



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SHERMAN LAKE YMCA Day Camp Guidebook

Everything You Need to Know for Camp!

Greetings from Sherman Lake YMCA Camp,

Welcome to the Sherman Lake YMCA Camp Family! We are honored you have chosen to spend part of your summer here with us. Sherman Lake YMCA is a place where campers build relationships with others from both near and far, find endless opportunities to feel a sense of achievement as they explore new things, dive into activities they love, and find a sense of belonging within the Sherman Laker family. **A summer at Sherman Lake YMCA Camp, filled with new experiences, character development, and connection is truly needed for all children.**

Day Campers will take part in a variety of activities that will allow them to develop new skills and new friendships. Campers will step into their learning zone as they develop both competence and confidence. Our specialty programs (Horse, Robotics, and Gilmore Piano) allow campers to enjoy half of the day immersed in their specialty program and the other half exploring traditional camp activities. No matter which Camp they are in, your child is about to embark on a week that will introduce them to new friends and activities, challenges and rewards, and an experience built on a foundation of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility (HCRR).

Whether your camper is being dropped off at camp or riding a bus, you will be greeted by a smiling staff member who will guide you through our check-in process and will ensure your camper joins in on the camp fun right away.

No matter if this is your first summer or tenth, please take some time to review the attached packet. In it, you will find information regarding arrival and departure procedures, behavior policies, medical information, and packing lists. We hope it will answer all your questions regarding your child's stay at camp this summer.

Please remember that all *forms and documents* as well as your outstanding *balance for the session* are **due one month before** your child's camp session.

Thank you for choosing Sherman Lake YMCA Camp for your child's camping experience. If you have any questions, please call or email anytime. It is truly a privilege to have your child attend camp at Sherman Lake YMCA Camp!

Sincerely,



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SHERMAN LAKE YMCA MISSION & VISION

Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center puts Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility into programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

The Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center is an inclusive organization that welcomes all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or disability.

Land Acknowledgement

Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center respectfully acknowledges that we are on the appropriated homelands of Indigenous peoples, including the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi tribes. We recognize the perseverance and survival of Indigenous communities, who continue to live throughout this region. We endeavor to be responsible stewards of the sacred nature of their homelands.

Summer Camp Goals & Outcomes

The tradition of YMCA camping is at the heart of all our summer camp programs at Sherman Lake YMCA. Personal growth, character development, life long friendships, positive role models and learning skills that will last a lifetime are integral parts of the Sherman Laker experience. Each camper will experience these as an individual, small group and greater camp community. Each year, campers build upon previous year's experiences and become a Sherman Laker "Legend" at five Summer Camp years where they will be recognized on our Legend Wall at Camp!

Program Philosophy

At Sherman Lake YMCA Camp, campers experience the power of HCRR (Hick-er). The Y's four core values – Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility – are emphasized in each camp program with an additional focus on social emotional learning skills such as building healthy relationships, empathy, emotion management, responsibility and personal development. Through discovery of the great outdoors, skill development and guidance in the importance of building healthy relationships, campers leave with a renewed sense of achievement, belonging, confidence and courage to try new things.

Safety

Safety is our #1 priority. Our camp staff are carefully screened during a character-based hiring process and are selected for their skills and concern for the well-being of children.

Professional program staff work directly with counselors to provide guidance and support. All staff are certified in first aid and CPR and have been screened through the highest standards of child safety practices, including background checks. Sherman Lake YMCA is licensed through the State of Michigan and accredited by the American Camp Association.



We hire Counselors who:

- demonstrate honesty, caring, respect and responsibility in their words and actions.
- help your child develop new friendships.
- help your child learn a new skill.
- help your child interact with kids who are different from themselves.
- help your child build their self-esteem, confidence, and independence.
- give your child an opportunity to practice their decision-making skills.

SAFETY & EQUITY AT CAMP

Safety is always our number one priority. We don't just strive for our campers to be safe while at Camp, but outside in the real world, as well. That is why all our staff are mandatory reporters and are trained on appropriate boundaries with children and every policy and rule we have is made to create and teach about healthy and safe relationships. It's up to all of us adults to prevent abuse and create a safe environment.

Providing an equitable experience where all campers feel like they belong is an important way for us to create a safe environment. While more information can be found on our "Safety & Equity" page on our website, here are some highlights:

- All our staff are mandatory reporters, go through thorough background checks, and are well versed on our policies and procedures regarding safety.
- Campers are taught about consent in an age-appropriate way, such as morning greetings where they can choose how they'd like to be greeted - with a high five, a hug, a handshake, or a wave.
- In the event that a staff member believes a form of abuse has happened, they will communicate it directly to their supervisor. The situation will be reported and the CEO will be the lead staff member in charge.
- On the camper application form, you will be asked to fill out your camper's name and preferred pronouns. Camp is a unique experience that allows children to explore who they are. They may try things out temporarily at Camp, and if they ask to go by a different name or pronouns, we will respect their request. We will also respect their decision if they ask us not to share this with you.
- Privacy and personal boundaries have always been a standard expectation and are discussed at the beginning of each week. While most of our restrooms are gendered, they have multiple bathroom stalls with standard locking mechanisms. When campers need to change before/after swimming times, they will have access to a gender-neutral changing space.
- If there is a chronic issue of bullying or other unsafe behavior in a cabin or a group, steps will be taken to attempt to resolve the issue at camp; if this is not possible the camper creating the unsafe space will be sent home.

WHY SUMMER CAMP?

You likely have excited visions of archery, laughter, swimming, silly games, campfires... all the things you see in movies about summer camp. But Camp is so much more than that. The memories, the friendships, the newfound interests from Camp can last for years and years, but the personal development that a child gains lasts a lifetime. So, when you start to get a little anxious or nervous as check in day gets closer, come back to this list* and remind yourself why you're choosing Summer Camp at Sherman Lake YMCA!

- **Recentering reality:** Young people are more digitally connected than ever before while being significantly less personally connected as human beings. Think of Camp as a screen antidote; a place where children talk to each other using the ancient art of speech and body language.
- **Decision-making:** In a world of seemingly endless choices, many children surprisingly make little choices themselves. They make friends based on proximity, eat what is made for them, and do extracurriculars they're signed up for. Even when they make a choice, they are usually looking back at their adult to make sure it's the "right" decision. But at Camp, they get to practice critical thinking, assess risks, and decision skills to sign up for their own activities, choose their own foods at meals, make their own friends, and more!
- **Courage:** Campers will meet dozens of new people and that can be frightening in the beginning! It also takes courage to try new activities like climbing a rock wall, especially if you're not sure you'll be good at it. Most importantly, Camp life requires everyone to ask for help at one point or another. That is a crucial life skill that sets up children for success!
- **Adaptability:** Try as we may, things don't always go as planned at Camp (in large part to that midwest weather!). This helps everyone learn to adjust when needed and they just might learn to find the silver linings! As we often say in camp, "You either love the moment, or it becomes an incredible story to share later." It stinks when a rainy day interrupts swim time, but finding the joy in jumping in puddles is a great reminder of why adaptability is a key to happiness!
- **Resilience:** It's human nature for adults to want to protect children from the hardships of life. But the biggest leaps of personal growth and the strongest friendships are forged in the fires of adversity. Campers will undoubtedly be put into situations that frustrate or challenge them, requiring them to critically think through possible solutions, just like in real life! Sometimes they will overcome obstacles and succeed, and sometimes they will simply fail — which is a super important life lesson, more likely achieved without parental/guardian interference.
- **Life Skills:** Communication, collaboration, creativity, independence, and the ability to make and keep friends are the skills that employers are seeking in the 21st century. Studies have proven time and time again that summer camp builds all of these vital skills!
- **Expanded Perspectives:** Camp brings people together from all backgrounds and experiences. That inevitably leads to learning from people with different perspectives and how to disagree safely. Being outside of their normal routine also gives children a different perspective on daily life. Sherman Lake campers create a "community commitment" together that promotes being an active participant in a healthy community with shared responsibilities!

**Source: American Camp Association. More information about the peer-reviewed research on the benefits of summer camp for children can be found at the American Camp Association website.*

BEFORE CAMP STARTS

FORMS

Forms need to be submitted online, one month (30 days) prior to the start of your camper's session. To begin, log into your [CampInTouch](#) account, then click on Forms & Documents.

CAMPER FORMS & DOCUMENTS:

- ❑ **Health History:** This form needs to be completed and signed electronically at least one month before your child's camp session. Immunization history, including the date of your camper's last tetanus shot, at least TWO emergency contacts with accurate phone numbers, up-to-date information about camper's medications that will be checked in on opening day and health insurance information are several of the important items needed when completing this form.
 - ❑ **Medications:** This must be completed two weeks prior to check-in for all vitamins, over the counter and prescribed medications that your camper will take while at camp. **Please note that ALL medications must be in their original container and must be checked in with our staff during check-in.** Epi-pens and inhalers can stay with the camper, but staff need to be made aware of these items.
- ❑ **Camper Questions:** This information is essential for our staff to be prepared and provide the best experience for your camper. Please be honest and thorough.
- ❑ **Authorized Pick-up:** Please list all adults, including parents, who are authorized to pick up your child from camp.
- ❑ **Day Camp Travel Form:** ALL Day Camp families must complete this form. This form provides information on how your camper will be arriving at camp, including car drop offs at Sherman Lake YMCA Camp or riding on a bus from one of our transportation sites.
- ❑ **Group Requests:** An optional form, but if your camper has friends they would like to be in a group with, please list them here. We will do our best to honor your request.
- ❑ **Camper Photo:** We invite you to upload a photo of your camper onto their [CampInTouch](#) account so that our staff can be ready to meet them upon their arrival. This is an optional item, but helps build relationships as soon as they arrive!
- ❑ **Scholarship Assistance Form:** We believe that every child deserves a camp experience, regardless of their family's ability to pay. [Please complete this form](#) if you would like to receive financial assistance.

BALANCE & CANCELLATION POLICY

Payments must be made in full 30 days prior to your session beginning (login to your [CampInTouch](#) account to make payments throughout the year). Cancellations must be made in writing two weeks before your session begins for a refund to be processed, minus the non-refundable camp deposit. All cancellations made less than two weeks before the start of a camp session are non-refundable. There is no refund for a child who leaves camp because of illness, homesickness, or disciplinary reasons. Please notify us as soon as possible if you are canceling due to illness or injury-related circumstances for a full refund.

GROUP ASSIGNMENTS & REQUESTS

Campers are placed into groups with other campers who are of similar age and school grade by our Leadership team. Each group's staff-to-camper ratio is based on the age of the campers.

Most of our campers come here on their own and are eager to make new friends. We do our best to honor all **mutual requests** through the 'Group Requests' form that can be found in your account. In the case of campers who want to be together but are largely different ages, both will be placed in a group that matches the younger camper's age. We cannot put a younger camper in a group of older campers. If a request can not be honored, we will contact you before Camp.

Campers who are enrolled in a specialty camp will be grouped with campers in the same camp.

INCLUSION & BELONGING AT CAMP

Here at Sherman Lake YMCA we work with caregivers to help ensure 'SUCCESS FOR EVERY CHILD'. We recognize that success for each camper may be different and we strive to be proactive in creating strategies that work best for your camper. We have an extensive training program for our staff, centered around inclusion and working with campers of all needs.

Make sure to fill out all required forms as early as you can. Our staff team goes through all the camper forms and will follow up with you before Camp if necessary for clarification and questions, to determine the best way to serve your camper. If your camper has any specific physical health, mental health, or behavioral accommodations that are desired or required for success, please contact our Camp Director 30 days prior to your session to discuss further.

Our programs are not designed for campers who need significant assistance in personal care, have difficulty managing their behavior in group settings, or require constant one-on-one support. If your child has a one-on-one professional for support during the year and would benefit from their attendance at Camp, please contact us to discuss how to make that happen.

We are partnered with [Kulture City](#), an organization that creates sensory accessibility and inclusion for those with invisible disabilities. With this partnership, we can offer sensory bags for campers in various spaces and programs at Camp. These bags include various fidget items and headphones for loud areas. We also have a "social story" on their website that allows campers to learn more about Camp programs and feel prepared while at Camp!

TOUR DAYS & FAMILY EVENTS

We offer year-round fun including Family Fun Days, Trick or Treat on the Trails, KIDS Roar, the Shermanator Triathlon, and more! Please visit our [website](#) for more information.

Are you unable to make it to one of those events, but want to see Camp? Join us for one of our "Tour Days"! You'll sign up for a time slot and be given a private tour around Camp, the perfect chance to ask all your questions and see Camp. Information about these events will be sent via email. Pre-registration is required.

- Friday, March 22
- Friday, March 29

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR CAMP

Camp is often one of the first places a child may experience independence. Here are some suggestions we have to help your child while they're at Camp!

- Practice life skills! Think of all the things you may do for your child on a normal day, and have them start practicing doing them without you. Some tasks to test out include safely and effectively putting on sunscreen and bug spray, as well as changing in and out of a swimsuit and then putting all clothing into a backpack.
- Visit Camp! See above for Tour Days and Camp Events. Being able to visualize where they're going to be can be very helpful for children and help reduce anxiety.
- Campers will experience a large range of emotions while at Camp, which may include some negative emotions like being anxious, unhappy, or even bored. Help your child learn how to name their feelings and work through them in a positive way.
- Speaking up is such an important skill for people and it starts as a child! When your child whispers something to you - to tell someone else - encourage them to share it directly. So many concerns we hear after a child goes home can be easily and happily fixed in the moment if only we had known!
- Teach them about the importance of drinking enough water during the day! While our staff will have many intentional moments during the day for water breaks, we've found that sometimes our campers are having too much fun and don't want to stop to drink water! This is another important reason for speaking up - if we know their water bottle is empty, we'll make sure to get it refilled!

MISSING HOME

Missing home is a natural feeling that everyone experiences to different degrees. While it leads to incredible developmental growth for children, it's still tough knowing your child might have feelings of sadness while here. Our staff are here to help and are well trained to help campers who are missing home. Rest assured, we'll call you to discuss ways to best support your camper if they are struggling. If we do call, it does not mean that you should immediately come to the rescue. We invite you to work with the staff and provide them with any information that may help your child overcome the challenges they are facing.

The [American Camp Association](#)'s article '[Homesickness Dos and Don'ts for Parents](#)' provides helpful advice on how you can prepare your camper. Here are some highlights:

- **Talk positively about the camp experience.** Let your child know they are going to have an amazing time - making wonderful new friends and trying exciting new activities.
- **Provide opportunities for your child to practice being away from you.** Sleepovers with friends and family can be a great stepping stone towards a camp experience.
- **No negative talk about the camp experience.** Avoid saying things like "We will miss you so much" or "I don't know what I'll do without you." Comments like these will cause your camper to feel guilty if they are enjoying their time at camp knowing that you are at home missing them.
- **Do NOT offer a pick-up clause.** Please don't send your child to camp with the phrase "Give it a try and if you don't like it, I'll come and pick you up". You will inevitably be faced with the decision to either pick the child up and rob them of a valuable growing experience or break your promise and damage your credibility with them. Neither of these outcomes is positive and both can be avoided by refraining from offering this.
- **Give positive encouragement.** Let your child know you are proud of them for trying new activities and making new friends. Put these in their lunch or backpack as a surprise!

HEALTH & SAFETY

The health and safety of our campers is our number one priority. We adhere to standards and recommendations from the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) and the American Camp Association (ACA).

We offer an expansive Health & Safety Guide that reviews our full health policies and protocols. However, here are some highlights as you prepare for Camp!

- Our **Health Team** includes a licensed physician who reviews and updates our policies and protocols annually and a team of registered nurses who are on-site regularly during the week and on-call as needed. We hire Health Officers who live on-site who administer medications and respond to first aid and illness calls 24/7. All of our counselors and support staff are certified in First Aid/CPR, at a minimum.
- If your child is **not feeling well**, please keep them home until they no longer exhibit signs of illness. Campers should be fever and vomit free without the aid of medication for at least 24 hours prior to being at Camp.
- Sherman Lake YMCA Camp does not carry **insurance** on campers, you must accept responsibility for medical/surgical treatment charges which may be incurred on your child's behalf and provide us with your insurance information.
- If your child is taking **medication** during their time at Camp, this will need to be checked in on the first day and will be given by our Health Officers to ensure proper administration. See the Medication section in the Packing section for more details.
- If children regularly see a **therapist** or other professional, we suggest continuing that care as scheduled. Please contact the Camp Office to make arrangements as needed.
- Staff are trained to keep an eye out for signs of fatigue, dehydration, improper eating, etc. that may indicate illness in their campers. If a **health concern** is expressed, the camper will be seen by a Health Officer. We will contact you immediately for fevers that are over 100 degrees or for vomiting. Caregivers will be asked to pick up a child immediately in these instances.
- **Common illness** symptoms we see are headaches and stomachaches. Often these are due to dehydration and/or missing home. Our team will assess and provide appropriate care. If symptoms persist or worsen over the next 4-6 hours, we will call you.
- Being outdoors most of the day, the most **common injuries** are bites, stings, and cuts and your camper may come home with a bandaid on. Typically, these injuries are cleaned and campers go on with their day. If a camper has an allergic reaction or a deeper wound, we will call you.
- In the event of an injury that requires **medical attention**, caregivers will be notified immediately. Arrangements will be made to meet the caregiver at the hospital or for pick up at Camp, depending upon the severity of the injury.

PACKING FOR CAMP

DAY CAMP PACKING LIST

****PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING****

What to wear:

Reminder that we will be playing outside - don't wear anything that can't get dirty!

- ☐ Comfortable clothes
- ☐ Close-Toed Shoes/Athletic Shoes (NOT Crocs) - for all land-based activities
- ☐ Sunscreen (apply at home in the morning, and campers will reapply during the day)
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Hat and/or Sunglasses

What to bring in a backpack:

Campers will carry their backpack all day to and from activities!

- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Swimsuit and beach towel (campers may not have water activities every day)
- ☐ Sandals (for water activities). We suggest solid sole sandals with straps on the top and back
- ☐ Rain jacket or poncho
- ☐ Sunscreen & insect repellent
- ☐ A healthy, well-balanced lunch (unless purchasing from us)
- ☐ An afternoon snack
- ☐ Book for reading time and on the bus
- ☐ Optional - Sensory headphones (Camp can get loud!)

Specialty Camp packing additions:

Some specialty camps require equipment in addition to the suggested packing list above.

- ☐ Horse Camp: Hard-soled boots or sturdy closed-toe shoes – no sandals or Crocs. Long pants or jeans are required for horseback riding. Campers may not ride in shorts. Helmets are provided; campers may bring their own if it is ASTM or SEI approved.
- ☐ Gilmore Piano Camp: Please check with the Gilmore office (269) 342-1166 before coming to camp regarding special equipment or requirements. An audition (to determine current playing level) is required to enroll in this camp.

What NOT to Bring:

Do not bring any weapons (knives, guns), lighters, matches, fireworks, alcohol, tobacco products or illegal drugs. Being in possession of any of these items can result in the immediate removal of your child from camp. If it comes to the attention of the staff that a camper is in possession of any of these items, the camper may be asked to unpack their bag in front of a director. We also ask that trading cards, such as Pokemon cards, be left at home as well.

While we do understand a guardian's concern about the safety and well-being of their child, campers are ***not allowed to bring their cell phone, or anything with internet capability or data, unless medically necessary***. Rest assured, if your child needs to talk to you, we will get them to a phone and they will call you. Any phones or electronics such as smart watches, iPods, tablets, or video games that are brought to camp will be held by the Director for the day and returned to the parent at the end of the day at check-out. Thank you for your understanding!

MEDICATIONS

- All medications must be in their original pharmacy containers. Containers will be returned at check-out. We recommend putting all containers in one ziploc bag with your child's name written at the top.
- You do not need to bring over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen; camp has a supply of these. If you give permission to administer over-the-counter medication for aches and pains on your child's health form, our Camp Health Officers will do so if needed.
- Any medications, including vitamins, inhalers, epi-pens, and non-prescription medications, must be checked in with a Sherman Lake YMCA Camp staff member at check-in each day and need to be in their original containers. Inhalers and epi-pens may stay with the camper but still need to be checked in at the beginning of the week so our Health Team and counselors are aware of them.
- The Health Form includes a section for medications that needs to be completed two weeks prior to check-in for all vitamins, over-the-counter, and prescribed medications that your camper will bring to camp.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that "Elective interruption of medications (drug holiday) should be avoided by campers on long-term psychotropic therapy or those on maintenance therapy required for a chronic medical condition" (*Pediatrics*. 2011; 127(4): 795).

LOST & FOUND

Regardless of how careful we are, it is inevitable that some items will be misplaced throughout the week by your camper. Labeled items are always easier to get back to their owners, so please put your camper's name on everything you possibly can, including lunch boxes and backpacks! Lost items will be displayed for campers at the end of each day. Items will be posted in a photo album for caregivers to look through as well. Unclaimed items will be kept for two weeks and then donated to local charities. Sherman Lake YMCA is not responsible for the loss of articles.

CHECKING IN AND OUT

TRANSPORTATION

Day Campers can be dropped off directly at Sherman Lake YMCA or they can ride the bus from one of our transportation sites for a weekly fee. The option you select will specify your drop off and pick up windows. Before and after care is not available through Sherman Lake YMCA. If needed, please contact your local Y to see what options are available.

Location	Check In Time	Bus Departs	Bus Arrives	Check Out Time	Notes
Portage YMCA 2900 W Centre Ave Portage, MI 49024	7:40-7:55am	8:00am	5:00pm	5:00-5:15pm	SLY staff will be at the side door of the building. When entering the parking lot, use the lot to the far left (east) and walk to the door on the lower level.
Maple Street School 922 W Maple St Kalamazoo, MI 49008	7:40-7:55am	8:00am	5:00pm	5:00-5:15pm	SLY camp staff will be at the front of the building. For emergency restroom needs and weather, we will utilize the YMCA across the street.
Westlake Elementary 1184 S 24th St Battle Creek, MI 49015	7:40-7:55am	8:00am	5:00pm	5:00-5:15pm	SLY camp staff will be at the front of the building. For emergency restroom needs and weather, we will utilize the school.
Battle Creek YMCA - Multi Sports Complex <i>*Quickstop*</i> 86 Cherry St. Battle Creek, MI 49015	8:10-8:15am	8:15am	4:45pm	4:45-4:50pm	The Westlake bus will briefly stop at the Battle Creek Y's Multi Sports Complex parking lot to pick up and drop off campers. Families are asked to be prompt as Sherman Lake YMCA does not staff this location.
Sherman Lake YMCA 6225 N 39th St Augusta, MI 49012	8:30-9:00am	N/A	N/A	4:30-4:50pm	When you arrive at camp, you will be directed to the Day Camp Drop Off circle driveway (second circle). Staff will come to your car to check your camper in.

CHECK IN & OUT PROCEDURES

Check In: An authorized adult must sign in their camper(s) each day. Campers are asked to stay with their adult until it is time to check in. After check in, campers will immediately get on the bus until it's time to depart. We recommend packing a non-electronic book or activity for your child on the bus.

Check Out: An authorized adult from your camper's account must sign your camper out each day using a photo ID.

Late Pickup Fees: Please arrange your schedule so that you can pick up your child at the designated time. Failure to pick up your camper on time may result in an additional fee.

DIRECTIONS TO SHERMAN LAKE YMCA

[6225 N. 39th Street](#)
[Augusta, MI 49012](#)

From Portage:

Go east on I-94. Take Exit #85 (35th Street) and turn left (north) onto 35th Street. Continue on 35th Street until G Avenue. Turn right (east) on "G" Avenue. Turn left on 39th Street. The camp entrance is located on 39th Street.

From Kalamazoo:

Go east on M-43 (Gull Road) to G Avenue. Turn right onto G Avenue. Continue on G until 39th Street. Turn left (north) onto 39th Street. The camp entrance is located on 39th Street.

From Richland:

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

From Battle Creek:

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

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES & EMERGENCIES

Change of Plans: If your transportation plans change, please notify the camp directly at (269) 731-3030. Please direct all questions, comments, and concerns to Sherman Lake YMCA staff. We are an independent organization, not a part of the Battle Creek or Kalamazoo YMCA. Please do not contact the other YMCA locations for information about camp. If you miss the bus, you will be responsible for transporting your child directly to camp.

Late Arrivals (after 9:00 am) at Sherman Lake YMCA Camp: Please go to the Kellogg Building to sign in (third circle drive). A staff member will transport your camper to their group.

Early Pickups: To arrange an early pick up, please call the office at (269)731-3030. **Early pick-ups must be before 3:45pm. Please do not request to pick up your child between 3:50-4:15pm.** We appreciate 24-hour advance notice, if possible. It's also helpful to remind your transportation site staff of any changes, but you still must call the office! Staff will have your child at Kellogg Hall at that time. Thank you in advance for your patience, as it can occasionally take longer than planned to get campers from activities.

Emergencies and Closings: In the rare event of an emergency when camp may need to be canceled, please listen to the radio or television, become a friend of Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center on [Facebook](#), where the emergency closing will be posted, or check our [website](#) for up to date information. Those sites will be updated as soon as we make a determination to cancel a program. If the off-camp transportation site is closed, please call camp at 269-731-3030 for more information. This phone line is covered from 8:00am - 5:00pm during the summer.

LIFE AT CAMP

SAMPLE SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

Below is a generic schedule for a week at Day Camp. On Monday, you will receive a full, detailed schedule for the week with your child's daily activities. Once you know the name of your child's counselors, you'll be able to follow along very easily.

9:00am Opening Ceremony

9:30am ACTIVITY 1

10:15am ACTIVITY 2

12:00pm Lunch

12:30pm ACTIVITY 3

2:00pm ACTIVITY 4

2:45pm Snack & Reading

3:30pm Ties Ceremony

4:00pm Closing Ceremony

4:30pm Busses Depart &
Check Out begins



ACTIVITIES: Each day will include both classic and special Sherman Lake YMCA activities such as Archery, Arts & Crafts, Rock Climbing, Fire Building, Boating, Swimming, Gaga, Chomp 14, Capture the Pig, Nature Hikes, and more!



SNACK & READING: After a full day of camp activities, we will end the day with a semi rest period. Pack a healthy snack for your child, along with a book! We have a small library for kids to pick books from and our younger groups will have their story read aloud to them by their counselor.



TIES CEREMONY: The Ties Ceremony is a group reflection on the day. Each camper gets a turn to share where they saw a fellow camper be Honest, Caring, Respectful or Responsible. The camper being recognized gets to fasten their tie to the group flag.

SPECIALTY CAMPS

Our Horse Camps, Robotics Camps and Gilmore Piano Camp are our Specialty Camps at Sherman Lake YMCA. These campers spend half of their day in their specialty activity. In general, specialty camp campers will be with their specialty instructors in the morning until lunch, or in the afternoon until the closing ceremony. The other half of their day will be scheduled with a variety of camp activities. Please note, specialty campers will not have time to participate in all camp activities offered at Sherman Lake YMCA.

DRESS UP DAYS & WEEKLY THEMES

Each day of the week is a special dress-up day! More information on dress-up days will be sent via email before each session. Below are some things you can expect

Dress Up Days:

- **Monday** - First day of camp! Come dressed to try new things and make new friends!
- **Tuesday** - It's T Day so dress in items that start with the letter 'T' like t-shirt, tall socks, top hat, tacos, tie dye or any creative idea you have!
- **Wednesday & Thursday** - Each week, a new dress-up day will be selected and shared with you. In the past, we've had Wacky Hair, Dress Like a Counselor, and more!
- **Friday** - Theme Day! See below for the theme of each week.

Weekly Themes:

- **Session 1 - Superheroes** - Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's the Sherman Lake Avengers! Join the team as we fly into our first week of summer fun!
- **Session 2 - Storybook** - This week we will bring your favorite book to life; from Mother Goose to Dr Suess to Roald Dahl to Harry Potter and anything in between! Put on your armor or tiara, jump on your dragon, and explore the magic of your imagination.
- **Session 3 - Disney** - Get into character as we explore everything Disney, from the classics to live-action remakes. Grab your crown or your lightsaber, warm up your singing voice, and get ready because 'Adventure is out there'!
- **Session 4 - Around the World** - Prepare to explore the world as we try different activities from various countries. We'll host the Sherman Lake Olympics, where we will be celebrating sportsmanship, and good old-fashioned summer fun as we compete in awesome activities.
- **Session 5 - Game On** - Get your game faces on, as all our favorite games come to life! You might have to "catch them all", trek through Gumdrops Mountains, and solve whodunits during this exciting week of Camp!
- **Session 6 - Time Warp** - Buckle up for this week as we prepare for a wild ride through the time warp! You might see anything from dinosaurs to knights in shining armor to hippies in tie-dye as we travel back through time to visit different eras in history.
- **Session 7 - Holidays*** - Tired of waiting all year for Christmas to roll around again? Get ready to celebrate your favorite holidays all together in one amazing week! We will also be celebrating Christmas in July with our classic holiday toy drive*
- **Session 8 - Color Games** - This week is a friendly and spirited all-camp game, where campers will get assigned to a color and participate in challenges and games to earn points for their team!
- **Session 9 - Animal Planet** - The world is home to so many more creatures than just us! Let's learn and share about our favorite animals and explore the camp from their view.
- **Session 10 - Carnival** - Get ready for everyone's favorite carnival blowout! We will celebrate another amazing summer of Sherman Lake YMCA Camp fun with our tradition of an end-of-summer carnival!

***Holiday Toy Drive** - For more than a decade, we have partnered with Family & Children Services to support their toy drive for kids and families in the foster care system. If you're not signed up for "Holidays Week" (Week 7) but would like to support our partnership with the FCS Toy Drive, it would be greatly appreciated! New or gently used toys may be dropped off at transportation sites with Camp staff.

WATER ACTIVITIES & SWIM QUEST

Camper groups will rotate through various water activities during the week, such as swimming at the Sherman Lake waterfront, swimming at the pool, playing at the splash pad, boating, and water games. Please note that it may not be possible to get water time every day.

Every camper's current swimming ability will be tested and their ability level marked with a bracelet on their first swimming day at either the waterfront or pool. Campers will be assigned to an appropriate swimming area to ensure their safety. Campers who have been to Camp earlier in the summer, will be required to retake the Swim Quest each session.

Swim Quest level is assigned based on the completion of the following:

- Swim 2 widths of swim area, approximately 30 yards.
- Jump in the water, submerge face, and tread water for 1-2 minutes.

All campers will:

- Use personal flotation devices (PFDs) at all times when in boats or on deep-water play equipment.
- Use the buddy board when engaged in any waterfront activity.
- Have a buddy while swimming.
- Obey all rules for swimming and boating areas.



LUNCHES & SNACKS

Day Campers will need to bring their lunch every day. We encourage families to pack healthy, well balanced lunches to energize campers for their active days. Lunches will not be refrigerated; please do not send perishable items. For the safety of other campers, we encourage you to not send any items that contain peanuts.

We have a designated rest/reading and snack time in the afternoon. Please pack a small snack for your camper to enjoy at the end of the day!

If you want to simplify your Day Camp week, we have you covered! Sherman Lake YMCA offers sack lunches for purchase for \$30 per week. Lunches must be pre-ordered through the [Camper Application](#). Sack lunches feature a sandwich of cold cuts, fruit or veggies, a treat, and a drink. We are not able to accommodate special requests.

BIRTHDAYS AT CAMP

Many of our campers will celebrate their birthdays while at Camp. They will be recognized at either Opening or Closing Ceremonies with the Sherman Laker Birthday song if they choose to be! A birthday reminder to staff at check-in is greatly appreciated.

BEHAVIOR POLICIES

Upon arrival, each camper is placed in a group and given the task of helping to develop their living community. Sherman Lake 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 (HCRR). When that boundary is broken, it is essential to provide some form of understanding and consequence.

Our counselors follow these procedures:

1. Planning and Preventative

- Counselors establish clear boundaries and work with campers to establish behavior expectations through the group's community commitment.
- Campers agree to boundaries and are aware of positive behavior expectations.
- Counselors and staff continually communicate and encourage camper behavior within boundaries. The focus will be on positive behavior of the group.

2. Understanding and Refocus

- If issues arise, the counselors look at the camper's behavior and the behavior of those involved.
 - Were the boundaries clear? How did the actions relate to HCRR? Did the actions escalate or encourage a negative response?
- Camper looks at their behavior.
 - Can the campers identify boundaries in their own words? Can they understand how others were affected by their actions?

3. Action and Consequence

- If there is an issue that cannot be resolved by the camper or the counselor, appropriate action is taken. The safety of all campers and staff is central to the HCRR philosophy. Sherman Lake YMCA will work within a restorative practices framework when resolving conflicts. Actions include:
 - Verbal warning and positive redirection.
 - Caregivers will be notified by the camp director and the camper will be given a final warning.
 - If the issue is so serious that it cannot be resolved to ensure the safety of the campers and staff, the camper will be removed from camp. *A parent/guardian is responsible for picking the camper up. There will be no refund for a camper who leaves camp due to a behavior issue.*

Behaviors that may result in dismissal

Sherman Lake YMCA Camp strives to be a place where all feel welcome and safe, both physically and emotionally. When a camper chooses to ostracize others, ridicule another camper, or use inappropriate language they will be warned one time and a camp director will contact the camper's caregivers. The camper will also talk to their caregiver. If the behavior continues, the camper may be removed from camp.

We reserve the right to immediately dismiss campers for behavior that endanger themselves or others at Camp, either physically or emotionally. Some examples of these behaviors may include malicious acts, hate speech, or physical or verbal threats of a weapon. Questions or concerns about your child's behavior at camp should be directed to the Camp Director.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES & RISK MANAGEMENT

Emergency Procedures:

In the event of a severe storm that produces damage rendering our facilities unusable, or other natural disaster or extreme emergency, you will be contacted immediately. Staff will first issue a mass email to caregivers regarding the emergency. Telephone calls will then be placed. We will also post information on local television (WWMT, WOOD, WOTV) and radio stations.

Thunderstorms are a normal occurrence at camp during the summer. Rest assured that we watch the weather radar and monitor warning systems very closely and move the children to storm shelter locations to ensure their safety. In the event of a short-term power outage, we have emergency generators that keep our food cold and our wells running. We will only notify you if we need to close camp. If you try to call camp during a weather emergency and receive a recording, please leave a message and a staff person will get back to you as soon as possible. Our first concern during an emergency is the safety of our campers and staff. We may not be available to answer the telephone. Thanks for your help in keeping everyone safe.

Mosquito Management:

Sherman Lake YMCA takes an aggressive approach towards the eradication and control of mosquitoes and ticks on our campgrounds. Before and during summer camp season, Mosquito Shield will spray our property. Spraying is a safe and effective means of controlling the mosquito and tick population. Mosquito Shield uses a blend of natural oils so the product is environmentally responsible and kid friendly. We will spray in areas when children are not present. Once they're done spraying, the area can be used immediately.



Protection from Sun & Mosquitos:

Campers will spend the majority of their day outside at camp and campers are responsible for bringing their own protective clothing, sunscreen, insect repellent, and water bottle. Our staff are trained to remind our youngest campers to apply sunscreen and insect repellent and refill water bottles regularly throughout the day. Please have your children practice applying sunscreen and bug repellent on their own before they come to Camp!

COMMUNICATION

PHOTOS

- Photos are uploaded several times a week to share a snapshot of life at Camp. Our staff do their best to get a photo of every camper, but sometimes it is not possible. Our focus is on relationship building and respecting every camper's choice to have their photo taken.
- You can access our Sherman Lake YMCA Photo Galleries by visiting: <https://shermanlakeymca.smugmug.com/>, and click on the year and session in which your camper is enrolled.

SOCIAL MEDIA



Follow us on [Facebook](#)



Follow us on [Instagram](#)

CONTACTING CAMP

Our Camp Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00 am-5:00 pm. Our phone number is (269) 731-3030.

CAMP LEADERSHIP



Zach Klipsch, CEO
zachk@ymcasl.org (269) 731-3006



Alex Kinney, Summer Camp Director
alexk@ymcasl.org (269) 731-3041



Heather Sticka, Assistant Summer Camp Director
heathers@ymcasl.org (269) 409-3047

For general questions, please contact our Camp Office Manager at logistics@ymcasl.org or (269) 731-3030.

CONNECT WITH CAMP FRIENDS & STAFF

Camp friends don't have to just see each other in the summer! If your child connected with another camper and would like to remain in touch during the year, please contact our office. We will reach out to the other family for permission before sharing their contact information.

We maintain a "no-outside contact" policy for staff and campers. This ensures the safety of the campers and staff outside of Sherman Lake YMCA programs, and teaches the youth about appropriate relationships with adults. This policy includes social media, letters, and babysitting (excluding pre-existing relationships). We have instructed our counselors not to share their contact information or to 'friend' or follow campers or caregivers of campers on social media.

If your camper would like to connect with a counselor, we ask this be done in an open forum. Campers and caregivers may send their communications by email (camp@ymcasl.org) or mail. We will be happy to forward the message to the counselor, who will respond from the camp address. We do this to ensure the safety and privacy of our campers and staff.

If you are aware of a violation of this no-outside contact policy, please notify the Camp Director, Alex Kinney (alexk@ymcasl.org). We thank you for your understanding and cooperation.