

# Welcome to the Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center Integrated Education School Programs

## Welcome!

We have put together this School Programs Information Packet to help answer any questions that you might have about the School Programs at the Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center. Although most people refer to these programs simply as “the School Programs at the Sherman Lake YMCA,” the true name of the program is “Integrated Education.”

Integrated Education is a true partnership between the schools and the Sherman Lake YMCA. Together, we are integrating the best of the YMCA Character Development Programs with the current school curriculum. Each school district has been invited to view the Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center as their very own \$25 million outdoor center. Through a series of planning meetings with YMCA staff and school teachers and curriculum directors, we have created a unique opportunity for schools to enhance academic performance through experiential learning.

Every school that has registered for an experience at Sherman Lake has determined the program that is best for their students. For example, all Vicksburg 6<sup>th</sup> graders will participate in a program specifically designed to build healthy relationships and improve success-building skills. This was chosen to kick-off the school year and ease the transitions that students often face in Middle School. Every school that attends the Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center is given the same opportunity to create a program that integrates perfectly into their school curriculum and objectives while reinforcing strong character development.

The Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center integrates elements of character development into every aspect of the camping experience. Our programs are designed to reinforce the four principles of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility. This is accomplished in a variety of ways -- from the way each student lives in the cabins, to the meals we serve, to the school lessons we teach, and in the recreation activities we play. The focus of everything we do has elements of these four principles. By focusing so strongly on how everyone treats one another and themselves, students discover an easy way to build the self-esteem skills needed to be a success in all they seek to accomplish.

We welcome your participation and active involvement at the Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center. We look forward to creating a strong partnership that serves many generations of school children. Please take the time to read this information packet. If you have any questions or concerns, please call me directly at 269-731-3037. We invite you to learn more about all of the opportunities available at the Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center. Together, we build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities. We are looking forward to seeing you and the students at camp!

Sincerely,

Heather Allbee, Integrated Education Director

*Please keep this information handy for future reference throughout the school program.* Questions??? Call 269-731-3000

## **Camp Facilities**

Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center is a new 300-acre facility located in Augusta only 20 minutes from both Battle Creek and Kalamazoo. This fully accessible facility was designed to serve all populations and features two age-appropriate villages each with its own overnight cabins, pavilion, washhouse, and activity area. Our facilities include:

- A large recreation center with a full size gym, pool, and fitness center;
- Six ropes courses and adventure elements for rock-climbing and team-building located both indoors and outdoors;
- A spectacular dining hall that includes two dining areas, indoor and outdoor fireplaces, art studio and kiln room, nature center, camp store, and generous deck space for activities;
- A large multipurpose court for tennis, basketball, volleyball; 10 acres of playing field for a variety of sports, including soccer, kickball, softball and field games; and two sand volleyball courts;
- A large amphitheater for skits, songs, and special events;
- One mile of shore line on Sherman Lake with beach access for swimming, rowing, canoeing, sailing, fishing, and kayaking; and,
- Miles of accessible and wilderness trails for science, nature studies, hiking and adventure.

## **Camp Location**

Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center  
6225 North 39<sup>th</sup> Street  
Augusta, MI 49012

### **From Kalamazoo and Richland:**

Go east on M-43 to Richland. At the stoplight, continue straight through the light on M-89 to 38<sup>th</sup> Street. Turn right (south) on 38<sup>th</sup> Street. 38<sup>th</sup> Street becomes 39<sup>th</sup> Street. The camp entrance is about one mile south of M-89 on 39<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **From Battle Creek:**

Go west on M-89 to 38<sup>th</sup> Street. Turn left (south) on 38<sup>th</sup> Street. 38<sup>th</sup> Street becomes 39<sup>th</sup> Street. The camp entrance is about one mile south of M-89 on 39<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **From Portage and Highway I-94:**

Go east on Highway I-94. Exit #85 at 35<sup>th</sup> Street north. Follow 35<sup>th</sup> Street north until G Avenue. Turn right (east) on G Avenue. Turn left on 39<sup>th</sup> Street. The camp entrance is located on 39<sup>th</sup> Street.

## **Program Philosophy**

The Sherman Lake YMCA builds strong kids, strong families, and strong communities. We take a holistic approach to building capacity in people by nurturing the Spirit, educating the Mind, and promoting a healthy Body. The focus of the school programs is to enhance four principles of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility. By focusing on these character concepts, a student learns greater self-esteem and self-reliance while increasing one's emotional intelligence. Each school district works hand-in-hand with the Sherman Lake YMCA staff to develop a curriculum that provides an experiential component to the current classroom curriculum. Through active participation, each student can achieve a greater understanding of the concepts presented by their teacher, while enhancing three essential elements: Character development for the spirit (Honesty, Caring, Respect, Responsibility), Education for the mind, and Recreation for the body.

**What to bring:**

Please make sure campers bring clothing appropriate to the weather (Warm clothes can always be kept in backpacks but it is always nice to have the option to put on warmer clothes). *Closed-toed tennis shoes must be worn in order to participate in all non-water based camp activities.* Please also send a water bottle and bug spray/sunscreen as appropriate to the weather.

**\*\*\*PLEASE DO NOT BRING\*\*\***

Please do not bring to camp any *fireworks, tobacco products, illegal drugs, knives, or guns.* **Being in possession of any of these items could result in the child's immediate dismissal from camp.** If it comes to the attention of the staff that any of these items are in the possession of the camper, the camper may be asked to unpack their bags in front of a staff member. *Food, candy, gum, soda, junk food, toys, radios, walkman, CD players, cell phones, laptop computers, curling irons/blow dryers, or video games,* are discouraged and may be taken away for safekeeping while the child is at camp.

**Registration and Health Information Form**

A Registration and Health Information Form is required of every person who attends the school programs at the Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center. This form must be returned to your child's teacher two weeks prior to the school's camp dates. The school district is responsible for returning these forms to the Sherman Lake YMCA prior to arrival at camp. Please contact your child's teacher for the exact due date. This information is essential in providing a safe camping experience for your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Sherman Lake YMCA staff at 269-731-3000.

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND ADMINISTRATORS THAT WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SHERMAN LAKE PROGRAMS MUST COMPLETE AND SIGN THE REGISTRATION AND HEALTH INFORMATION FORM.**

**Behavior Response Policy**

Prior to attending camp, the students will meet the Sherman Lake YMCA staff at their school and receive a complete orientation of what to expect at camp. Upon arrival, each student is placed in a cabin group and will be given the task of helping develop their community. Our counselors are well-trained in preventative methods to enhance a child's behavior. Each student in the community will present their ideas on what behavior is expected to create a safe and successful environment to learn. The counselor takes careful notes on the agreed upon community strategy and each student signs his/her name in agreement of the guidelines for behavior. Our YMCA Camp works hard to create an environment for everyone to succeed within the boundaries of safety and our four principles of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility. When that set boundary is broken, it is essential to provide some form of understanding and consequence. Our counselors follow these procedures:

1. Planning and Preventative
  - A. Counselor establishes clear boundaries and works with campers to establish behavior expectations.
  - B. Campers agree to boundaries.

- C. Counselors and all staff must continually communicate and heavily praise camper behavior within boundaries (a.k.a. “the path”). Keep the focus on positive behavior of the group.
2. Questioning (What is the camper reality?) and refocus.
  - A. Counselor looks at his/her behavior first.  
(Were the boundaries clear? Did my actions escalate or encourage negative response? Can I isolate the behavior from how I may feel about the person?)
  - B. Camper looks at his/her behavior.  
Can camper identify boundaries in their own words? Camper must state behavior on “the path.” We plan for this to take time to achieve full understanding from the student. If a camper has high needs, another staff member may be involved to work one-to-one so that the group may continue their activity.
3. Three strikes and you are out...  
If there is an issue that can not be resolved by the camper or the counselor, appropriate action is taken.
  - A. Strike 1 – Verbal warning and positive redirection.
  - B. Strike 2 – Parents or School will be notified and child will be given last warning
  - C. Strike 3 – Child will be removed from camp.
    - **2 Strike Bullying Policy:**  
Strike 1 – When a child chooses to threaten, intimidate, ostracize, or ridicule another child, they will be warned 1 time and camp director will talk with the teachers and call the parents, the child will talk to the parents.  
Strike 2 – Child will be removed from camp. Camp Director phones the parents.

**Zero Violence Policy** – Any act of violence or aggression towards participants, teachers, staff or camp property will result in a child’s immediate dismissal from camp. Violence and aggressive acts do include bullying, ostracizing, and other forms of emotional abuse.

4. Teacher and/or Family Involvement with YMCA Staff
  - A. Teachers/Parents are notified of entire behavior sequence and action taken by staff. Staff and teachers/parents discuss and agree to appropriate course of action. Parent may speak to camper by phone.
  - B. All staff and camper agree to follow set course of action. (Please note: Camper may not return to original group unless the group agrees to invite camper back into community.) If negative behavior continues, parents are called to pick up camper.  
If you see a camper who is not in your group display unacceptable behavior, act. All staff and teachers must reinforce behavior on the path and bring the camper to their counselor.  
**Please note: Any action that jeopardizes the safety of the camp or any participants will result in immediate dismissal.**

### **Health Concerns**

Along with our four character principles of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility, the health and safety of all our participants are the primary concerns in all camp activities. Staff is trained in Red Cross First Aid and CPR.

If a staff member or camper expresses a health concern, that person is escorted to the Program Directors. The Program Directors will determine if the illness merits contacting parents or emergency services to come immediately for the child. Should a child have a communicable disease, other program parents will be notified. Please notify us if a communicable disease occurs shortly after returning from camp. Please communicate any health concerns that you may have with our Program Directors. Safety is our #1 priority.

### **Birthdays**

Should your child have a birthday while at Camp, please let us know so we can celebrate it with him/her! Contact the Sherman Lake YMCA at 269-731-3000.

### **Sherman Lake YMCA Programs**

Everyone loves camp! We have all types of opportunities for kids and families to experience the Sherman lake YMCA. Brochures about our summer programs will be sent home with your child every Spring. Each year in June, we have a big open house that everyone is invited to attend. This is an excellent opportunity to view the new facilities, meet the staff, and play with your families in the newest YMCA Outdoor Center built from scratch in over 50 years. Your school can arrange an open house for families wishing to see the camp. In addition, the Sherman Lake YMCA Staff will be providing orientations at your school for students and families prior to attending camp. We are available to serve you and answer your questions. Call anytime at 269-731-3000.

### **Questions???**

The staffs are here to answer your questions. Call us at 731-3000. School camp is a very special experience for every camper. We are here to support you and provide the best experience possible for your child. Please do not ever hesitate to call us. We appreciate your active involvement at the Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center. Together, we build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.

Sherman Lake YMCA  
Outdoor Center

Integrated Education  
School Program



School Partnership

Information Packet

-Day Group-