

Whispering Pines



HAYO-WENT-HA CAMPS
Arbutus Lake for Girls • Torch Lake for Boys
State YMCA of Michigan



JULY 2024

Musings and Meanderings...

By John (JC) Carlson, CEO

Traditions: The Seeds of Our Future

Albert Einstein once said, "The future is an unknown but a somewhat predictable unknown. To look to the future, we must first look back upon the past. That is where the seeds of the future were planted." Our camp traditions have indeed sown seeds that cultivate a remarkable culture at both camps. Here, campers rise to challenges, achieve personal milestones through these time-honored practices, and develop character that prepares them for their futures. Our alumni frequently attest, "My experiences at camp shaped who I am today." In this edition of *Whispering Pines*, I am eager to share and reinforce the seeds planted over the years, along with updates showing how traditions are blossoming across all corners of HWH Camps.

Tradition of Relationship Building: Hayo-Went-Ha Camps Prioritizes the Power of Relationships

There are moments when I wish parents could witness firsthand the incredible spirit of camaraderie that defines our camp experiences. One notable tradition, led by the Girls Camp, is their warm welcome party upon the return of busses or vans from trips. It's truly inspiring to witness the entire AHWH Camp community gather to welcome back their returning campers and celebrate their accomplishments. As the bus horn signals their arrival, girls step off with huge smiles, greeted by many heartfelt hugs and cheers of excitement.





Meanwhile, as we strive for consistency across both camps, the Boys Camp recently celebrated the return of their Killarney Trip campers from a thrilling canoe camping expedition in Canada. The campers were welcomed with a festive reception line and enthusiastic cheers — a moment that undoubtedly left a lasting impression on them, experiencing such a heartfelt welcome back.

Tradition of Opening & Closing Campfire: Back in Bonbright Lodge for the First Time Since Summer 2019

Tradition at camp transcends mere nostalgia; it forms the bedrock for future experiences. At Camp HWH for Boys and Camp 'AHHW for Girls, our traditions weave a tapestry of shared memories and values, uniting generations of campers and staff. From the daily flag raising to the traditional opening and closing campfires, these rituals nurture a profound sense of belonging and community. In 2024, at Boys Camp, we celebrated the return of a cherished tradition: the opening and closing campfires at Bonbright Lodge, a tradition which had been paused since 2019. This revival holds deep significance for our community. Likewise, at Girls Camp, the echoes of songs and skits resonate across Arbutus Lake, affirming how campfire traditions leave an indelible mark on friendships and countless memories.



Tradition Of Wilderness Tripping: Killarney Campers Learn Important Life Lessons

The trip experience has always been a cornerstone of our overall camp program, providing age-appropriate challenges, fostering cabin bonding through shared adventures, and offering unforgettable time spent in beautiful state and national parks across Michigan, southern Ontario, and Alaska.



Over the weekend, the combined three cabins of Explorers led the Chapel service. Their topic was perseverance, and they shared inspiring personal stories fresh off their return from Killarney Provincial Park. We always stress that our trip program is

designed to be appropriately challenging, with success defined by the completion of the journey and the shared experiences along the way. The Explorers' reflections on their recent adventure truly highlighted this spirit of perseverance and friendship, showcasing the profound impact these trips have on our campers. It is a great example of how we can successfully complete challenges, and it helps to have our friends there for support.

These trips are about life lessons. As one camper stated, "Just when I thought I couldn't take another step ... I took 1,000 more."



Traditions Surrounding the Camp Hayo-Went-Ha Boathouse: Camp HWH Boathouse Evaluated by a Structural Engineer; Vision of a Future Boathouse at Camp AHW

Soon, I will be reaching out to our community to rally support for one of our most iconic buildings—the Boathouse—which has stood proudly since 1904. Concerns about its aging infrastructure prompted us to commission a structural engineer for an evaluation. Fortunately, we received reassuring news that the Boathouse remains structurally sound, though it does require extensive cosmetic renovations.

The Boathouse is more than just a building; it holds a treasure trove of memories. It echoes with laughter from countless waterfront gatherings, spirited games of foursquare, the excitement of learning to sail, and the timeless tradition of hanging up the "Five-year Plaque" to revisit in later years. This magical space embodies the camaraderie and joy of friendships formed amidst the natural beauty of Torch Lake.

Our vision for Camp Arbutus Hayo-Went-Ha is to honor and amplify these traditions by constructing a new Boathouse at the waterfront in the future—the seeds of the past helping to grow our future.

Tradition of the Cabin Plaque: It's a Cabin Plaque Year and the Kids Are Excited

A cherished tradition at Hayo-Went-Ha Camps that I deeply admire is the "plaque years," celebrated in years ending with a 3 or 4. These special occasions pay homage to the founding years of Camp Hayo-Went-Ha in 1903 and 1904 for boys, and Camp Hayo-Went-Ha Arbutus in 1914 for girls.



During these memorable years, cabin groups meticulously craft unique plaques that symbolize their unity and encapsulate their camp experiences. This tradition not only marks a significant historical milestone but also honors the enduring memories and bonds formed within each cabin group. The excitement is palpable as cabin groups currently create their plaques, eager to showcase them and preserve their legacy for years to come.



Tradition of the Crescent Moon Ceremony: Inspires a Reach for the North Star at Boys Camp

Since the 1960s, Camp Arbutus Hayo-Went-Ha has welcomed first-year campers and staff with a special Moon Ceremony. This tradition symbolizes the journey from the first-year copper moon to a full moon, celebrating those who reach their fifth and tenth years at camp.

This procession fosters a deep sense of belonging and connection to the rich history and traditions of our beloved camp. Each first-, fifth-, and tenth-year camper and staff member is called up to receive their moon and light a candle, reflecting the enduring glow of camp history. This ceremony not only honors their commitment but also illuminates the lasting legacy of Camp Arbutus Hayo-Went-Ha. In keeping with this spirit, the Boys Camp has introduced a North Star Ceremony, inspired by the Ladle story that underpins our ethos of "each for all — all for each."

Torch Talk

By Sal Cracchiolo

Overcoming Fears Through SCUBA/Snorkeling

This summer, we are excited to unveil some of the distinctive elements of HWH Camps' programming to our community. At the heart of our mission lies our commitment to providing transformative experiences for campers. Our aim is to equip them with the tools and opportunities to embark on new and challenging adventures in the great outdoors, pushing beyond their comfort zones to foster growth, confidence, and resilience.



One standout program at our Boys Camp is SCUBA and snorkeling. Situated on the crystal-clear waters of Torch Lake, often likened to the Caribbean for its clarity and vibrant blue hues, we find it only fitting to fully embrace this natural wonder by exploring beneath its surface. This vision came to life in 1996 with the inception of our SCUBA program. Among its pioneers was Mike Dunham, who, having been part of the inaugural SCUBA cabin, has returned as a staff member, ensuring the program's continuity and excellence to this day. In our quest to offer a world-class experience, Camp Hayo-Went-Ha stands as one of the few camps nationwide to feature a SCUBA program.

Our current SCUBA team includes PADI certified instructors, Mike Dunham and myself, Sal Cracchiolo. We offer a Discover SCUBA program consisting of two dives, introducing

campers to the exhilarating experience of breathing underwater and exploring Torch Lake's depths. Beneath its surface, campers encounter a variety of wildlife, from bass and lake trout to crayfish, alongside fascinating remnants of the camp's history, such as the remains of long-demolished diving platforms repurposed as artificial fish habitats. This unique glimpse into our past enriches the SCUBA experience, offering campers a deeper connection to our heritage.



For those not yet ready to dive, snorkeling serves as an accessible alternative, allowing campers to discover the underwater marvels of Torch Lake. Beyond the thrills of SCUBA and snorkeling, these activities are integral to our mission, encouraging personal growth through overcoming challenges and fostering environmental stewardship. One of the most rewarding aspects of teaching SCUBA is witnessing the awe in kids' eyes when they realize they can breathe underwater for the first time.

We see children enter the program apprehensive of the unknown but emerge exhilarated by the beauty they discover beneath the surface, with newfound confidence.

In summary, our SCUBA and snorkeling programs not only offer thrilling adventures but also embody our commitment to nurturing personal growth and environmental awareness among our campers. We look forward to sharing these enriching experiences with our community this summer and beyond.

Arbutus *Angle*

By Lily Coughlin

Pirates and Mermaids – Could It Be the Best Super Saturday Ever?

Each week at camp, the air buzzes with excitement as we gear up for Super Saturday. Each Super Saturday has a unique theme which is reflected in everything done throughout the day.



Whether it's Pirates, Harry Potter, Renaissance, Hunger Games, Barbie, etc., we pull out all the stops to make it special. Program staff decorates the lodge the night before and everyone dresses up in theme.

During this session, I had the pleasure of planning two of Arbutus's Super Saturdays. During 1A it was Pirates and Mermaids of Arbutus, where we did everything from sea shanties to treasure digs to a cardboard pirate ship regatta. This could have been the best Super Saturday ever! By 1B I got a little more ambitious. The theme was Mad Scientist, where throughout the morning the campers did a variety of experiments. The

afternoon then turned into Mad Scientist Gone Wrong with a zombie raccoon apocalypse ensuing. The campers ended the day with a game of predator/prey.

Super Saturday isn't just about the fun and games; it's about creating memories and building friendships. By the end of the day, everyone's already talking about what the next theme might be. For me, seeing the campers so happy and engaged makes all the planning and effort worth it. It's the highlight of our camp experience, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Alumni Corner

By Amanda Macaluso

3rd Annual Alumni Gathering at Shorts Brewery Co. Pull Barn Tap Room & Production Brewery

Come and mingle with old friends and meet new ones. Our camp directors Amanda Macaluso and Adam Delezenne, our CEO John (JC) Carlson, and members of the the camp's Board of Trustees will be there. You can hear a little bit about how things are going and where things are headed. We'd love to see you, so come by and enjoy a cold beverage on a summer's day!

There is no need to RSVP; it's a casual gathering. We'll meet at the picnic tables outside on the lawn.

When: July 19, 3-6pm

Where: Shorts Pull Barn, 211 Industrial Park Drive, Elk Rapids, MI 49629

Why: To connect with camp and each other.

Parking: Parking near the Pull Barn is limited, but additional parking is available in nearby Elk Rapids.

On behalf of the staff and HWH Camps Board of Trustees, we're looking forward to seeing you!

Hayo-Went-Ha Camps Each for All Weekend is Approaching

YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camps is hosting an alumni celebration weekend August 23-25, 2024, celebrating 120 years of camping on Torch, and 110 years of camping on Arbutus. Come join us to celebrate these amazing milestones and enjoy a weekend with friends at camp, sharing meals and singing songs around the campfire!

The celebration weekend will be from August 23-25, 2024, at both the Torch and Arbutus Lake sites, with festivities starting in the afternoon/evening on Friday, August 23 and wrapping up by midday on August 25.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Alumni Spotlight

By Hadley Robinson

ZACH GOLDSTEIN

Camp Era: 2002-Now! – Health Officer to Camp Doctor

Our camps are blessed with alumni who continue to directly participate and provide services for our youth and staff every summer. Their commitment to camp never sunsets. Zach Goldstein started on staff in 2002, and has worked in some capacity at HWH ever since, the vast majority of the time as a medical professional.



And now, in addition to his time at camp, he is helping bring the transformational summer experience to kids who don't often get the opportunity to do something like it through the non-profit he founded, Eli's Project. We talk to Zach about his advocacy and how camp has inspired him.

Q: What's your current job?

A: Currently I work as an Attending Physician at Clinton County Medical Center in St. Johns. I specialize in pediatrics, but I do a lot of sports medicine/orthopedics and work as the team doctor for a couple high school teams.

Q: Tell us a little bit about Eli's Project?

A: Eli's Project is a 501c3 mental health foundation. I started the foundation in 2022 after my son Eli passed away from suicide. Eli was adopted from the foster care system. The foundation operates with three primary projects: community outreach and mental health awareness events, organizing mental health support groups in schools, and the YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha/Arbutus Hayo-Went-Ha partnership.

Q: How is Eli's Project working with Hayo-Went-Ha camps?

A: Eli's Project will be sending 7-8 kids from the Northern Michigan foster care system to camp this summer on full scholarships.

Eli was an Isle Royale camper in 2021 and was planning on returning in 2022. Camp was an amazing experience for him and really made a difference with his mental health struggles. Camp has a full-time social worker on staff to help with camper mental health issues. He was a unique camper and was fully supported by camp staff!

I've been very grateful to my friend and fellow camp alum Trevor Emig, who has been crucial in supporting this initiative and is on the Eli's Project Board of Directors.

Q: How has camp influenced you personally?

A: Camp has definitely been a driving force in my evolution as a doctor. Working as a health officer provides amazing training on managing common pediatric illness. I've also met some of my best friends at HWH and many continue to be some of the most supportive people in my life.

Q: What's your favorite camp memory?

A: I think my best memory from camp was impersonating Dave Martin at leader follies for several summers.

Learn more about Eli's Project [here](#). If you have a nomination for the next alumni feature, please send it to alumnitaskforce@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you!

It's for the Kids

By Amanda Macaluso

Staff Auction and Summer Dreams Campership & Equipment Drive was a Resounding Success!

Hayo-Went-Ha Camps staff, with some help from the HWH Camps Board of Trustees, raised an impressive \$20,446 for camperships at this year's staff auction! This helped place an exclamation point on a very successful Summer Dreams and Campership Drive, where we exceeded our goals for 2024 (\$103,327) and have provided over 130 kids with full or partial campership assistance (representing \$250,000 in scholarship assistance) and purchased kayaks at Boys Camp and sailboats at Girls Camp. THANK YOU to our community for all your donations and support in helping us to achieve our mission. Staff Auction proceeds have allowed us to continue approving scholarships for 2024. Led by Emma Macaluso and Lily Coughlin, the event sparked an electric atmosphere of laughter and camaraderie as everyone united for the cause.



Throughout the evening, creative bidding items drew attention. For instance, naming rights to Arbutus's 4th chicken fetched \$1,300, split among 16 staff members. Other notable donations included an apple pie by Josh Moody, a crochet hat by Lauren Stern, and maple syrup from Sal Cracchiolo, which was generously bid on by one of our esteemed camp alumni, raising \$500. In a memorable moment, Matt Squires and Tristin Dougan auctioned "the hair off their heads," with the winning bidders shaving their heads amidst an astonished crowd. Matt's response, "It's for the kids," completely encapsulated the evening's spirit.

Beyond fundraising, the annual staff auction reflects the unwavering commitment and generosity of our staff, board, and community. Together, they ensure every child has the opportunity to experience the magic of camp. Congratulations to all who contributed to this incredible event — it truly embodies our dedication to the children we serve!

Kindness Spreads Like Confetti

The Dimitry Family — Helping Children Become Independent Adults

By The Dimitry Family

In our community, kindness spreads like confetti whenever we come together for our camp. Whether its raising funds for camperships, volunteering for a work weekend, or coming back to camp to help new camper generations flourish, every act of generosity strengthens our bonds and amplifies our spirit of compassion and unity. Through each Whispering Pines edition, we plan to highlight stories where kindness makes a lasting difference in our camp community. Please enjoy the following story of the Dimitry Family and how they have chosen to give back to our community.

As a family, we truly believe that one of the reasons both of our kids are now independent adults is the experiences they had at Hayo-Went-Ha Camps. The stories they had from the trips they made during camp not only made us smile but convinced us that they could make decisions on their own.

The Dimitry family are big fans of Hayo-Went-Ha Camps. Our daughter Carolyn went to camp for five years, highlighted by a very eventful Bikers camp trip (which JC, Adam and Amanda all heard about recently, lol!), and Kayakers camp trips. Our son Dustin went to camp for nine years, including the Viking camp, the SCUBA camp twice, the Alaska trip, a year in the Leadership Corps (counselor in training), and ending with a year as a counselor.



Both were initially invited to camp by friends. We'll admit, the first couple years it was tough to leave them at camp knowing they would be there for two weeks, but after that, they spent their whole year looking forward to going back to Hayo-Went-Ha. Over the years, both kids maintain fond memories of their camp experiences. In fact, Carolyn got a tattoo in the shape of her five-year camp medallion, and when Dustin left for a study abroad his senior year in college, he wore his Hayo-Went-Ha t-shirt on the trip over to Italy!

We truly believe that one of the reasons both kids are now independent adults is the experiences they had at camp. The stories they had from the trips they made during camp not only made us smile but convinced us that they could make decisions on their own.

Because of the positive experiences that Hayo-Went-Ha has given our kids, we have sponsored kids from the Jackson, MI area to attend camp for the past three years, with the hope that their camp experiences also help them to become independent adults.

Staff Scoop

By Charlotte Warren — Melbourne, Australia

International Program Makes a Huge Impact on Everyone Involved

This is my first year at camp, and although I've only been here for around one week, I already feel as though I've found a new family, just like I've known you all for years. The bond I've formed with my fellow counselors and campers is irreplaceable, regardless of our cultural differences.



This past week, I've noticed little differences between Melbourne and Arbutus. Way past the funny cereal and the Red 40, Arbutus, its values, and most importantly, its community cannot be found in Australia or even the world. Rather than being surrounded by gum trees, the Murray River, and kangaroos, I'm waking up to pine trees blowing in the wind, Arbutus Lake shining in the sun, and raccoons trying to sniff out any hidden lollies in our cabin.

When I first arrived at camp, I was met by a lovely group of internationals, a couple of Kiwis and a Brit, not an American in sight. Now I can't seem to get rid of them, but I wouldn't change it for the world.

I'm so thankful to have the opportunity to embrace Arbutus Hayo-Went-Ha's unique environment and make everlasting memories with this newfound family.

Arbutus is my family, way across the pond and 14 hours behind. I'm excited to learn so many new things from the kids, and I look forward to sharing my culture and background with the kids to broaden their horizons and impact them in positive ways.

Please consider 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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