

# STAFF GUIDE

## CAMP HAZEN YMCA

204 West Main St.

Chester, CT 06412

[camphazenyumca.org](http://camphazenyumca.org)

### CAMP HAZEN YMCA OVERNIGHT CAMP—SUMMER 2026



## A MESSAGE FROM DENISE,

### Welcome to Camp Hazen YMCA!

Thank you for choosing to spend your summer with us. We're thrilled to have you on the team and excited for the season ahead—full of sunshine, outdoor adventures, and meaningful connections. Whether you're returning or joining us for the first time, we can't wait to see the friendships you'll build and the impact you'll make.

As Executive Director of Camp Hazen YMCA, I've seen how transformational summer camp can be in a child's life. We believe that time spent outdoors gives kids the chance to be themselves, explore the world around them, and grow in confidence and independence. Campers leave Hazen with memories that last a lifetime—and you play a vital role in making that happen.

This handbook is your go-to guide for the summer. It's packed with practical information to help you prepare for your time at camp. While every summer brings something new, this will help you get familiar with our procedures, schedules, and traditions.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the camp office at (860) 526-9529 or email Kath at [kdavies@camphazenyumca.org](mailto:kdavies@camphazenyumca.org)—she's your best resource for all things Hazen.

You can also find more information on our website at [camphazenyumca.org](http://camphazenyumca.org), and be sure to follow us on Instagram @camphazenyumca to stay connected and see what's happening around camp.



Denise Learned  
Executive Director/CEO

**We're so glad you're here. Let's make this summer unforgettable.**

## WHAT'S NEXT?

### MAY 1ST

Forms Due

- ⇒ Health History
- ⇒ Physical Exam
- ⇒ Background/Police Check
- ⇒ Policies & Disclosure
- ⇒ Personal Policies

Online Trainings available

### TRAVEL TO CAMP

- Let Kath know your plans
- Connect with others

### FOR ARRIVAL

- Check the Packing List
- Medication Authorizations signed by prescriber (for U.18)

### STAFF ORIENTATION

- Come ready to play and learn. This is the time when you'll meet your friends and prepare for the summer ahead.

### AFTER CAMP

- Many staff members have already made plans to work with us into Fall. We'll talk more about this mid-summer.

### PRO TIP

- Be sure to check the Slack group regularly, so you can see some familiar faces and get excited with us as the summer approaches.

[Link to CampInTouch](#)

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### SLACK:

In the New Year be sure download SLACK and accept our invitation—email [kdavies@camphazenyumca.org](mailto:kdavies@camphazenyumca.org) if you do not have an invite. We use this to create community before the summer and to share information during the summer. All important information will also be emailed to you directly prior to your arrival.

### VIDEO MEET UPS:

Between now and the summer we'll have a number of meet ups online. These are totally optional, but they will give you a chance to get excited for the summer while learning a bit more about Camp Hazen and the work we do.

# FORMS – NEED TO BE SUBMITTED ONLINE BY MAY 1<sup>ST</sup>.

To begin, log in to your CampInTouch account, then click on [Forms & Documents](#)

## FORMS & DOCUMENTS

### 1. Health History

- This form must be completed *annually*.
- The last page is an Authorization, Release, and Indemnity Waiver.

### 2. Physical Exam & Immunization Record

- The physical examination form must be current within 36 months of your last day in camp.
- Please upload a copy of your most recent physical exam and immunization record. You may use the form we provide online, a copy of your school physical, or your states health exam form.
- In the event that you have not received immunizations, as per the State of Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, you must provide us with an Immunization Waiver. There are two acceptable forms of documentation for this waiver, please contact the office for details.

### 3. Child Protection Policies & Disclosure Forms

- Complete, Read & Sign

### 4. Seasonal Staff - Code of Conduct

- Complete, Read & Sign

### 5. Seasonal Staff - Personal Policies

- Read & Sign

### 6. Travel Form

- Complete you travel details, so we know if you need a ride from Old Saybrook Train Station

### INTERNATIONAL STAFF: Police Check

- Please upload a copy of your police check here.

### UNDER 18 STAFF Under 18 - Parental Consent

- Ask your parents to read & sign

### Medication Authorization Form—for Under 18's Bring to Check In with Medication

- This form must be completed for a person to receive any medications (prescription or over-the counter) brought from home.
- This form must be signed by both a parent/guardian AND a prescribing health care professional, even for over-the-counter medications like vitamins.
- You must complete one form for each medication brought to camp and the information on this form must match the label on the medication.
- Please review this form carefully before coming to camp. We are unable to dispense medications to persons without this properly completed form.
- The medications must be in the original containers and properly labelled. This includes epi-pens and inhalers -- often the label is on the box and parents don't realize they MUST bring that box with the label, as mandated by both the State of Connecticut and the American Camp Association.

## HEALTH CARE & INSURANCE

Camp Hazen YMCA employs Nurses who are responsible for both camper and staff health care. The nurses and a 24-hour emergency clinic are available for staff if needed. If injured while working, you are covered by the Camp Hazen YMCA Workmen's Compensation insurance. If injured during your free time or if you become ill, any expenses incurred will need to be covered by your own insurance policy. Please be sure to attach copies of your insurance cards to your health form.

The Health Lodge does stock over-the-counter medications. Please remember to bring any prescription medications that you require. Other medications (painkillers, cold medicine, etc.) can be purchased upon arrival. ALL medications MUST be left with the camp nurse for storage and dispensation—this is a State Law! You may NOT keep any medications in



## BEFORE CAMP

### Packing Guidelines

We recommend packing in large duffle bags or backpacks that can fold and store easily under the bunks. There is only a 9-inch clearance under the bunks where all luggage needs to be stored.

### Unplugged experience — No Wi-Fi = better connection

To help children develop independence, and to maintain a safe environment, Camp Hazen maintains a 'No Cell Phone' policy. We want our campers to experience living in a natural environment and reconnect with friends and nature. We also believe that not having instant access to a cellphone promotes independence and personal problem solving, as campers are compelled to find solutions on their own or ask one of our fully-trained staff for help.

Your cellphone should not be seen by campers, which is why bringing a watch to tell the time is important. During your periods off and during downtime in the evenings there is wi-fi available in the Staff Lounge in the Dining Hall.

### WHAT NOT TO BRING

Staff should **NOT** bring any of the following items:

- Pets
- Fireworks
- Water guns
- Vehicles
- Tobacco products
- Drugs OR drug paraphernalia
- Alcohol
- Weapons of any type
- Expensive or valuable items

Staff found in possession of weapons, drugs, alcohol or drug paraphernalia maybe immediately be dismissed from camp.

### PLEASE CAREFULLY LABEL ALL ITEMS.

There is a lost and found at camp, we encourage you to check it out if you have lost something. Camp Hazen YMCA is NOT responsible for any items that are lost or stolen.

### LAUNDRY

We have the ability to do laundry if an accident requires it, but there is no regular laundry done on site. You have the option to sign up for a weekly laundry service, or you can choose to go to a local laundromats on your day off.

### TIP FOR KITCHEN STAFF

You should bring several pairs of sensible shoes that are suitable for working in the kitchen. They should be cover your entire foot and comfortable.

This packing list is for a 2 week session– please adjust accordingly for the summer.

#### CLOTHING

- Face Masks
- 5-8 t-shirts
- 3 White T-shirt (*Tye Dying/All Camp Day Event*)
- 1-2 long sleeved shirts
- 3-5 pairs of shorts
- 2-3 pairs of long pants/jeans
- 1-2 sweatshirts
- 2-3 swimsuits & swim shirts
- 1-2 pairs of pajamas
- 13-15 pairs of underwear
- 13-15 pairs of socks
- Raincoat or poncho
  
- 1- 2 pairs of sneakers (*required for some activities*)
- 1- 2 pairs of flip flops, chacos or sandals

#### GEAR

- 1 sleeping bag
- 2 bath towels + 2 beach towels
- 1 laundry bag
- 1-2 water bottles
- Sunscreen
- 1 flashlight with extra batteries
- Day backpack
- Insect repellent (non-aerosol)
- Sunscreen
- Toiletries (soap, shampoo, hairbrush, toothpaste, toothbrush, etc...)
- Container to carry toiletries to shower
- Watch
- Prescription medication (if needed)
- Pen & Notebook
- Padlock for personal locker

#### USA STAFF

- 1 twin size fitted & flat sheet
- 1 blanket or comforter
- 1 pillow & pillowcase

*International Staff will be provided with bedding*

#### OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Item for Staff Auction to support Target 289
- Reading material - printed books only
- small games/deck of cards
- Items from home to share with friends
- Car—with permission from Camp Director

# TRAVELING TO CAMP

## TOP TIP...

Most international staff choose to fly in to New York City the day before, and stay the night in a hostel then travel to camp by train the next morning. I know a few staff have used this hostel before: [HI NYC Hostel](#)

All International Staff should fly in to one of New York City's major airports: JFK, LaGuardia or Newark Airport, then follow the train directions. All NEW international staff coming to us through an agency will be reimbursed for basic travel costs from New York to Camp – if you choose to take an uber, or come to camp via a different method, you will only be reimbursed the equivalent of the AirTrain route.

From the airport you will need to go to Grand Central Terminal (GCT) in New York City. For JFK - after getting your luggage follow signs to 'Ground Transportation' and the AirTrain. Take the Red AirTrain towards Jamaica Station. (The Blue train just goes to all the terminals). Take the [AirTrain](#) from JFK to Jamaica Station, it'll cost \$8.25. At Jamaica follow signs for the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) about a 4 minute walk (everyone will be doing this!). Purchase a one-way ticket to Grand Central Station, this will cost between \$7-\$12 depending on the time of day you arrive. (Easiest way to buy a ticket is through the new TrainTime app on your phone: <https://new.mta.info/traintime>)

Once you arrive at GCT, you meet up with other Hazen staff that will get the train with you. There are 3 trains departing from GCT which may have other Camp Hazen people on them, so I highly recommend that you take one of these trains. You would find each other at GCT and take the train together. For each of these options I will create a Slack group the week before so you can communicate and meet up in the city with the people on the same train.

At Grand Central Station you will purchase **a ticket all the way to Old Saybrook, Connecticut**. This will cost \$30-\$35). You will **transfer** at New Haven Union Station and board the Shore Line East train going eastbound to go to Old Saybrook.

Option 1: Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup> Metro North Train departs GCT to New Haven Union Station at **5:22pm**. We'll be at Old Saybrook Station at 7:56pm

Option 2: Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> Metro North Train departs GCT to New Haven Union Station at **8:02am** We'll be at Old Saybrook Station at 11:56pm

Option 3: Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup> Metro North Train departs GCT to New Haven Union Station at **7:30am**. We'll be at Old Saybrook Station at 10:26pm

We will pick you up at the Old Saybrook train station – it's very small – wait on the platform and we will have no trouble finding you – look for someone wearing a shirt that says Camp Hazen YMCA.

Once you have your flight booked, email the details to [kdavies@camphazenyymca.org](mailto:kdavies@camphazenyymca.org) so we have an idea of when you will be arriving.

**By Car:** From the North, Take Route 9 South to exit 8. Make a right at the bottom of the exit ramp and Camp is 1.4 miles on your right hand side. From the East or West, take Interstate 95 to exit 69 which is a connector to Route 9 North. Take Route 9 North to Exit 8. Make a left at the bottom of the ramp and camp is 1.5 miles on your right hand side. Due to limited parking, please notify us if you are going to keep a vehicle on camp this summer.

**End of the Summer:** We will finish early afternoon on the Saturday August 29<sup>th</sup> after Sampler – see your contract for date, or email me for confirmation. Return flights from New Haven, Hartford or Providence MUST be after 5:00 PM or from NYC or Newark after 9:00 PM on that day.

Be sure to call us at (860) 526-9529 or contact us via SLACK when you arrive at Grand Central so we know you are on your way!

## WHEN TO ARRIVE

Your arrival date is dependent upon your position and if you will be participating in Skills Week or not. If you are not sure of when you should arrive, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**Leadership Staff Training:**  
9am Tuesday June 9<sup>th</sup>

**Skills Week:** runs from June 13<sup>th</sup> to June 20<sup>th</sup>. This is a week to learn the hard skills needed for camp and gain lifeguarding, ropes, and archery certifications.

**2pm Saturday June 13<sup>th</sup>**  
Day Camp

- Adventure
- Lifeguards

Overnight Camp

- Outdoor Pursuits
- Water Sports
- Ropes Staff
- Quest Staff
- Support Staff

**9am Thursday June 18<sup>th</sup>**  
LGT Recertification

**2pm Thursday June 18<sup>th</sup>**  
Overnight Camp

- Creative Arts
- Land Sports

**2pm Saturday June 20<sup>th</sup>**  
Staff Orientation

- Assistant Counselors
- This is the arrival time for all staff not already here for Skills Week.

## RETURN FLIGHTS

We will finish early afternoon on August 29<sup>th</sup>. Return flights from New Haven, Hartford or Providence MUST be after 4:00pm and flights from NYC or Newark after 9:00pm on this date!

## STAFF TRAINING

Training actually began during your initial interview! We hope that you have already learned a lot about Camp Hazen and are VERY excited for this summer! It's OK if you are a little nervous too - actually that's probably a good thing because you are taking this job seriously.

You should be prepared for a week of intense training and great fun! Come prepared to ask questions and fully participate in this very important process. You will have this week to prepare yourselves for the best summer of your life! This will be hard work, fun, exciting and challenging.

### ONLINE TRAININGS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

You will be required to do an online Child Protection course prior to arrival. If you are working as a Lifeguard, there are also some additional classes to complete.

## STAFF ORIENTATION

Through mandatory pre-camp training, staff are trained to provide a safe and encouraging environment. By the time the campers arrive, you will be well prepared to help them have a safe, fun, and memorable summer.

### Soft Skills

- During our intensive week of Orientation before the campers arrive, we make certain that you are taught the best ways to advocate for each individual camper.
- You will learn to identify the social and emotional needs of campers, as well as the physical.
- Our orientation covers Camp Philosophy, Camper Management, Behavior Management, Child Protection, Village Life, and Lesson Plans, and more.

### Hard Skills

- Our staff are also fully trained in our Policies & Procedures on Camper Safety, Water Safety, and Emergency Protocols.
- Our Waterfront and Adventure staff come for an extra week of certifications and skills training, including American Red Cross Lifeguarding and American Red Cross CPR.

## PLEASE BRING THE FOLLOWING:

1. An item from your school or hometown that you're willing to donate to our annual staff auction (proceeds benefit our \*Target 289 scholarship program).
2. An open mind that is ready to learn, play, accept challenges, meet new friends and begin the adventure of a lifetime.
3. Counselors should bring a "five minute filler" activity that you can share with other staff. This could be a game, a song, a puzzle - something to do with campers at a meal, while waiting in line, etc....

## TARGET 289

Through Target 289, Camp Hazen YMCA's Annual Giving Campaign, our goal is to provide financial assistance to 289 children who could not afford to attend Hazen otherwise. As a non-for-profit youth servicing organization, we believe in teaching philanthropy. Campers will learn about Target 289 while at camp and have the opportunity to support it by donating \$0.50, \$1.00 or \$2.89 from their store account. You will also have an opportunity to support Target 289 throughout the summer, but also right at the beginning.

We have a Staff Auction, last year we raised over \$8,000!! Staff are asked to bring a t-shirt, or a sweater or something from their home town/school to donate.



# THE OVERNIGHT CAMP EXPERIENCE

## OVERNIGHT CAMP LIFE

You live in a cabin with 8 campers and 1(or 2) other staff. This is your home base for the session and where best friends are made. Your cabin eats meals together, rests together, and connects closely together during the session.

Your cabin is part of a village. Each village has a community feel to it and gives you a sense of belonging to a larger community within the camp.

## SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

7:30 am	Reveille
8:00 am	Waiter's Bell
	All Camp Assembly & Med Call
8:15 am	Breakfast**
9:00 am	Cabin Clean-Up & Cabin time
9:40 am	Skill Class 1
11:00 am	Skill Class 2
12:15 pm	Waiter's Bell
12:30 pm	Lunch**
	Mail Delivery + Package Pick up
1:15 pm	Siesta
2:15 pm	Skill Class 3
3:35 pm	Skill Class 4
4:50 pm	Beach Party
	Dickinson's General Store Open
5:40 pm	Summer Summit - Village Meeting
	Waiter's Bell
	Med Call
6:00 pm	Dinner **
7:00 pm	All Camp Assembly & Med Call
	Evening Program
8:30 pm	Showers
	Cabin Chat
9:30 pm	Taps



## VILLAGES & AGE GROUPS

Our camp is divided into 5 living groups or "Villages" that help to make every camper's experience age appropriate:

**Juniper & Maple** - younger campers (grades 3 - 7)

**Spruce & Tamarack** - older campers (grades 7 - 9)

**Oak** - (*tent village*) teenage campers (grades 9 - 10)

# THE CAMP EXPERIENCE

## LIFE AT CAMP

### SKILL CLASSES

Each week campers will participate in 4 daily skill classes. They will have the choice of activities from each of our four program areas: Water Sports, Land Sports, Outdoor Pursuits and Creative Arts. Campers in 6th grade and up will also participate in Quest with their cabin group, a program for the cabin to do team building and discovery activities together. Hazen offers approximately 30 skill classes each summer. Campers rotate between activities with others in their age group and each camper has a custom schedule.

In addition to the instructional activities, the schedule includes Cabin Activities, Village Activities and All-Camp Activities. Camp Hazen YMCA also offers a block of "Beach Party" time each day for campers to participate in their favorite activities (swimming, skate park, sports, etc.) and to socialize with other campers and staff. We believe this schedule offers everyone a variety of opportunities to make new friends and learn from a wide range of peers.

### TRADITIONAL TWO-WEEK PROGRAM:

Our two-week program is designed for campers to have the choice to specialize in specific activities from the program areas each week. They also have the option to choose a "Sampler Class" from a program area if they prefer.

Closer to the summer, we will email camper parents a program booklet and further instructions on how to complete a preference sheet in your CampInTouch Account. The booklet will describe all the activities available for each age group and campers will be assigned to activities based on their preferences. We encourage families to talk together about their program choices, but hope each camper will be able to make their own choices.

### ONE WEEK SAMPLER CAMP PROGRAM:

We call it Sampler Camp because it gives kids a "sample" of what Hazen has to offer. In each program area, we have bundled together multiple activities. Campers can choose which bundle they would like in each program area, such as Water Sports and Land Sports. Campers will select their program classes on the first day of camp.

### MEALS

Campers and Overnight Camp Staff eat meals family-style with their cabin group in Bunting Dining Hall. Each camper takes a turn to be the representative for the table. Our two-week cycle menu is nutritionally balanced and designed to appeal to most appetites. Fresh fruit, salad are always available, in addition to a daily vegetarian selection for those that require it. We are very used to having campers that are 'picky eaters', we will work with them to try a 'no-thank-you-helping' but we will also make sure everyone gets something to eat! Our Food Service Staff are able to accommodate vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, and dairy free substitution in our meals. We do not prepare any meals with peanuts or tree-nuts.



# THE DAY CAMP EXPERIENCE

## DAY CAMP LIFE

You live in a staff cabin with 3-7 other staff. During the day you'll work with our campers that come to camp for just the day,

Examples of activities are Swim Class, Nature Hikes, Creative Arts, Climbing, Archery and many more. We always welcome new and innovative activities to all our programs, so be sure to bring your ideas to share!

The campers are divided into groups based on their age. Each group has their own 'Group Leader' and they rotate through and lead the various activities with the campers. Other staff members are 'Activity Leaders' and take more of an active role leading specific classes. Counselors rotate through the various roles throughout the summer. Lifeguards rotate through these roles in addition to spending a session or two full time at the Waterfront.

Day Camp staff who live on-site are also able to experience other aspects of camp. They will participate with a cabin group during evening activity or work with the DC Staff on a Camp Community Project. Plus, Day Camp staff who live on-site may be asked to live in a camper cabin as needed.

### Examples of shifts:

7:20am — 4:00pm

8:30am — 6:00pm



## SCHEDULE OF THE DAY

7:30 am	Before Care
8:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	Drop off
9:15 am	All Camp Assembly
	Activity Period 1
	Activity Period 2
11:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm	Siesta
	Beach Party
1:30 pm	Activity Period 3
	Activity Period 4
3:30 pm	Snack Time
4:00 pm	Pick Up
	After Care
6:00 pm	End of After Care
	Dinner
7:00 pm	All Camp Assembly
	Overnight Camp
	Evening Activity

## GROUPS

Our Day Camp is divided into 3 color groups that help to make every camper's experience age appropriate:

YELLOW—younger campers (grades 1 - 2)

RED - middle campers (grades 3-4)

BLUE - older campers (grades 5 -7)

# THE SUPPORT STAFF EXPERIENCE

## FOOD SERVICE

As a Kitchen Staff member, you will help prepare over 74,000 meals throughout the summer. You'll also have the opportunity to interact with all of the campers and staff as you serve the meals. We serve all kinds of meals at Hazen, including family style meals, cookouts, pack outs for the woods and even packing out a cabin's breakfast in bed. Remember that working in the kitchen isn't just about the food, there is lots of cleaning and sorting to do as well.

The Dining Hall is the heart of the camp, and the staff that work there are a fun team that helps make camp a special place for everyone.

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE

7:00 am	Report to Kitchen Set up Dining Hall Prep B'fast
8:00 am	Day Camp Breakfast
8:15 am	Overnight Camp Breakfast
9:00 am	Clean Dining Hall Wash Dishes
10:15 am	Kitchen Staff Breakfast/Break
10:45 am	General Duties Lunch Preparation Clean Kitchen Clean Showerhouses
11:15 pm	Day Camp Lunch
12:00 pm	Clean up DC Lunch Set up OC Lunch
12:45 pm	Overnight Camp Lunch
1:30 pm	Clean Dining Hall Dishes
2:00 pm	Kitchen Staff Lunch Siesta
4:00 pm	Dinner Preparations Breakfast Preparations
6:00 pm	Overnight Camp Dinner
6:45—8:00pm	Clean up Dining Hall Dishes

## MAINTENANCE

We would all be lost without our Maintenance Staff because they hold camp together. Between fixing things that are broken, cleaning shower houses and taking water to program areas all the details are looked after. Maintenance Staff are always on the move. You see a totally different side of camp than anyone else and everyday is different.

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE

7:30 am	Day Camp Trash Pick up Water Coolers to Health Lodge
8:15 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	Water Coolers to all Program Areas
	Pick up Mail Clean Showerhouses
12:45 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm	Refill Water Coolers General Maintenance Grass cutting Landscaping Fixing repairs Painting
6:00 pm	Dinner
7:00pm	Trash Pick Up Collect Water Coolers

## OFFICE

As the Summer Office Staff member, other Summer Staff will naturally come to you with office related questions. You'll be the go to person for a bunch of things including; mail and questions on Transportation Sign Ups. You'll work closely with the year round staff and all the Village Directors. You'll be the front line of Camp, answering the phone calls from nervous parents and greeting them in person at the front desk when they come to drop off a package for their camper, etc

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE

8:15 am	Breakfast
9:00 am	Report to Office Pick up Mail
9:30 am	Sort Mail
11:00 am	General Office Work Photocopying Answering phones Filing
12:45 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	General Office Work Photocopying Answering Phones Tallying Evaluations
3:30 pm	Camp Store Inventory
4:30 pm	Camp Store Open
6:00 pm	Dinner
6:30—9:30 pm	Office Coverage

# THE CAMP EXPERIENCE

## CAMP CULTURE

As a close-knit community, Camp Hazen YMCA expects each camper to respect themselves and others at camp, as well as the facilities and natural surroundings. Our Staff will work with campers to help them assimilate to the camp community. If it comes to the point where a camper is placed on a written "behavior contract" to help address recurring inappropriate behaviors, parents would certainly be notified. The terms of the "contract" will be made very clear to both the camper and parent.

All members of the Camp Hazen community, including campers and staff, are expected to behave responsibly and appropriately at all times. Coming to camp means coming to a place of support, inclusion, and safety. Here, we teach to respect those around us and build others up in a place of diversity.

## GENDER INCLUSIVE POLICIES

Camp Hazen YMCA aims to provide an inclusive and welcoming community to all our campers and staff. Our staff represent many gender identities, and we train all our staff in gender-inclusive practices.

Here are some of our practices at camp that are geared to creating an equitable & safe environment for all campers include:

- Gender-neutral public bathrooms
- Gender-inclusive cabin options
- No activities or classes are grouped based on gender.
- Private changing areas are available to all
- Staff, no matter their gender identity, are encouraged to wear swim shirts while at the waterfront.
- Each person may choose to share their pronouns as part of our introductions
- Staff are trained on creating safe(r) spaces for queer, trans\* and non-binary campers and staff

We are in a time where we find ourselves educating many camper families on the need to normalize this type of conversation. While we understand that for some families, topics of gender or sexuality may be uncomfortable or difficult, we believe that through learning from each other's experiences and stories we ultimately create a more empathetic and welcoming world. We understand you may have questions regarding our policies, and we are happy to talk to you about them. We will, however, not compromise on striving to create a safe space for all.

## LIFE AT CAMP

### LIVING IN UNITY

Our approach is designed to help children develop self-awareness and assume responsibility for their actions. Clear and consistent, age-appropriate rules and limits are established at camp.

On the first evening at camp, each village has their first Summer Summit (Village Meeting) to meet the staff and the Village Director will go over our Camper Guidelines. Later, each cabin will establish their own community norms that are consented to by consensus.

As with all communities, we are bound to encounter conflict, here are some techniques our staff are trained in when dealing with these situations:

- Redirecting campers
- Reinforcing positive behavior
- Encouraging campers to talk about their feelings
- Role modeling how to speak and interact with campers in a positive manner
- Conversationally addressing conflict intentionally, respecting the autonomy and agency of those involved
- Implementing breaks when appropriate

Any behavior modifications, or conflict approach measures used will relate to each child's specific actions and will be handled in a timely fashion. No physical punishment, humiliation, scare tactics, or controlling measures shall be allowed. Methods associated with food deprivation or extended isolation are not permitted. All behavior coaching measures intend to support the camper with healing any harm done and strengthening their positive connections with others.

When a conflict arises, our counselors will communicate with the campers involved to understand and address the needs of the group. Once all of the campers feel ready to discuss the conflict together, our counselors will facilitate a productive conversation by providing open-ended questions and creating healthy boundaries. All campers will have the opportunity to share their experience and listen to the experiences of others; then they will work together to create a plan for moving forward as a community. We use restorative practices to help our campers take responsibility and initiative; however, our counselors still work one-on-one with campers to address positive behavior. We do not tolerate any behavior that will harm oneself, others, or the surrounding environment.

### HAZEN TRADITIONS

**Opening Campfire** – The second night of each session hosts a lively and fun campfire. You'll learn classic camp songs and enjoy an evening together with the entire camp!

**Cheers** – Singing and cheers are a huge part of Hazen culture. Each village has their own unique cheer, and love to see who can sing loudest in the dining hall. Everyone will learn all the important cheers in your first few days at camp.

**All Camp Days** – Each two-week session, the entire camp is split into teams to participate in friendly competition. Team loyalty is fierce, as campers return to the same team every year.

**Closing Campfire** - We end each session at Hazen with a closing campfire. It's similar to opening campfire and is a great way to spend our last night together at camp.

**Honor camper** - One camper in each village is recognized at the end of the session as Honor Camper. This is someone who best embodied the pillars of Camp Hazen YMCA: respect, caring, honesty, responsibility, and unity.

**Candle Lighting Ceremony** – After our closing campfire, we gather in our Robert Montgomery Alumni Chapel for a candle lighting ceremony. Here, we listen to speeches from staff on the importance of Healthy Bodies, Open Minds, and Awakened Spirits.

**Patches** – Campers and staff are given an alumni patch each summer at the end of their session with the number of years that they've attended camp.

**Milestones: Legacies, Lifers, Legends, Legacies & Luminaries-** We recognize four different milestones at our candle lighting ceremony. Legacies are campers whose parents or grandparents have attend camp before them. Lifers are campers who have been coming to camp for five summers, and this is when you receive your Hazen watch! Legends have been coming to Hazen for ten years. Luminaries have been coming to Hazen for 20 years!



### BIRTHDAYS

We love celebrating birthdays at Hazen! Each camper & staff who has a birthday during the camp session will celebrate with our special Hazen birthday song and a cake for their cabin at lunch that day.

## SAFETY

Safety is always a top priority at Camp Hazen YMCA. In fact, our first two rules at Hazen are 1. Have fun and 2. Be safe! We are focused on children's safety, both physically and emotionally, while they are with us at camp. It's important for each child to know who the trusted adults at camp are if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable. We encourage parents to talk to their children and explain that they should feel comfortable coming to their counselors with anything that is bothering them, just like they would to their parents at home. The Village Directors are also people that they can come to with questions while they are at camp.

In addition to being a licensed youth camp through the State of Connecticut, Camp Hazen YMCA is considered a Pioneer in Camping with the American Camp Association for its long history of dedication to youth development. The American Camp Association (ACA) is the leading authority for summer camps and youth development. They work to preserve, promote, and improve the camp experience. Camp Hazen YMCA is an accredited member of the ACA, and as part of our membership, Hazen must adhere to strict guidelines which include the successful completion of both on-site visits and paperwork reviews.

While our staff will make every reasonable effort to minimize known risks associated with each activity, all hazards cannot be foreseen. By participating in our programs, campers and their parents knowingly and willingly assume all risks associated with participation in a summer camp program. Campers and their parents should fully understand that even after reasonable precautions have been taken, occasional accidents do happen.

Camp Hazen YMCA recently participated in a pilot program to become accredited through Praesidium, a leader in the field of child protection, that uses decades of data and methodology practices to determine root-cause contributors in cases of organizational abuse. This accreditation process helps organizations sustain the highest standards in child abuse prevention. This will publicly demonstrate our commitment to safety and adherence to the highest standards in abuse prevention.

**Keep children safe:** [Checkout this CT information sheet on 'Grooming'](#)

## SPIRITUAL EMPHASIS

Camp Hazen is an independent YMCA. We focus on honesty, caring, respect and responsibility through sensitive and mature leadership. We live in a community that holds a system of values and a positive atmosphere, rather than an emphasis on a particular religious faith.

## MISSING HOME

Missing home is a natural feeling when you are away from home and in a new environment. Remember you are not alone, many others are experiencing the same feelings. Our returning staff and leadership team are here to help you settle in and make connections. If you feel like you are struggling, it's ok to say so—we'll help you out.

## WHO COMES TO CAMP HAZEN YMCA?

Each child is an individual with their own personal characteristics. Our camp draws campers from a cross-section of the population. Children come from wealthy families, poor families, some children are in foster care, live with relatives other than parents, live with same-sex parents and every scenario in between. About 75% of our campers are from Connecticut. The remainder are from the greater New England area and a few are from across the states and around the world. Their interests range from active to passive. Each is a special person and you will find that you learn more from the children than from anyone else. Part of your experience will be getting to know and appreciate each child as an individual.



## HEALTH LODGE



The health and safety of our campers is our number one priority. To be a licensed youth camp in the state of Connecticut we are required to have a registered nurse (RN) on site. We have two or three RNs on camp per session.

In case of illness or accident, our RN's work under Standing Orders from Dr Nicholas Condulis, MD, from Wildwood Pediatrics in Essex.

Our Health Lodge is stocked with a number of over-the-counter medications which the nurses can administer also. These medications are listed on our Health History Form.

Any other medications you need while at Hazen must be brought to camp in the original container and be (accompanied by a Medication Authorization Form that is signed by both a parent/guardian and the prescriber if under 18) All medications, other than emergency medication such as Epi-Pens and asthma inhalers, must be kept in the Health Lodge.

Med Call is in the morning and evening of each day, at the same time as our All Camp Assemblies. Campers or Staff can see the nurse if something is bothering them after breakfast, after lunch, and before dinner.

In case of emergency, we take people to the camp physician at Wildwood Pediatrics, or the local emergency treatment facility, Shoreline Medical Center – Middlesex Hospital.

For Campers, parents will be contacted should there be an urgent medical concern, or in the following instances:

- Camper stays overnight in the Health Lodge
- Camper visits the nurse multiple times with the same complaint
- Campers require a medical visit to an outside provider, if parents aren't able to take child to their primary healthcare provider, we would use Wildwood Pediatrics in Essex, CT



## HEALTH & WELLNESS

We are very lucky to have such a robust and qualified team of health care professionals on camp, we also ensure that our counselors are trained to monitor the personal hygiene and cleanliness of our campers each day. Cabins have scheduled time every morning to clean their space and organize their belongings, as well as a dedicated shower time each day. Staff also often remind campers to wash their hands, and we have hand sanitizer at specific entrances to buildings.

As campers spend the majority of their time outside at camp, campers are responsible to bring their own protective clothing, sunscreen & water bottle. Hazen Staff will remind campers to apply sunscreen & carry their water bottle regularly throughout the day.

### Ticks & Lyme Disease

Campers spend most of their time outside at camp. Many of our program areas are wooded and we expect that children will come in contact with ticks. Each child showers daily, which should wash off any tick that has not yet imbedded. It is also an opportunity for them to check themselves for ticks. Staff are well-trained to encourage campers to check themselves for ticks. For privacy reasons, counselors do not check campers for ticks. Parents will be notified of any reported tick bite or rash that appears during a child's stay at camp if the nurse is concerned. Parents should also discuss with their campers the need to check themselves regularly for ticks during their stay at camp and after any outdoor activity and encourage them to see the nurse if they ever have any medical concern.

## BEING A ROLE MODEL

Summer camp staff make a distinct impact on the lives of the children they serve. At Camp Hazen YMCA, the impact must be positive. Being a role model is a very difficult job and sometimes requires significant sacrifice. Throughout the summer we will discuss and exemplify the four core values of the YMCA—HONESTY, CARING, RESPECT and RESPONSIBILITY. Our attitude, appearance and behavior are going to be observed and mimicked by over 1000 children during the course of the summer. At Camp Hazen we teach and role model positive behavior. Clothing with advertisements for alcohol, tobacco, demeaning sayings or lewd graphics send the wrong message to our campers. The use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or illegal drugs is not acceptable. Being a summer staff member may require an adjustment to your life style. However, it is one of the most rewarding positions and experiences you will ever enjoy. Think about how great you will feel when you realize that you have had a positive impact on the life of a child!

## CAMPER CARE

Our counselors are completely focused on ensuring the social and emotional well-being of all of their campers. They take nightly notes to discuss with their Village Directors on the progress and growth of each camper, as well as their health and overall experience. Our Village Directors will always keep parents up to date on any issues their camper is experiencing.

Our number one goal at Hazen is to make sure that every camper is having the best experience they can have. We understand that some campers need a little extra support during their time with us, our staff is well trained in many common camper scenarios and know how to make sure each child is participating in camp in a way that is right for them. We believe that summer camp is a unique experience for children to improve their mental and physical health, as well as develop in ways that are not frequently emphasized in a school environment. We request that parents and guardians give us as much information as possible on their camper's health forms so that we can best serve each child's needs while they are at camp.



## WATER TESTING

Cedar Lake is a spring-fed 68-acre lake. The many underground springs flowing into the lake contribute to low levels of bacteria and help to keep it cleaner than many other lakes in Connecticut. Both the Town of Chester and Camp Hazen YMCA conduct independent water tests to ensure that the lake is safe for recreational swimming.

## EVALUATIONS, SURVEYS & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

At the end of the summer we appreciate you taking the time to complete our evaluation as it helps us to determine what is working and what may need to be changed. Your positive comments as well as your constructive criticism are needed for the continued growth of our facilities and programs and in order for us to best meet the needs of all future Hazen families and staff!

If you have comments or feedback throughout the summer your supervisor is the best point of contact, if you do not feel they have adequately addressed your issue you are always welcome to reach out to Kath Davies, Camp Director or Denise Learned, Executive Director/CEO with specific concerns. You can find us around camp or call us at (860) 526-9529, email us at [kdavies@camphazenyumca.org](mailto:kdavies@camphazenyumca.org) or [denise@camphazenyumca.org](mailto:denise@camphazenyumca.org) respectively or write to us at 204 West Main Street, Chester, CT 06412. We will respond to all communications in a timely manner and do our utmost to resolve any situation that may have arisen. If you would like to submit feedback anonymously, please [click here](#).



# YEAR ROUND LEADERSHIP TEAM

## Denise Learned, Executive Director/CEO

Denise has dedicated her career to mission-driven work. She started her career at Hazen as the Summer Camp Director. During the 90's she left camp to work as the Executive Director of the Shoreline Soup Kitchens, then returned to her current role as Executive Director/CEO of Camp Hazen YMCA in 1999. Denise is an active member of many professional networks and committees including the YMCA Independent Camp Group and the CT Alliance of YMCA. She is also a Y Guardian of Child protection through the YMCA of USA.

## Kath Davies, Camp Director

Kath joined the Professional Team right out of University. She is well known in the Camping Community serving on the Board of Directors of the CT Camping Associations, a member of the Youth Camp Safety Advisory Committee for the CT Office of Early Childhood and on a committee for the YMCA Camp Cabinet for YMCA of the USA.

Kath and the other Year Round Staff will host a number of video calls leading up to the summer. This call is designed for staff to prepare for the summer ahead, all are welcome—these are optional calls, they are not required. It will cover commonly asked questions by staff as well as give detailed information about our program for this summer. If you have specific topics that you'd like to be covered, please feel free to email in advance.

## **PROGRAM DEPARTMENT:**

Alex Learned, Assistant Camp Director  
Nicky Fauteux, Program Director  
Jake Fernandes, Program Director

## **SUPPORT:**

Laurie Bouchard, Office Manager  
Sarah Menzel, Business Manager  
Carolyn Learned, Development  
Alex Welch, Food Service Director  
Mike Learned, Maintenance Director  
Dan Feltus, Asst. Maintenance Director  
Mark Lowrey, Construction Manager

# LOCATION

Camp Hazen YMCA is located in Chester, CT. Connecticut is a small state in the Northeast United States in an area known as New England. We usually have beautiful summer weather with temperatures varying from 70-100oF (21-38oC) during the daytime and 55-80oF (13-27oC) at night. Chester, CT is located in the Connecticut River Valley. This area is known for its rolling hills, thick forests and beautiful coastline. Camp Hazen YMCA is located in a rural setting surrounded by private residences. The Long Island Sound and Atlantic Ocean are about 6 miles away. Boston, MA and New York City are both approximately 2-2.5 hours away by train, bus or car. Rhode Island (a neighboring state) is home to both Newport and Block Island. Great day-trip getaways with lots of tourist attractions and great beaches are also nearby.



Our closest neighboring larger towns are Old Saybrook and Middletown, CT. It's here that you'll find a movie theatre, miniature golf, restaurants, laundry and shopping for necessary supplies. Camp Hazen does try and provide transportation to Old Saybrook for staff on their days off. Announcements will be made regarding how to sign up for this transportation.

# SUMMER STAFF

Each session, we host 248 overnight campers entering grades three through ten. Our *4:1 camper to staff ratio* provides individual attention and quality instruction and supervision in all aspects of camp life. Our Staff is comprised of young adults from throughout the world.

All staff are chosen based on their desire and ability to act as positive role models, their maturity, their commitment to children's growth, and a love of the camp community. All our cabin counselors are high school graduates. Most have completed at least one year of college or have been an Assistant Counselor with us last summer. All our Assistant Counselors are long-time Hazen campers and have completed our LEAdership Program the previous summer. In addition, Hazen works with industry leading international staffing agencies to hire counselors and support staff from around the world to expose campers to other cultures and provide them with an international point of view.

A thorough background check is conducted on each staff member. This includes a search of the Judicial Department for convictions matching the prospective employees name and date of birth, the state child abuse registry and the National Sex Offender Registry.

There are at least two staff living in each cabin with eight campers. Our oldest campers live with one staff member and four/five other campers in platform tents. Each of our five villages is led by a Village Director. Village Directors are the primary contact for parents while children are at camp. Our Village Director team have several years of camp experience and have demonstrated a superior level of maturity and skill working with children.

## OUR PAST... YOUR FUTURE

### History

Since 1910, there had been talk of establishing a summer camp for boys from all across the state. The Senator Edward Hazen, a native of Haddam who had made his fortune in publishing, was the driving force behind the plan for such a camp. Unfortunately, the First World War interrupted these plans as the Y focused it's efforts on supporting the troops in Europe. But with Armistice in November, 1918 attention could once again focus on the home front. This was one of those times when the will and the resources for such a project had come together at just the right time. The only difficulty, it seemed, was finding the right piece of land. A seven man committee met throughout 1919 trying to find the perfect spot—something on the edge of a forest, by a lake and easily accessible from all across the State. When the Committee next met on the evening of April 7th, Mr F.A. Stanley, the State YMCA Boys Work Secretary, was appointed Director of Camp Hazen. The price was set at \$7.50 per week and the summer set up in four, two-week sessions. In the very first advertising brochure, the new director, 'Pop' Stanley, explained his plan to perspective parents — *"When the books are laid aside and the long summer vacation begins for that boy of yours, what then? Here he lives in "the great out doors", rubs shoulders with the other fellow, learns the secret of the woods, imbibes the spirit of the campfire, learns the lessons of nature...experiences which send him back home thrilled for higher attainments in his own life and conduct."*

In the early years, traditions were formed that continue to this day. Campers still enjoy campfires, cabin chats, singing, camping out in the woods, and the revered Candlelight Ceremony.

It's hard to believe that over 100,000 campers and staff have spent their summers on the shores of Cedar Lake. So much has changed since our first summer of 1920, and yet—so much remains the same. Our facilities have grown and expanded; our activities and programs have changed and developed over time. Our campers and staff, once from just Connecticut, now come from throughout New England, the United States and from around the world. What remains the same is the nervous anticipation of going to camp—whether it be your first time or your 10th; that excitement you feel when you first pull in the entrance; the smile on your face when you see your friends, the sense of confidence you feel when you push beyond your comfort zone and try something you've never done before; that feeling of acceptance when you realize that this is a place where you can be yourself; that calm, peacefulness that you feel when looking out over Cedar Lake at yet another perfect sunset.

Hazen has a long history of strong leadership. Since 1999, Denise Learned has been Executive Director, following in the footsteps of Tim Milbern, Sue Edmonds, Russ Gormley, Howard Bunting, Archie Knowles, and Pop Stanley. Under their careful watch, the tradition and history of Camp Hazen has been passed from one generation to the next.



## THIS IS WHY:

### OUR PROMISE:

Your child is our #1 priority. Everything we do, every decision we make, has your child's safety and well-being in mind.

### OUR VALUES:

Our community is based on the YMCA pillars of Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility. We use these values in our cabin groups, at meals, and throughout the day.

### OUR MISSION:

Camp Hazen YMCA is committed to helping youth develop valuable life skills through camping experiences that build healthy bodies, open minds, and awakened spirits.

### OUR VISION:

To be a time and place in people's lives that they look back on and smile. We hope we are a place where people are always happy to arrive, and hesitant to leave.

### OUR CAUSE:

We believe that children should have a Hazen experience, regardless of their family's ability to pay. Camp Hazen YMCA has instituted a voluntary 4-tier pricing program for our Summer programs.

### OUR BELIEF:

Camp Hazen YMCA is an inclusive organization. Our doors are open to everyone, from across all dimensions of diversity, creating the opportunity to learn from each other. It is our belief that, in a diverse world, we are stronger when we are inclusive. We have a culture of acceptance, and we know that it is our differences that bring us closer together.

### OUR COMMITMENT:

We will continue to work for equity for all, by questioning our personal bias' & privilege and the part we play in systemic racism in our world, in order to make camp a safe(r) space for all our campers and staff.

### Philosophy

Camp Hazen YMCA has had over 100 years of creating experiences for campers to enjoy activities, appreciate the outdoors, learn about themselves and others, and grow as people. Our impact is measured by the thousands who have attended Hazen throughout the years, who know camp is so much more than the activities done and skills learned.

We believe that the community formed during a camp session allows children to gain experiences that peers at home may not, and these positive experiences give children the confidence to excel in so many other aspects of their lives. A camp experience will bolster children's socialization skills, provide opportunities for leadership development, and help them achieve their full potential.

## HOW DO I GET PAID?

**Paychecks:** For American staff, your paycheck will be directly deposited into an American bank account every 2 weeks. For International Staff who do not have access to an American bank account, you will have the opportunity to set up a bank account during Staff Orientation where your paychecks will be deposited. Or you may have your own card like a 'Wise-card' —so long as it has a US bank account number.

The first paycheck will be distributed on June 26<sup>th</sup>, this will be for work completed during Skills Week and Staff Orientation. Staff are responsible for the management of their own money. Staff can keep important papers in their own personal locker found in the staff lounge and are advised to maintain normal safety precautions in regards to personal belongings. Staff must bring their own padlock for these lockers.

## WHEN DO I HAVE TIME OFF?

Everyone looks forward to time-off. This gives staff

an opportunity to rest, rejuvenate and explore some local attractions. At the end of each Overnight Camp session, most staff are off from Friday evening to Sunday morning. These in-between times are great for exploring New York, Boston, Cape Cod or Block Island. Regular days off are a good time for movies, miniature golf, eating out or laundry.

**Overnight Camp Staff:** During the season, Overnight camp staff members will generally have three days off per two-week session worked. Time off is as follows: one "13" hour day from 10am to 11pm, one "22" hour overnight from 6pm to 4pm the next day, and at the end of a session from Friday at 10pm to Sunday at 9am. Days and times may vary according to staff positions and actual responsibilities.

**Day Camp Staff (that live on site):** Days off are on Saturday. On Sundays when there is Overnight Camp Check-in DC Staff help with this otherwise DC Staff have some time off on non-check-in Sundays.

**Support Staff (Food Service, Maintenance & Office):** You will have one day off each week ending at midnight. The day is coordinated with your supervisor

## HOW CAN I BE CONTACTED @ CAMP?

**Letters and packages** should be addressed to you as follows:

Your Name  
Camp Hazen YMCA  
204 West Main Street  
Chester, CT 06412 USA

Everyone wants to receive packages in the summer. However, we need staff to follow the same rules as campers which is that food should not be delivered in consideration of food allergies.

**Electronics:** Email, video chats and social media are definitely the best way for friends to communicate with you. Internet access for personal phones and laptops is accessible in the Dining Hall at night after the campers are in bed. WiFi in the Staff Lounge can be used during days off or downtime.

**Phones:** You may bring cell phones to camp. However, they are your responsibility. Also, as we strive for face-to-face connections at camp, these can only be used during your downtime and time off. Campers do not bring their phones to camp.

In the case of an emergency, friends and family may call the camp office and the message will be delivered to you as soon as possible. The office number is (860)526-9529.