



# HAYO-WENT-HA CAMPS

## WHISPERING PINES

INFORMATION FOR FRIENDS OF HAYO-WENT-HA CAMPS

APRIL 2023



### Musings and Meanderings...

*From the Executive Director*

Well, it's almost here! Another Hayo-Went-Ha Camps summer is just around the corner. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, our plans and preparations are coming along nicely. However, as any seasoned camp professional knows, there's always SOMETHING that emerges with little or no warning to knock you off-stride a bit. We are currently working hard to minimize that possibility.

I remain excited and energized about my role as interim Hayo-Went-Ha Camp Director. While I am sure that there will be some mid-summer days when I ask myself "*What was I thinking?*" when I chose to take on these extra responsibilities, I am so looking forward to this hands-on role.

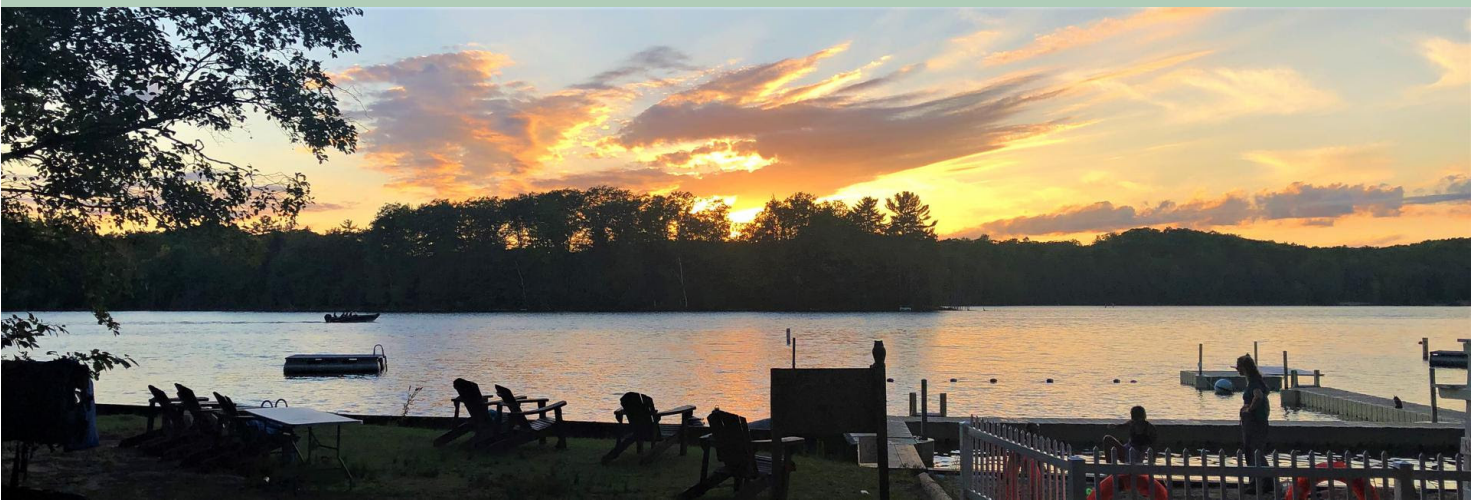
I have been so incredibly gratified and impressed by the many members of our HWH Camps community who have reached out to me with words of encouragement, offers of assistance, or both. I will not be shy about accepting these wonderful offers!

Please read on to learn more about how the 2023 camping season is shaping up – and the ways in which you might be able to help. It's going to be a great summer at Hayo-Went-Ha Camps!

*Each for All – All for Each.*

**Dave**

[Dave DeLuca/CEO – YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camps](#)



## Calling all Alumni!

Hayo-Went-Ha Camps boasts a worldwide community of former campers and staff members. We have more than 5000 of these alumni listed within our camp database. However, we don't know much about their specific affiliation with our camps – when they attended, what programs they participated in, what staff positions they held. This information is vital to our ability to reconnect alumni and keep folks informed about camp news and opportunities for engagement.

We have created a Google Form to collect this information. Please click on the link to add your details and to ensure that we have accurate contact information for you.

The form also asks about camp's impact and any treasured memories. Here are just a few of the powerful responses we have collected:

***The first things that come to mind are summiting the Chilkoot and humpback whales swimming under our kayaks. Camp had a profound effect on my love of nature, my belief in community and meeting friends who I still cherish today.***

***Cabin rules are the core values of our company.***

***Pushed me to expand my limits if possible, given me confidence as a woman that I am strong and capable, increased worldly exposure and experience, given me a deeper love of my Creator and creation, shaped me as a person into who I am today!***

***There's not a day that goes by where I don't think about camp! One of my fondest memories would be as an Explorer, waiting for the Extensos to return in the middle of the night. The whole division ended up laying out on the front walkway, watching a meteor shower and singing songs. Camp magic at its peak.***

***Camp is where I met some of my best friends. I've connected with them in several countries, sometimes on trips I would not have taken otherwise. If not for my time at camp, I probably would not have learned how to sail or SCUBA dive, both of which I have been able to enjoy since leaving camp. Growing up at camp helped me develop a level of independence, learn to navigate social relationships, and cultivate a love of the outdoors. Overall, I would say that camp probably had a bigger influence on me than anything else in my life except possibly my immediate family.***

***It is why I am who I am today.***

[If you have not yet completed your Alumni Survey, please do so here.](#)

***And while we're talking about alumni, please send us your news and updates... weddings, births, moves and other milestones! Email these - with photos if you're so inclined - to [Dave DeLuca](#) so that we can include these in future editions of Whispering Pines!***



## Spring Volunteer Work Days!

After the long northern Michigan winter, there is plenty of work to be done to get our two camps ready for another summer season. We are looking for volunteers to join us for one (or both!) of our **Volunteer Work Days** in May.

On Saturday May 6th, we will gather at HWH/Torch Lake for a day of clean-up, set-up and preparations. Two weeks later – on Saturday, May 20th – we'll do the same at AHW/Arbutus Lake. Our projects will largely focus on basic landscaping and set-up tasks – leaf-blowing, raking, boat-moving, cabin-opening, etc. Perhaps not the most glamorous of projects, but all are critical in our work to open camp.

We will get started at 9:00am each Saturday and work through to 5:00pm. We'll serve a light breakfast, a hearty lunch and a pizza dinner to our volunteers. There are also options for folks to arrive on Friday evening and/or stay until Sunday morning, but we won't be offering meal service on either day.

We would love to have you join us – many hands make light work! [Please use this form](#) to sign up for our work days.



## Summer Camp 2023: Spaces Still Available!

While both of our camps have exceeded last summer's enrollment totals, we still have some work to do to reach our goals for the 2023 summer. This is the most challenging time to register new campers, as we have

limited availability in specific **programs** and in specific **sessions**. It's a little like putting a jigsaw puzzle together!

Still, we would love to fill some of these empty beds and serve even more kids this summer. If you know of families that are still making their plans for the summer, please share our website and other information. We have two more promotional events scheduled – an in-person slideshow in Ann Arbor and a virtual information night – scheduled over the next two weeks.

- **Thursday, April 20 – Ann Arbor slideshow at the home of John & Nancy Kelley (6:30pm)**
- **Tuesday, April 25 – Virtual information night (6:30pm)**

[Please click here](#) for more details about these events.

## Piraino Campership Challenge!

Once again, thanks to **Tom Piraino and Barbara McWilliams** – and the generosity of the **Piraino Family Foundation** – we are seeking to raise \$25,000 in campership donations to match a portion of the Piraino gift. These funds will be allocated as financial assistance to allow more kids to come to camp... kids whose families could not otherwise afford our camp fees.

This challenge is incredibly timely now, as we have exceeded our budgeted campership funds for the 2023 summer. We planned to give out more than \$170,000 in financial assistance, but the need has been greater, with requests for at least \$30,000 more still pending. We would very much like to give these kids the opportunity to experience Hayo-Went-Ha Camps this summer.. it could possibly be a life-changing experience.

**Won't you join us and help to provide this incredible experience to more kids?** You can make your gift in a couple of ways. A check may be sent to the camp office (our address is at the end of the newsletter) with "Piraino Challenge" written on the memo line. Alternately, you can visit our website and [use our online giving portal](#). In the dropdown menu, you may select "Campership Fund."

Thanks in advance for helping us to meet this challenge!



## Alumni Gatherings!

In mid-March, Amanda and Dave traveled east to do some camper recruiting in the Washington D.C. area. Thanks to alumna Amy (Goetz) Rzepka and her family for hosting a very successful and well-attended slideshow!

While in the area, we held a Sunday afternoon alumni gathering in Arlington, Virginia. Almost twenty-five individuals stopped by for refreshments and reminiscing – LOTS of reminiscing! It was wonderful to connect with old friends and even make some new connections. Just like the February event we held in Denver, this might need to become an annual affair.

And – speaking of annual events – please mark your calendars for our **second annual summer reunion in Elk Rapids**. On Friday, July 21st, we will gather at the Short's Pull Barn (3:00pm) for an afternoon of

friendship and memory-making. This event occurs the day before our summer board meeting and is a wonderful way for HWH Camps friends who are enjoying the fabulous northern Michigan summer to reconnect.

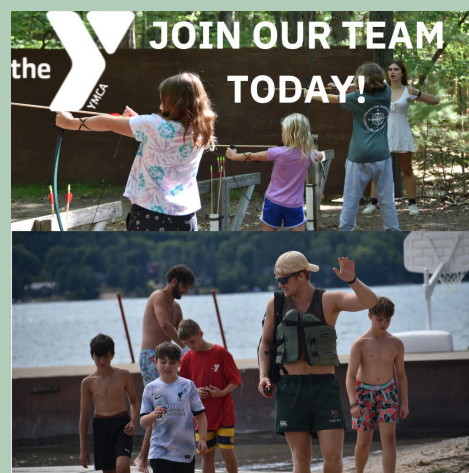
## 2023 Summer Staffing

It often feels as if we hire our summer camp staff *twice* – once during the initial recruitment period in the winter, and then again after folks drop out, get that dream internship, or have their visa denied. It is a never-ending process.

Our camps are still looking for a few high-quality individuals to round out our staff ranks:

- Cabin Leaders (HWH)
- Day Camp Leaders (HWH)
- Waterfront Assistant/Lifeguard (HWH)
- Driver (HWH)
- Waterfront Director (AHHW)
- Food Service Director (AHHW)

If you know of interested candidates, please encourage them to reach out to [Amanda](#) and [Dave](#) as soon as possible. As our alumni will attest, there is no better place to spend the summer than at Hayo-Went-Ha Camps!



## SPARKS Day Camp – Registration Open!

Sparks Day Camp – located on our Torch Lake site – is enrolling campers for the 2023 summer. Sparks offers eight one-week sessions for children (boys and girls) ages 5-10. Enrollment is limited to forty children per week, with even more limited spaces for the youngest campers (ages 5-6) in our Kinder Sparks program.

Day camp is based at the Dow Building at Camp Hayo-Went-Ha – a wonderful facility that provides indoor activity space, bathrooms, refrigerated storage for lunches and more.

To learn more about Sparks – and to register – [please visit our website.](#)

## Welcome Scott Swanson!

After an extensive search process, we are pleased to announce that we have a new member of our year-round team! **Scott Swanson**, a resident of Traverse City, joined us in early April in the role of HWH Camps Maintenance Director. In this position, Scott will oversee facilities/property needs at both camps and work closely with Jake Smith (HWH) and Mark Mullins (AHHW). Scott has hit the ground running and is already making a positive impact on our camps. He brings great energy and experience to his work.

We have SO MUCH work to do with the physical plant at both our camps. We now have a new site master plan that will guide the process of building new facilities and renovating existing ones. We have considerable historic preservation projects to accomplish... projects that will ensure that our most treasured older buildings

remain viable. Finally, both camps have a considerable amount of deferred and preventative maintenance needs to address.

We are so happy that Scott has joined the HWH Camps team. If you are coming to either of our May volunteer work days, you'll have the opportunity to meet Scott yourself!

## Collaboration to Serve Foster Kids

YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camps is entering into a collaboration with [Eli's Project](#), a Lansing-area non-profit organization, to provide a camp experience to children within the Michigan foster care system. Eli's Project will also assist the camps in identifying mental health resources and trainings that will better support our staff in their work with campers.



Created by HWH alumnus Dr. Zach Goldstein, Eli's Project's mission is to support the mental health needs of children and teens – with a specific goal of preventing suicide within this population. It hopes to accomplish this through advocacy, education and action.

Zach's adopted son Eli, a product of foster care, attended Camp Hayo-Went-Ha and participated in the Isle Royale program in 2021. Eli passed away unexpectedly in June 2022.

Funding is currently in place to send two foster kids to our camps this summer. We also hope to secure funding to properly outfit these campers for their camp experience. In the words of Zach Goldstein:

*"After years of working with HWH as the Health Officer I was able to see firsthand what positive impacts HWH Camps has on kids when I sent my son Eli for the first time. The camp experience is important for ALL kids to have. When Eli's Project was formed, we made it our mission to advocate for kids from different backgrounds or those with different life experiences. We're all excited for the potential of this joint fundraiser to represent kids who would otherwise never have the opportunity to go to camp."*

Those wishing to support this collaboration can make a gift via the Eli's Project [website](#). To benefit the campership program your gift should be designated to "YMCA Legacy Fund" in the dropdown menu. For those of you who want to inspire others to donate, please use our crowd funding option [here](#) to create and share your own donation page. It should be noted that Eli's Project is a separate 501(c)(3) organization and your donation is not going directly to YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camps. All donations to the YMCA Legacy Fund will be reinvested back into YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camps.

We are very pleased to collaborate with Zach Goldstein and Eli's Project to serve more kids and staff at camp. If you would like to learn more about Eli's Project, please feel free to reach out to Zach.

**Our Contact Information**

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