



YMCA - YWCA

CAMP STEPHENS  
RESIDENT CAMP  
PARENT PACKAGE

YMCA-YWCA



Camp Stephens  
YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg  
3550 Portage Avenue  
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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for choosing YMCA-YWCA Camp Stephens. Your child is about to embark upon the experience of a lifetime. Whether this is their first or their fifth time out to Camp Stephens this package is designed for you, the parent. It will provide the necessary information to adequately prepare you and your child for this year's camp experience.

After saying goodbye to your child at the West Portage YMCA-YWCA, campers are transported to Kenora by highway coaches. All campers then take a 10 minute boat ride to camp. It's a good idea to ensure your child has warm clothing and /or a rain jacket for this ride as it can be fairly chilly. Upon arriving at Camp Stephens, campers will be introduced to their counselors and cabin mates.

For the next 6, 12 or 26 days, your child will experience group living first hand. They will be part of a democratic living situation which will foster communication skills, the ability to share and the chance to develop new friendships. Of course they will also take part in a number of different outdoor activities which are an integral part of the camp program. On the final day campers will return home to the West Portage YMCA-YWCA full of stories and memories to share with you.

Every fall we send out parent/camper evaluation forms. This feedback has provided us with valuable information on our programs and services, and we have used this information to continue to improve what we do.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child's care. You have our commitment to do our very best.

If at any time you have any questions or concerns please contact the office at 889.8642 ext. 244.

We are looking forward to meeting your child at camp this summer.

Happy Camping!

## Bus Transportation Information

All buses depart and return from the West Portage YMCA-YWCA, 3550 Portage Avenue

### Boarding Time

7:00 a.m. – buses will depart at 7:30 a.m.

### Return Time

Approximately 2:15 p.m.

**Please note:** All campers must be signed in and out of Camp Stephens by an authorized person. Campers 13+ can sign for themselves, if authorized by a parent/guardian within 3 business days of boarding or return.

### Own Transportation Information

If you are arranging for your camper's transportation to Kenora yourself, please be at **WHARF A** (beside the MS Kenora) in Kenora at 9:15 a.m.

If you are arranging transportation from Kenora at the end of camp, please be at **WHARF A** (beside the MS Kenora) at 11:15 a.m.

We use highway coaches to transport the campers to and from Kenora. You may pack a light snack for your camper for the trip to camp. We will have a supervisor on each bus. Once in Kenora, we will transport your child using our own camp boats. We will provide a lifejacket for each camper.

### WHAT TO BRING TO CAMP

*(This list is for a 12 day camp – one week & four week campers please adjust your packing)*

- Sleeping bag (pillow optional)
- 2 pairs of rough-wear long pants (jeans or the like)
- 1 nylon windbreaker pants for canoeing
- 3 pairs of shorts
- 6 T-shirts or light sports shirts
- 2 long sleeved shirts or sweaters (fleece if possible)
- 1 raincoat or rain suit – VERY IMPORTANT –programs continue in the rain
- Warm jacket
- 1 pair of shoes to get wet and stay wet (an old pair of runners or sandals)
- 1 pair of dry shoes (regular runners)
- 1 hat – VERY IMPORTANT
- 12 pairs of underwear and socks (one pair for every day at camp)
- 1 bathing suit
- 2 towels- 1 for swimming and 1 for showering
- 1 pair of pyjamas
- 1 pair of rubber boots (optional)
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen
- Writing paper and pen
- Toothpaste, toothbrush, comb and/or brush, facecloth, soap and shampoo
- Laundry bag for storing dirty clothes
- Stuff sack – for age 10-16 two & four week campers (this can be purchased at Canadian Tire for about \$5.00 – it is a nylon bag used to pack your clothing for your overnight canoe trip)

**OPTIONAL:**

- Camera
- Flashlight
- Enamel or plastic cup
- Sleeping pad (for ages 10 – 16 two & four week campers for your canoe trip)

Please avoid new or valuable clothing as camp activities can be very rough on clothing

**PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS WITH YOUR CHILD'S FIRST AND LAST NAME!****WHAT NOT TO BRING TO CAMP**

- Radios, IPODS, MP3s or gameboys
- Cellphones, pagers
- Knives
- Watches – they get broken; let the counsellors keep track of time
- Personal floatation devices (PFD's) – camp provides them free of charge
- Fishing rods – we find that they get damaged or misplaced

**HOW TO PACK**

Your camper's clothing and sleeping bag should be waterproofed for the trip out to camp (in case of rain). The easiest way to accomplish this is to place all clothing and personal items into one garbage bag and then pack this into a duffle bag or suitcase. Please do not pack clothing into a garbage bag only. The sleeping bag should be rolled, securely tied, and placed in its own garbage bag (clear ones are the best as you can identify your sleeping bag more easily). Please label each piece of luggage with your camper's name. If you are packing the sleeping bag in a garbage bag, please send an extra garbage bag for the trip home.

It is not necessary to go out and buy every item on the list, use your own judgment and make substitutions. Please remember that your camper will be active, and that camp can be rough on clothes. For this reason, we recommend that campers do not bring expensive clothing to camp. As well, "MP3S'/IPODS", stereos, cellular phones and other expensive electronics and other easily damaged items are best left at home. Campers will not be allowed to use these items at camp.

**Some Packing Tips**

- ⇒ Label everything – we suggest sew on labels for clothing and indelible marker for other items.
- ⇒ Luggage – remember that luggage has to travel by car or bus, by boat, and then be carried by the camper to the cabin, so pack only what is needed for your child to feel comfortable while at camp. Please label all luggage/garbage bags for easy identification.
- ⇒ Rain Gear – good rain gear is important. Windbreakers are not generally waterproof and are ineffective as rain gear. Test yours in the shower!

**LOST AND FOUND**

When the campers arrive at camp, they are requested to deposit all pocket money, wallets and valuables with the camp bank. If your camper returns home missing an item they took to camp, please call the office and we will try to locate the article (if it has been labeled). We do not accept responsibility for any lost or damaged articles. All lost and found is brought to 3550 Portage throughout the summer. To search for a lost item please visit the camp office at 3550 Portage between 8 and 4:30, Monday thru Friday. Items not claimed by September 30<sup>th</sup> will be donated.

## **MAIL**

Most parents find that cheery letters to their camper, with the earnest hope of reply, provides the best source of contact. Campers are encouraged to write home frequently. All mail sent to your camper should be addressed as follows:

**Your camper's name (session they are attending)**  
**YMCA-YWCA Camp Stephens**  
**Fish Market Dock**  
**Kenora, ON P9N 1W2**

Out-going and in-coming mail is delivered daily. Please send sufficient envelopes and stationary with your camper. As stamps have a way of sticking together, we suggest parents provide self-addressed stamped envelopes. In the past we have found that mail takes about 5 business days to arrive in Kenora. Please do not use a private courier company as they can not reach us on the island nor will they leave packages in our mailbox.

If you get an unhappy letter from your child, don't panic. In all likelihood whatever made them unhappy when they wrote the letter is long since forgotten, or has been addressed by your camp's counsellor and/or camp staff. If you do have a concern, please call the Winnipeg office and they will get in contact with us. We want camp to be a positive experience for both campers and parents.

There is no fax or email available for campers.

## **FOOD PARCELS**

We provide your child with a carefully planned, well balanced diet at camp (see Type of Food to Expect further on in this booklet). Food parcels or "care packages" are discouraged, if sent the camper is presented with two options:

- Share the package with his/her cabin mates, with restrictions put on when the food can be eaten, e.g. not before meals or bedtime
- The package is put away and given back to the camper when they leave camp

## **HOMESICKNESS**

Sometimes campers who are away from home for the first time may encounter some homesickness for the first few days of camp. Prevention of this problem can be helped by:

- Your enthusiasm for the camp and what fun it will be
- Encouraging your camper to actively engage in all camp activities

Please be assured that our staff receives training on how to help children feel comfortable at camp and how to respond to their individual needs. These are people who enjoy being with kids and will take the time to listen. Our Senior Staff, who oversee the counsellors, have many years of camping experience and excellent counselling skills. This caring attitude is reflected in all of our staff. Should you get a letter which causes you to worry, you should do two things:

- Write a cheery letter in reply asking about the good things that are happening, passing on the news from home (take care, though, not to indicate how much you might be missing him/her or all the good times he/she is missing at home) and generally encouraging his/her continued participation in camp activities.
- Contact our office if you have any concerns. Our office will contact the camp to pass on your concerns and get back to you as soon as possible.

## **PREPARE EARLY**

Here are a few things you might do to keep your child's anxiety low and anticipation high:

- Read this booklet with your child and talk about all the activities and programs
- Find out what he/she is most interested in and get some books from the library
- Talk about what it's like living in a cabin with seven other kids and ways he/she might go about making new friends
- Talk about ways to solve problems at camp, i.e. talking with a counsellor or the camp director
- Have a friend sleep over and sleep in their sleeping bags
- Write a letter before your camper leaves for camp so it will be waiting at camp when he/she gets there
- Focus on the positive: all the new skills they'll learn, and build confidence in the skills they already have
- Bring them to our Open House

## **OPEN HOUSE**

If you wish to visit camp with your child, our open house is the last Saturday in May from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please meet at **WHARF A** (beside the MS Kenora) in Kenora between 9:30 and 10:00 a.m. We will use our boats to transport you to and from the island.

There will be a buffet lunch, tours and a chance to explore camp on your own. Camp Stephens does not have a formal visitor's day while we are in session. It can be a disruptive influence on the camp; some children do not have parents attend, it is difficult to ensure that all campers would be in camp and not on their overnight canoe trip, and the children also lose a full day of the camping program.

## **MEDICAL FORM**

By now you will have filled out the Health History Form which was attached to the camp registration form. It is recommended that parents consider any restrictions to activity or any other medical problems that the camp should be aware of, any dietary considerations (allergies, vegetarian, etc.) and please send us any further information if it is needed.

If your child is on any medication, please attach a note to the prescription, stating the medication usage instructions (e.g. – Ann must take one pill before each meal) and your signature. Please send all medication in the original container and hand it to a staff member at the bus. If after you have returned the form, your camper is placed on any medication, please send the above information and signature to camp with your camper.

If your camper has to receive medical attention above what we can provide at camp, our Wellness Coordinator will contact you with the information, e.g. ear infections, throat infections, sprained ankles/wrists, etc.

If it is necessary to obtain a prescription for your child while they are in attendance at camp, you will be called and asked for a credit card on which we can place these charges (we will also provide you with the pharmacy receipt so that you can be reimbursed through any medical plans you may have).

**IMPORTANT:** Please inform the camp (in writing) of any changes (medical, social, emotional, family environment) that occurs between filling out these forms and attending camp.

## **CAMPER BEHAVIOURAL CODE**

To ensure all campers at Camp Stephens are having a safe, positive camping experience, we have a behavioural code to quickly identify and resolve concerns within groups. Counsellors have a support network of supervisors and resource staff to aid them in situations or with concerns.

It is our hope to keep every camper at camp during session, but we will not hesitate to quickly inform parents/guardians of their camper's behaviour if it endangers their own safety or the safety of those around them. In this situation it is our policy to communicate concerns immediately to parents/guardians to find a solution. If a solution is not found the camper will be sent home at the parents' expense and there will be no refund of camp fees. Fighting, bullying, lighting unsupervised fires, smoking, drinking, stealing, swearing, hitting and general misbehaviour will not be tolerated and are grounds for being sent home.

## **A TYPICAL DAY AT CAMP**

We strive to build a better world – one child at a time. To do this, we believe that there must be a holistic approach to learning: in spirit, mind, and body. Camp is a magical experience where campers are granted tremendous independence in a safe and supervised environment.

7:20am Wake up and Polar Bear – what better way to start your day than with a jump into the lake?

8:15am Hasher Bell and Flag Raising  
One person from each cabin group comes to the dining hall to set their table, while the rest of the cabin group gathers around the flagpole to hear an inspirational thought and to sing the National Anthem.

8:30am Breakfast

9:30am Program Time (see program overview)

11:30am Clubs  
This is a chance for kids to sign up for hard and soft skill clubs in which they would like to participate. Clubs include anything from climbing to swimming to arts and crafts to drama and everything in-between.

12:15pm Hasher Bell

12:30pm Lunch

After lunch everyone is given half an hour to rest, read, write letters home, etc. back at their cabin with their counsellor.

2:00pm Program Time

4:00pm Free Time/ Fun Time

5:15pm Hasher Bell

5:30pm Supper

7:00pm Program Time

9:00pm Snack

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

To help you understand a little of what goes on at Camp Stephens here is an overview of some of the program areas at camp. Each area varies in depth and content depending on the age of the campers.

The principal unit of activity at Camp Stephens is the cabin group. We have found that an activity focused around a small group of peers encourages the development of close friendships as cabinmates play and meet challenges together. At camp we do our best to foster an atmosphere of cooperation rather than competition. If we do run an activity containing some element of competition, we focus on challenging campers to achieve their own goals, rather than encouraging them to measure their accomplishments against others.

Cabin groups choose some of the activities that they participate in and some activities are slotted in so that everyone can try all the different areas. Every day campers have the opportunity to go and try an activity again on their own or with a few of their friends. Counsellors will design a program that is safe, active and appropriate to the age level of the cabin group.

## **ACTIVITY AREAS**

- Swimming – There are three recreational swim periods per day (weather permitting). Campers have no formal swim instruction.
- Crafts – Crafts are done as a creative activity and often involve natural or recycled materials.
- Climbing Tower – This is a simulated rock climbing program that teaches the basics of rock climbing and safety.
- High Ropes Course – Designed exclusively for Camp Stephens with our unique program in mind. It consists of a series of movement challenges 35 feet up! This is a safe environment to challenge oneself both physically and mentally.
- Canoeing – Campers are provided with quality canoe instruction to develop their personal skills.
- Sailing – All campers will be introduced to basic sailing skills using Hunter 170 Sailboats.
- Kayaking – We have kayaks for everyone and we will teach you some basic skills.
- Orienteering – At its highest level, this involves the use of map and compass and at its most simple it uses a combination of clues and map orientation to complete “treasure hunts”.
- Mass Days – This is a program where the age group sections or the whole camp will be engaged in a common theme day program.
- Overnight Camp Outs – Depending on age, campers will experience an overnight campout or an off island trip from one to three nights for those registered in our two week camps. Campers will paddle to popular campsites within close proximity to Camp Stephens, learning valuable outdoor living skills.

We also offer activities like: campfires, initiative tasks, games, and singsongs, environmental and international themes.

## **TYPE OF FOOD TO EXPECT**

At Camp Stephens we follow the Canada Food Guide and we have a nutritionist examine our menu. We serve our meals “family style” and encourage everyone to try a little of everything. We do accommodate restricted diets such as vegetarians, allergies or religious restrictions with prior notice by specifying it on the medical form.

Some of the meals we serve may include:

### **Breakfast**

Cold cereal	Hash browns
Bacon and Eggs	French toast
Toast	Fruit
Pancakes	Milk and Juice

Lunch

Make your own sandwiches	Veggies and dip
Soup and grilled cheese sandwiches	Macaroni and cheese
Hot dogs and beans	Chicken fingers

Supper

Spaghetti and sauce	Hamburgers and fries
Stir fry with rice	BBQ chicken
Salad	Ham and scalloped potatoes

Dietary requirements such as allergies or vegetarianism will be accommodated if the restrictions are written on the camper's registration form or camp is notified well before the child attends their session to help the kitchen staff accommodate any needs.

We are looking forward to a great camping season with your child this summer!