



YMCA - YWCA

CAMP STEPHENS  
WILDERNESS PROGRAM  
PARENT PACKAGE

YMCA-YWCA

CAMP  
Stephens  
*est. 1891*

Camp Stephens  
YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg  
3550 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3K 0Z8  
Phone: 204.889.8642 ext. 230  
Phone: 204. 889.8642 ext. 244  
Fax: 204.889.9002  
Email: [campstephens@ymcaywca.mb.ca](mailto:campstephens@ymcaywca.mb.ca)



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for choosing YMCA-YWCA Camp Stephens. Your child is about to participate on the trip of a lifetime, experiencing the Stephens Wilderness Program first hand. This package is designed for both parents and campers to adequately prepare you for this summer'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 (we call them "Trippers" at camp) and cabin mates.

Upon arrival these trippers will facilitate the group members in getting to know each other as they prepare for their adventure. The group will pack out their food, equipment and personal belongings during their first day of camp. They will also go over canoeing emergency procedures as well as visit the camp paramedic to ensure they are healthy prior to the group leaving. Your trippers will also provide information regarding the route and go over navigation techniques. On Tuesday morning all the wilderness canoe trips take part in a farewell ceremony explaining to all resident campers what routes they are going on, and what their wilderness camp experience will involve.

Wilderness canoe trips are a great chance for all participants to develop new friends, gain a greater appreciation for the wilderness and develop a stronger sense of themselves. Trail is a place where the cliques and barriers that often inhibit teens in city life are left behind. These young adults are given the freedom and expectations to discover their full potential. This wilderness education will be life learning and an experience they will never forget.

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 how we deliver our services.

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 questions or concerns please contact the office at 889.8642 ext.244.

We are looking forward to meeting your canoeist 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 canoeist's transportation to Kenora, please be at **WHARF A** (beside the MS Kenora) at 9:15 a.m.

If you are arranging transportation from Kenora, 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.

## **WILDERNESS ADVENTURES**

(EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO HAVE A GREAT CANOE TRIP!!)

### **TRIPPERS**

All trips are led by two wilderness staff, or trippers. Staff is selected for their love of the wilderness, desire and ability to help youth discover themselves, communication, personal skills and philosophy of education. All staff has at least two years counselling experience in a resident camp setting and are a minimum of 18 years of age; the average age is 21. In addition to a one week intensive training period, staff are required to have a Bronze Cross, Standard First Aid, and CPR Certification. A trail staff member typically works three to four years as a tripper which provides both reliable and consistent service. Above anything else, however, trail staff are caring, unique individuals committed to the "Y" philosophy and helping young people learn and grow.

### **ROUTES**

Routes may be challenging, but not impossible. Trips leave base camp with detailed route information from past years, and/or from the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Wilderness Coordinator is left with a day to day itinerary of each trip with prearranged phone-in details. Emergency evacuation is ordered if the trips are significantly late for their check-in.

Each group travels between 80 to 120 km during their 10 day adventure. This means that every day they have approximately six to eight hours of paddling. Each night they stop at a different spot, set up tents, cook their evening meal and get some rest for their next day's journey. Our 3, 4 & 6 week trips carry SPOT GPS trackers to guarantee help is available at any point. On our two week trips they are within the Lake of the Woods area and cottages, etc. are always close by.

### **FOOD**

All trips carry a combination of dried and fresh foods that are planned to provide tasty, nutritious meals as well as snacks for those long paddling days. Trips also carry some fresh water and then use "Pristine or Katadyn water filters" to purify their drinking water.

## **ARRIVING AND LEAVING CAMP**

Once the buses arrive in Kenora, all canoeists are transported to the island via the camp boats. This first day includes checking personal gear and equipment, packing out food, a canoeing session, a swim test and team building. Trips leave after a post-breakfast ceremony on Tuesday. Trips return to the island the day before they are due back in Winnipeg. A return ceremony is held for them by the resident campers and the rest of the afternoon is spent cleaning and putting away equipment, showering, debriefing about the trip and a final campfire night.

## **THE “WHY” OF THE “Y” TRAIL PROGRAM**

Why do so many of our staff return year after year? The awesome experience of the wilderness is one answer, close friendships is another. Gaining a new sense of confidence in the face of challenges shared by encouraging friends is yet another. More than anything else, however, the Camp Stephens Wilderness Program is about developing people. Staff and participants are encouraged to try their best, test their limits, and explore new abilities. The learning process is reciprocal: trippers and participants develop and grow alongside one another, as the group moves together to accomplish the trip. We believe in the program’s ability to provide positive and rewarding experiences. A couple of weeks in the wilderness provides a lifetime of memories.

## **MEDICAL FORM**

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

If your canoeist is on any medication, please send a note stating the medication usage instructions (e.g. – Anne 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 it is necessary to obtain a prescription for your canoeist while they are at camp, you will be called and asked for a credit card on which we can place these charges. We will provide you with the pharmacy receipt once payment has been made.

**Important:** Please inform the camp (in writing) of any changes that occur in your canoeist’s medical condition between filling out your health history form and attending camp.

## **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 fleet of 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.

## **MAIL**

Please feel free to write your canoeist for the end of the trip. In-coming mail is held at camp until the end of the trip and is always nice to get after spending ten days on trail. All mail sent to your canoeist should be addressed as follows:

Your Canoeist’s Name  
The Trip they are on  
YMCA-YWCA Camp Stephens  
Fish Market Dock  
Kenora, ON P9N 1W2

## LOST AND FOUND

When canoeists arrive at camp, they are requested to deposit all money, watches and wallets with the camp bank. This protects these items from being lost on the trip.

If your canoeist returns home missing an item(s) they took to camp, please call the office and we will try to locate the article (please make sure that all articles are labeled). 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.

## PERSONAL EQUIPMENT LIST

### PLEASE LABEL ALL ITEMS WITH YOUR CHILD'S FIRST AND LAST NAME!

When packing for camp, divide clothes into three groups; dry, wet and traveling home. "Dry clothes" are for nighttime and around the campfire. "Wet clothes" are for paddling. Having a change of clothing which is always kept dry insures both hygiene and comfort.

- Sleeping bag and stuff sack: line the stuff sack with a garbage bag to keep it dry
- Ensolite pad or Thermarest: used as a buffer layer between body and ground
- Rain jacket and pants: **VERY IMPORTANT!**
  - Please make sure this is waterproof (not water resistant)
  - Windbreakers are not acceptable;
  - Get a raincoat large enough to accommodate a heavy sweater
- Stuff sack: for clothes, lined with a garbage bag; soft stuff sacs (these can be purchased at Canadian Tire for about \$5.00) or a 'sealine' stuff sac
- 1 Cup: Thermal mugs are good
- Water bottle: 1 litre capacity (good for long portages)

### Wet Clothes (for the day) - These will get VERY dirty and worn

- 1 – 2 pairs of nylon or cotton shorts
- 1 – 2 T-shirts
- 1 pair pants (No jeans or heavy materials): for sun and bug protection and will be worn for portaging
- 1 pair long johns: polypropylene or wool is best for warmth when wet
- 1 long sleeved under shirt; preferably polypropylene (no cotton)
- 1 long sleeved flannel or cotton shirt: for sun and bug protection
- 1 Bathing suit
- Warm fleece jacket or wool sweater- **NO COTTON!**
- Toque and mitts (for cold windy rainy days)
- Hat – baseball cap or wide-brimmed to keep noses and ears from burning
- Underwear
- 2 pairs of wool socks (cotton draws heat away from cold feet when wet)
- 1 pair of hi-top sneakers or hiking boots; these will get wet and must have plenty of ankle support for portaging and walking on wet slippery rocks (an old pair of good quality runners works well) **VERY IMPORTANT!**

### Dry Clothes (for evening)

- 1 pair of shorts
- 1 pair of pants: army pants or nylon pants are good
- 1 T-shirt
- 1 long sleeved shirt
- 1 set long underwear
- 1 warm sweater
- 2 pairs wool socks

- Pajamas or sleeping T-shirt and boxer shorts
- Underwear
- 1 pair dry shoes – light cotton runners, or sturdy sandals like “Tevas”

### **Traveling Clothes (prepare for either warm or cold weather)**

- 1 pair shorts
- 1 t-shirt
- 1 pair of pants
- 1 sweater

Because cotton does not keep moisture off skin when it gets wet, it is better to get polypropylene products for insulating layers next to the skin and wool or fleece for warmer layers: these materials have air pockets between the fibres, which serves as an insulator.

When packing for camp, think in terms of layering clothing – change in weather simply means removing or adding a layer of clothing.

### **Toiletries**

#### **On Trail**

- toothbrush
- hairbrush
- lip balm with sunscreen
- Sunscreen (with at least 30 SPF) - reflection from water and canoes makes the summer sun very intense  
\*Bring LOTS of sunscreen, you need to lather up your ENTIRE body at **least** twice a day

#### **At Camp**

- shampoo
- soap
- lotion
- deodorant
- towel

#### **Optional**

- sunglasses
- flashlight or headlamp
- camera and film in waterproof containers
- bumpack to carry small personal stuff
- journal and pen
- 1 good book
- crafts (embroidery, thread, seed beads)
- mosquito repellent - non-aerosol, consider citrus based repellents since DEET products (i.e. Muskol) are quite strong (they melt plastic) or a bug shirt/hat.
- Extra clean bathing suit to keep at camp for use upon returning to the island

#### **Do Not Bring**

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| MP3/IPOD or radios | cell phones or pagers |
| watches or jewelry | knives                |

**WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREAT CAMPING SEASON WITH YOUR CHILD THIS SUMMER!**