



HAYO-WENT-HA CAMPS

WHISPERING PINES

INFORMATION FOR FRIENDS OF HAYO-WENT-HA CAMPS

APRIL 2024

Musings and Meanderings...

By John (JC) Carlson, CEO

You might be wondering about the picture of the house below. Recently, Amanda Macaluso, our Girls Camp Director, and Adam Delezenne, our Boys Camp Director, and I embarked on a two-week road trip across the Midwest. We visited six different locations to showcase our camp programs, known as Camp Rallies. These events are joyful reunions for our camp community, showcasing the strength and warmth of our camp's legacy while also welcoming new families and offering them a chance to meet the directors and get their questions answered.

During our visit to Chicago, Amanda took us on a fun detour to the house where the iconic movie "Home Alone" was filmed. Of course, this is the house I am referring to, and I had to snap a quick picture and send it to my kids and camp friends from years past. This moment sparked such nostalgia, reminding me of 1990 when a young group of camp staff, including myself, went into town between sessions, and laughed our way through the film. It was a memorable experience that highlighted the special friendships formed during my first summer at YMCA Camp Thompson.

Yet, there's a deeper layer to this reminiscence. In "Home Alone," Kevin McCallister learns the values of independence and responsibility amidst extraordinary circumstances. Similarly, our Midwest tour introduced us to a myriad of stories from alumni about conquering challenges at camp. Many alumni attested that while they undoubtedly reveled in the entertaining programs we offered, it was the act of overcoming challenges, both individually and as a cabin group, that truly enriched their Hayo-Went-Ha Camp experience. For instance, one alum shared a memorable story of a torrential downpour that inundated their tent, with sleeping pads floating amidst the deluge, yet they fondly reminisced, remarking, "Those were such great times!" These narratives illuminate the transformative influence of overcoming challenges alongside friends—a facet often overlooked as we tend to emphasize the virtues of fun and adventure.

Our interactions during Camp Rallies events, coupled with the stories shared by alumni and campers, consistently reaffirm the notion that while fun, adventure, and friendships are pivotal, it's the situations demanding creative problem-solving, fostering teamwork, nurturing perseverance, and instilling a sense of communal responsibility that truly shape a camper's experience. These experiences not only shape their values but also equip them with skills that endure a lifetime. It's truly humbling to have lost count of how many times someone has expressed, "Camp shaped me into the person I am today!"

As I reflect on our tour, I want to express a heartfelt thank you to Hill and Jennifer Harcourt for their gracious hospitality in hosting one of our Rallies in Louisville, where we savored the warmth of a campfire and indulged in s'mores. One memorable moment encapsulated the essence of camp as a couple returning campers (pictured below) patiently taught fire-building skills to a couple newer ones—a testament to the invaluable lessons learned at YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camps.

As we commemorate our 110th and 120th Anniversary at YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camps this year, we take pride in the profound and enduring legacy we have built. We eagerly anticipate furthering our partnership with our community to nurture and sustain this remarkable and storied program. This is Hayo-Went-Ha Camps!

Each for all - All for Each



Torch Talk

By Adam Delezenne, Boys Camp Director

Summer preparations ... It's always amazing how much work it takes to make the eight weeks of a summer camp season successful. I look at this time of preparation as building a machine that's going to produce a great summer for us. A great staff, solid policies, creative program plans, ample supplies, and the work of keeping our camps looking good and working well are all the cogs, gears, and conveyor belts that make up Hayo-Went-Ha Camps. If I do my job well now and build a great machine, then summer camp will be the easy part!

In stretching this metaphor a little further... in this, my first summer at Hayo-Went-Ha, I have a lot of solid theory from my time at other camps - I know how these machines work - but I don't know the exact specifications for a Hayo-Went-Ha Camps summer. I've been in love with camping since my first time on a summer staff in 2001. Since then I've been involved with camping in different ways, including co-directing sites in Texas and Michigan, intern instructor with Outward Bound, and two years as Interim Executive Director of Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake. Everything at Hayo-Went-Ha Camps is familiar and new at the same time.

Fortunately, I've got a lot of help. Amanda and Gina have been a massive help in hiring staff for our Torch Lake camp and orienting me to our expeditions. We've also got some great returning staff. Many of them have said they are excited to return to give me a good

start. I very much appreciate the support, and I take it as a sign of their commitment to carrying on the traditions of Camp Hayo-Went-Ha on Torch Lake. (Also, I'm still hiring counselors! If you know anyone who might be up for an epic summer on Torch Lake, please send them my way.)

The commitment of our staff echoes the same sentiment I've heard from the many alums I've met in my two months on the job. The welcome I have received from alums, staff, and camper families has been spectacular. The community that surrounds our camps is our greatest asset. We're on some fantastic lakes and set in beautiful forests, but welcoming new campers and staff into that community is one of the most beautiful aspects of this work. Right now, I have an understanding, but I look forward to knowing, after a summer on Torch Lake, what it means to be each for all, all for each.



Arbutus Angle

By Amanda Macaluso, Girls Camp Director

The benefits of being unplugged. Do campers really go without their phones at HWH Camps? This is a common question from parents as they prepare their child for a summer adventure with us. At HWH Camps, we remain steadfast in our commitment to a technology-free experience for our campers. The opportunity to disconnect from digital devices is not just advantageous; it's a necessary respite for our campers, allowing them to fully engage with the natural world, build real-life connections, and enjoy a break from the constant digital chatter.

While we embrace a tech-free experience for our campers, we certainly recognize the importance of modern communication tools for health and safety purposes at our camps. For critical communications, especially on our trip locations, we are equipped with SPOT GPS devices that ensure group coordination in the field. Our senior staff also use their phones to facilitate essential daily communications among our staff, maintaining a high standard of safety and operational efficiency.

Being unplugged is just another aspect of our camp program we will continue to follow for years to come. It is what our campers need!

Here is a great article about Why Kids Need Summer Camp - A 160-year-old solution to a modern mental health crisis by Steve Baskin. [Click here.](#)

"Operation Spring Spruce Up" Is Less Than A Month Away!

By Scott Swanson, Director of Building, Grounds, & Hospitality

We invite you to join us for our annual Spring Volunteer Work Weekends, now aptly named "Operation Spring Spruce Up." These weekends offer a wonderful opportunity to stay connected, rekindle old friendships, and forge new ones while assisting in preparing our camps for another exciting summer season. Whether you're skilled in planting flowers, weeding, carpentry, painting, or have other talents to offer, there's a project suited for everyone!

You're welcome to participate for the entire weekend or simply contribute a few hours of your time. Your presence would be greatly appreciated!

Accommodations and meals will be provided. For volunteers under 18, we kindly request that a parent or supervising adult accompany them. Meals will be served from Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch, and work projects will conclude by noon on Sunday. We look forward to welcoming you to one or both of our camps soon and extend our heartfelt gratitude in advance for your invaluable time and talents.

Operation Spring Spruce Up Work Weekends - [Register here.](#)

- HWH work weekend - May 3rd - 5th

- AHWK work weekend - May 17th - 19th



Arbutus Updates

By Amanda Macaluso, Girls Camp Director

I am thrilled to announce that the T. Grace Macdonald Lodge Dining Hall has just completed a much-needed extension of our main dining room. During the quieter months, when the campers are away, we seize the opportunity to embark on significant repairs and construction projects aimed at enhancing our facilities. At the Arbutus Lake site, we have recently undertaken the expansion of the dining hall by seamlessly integrating the adjacent room into its layout. This expansion not only amplifies our capacity but also allows us to arrange our tables more spaciously, ensuring a more comfortable dining experience for all.



Torch Updates

By Adam Delezenne, Boys Camp Director

Our Maintenance Team, led by Scott Swanson and Jake Smith, is on a mission: to ensure that the Torch Lake site is not only prepared for the children this summer but also presents our community with a facility we can all take pride in. Our rustic features nestled along the shores of Torch Lake require much-needed renovations to uphold the quality of the overall experience that Hayo-Went-Ha Camps aspire to provide. Pictured below, "The Bush" Division is undergoing a complete overhaul, including cabins and the bathhouse, along with the installation of a new Circle Fire Ring that will serve as the centerpiece of this beloved historical area. Additionally, pictured below is our initial step toward a comprehensive restoration of our current shower houses. A heartfelt THANK YOU goes out to JC's son, Logan Carlson, for generously volunteering his week to operate a skid-steer and assist Scott with landscaping the Old Shower House and the Dow & Sparks Day Camp area.



In Memorial - Tom Piraino

By Jim Austin

Tom Piraino loved camp, and camp has lost a great friend far too soon, as Tom passed away on March 22 at the too young age of 74. Tom first came to Camp Hayo-Went-Ha as a Bush Ranger from Cleveland, Ohio in the mid 1960's. With an ever-present smile and kind disposition, he made friends quickly and easily, and enjoyed camp and his Canadian canoe adventure that he returned to camp each year as an impactful leader through 1972.

I first met Tom the summer of 1969, when he was my counselor for about 5 days. It was the first summer of the Outpost trip, in which would spend nearly 3 weeks on the shores of Lake Superior. Tom had to leave camp early, and just worked with us before we left, but

that was all the impact it took to know this was a person who would be someone to listen to, to heed and to emulate. I had a lot of those folks that summer – the boundless enthusiasm, curiosity and encouragement of Steve Foley; the strong determination of Sam Zainea and Moose Houston; the stoicism and thoughtfulness of Tom Bartley. But Tom Piraino brought kindness, patience and support with the most sincere smile I have ever known. We hiked 52 miles around Torch Lake that summer in two days, and I was by Tom's side for most of it. With endless stories, songs and encouragement, he made a trek that could have been drudgery and misery into a nice, albeit long and hard, walk that at the end, made me proud of the accomplishment and full of admiration for Tom's style of leadership. He may have tired of my asking, but I never tired of his letting me know that "how much farther" was "just over the hill and around the next bend", an answer that my kids and grandkids know all too well, thanks to Tom.

I was lucky enough to find Tom as my counselor the following summer for the Bush Ranger trip into Canada, paired with another now lifelong friend, Tim Kohr. They led 17 campers in 7 canoes up and down the rivers and lakes and across the portages, testing the limits of much rougher and more diverse bunch of campers, but again, Tom had the uncanny ability to find the ray of light in the downpour, coax you to the end of the trail with the 80 pound canoe on your head, or make you feel that the tenth day on Seidel's dehydrated food was a feast. Tom and Tim (along with assistant Jeff Steeres) were able to mold that rag tag bunch into a team, helping each other through the tough spots, and again, relishing in our accomplishment at the end.

I didn't get to have Tom as a counselor again at camp, but with his close friends Tom Barson as my leader in 1971 and Steve Foley again in 1972, he was never far off, and was talked about often. No matter how long it was between meetings, which may have been 10 years at times, we were always able to pick up just where we left off, with Tom's infectious laugh and our stories of shared adventures. Then a dozen or so years ago, Louise and I fell into the habit of meeting up whenever Tom and his equally wonderful wife Barbara were up on Lake Michigan, making the occasional trip to Cleveland and settling into four good friends looking forward to the next time together.

Tom was also brilliant. After undergrad at Allegheny College and Cornell Law School, Tom returned to Cleveland to work in the legal department of Parker Hannifin Corporation, where he was a lawyer for rocket scientists. He worked at Parker 33 years, 16 of which he served as their General Counsel and Secretary. Tom retired from Parker in 2014, but maintained a role as their Historian, and published two books about the history of the company.

After law school, Tom moved to an apartment complex in Cleveland. One day, after accidentally dropping his keys down the apartment elevator shaft, Tom met an annoyed front desk receptionist named Barbara, whom he asked to help retrieve his keys. It was only up from there. Tom married Barbara, the love of his life, in 1976. Together they shared a wonderful life and enjoyed raising their three girls.

Regular donors to YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camps over the years, in 2015, Tom and Barbara wanted to do more for kids that otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend camp. They added an additional \$25,000 annual matching challenge to the established Cook Campership Challenge. That summer, with the Piraino funds, the \$20,000 Cook funds and a grant from the YMCA of the USA for \$12,000, a challenge was given to our camp community: if a donor contributed at least \$750, that donation would be matched to create a \$1,500 donation, which would send a deserving child to camp for two weeks. The challenge was met that year, raising \$114,000 in camperships, and the Cook/Piraino Campership Challenge was rolling. Each following year, Tom and Barbara have provided matching funds and the Challenge has helped send a couple hundred happy kids to camp. Along with the Challenge, Tom and Barbara generously supported the Healthy Camps Capital Campaign and have established a campership fund for LC's that have come through

the camp ranks on camperships and have shown leadership potential. An amazing legacy of giving back to a place and a community that has meant so much to Tom.

Tom was my counselor first in 1969, and continued to be my counselor, mentor and friend for the next 55 years. He was one of the kindest, nicest souls I have ever known. I will miss him dearly, but cherish my memories and continue to share them regularly. Fellow staff members and campers remember Tom as one of the nicest and kindest people they have ever met:

I met Tom at HWH in June, 1968. I was an inexperienced VIKING counselor who wondered at the time what I had signed up for as I began the summer on Torch Lake as a Y staff member. I was assigned to Cabin #9. Tom was assigned to Cabin #10. In so many ways, he guided me through those first 4 weeks with care, compassion, and kindness. He was genuine. He was a friend to many. He holds a special spot in this rookie counselor's heart from Indiana. *Bob Ulrich*

Tom was a true friend as fellow counselor at HWH and all these years since ... an amazing enthusiasm for the gift of life ... he was a gift to us all. Four strong winds. *Bob Calhoun*

Tom had a major impact on my life. I met him my first summer at HWH and his perennial enthusiasm for life set the tone for me. God bless him. He was a real gift to us all. *Steve Foley*

I had the absolute joy of having Tom as my counselor two summers in a row: 1970 and '71. He was the gold standard, then, of counselors, and I was fortunate enough to have him as a gold standard friend for the last 50 years. *Dave Martin*

Tom is one of the kindest, gentlest souls ever put on the planet. *Dick Sammis*

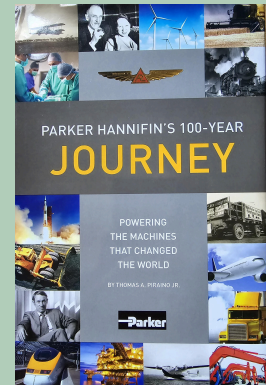
I've always counted myself lucky that I worked with him at camp and got to enjoy all that kindness, caring and understated sense of humor. I've recalled his laughter at times when I needed something to feel good about. I remember having a conversation with him about God one starry night and the time we invited Earl, a poor old man from Central Lake, to join us for lunch at camp and to play his fiddle in the old dining hall. That didn't go so well but at least we took the opportunity to make him feel included. All in all, Tom was one of the best counselors and best persons who have passed through my life. I'm glad to learn more today about his many talents, his vocations and the beautiful family he enjoyed. God is love, Tom. *Jim Asselin*

Tom was one of my counselors with Steve Foley when I was an assistant counselor. We did the Outpost together with a fabulous group of campers. (I think one of the best groups ever at HWH) He taught me a lot while working with him. *Skip Merten*

One of the nicest guys. Always had a smile on his face. He was always on Viking Hill so I never got to trip with him. It is very hard to explain to people who never had the chance to experience Camp what it means. We who did carry it with us the rest of our lives. *Jerry Fine*

He was as patient and loyal a friend as can be imagined, and his friendship helped to steer my life. I had known Tom since first grade. And I had no friend, of any duration, who was as kind or loyal or generous or forbearing or forgiving -- and as my friend he had to be all of those things. *Tom Barson*

[Click here](#) for his obituary



Alumni Corner

By Hadley Robinson, Alumni Task Force Chair

There's a lot of good reasons to wear a camp shirt or hoody even when you're not at camp. You're repping one of your favorite places, it's probably pretty worn-in and comfortable, and it may even still have the lingering scent of a campfire on it! But, in my opinion, the best reason is that it could make you more recognizable to other camp people out in the world.

I've had some amazing encounters over the years because either I or somebody else was wearing a camp shirt — from the streets of San Francisco, to a grocery store in Virginia. My favorite was on the trail in the White Mountains of New Hampshire back in 2020. I was backpacking with a couple of friends, wearing my t-shirt with the classic logo on front and instead of the usual trail "hello" from a couple of guys we passed, I got a "Hayo-Went-Ha! I went there as a kid!" It can be a great way to connect and befriend alumni from across the years.

Of course, there's also some good opportunities to intentionally connect with HWH or AWHW alumni this year. If you're up in Northern Michigan this summer, save the date of July 19, 2024 for a casual gathering at Short's Pull Barn in Elk Rapids. More details to come, but it's a great chance to enjoy a beverage and chit chat with board members and our camp directors as well as other camp friends.

And remember, we're celebrating 110 years of camping at Arbutus and 120 years of camping at Torch August 23-25. Save a spot for you and yours by [registering here now!](#) I hear there's going to be custom-designed shirts! And you'll need that for your future random encounters.

Do you have a random HWH encounter? Tell us in an email: alumnitaskforce@gmail.com.

Alumni Spotlight

By Hadley Robinson, Alumni Task Force Chair

MARNI BREWSTER -- Camp era: 90s-2000s

As camp people, I'm sure there are times you've wanted to look up a good hike or walk around town. And that may have led you to AllTrails, an app with information and maps of over 400,000 trails that was recently named by Apple as the best app of 2023. The cool thing is there's an HWH alumnus behind lots of those features. We chatted with her about her work, and how camp influenced her career.

Q: Marni, how do you spend your work days?

A: I am a Senior Software Engineer at AllTrails, and I work on our web app. My days are spent coding new features and improving our current user experience.

Q: Can you tell us a little more about the trails?

A: We have trails all over the world, and our apps are available in 14 languages. AllTrails is a tool that individual people use and love, but we also have administrator-focused tools for folks who work in state and national/provincial parks around the globe! Some people use our app to find a quick trail/walk/roll in a big city, some use it to plan weeks-long backcountry trips, and some use it to find off-road driving routes.

Q: What are you most proud of?

A: I am most proud of working on the accessibility of our web apps. One of our core mottos at AllTrails is "All are welcome." I love that we work hard to help people get outside so that they can enjoy nature. One example of this is making sure that our apps provide the same experience for someone who uses a screen reader and someone who doesn't. We try to extend that motto into finding suitable trails as well: we offer the ability to filter trails based on if they are wheelchair friendly, paved, stroller friendly, etc.

Q: Do you think camp in any way contributed to your desire to have this job, and did it make you more qualified to do it?

A: My experience as a camper and counselor contributed not only to my interest in working at AllTrails, but I, like many of my coworkers, can draw on my outdoor experience to understand the needs of our customers. Camp taught me about overcoming physical and mental challenges, learning to work as a team, the importance of singing and laughing through difficult moments, and staying humble. I love knowing that my work is helping more people experience that.

*Thanks Marni for being a part of our first alumni spotlight! Learn more about what our alumni do for a living on our new [HWH Camps Alumni Networking Group](#) on LinkedIn. If you have an idea for somebody to feature for our alumni spotlight in upcoming editions of the *Whispering Pines*, please drop us a line at alumnitaskforce@gmail.com.*

Pictured below is Marni on Isle Royale in 1997 and Marni today visiting the Oregon coast.



HWH Camps Event Calendar - Save the Dates

Operation Spring Spruce Up - Work weekends

HWH weekend - May 3rd through 5th

AHWH work weekend - May 17th through 19th

Alumni Celebration Weekend

Celebrate 110 and 120 years of HWH Camping
August 23rd - 25th

Annual Tailgate Event

UM v MSU tailgate

October 26th at UM

Registration Update!

As of April 5th, the Arbutus site is at 89% of the enrollment goal, and the Torch Lake site is at 84%. We still have openings in several programs! To see the most current openings in real time, [please click here](#). While some of our programs have reached capacity, many are quickly approaching full enrollment. If you haven't secured your spot yet, we encourage you to act swiftly to ensure your participation. For detailed descriptions of each program and to register, [click here](#) to go to the website.

Please considering forwarding this issue of Whispering Pines to friends, family members and others in your network that might consider making an investment in our camps!

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