



# THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN YMCA CAMPS THE ARROWHEAD



A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN YMCA CAMPS

SUMMER 2024

## The View From the Peak

As I reflect on my first year as CEO of South Mountain YMCA Camps, it feels like both a brief moment and a lifetime. Our camp community's rich history and forward-thinking spirit have truly captivated me. Whether your journey with us began at Camp Conrad Weiser, Bynden Wood Day Camp, or through our outdoor education programs, it's clear that our bonds run deep.

Over the past nine months, our Board has been hard at work crafting a Real Time Strategic Plan. We aim to finalize this plan in May 2025, setting the stage for its implementation. I'm excited to share the fully developed strategy with you this fall, as we take our next steps together.

In January, the South Mountain YMCA Board of Directors saw a change in leadership. John McCloskey stepped down as Board Chair and Chief Volunteer Officer, though he continues to play a vital role on our board, contributing to key committees and mentoring our new Chair. John's leadership was invaluable during the CEO transition and throughout the initial phases of our Strategic Planning process. I extend my deepest thanks to him for his leadership, dedication, and guidance.



Taking the helm as our new Board Chair and Chief Volunteer Officer is Jennifer Mikes, a South Mountain native. She began her journey with us as a camper, enjoying all that camp life has to offer. Jennifer then participated in the International Camper Exchange Program (ICEP), an experience she appreciates to this day. Later, she returned to camp as a counselor at Bynden Wood, guiding a new generation through their own summer adventures. As she wrapped up her fourth and final summer at day camp, Jennifer thought her journey had ended. Eventually, she found herself drawn back to the camp community when she returned to Wyomissing and joined her family's business, Second Wind. An invitation to join our board reignited her passion and now, after several years of service, she is honored to lead as our Board Chair and Chief Volunteer Officer for the next two years. Jennifer never imagined this path as a young camper at SMYMCA, but she's delighted with where it has led.

As we look to the future, I'm confident in the direction we're headed with Jennifer at the helm. Exciting developments are on the horizon, and we are in great hands with her leadership.

Bill Hinton, CEO, South Mountain YMCA Camps

## Early Enrollment Opens November 19!

Get ready for another unforgettable summer at YMCA Camp Conrad Weiser and Bynden Wood Day Camp! From November 19 to December 31, take advantage of our early bird pricing and lock in 2024 rates for Summer Camp 2025. Don't miss this chance to give your child a summer full of adventure, friendship, and growth at last year's prices. Register today to secure your spot and save!



THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN YMCA CAMPS: *Igniting the Fires of Friendship since 1948.*



## Exciting Changes at Bynden Wood Day Camp

I am excited to announce some exciting changes at Bynden Wood Day Camp this summer! For the first time ever, we introduced four Village Coordinators to our day camp structure. This new addition was inspired by the successful leadership model used at YMCA Camp Conrad Weiser, our overnight resident camp. The Village Coordinators brought a new level of support and guidance to our day campers and staff. VC's were responsible for overseeing different groups of campers, supporting our



counselors, and ensuring that every child has the most enjoyable experience possible. Paco, Caitlyn, Chloe, and Danna are talented and caring individuals who have worked at South Mountain YMCA Camps for several years and brought a wealth of experience and passion to the role. Their familiar faces were welcome sights for many of our returning day campers. Their deep connection to our camp community and understanding of our day camp program ensured a smooth and positive transition for everyone involved and, with their leadership, I am confident that Bynden Wood Day Camp will continue to provide a safe, fun, and enriching environment for everyone.

*Nick Raines*

Nick Raines, Associate Program Director, Bynden Wood Day Camp

## What's New With You CCW?

For 2024, we launched the **Young Adult Leader (YAL) Program**, which serves as a precursor to the CIT program. Open to 9th and 10th graders, YAL features traditional camp activities, service projects, leadership development, life skills training, and off-site trips. It's a fantastic opportunity to develop future leaders.



We also introduced a new Literary Theme Camp, **Panem Training**, inspired by the *Hunger Games* series. Campers spent two days learning outdoor survival skills before embarking on an immersive role-playing game where their choices decided the outcome of the Games, leading either to victory for the Capital or revolution for the Districts!

The **International Camper Exchange Program (ICEP)** took participants to Salduero, Spain, for an unforgettable cultural exchange experience. The ICEP program offers campers a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in a new culture and build lifelong friendships.

Additionally, we welcomed **former Village Coordinator Manu** as our new Assistant Director. With his experience and dedication, Manu helped ensure a fantastic summer for all our campers.

*Sam Westphal*

Sam Westphal, Associate Program Director, YMCA Camp Conrad Weiser



Whoa there, horse lovers! Whether you're new to riding or already galloping with the pros, our Community Horseback Riding lessons are perfect for all ages and skill levels. Learn the basics or refine your trot with our skilled instructors in a fun and supportive environment. So, saddle up and join us for a hoof-stomping good time!



Get ready to tip your hats, patch up your gear, and stick around for some exciting news! Our camp store has just rolled out a fresh batch of goodies that are sure to make a fashion splash. We're talking brand new hats, stickers, and patches that are guaranteed to elevate your camp style to new heights. Want to patch things up with your backpack? Our vibrant patches have got you covered! Looking to stick it to boring water bottles? Our fun stickers will add just the right amount of flair. And if you're aiming to be the cap-tain of camp fashion, our stylish hats are here to top off your look. So don't just sit there – swing by the store or shop online and snag your swag today!





## Transforming Our Dining Hall: A New Chapter for South Mountain YMCA Camps

We are thrilled to announce the long-awaited addition to our historic Dining Hall, a project that has been a dream of staff and volunteers for decades. This new 2,800-square-foot building will significantly enhance our facility, offering 14 restrooms for our guests, along with a fully accessible entrance from the walkways and paved parking area, granting easier ADA compliant access for all visitors.

Since 1948, our Dining Hall has only had two toilets, requiring many campers to leave the building to find a restroom regardless of the weather conditions. With this new addition, we are not only increasing the number of available restrooms, but also improving their quality and accessibility. The new restrooms will feature various configurations to meet diverse needs, ensuring a more comfortable and inclusive experience for everyone.

Great care has been taken to ensure that the new building seamlessly matches the existing dining hall to make it feel like a natural extension of our beloved camp facility. The project is already halfway complete and is expected to be finished by Spring 2025.

This addition marks the final piece of our 2017 Capital Campaign, "Creating a Camp for All," through which our dedicated volunteers and staff raised over \$3 million to enhance our camp facilities. Previous improvements included a new swimming pool complex, septic treatment facilities, a water tank, dining hall renovations, and the expansion of the John R. Post Center property.

The funding for this final project was generously provided through The American Rescue Plan, thanks to a gift from the Berks County Commissioners, The Strategic Initiatives Fund from the YMCA of the USA, and numerous local community and alumni donors. We are incredibly grateful for their support, which has helped bring this dream to life.

We look forward to welcoming you to our improved dining hall and sharing this exciting new chapter with you!



October 25 @ 6:00 pm -  
October 27 @ 1:00 pm

The leaves are putting on a stunning display! Join us for our final Family Camp of the year and experience all the fun we have to offer. Relax with guided trail hikes, pumpkin carving, outdoor cooking, gathering around campfires, creating crafts, and taking part in your favorite camp activities. Stay cozy in our heated cabins, enjoy delicious meals in our dining hall, and set your own pace for a perfect weekend retreat on the mountain. Register online or call Camp at 610-670-2267!

## Give the Gift of Camp

Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, our Reach Out for Youth campership campaign has helped countless children create lifelong memories, make new friends, and explore the great outdoors. Even a small donation can make a big difference! Check out our website to learn more about how you can help. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of deserving children.

# SUMMER CAMP

## WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

BASKETBALL, BOYS,  
BUNKS, BUS, CABINS,  
CONTESTS,  
COUNSELOR,  
EVENTS, FISHING,  
FOOD,  
FUN, GAMES, GEAR,  
GIRLS, GROUP, LAKE,  
MEMORIES, NATURE,  
OUTING, ROUTINE,  
SITE,  
SWIM, TEAMS,  
TENTS, TRAILS,  
WALKS, WOODS

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Igniting the Fires of Friendship since 1948

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THE SOUTH MOUNTIAN YMCA CAMPS: *Keep the Fires Burning!*