of its major buildings, including student cabins. Students may use Mount Carmel's internet for their personal use, but we do ask that internet usage be stewarded well. Fiber internet was recently installed (end of 2021/beginning of 2022) so the connection has improved significantly in the last three years.

### Goals of The Awaken Project

- **What should a student expect to gain by participating in The Awaken Project's gap year program?** Students can expect to gain the following: highly intentional Christian community, leadership skills and sound Biblical knowledge, travel experience, scripture memorization skills, critical thinking, social skills, and clear moments of joy (just to name a few!).
- **How rigorous is this program?** This is a full time program, meaning students should expect to be involved with TAP functions for approximately 35 to 40 hours per week. Growth takes effort and energy. There will be some long days, but the long days are usually the most rewarding.
- **Is a program like this, "worth it?"** In short, YES! Why? There are very few opportunities today that allow for someone to be this intentional with their relationships, to study the Word of God at an advanced level, to practice and execute leadership and relational ministry skills, and to travel the country for a quarter of the year... all at a cost that is cheaper than most community colleges. In most cases, someone who has taken a gap-year will say that they met "their people" during this part of their life. This, all wrapped into one program, is what The Awaken Project's gap year program offers (and will offer well into the students' future).

### Accountability/Boundaries

- **What accountability structures are in place to ensure the safety of all students/personnel involved with The Awaken Project?** Any meetings between one male and one female who are not married may only happen in a location that is public and accessible to anyone passing through. Men will be roommates only with men; women will be roommates only with women. Any incidents of abuse, sexual misconduct, harassment, severe bullying, drug/alcohol abuse, or any other endangerment of the safety of students will be addressed immediately by TAP's staff and board of directors.
- **What is The Awaken Project's policy for alcohol? Drugs? Tobacco? Tattoos?** The Awaken Project's policies on alcohol, drugs, tobacco, and tattoos are consistent with the policies of Mount Carmel Ministries, which are: tobacco cannot be consumed on site by anyone at Mount Carmel. Alcohol cannot be consumed on site or off site by anyone who is underage at Mount Carmel; any person above the age of 21 may drink off site, only by following the 0-1-3 policy (one drink per hour, no more than three drinks in an evening). Drugs cannot be consumed whatsoever. Tattoos are at the discretion of the student; The Awaken Project encourages students to consider their ministry responsibilities and funds when considering a tattoo, but will allow students to get tattoos if a tattoo is strongly desired.

- **What offenses will lead to dismissal from the program?** Any act that can be considered a felony in the state of Minnesota is grounds for immediate and permanent dismissal. Any student that is complacent in the academic portion of the program (does not complete assignments, is consistently late/does not come to class, does not take seriously the academic portion of the program) and consistently shows virtually no desire to change their academic behavior will be dismissed from the program. The Awaken Project does not actively seek to dismiss any student from the program, but The Awaken Project will not tolerate students that manipulate the program, Mount Carmel Ministries, their peers, or their staff for their personal gain.

### **Local life in Alexandria**

- **What is healthcare like in Alexandria?** Alexandria, Minnesota is home to a number of different healthcare facilities that are some of the best in Minnesota. The Alexandria Clinic, Sanford Health, Alomere Health, and Douglas County Hospital are the largest healthcare providers for west-central Minnesota, and are all located within a 20 minute drive from Mount Carmel Ministries.
- **What is the weather like in Alexandria?** As Minnesota goes, winters can be harsh, with temperatures dropping into the negatives, and snow usually on the ground for at least five months of the year. The fall and spring seasons can both have sporadic weather, but each can also be incredibly beautiful. Summers can see high temperatures in the upper 80s/low 90s, with some humidity and plenty of mosquitos. The Awaken Project does not have any formal sessions during the summer, but anyone can come visit over the summer! Or better yet, TAP students can be hired on to work as a summer staffer at Mount Carmel before or after their time with TAP's gap year program!
- **What do people do for fun in Alexandria?** Alexandria, Minnesota is the hub of the Lakes Area region. Some of the best lakes in all of Minnesota are located around Alexandria, so any lake activities (fishing, ice fishing, ice skating, broomball, snowmobiling) are local favorites. There are a number of high quality restaurants in town, including D Michael B's, Boulder Tap House, the Great Hunan, Traveler's Inn, and many others. There are plenty of unique coffee shops, a smoothie bowl shack, antique stores, a fantastic bike trail, state parks, axe throwing, and other area attractions within a short driving distance. Mount Carmel has a disc golf course, two saunas, its own beach, recreational/outdoor equipment, indoor games (ping pong, billiards, foosball), a trail system, and other amenities, so there are plenty of enjoyable things to do for fun onsite at camp as well!