

THE CARSON CONNECTION

Welcome Home to YMCA Camp Carson



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SUMMER CAMP 2024



This Summer, campers joined us on a journey into the Wild West, with a rowdy bunch of characters, skits, and camp songs.

We served 1442 campers through nine weeks of summer camp. This included two weeks of camps exclusively for kids from Military families, at reduced or no cost. This summer, more than 1/3 of our campers received some level of scholarship or subsidy to help with the cost of camp.

Our Summer staff included counselors from ten countries and nine states, all working together to ensure our campers had an unforgettable summer.

Each summer brings wonderful memories and adventures, and we are incredibly thankful to all of the donors who contribute to making YMCA Camp Carson as amazing as a starry night in the Wild West.

Camp Carson Raggers

The YMCA Raggers program at Camp Carson is an optional, progressive goal-setting program helping campers become the best version of themselves. Each colored rag is an outward symbol of an inward goal.

This Summer, we were proud to guide 221 campers and staff through the Raggers program.



2024 CARSON ROCKERS

We are incredibly proud of all of the campers who acquired new skills and accomplished their goals this year. The following campers achieved Rockers at Camp Carson this summer!

The Carson Rocker award takes a lot of commitment. To earn this distinction, campers must:

- earn all 5 levels at an activity area
- teach a counselor all 5 levels at that activity
- teach a new camper all 5 levels of that activity

Alpine Tower

Natalie Bonham

Archery

David Abate

Grace Appman

Cora Carrico

Avery Hawkins

Brooke Hawkins

Phoebe Smith

Zoie Warner

Basketball

Myles Frazier

Tristan French

Cash Northington

Boating

Lily Hogue

Sophie Miller

Mountain Bikes

Cameron Feightner

Hunter Kendall

Gus Reed

Sadie Smith

Trayce Stanton

Cayden Ussery

Pottery

Benny Campbell

Anna Harner

Chestin Kincaid

Jayce Robinson

Kayla Speten

Rifles

Evan Ellsworth

Sailing

Will Engelbrecht

Jack Helfrich

Wyatt Knopf

Max McConda

Soccer

Todd Abeln

Charlotte Huber

Woodworking

Kaleigh Collazo

Logan Kutz

Kainen Schmitt

A MESSAGE FROM JIM

Greetings from YMCA Camp Carson!

This has been an incredible year, with (literally) once-in-a-lifetime events. We hosted families from across the US for our Eclipse Family Camp, the NASP Archery tournament, Community Family Weekend, AmeriCorps, nine weeks of Summer camp, Labor Day Family Camp, three Military Family Weekends, Fall Camp, plus a record number of rental groups and schools nearly every day in between. By year end, we will serve more than 4500 people.

This Fall, we are also busy with several construction projects - we are moving the rifle range, to make room for the new Music & recording studio. Creative Arts is moving to a larger space, and a new shower house is being built to accommodate the increasing number of campers.

Every day, I feel incredibly lucky to be a steward of Camp Carson and its history.

Please make plans to come visit soon - and sign up to join us for our 6th Polar Plunge on January 25th!



Josie, Jordan, Jenni, and Jim
at the 2024 Polar Plunge



Future home of the new Rifle Range at Camp

THE MAGIC OF CAMP

"Kevin" is a camper who joined us for his third summer in 2024. In his first year, he had significant behavior issues - struggled with listening to counselors, making friends in his cabin, and expressing his feelings in an appropriate way.

Prior to Kevin arriving for his second year, our team worked with his Mother to understand his behaviors, and learned that his father died while serving in the military. All of this knowledge guided us in giving him the Camp experience he needed and deserved. In this camper, we found a kid that was longing for acceptance and had so much love to give. We found a good age group for cabin mates, and he made friends more easily. Kevin loved being at Arts & Craft - his favorite thing was to make a craft for any counselor or camper who had shown him kindness.

On Friday of his second year as campers were leaving, nearly every child walked over to say goodbye to Kevin.

This Summer, Kevin spent two weeks at Camp. He was here on his late father's birthday, and his Mom coordinated with Camp staff to have a special remembrance ceremony with his cabinmates and counselors.

With a bit of understanding, planning, and patience, a camper transformation is not only possible, but life-changing for all involved.

SUMMER STAFF AWARDS

2024 MARK KNIESE SCHOLARSHIP

The Mark Kniese Scholarship was created in 2002 by YMCA Camp Carson alum August Neal, in memory of former counselor Mark Kniese. We were honored to host Jeff and Skip Kniese at the awards banquet, and August Neal joined us by zoom to share some stories of Mark.

Riley is studying Occupational Therapy at University of Southern Indiana, with a goal of working with neurodivergent children to empower them in their daily lives, so that they can accomplish their dreams.



Riley Oakes

2024 LLOYD OUTSTANDING COUNSELORS & STAFF MEMBER

This award was created by Dr. Thomas Lloyd, a YMCA Camp Carson Alum & Bridge Builder, who established a named Endowment Fund with the purpose of awarding scholarships each year for the Outstanding Boys and Girls Counselors, and Outstanding Staff Member. We truly appreciate Dr. Lloyd's commitment to Camp Carson and our staff!



Outstanding Boys Counselor
Dalton Hodges



Outstanding Girls Counselor
Mikayla Collins



Outstanding Staff Member
Natalie Overstreet

2024 CERRITOS GATTO FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP



Lexie Birch

The Cerritos Gatto Family Staff Scholarship was established by Henry Cerritos and Donna Gatto, whose family has been involved with and attending YMCA Camp Carson for many years. The scholarship is awarded to a summer staff member who exemplifies the spirit of YMCA Camp Carson and has a positive approach with campers and staff.

This year's scholarship was awarded to Lexie Birch, who is beginning her PhD at Rutgers University in the Endocrinology and Animal Biosciences department researching Animal Nutrition.

EVENTS AT CAMP CARSON

CAMP CARSON HALL OF FAME

This year, we had the privilege of inducting two wonderful individuals into the YMCA Camp Carson Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame honors former campers and staff members who have gone on to excel in their chosen profession, have performed outstanding public service, or otherwise distinguished themselves in a positive manner.

Spencer Goodson, MD, JD, has been a steadfast supporter of Camp Carson since his first Summer as a camper in 1960. The lessons of Camp influenced his personal and professional development. His impressive career and educational background encompass experience as both a vascular surgeon and an attorney, while continuously advocating for Camp and its mission as a chairperson and member of our Board of Advisors.

Jerri Vanpatten served in the kitchen at Camp Carson from 1983-2016, dedicating many long summer days providing the campers, staff, and visitors with home-cooked meals prepared with love. Jerri's decades of dedicated service helped make memories for all the people that crossed her path at Camp Carson.



CAMP BIRTHDAY PARTY & STAFF AUCTION



The festive birthday party atmosphere was an inspiring backdrop for our third annual auction. Balloons throughout the room dangled cards with notes and drawings from former campers, reminding attendees of the value of philanthropy at Camp. More than one hundred Alumni, Staff, and Community members attended for the dinner celebration. The auction included 40 donated items with fishing trips, distillery tours, homemade crafts, international souvenirs, and camp memorabilia.

The highest-bid item was donated by our friends at Hard Truth Distilling Co, a "Get Lost" tour experience for 4, bringing \$925!

This year's Auction raised \$3,940 for Camper Scholarships!

Mark your calendars to join us on May 31, 2025!

CAMP CARSON BOARD UPDATES



As a nonprofit organization, YMCA Camp Carson is advised by a board of volunteers – many alumni, local community leaders, and business professionals. These volunteers are dedicated to the mission of Camp and the YMCA. They assist us with dreaming, building, fundraising, and ultimately supporting our campers and camp families.

Tom Elsner has accepted the role of chairperson for our Camp Board of Advisors, as Steve Witting steps down after three years. Tom has been a board member for more than 15 years, and was a former camper & staff. We are grateful to have Tom guide us through our next chapters, and appreciate Steve’s recent leadership.

Welcome New Members!

This spring, we welcomed two new board members with diverse backgrounds and varying histories with Camp Carson, who will significantly contribute to camp’s success. We are so grateful for their commitment and enthusiasm for the mission of Camp Carson. Please help us welcome these new members to our Board of Advisors.



Max Fiester
Partner, Terrell, Born,
Sullivan & Fiester, LLP



Mary Williams
Instructional Coach, Princeton
Comm. Primary School
Head Archery Coach, North
Gibson School Corp.



New – Camp Carson Junior Board

This year, we launched the first-ever Junior Board. This volunteer group of 20 campers is really excited about their time at camp, and wants to help make Camp Carson a great experience for everyone. The Junior Board will help camp by offering program, building & ground, camper engagement and philanthropy ideas. They will also be working together on an improvement project for campers and staff – more to come on how you can help! Additionally, this gives the Junior Board members the opportunity to develop their leadership and teamwork skills for their personal growth.

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

87.6%
to goal



We feel so fortunate to be able to offer camp experiences that help young people explore, grow, learn, and build lifelong friendships. The positive camp experience stays with campers throughout their life, and helps them make a difference out in the world.

Your donation allows YMCA Camp Carson, as a nonprofit organization, to offer a camp experience that builds a foundation for growth, confidence, and responsibility. Your donation helps campers in these ways:

- Funds camper scholarships for young people who may not otherwise be able to attend camp.
- Reduces camp fees for our Operation Military Support summer camp program.
- Subsidizes the tiered pricing to make camp accessible for all families.
- Helps us reach a matching grant of \$7,500 for our Military Family Weekends.

We welcome your donations online at www.campcarson.org/giving or mail to: YMCA Camp Carson, 2034 Outer Lake Rd, Princeton, IN, 47670

We are also grateful for “in kind” donations – items that you would like to give to Camp. Currently on our wishlist: Landscape gravel, golf cart for guests, lumber, picnic tables, small ice machine, scrapbook materials.

CHARTING NEW ADVENTURES

YMCA Camp Carson 2024 Annual Campaign



CAMP CARSON BRIDGE BUILDERS

This Summer, we invited our Bridge Builders to join us for special meals at Camp, sharing lunch or dinner in the Dining Hall full of rowdy campers and staff. We hosted 30 Bridge Builders with seven meals in the Dining Hall and one cookout night.

The Bridge Builders at YMCA Camp Carson are a dedicated group of donors who make a significant impact at Camp, helping us continue the legacy and mission, while growing and serving more campers.

Here are some ways you can become a Bridge Builder:

- Designate YMCA Camp Carson, a registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, as a beneficiary in your will, living trust, or life insurance policy.
- Make a tax-deductible cash, or stock contribution of \$1,000 or more to the YMCA Camp Carson Endowment Fund.
- Make a gift of real estate or personal property to YMCA Camp Carson.
- Lifetime contributions to YMCA Camp Carson of \$5,000 or more.

Please contact Heather at 812-385-3597 or hpierce@ymcacampcarson.org for more information.

FALL AT YMCA CAMP CARSON



In the midst of our Fall groups and events, our thoughts are always on Summer. We are actively making plans and starting the hiring process for Summer 2024. Additionally, our team dedicates time during Winter to attend conferences, ensuring that Camp remains a safe, positive, and memorable experience for all campers.

We invite visitors, especially Alumni to come back and enjoy the stunning beauty of Fall at Camp!

We love Fall at YMCA Camp Carson! Each day brings a beautiful blend of fall colors, AND a variety of groups and visitors. Starting immediately after the last campers leave, we host Outdoor Education groups, Family Camp, Military Family Weekends, Camp Corral Family Weekend, church events, Fall Camp, cabin rentals, Scouts, organizations, retreats, conferences, rentals, and weddings!



If your organization, family, or group of friends have considered gathering for a weekend or hosting an event, we invite you to check out the options at Camp Carson. Between the Lodge, Dining Hall, Chapel, and year-round cabins, we have lots of possibilities for a special occasion.

To request a quote for a special event or group rental, please go to campcarson.org/events.



WHAT'S NEXT AT CAMP CARSON

6th ANNUAL POLAR PLUNGE!

Five times just wasn't enough! Our 2024 Plunge was our largest yet, with FIFTY PLUNGERS! We are again taking a big plunge into a frigid lake to raise money for camper scholarships and reach more kids through Camp! Please make plans to join Alumni, Donors, Camp Families, and members of our Community for an exciting event for a great cause! Go to campcarson.org/events to sign up or support your favorite Plunger today!



Registration is OPEN for Summer 2025!



Embark on
your journey
today!

Summer 2025 is already getting booked up! Don't wait too long—last year, our camp reached capacity with waitlists by March. Visit campcarson.org to register today!

- Overnight Camp Session
- 1st Year Dirt Bike
- Wrangler
- Operation Military Support
- Wrangler in Training (WIT)
- Counselor in Training (CIT)
- Leader in Training (LIT)

We also offer financial assistance, and thanks to a very kind donor, our Foster Care camper scholarship is available for another year! You can find the applications at campcarson.org/financial-assistance

CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE CAMP STORE!



campcarsonalumni.org
click on Camp Store

Discover More at YMCA Camp Carson!

RENTALS



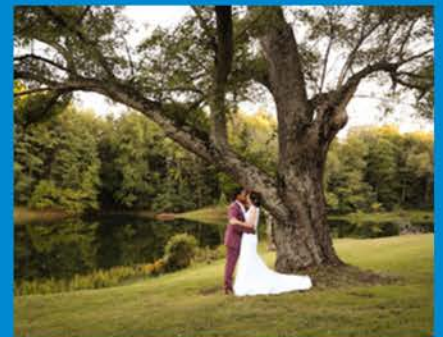
YMCA Camp Carson is the perfect venue for a retreat, reunion, corporate meeting, or team-building activity. We offer a variety of spaces, both small and large, as well as indoor and outdoor options—combining practical amenities with a welcoming camp atmosphere.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION



YMCA Camp Carson has created an Outdoor Education program for local schools and youth programs with options for day or overnight trips. We can customize the day(s) based on your school's preferences.

WEDDINGS



YMCA Camp Carson provides stunning venues for both indoor and outdoor weddings, featuring a picturesque lakefront amphitheater, an outdoor chapel, and scenic suspension bridges.

*Photo courtesy of Kendalyn Nicole Photography

To book an event or request a quote, go to campcarson.org/events or contact Ryan Meeks at 812-385-3597 or rmeeks@ymcacampcarson.org

Own a piece of YMCA Camp Carson History

Adam Fakult is a Camp Carson alum & one of our Camp photographers for the last 4 summers. He created this photo book to share his passion for camp. It truly captures the spirit of camp, and is a trip down memory lane for all of us (from any generation) who have been a part of camp.

We are grateful to Adam for sharing his love of camp, and highlighting the magic of Camp in this way.



You can order your copy
TODAY at
adamfakult.com/book

A portion of the proceeds will be
donated toward camper scholarships.

The Carson Connection is our digital newsletter, designed to share updates with Alumni, Donors, Camper families, and our local Community. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or campcarson.org for more updates and opportunities to CONNECT.



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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