



SEPTEMBER 2022



From the CEO

September greetings! We intentionally suspended our monthly e-newsletter (for the summer) in June, as our small team was all just a bit busy with getting camp up and

running. And now - with our first post-summer issue of Whispering Pines, we're challenged to recap everything that's happened in the past three months, as well as share all our plans for the months ahead.

What a summer it was! We served more campers than the year before, although we still haven't achieved capacity enrollment. We introduced paddle-boarding at HWH and gained a new fleet of kayaks at AHW. We held our first-ever summer gathering for alumni, volunteers and other camp friends. We dealt with a few cases of COVID but still delivered a safe and rewarding experience to all. And now - after two weeks of post-camp events at both sites, our camps lie quiet until the 2023 summer rolls around.

I remain so impressed with the impact that our camps have on our campers and staff. It's such a powerful - and so incredibly valuable - experience. Memories are made, confidence is gained and new friendships are created - all in the span of an eight-week season.

I'm more excited about the potential that our camps have to be ***even more***. With some fine-tuning here and there, we will make the necessary improvements that will result in HWH Camps being consistently filled and renowned nationally for the quality of our camp experience.

So - read on to celebrate the successes of the summer past and to learn how you can help our camps on our path of continuous improvement. And, as always, thank you for being a part of the Hayo-Went-Ha Camps community!

Dave

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

2022 SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS

We all know that there's so much more to the camp experience than just numbers. It's difficult to quantify the impact of camp as friendships gained and personal growth are tough to measure by mere numbers.

Still, the numbers help to tell the story of the 2022 summer season. Here are just a few to share...

- *Each camp had identical enrollment - 577 two-week units*
- *Almost \$165,000 were allocated in financial assistance - allowing 99 additional campers to have an HWH Camps experience*
- *Our campers and staff came from a total of 38 states and 11 foreign countries*
- *391 parent surveys completed - almost twice that of 2021*
- *HWH had a 55% camper return rate, while AHW had a 65% return rate*

What we haven't calculated are the number of miles hiked, bullseyes hit, sunsets viewed, Polar Bear plunges made, s'mores eaten and campfire songs sung. These are the true measures of a successful summer!



2023 REGISTRATION LAUNCHES ON OCTOBER 2ND!

This summer we intentionally did not enroll campers for the 2023 season on our closing days. Rather, we opted to take a little time to review the successes of the summer and to identify areas where improvement was needed. We did much more ***evaluating*** this summer – camper surveys, staff surveys, trip evaluations and (as noted elsewhere in this newsletter) a record response rate for our parent surveys. All this feedback has allowed us to be more intentional and thoughtful in our planning for the 2023 summer.

So – mark your calendars for **Sunday, October 2nd!** Registration will open at 2:00pm. Based upon those summer evaluations, we're expecting a busy few weeks as families make their session choices for next summer.



INCREDIBLE GENEROSITY FROM OUR COMMUNITY!

Last spring we identified several philanthropic initiatives that would greatly benefit our camps. We wanted to add a fleet of paddleboards to the waterfront at Hayo-Went-Ha and add a number of new sit-upon kayaks (both singles and doubles) to the AHWH fleet. We once again received a challenge grant from the Piraino Family Foundation for camperships and needed to solicit matching funds to secure it. And then, we received news of a similar challenge grant from the YMCA of the USA – also for campership funding. At the same time, AHWH staff members Cassie Sessler and Carynn Jo Randolph approached us with an idea for a hiking fundraiser, and this meshed perfectly with the Y-USA grant opportunity.

With a little trepidation, we reached out to our community with **four different fundraising needs**. There was some concern that we'd be overtaxing our supporters and would perhaps not reach our goals for any of the four initiatives.

Well, our fears were unfounded, as we reached each and every one of our goals – all within the period of two months! By the time that camp began there were ten new paddleboards on the HWH waterfront and ten new kayaks on the racks at girls' camp. Even more importantly, the campership dollars raised provided an incredible experience to an additional thirty children this summer.

Our community is amazing and we are so grateful for your support! Thank you, thank you, thank you!



A SOON-TO-BE ANNUAL EVENT!

Every summer, our Hayo-Went-Ha Camps Board of Trustees gathers (at one camp or the other) for its traditional summer meeting. Many board members spend an extra day or two in northern Michigan – and this gave us the idea for a new event.

On Friday, July 22nd, trustees, staff members, alumni and other camp friends gathered for the afternoon at the Shorts Brewing Company's Pull Barn in Elk Rapids. The weather was perfect for this outdoor event and almost thirty folks came together to reconnect, share camp stories and enjoy some HWH Camps camaraderie. It was a wonderful event that made us realize that we should do it **every** summer!

So – mark your calendars for Friday, July 21, 2023! Plan on a mid-afternoon get-together with camp friends. More details – and an invitation – will follow as we get closer to next summer.



LONG-RANGE PLANNING – A KEY TO THE SUCCESS OF OUR CAMPS!

There's an old adage that goes something like this:

Organizations don't plan to fail – they just fail to plan!

There's more than a little truth in that axiom.

The board and staff of YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camps have been working hard to ensure that our future is safe and secure. In July 2021, the organization began the process of developing a new strategic plan. The planning process concluded with the approval of the new strategic plan in March 2022. [You can see the entire plan here.](#) This document – as it indicates – will serve as our roadmap in making all kinds of critical decisions for our camps.

Our next planning initiative is to develop ***comprehensive master site plans*** for each of our camps. A well-conceived master site plan serves as the guide to all future development (of property and facilities). It helps to ensure a high level of intentionality as well as to prioritize future needs.

We have selected [OCBA](#) (of Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo) to be our partner and guide in this process. Their team of architects, planners and landscape architects visited our camps this summer for an initial review. They will return in mid-October to conduct intensive planning sessions (charrettes) at each site. Each charrette will last for two days and will engage HWH Camps staff, trustees, committee members and other stakeholders in the process. The end result will be a master site plan for each camp that will help to inform future land use, facility development and philanthropic initiatives.

There are still some limited opportunities for additional members of our camp community to participate in one (or both) of the charrettes. Please contact [Dave DeLuca](#) for more information.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN!

After two years of virtual promotional events for camp, we're looking forward to resuming our series of in-person rallies and in-home slideshows. Our camp directors – Amanda and Bill – will hold large-scale rallies (combination reunions and new family info presentations) in Ann Arbor, Cincinnati, Chicago and metro Detroit. These events will be scheduled for February 2023.

Following these rallies, our directors hope to offer a series of **home visits** – info sessions for prospective camp families held in the homes of current families and/or alumni. These more intimate gatherings can be extremely effective in conveying the mission and value of camp to new families.

We're looking for home visit hosts! If you are willing to open your home to our team and can assist in the recruitment of new families, then we'd LOVE to visit your community! Please reach out to [Amanda](#) or [Bill](#) for more information or to express your willingness to host a home visit.



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY AMANDA!

It was the summer of 1993 when a young Australian woman by the name of Amanda Pratt made her way to northern Michigan to spend the season at a fledgling camp for girls located on Bows Lake. In her mind it was a one summer "fling" – an opportunity to experience a little of American culture before getting on with life.

But then, Pat Rode asked her to return... and to return again. She was there for the '96 summer when Camp Arbutus merged with Hayo-Went-Ha. By 1998, she was the camp director and experienced year-round life (and snow!) in northern Michigan.



The '98 summer was when she also happened to meet an HWH counselor by the name of Joe Macaluso... and two years later, they were married!

There are now families with multiple generations of AHWH involvement who know only Amanda Macaluso as the face – and the heart – of Arbutus Hayo-Went-Ha. This past summer marked thirty years of affiliation for Amanda with our camps. This milestone was acknowledged at several points during the summer, including the sacred Moon Ceremonies and our summer board meeting.

We are so grateful for Amanda's continued leadership of Camp Arbutus Hayo-Went-Ha and for the passion that she displays every day. Here's to another thirty years!



Our Contact Information

{{Organization Name}}

{{Organization Address}}

{{Organization Phone}}

{{Organization Website}}

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