Whispering Pines

the YMCA HAYO-WENT-HA CAMPS
Two Camps. One Purpose.

MAY 2026

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Summer Dreams Campership and Equipment Drive

By John (JC) Carlson, CEO

Each year, Earth Day calls us back to what matters most. Connection to the outdoors, to one another, and to something bigger than ourselves. That spirit inspired the launch of our Summer Dreams Campership and Equipment Campaign, and because of this community, we are already building meaningful momentum.

We are nearing 50 percent of our goal. It is a strong start, but this is the moment where we decide to carry that momentum forward.

Demand for campership support is higher than expected, continuing what we saw last summer. More families are applying, and the gap between what is needed and what is funded is growing. For the second year in a row, we are increasing our goal from $300,000 to $350,000 with a clear commitment. We will not turn a child away because of an inability to pay. If there is a spot at camp, we will find a way to fill it.

Right now, every gift matters even more. Thanks to the generosity of the Cook Family and the McWilliams Piraino Family, every contribution is matched, doubling your impact and helping us reach more young people, faster.

At YMCA Hayo-Went-Ha Camps, I believe creating access is our responsibility, and I hope it is a value you share. Camperships open the door for every child to build confidence, independence, and a true sense of belonging. In a world full of noise and distraction, camp remains one of the few places where kids can unplug, take healthy risks, and discover who they are. Within the cabin community, they live alongside peers from different backgrounds, building empathy and friendships that last far beyond the summer.

This is about more than one season. It is an investment in young people and in the future we all share.. It takes all of us to ensure that every child who wants to experience camp has that opportunity.

Your gift today will help turn that commitment into reality.

Because every child deserves that chance.

Support the Summer Dreams Campaign Here!









Help us share the HWH Camps Experience!

One of the most powerful things about Hayo-Went-Ha Camps has always been how people find us. It is not through large advertising campaigns or promotions. It is through you.

Word of mouth remains our most meaningful way to welcome new campers. It comes from people who know camp best, those who have lived it, experienced it, and understand what makes it so special.

You know the feeling of camp. The friendships, the growth, the confidence, and the connection to something bigger. That is something only you can truly share.

As we look ahead to this summer, we still have a few remaining openings across our programs. While many sessions are nearing capacity, we want to ensure that more families have the opportunity to experience Hayo-Went-Ha Camps.

We are asking for your help. Please consider forwarding the attached flyer to a friend, neighbor, colleague, or family member who may be looking for something meaningful for their child this summer.

Click Here to Learn More!

If you are a teacher, coach, or connected to a church or community group, your recommendation can make all the difference. You may know a family who would benefit from camp, and a simple introduction from you carries real weight.

Our alumni community plays an important role as well. No matter where you are, your network helps extend the reach of camp in ways we could never achieve on our own. This is not about filling spots. It is about sharing something you believe in and helping more kids experience the lasting impact of camp.

If someone comes to mind, or if you would like help making a connection, I encourage you to reach out to Amanda Macaluso, Director of Development and Alumni Experience, at **amacaluso@hayowentha.org**. She would be glad to support you in making that introduction or answering any questions.

Thank you for being such an important part of this community and for helping us continue to grow it in a genuine and meaningful way.









Hayo-Hikes: A Growing Tradition Across the Country and Around the World

What better way to celebrate Earth Day, kick off the Summer Dreams Campership and Equipment Drive, and honor the spirit of Hayo-Went-Ha Camps than by getting outside together?

After the HWH camps alumni committee successfully experimented with several regional hikes in 2025, we decided it had potential to be a bigger and even more meaningful event. This year, we launched our first International Hayo-Hike Day with 11 group gatherings across the U.S. and one in Australia with more than 125 people joining in the fun across all 11 events. What began as a simple idea has quickly grown into a meaningful tradition, bringing together alumni, families, and friends across generations.

From coast to coast and beyond, hikers gathered to reconnect, meet new camp friends, and share their love for Hayo-Went-Ha Camps. Whether it was sunshine or a bit of rain, the energy and enthusiasm were felt everywhere. The Central Park crew definitely earned their Hayo-Hike trip shirt as it rained the whole time.

Some of the largest gatherings took place in Ann Arbor, with 22 hikers; New York City and the Washington, DC area, with 18 each; and Chicago, with 16, all bringing together strong, enthusiastic groups to celebrate the day.



What stood out most was the connection across generations. Campers, alumni, families, and staff came together, some meeting for the first time and others reconnecting after years, all sharing a common bond through camp. First-time campers found comfort in talking with returning campers, helping ease nerves and build excitement for the summer ahead. Conversations flowed easily across ages, programs, and even camp locations, highlighting just how strong and connected the Hayo-Went-Ha camps community truly is.
Thank you to everyone who participated, led a hike, brought a friend, or simply took time to be outside and think of camp. We hope to see even more locations and even more familiar faces. Stay tuned for the 2027 date and locations.

If you're interested in leading a Hayo-Hike in your area next year, we would love to hear from you. This is how traditions grow, one step, one hike, and one connection at a time.

National Hayo-Hike Day is our spring day of connection and purpose. If you don't want to do an official hike or if you are not in one of these 13 locations, you can still participate. You can host something simple with friends, or celebrate camp wherever you are by getting outside and sharing what camp means to you. Every gathering helps strengthen our community.

On April 25, step outside, reconnect, and help a child step into summer. We look forward to celebrating with you. Be sure to send us a photo of your group.

Make an Impact All Year Long With Monthly Giving

There are many ways to support Hayo-Went-Ha Camps, but one of the simplest and most meaningful is through monthly giving.

For many families and supporters, a monthly gift feels manageable. Instead of one larger contribution, smaller amounts spread throughout the year can fit more naturally into everyday budgeting. Over time, those gifts add up in a powerful way, helping us plan ahead and provide steady support for the programs and campers who need it most.

Monthly giving also creates something deeper than a single gift. It builds a lasting connection. It means you are walking alongside us throughout the year, helping more children experience camp, grow in confidence, and find a sense of belonging in our cabin communities.

This month, we have a special opportunity to grow that impact even further.

May 11–15 is Monthly Giving Week, and during this time, Givebutter will contribute **$10 for every new monthly donor** who joins our Summer Dreams Campership Campaign. It's a simple way to make your gift go even further and help us reach more campers.

Every dollar matters. Every gift makes a difference. And every monthly donor helps ensure that no child is left out of the camp experience because of financial barriers.

If you've been thinking about getting more involved, this is a great place to start. A small monthly commitment can open the door for a camper to step into summer, build friendships, and discover who they are.

Thank you for being part of this community and for helping make camp possible, all year long.

Set Up Your Month Donation Here!

Classic Camp Gear, Available for all Alumni – June 1st



Alumni from all years and both camps are invited to join the Each for All Alumni platform. It's a great way to reconnect with camp friends and learn about alumni opportunities and events.

Click here to check it out and update your profile.

PS It's also the only place to purchase camp gear featuring the heritage logos from each site. The alumni camp store will be up and running by June 1st!

Stay in the Loop!

Check out the new events section on the website.

Your one-stop place to check all the camp events for the year!

Events Calendar

Camp Connections

Do you know a camp friend who isn't receiving the Whispering Pines newsletter? Have them reach out to Amanda at **amacaluso@hayowentha.org** so they don't miss any updates.

Click here for all past editions of the Whispering Pines and some news from alumni. Weddings, Babies, and reunions…

the YMCA **YMCA HAYO-WENT-HA CAMPS**
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