



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

# **YMCA Camp Bernie**

## **Outdoor Education & Weekend Groups Programs**

### **Welcome to YMCA Camp Bernie!**

Our directors and staff members are dedicated to helping your faculty, parents and students have a rewarding educational experience. We are here to help throughout the planning process to ensure that your program runs smoothly. We've designed this planning guide to assist teachers and administrators in planning a successful outdoor education experience at YMCA Camp Bernie. This guide contains program information, support services, activity lists and sample parent forms. Please feel free to copy any of the included materials for use in the planning process.

Carefully read through this guide, making note of camp policies, school and chaperone responsibilities, and program requirements. We have included a checklist, for your convenience, outlining each step of the planning process and highlighting important deadlines for required materials. Please note our policies and procedures for any changes. We are always willing to help out in any way we can, however, we will adhere firmly to our policies and important deadlines.

#### **Mission Statement**

The Ridgewood YMCA's Mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that help build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

#### **Vision Statement**

YMCA Camp Bernie through its staff members and volunteers will empower participants through a positive and safe experience in a healthy nurturing environment that satisfies their ever-changing needs and expectations.

#### **Program Philosophy**

The Weekend Groups Department at YMCA Camp Bernie exemplifies mission driven programs and conduct. We base our centered approach on the belief that all individuals, no matter their race, gender, religion, or ability should have a safe and nurturing environment, full of comfort and support, where they may develop and grow physically, emotionally, and spiritually through appropriate challenges and interactions. Programs are designed to increase self-worth, build healthy lasting community and group relationships, develop wide spread support networks, and cultivate creativity and curiosity in all individuals, while exploring the natural world and developing a sense of stewardship for our environment.

#### **Character Development**

Programs Center around the National YMCA's Character Development Initiative focusing on four primary core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility.

# More about the YMCA Camp Bernie Outdoor Center Programs

## Location

We are a year-round day and resident outdoor & environmental education facility located on 280 acres at the northern tip of Hunterdon County. YMCA Camp Bernie has been in operation since 1957 and our Outdoor Education and Weekend Groups Programs have been serving students and participants of all ages throughout New Jersey since 1983. Located between Interstates 80 and 78 just off Route 57, our facility adjoins 550 accessible acres of county park property including scenic Point Mountain.

## Program

Our program closely parallels 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade curricula common to most school districts. It is diverse and flexible, appropriate and relevant for students ages 6 to 18. Teambuilding and adventure programs are easily adapted for utilization by teachers and other adult professionals. Our school programs have grown from 1,300 participants in 1983 to over 15,000 participants in recent years.

## Core Curriculum Standards

All of our educational programs act in accordance with the 2016 Core Curriculum Content Standards set forth by the NJ Department of Education. Additionally, we work with schools in developing a schedule of classes complementing in-school modules and learning units.

## Activities

Select from over 30 different educational activities in developing a program that meets the needs and objectives of your students and school. Recreational programs are available to stress physical education, unwind from a busy day of learning, or help balance your program. We offer programs that create and enhance a sense of awareness and curiosity in all participants.

## Staff

Highly motivated degreed professionals dedicated to our program's mission lead our classes and support your faculty and chaperones. From welcoming your teachers and students to waving goodbye our instructors are there to teach, enrich and support your students and faculty every step of the way ensuring a unique and rewarding experience. While we are available to teach all the classes, any school wanting their teachers to take lead roles in all or some of the school's program can coordinate those requests with our staff in advance. We require that all volunteer staff produce written documentation of relevant certification from recognized training institutions and receive orientation training from YMCA Camp Bernie staff regarding operating procedures, supervision requirements and emergency procedures for the particular program area.

## Food Service

All meals are freshly prepared and served family-style. While we provide quantity, we also strive for quality. For example, we use real eggs for our breakfasts, real turkey breast for our dinners served with steamed vegetables, and homemade gravy. Our on-site baker makes our baked goods such as bread, desserts and snacks from scratch. We are happy to accommodate requests for vegetarian meals or other dietary restrictions. Advanced notice is required for all special requests.

## Evening Programs

Our staff organizes and facilitates one evening program during each evening of your stay. Additional programs are available upon request though may incur an additional fee.

## Use of Facilities

Participants have full use of contracted facilities and authorized supplies as coordinated with the Program Coordinator prior to the trip. ***The use of all facilities is scheduled and supervised by Camp Bernie staff, and is subject to change at any time up to and during the group's stay.***

## **Policies and Procedures**

The following information has been gathered to inform group leaders and participants of the policies and requirements of YMCA Camp Bernie and the Outdoor Education and Group & Family departments.

### **Adult Supervision**

YMCA Camp Bernie will provide (1) instructor for each (15) people or (1) staff for each program area. We require that group's assign (1) adult chaperone for every (15) participants or at least (1) chaperone per activity group. School personnel and parent chaperones are responsible for the supervision of students during recreation, set up and mealtime, and assisting with supervision during class time. Please be sure all teachers and parents are aware of their responsibilities (see page 5).

### **Orientation**

At the beginning of each group's visit we provide an orientation session for the group's teachers, chaperones, and students reviewing procedures, camp guidelines and program requirements.

### **Buses**

If the trip coordinator is riding a bus, that vehicle should stop at the camp office, just inside the main entrance, to check in their group. All buses should proceed to the parking lot in the center of camp to unload. Please be sure to direct the buses to the "bus route" at the top of the hill.

### **Parking**

All vehicles must be parked in the designated parking areas. Cars may only be driven through camp and the cabin areas for unloading and loading. Driving through camp for convenience puts our participants at great risk of incident or injury. Please keep all driveways and roadways clear for maintenance and emergency vehicles.

### **Visitors**

It is the Policy of the Ridgewood YMCA and YMCA Camp Bernie that all visitors check in at our main office. If a parent or chaperone will be arriving after office hours we require that they check in with the on-call staff member upon arrival. Any unknown or suspicious individual should be brought to the attention of the Program Coordinator immediately.

### **Trading Post**

The Trading Post is available for purchases of souvenirs and snacks. Please arrange store times with the Program Coordinator in advance. A sample price list of store items can be provided ahead of time, though this list is subject to change based on availability of items.

### **Waterfront Areas**

The water front areas including the Pond and Pool are off limits to participants without the presence of certified camp supervision. Program requirements mandate that all participants involved in watercraft activities must wear personal flotation devices.

### **Equipment**

YMCA Camp Bernie has a variety of equipment necessary for educational classes, group workshops, recreational activities and evening activities. You may use this equipment as a rainy day alternative, an evening program or part of a regular session. All equipment needs must be requested in writing from the Program Coordinator in advance.

*DVD Player*  
*Overhead Projector*

*Extension Cords*  
*Bingo Equipment*

*Sports Equipment*  
*Portable Speaker System*

### **Cell Phones**

It is the policy of the Ridgewood YMCA that cell phone use inside any camp buildings is prohibited. Please limit the use of cell phones to emergency use only as they provide a distraction for students and chaperones during program times. Courtesy phones are available inside the main office and the program office in the Dining Hall.

### **Alcohol, Controlled Substances**

The use of alcoholic beverage and controlled substances on camp property is prohibited pursuant to YMCA Camp Bernie policies and concurrent with local and state laws. Violation of this law endangers participants. Anyone violating this policy will be asked to leave the property. YMCA Camp Bernie reserves the right to inform law enforcement as deemed necessary.

### **Firearms and Explosives**

Firearms, knives, fireworks and other weapons/explosives are not permitted at camp. Anyone in possession of these items will be escorted from the property.

### **Smoking & Tobacco Use**

YMCA Camp Bernie is a smoke-free environment. Smoking and other tobacco use is prohibited in or around any camp buildings. This behavior does not promote positive healthy lifestyles and does not meet with the Y's mission statement.

### **Fire Safety Equipment**

All cabins have evacuation plans posted as well as fire extinguishers and smoke detectors. Please do not place beds in front of fire exits or tamper with fire extinguishers or smoke detectors. Groups will be charged for misuse of fire extinguishers.

## **Weather Effects on Programming**

### **Inclement Weather**

All our programs run rain or shine. Please prepare for the weather patterns projected for the week of your trip and dress appropriately. In the event of severe inclement weather we have indoor class programming alternatives. Our definition of inclement/severe weather is based on standard definitions from NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) which include the table below:

-Tornado Watch -Tornado Warning* -Severe Thunderstorm Watch -Severe Thunderstorm Warning* -Hurricane Watch -Hurricane Warning -Tropical Storm Watch -Tropical Storm Warning	-Flash Flood Watch -Flash Flood Warning* -Coastal/Flood Watch -Coastal/Flood Warning -Small Stream Flood Advisory	-Blizzard Warning -Winter Storm Watch -Winter Storm Warning -Snow Advisory -Freezing Rain Advisory -Ice Storm Warning -Winter Weather Advisory	-High Wind Warning or Advisory
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As professional outdoor educators who teach and care for more than 15,000 children annually through our variety of programs, we are accustomed to being outdoors with children of all ages in all types of weather and the safety and well being of every child who comes to camp is of paramount importance to us. Camp Bernie staff are sensitive to the effects of severe weather on our participants and will make every effort to modify selected programs to accommodate severe weather changes. Some of our programs have alternative activities and others may require substitutions for safety reasons.

### **School Closing**

If your school is closed due to snow on the day you are scheduled to arrive at Camp, please contact our office as soon as possible. Alternative arrangements will be determined later in the day and might include postponement of the trip to a different date within the same calendar year (if possible according to our schedule).

## **Delayed School Opening**

Please notify our office immediately if school is delayed on your scheduled arrival day. We will amend the schedule as best we can to accommodate the late start.

## **Emergency and Medical Information**

### **Emergency Transportation**

The group is responsible for transporting individuals requiring emergency treatment or additional care. Camp Bernie recommends that groups provide and designate a vehicle for emergency situations.

EMS will be called in extreme cases or if the group is unable to provide transportation.

### **Emergency Phone Numbers**

In addition to these medical facilities, the Lebanon Twp Fire & Rescue can reach camp within 15 mins.

**Camp Bernie Office** (business hours 9:00am - 5:00pm) (908) 832-5315

**Emergency Cell Phone** (after 5:00 pm) (908) 399-9377

**Hackettstown Regional Medical Center** (908) 852-5100

**Hunterdon Medical Center** (908) 788-6100

### **Emergency Procedure**

In the event of an emergency, please notify a staff member immediately. If it is a camp-wide emergency, a continuous ringing of the dining hall bell will notify everyone on camp. In this situation everyone should meet on the basketball courts. Attendance will be taken to ensure that all participants and staff members are accounted for and further instructions will be provided.

### **Nurse and Medical Concerns**

Groups must designate a medical officer to be responsible for administering first aid and for distributing medication. This medical officer should be either the school nurse, lead teacher, or appointed parent chaperone. Camp Bernie recommends that the medical officer have current First Aid and CPR for the Professional Rescuer or higher certification from a nationally recognized organization and is present throughout the group's stay. Groups are also responsible for keeping accurate health history records with all necessary authorization to treat for all participants. YMCA Camp Bernie staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR including the use of AEDs. However, our staff members cannot dispense any medication to any participant.

### **Medical Supplies**

Basic first-aid kits for hiking trails and program activities are available throughout camp. Many YMCA Camp Bernie staff are first aid/CPR trained to help address illness or injuries should they occur.

### **Infirmery**

Please indicate on the Group Information Sheet where you would like your nurse or designated medical officer to stay. If your nurse requires a mini refrigerator for medical supplies, please indicate this on your sheet as well. During the chaperone orientation the group staff and parent chaperones will be informed of the nurse's location and the medical procedures agreed upon by the school or organization.

## Who is Responsible?

### YMCA Camp Bernie will:

1. Provide a clean and safe facility for all participants.
2. Provide safe equipment and program areas.
3. Provide trained instructors for all classes and evening programs as requested.
4. Provide meals in the Dining Hall at 8:00am, 12:30pm, and 6:00pm unless otherwise specified and scheduled in advance.
5. Provide a program coordinator for your group before, during and after your visit to Camp.
6. Assist in planning your schedule to assure that your experience at YMCA Camp Bernie is productive and trouble free.
7. Attend meetings in support of teachers, student and parent information sessions as requested and host a camp tour when requested.
8. Perform other duties as agreed upon by the Outdoor Education Coordinator and the school's administrator.

### Teachers will:

1. Live up to school district and community expectations.
2. Develop goals and purpose for the program in conjunction with the Outdoor Education Coordinator.
3. Communicate with Camp personnel in a timely manner.
4. Collect required forms from students and parents and return them to YMCA Camp Bernie in a timely manner.
5. Recruit, supervise and support chaperones in a minimum ratio 1 chaperone for every 15 students, or as required by the school policies.
6. Assign students to learning groups, tables, and waiter duties prior to arrival.
7. Collect medications from students and dispense medication properly while at Camp. Handle all medical related issues involving students and chaperones.
8. Supervise students at all times.
9. Perform other duties as agreed upon with the Outdoor Education Coordinator.

### Chaperones will:

1. Supervise students at all times.
2. Support camp and school staff.
3. Follow all rules as indicated by the School District and YMCA Camp Bernie.

### Students will:

1. Obey all school and Camp rules.
2. Take turns at assigned duties.
3. Participate in all activities.
4. Have fun.
5. Respect all participants, staff, and chaperones.
6. Behave in accordance with the YMCA's Character Development program, demonstrating caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.