

*The Summer Your Child Will Always Remember!*

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18-19

**SUMMER CAMP GUIDE 2024**

# Eagle Hill School 2024 SUMMER PROGRAM

Programs designed to prevent the "Summer Slide"

## July 8 - August 2



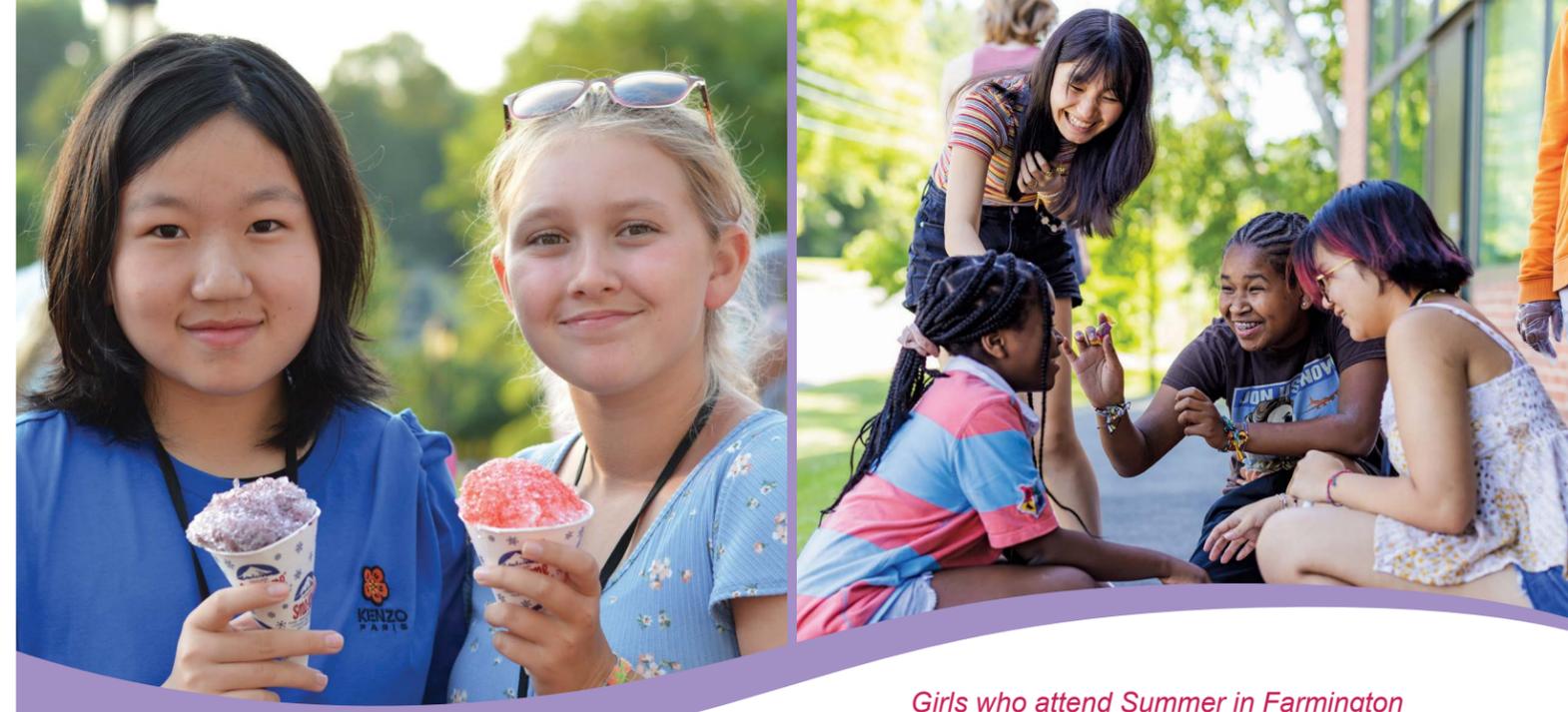
Our summer program is a tailored educational experience for students who learn differently or those requiring extra support.

**IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSIONS AVAILABLE!**

  
**Eagle Hill School**  
LEARNING. TRANSFORMED.

[eaglehillschool.org/summer](http://eaglehillschool.org/summer)

FOR MORE  
INFORMATION AND TO  
REGISTER, PLEASE  
SCAN THE QR CODE:



*Girls who attend Summer in Farmington develop the vision, determination, character, and capacity to begin to shape a changing world.*

## Summer in Farmington

Sunday, July 7, 2024 - Saturday, July 27, 2024

Our summer sessions for middle schoolers are designed to provide girls entering grades 6 through 9 the opportunity to experience Porter's residential community while learning lifelong leadership skills.

Girls thrive in our supportive, collaborative environment where curiosity and confidence blossom. They complete their sessions with a greater understanding of all they can accomplish as informed, bold, resourceful, ethical global citizens.

### Session 1 (Sunday, July 7 - Saturday, July 13)

Sarah Porter Leadership Institute, Level 1: Principles and Practice  
Institute for Global Education: Issues to Action

### Session 2 (Sunday, July 14 - Saturday, July 20)

Sarah Porter Leadership Institute, Level 2: Resilience and Risk-Taking  
Technology Innovation Entrepreneurship: Idea Lab

### Session 3 (Sunday, July 21 - Saturday, July 27)

Sarah Porter Leadership Institute, Level 3: Leading Well  
STEAM Research: Science in Our Backyard



Learn more and register at [pcgl.porters.org](http://pcgl.porters.org)

# WYONEGONIC CAMPS

# WINONA CAMPS

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# SUMMER PROGRAMS

NAVIGATING A FRESH START

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[landmarkschool.org/summer](http://landmarkschool.org/summer)

Boost Skills | Gain Confidence | Get Back on Track



# SUMMER VACATIONS and Bears

Now that the days are slowly getting warmer, we were reminiscing about our own family vacations when we were kids. You know the ones where your parents packed up the whole family in the station wagon and drove to some far-flung location for a week or two of quality "family time."

Or better yet, the time you drove as a family all the way across country, which was great, but then you realized you had to drive back home with your brother and sister next to you in the back seat. Now as adults, we remember less the quality time and more the hilarious antics that ensued.

In our family, it was the summer of 1975. I was eight. We were to embark on a family odyssey that would have us travel from Connecticut to Maine to Canada and then home. This trip had been meticulously planned by our parents. My sisters and I were loaded into our Ford Country Squire. My parents were captain and navigator, or more accurately driver and the person who answered all questions and handed out grapes when we were hungry. My two sisters were in the middle seats and I, as the youngest, was in a self-made cave from all the luggage in the way back.

Driving to Maine is something we did often as our Mother was from Maine and we loved visiting our grandparents in Augusta. This time it was just a provisioning stop for our adventure in Canada. We were going to a family friend's remote camp. Very remote. Our mother was concerned about being able to get food. My father thought an extra bottle of Rye was in order. Someone may have mentioned to me in passing that bears regularly visited the camp. My sisters wanted to know if there was electricity. There wasn't.

When we arrived at the camp after a 10-hour drive from Augusta and 40-minute boat

ride across a very large lake I remembered immediately the passing reference to bears and kept my eyes peeled.

Of the children there, I was the youngest. The owner's sons were my sisters' ages, so I was a bit of an odd boy out. That did not stop them from trying to terrorize me or so I thought at the time. The owner's youngest son showed me around the camp and pointed out every bear claw scratching or marking he could find. And it turns out these weren't just cute little black bears, these were big brown bears, grizzlies. Their marks were everywhere; on the outside of the main cabin where my parents slept, on the bunk house where all the kids slept, on trees. Remember, I was eight.

That first night when it was time for bed my Mother took me to the bunk house with my flashlight to zipper me into my

sleeping bag. I was panicked the moment I saw where my bed was, all the way at the far end of the bunk room. My siblings and the others were closest to the door. Of course my mother was thinking she did not want the older kids waking me up when they came in. What I thought was BEARS! And what would a big hungry grizzly bear like to eat? A little boy! And if I am at the end of the bunk house, he could just reach in through the screen window and grab me before anyone knew. Somehow my mother got me to bed.

Later that night, the quiet Canadian lake was pieced by the screams of an eight-year-old boy who thought a grizzly bear was trying to break into the cabin and take him home for dinner. Parents came running. What they found were the four older kids scratching on the side of the cabin. Mothers meted out discipline. Fathers

went in search of the bottle of Rye. A week in the Canadian wilderness had begun.

Today we get together and laugh at such memories. I had my revenge later that trip. And it turns out the grizzly bears only visited the camp just before winter looking for food.

We hope you will make memories this summer that will last you a lifetime.

*Peter Barhydt is the managing editor of The Sentinel Hometown News, which publishes The Greenwich Sentinel and The New Canaan Sentinel. He attended camps in Maine and New Hampshire and spent six weeks hiking the Appalachian Mountain Trail through ALC. He vacations with his family in Maine to this day.*



# OARS OVER AGE

## Rowing Empowers Young Athletes at Any Stage



and accountability – skills that pave the way for a more fulfilling life both on and off the water.

“If you have the ability and willingness to work with other people and push

yourself athletically, it’s very possible to transition quickly,” said Roman Vengerovskiy Director of Operations and Boys High Performance at Maritime Rowing Club in Norwalk, one of the oldest and most accomplished rowing clubs in Fairfield County.

“If you don’t think, you’re not going to row well,” said Joe Rantz, one of the legendary oarsmen from “The Boys in the Boat.” Rowing demands focus and precision as much as muscle. While it’s a full-body workout, engaging over 85% of your muscles, success lies in the team dynamic. Synchronization is key; communication, trust, and unwavering accountability bind rowers together.

As the crew in “Boys in the Boat” discovered, “...what mattered more than how hard you pulled was how well you pulled together.” Success hinges not on individual talent but on the collective effort of the entire crew.

This sense of accountability fuels discipline and a work ethic that resonates beyond rowing. You learn to set goals, face obstacles with grit, and relish in shared victories – skills that shape strong students and future leaders. Universities understand the value rowers bring, offering potential scholarship opportunities that can open doors to higher education.

“I had no idea that trying out for the rowing team in college would have such an impact on my life. It guided my studies and influenced my life goals. I learned that with hard work,

Many team sports now more than ever before demand dedication from a very early age. Kids today are getting started in sports at younger ages – well before preschool.

Travel teams have started earlier in a young athlete’s life. And families even invest in private coaching before Little League even starts.

These years of practice and ingrained techniques create a steep barrier to entry for those trying to venture into the game later in life.

You might be a young athlete who has lost the passion for your original sport of choice. Or, you might have hit the stage in school teams when you find yourself stuck on the bench yearning for that playing time that is unlikely to come.

The unfortunate reality is that given the advanced development earlier in age among others, most sports are almost impossible to transition into if you didn’t make that commitment very early on in life.

But rowing breaks the mold and gives young athletes an opportunity they cannot find in other sports.

As opposed to most other team sports where it might just be too late to transition, rowing is a transformative experience where age is no obstacle.

Young athletes have a unique chance to transition into a new sport, building physical fitness, mental toughness, teamwork, leadership, self-confidence

dedication, and teamwork, I could be the best at whatever I set my mind to,” said Sharon Kriz, who despite not starting rowing until college represented the USA in the Womens 8+ at the World Championships and is now Director of Rowing Programs and High Performance Boys Coach at Maritime Rowing.

And it’s not just about the accolades. The rowing team becomes your family, a support system cheering you on through triumphs and challenges. Research suggests that rowers experience enhanced cognitive function and academic performance – the sport’s focus and problem-solving translate to a sharper, more focused mind.

“Rowing has been one of the most important aspects of my life. I have had a lot of success competing and rowing for the past six years, but the most important things I have taken away from it are the lessons of hard work and discipline. I have met some of my best friends at rowing and will always be thankful for this part of my life,” said Leyton Tucci, a high school senior who rows at Maritime.

Ready to step into the boat? Rowing clubs often offer beginner programs. It doesn’t matter if you’ve never held an oar; a place awaits you. Embrace the team, discover your inner athlete, and forge the path to a brighter future. As the “Boys in the Boat” understood, “There is something beautiful about finding that harmony.” Your journey on the water awaits.



**Dave DeVito’s daughter is a high school sophomore who has been rowing for over three years and has won multiple nationals medals.**



“The sport of rowing has changed the trajectory of our children’s social lives and academic careers, and Maritime Rowing Club has played a big part in this. Despite six practices a week, often in some miserable weather, our three kids have never complained once about heading to the boathouse to train with their friends.”  
– J. THOM

### The Maritime Rowing Club’s Youth Learn to Row & Development Programs

- Elementary, middle school, and high school-aged youth from all over Fairfield County and the surrounding area.
- Internationally known coaching staff works with all levels to develop potential with solid rowing skills and team fundamentals.
- No experience necessary, All skills levels welcome!
- Sessions are always outdoors on the water, group size is limited, and all athletes learn to row in team and single-person boats.
- Emphasis on water safety and rowing basics, both on and off the water.
- Athletes improve strength, fitness, flexibility, mental toughness, and discipline.
- Make new friends, enjoy being outdoors, and be part of a great team!

Register at [maritimerowing.com/summer-youth-learn-to-row/](http://maritimerowing.com/summer-youth-learn-to-row/)  
For more information, please email [info@maritimerowing.com](mailto:info@maritimerowing.com) or call (203) 854-5492

**SUMMER SCHEDULE**  
**JUNE 3 – AUG. 23**  
**WEEKDAY SESSIONS**  
**9-11 a.m. OR 3-5 p.m.**  
*NOTE: Sessions 1 and 2 will be 4-6 p.m. only*

- SESSION 1**  
June 3 - June 14
- SESSION 2**  
June 17 – June 28
- SESSION 3**  
July 1 – July 12  
*(No rowing July 4; includes Sat., July 6)*
- SESSION 4**  
July 15 – July 26
- SESSION 5**  
July 29 – Aug. 9
- SESSION 6**  
Aug. 12 – Aug. 23



# DE-SCREENING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

## Aloha's Technology-Free Pocket in the Natural World

In the many conversations I've had with families in the last several months about deciding if Aloha—or any camp—is right for their teenager, one key element keeps emerging as an important factor: we don't have our cell phones. It's true! It can be done! And parents are focused in on this difference more than ever.â

I think they realize that one of the best gifts they can give their kids is time without having to carry the weight of the world on their shoulders (or in their pocket), and instead, offer them a space in a community that is uplifting, tight-knit, and face-to-face. At Aloha, our campers get a pause from the constant stream of information they (and all of us!) experience the rest of the year. Instead of tuning out, I like to think of this as tuning in – to themselves, to their community, and their surroundings. At each of our camps, we believe this is vital for camper health and wellbeing.

In today's digital age, teenagers spend an average of 7 hours and 22 minutes per day on screens for entertainment purposes alone, according to a recent report by Common Sense Media. That's almost a full-time job worth of screen time! This constant exposure to screens can lead to increased feelings of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Those important face-to-face interactions and meaningful conversations are replaced by digital interactions, hindering the development of empathy, communication skills, and emotional intelligence.

By unplugging from screens and immersing themselves in nature, teenagers can cultivate resilience, self-confidence, and authentic connections with their peers. Instead of sitting on their beds and scrolling in their free time, our campers are playing card games with a tentmate or inventing a new game on the athletic field. These



small pockets of time allow a feeling of community to be nurtured where isolation would have been before.

During our Visiting Weekend last summer, the midpoint of our two 3.5-week sessions, a camp dad told me that his daughter (who chose to stay for the full seven weeks) had NO interest in borrowing his phone, and instead chose to sit on the porch conversing with her friends and their families. He confided in me that this was a massive change from the rest of the year, and he was thrilled to see it!

The same weekend, I spoke with the parent of another camper who happened to be a political refugee. She said the absolute best thing for her daughter was being away from the news. It had become an unhealthy addiction for her to stay constantly connected to events in her home country, and her mom was glad for this change. Activities with peers like hiking Crawford Notch, swimming in Lake Morey, and our nightly ritual of Evening Circle all help to replace those

anxious feelings often associated with an electronic device, while promoting physical health and emotional resilience. Is it any wonder she can't wait to come to camp at Aloha again next summer?

Studies have long shown that spending time in nature can significantly benefit teenage mental health, and while the idea of tech-free summer camps may seem daunting, the long-term benefits far outweigh the temporary inconvenience or discomfort. By supporting our teenagers in taking substantial breaks from technology (weeks at a time even!), we empower them to prioritize their mental health, cultivate resilience, and embrace a more balanced and fulfilling lifestyle that will serve them long into adulthood.

**Charlotte Messervy is Aloha Camp Director.**



COMMUNITY | FRIENDSHIP | CHALLENGE | PERSONAL GROWTH | NATURE

# Kids need camp more than ever.

**Summer Overnight Camps for Girls in Vermont**

**ALOHA** 7th-10th Grade Graduates  
**HIVE** 3rd-6th Grade Graduates

**(802) 333-3400**  
**ALOHAFoundation.org**

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**JULY 8-26, 2024 | 9:30am-2:30pm**  
**1 WEEK: \$450 | 2 WEEKS: \$800**

**HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS**  
 Grades 5-8 July 8-12

**COLONIAL CONNECTIONS**  
 Grades 2-4 July 15-19

**ARTFUL ADVENTURES**  
 Grades 2-4 July 22-26

**EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT**  
 Register by April 19 to SAVE \$50 per week  
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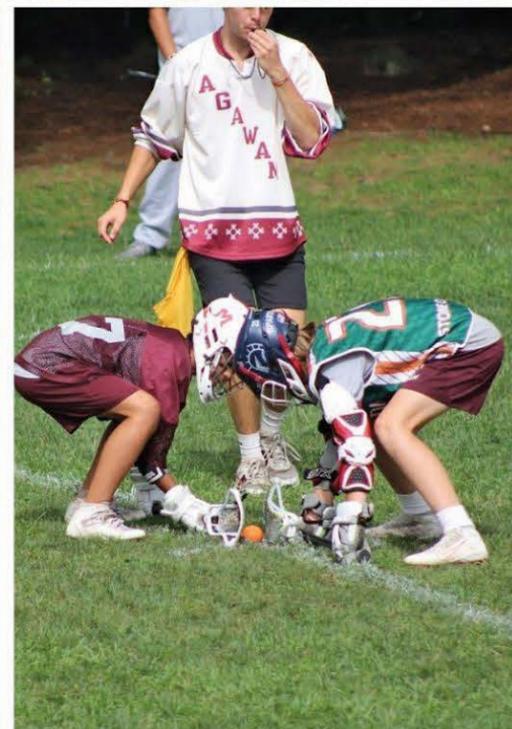


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# CAMP AGAWAM

**Where a boy learns to become his best self.**

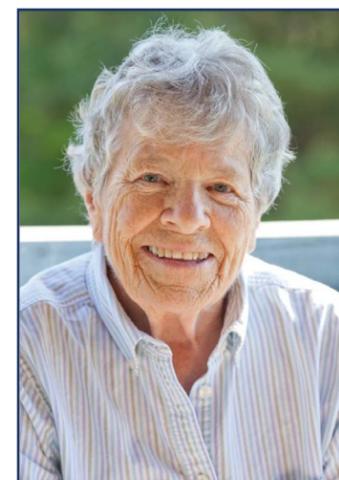
*A residential summer camp for boys, located in Raymond, Maine*



[www.campagawam.org](http://www.campagawam.org)

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Only a few spots left for 2024!



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Jean Gentry McMullan

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*from the Barhydt Family*

## THE IMPORTANCE of Camp

With children and adolescents battling anxiety and depression at a rate never seen before, parents and educators are searching desperately for ways to keep kids healthy and safe. Among their best strategies are spending time outdoors and making friends; getting off devices and avoiding social media; and being physically active. Summer camp, especially a multi-week, overnight experience, is a great place to do all of these. And though it can be difficult at home to break out of old habits and routines, children often thrive at summer camp. In a new environment – and a digital detox – children connect with nature, find confidence and resilience, and recharge their mental batteries.

An August 2020 Massachusetts General Hospital study identified social connection as the strongest protective factor for depression. Summer camp provides a unique environment for children to cultivate essential interpersonal skills. Campers are immersed in a diverse community where they share cabins, meals, and activities with peers from various backgrounds, ages, cultures, and perspectives. This exposure fosters empathy, understanding, and appreciation for differences. As they navigate this environment of varied personalities, they learn to adapt, communicate, and collaborate effectively. Through engagement in collective adventures—from hiking trips to late-night campfires, bonds and memories develop that transcend ordinary friendships. Whether conquering a ropes course or performing a cabin skit, they

learn to rely on one another, celebrate victories, and support each other during challenges. These skills extend far beyond camp life, enriching their social interactions in school, family, and beyond.

Summer camp also serves as a powerful arena for nurturing resilience and confidence in young people. At camp, children encounter new challenges, like sleeping under the stars or attempting a new water sport. These experiences encourage campers to step out of their comfort zones. When they take calculated risks and sometimes face setbacks, they learn that failure is a steppingstone, not an obstacle. The supportive environment allows them to dust themselves off, learn from mistakes, and try again. This resilience becomes a life skill that helps kids overcome challenges in school, relationships, and future endeavors. Camp provides a unique opportunity for children to survive without parental safety nets. Away from home, they learn to make decisions, manage their time, and solve problems independently. This newfound autonomy boosts their self-confidence and prepares them for life beyond camp.

Finally, a summer at camp provides a refreshing escape from the digital noise and constant connectivity of our modern lives. At camp, children step away from technology and immerse themselves in nature. There is time to notice the cries of the loons, the scent of pine, and the lapping of waves. This direct communion with the natural

world has a profound impact on mental health, reducing anxiety and fostering a sense of wonder and grounding. Without constant notifications or virtual comparisons, campers learn to be present in the moment, allowing their minds to recharge. They trade screens for face-to-face conversations. The absence of screens and distractions promotes mindfulness and allows campers to forge genuine connections.

Summer camp is a transformative experience that shapes children in profound ways. It allows for growth in interpersonal skills, where campers learn to communicate, collaborate, and appreciate diversity. Through shared adventures and calculated risks, campers build resilience; learning that perseverance, not praise, is the achievement. Moreover, camp provides a screen-free environment, allowing kids to connect with nature, reduce anxiety, and recharge their mental health. Many residential summer camps are multi-year allowing lessons learned to be internalized and transferable to situations and experiences in the months outside of camp. Summer camp isn't just about fun; it equips children with essential life skills, confidence, and a deeper appreciation for the world around them and in today's climate, that is more important than ever.



**Karen Malm is Director of Programs, Alumni Relations and Council Operations, and Assistant Camp Director at Camp Agawam**



# Summer is the time to Boss Up

Only 5 weeks to Boss Up with the Nation's only live, FUN, online business & leadership program for young women 14 - 24.

## Why:

- › Learn the basics on how to build and run a business – based on YOUR PASSION!
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- › Live, online, small classes – you choose the day and time and take from *anywhere*
- › 5 weeks *only*, plus continued 1:1 mentoring and more learning resources, if desired

*"I could not have gotten to this point without all the valuable information I've learned from Girls With Impact. I loved the process getting here and can't wait to continue!" – Laila*

### Summer Registration Now Open Classes Start July 8 & July 22

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Use code GREENWICH for a tuition-free summer program!

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July 1-July 26, 2024 • Coed • Boarding & Day • Grades 7-11




# SUMMER CAMP

## WEEKLY CAMPS BEGIN JUNE 10!

Our tennis camp provides young players the opportunity to **IMPROVE** their tennis game, **WORK HARD**, make **NEW FRIENDS** and **HAVE A LOT OF FUN!**  
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# CAMP SETON



Camp Seton is open to youth with or without Scouting experience!

**Summer 2024**  
**Monday, July 8 – Friday, August 9**

**5-week Cub Scout Camp for rising 2-5<sup>th</sup> grade boys & girls**  
**5-week Scout Adventure Camp for rising 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade boys & girls**

Get ready for an unforgettable summer adventure at Camp Seton! Camp Seton offers 5 weeks of non-stop fun and excitement for boys and girls. We offer a wide range of activities that keep campers engaged and entertained throughout the day at the beautiful Ernest Thompson Seton Scout Reservation. Unplug and immerse yourself in the wonders of nature, make unforgettable memories, forge new friendships, and explore the great outdoors like never before.

**Archery • Boating • Climbing • Crafts • Hiking • Bouldering Wall • Fishing • Cooking**  
**Nature Programs • Scout Skills • Swimming • Campfire Programs and more...**

**Ernest Thompson Seton Scout Reservation**  
**363 Riversville Road, Greenwich, CT 06830**



Visit [Campseton.org](http://Campseton.org) for INFO & TO REGISTER

## A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCE

*A Week of Scouting Camp Stirs A Child's Imagination Like None Other*

Since its inception in 1912, the Greenwich Scouting program has held steadfast to its commitment to immerse youth in outdoor activities and camping experiences. For over a century, the program has made a significant impact on the lives of children and adolescents in our community. One of the key components of this lasting success has been Camp Seton. Established nearly 60 years ago, the camp has continued to provide an enriching and educational summer adventure for our youth, regardless of their Scouting background.

### A Summer Adventure at Camp

Nestled amidst the picturesque landscape of Greenwich, Connecticut, Camp Seton spans over 249 acres of pristine wilderness. With two Byram River-fed lakes at its heart, the camp offers a plethora of opportunities for children to engage in both traditional and innovative outdoor activities. From fishing and campfire cooking to swimming and boating, Camp Seton instills a love for nature and adventure in every camper.

### Developing Skills and Character

Camp Seton's diverse program offerings go beyond recreational activities. The camp is also dedicated to teaching Scout skills, handicrafts, archery, and marksmanship on the rifle range. Through these experiences, campers develop self-reliance, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving abilities that will serve them well throughout their lives. In addition to these essential life skills, Camp Seton offers specialized programs such as nature study, climbing tower, and hiking. These activities not only inspire curiosity and respect for the natural world but also foster an understanding of the environment and its importance to our collective wellbeing.

### The Impact of Camp Seton on Scouting and the Community

Camp Seton's role in the Greenwich Council Scouting program cannot be overstated. The camp provides a crucial space where young people can build friendships, gain valuable life experiences, and learn about themselves and the world around them. For many campers, the bonds formed during their time at Camp Seton last well beyond their Scouting years. Moreover, Camp Seton contributes to the overall enrichment of the Greenwich community. The camp provides an invaluable resource for local families seeking a safe, nurturing, and educational environment for their children during the summer months. It also serves as a hub for community gatherings, events, and volunteer opportunities, further strengthening the ties between

Scouting and the town of Greenwich. As Lord Robert Baden-Powell, one of the founders of Scouting, once said, "A week of camp life is worth six months of theoretical teaching in the meeting room." At Camp Seton, we see the truth of this statement in the transformative experiences of our campers. The memories, skills, and friendships they forge during their time at Camp Seton have a lasting impact not just on their own lives, but on the Greenwich community as a whole. For almost six decades, Camp Seton has provided a unique and unforgettable summer adventure for the youth of Greenwich. The camp's diverse range of activities and its commitment to fostering personal growth have made it an indispensable part of the Greenwich Council Scouting program. As we look towards the future, we remain dedicated to preserving the legacy of Camp Seton and continuing to offer these life-changing experiences for generations to come.



*Jim Heavey is the Scoutmaster of Greenwich Boy Scout Troop 35 and has led multiple Scouting expeditions. He has served as Greenwich Chief of Police since 2011.*


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ywca  
greenwich

# YWCA Greenwich's CAMP TAYITO

Making new friends and special summer memories.

Located on YWCA Greenwich's 6.5-acre property and accredited by the American Camp Association, Summer Camp TAYITO accommodates small groups of children and offers variety of recreational and educational opportunities.

Starts

June 24th!

For more information, visit [www.ywcagreenwich.org/summer-camps](http://www.ywcagreenwich.org/summer-camps)

## the **Y** BEST SUMMER EVER

Whether it's making new friends, learning to swim, or gaining self-confidence, each child grows at New Canaan YMCA camps, developing skills and memories that last far beyond the summer.

**Camp Mini:** Ages 3-5 (Pre-K)

**Camp Y-Ki:** Entering Grades 1-6

**Leaders-In-Training:** Entering Grades 7-8

**Counselors-In-Training:** Ages 14-15

**Artistic Swimming Camp:** Ages 6-12

**Basketball Camp:** Ages 6-14

**YSN Camp Jam for Teens & Young Adults:** Ages 13+

**REGISTRATION NOW AVAILABLE!** Learn more and register at [www.newcanaanymca.org](http://www.newcanaanymca.org) or scan code:



NEW CANAAN YMCA



## RCDS | Summer Session

Rye Country Day School offers academic and enrichment courses for rising Grades 5-12 students from any school

**JULY 1 - AUGUST 9, 2024**

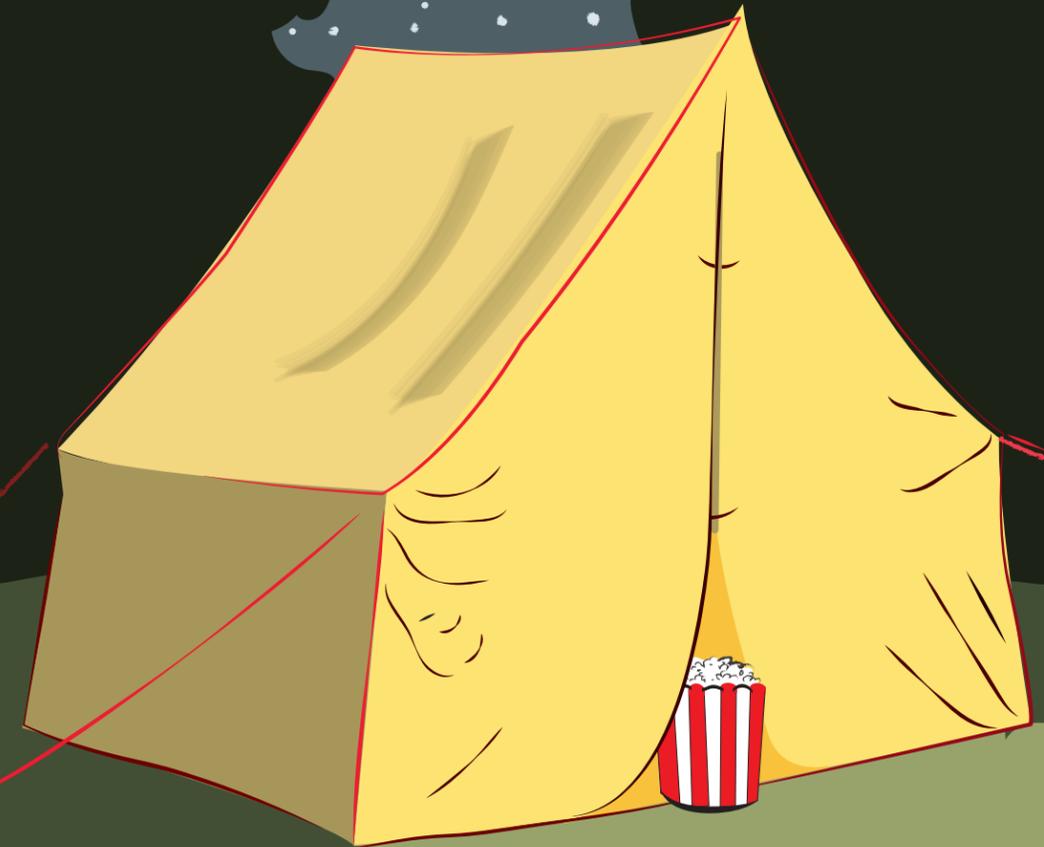
- Courses range from 1-week to 6-weeks long
- Earn advanced credit or strengthen subjects
- Learn on campus with top RCDS faculty

Register at [RYECOUNTRYDAY.ORG/SUMMERSESSION](http://RYECOUNTRYDAY.ORG/SUMMERSESSION)



# THE PLAYHOUSE

Proud to Bring Back Star-Filled Nights



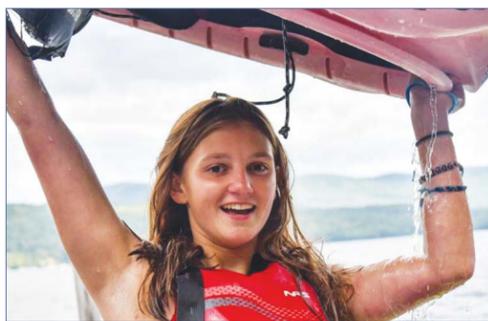
The Playhouse is thrilled to be supporting New Canaan and the surrounding towns in their Summer Camps. Nothing like taking a break from the heat and enjoying a great movie.

SECURE A SPOT FOR A CAMP DAY, BIRTHDAY OR ANY OTHER PARTICULARLY AWESOME DAY. EMAIL [JAYNE@CINEMALAB.COM](mailto:jayne@cinemalab.com). Also, thank you all for welcoming us into the community with open arms and local pride.

**THE PLAYHOUSE**  
93 Elm Street, New Canaan, CT 06840

A CINEMA LAB EXPERIENCE

# DO NOT PANIC. YOU CAN DO IT.



**Katie Byxbee**

"Alright guys we are here, let's get ready," said the driver of our van as we pulled into the gravel lot. My three friends and I along with our three counselors piled out of the van to meet our river guide. We were preparing to white water kayak down the Sacandaga River (The Soc) in upstate New York. This was my first summer in a white water kayak.

"I can hear it!" Said one kid. "So can I!" said another. I did not have my hearing aids in because I knew I was going to be in the water, but not hearing the river

made me even more excited to see it.

Our river guide, Frank, was a very experienced kayaker who has been on much more dangerous rivers than The Soc. He explained how the river would be four different

parts; rapids, calm, rapids, then calm again. He made it sound straightforward and simple, however my mind went to the worst case scenario: wet exiting. A wet exit is when you flip over in a kayak and cannot roll back up, so you pull the skirt loop and push yourself away from the kayak, allowing you to come up for air.

I got excited every time at camp when I had to get out of the water, however, we were not on Lake George anymore. The water was no longer deep and calm;

the Soc was shallow and rocky. Frank and the other counselors reassured my camp mates and I that we are more than capable of paddling this river, otherwise we would not be here.

When choosing the order of the ducky line (the order in which the kayakers were to paddle in a line down the river), I felt best to be second in line right behind Frank in order to hear him as well as possible and for him to be able to reach me in case I flipped over and wet-exited my kayak. Once we went over safety rules, we all geared up and began to truck our kayaks down the river. With each step down to the water, my heartbeat felt like it was about to burst out of my chest. It was all I heard and all I felt. Because of my hearing loss, I tend to only hear sounds that I choose to focus on. So when I finally saw the river, I focused my hearing on the sound of the water. And my heart beat seemed to have disappeared and

overflowed with the white water crashing on rocks. The water was so much louder than I had anticipated; it sounded like white noises and static from the TV.

I tried to focus on getting into my kayak and making sure I had everything I needed. Once again, my heartbeat was the only thing I could hear even as I was floating in the eddie right before the river. (An eddie is a still spot of water in the rapids that is on the banks). It was time to make our way down the first rapid, and at this point my heartbeat felt like a drum in my chest. I told myself I needed to focus because this was no time to panic. I closed my eyes and took a breath, and focused on the water that was 100 feet in front of me. I went over everything I was just told: *sit up straight, paddle hard, if you flip over try to roll back up, do not panic.* Those words were repeated in my head over and over as we began to paddle to the rapids.

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Before I knew it, I was there, in the waves, paddling as hard as I could. I took a quick glance to my right and see how fast the banks were moving, and that's when I realize it was me moving that fast. *Sit up straight.*

The waves got bigger and it got harder to paddle. *Paddle harder!*

Frank moves across the river over multiple waves, trying to avoid a rock that I would not have noticed without him. *If you flip, just roll back up.* A wave came over the bow of my boat, causing my kayak to tilt forward and bounce back up. I lost balance, struggling to brace back up, but I did it.

Right as I was stable again, a wave hit me from the other side. It took me by surprise, so I forgot to brace and I flipped.

*Do not panic.*

Somehow, the rapids were

louder underwater. I had my eyes closed and all I could focus on was the insufferable sounds from the water that stressed me out on its own. The water began to fill my ears but instead of blocking noise, it consumed me. Don't panic, I told myself, focus.

I once again focused on my heartbeat, oddly not as loud as the rapids I was submerged in. I set up my paddle, positioned my hips, and rolled back up. Next thing I knew, I could see Frank in front of me and I was paddling again. That entire moment had been maybe a total of three seconds, but it was the longest three seconds I could ever imagine.

In that moment, I realized focusing on my heartbeat allowed me to roll back up and drown out the overwhelming sounds from the rapids. So

for the rest of the river, I focused on my heartbeat, and everything else came naturally. I did not flip again, I did not lose Frank, and I did not panic.

Once we reached the calm water, I took a deep breath. "Are you okay?" asked one kid.

"Yeah, I thought you were a goner! One second you were there, and then you weren't!" screamed my other friend.

I forgot how many people I was with when I was paddling down the river because all I focused on was my heartbeat. "We were screaming to you asking if you were okay," said the other camper.

"I'm okay," I told them all. "Just next time, remember I can't hear and focus on yourself so you do not flip like I did."

No one else flipped in the second rapid, and everyone was locked in on themselves.

Zoning in and focusing is the most important thing in order to progress. Once you realize that and find what works best for you, things will come naturally and work will become easier. Just remember to take a deep breath, relax, not panic, and focus.

*Kathryn Byxbee is known by all as Katie. She is an 11th grader at the Greenwich Country Day School. She loves all water sports, polo, kayaking and swimming. Katie is part of the YMCA Greenwich Aquatics Water Polo team and GCDS Boys Varsity Water Polo & Swim teams, but she finds most joy when paddling around in her kayak at Adirondack camp in the summer. Katie has moderate-severe sensorial hearing loss in both ears. Adirondack camp has been her home away from home every summer since 3rd grade.*

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For additional questions, please contact: Christian.Alexander@audubon.org

To learn more and access the camp registration website, please visit our website using the QR code!



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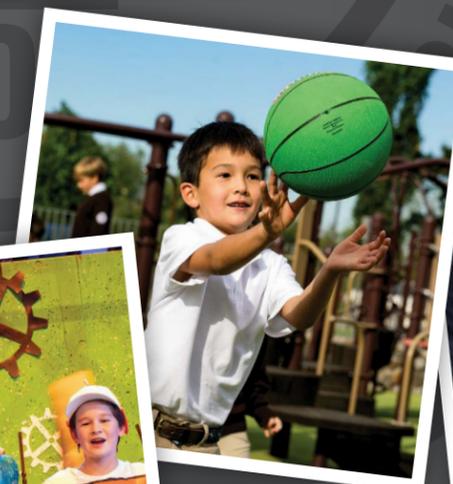
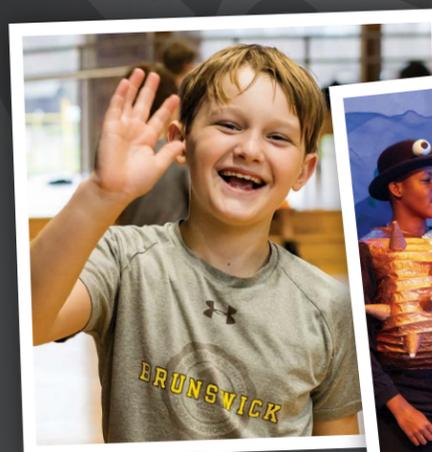


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