



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# **SHERMAN LAKE YMCA**

## **Overnight 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, and 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.**

Overnight campers will find a variety of activity options from which they can choose to participate. Within each of the activities, there will be progressive levels of knowledge and skill where they can learn, explore, and grow in both competence and confidence. Our Horse, Robotics and Gilmore Piano specialty programs allow campers to enjoy their day immersed in their specialty program. Whether they are in our traditional or specialty overnight camps, your child is about to embark on a week (or more!) that will introduce them to new friends and activities, challenges and rewards, and the experience of living in a community built on a foundation of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibility.

Upon arrival at camp, you will meet our leadership staff, receive your cabin and counselor assignments, go through our streamlined check-in process, and head to your camper's cabin to sign in and move in.

**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 any questions you have 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 years 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. The 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. 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, 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.
- Overnight campers may opt in to an all-gender cabin (on the camper questions form). This cabin is open to any camper, no matter their gender or gender identity. Campers may be interested in this cabin because they do not feel like they fit in a male or female cabin or perhaps they have friends of a different gender that they would like to be with.
- 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 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 actually 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, 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, assessing 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 if you'll be good at it. And 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 definitely stinks when a rainy day interrupts swim time, but finding the joy in jumping in puddles is a great reminder on 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 real life! Sometimes they will overcome obstacles and succeed, and sometimes they will simply fail — which is a super important life lesson, achieved more likely 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 those 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 in a safe way. Being outside of their normal routine also gives children a different perspective of 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 prior to 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 bring to camp. Please note that ALL medications must be in their original container and must be checked in with our staff during check-in. \*Do not pack in your camper's bags for camp.
- ❑ **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, that are authorized to pick up your child from camp.
- ❑ **Group Requests:** An optional form, but if your camper has friends that they would like to be in a cabin 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 is helpful in building 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 prior to your session beginning for a refund to be processed, minus the non-refundable camp deposit. All cancellations made less than two weeks prior to 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 canceling due to illness or injury related circumstances for a full refund.



## **CABIN 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.

Campers have the option to opt-in to an all-gender cabin. This is open to all campers, no matter their gender or gender identity. If your camper is interested in this, they will select "yes" under our Camper Questions form in your CampMinder account. No matter what cabin your camper chooses to reside in, privacy and personal boundaries have always been, and will remain, a standard expectation that is discussed at the beginning of each week. All campers have access to a private bathroom and changing space. If you have more questions regarding this, please visit our "Safety & Equity at Camp" page on our website.

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 cabin 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 prior to Camp.

Campers that are enrolled in a specialty camp will be grouped with campers in the same camp, but may be intermixed in a cabin with our traditional overnight campers.

## **INCLUSION & BELONGING AT CAMP**

Here at Sherman Lake YMCA, we work with parents/guardians to help ensure 'SUCCESS FOR EVERY CHILD'. We recognize that what success looks like for each camper may be different and we strive to be proactive in developing resources and 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 prior to 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 assistance while 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 are able to 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!

## CAMP STORE ACCOUNT

Prior to your arrival to camp, log onto your [CampInTouch](#) account, choose 'View Camp Store' and select 'Fund' to put money in your camper's account. Throughout your camper's session, you may view their purchases and add money as you see appropriate.

All campers will have opportunities throughout the week to visit the camp store, where they may purchase snacks, drinks, and souvenirs. We suggest a minimum of \$10 and a maximum \$60 per week for your camper's store account. Do not send cash with your camper. You can view our [Camp Store here](#) for some of the items offered!

On your "Camper Questions" form, let us know how you would like your camper's remaining balance of more than \$5 to be allocated. Any unused balance of \$5 or less will automatically go to our Camp Scholarship fund. Your options include: saving it as a credit for next year, donating it to Sherman Lake YMCA's Scholarship fund that helps send children to Camp, or returning the balance to your credit card on file at the end of the summer season (payments made in cash can not be refunded). **All refunds will be made after the close of our summer season.**

## 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.

You can also join us for one of our "Tour Days"! You'll sign up for a time slot and be given a private tour around Camp which is a 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! We also suggest reviewing the "Missing Home" section that is on the next page!

- 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, changing in and out of a swimsuit, and showering by themselves.
- 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 reduce anxiety.
- Campers will experience a large range of emotions while at Camp, which may include some negative emotions like being anxious or 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 the importance of drinking enough water during the day! While we'll have many intentional moments every 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 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 that are missing home. Rest assured that we'll call you to discuss ways to best support your camper if they are struggling. If we do call you, 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 to 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 are positive and both can be avoided by refraining from offering this.
- **Write letters with positive encouragement.** Let your child know you are proud of them for trying new activities and making new friends.

## **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, below are some highlights to help you prepare prior to 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 meds and respond to first aid and illness calls 24/7. All of our counselor 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.
- During check in, campers will have a routine **health check**, including a baseline temperature reading and head check. Campers with temperatures of 100 degrees or above, or with head lice, will be sent home.
- If **lice** or nits are found, your camper will be sent home, at a required minimum of



24 hours, for treatment and removal. Due to the unavoidable closeness of overnight camp in the cabins and program areas, Sherman Lake Y can not allow campers to stay at Camp with lice or nits. As some cases take longer to treat and eradicate, we will work with you to switch your camper to a different week if available.

- 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 the 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 care appropriately. If symptoms persist or worsen over the next 4-6 hours, we will then give you a call.
- Being outdoors most of the day, the most **common injuries** are bites, stings and cuts and may come home with a bandaid on. Typically, these are cleaned and campers go on with their day. If a camper has an allergic reaction or a deeper wound, we will give you a call.
- In the event of an injury that requires **medical attention**, the caregivers will be notified immediately. Arrangements will be made to meet the parent at the hospital or for pick up at Camp, depending upon the severity of the injury.

# PACKING FOR CAMP

## Your Cabin:

Campers sleep in cabins with 6 bunks and twin mattresses. You must provide your own bedding.



## What to Bring:

Sturdy, comfortable clothes are encouraged. Laundry service is not provided except in emergencies. One of the most important items you can pack is a WATER BOTTLE. A suggested packing list is provided below for your convenience. Please be sure, if your child is attending a specialty camp, to check the Specialty Camp packing additions as well, as there may be specific items required for those camps. Be sure dirty clothes bags are labeled with your child's name, so dirty clothes also return home.

## OVERNIGHT CAMP PACKING LIST

**\*\*PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING\*\***

### Clothing

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

- ☐ T-shirts (short and long sleeved)
- ☐ A sweatshirt, jacket, or sweater (for those cool summer nights)
- ☐ Shorts
- ☐ Jeans or long pants (required for horseback riding)
- ☐ Pajamas
- ☐ Underclothes and socks (a pair for each day)
- ☐ Sandals (lake/shower only). We suggest solid sole sandals with straps on the top and back.
- ☐ Close-Toed Shoes/Athletic Shoes (for all land-based activities)
- ☐ Swimsuit
- ☐ Sun Hat and/or sunglasses
- ☐ Rain jacket or poncho

### Gear

- ☐ A small daypack or backpack
- ☐ Water Bottle
- ☐ Pillow and pillow case
- ☐ Sleeping bag or twin sheets and blanket
- ☐ Bath towels and washcloths
- ☐ Beach towel
- ☐ Toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, shampoo and other hair products, comb, brush, deodorant, etc.)
- ☐ Laundry bag or plastic garbage bag for dirty and wet laundry (be sure to label with name)
- ☐ Insect Repellent and Sunscreen (when outside all day, the sun is harsh on all skin types)
- ☐ Flashlight (with extra batteries)

## Optional Items

- ❑ A white t-shirt (or something else white) to tie-dye.  
*\*SLY white t-shirts (\$8) and white bandanas (\$4) are available at the Camp Store.*
- ❑ Pen & Paper
- ❑ Self-addressed envelopes/postcards with stamp
- ❑ Camera
- ❑ Fan (small clip on)
- ❑ Sensory headphones (Camp can get loud!)
- ❑ Deck of cards & reading material - paper/printed materials only
- ❑ **Return Campers** - We invite you to bring your BEAD NECKLACE from previous years so you can continue to personalize it for years to come.
- ❑ Tuesdays are 'T Day', so bring your tie dyes, tall socks, ties, tank tops, tennis shoes, and everything that begins with the letter 'T'!

## Specialty Camp Packing Additions:

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

- ❑ **Horse Camp:** Hard-soled boots or leather 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) prior to coming to camp regarding special equipment or requirements. An audition (to determine current playing level) is required to enroll in this camp.
- ❑ **Two Week Camp:** Two-week campers will be going on an overnight tent camping trip, so they will need a sleeping bag. We recommend a few items for comfort, but they are NOT required, such as a sleeping pad, stuffable duffel to pack their camping gear in, and synthetic layers for cooler evenings and quick drying

## 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, are left at home as well.

While we do understand a parent'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, curling irons, blow dryers, or video games that are brought to camp will be held by the Camp Director for the day and returned to the guardian at the end of the day at check-out. We also ask that you do not bring any personal, specialized sports or camping equipment unless it appears below under Specialty Camps. Thank you for your understanding!

*\*Campers of driving age are not allowed to bring a vehicle to camp.*



## **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 on 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 the health form, our Camp Health Officers will do so if needed.
- Any medications, including vitamins, inhalers, melatonin and non-prescription medications, must be checked in with the Camp Nurse at Sunday check-in and need to be in their original containers.
- 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 name on everything you possibly can, including laundry bags! Lost & Found will be displayed all week and at Friday check-out. 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

## **DIRECTIONS TO SHERMAN LAKE YMCA** ([6225 N. 39<sup>th</sup> Street Augusta, MI 49012](#))

### **From Chicago:**

Follow I-90 E and I-94 E to Michigan. Take exit 85 from I-94 E at South 35<sup>th</sup> Street in Comstock Township. Continue on 35<sup>th</sup> Street. Turn right onto G Avenue. Continue on G until 39<sup>th</sup> Street. Turn left (north) onto 39<sup>th</sup> Street. The camp entrance is located on 39<sup>th</sup> Street. *(Note, we are in Eastern Standard Time and Chicago area is in CST!)*

### **From Portage:**

Go east on I-94. Take Exit #85 (35<sup>th</sup> Street) and turn left (north) onto 35<sup>th</sup> Street. Continue on 35<sup>th</sup> Street 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.

### **From Kalamazoo:**

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

### **From Richland:**

Go east on M-89 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.

## **CHECK-IN DAY PROCESS**

Check in is located in Kellogg Hall. We thank you in advance for your patience and grace as we work through any kinks that arise, or unexpected changes that may occur in the process below.

1. Check in is between **3:00pm (EST) and 5:00pm (EST)** on Sunday. Please do not arrive earlier than 3:00pm, as our staff will not be ready before then. Starting at 3pm, families will be welcomed upon arrival at Camp and directed to various stations.
2. These stations can be skipped if completed prior to your arrival at camp, or there are no medications to check in.
  - a. Finance - pay remaining balance or deposit Camp store money
  - b. Paperwork - complete any forms that you have not finished such as the Health Form, waivers, or camper questions.
  - c. Medication - check in any medications that your camper will take while at Camp (vitamins, prescriptions, etc.). All must be in the original bottle.
3. Camper Choice activity station is where campers will confirm their activity choices for the week. Even if the form is filled out prior, we ask that campers stop here, as sometimes we have added new choices or their chosen activity may not be available. If your camper is in Horse Camp or Gilmore Camp, they do not need to stop here.
4. Head & health check is the last and required stop for all campers. You will stop for a health check to inquire about the campers health leading up to camp and take campers temperature. Then campers will have their head checked as we have a no nit policy for lice. Once this is done, you will receive your cabin assignment!
5. Walk to your camper's cabin with their luggage! If you or your family need assistance getting to the cabin, please let us know and we'll gladly transport you.

If you are going to be delayed in dropping off your camper, please notify us via call or email. Please wait until you get home to reunite with the family pet. **Pets are not allowed at camp!**

# LIFE AT CAMP

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

8:00am	Breakfast
9:00am	WOW Time
9:30am	Camper Choice
12:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Cabin Activity
3:00pm	Recharge
4:00pm	Swimming
6:15pm	Dinner
7:00pm	Free Choice
7:30pm	Evening Programs
9:00pm	Showers & Cabin Time
10:00pm	Lower Village Lights Out
10:30pm	Upper Village Lights Out



**WOW TIME (Words of Wisdom):** A time set aside each morning to begin the day as a camp family learning from stories and songs that are centered around character lessons. Lively discussions about living together and supporting each other in a healthy community round out the activity. WOW Time starts out each day on a positive note.

**ACTIVITIES:** In the morning, campers will have the opportunity to pick their activity which can range from boating, climbing, crafts, archery, LARP, firebuilding and more! During cabin time in the afternoon, campers will rotate through our "core" activities.

Evening programs will consist of an opening campfire on Sunday, cookout night, and a closing campfire on Thursday. The other activities will rotate such as talent shows, lip sync battles, scavenger hunts, and more!

## SPECIAL SCHEDULES

### **Taste of Camp (TOC):**

Our Taste of Campers will enjoy traditional camp programming, adjusted slightly to their younger age, and will be integrated within the one-week overnight camp. TOC campers will arrive on Sunday and will continue through their departure on Wednesday.

### **Two-Week Overnight Camp:**

Our two-week campers will follow a traditional camp schedule Sunday through Friday at lunch. On Friday afternoon our two-week campers will transition to their weekend camping adventure. Campers will experientially learn the important skills needed for putting up a tent, cooking over a campfire and basic 'Leave No Trace' ethics for camping. Following their camping trip, campers will return to Sherman Lake YMCA on Sunday morning to reset for their second week.

### **Specialty Camps:**

Our Horse and Gilmore Piano campers will be spending the majority of their day in those programs. In general, they will be with their specialty instructors in the morning following WOW Time and then again in the afternoon. They will join the rest of their village mates in the afternoon and evening for camp specific activities. The new LARP specialty camp will have a lot of autonomy in their schedule, with most activities centering around LARP.



## **WATER ACTIVITIES & SWIM QUEST**

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 that 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, ~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.

## **MEALS**

Campers will eat their meals in the Great Hall of Kellogg Hall, with the occasional picnic around Camp! Meals will be a mix of buffet, grab and go, and family style. Every meal offers a variety of options. We are well versed in food related allergies, special dietary needs and our 'picky eaters'. We will ensure that everyone gets something to eat. Please contact us ahead of time if you have any specific needs you would like to discuss with our Camp Director and/or Kitchen staff.

## **BIRTHDAYS AT CAMP**

Many of our campers will celebrate their birthdays while at Camp. They will be recognized at either lunch or dinner with the Sherman Laker Birthday song and a sundae, if they choose to be! A birthday reminder to staff on opening day 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. 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 first, or behaviors of those involved.
  - Were the boundaries clear? How did the actions relate to HCRR? Did the actions escalate or encourage negative response?
- Camper looks at his/her 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 involved will include:
  - Verbal warning and positive redirection.
  - Parents 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 abuse or ostracize others, ridicule another camper, or use inappropriate language they will be warned one time and a camp director will contact the camper's parents. The camper will also talk to their parents. If these behaviors continue, the camper may be removed from camp.

We reserve the right to immediately dismiss campers for behaviors that we find to 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 parents regarding the emergency. Telephone calls to parents, or those listed on the registration form as emergency contacts, 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, 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

## INCOMING MAIL - LETTERS, PACKAGES & EMAILS

Mail from home is likely very important to your camper. When writing to your camper, we encourage you to send uplifting messages of encouragement and curiosity on what they are doing, learning and friends they are making. We discourage sending messages that make mention of things they may be missing back at home. If you do not receive mail from your camper during the week, please do not worry! It means your camper is active and happy! Feel free to pack pre-addressed and stamped envelopes to encourage writing letters home.

### **Send Camper Mail & Packages to:**

Sherman Lake YMCA Outdoor Center  
(c/o Camper Name & Cabin Number)  
6225 N. 39<sup>th</sup> Street  
Augusta, MI 49012

Tips on sending letters & packages:

- We invite you to bring your camper's mail or packages for the week to camp during Check-in. We will deliver them on the day that you specify on the outside of the letter or package.
- If you choose to send letters and packages through the mail, we recommend they are sent by Tuesday to ensure they arrive at Camp on time!
- If you choose to send a package, we ask that you stay away from food, as it attracts unwanted critters into the cabins. In addition, a cabin mate may have a severe food allergy and if food from home is shared, it could result in a life-threatening situation for a child or staff member. If food is sent, it will not be allowed in the cabin, and will stay in the Dining Hall.
  - We do recommend many non-food items, such as: comics, books, cards, games, bubbles, craft projects, etc.

### **Emailing Your Camper:**

You can find the link to email your camper on the 'Parents' page under the Summer Camp tab on our website or you can [CLICK HERE](https://www.shermanlakeymca.org/email-an-overnight-camper) or type this in your browser:

<https://www.shermanlakeymca.org/email-an-overnight-camper>

- The email you send is a one-way email service and campers will not have access to reply by email.
- Emails are printed daily and delivered at lunch and dinner. Please note that emails sent on Friday may not be delivered.

## PHOTOS

- Photos are uploaded several times a week to share a snapshot of life at Camp. We do our 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 then clicking 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, 8:00am - 5:00pm. Our phone number is: (269) 731-3030.
- In case of an emergency, the Camp Office phone will be forwarded to the director on duty during non-business hours.

## **CAMP LEADERSHIP**



Zach Klipsch, CEO  
[zachk@ymcasl.org](mailto:zachk@ymcasl.org) (269) 731-3006



Alex Kinney, Directora de Campamento  
[alexk@ymcasl.org](mailto:alexk@ymcasl.org) (269) 731-3041



Heather Sticka, Asistente de la Directora de Campamento  
[heathers@ymcasl.org](mailto:heathers@ymcasl.org) (269) 409-3047

Para preguntas generales, por favor contactar a nuestra Manager de la Oficina a [logistics@ymcasl.org](mailto:logistics@ymcasl.org) o (269) 731-3030.

## **CONNECT WITH CAMP FRIENDS**

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 more. We have instructed our counselors not to share their contact information or to 'friend' or follow campers or parents 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 parents may send their communications by email ([camp@ymcasl.org](mailto:camp@ymcasl.org)) or mail. We will be happy to forward the message on 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 Summer Camp Director, Alex Kinney ([alexk@ymcasl.org](mailto:alexk@ymcasl.org)). We thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

## CHECK-OUT

### CHECK-OUT DAY PROCESS

Check out will be at Kellogg Hall, unless directed otherwise. Again, we thank you in advance for your patience as we work out any kinks that arise.

1. Check out is between **4:00pm (EST) and 5:30pm (EST)** on Friday. Please note that Day Camp check out is occurring at the same time, so there may be a little congestion.
2. Upon arrival, you will then be directed to sign out. Here you will:
  - a. **Bring a photo ID to sign out your camper.** We require all authorized adults, even parents and guardians, to be listed on the 'Authorized Grown-up' form that can be found on your family's [CampInTouch](#) page.
  - b. Pick up any remaining **medications** from our Health Officers.
3. Gather your camper, their luggage, and say goodbye!
4. Make sure to check Lost & Found before you depart.

\*If you are planning to **pick up your camper early**, please let us know! Early pick ups must be before 3:00pm on Friday. Please do not request to pick up your child between 3:00-4:00pm. You may arrange early pick-ups by calling the office or emailing us.

\*Please wait until you get home to reunite with the family pet. **Pets are not allowed at camp!**

#### **Specialty Camp Closing Variations:**

- **Taste of Campers** will check out between 4:30-5:00 pm (EST) on Wednesdays. The same procedures will be followed as a traditional Friday check-out; however, the locations may vary depending on availability. Appropriate signage will be displayed to help guide families.

### AFTER CAMP

You will receive a follow-up email with a survey and a link to the photos for the week. Please take the survey with your child to let us know how we're doing and what we can improve!

Make sure to take a look through the Lost & Found album on SmugMug to see if your camper left anything behind.

We also ask that you keep us posted for 14 days following your departure on any contagious or environmental illness symptoms might have upon leaving Camp.