



CAMP JEWELL YMCA UPCOMING EVENTS

Mother/Daughter Riding Weekend: April 24-26
Spring Women's Wellness Weekend: April 24-26
Memorial Day Family Camp: May 22-25
June Family Camp: May 29-June 1
Tt's Grotto Ribbon Cutting: May 30
5K Fun Run: June 20
Lewis Fox Corn Roast: August 15
August Family Camp: August 28-31
Labor Day Family Camp: September 4-7
Mother/Daughter Riding Weekend: September 18-20
Fall Women's Wellness Weekend: September 18-20

THE REAL JEWELL

YMCA of Greater Hartford



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CAMP JEWELL YMCA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 4
Spring 2015

What's Inside:

Waterfront Project
Alumni Spotlight
Staff Spotlight
Tt's Grotto

The YMCA for Youth Development: Nurturing the potential of every child and teen, for Healthy Living: Improving the nation's well-being, for Social Responsibility: Giving back and providing support to our neighbors. The YMCA of Greater Hartford is a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization established in 1852 and is one of the nation's oldest YMCAs. The YMCA strives to serve all regardless of their ability to pay.

campjewellymca.org

CAMP JEWELL YMCA
A Branch of the YMCA of Greater Hartford
6 Prock Hill Road, P.O. Box 8
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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CAMP JEWELL YMCA



THANKS • GRACIAS • GRAZIE • MERCI • DANKE • OBRIGADO



Craig Dawson, Camp Jewell YMCA's associate executive director.

Among Camp Jewell's greatest resources are our human resources. Set on more than 500 bucolic acres, camp would be little without the passion, vision, creativity and commitment so many of our employees give day after day to make each and every guest at camp have an experience of a lifetime.

One of Camp Jewell's biggest supports is Craig Dawson, our associate executive director. Craig works tirelessly with staff and volunteers to improve the programs we offer and the impact they have on camp's visitors. Under his leadership since 2012, camp has grown substantially: summer camp enrollment has grown by 200 campers, last year's Outdoor Center saw its largest growth in five years and our overall operation is expected to be \$500,000 larger by the end of 2015 than it was when he arrived. Craig is responsible for improved communication with parents, volunteers and campers through our Facebook presence, parent emails, camper newsletters and more. He takes his job very seriously, making a lot of sacrifices for the overall good of camp.

Perhaps one of his most insightful perspectives is as a dad. His two children attend camp and that gives him a different approach to working with campers and their families. He knows what it's like to have a child away at camp. He has a big heart and he cares about every kid that comes to camp. He's a friend, not just a co-worker. Thanks, Craig, for all you do to move Camp Jewell forward and continue to improve on our 114-year history!

TT'S GROTTO RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY



**Ribbon Cutting & Reception
May 30th at 10:30 a.m.**

Come be a part of Camp Jewell's history as we officially open Tt's Grotto, our newest addition to the waterfront. A water park feature that will be available to summer campers and guests who visit during the warmer months, Tt's Grotto was possible because of the support of Dean and Kristin Manning. The Mannings chose to make a permanent improvement to camp in memory of their daughter, Taylor Manning, who passed away unexpectedly at the age of 13. The Mannings have raised over \$90,000 toward the project and have, alongside their friends and family, volunteered countless hours to build Tt's Grotto.

Staff SPOTLIGHT: Rich Krudner, Weekday Program Director



I grew up going to summer camp, but it was my years as staff at Frost Valley YMCA, a camp and outdoor center in upstate New York, that really make an impact on me. When I was 16 I joined the staff at Frost Valley YMCA—it was the first time I had real responsibility and I loved it. It was such a great place to grow into an adult. One of my 10 summers there I worked as a CIT counselor and it was then that I started thinking working with kids was what I wanted to do because I felt like I could really see the difference I was making with them.

I studied biology and chemistry at SUNY Stony Brook and planned on becoming a teacher. But after graduation my first teaching job fell through so I worked the fall season at Frost Valley and I realized that outdoor education was a perfect match for my interests and education. It's camp and it's teaching, what could be better than that?

After three years I wanted to go to the next level and began pursuing full-time work at a camp and outdoor center. When the weekday program director position at Camp Jewell was offered to me I knew it was the right place for me.

I love living and working at Camp Jewell and I'm most passionate about getting kids outside during the school year with their classes. You can learn so much more about the world when you're outside and I find it to be the most liberating environment for teaching. When we teach outside, a lot of kids feel less pressure and experience what it's like for learning to be fun.

A lot of what I do is help school group leaders plan their programs to fit the unique needs of their school, grade and/or class. The key to this is developing relationships with the teachers and it's important to be to successfully build a program that meets their goals. Another part of my job is continuing to develop new offerings for school groups. We are doing a lot of curriculum development with the camp staff, including a geology curriculum and I initiated a new forest ecology program and a more comprehensive pond study. It's exciting to be part of something that has such a long history and expanding it to meet the needs of an even wider group of camp visitors.

Last summer I worked as the summer day camp director and this year I'll be overseeing Jewell's trips program. Like with the outdoor center, I'm looking forward to expanding it and making it bigger. Backpacking was my favorite trip at Frost Valley YMCA and it will be fun to be a part of the trips we offer here.

Camp Jewell offers so many opportunities to kids who otherwise might not have the chance to connect with nature and other people the way we do here. At the end of the day, if a kid's never spent time exploring outside it's easy to take our natural environment for granted and not make it a priority to care for it. For me, it's all about helping kids make a tangible connection between their actions and the impact it makes on the environment, all while having fun enjoying it!

NYC Alumni Event: June 6, 2015

Save the date for the next alumni event, to be held in New York City on June 6th from 3-5 p.m. at the home of Wendy (Lyons) Conlon! Come meet up with old camp friends and share your photos and your favorite camp stories. Find out what's new at camp and relive some of the best memories of your youth. Watch you mailbox for more information to come—all are welcome! RSVP to becky.barton@ghymca.org or 888-412-CAMP.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CAMP JEWELL YMCA



RAY'S ROUNDUP



When we plan capital improvements to camp, we focus on the program areas because it's where kids, families and guests spend all their time. I've shared the improvements we've made over the past few years, and I'm really excited about the upcoming changes to the waterfront—particularly because they will improve access to Triangle Lake and bring the quality of visitors' aquatic experience to a new level.

The Y has a commitment and a history of valuing swimming as a life skill and way to save lives. Camp Jewell shares that commitment and we want to get as many kids in the water as possible. There's such an environmental aspect to swimming in that quite literally you're enveloped in nature when you jump in the lake. When kids are swimming they connect with the natural world more than any other place at camp. Being in the water also has a direct impact on kids' behavior by relieving stress and anxiety. It's for all these reasons that we are prioritizing improvements to the waterfront to maximize Triangle Lake as one of camp's premier resources.

One of the approaches we've taken is to start with the kids who come to camp without any swimming ability at all. Most non-swimmers are happy to continue life as non-swimmers, so we need to motivate them to interact with the water.

Tt's Grotto, the splash pad-type water element that will open in May, gives those kids a large space to get comfortable in the water, build confidence, cool off and just enjoy themselves. To encourage kids to move up the ranks in swimming, we built a new and improved rope swing a few years ago and will be installing a Wet Willie slide next to the boathouse.

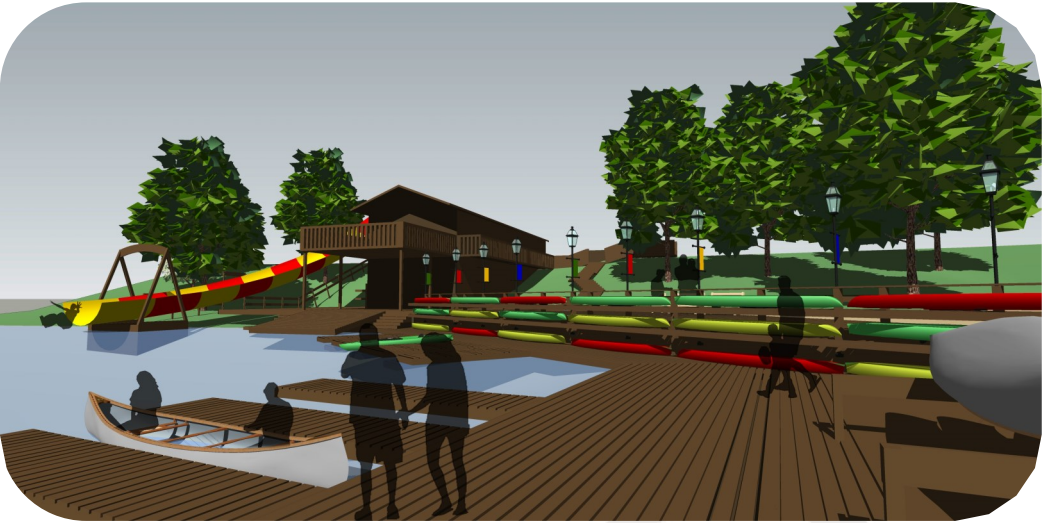
When we analyzed the current waterfront and how to improve it, we concluded another group whose needs are not being met are the kids and adults who are uncomfortable boating. In the spring, summer and fall we have campers and guests who physically struggle with the idea of getting in and out of canoes and kayaks. They have a fear of looking silly, of falling in the water or of actually getting injured while trying to go out on the lake in a boat. Part of the waterfront improvement project will be creating a space that is inviting and comfortable for all and encourage campers and their cabinmates, families and their friends, to experience the water together.

Other facility improvements will include new deck surfacing that extends from the swimming area to the boating area, which will make it more comfortable to walk from one area to the other barefoot and also solve an on-going erosion issue. Boat slips and storage racks will be located alongside the decking to make boating equipment more accessible.

All of these improvements create a WOW! factor for new and returning campers and guests. We are confident that by making the lake more accessible to hesitant swimmers and boaters, and building new incentives to become a stronger swimmer, we are making camp an even better place.

I hope you'll come by sometime to see this and the other improvements we've made to camp over the past three years. I'll meet you on the rope swing!

Ray Zetye
Executive Director



A view to the East of the planned decking, boat slips, boathouse deck extension, boat racks and Wet Willie slide.



The view to the West from the Boathouse deck. Included are the new boardwalk, sailboat slips on the western side of the waterfront and Tt's Grotto to the south.



The bird's-eye view of the planned waterfront improvement project.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Lauren Hersh



Lauren Hersh, Camp Jewell camper and staff alumna from 1983-2000, pictured above at Corn Roast in 1997. Below, Lauren works today to end domestic and international human trafficking and gender violence.

Growing up, summers for me meant warm mornings on Triangle Lake, spirit filled meals in the dining hall and afternoons horseback riding or navigating a ropes course twenty feet in the air. For more than a decade, as a camper and then as a staff member at Camp Jewell, my summer "job" was to play, laugh and learn.

Today, as I reflect on my time at Camp Jewell, I recognize that camp for me was much more than a summer vacation. It was the place where I formed meaningful friendships and developed the ability to be independent. It was the time when I learned an appreciation for differences and the power of positive thinking. Camp provided me with the space and support to take risks, to be brave and think big.

And it started early. At only 8, I was empowered to select my activities, live with people from diverse backgrounds and be responsible for myself and my belongings. By the time I was 18, Camp Jewell had taught me the importance of social justice, the importance of reaching beyond my comfort zone and the understanding that success is often predicated on team work. By 25, when I spent my last summer at Camp Jewell, I had organized a leadership development program for teens, led programs in Siberia—not once, but twice and had been told "I believe in you" more times than I could possibly count.

With this foundation, I embarked on a career as a lawyer and a human rights advocate. As a young Assistant District Attorney prosecuting domestic and sexual violence cases, I frequently found myself out of my comfort zone. Five years into my tenure, I was asked to lead one of the nation's first human trafficking units. Terrified by the task, yet determined, I forced myself to take the risk, think big and be brave. Before long, our unit was implementing creative strategies to prosecute some of New York's most heinous sex trafficking cases.

Years later, as the director of a global human rights organization for women and girls, I worked to change hearts, minds and laws by bringing people together to find common ground and utilize unique differences for good. The skills I had acquired at camp had become essential tools that I drew on daily in my professional life.

Today, I travel the world advocating for legal change to improve the lives of women and girls. As the Director of Policy & Advocacy at **Sanctuary for Families**, New York's leading service provider for domestic violence, human trafficking and other related forms of gender violence, I work with political leaders, community change agents and young people to educate about gender and create strategies to ignite change.

At times, ending gender violence globally can feel insurmountable. But when I stand beside a 15 year old who is co-hosting a human trafficking conference because she believes she can end sex trafficking in her lifetime or a 13 year old who is taking on rape culture because he believes his voice can make a difference, I am inspired by possibility.

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In my work with young people, I am often struck by the power of positive environments. When children grow up consistently hearing "You can" and "I believe in you," they are far more likely to feel that they can change the world.

As an 11 year old camper, I tentatively placed one foot in front of the other on a wobbly rope twenty feet in the air. Nine girls and three counselors stood below me on steady ground, supporting each step with words of encouragement. Once I had reached my goal, their explosion of excitement was exhilarating and empowering.

Moments like these have lasting impact. These are the types of moments that I hope become memories for my daughter and son.

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN MATCHING GIFTS

As many alumni gear up to make their pledge to our 2015 Annual Campaign to bring kids to camp on scholarship, we want to remind you that many employers offer matching gift programs up to a certain dollar amount. What an easy way to make your gift to camp that much bigger this year. Please check with your employer to see if your donation qualifies for a matching gift. Thank you for being part of the camp community that's working to bring more kids to camp on scholarship this summer!



Camp Jewell Credo:

"We come together for this short time to live simply, close to nature and closer to each other; that we might renew our respect for the world around us, recommit ourselves to family and friends, and rejoice in God's love for us all."

Camp Jewell YMCA

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