Fall 2026

Volume 19, Issue 2

THE CARSON CONNECTION

Welcome Home to YMCA Camp Carson









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SUMMER CAMP 2026





Every Summer is unique - filled with new stories, friendships, laughter, and excitement. This year, campers and staff explored a theme of time travel and exploration. Of course each week was filled with traditional camp activities - climbing, pottery, sailing, archery, arts & crafts, songs, skits, and more.

This summer, we hosted 1447 campers through nine weeks of summer camp, including two weeks of camps specifically for kids from Military families, at reduced or no cost. One third of our campers received some financial assistance or reduced rates.

We were excited to have Camp Counselors from eight states, plus 14 international staff from eight countries.

Fortunately, our time travel returned us to our current timeline just in time for campers to go back to school. As always, we are incredibly grateful to all of the donors who help make YMCA Camp Carson a great adventure for all.

Camp Carson Raggers

The YMCA Raggers program at Camp Carson is a progressive goal-setting opportunity established by the YMCA in 1914. The program is designed to help campers become the best version of themselves. Each colored rag is an outward symbol of an inward goal.

This Summer, we were fortunate to guide 276 campers and staff through the Raggers program.



2026 CAMP CARSON ROCKERS

We love seeing campers advance and learn new skills in their favorite Camp activities! The Carson Rocker award takes a lot of commitment. To earn this distinction, campers must:

- earn all 5 levels at an activity area
- teach a counselor all 5 levels at that activity
- teach a new camper all 5 levels of that activity

The following campers earned Rockers at Camp Carson this summer!

Alpine Tower
Eve Giacobbe
Kennedy Garlove
Lucy Speiden
Mya Uebelhor
Carson Miller

Basketball
Charlie Palmer
Genni Reid
Ryan Fischer
Thompson Brown

Archery
Aidan Wiese
Bella Arnold
Christine Butler
Claire Kirkwood
Ed Meriwether
Emalyn Enochs
Erin Troth
Hudson Platt
Ian Jurado
Lily Furlow
Mason Ulrick
Milo Prest
Natalie Simpson
Owen Park
Roger Quarles
Rosemary Diersing
Ryan Kerney
Sara Griffin
Stone Nunnally
Tesla Doddridge
Tristan Bernens
Tyler Fisher
Val Macero Rodriguez

Boating
Anna Hogue
Bea Smith
Colin Falconer
Cordelia Smith
Dillon Thomas
Hadley Mae Owens
Molly Shepherd

Mountain Bikes
Benny Campbell

Pottery
Alaina Kendall
Evelyn Dailey

Woodworking
Ava Crews
Benjamin Hart
Daniel Ellerbrook
Dawson Fleming
Hadley Wininger
Leo Doddridge

Riflery
Daniel Spencer

Sailing
Ale Fendley
Annie Speakes
Jaxxon Holder
Kendra Srinivasan
Leah Hartz
Lily Noltemeyer
Luke Kindig
Neil Mirchandani
Will Kuerzi

Soccer
Avery Miner
Brody Fleming
Carole Erwin
Charlotte Huber
Grayson Chinn
Isaac Waller
Jack Patel
Joey Gnau
Uriah Robb

A MESSAGE FROM JIM

Hello from YMCA Camp Carson!

I continue to be touched by the magic of Camp Carson. Through our Summer Camp programs and year-round events, we are expected to serve more than 6000 people this year. This includes so many local schools, organizations, churches, Scout troops, and families.

As mentioned in our Spring newsletter, we have a wonderful opportunity to expand and upgrade some of our facilities through a recent grant. Many of those projects started as soon as we wrapped up Summer Camp, and more will continue through the next few years. Our goal is to ensure that Camp Carson a sustainable and relevant year-round facility providing opportunities for our community partners and campers to grow and learn with us.



On a personal note, we recently had to say goodbye to the greatest Camp dog ever. Axel loved his years at Camp, and every camper who met him instantly became his best friend. We miss him already.

I would love to have you visit camp and share your stories with us!

J-Stone

P.S. Alumni, please be sure to RSVP for our Alumni & Friends Hangout on October 10th - see page 5!

A BLIZZARD HITS CAMP CARSON - IN SEPTEMBER!



If you ask any camper, staff, or alumni what they actually dislike about Camp, it ia almost inevitably THE HEAT. Summer Camp only happens in Summer, and we all know how brutal Indiana Summers can be. Our team works hard to ensure that campers get plenty of lake time, have lots of water stations around camp, and stay as cool as possible. But it's still just HOT.

We are very excited to share that the

CAMPER CABINS ARE NOW AIR CONDITIONED!

Please rest assured that this does not deter from the camper experience, they will get plenty of opportunities to be hot while they are outside. But we are excited to be able to give campers the opportunity to cool down during rest hour (the best hour!) and overnight in their cabins.

This enhancement will also support our year-round groups, as the cabins are also HEATED for winter!

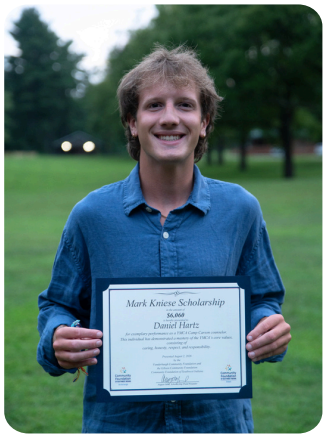
SUMMER STAFF AWARDS

2026 MARK KNIESE SCHOLARSHIP

The Mark Kniese Scholarship was created in 2002 by YMCA Camp Carson alum August Neal, in memory of former counselor Mark Kniese. We are honored to host Mark's brothers Jeff and Skip Kniese at the staff awards banquet, and August Neal joined us by zoom.

This year's recipient is Daniel Hartz, a long-time camper and counselor. He is studying Elementary and Special Education at the University of Southern Indiana.

To quote Daniel's essay: "Mark Kniese was remembered for the way he cared for campers. That is the legacy I hope to continue. Every summer, every classroom, and every child I have the opportunity to work with is another chance to live out the values that Camp Carson has instilled in me. If I can make even one child feel the way Camp Carson has made me feel, then I know I have honored that legacy."



Daniel Hartz

2026 LLOYD OUTSTANDING COUNSELORS & STAFF MEMBER

These awards were created for Camp Carson staff by Dr. Thomas Lloyd, a YMCA Camp Carson Alum & Bridge Builder. He established a named Endowment Fund with the purpose of awarding scholarships each year recognizing the Outstanding Boys and Girls Counselors, and Outstanding Staff Member. We truly appreciate Dr. Lloyd and his tremendous support of Camp Carson and our staff!


Outstanding Boys Counselor
Nick Lewis

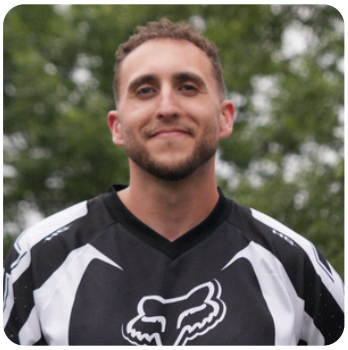

Outstanding Girls Counselor
Laska Maree


Outstanding Staff Member
Oliver Emerson

2026 CERRITOS GATTO FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP

The Cerritos Gatto Family Staff Scholarship was established by Henry Cerritos and Donna Gatto, whose family has been involved with and attending YMCA Camp Carson for many years. The scholarship is awarded to a summer staff member who exemplifies the spirit of YMCA Camp Carson and has a positive approach with campers and staff.

This year's scholarship was awarded to Adam Fakult, a long-time Camp Carson photographer, who is studying to become a Radiologic Technologist. He wants to work in a hospital and bring the love and care he learned at Camp Carson.


Adam Fakult

CARSON'S ALUMNI & FRIENDS HANGOUT

AT TURONI'S

8011 BELL OAKS DR, NEWBURGH, IN

OCT 10, 2026

3 - 7 PM



PIZZA. LAUGHS. FUN.

Please JOIN US for an awesome time to share Camp stories, reconnect, and socialize with Camp Carson alumni and friends. We will have some Camp swag available, and pre-event tours are available at camp (at 1pm) for anyone interested.

Upload Alumni Photos HERE!

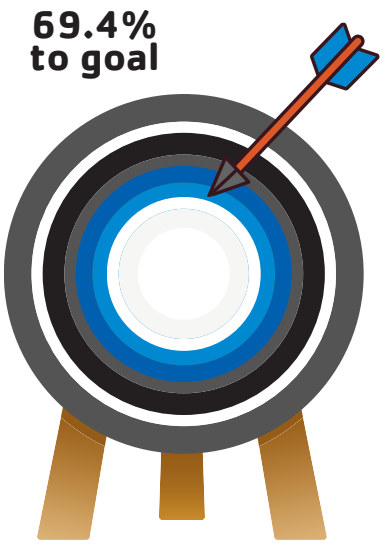
Click HERE to RSVP!

or contact us for more info

812-385-3597

hpierce@ymcacampcarson.org

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE



Sincere thanks to all who have already contributed to our 2026 Annual Campaign. Camp adventures profoundly impact children by building confidence and teaching them to make a positive difference. Your generous donation ensures every child has the opportunity to experience the magic of summer camp.

Your donation helps campers in many ways:

- Camper scholarships & subsidies for young people who may not be able to afford camp.
- Lower camp fees for our Operation Military Support summer camp program.
- Supports a matching grant of $7,500 for our Military Family Weekends.
- Upgrades to programs and facilities, to keep Camp Carson a safe and positive space for campers.

We welcome your donations online at www.campcarson.org/giving
or mail to: YMCA Camp Carson, 2034 Outer Lake Rd, Princeton, IN, 47670

We are also grateful for "in kind" donations - items that you would like to give to Camp. Currently on our wishlist: Landscape gravel, golf cart for guests, lumber, picnic tables, small ice machine.

SETTING COURSE FOR THE FUTURE

YMCA Camp Carson 2026 Annual Campaign



CAMP CARSON BRIDGE BUILDERS

Throughout Summer, we invite our Bridge Builders to join us for meals at Camp. These kind donors share meals with campers and staff, experiencing the joy and chaos of mealtime at Camp. We love sharing Camp's vibrant atmosphere and giving donors a chance to see the positive impact of their support.

YMCA Camp Carson Bridge Builders are a dedicated group of donors who make a significant impact at Camp, helping us continue the legacy and mission, while growing and serving more campers.

You can become a Bridge Builder in many ways:

- Designate YMCA Camp Carson, a registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, as a beneficiary in your will, living trust, or life insurance policy.
- Make a tax-deductible cash, or stock contribution of $1,000 or more to the YMCA Camp Carson Endowment Fund.
- Make a gift of real estate or personal property to YMCA Camp Carson.
- Lifetime contributions to YMCA Camp Carson of $5,000 or more.

Please contact Heather at 812-385-3597 or hpierce@ymcacampcarson.org for more information.

FALL AT YMCA CAMP CARSON

Labor Day Family Camp

Dating back to 1951, Camp Carson has hosted Family Camp over Labor Day weekend. This year, families from as far as Florida and California joined us for one of our largest Family Camps yet. Campers aged 1 to 80 enjoyed all traditional Camp activities, a rowdy Hootenanny, lots of lake time, and lots of fun family bonding. Fortunately for these families, the hottest day of the year also coincided with the introduction of our newly air-conditioned cabins!





Fall Camp





In early October, Campers spent a weekend with us for some of their favorite Camp Carson activities, plus pumpkin carving, pumpkin derby, pumpkin slingshots, and Fall fireside snacks.





In addition to all of these Camp events, our Fall weeks are filled with Outdoor Education programs, volunteers, Church groups, cabin rentals, company picnics, conferences, and retreats.



Celebrating Military Family Weekends

Military Family Weekends have been a favorite part of our Fall season since 2020. We organize three weekends specifically for military families, made possible by a generous grant, Camp Corral, and various local organizations. Families enjoy a weekend together in their own cabin, enjoying all of the unique camp activities. We are so thankful for these families and the incredible donors who make these weekends a reality.



SUMMER 2027 REGISTRATION



REGISTER TODAY!

Registration is OPEN for Summer 2027! Hurry to book your spot now, as some weeks fill up quickly. In addition to our traditional overnight camp, highlighted below are some of our specialty camp programs.

We can help with the cost of Camp! We have scholarships and Military scholarships available. Click here for Financial Assistance.



OPERATION MILITARY SUPPORT

Exclusively for kids from Military Families! Kind Camp Carson supporters allow us to offer this program to families for just $200 per camper.



WRANGLERS AND DIRT BIKES

For the more adventurous camper: Wranglers work with and ride horses, and Dirt Bike campers learn bike safety and take rides through our trails.



TEEN PROGRAMS

Leaders in Training (LIT), Counselors in Training (CIT), Wranglers in Training (WIT), and Service Corps are varying levels of our two-week teen leadership camps.



Preserving and Growing for the Future of Camp

YMCA Camp Carson is built on tradition, and holds decades of memories for thousands of people. Although it is a physical space, it is so much more than a "place". For example, very camper who has driven through the front gate in the last 86 years has a core memory of driving down that lane and seeing Lake Seminole for the first time. That feeling magically returns every time we drive into Camp and see the lake.

We have an amazing opportunity to preserve Camp's rich history and grow responsibly through a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. through its Capital Project Initiative for Residential Youth Camps.

Over the next few years, you will see enhancements to our lake, a new climbing tower, brand new shower houses (YAY!), additional cabins and camper spaces, and more year-round opportunities at Camp. Some improvements may not be as visible - we are also improving areas of our forest, planting new trees, and improving critical infrastructure.

As the current stewards of Camp Carson, we feel so honored to be a part of these projects and ensure that Camp will continue to be a magical place for many more decades.



Hello, Alumni!

We have an estimated 90,000 Alumni out in the world and would love to hear from you! We hope to feature more of you in our newsletters and share where everyone is or what you have been up to.

Please reach out to Heather hpierce@ymcacampcarson.org and let us know where you arein the world, and what you've been doing since Camp! Don't forget to check out our Alumni site for tons of pictures, memories, and songs.

And if you are ever in the area, PLEASE stop by for a tour!

OUTDOOR OPPORTUNITIES AT CAMP



OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Bring your classroom to Camp Carson! We have developed unique Outdoor Education programs for local schools, combining outdoor adventures with learning. We can customize the day(s) based on your school's preferences.



RENTALS

Book your weekend getaway, group retreat, reunion, company meeting, or team-building event! Camp Carson offers small and large spaces, indoor and outdoor - practical spaces with a warm Camp atmosphere.



OVERNIGHT EVENTS

Camp Carson now has the option for overnight retreats and events for large groups! Our camper cabins are now heated and cooled year-round, and house up to 15 people per cabin. Bring your family, friends, or co-workers for a fun winter weekend.

To book an event or request a quote, go to campcarson.org/events or contact Ryan Meeks at 812-385-3597 or rmeeks@ymcacampcarson.org

CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE CAMP STORE!



campcarsonalumni.org
click on Camp Store



The Carson Connection is our digital newsletter, our Camp newspaper, and a way of sharing updates with Camp Alumni, Families, and Friends. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or campcarson.org for more updates and opportunities to connect.

the YMCA

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2034 Outer Lake Road
Princeton, IN 47670
812-385-3597
campcarson.org

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