



THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN YMCA CAMPS THE ARROWHEAD



A PUBLICATION OF THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN YMCA CAMPS

SPRING 2025

The View From the Peak

Campers will soon be back on the Mountain, ready to ignite new friendships and adventures! But before we jump into 2025, let's take a moment to reflect on 2024. While the year brought its share of challenges, it also highlighted the incredible resilience, adaptability, and spirit of our South Mountain YMCA Camps community. We welcomed a diverse group of campers, each with their own stories, energy, and enthusiasm. From day camps to outdoor education, it was amazing to see campers step outside their comfort zones, try new activities, and form friendships that will last a lifetime. Despite obstacles, our team remained creative and dedicated, finding new ways to make the camp experience unforgettable while maintaining a safe and welcoming environment for all.

I encourage you to dive into our 2024 Annual Report on our website for more details and insights into our impact.

As we look toward 2025, I'm filled with excitement and optimism. We've set ambitious goals to grow our camper base and elevate our programs. This year, we'll introduce fresh activities and schedules at both Camp Conrad Wieser and Bynden Wood that will promote camper choice, foster personal growth, and strengthen our sense of community. We're also committed to values-based learning that equips campers with the skills to face life's challenges, build resilience, and develop emotional intelligence.

A huge thank you to our dedicated staff, families, and supporters. Your trust, involvement, and support have been essential to our journey. Together, we can turn the lessons of 2024 into even greater success as we move forward.

Here's to an exciting and rewarding 2025! Let's "Keep the Fires of Friendship Burning" as we embark on another year of adventure, growth, and connection at South Mountain YMCA Camps.

Bill Hinton, CEO, South Mountain YMCA Camps



Great golf. Greater impact.

Join us for our 28th Annual Golf Classic on **Monday, September 15, 2025**, at **The Manor Golf Club** for a day of golf that changes lives! Proceeds support our **Reach Out for Youth 566 Campaign**, providing financial aid so every kid can experience the magic of camp.

To become a sponsor or register your foursome, contact Tracey at (610) 670-2267 or tbraymiller@smymca.org

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



Big Changes, Bigger Fun: What's New at Bynden Wood This Summer?

We're getting ready for an amazing summer at Bynden Wood Day Camp, and we have some exciting changes that we think you're going to love!

This summer, we won't have the Oaks Village anymore. If you were in the Oaks Village last year, don't worry! You'll now be part of the **Saplings Village** and get to take part in all the fun leadership activities.

We're also changing up our daily schedule and adding an **extra activity period**, so you'll have time for your favorites **and** something new each day.

We're making a cool new space for our morning meetings! The **new amphitheater** will be right by the fire pit, tree house, and archery area. It'll be a special spot where we'll meet each morning to kick off the day together.

Also, in response to your feedback, we're pushing swim times to later in the day so the water will be warmer and even more fun to swim in!

And don't overlook our awesome new themes like Dinosaurs, Halloween, and the Wild West. Get ready for some fun and adventure!

We can't wait to see you all at Bynden Wood this summer! Oh ... and did I mention that there will be all-new camp swag just for Bynden Wood?? It's going to be a blast!

Nick Raines

Nick Raines, Assoc. Program Director, Bynden Wood



What's New With You, CCW?

I am beyond excited to return for my second summer heading up CCW, and I want to share some exciting updates for 2025!

First, we're bringing back our pre-COVID schedule, which means both one- and two-week campers get the chance to sign up for the activities they want to try and **create their own adventures**. We're also introducing new activities, including **woodworking** in the Gimmie Shop with our beloved Uncle Harold, **gardening** where campers can help grow vegetables for our salad bar, and **paddleboarding** at the lake!

We're also thrilled to announce our first **PRIDE Camp**, led by camp alum A.S. King and Gracie's House, creating a safe, non-gendered space for LGBTQ+ campers to connect and grow. Additionally, **Rooted Kinnections Camp** will offer a special experience for siblings impacted by foster care and other out-of-home placements, helping them strengthen their bonds. Learn more about Samii and this wonderful program at rootedkin.org.

But wait... there's more! **Adventure-palooza** is expanding to two weeks! Following a week of all your favorite traditional camp activities and team building, campers will head north to Jim Thorpe, PA, where they will experience tent camping and mountain biking in the Pocono Mountains and whitewater rafting on the Lehigh River. If there's energy and free time to spare, campers can explore and tour the town of Jim Thorpe. There's also a visit to Hersheypark to top everything off!

It's going to be an unforgettable summer!

Sam Westphal

Sam Westphal, Associate Program Director, YMCA Camp Conrad Weiser



Give the Gift of Camp

Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, our **Reach Out for Youth 566** 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.



Just in Time for 2025 ... Disc Golf Has Arrived!

We're thrilled to unveil the **Dr. George F. Stine 9-Hole Disc Golf Course**, a brand-new outdoor adventure nestled within the scenic woods and lawn of the Cameron Estate. Whether you're a seasoned disc golfer or brand new to the sport, this course, thoughtfully designed by local pro **Dan Brooks-Wells**, offers the perfect blend of open fairways and technical wooded shots to keep every round fun and challenging.

Are you up to the test?



Alumni Spotlight

A.S. King: From Camp to Award-Winning Author & Advocate

Many alumni remember Amy Sarig—now A.S. King—as a craft shop counselor and Pioneer Village Chief in 1987 and 1988. Today, she is a celebrated Young Adult author known for her unique storytelling and thought-provoking themes.

King has written over a dozen books, including *Please Ignore Vera Dietz*, *Ask the Passengers*, and *The Dust of 100 Dogs*. She is the **only author to win the Michael L. Printz Award twice**—for *Dig* (2020) and *The Collectors: Stories* (2024). Her accolades also include the **Los Angeles Times Book Prize** and the **Margaret A. Edwards Award** for her lasting contribution to YA literature.

Beyond writing, Amy is a dedicated advocate for LGBTQ+ youth. Along with her son, Jaxon, she is the Founder and Vice President of **Gracie's House**, which helps create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth in rural areas. Through Gracie's House, she runs **PRIDE Camp** and **FOUND Family Weekend Camps**, both hosted at Camp Conrad Weiser, providing affirming experiences for LGBTQ+ youth and their families. The organization also supports arts and music workshops to uplift LGBTQ+ voices.

Her journey from camp counselor to award-winning author and advocate highlights the creativity, leadership, and compassion nurtured at South Mountain YMCA Camps. We are proud to count her among our alumni!

Learn more at www.as-king.com and www.GraciesHouse.com

Help Keep a Camp Tradition Alive!

Hey camp families and alumni, we'd love your help making our 2025 summer chapel services extra special! Whether you'd like to do a reading, lead the character block ceremony, play music, or recite the *Prayer of a Camper*, we'd be grateful for your support.

Join us on **June 29, July 20, or August 10** from **11:30 AM – 12:30 PM**. Interested?

Let Michael know at mburger@smymca.org!

A New Era for Our Dining Hall

We are very excited to announce the completion of the long-awaited project to enhance our historic Dining Hall! Since 1948, we've had only two restrooms, making it challenging for campers to access facilities — especially in bad weather. With this new 2,800-square-foot expansion, we're increasing restroom availability (to 14!) and introducing a nurse's station for easier medication dispensing. The addition also includes a new wood-paneled watch office, allowing senior staff to continue to improve their programs while maintaining full view of all activities on the A-field. The addition blends seamlessly with the existing structure, maintaining our camp's charm while offering modern amenities like climate-control and two water bottle filling stations. Further enhancing the experience for all are a fully accessible entrance and various configurations to better meet diverse needs and ensure a more inclusive environment.

The project was funded through The American Rescue Plan, a generous gift from the Berks County Commissioners, The Y-USA Strategic Initiatives Fund, and local community and alumni donors. A huge "thank you" goes out to everyone who contributed, as well as to our Facilities Director, Brandon Tanner, and his entire team for their incredible handiwork!

The grand re-opening dedication will be held on Friday, June 13 from 5-8pm. Join us for a fun-filled alumni gathering featuring Bills Burgers and an evening around the campfire! It's the perfect chance to reconnect with old friends, meet this summer's staff, and enjoy a classic camp tradition!

Upcoming Events

Memorial Day Family Camp
May 23rd—26th

Bill's Burgers Alumni Event & Dining Hall Dedication
Thursday June 12th, 5-8pm

Labor Day Family Camp
August 29th—September 1st

United Way Day of Caring
September 10th

28th Annual Golf Classic
Monday, September 15th
At The Manor Golf Club

Women's Weekend
September 19th-21st

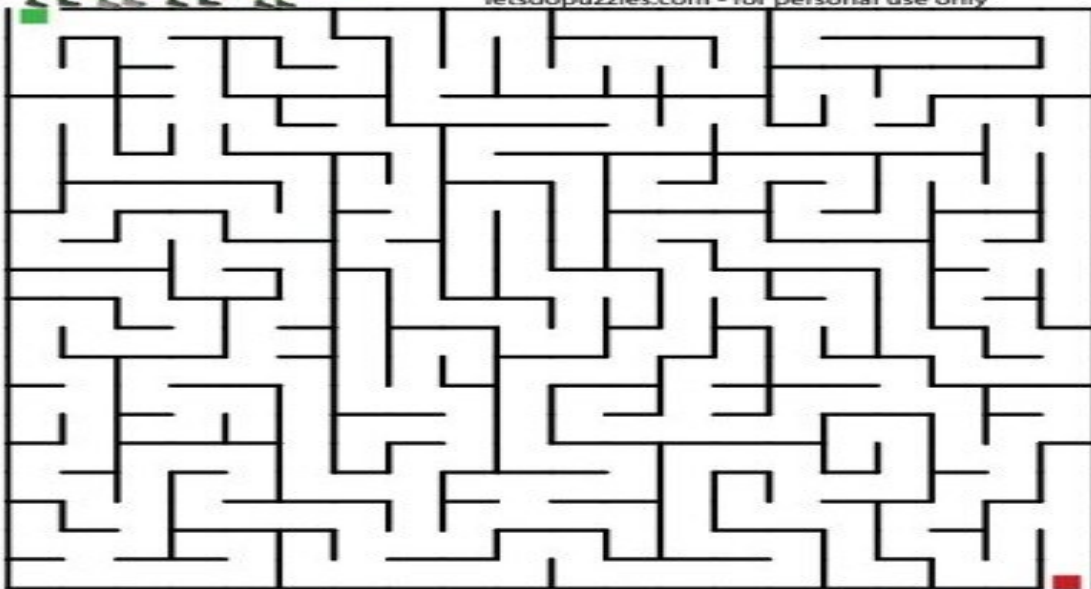


Summer Camp Maze



Can you help the children reach the campsite?

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Igniting the Fires of Friendship since 1948

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Hey, Let Us Know!

We'd love to hear what's going on in your lives! Keep us up to date on graduations, new jobs, promotions, weddings, birth announcements ... all of it! Email us at alumni@smymca.org

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