

2012  
Gaston County Family YMCA  
Summer Camp Parent  
Handbook



**YMCA Mission**

*"To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all."*

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## Introduction

Welcome to Summer Camp at the Gaston County Family YMCA!

We will serve your children with compassion, patience, skill and respect. It is our desire that staff and parents become partners to better serve your children. In turn, we ask that you, as a parent, help us. Let us know of any ideas, thoughts or concerns that you may have regarding camp. The YMCA is a place for families and we want to do everything possible to strengthen and support your family.

All YMCA camps are designed to meet the following goals. Each camper will:

- Learn to appreciate oneself, gain confidence and self esteem
- Develop character values
- Develop skills in leadership and group work
- Meet new friends
- Have fun!

## **Camp Leadership Team**

### **Central Branch YMCA**

JJ Woodruff  
Camp Director  
704.865.8551  
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### **Stowe Family YMCA**

Ben Oeser  
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### **Cherryville Family YMCA**

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**South Gaston YMCA**  
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### **Stowe Family YMCA**

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### **Pharr Family YMCA**

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## **Camp Locations:**

### **Central YMCA**

#### **Camp Chi-Rho**

615 W. Franklin Blvd  
Gastonia, NC 28052  
Phone - 704.865.8551

### **Cherryville YMCA**

#### **Camp Whajado**

Cherryville Elementary  
700 E. Academy St.  
Cherryville, NC 28021  
Phone – 704.445.9622

### **South Gaston YMCA**

#### **Camp Ogopogo**

3210 Union Road  
Gastonia, NC 28056  
Phone – 704.865.2193

### **Stowe Family YMCA**

#### **Camp Ohana**

196 YMCA Drive  
Belmont, NC 28012  
Phone – 704.822.9622

### **Pharr Family YMCA**

#### **Gymnastics Camp**

208 Main Street  
McAdenville, NC 28101  
Phone- 704.824.1131

## **Camp Hours of Operation:**

Drop-off= 7:00-8:45 am

Camp Hours= 9:00-4:30 pm

Pick-up= 4:30-6:00 pm

## **Parent Orientation**

We strongly encourage all parents/guardians to attend one of the following dates in order to become fully informed on the who, what, where, when, and why of camp! At this meeting you are able to pick up your child's 2012 Camp Gear!

Central YMCA upstairs – Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 6:30 pm

Cherryville YMCA at a location TBA – Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 6:30 pm

South Gaston YMCA at a location TBA – Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 6:30 pm

Stowe Family YMCA downstairs Open Area – Tuesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 6:30 pm

## **Who is watching my child?**

We feel confident that we have the best staff in town! Our staff is as diverse as our campers. The majority of our staff are college students who grew up in the area and are home for the summer. Staff members are at least 18 years old, with the exception of a few outstanding 16 & 17 year old employees. Many member of our staff team are enrolled in teaching credential programs or are full time teachers.

All camp staff members have been drug tested, had a criminal background check, are CPR certified, and certified in basic first aid. Additionally, three references are checked for each staff member. The staff of all our water related camps are certified lifeguards. We do everything to make sure your child will be safe in the event of an emergency.

Most importantly, our staff are people who love kids. They want to spend their summer playing, teaching, and working with children. They are good people with good hearts who are silly enough to sing "Herman the Worm" at the top of their lungs!

## **How many staff will be watching my child?**

- Kinder Camp = 1 staff per 6 children
- Camp = 1 staff per 15 children

## **Staff goals each day:**

- Create a welcoming environment
- Total group cohesiveness
- Lead by positive example
- Inclusion of all campers
- Keep campers happy and safe
- Promote caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and faith in each environment

## **Will my child be playing with kids their own age?**

To make camp more age-appropriate and easy to schedule field trips, Camp is broken into sub camps, aka huddles. This allows for small group activities, ease of supervision, and fosters the relationship between camper and staff. For a complete daily schedule, please see the camp director.

## **Where do I drop off my child?**

Please be sure you are dropping off your child at the correct location listed below. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

- Central YMCA Traditional Camp Chi Rho – Southbound on Clay Street
- Central YMCA Kinder Camp – West Franklin entrance to the Central YMCA
- Cherryville YMCA Camp Whajado – Eastbound on Academy Street
- South Gaston YMCA Camp Ogopogo – TBD
- Stowe Family YMCA Camp Ohana and Kinder Camp – Along the left hand side of the Stowe Facility along the sidewalk. On rainy days children should come and out of the gymnasium doors.

## **Is there a problem if I am dropping my child off late?**

No! Please bring your child inside your camp's location and sign them in. However, ON FIELD TRIP DAYS PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CAMPER ARRIVES TO CAMP BY 8:45AM, as most of our trips are time insensitive.

## **How do you make sure a stranger doesn't pick up my child?**

Each afternoon when picking up your children you will be asked for their CODE WORD. This Code Word is to be selected during the time of registration and will be used to release your child. This is to ensure the safety of every camper. Your child will only be released to those who know the Code Word and then will initial next to your child's name to sign them out. **Children should NOT know their own Code Word.**

## **Can a friend or family member pick my camper up?**

Yes. They just need to know your child's code word.

## **What if I forget my child's code word?**

People who come to pick up that do not know the Code Word or use an incorrect word will be asked to go to the YMCA front desk to confirm pick up authorization by checking a valid identification card. For offsite locations, South and Cherryville, please see the Head Counselor.

## **What if I am late picking up my child from camp?**

We understand that parents have work and other needs. To accommodate, we offer Pre-Camp from 7:00am to 8:45am and Post-Camp from 4:30pm to 6:00pm. There is no charge for this service.

Please note the following:

- Campers **MAY NOT** be dropped off before 7:00am.
- Camp begins at 9:00am and ends at 4:30pm.
- Campers **MUST** be picked up by 6:00pm. If picked up after 6:00pm there will be a \$5 late fee for the first 10 minutes and an additional \$1 per minute thereafter. **This will be adhered to and may affect camper enrollment.**
- The YMCA staff will contact the local authorities or Department of Social Services if parents are more than 30 minutes late.

## **My child loves their counselor. Can they babysit for our family?**

Although Y-Camp staff work well with children, our policy states that our staff (while they are employees of the YMCA) are not permitted to babysit for families involved in our YMCA programs.

## **What if my child becomes ill or gets injured while at camp?**

If your child becomes ill while at camp, or staff will contact you to pick him/her up. Camp is not designed to handle ill children, so it is important to tend to your child in a timely manner. If your child is injured, our staff will take whatever steps necessary to administer/obtain medical care. If we are unable to reach you or if you have not pick up your child after an hour and a half and your child needs medical attention they will be transported to the hospital by an ambulance. All expenses for emergency medical care are the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

## **What if my child needs medication while they are at camp?**

If medication must be administered to your child during Summer Day Camp hours, please follow our Medication Procedure:

- **MEDICATION MUST BE IN THE ORIGINAL PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE WITH THE CHILD'S NAME.**
- Fill out the "Medication Form" and place the medication bottle in an envelope.
- Give envelope and "Medication Form" to the counselor at the check-in area on Monday morning.
- **There must ONLY be enough medication for the entire week. Please do not send more than needed for the session.**
- Campers are not allowed to carry or administer their own medication, including Tylenol or other non-prescription medication.
- Medication must be picked up each Friday. If not picked up, you will be contacted. Medication will be properly disposed of if left for more than one week.

## **Why do you need my child's medical information?**

The medical information is the most important part of your child's registration. This is the only information the Gaston County Family YMCA has regarding any medical needs of your child. It also gives us permission to seek care for your child in the event of an emergency. Please be sure to list all medical and/or behavioral issues as well as any and all medications your child receives on a regular basis. It

could be a disadvantage to your child and/or your child's health to omit any of this information.

### **Do you accept children with special needs?**

We will make every attempt to serve children who have physical or emotional challenges; however, our setting of outdoors, hills, and rocky terrain may make it difficult for campers to travel from one place to another. If your camper has a special need you are encouraged to make not of it on their registration.

\*\*\*YMCA Staff is unable to serve as a child's one-on-one counselor. It is a parents/guardians responsibility to provide this service. Please contact your Camp Director for more information and a volunteer packet.

### **Does my camper need to be potty trained?**

Yes, however we know that accidents happen from time to time and our staff will assist your child when those accidents occur. If your child does happen to have an accident, we require that someone bring them new clothing immediately, if they do not have any with them, or comes to pick them up from camp.

### **How is behavior issues dealt with during camp?**

Promoting social interaction and building interpersonal skills are what we strive for. We will always help campers with this goal by providing encouragement, feedback and assistance. Counselors are trained to provide corrective action in a positive and supportive manner.

Campers are challenged to follow these positive expectations. If a camper is unwilling to adjust to these guidelines, we reserve the right to terminate enrollment for the summer. If this happens we will not issue a refund.

### **What are the YMCA's guidelines for discipline?**

1. Camper will be re-directed.
2. Camper will receive verbal warning.
3. Camper will be asked to take a personal time-out.
4. Camper will lose the privilege of participating in a special activity.
5. Camper will talk with Camp Leadership and Parent will be called to discuss a positive game plan for change.
6. Parent will be informed to pick-up child early.
7. Camper will be suspended.
8. Campers' enrollment will be terminated for the summer.

**\*\*\*Depending on the severity of an issue the YMCA reserves the right to dismiss participants for unruly behavior.**

### **What should my child wear and bring to camp?**

- Closed-toe shoes & socks daily
- Shorts
- T-Shirt
- Swimming Trunks
- One piece bathing suit
- Towel
- Backpack
- Refillable water bottle
- Lunch (*Please send only nonperishable foods because refrigeration is not possible.*)
- 2 Snacks (*All our camps take time in the morning and afternoon for snack*)

## **What shouldn't my child bring/wear to camp?**

- Money/Jewelry
- Toys
- Knives or any type of weapon
- Open toed shoes
- Clothing that promotes vulgarity, alcohol, or tobacco
- Electronics (*cell phones, Ipods, etc.*)

## **What if my camper forgets his/her lunch?**

If your child comes to camp without lunch, you will be contacted and asked to bring lunch for your child. If YMCA staff cannot reach you, there will be a \$10 service charge to provide lunch.

**Gaston County School Nutrition** will authorize the summer feeding program sites in May of 2012. We expect that they will be supplying lunch to our campers for several weeks of the summer (typically weeks 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) for no additional fee as they have for the past several years.

The lunch includes a deli style sandwich, a fruit, a vegetable, and milk.

## **What if my camper doesn't want to swim? Or forgets his/her bathing suit?**

If your child doesn't want to swim or forgets his/her bathing suit they simply won't go swimming. Usually 75% of campers want to swim, but the other 25% engage in other camp activities. A big part of our camp day is the pool. We have trained lifeguards that are challenged with periodic in-service training to keep their skills sharp.

**\*\*\*To swim in the deep end...** campers must pass the swim test by jumping into the pool, swimming the length of the pool, and then tread water for 2 minutes.

**\*Campers who pass the swim test MUST wear the swim band for the entire week(s) of attendance. For camper safety the swim band MUST be present at all times while in the pool. No exceptions.**

## **What if my camper can not swim?**

If a camper is unable to swim they will stay in the closely supervised shallow end of the pool. If children want to go to the deep end they must take and pass the swim test.

**\*\*\*Life jackets are available but we encourage campers to bring their own.**

## **How do in-camp swim lessons work?**

During the weeks you register your camper for in-camp swim lessons we pull them from their assigned huddle at a strategic time and take them to their lessons.

## **If my camper takes in-camp swim lessons will they still get to swim with their friends?**

Yes, typically swim lessons and free swim are held at separate times. This will allow your camper show off their sweet, new swimming skills during their huddle's routine swim time!

### **My child lost something, where can I find it?**

We know that sometimes things just get lost. At check-in or check-out inquire about the location for lost and found. Lost and found items are kept for 2 full weeks and then are donated to charity.

**\*PLEASE LABEL ALL OF YOUR CHILD'S BELONGINGS**

**\*\*The YMCA is not responsible for camper possessions that are damaged, lost, or stolen.**

### **What are the camp bathroom procedures?**

No camper is ever sent to the bathroom alone and one camper is ever alone with a staff member. Our campers will take trips to the bathroom with their group and camp staff. We use the rule of three or more, meaning that one staff member and at least three (or more) children use the restroom every time. Campers will only use restrooms, inspected for safety by camp staff prior to entering the restroom.

### **When can I expect my phone call to be returned?**

We work very hard to make sure your phone calls are returned. You should expect to have your call returned within 24-48 hours. Please keep in mind the volume of important phone calls we receive every day.

### **Do you go on Field Trips?**

Each week campers will leave camp on a field trip; there is no extra cost to parents. Please remember to have your child wear their camp T-shirt on field trip days. Below are the typical field trip days for each camp:

- Central YMCA – Wednesday
- Cherryville YMCA – Wednesday
- South YMCA – Wednesday
- Stowe Family YMCA – First through third Grade and CILTs – Tuesday
- Stowe Family YMCA – Fourth through Middle School – Thursday

Parent chaperones are welcome and encouraged to accompany their children on field trips. Please contact any of the Leadership Team for more information regarding field trips. Parents who attend will have to pay their admission fee and provide your own transportation.

### **What are the Bus Rules?**

1. Campers must remain their seats with their backs and bottoms touching the seats at all times.
2. Campers must keep their voices at an appropriate level.
3. Campers may not put anything (including body parts) outside the bus windows.
4. Campers must behave respectfully and use appropriate language.
5. No eating or drinking on the bus (except when permitted by camp staff).
6. All campers must follow the directions of the driver and camp staff at all times.

### **Will sunscreen be applied to my child throughout the day?**

We count on parents to apply sunscreen before children come to camp in the morning. We advise that if your children burn easily that they bring some protective gear like a hat they can wear while participating in the outdoor activities.

### **Will my child get a t-shirt for camp?**

YES!! At the Parent Orientation your child will receive a camp t-shirt. We will have a limited number of shirts that is why, each camper will be allowed to get one shirt for the summer. Additional t-shirts will be available for purchase at the Camp Office for \$10.

### **I only need to send my child a few days a week. Will you prorate fees?**

No. We believe that a true camp experience is a week-long experience. Additionally, we pay our vendors and staff by the week. For these reasons, we do not prorate camps.

### **The camp I want to register for is already full. Is there a waiting list?**

When a camp fills up, the registration staff will begin a wait list. If someone cancels, we will call the first person on the wait list, and they will have until 12pm the next day to confirm they want the spot. If we do not receive a call by 12pm the next day, then we will move to the next person on the wait list.

### **What do I do if I need to add or cancel a week of camp?**

- **Additions/Cancellations must be made in writing on a "Addition/Cancellation Form" (NO EXCEPTIONS)**
- The \$10 camp deposit is non-refundable.
- **Email, fax, or drop-off Addition/Cancellation Forms to your Camp Leadership Staff Member.**
- Cancellation requests must be made in writing by the Wednesday before the registered week to receive a full refund, except for the non-refundable deposit.
- If a cancellation is made after the Wednesday before the registered week, all monies paid will be forfeited.
- If a cancellation form is not completed and received or your child does not attend camp, you are still responsible for payment.
- If your child is suspended or sent home for disruptive behavior, no refunds will be issued.
- You can find Addition/Cancellation Form at each YMCA location, on our website [www.gastonymca.org](http://www.gastonymca.org), or faxed/emailed to you by your Camp Leadership Staff.

### **How do I make a deposit/payment?**

To make the payment process easier this year there are four easy ways to pay for camp:

1. Full payment at time of registration.
2. Paying \$10 deposits for each week and signing up for automatic bank withdrawal to take place the Friday before each week registered.
3. Paying \$10 deposits followed by monthly payments prior to the start of camp.
4. Paying \$10 deposits followed by bi-weekly payments on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> prior to the start of camp.

Camp is based on a limited number of spaces. To ensure everyone has a fair opportunity to register we *require \$10.00 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit for each week your child plans to attend.*

If payment is not made by the Friday before the week attending, you must be signed up for bank draft or a payment plan arranged by the camp director. If no payment is made by the due date, your child will be withdrawn to open space for additional children. **There will be no exceptions**, your child will not be able to attend camp.

If you have any questions or concerns about camp deposits or payments please contact your Camp Director.

There are four ways to make a payment:

- Bank Draft
- Credit Card
- Debit Card
- Checks

All payments must be made at the membership desk inside the YMCA; payments will not be accepted at Rides In or Rides Out.

### **What is financial assistance?**

The YMCA is committed to providing quality programs regardless of one's ability to pay. Our financial assistance program is available for those who otherwise would be unable to enjoy the benefits of YMCA programs. Eligibility is determined based on applicant's income and is administered on a sliding scale. For more information or an application, please inquire at the membership service desk.

- Each week, spaces will be set aside specifically for campers in need of Financial Assistance. These spaces are limited and will fill. **Early registration is highly suggested.**

### **What if there is inclement weather?**

Camp is blessed to have such a magnificent natural setting to implement our programs. Unfortunately, Mother Nature does not always bless us with sunny skies and 75-degree temperatures. When Mother Nature provides us with liquid sunshine (or rain) our camp proceeds as usual. Campers may come home wet or muddy on rainy days. When this rain is accompanied with thunder and lightning, all campers are moved to covered areas.

### **Return Fee Charge**

Any returned checks received will be turned over to the Gaston County Family YMCA collections department. Outstanding balances resulting from returned checks must be cleared up before the child may enroll or attend any YMCA program. There will be \$25.00 fee for any returned checks or bank draft payment. This will be collected through eCashflow and via your bank draft information.

*We are very excited for the summer of 2012 and hope you are too! Please keep in contact constantly throughout the summer either by phone or email. We want to assure that we are properly serving you! Weekly information will be sent via email – if you are not receiving email notifications please inform us asap! Thank you for choosing the YMCA.*