

YADVENTURE GUIDES

Friends Forever

*Welcome Packet for
YMCA Adventure Guides*



Journey begins

Games

Circle ceremony

Outing



Illini-Prairie Expedition
Serving McLean County, Illinois
2008-2009

Looking for an adventure?

YMCA Adventure Guides is a parent-child program for elementary age kids. Designed to help foster a lifetime of understanding and companionship, it strengthens the relationship between child and parent.



As “Y Guides” and “Y Explorers,” parents and kids explore adventures in fun, learning and mutual understanding. From small group “circle” meetings to “expedition” events like camping, pinewood derby, can food drive, bowling, and ball games, the bond between parent and child grows.

The immediate gain is sizable – spending time together – but the long-term gains will prove to be even more significant. The 2007 fall registration event is Sunday September 9th at Miller Park Zoo from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Free

admission to the zoo, program t-shirts, compasses, and book with new member registration! Contact the YMCA at 827-6233 for more information.



Why does the YMCA Adventure Guides program exist?

During their elementary school years, children learn rapidly, becoming much more aware of the world around them. They begin to see things differently and ask questions about who they are, where they came from, and why things are as they are. During this time, children tend to see their parents as guides, teachers, and heroes. They start to understand that parents protect and nurture them. Ideally, during this period, we learn how to *talk* with our children more than *at* them. A strong relationship is based on our ability to ask open-ended questions that help our children think and move beyond simple yes or no responses. During these years, we strive to invite our children to accept challenges and opportunities, celebrate accomplishments, and face fears.

The YMCA Adventure Guides program is designed to assist you and your children on your journey of discovery. While activities with the whole family are important, we see tremendous value in supporting and strengthening the ability of a parent and his or her children to communicate at an early age in ways that are caring, honest, respectful, and responsible. We seek to encourage you as a parent to “get to know your kid while your kid is still a kid.”

What do Adventure Guide participants do?

Your local YMCA will assign you to a small group of parent–child pairs called a *Circle* who meet on a regular basis in each others’ homes, usually biweekly or monthly. Each month, several Circles come together to participate in larger activities such as campouts, parties, or parades. These outings are called *Expeditions*. The core of the YMCA Adventure Guides program is these Circle and Expedition meetings and adventures. See the later sections for details on typical Circle and Expedition meeting activities.

How are Circles formed?

Circles are usually made up of 6 to 9 parents and their children. While new members are assigned a Circle based on a variety of factors, the program always gives priority to keeping friends together and accommodating meeting night constraints. The current Circles and their Circle Navigators (lead) include:

- Bobcats – Tracy Shepard (378-4581)
- Buffalo – Chuck Fisher (454-4965)
- Eagles – Doug Heinz (663-6239)
- Mustangs – Gene Pish (827-7297)

What does the logo represent?

The program focus is the adventures of a parent and child and of their Circles and Expeditions. At the forefront of the program are the Compass Points, which give members a sense of direction and an inspiration for activities. These points are broad enough in scope to allow for variety and creativity in designing activities.

The four main direction points on the compass are the essential components of the program.

- The **Family** is True North—the focal point of the program.
- **Nature** and the camping experience are integral parts of the program.
- The spirit of the program is experienced through belonging to a small **Community**, called a Circle.
- **Fun** is the magic of the program.



The YMCA Core Values of **caring**, **honesty**, **respect**, and **responsibility** make up the other directional points. Along the journey, adults should model, teach, and demonstrate these values as well as give children many opportunities to practice and celebrate them. Adults should also point out and discuss with children any

behavior that is inconsistent with these values. Initially, these four values provide guidance in helping children select activities, make decisions, and choose appropriate courses of action—both in the program and in their lives. As children grow, these values become their own internal compass.

The Compass Points allow you and your Circle members to personalize rituals, activities, and events. You can develop Compass Point activities relevant to your own town and your own common experiences. For example, a group in Texas may build a theme around Texas explorers and pioneers, while a group on the coast may use a scuba or water exploration theme. In each case family, fun, nature, and community might take on a slightly different meaning.

Who participates in YMCA Adventure Guides?

The YMCA Adventure Guides program is for parents or other significant adults in children's lives and their elementary age children through sixth grade. An adult and child must attend program activities together. In YMCA Adventure Guides, the parent is the Guide, and the child is the Explorer. Historically, YMCA Adventure Guides has appealed most to fathers and sons or fathers and daughters. However, any parent who desires a strong bond with their child is welcome to participate. In addition, many of the Expedition events (e.g., camping) are enjoyed by the entire family.

While sponsored by the YMCA, the Adventure Guides program is open to the entire community regardless of membership in the YMCA and is run through parent volunteers who lead the Circles and the Expedition.

What does the program cost?

The annual membership fee is \$40 for parent and one child, \$50 for parent and two or more children. This fee includes a subscription to the "Buckskin Scroll" newsletter, a one week free family membership at the YMCA, and allows us to keep our participation fees for Expedition events to a minimum. Program t-shirts and compasses, as well as a member's manual are also provided to new members. In addition, for some Expedition activities throughout the year, a small participation fee may be required to help cover the cost of the event (e.g., pizza, bowling, camp site rental, etc.).

However, since the main goal of the program is to bring children and their parents closer together, we don't want to exclude families that feel they cannot afford the membership fee. Please let us know if this is an issue and the membership fee will be waived.

How did this program come to be?

The YMCA Adventure Guide program is an evolution of the original YMCA parent-child program called Indian Guides. The father and son Y-Indian Guide program was developed in 1926 to support the father's vital family role as teacher, counselor, and friend to his son. Harold S. Keltner, a YMCA director in St. Louis, initiated this program around a blazing campfire while he was on a hunting trip in Canada with his friend, Joe Friday, an Ojibwa Indian. Friday told him, "The Indian father raises his son. He teaches his son to hunt, track, and fish, walk softly and silently in the forest, know the meaning and purpose of life and all he must know, while the white man allows the mother to raise his son." These words struck a chord for Keltner, and he arranged for Joe Friday to work with him at the St. Louis YMCA.

After World War II, the rise in YMCAs that served the whole family, the need for supporting young girls in their personal growth, and the demonstrated success of the father-son program nurtured the development of other parent-child programs. A mother-daughter program, called Y-Indian Maidens, was established in South Bend, Indiana, in 1951. Three years later, father-daughter groups, called Y-Indian Princesses, emerged in the Fresno YMCA of California. In 1980, the national YMCA recognized the Y-Indian Braves Program for mothers and sons, thus completing the four programs and combinations that made up the Y-Indian Guide Programs.

For 75 years, the program was the cornerstone for family programs in YMCAs across the country. But it is a different world today than it was in 1926. Native Americans and other citizens expressed concern over program

participants' adopting the Indian culture and teaching children about Native American life in ways they deemed inaccurate or stereotypical. The YMCA's commitment to being a caring, honest, respectful, and responsible organization; changing demographics resulting in diverse communities and diverse family structures; and an evolving cultural sensitivity and better understanding of Native American history all prompted YMCAs across the country to re-evaluate their parent-child programs.

One of the strengths of YMCAs both locally and nationally is that they have adapted and responded to societal changes in order to remain relevant and useful to their communities. From late 2000 to mid 2003 YMCA staff and volunteers from across the country met on several occasions to craft a parent-child program that had a broader appeal. In the summer and fall of 2003, YMCA Adventure Guides was launched in YMCA communities everywhere.

Where can I get more information?

We would love to tell you more about the program and answer any questions! Feel free to call any of the Circle leaders listed above or the YMCA at 827-6233 for more information. You can also visit our program web site at <http://www.bnymca.org/bnymca/?q=content/adventure-guides> . It contains recent newsletters, event photos, program information, and contact numbers.

Program Synopsis

Objectives

- Foster companionship and understanding and set a foundation for positive, lifelong relationships between parent and child.
- Build a sense of self-esteem and personal worth.
- Expand awareness of spirit, mind, and body.
- Provide a framework to meet a mutual need of spending enjoyable, constructive, and quality time together.
- Enhance the quality of family time.
- Emphasize the vital role that parents play in the growth and development of their children.
- Offer an important and unique opportunity to develop and enjoy volunteer leadership skills.

Purpose

To foster understanding and companionship between parent and child

Aims

1. To be clean in body and pure in heart
2. To be friends forever with my dad/mom/son/daughter
3. To love the sacred circle of my family
4. To listen while others speak
5. To love my neighbor as myself
6. To respect the traditions and beliefs of all people
7. To seek and preserve the beauty of Our Creator's work in forest, field, and stream

Motto

Friends Forever

Pledge

We, YMCA Adventure Guides/Explorers, through friendly service to each other, to our family, to this Circle/Expedition, and to our community, seek a world pleasing to the eye of Our Creator.

Typical Monthly Circle Meeting Outline

□ Open Meeting

Navigator: “All members young and old of the Bobcat’s will now come to the Circle.”
(Members gather together standing in a circle)

Jr. Host: (Beats the Circle drum once for each parent and child member present.)

Navigator: “We give thanks for this home and the Crawleys who have shared it with us today.”

Members: “We give thanks!”

Navigator: “Members, what is the purpose of the Bobcat Circle?”

Members: “To foster companionship of parent and child.”

Navigator: “What are the aims of the Bobcat Circle?” (Optionally - Navigator may ask for volunteers for each aim)

All: “To be clean in body and pure in heart; to be friends forever with my mom/dad/son/daughter/kids; to love the sacred circle of my family; to listen while others speak; to love my neighbor as myself; to respect the traditions and beliefs of all people; to seek and preserve the beauty of our Creator’s work in forest, field, and stream.”

Navigator: “All members will now sing Friends Forever to the tune of O My Darling Clementine.”

All: “Friends forever, friends forever, that’s our slogan, that’s our song
Kids are stronger, Moms/Dads feel younger, when they take the kids along
Moms are for it, Dads adore it, and the kids all think it’s fine
Friends forever, friends forever, as Adventure Guides we’ll have good times
Through the days and through the years we will wander side by side
Friends forever, friends forever, Our Creator is our guide.”

Navigator: “Young explorers, what is a YMCA Adventure Guide?”

Kids: “A boy/girl like me and a Mom/Dad like mine!”

Navigator: “Members, may this day be a blessing to all who are with us and those who are not be kept safe as well.
Please be seated.”

□ Prior Adventures –

- Christmas Parade & Discovery Museum – great fun, great turnout

□ Upcoming Expeditions and Adventures

- Upcoming Meetings – Let John R know if you need the 2004-2005 Rotation schedule – emailed
- January Adventure Camp In – January 8th/9th @ YMCA - swim @ 5:00, pizza @ 6:30, magic show, games, donuts, in morning – out of Y by 9:00 approx. John needs head count by 1/5 for pizza ordering (\$3/person)

□ Around Circle – Field Reports – Name, Good Deeds, Activities with Parent

□ High Honors – Award Beads and Patches – we’ll distribute at Camp-In

□ Story, Game, & Craft and Snack (or you can do snack after the close)

□ Close Meeting

Navigator: “All members young and old of the Bobcat’s will now come to the Circle.”
(Members gather together standing in a circle)

Jr. Host: (Beats the Circle drum once for each parent and child member present.)

Navigator: “We will now sing ‘Day is done’ to the tune of Taps.”

All: “Day is done, gone the sun, from the lake, from the hills, from the sky;
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.”

Program Year – Preliminary Circle and Expedition Activities

2008-2009

- **August**
 - Circle “kickoff” meeting (New or potential member, meet and greet)
- **September**
 - Bloomington/Normal Labor Day parade – Monday, September 1st
 - Membership kick off event at the Miller Park Zoo – Sunday, September 7th
 - Fall Campout at Comlara Park – Saturday, September 20th and 21st
 - No Circle meeting
- **October**
 - Harvest Fest (wiener roast, pumpkin carving) – Sunday, October 26th
 - Circle meeting
- **November**
 - Canned food drive & fun activity (Swimming) – Sunday, November 9th
 - Circle meeting
- **December**
 - March in Bloomington-Normal Jaycees Christmas parade, then to Children’s Discovery Museum for pizza party and fun – Saturday, December 6th
 - Circle meeting
- **January**
 - Adventure Camp-in at YMCA – Saturday, January 3rd and 4th
 - Circle meeting
- **February**
 - Pinewood Derby Time Trials at the Y – free swimming afterwards – Sunday, February 8th
 - Pinewood Derby Race at the Y – free swimming afterwards – Sunday, February 15th
 - No Circle meeting
- **March**
 - “Wildcard” event (Bowling, swimming, ball game, your idea here!) – Sunday, March 15th
 - Circle meeting
- **April**
 - Outdoor event – nature hike? – Sunday, April 19th
 - Circle meeting
- **May**
 - Campout at Comlara Park – Saturday, May 16th and 17th
 - Circle meeting