



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA Camp Thunderbird Overnight Camp
Activity Descriptions 2026

ADD-ON ACTIVITIES

Add-On Activities are specialty programs that take place during regularly scheduled Land Activity periods and require pre-registration. Because these are extended, skill-focused experiences, add-ons combine multiple one-hour periods into a longer block that will take place during your camper's land activities.

Add-on Options Include:

- **Advanced Wake Sports** meets for a 3-hour block (3 activity periods).
- **Advanced Pottery** and **Horseback Riding** meet for a 2-hour block (2 activity periods).

Campers enrolled in an add-on will attend that program during its assigned period(s) for the entire session, replacing one or more of their regularly scheduled land activities during that time.

Advanced Wake Sports

For campers who have experienced water skiing or wake boarding in the past, this is an extended session designed to help them build their skills on the lake! They will be pulled and instructed by trained instructors. *This is an add-on activity that requires pre-registration.*

Advanced Pottery

For campers who have experience in pottery and will be at camp for at least 2 weeks, this offers an extended timeframe for hand building and wheel throwing. Projects will be fired and glazed so they can be taken home at the end of their session. *This is an add-on activity that requires pre-registration.*

Horseback Riding

Campers will join group horseback riding lessons, where they will learn about basic grooming, care and respect for horses as well as English Riding techniques appropriate for their skill-level. All tack and safety gear is provided. Campers must wear long pants and boots with a heel. *This is an add-on activity that requires pre-registration.*

LAND ACTIVITIES

Land Activities run on an A/B Day rotation and are individually scheduled based on each camper's ranked preferences submitted before camp. Campers participate in **three land activity periods each day** (six total across A and B Days), rotating through their personalized schedule throughout the session. These periods focus on hands-on skill development, progressive challenges, and allow campers to advance through card requirements in each activity area.

A.T.L.A.S. – Achievement Through Leadership and Service

This is a leadership development program for last year campers (rising sophomores in high school), designed to further develop leadership skills and encourage them to take on more challenging roles and responsibilities both at camp and in their everyday lives. This activity is led by our Program Supervisor of Leadership Development with the help of our Counselor-In-Training (CIT) Mentors.

Aerial Adventure Course

Campers use smart belays to navigate themselves through 20+ elements high in the trees. Elements range in difficulty, including rolling logs, cargo nets, and slack lines. Our certified Course Operators encourage challenge-by-choice and help campers step out of their comfort zones. To participate in the AA Course, campers must be at least 48" tall. Ziplines are available for campers at least 60" tall.

Archery

Campers learn and refine fundamental archery skills using compound bows under the guidance of our certified instructors. Campers can practice different target challenges and as accuracy and strength improve, distance increases to provide additional challenges.

Arts & Crafts

Arts & Crafts is a creative space for campers to have a fun and explore a variety of hands on projects. Campers will have the chance to express themselves through a variety of different crafts.

Athletic Conditioning

Campers signed up for Athletic Conditioning will improve endurance and strength through walking, running, core workouts, and agility challenges.

Backyard Games

Campers can enjoy friendly competition in Cornhole, Nine Square in the Air, Ladderball and more. This is a great activity to stay active and connect with friends.

Baseball/Softball

Campers have the opportunity to practice catching and throwing, fielding grounders and pop flies, hitting live pitches, and participate in games to help improve their skills.

Basketball

Campers will be able to sharpen their skills by participating in dribbling drills, free throw challenges, layups, jump shots, and three-point shooting. Campers also have the opportunity to play in scrimmages to help apply their skills to real game situations.

Challenge Course

Campers will climb our Alpine Tower and Power Pole while being belayed by our trained operators. Campers will be challenged to try the different climbing routes to test their balance and climbing ability.

Cheer

Campers will learn the different jumps like toe touch and pike, practice victory chants, and simple tumbling skills. They even have the chance to perform a group cheer during a camp production!

Dance

Campers can explore different styles of dance like jazz, hip hop, lyrical, and contemporary while learning technique based leaps, turns, and short combinations. Campers have a chance to perform in a group dance during a camp production or choreograph an original dance!

Digital Media

Campers can create slideshows with music, design digital posters and infographics, record podcasts, write blog posts, and film short movies using iMovie. Advanced projects include multi-media storytelling with video, sound effects, and edited productions.

Disc Golf

Campers will learn about the different types of discs and their advantages, practice techniques, and play on our newly designed 18-hole disc golf course that transverses all over camp property. They participate in mini-course challenges and tournament style events like the Thunderbird Open.

Drama

Campers perform themed skits, memorized monologues, and commercials before taking part in full productions. Each 2-week session will be topped off by a drama production that campers can audition for and perform in front of camp. They may act, design props, create costumes, or run tech for the final performance.

Fishing

Campers practice casting accuracy, tying fishing knots, baiting hooks, and identifying local fish species. They fish from the dock and pontoon while learning how to rig artificial lures and safely catch and release fish.

Football

Campers will have the opportunity to better develop skills in throwing, catching, kicking, punting, and defending through fun drills, games, and scrimmages.

Future Engineers

Campers will design structures and build bridges from a variety of materials, create marble racetracks, and program the Sphero indi and BOLT+ robots through custom paths and obstacle courses. Advanced campers will be able to code robots to navigate their own map of camp they design.

Gellyball

A high-energy, low-impact game played in our paintball arena using gel orbs and blasters. Campers compete individually or on teams with protective gear provided.

Geocaching/Orienteering

Campers learn to read topographic maps, use compasses, follow bearings, and complete navigation courses around camp. They also use GPS systems to locate hidden caches and design their own geocaching routes.

Guitar

Campers learn chords, scales, and strumming patterns while building toward full song performances. Campers will have the honor of playing Carolina Gave Me You at closing campfire on the last night of camp.

Lacrosse

Campers learn the fundamentals of lacrosse in a supportive, non-competitive setting, practicing cradling, passing, catching, ground balls, and shooting.

Outdoor Living Skills

Campers identify native plants, safely handle animals with staff supervision, build shelters, start controlled fires, and hike camp trails. Campers can sign up for the overnight camp out during their session where they will sleep in hammocks to put their outdoor living skills to the test!

Pickleball

Campers will learn the rules and fundamentals of pickleball, play in matches and challenge each other while developing their own skills under the guidance of our experienced staff.

Pottery

Pottery is available for our 2 week campers where they will learn wheel throwing and hand-building techniques like pinch pots and coil projects. They glaze and fire finished pieces, explore decorative techniques like incising and applique, and create fully finished projects to take home.

Riflery

Campers will be guided by a certified instructor in learning the five steps of shooting, learn the fundamentals of riflery, and appreciate the safety of the sport while using BB guns. They'll practice their aim from various distances and positions while attempting to hit a variety of different targets.

Soccer

Campers build foundational soccer skills including dribbling, passing, shooting, goalkeeping, and ball control through drills and scrimmages.

Sports Sampler

Campers will get to try a variety of fun games, including gaga ball, kickball, 4 square, and even human foosball! With a mix of classic and unique games, campers will stay active, build teamwork skills, and most importantly, have lots of fun.

Tennis

Campers will spend their time learning the fundamentals of tennis in a non-competitive environment. Our staff will help coach campers on their skills in serving, backhands, forehands, and volleys.

Tree Climbing

Campers will ascend into the branches of our beautiful white oak trees and see camp from a new angle. They will learn how to ascend a rope into the canopy and come back down using specialized knots, guided by a certified instructor.

Ultimate Frisbee

Campers will work on the basics of high-energy ultimate frisbee. Our staff will work with campers on their backhands, forehands, hammers, cutting, and catching through drills, games, and friendly scrimmages.

Volleyball

In our sand volleyball court, campers will work on their serving, setting, hitting, and passing skills. Staff will also help campers understand the rules of the game and practice through various drills and games.

Yoga

This is a fun and engaging way for campers to move, stretch, and relax. Through interactive activities and a variety of yoga styles and poses, campers will build flexibility, balance, and confidence while learning mindfulness techniques in a supportive and calming environment.

WATER ACTIVITIES

Water Activities are attended with a camper's cabin group on an A/B Day rotation. Cabins travel together to the waterfront and pool on their assigned days, where trained staff provide instruction in water sports, swimming, and lake safety.

Paddle Sports

Campers explore the lake in a variety of small watercraft, including corcls, paddleboards, kayaks, and canoes. They learn how to paddle, steer, and balance while navigating around buoys, practicing turns, and taking short trips across the water.

Sailing

Campers work together to steer a sailboat across the lake, feeling the breeze and enjoying the freedom of the open water. They learn basic sailing skills like steering, trimming sails, and tying knots. As they gain experience, campers tackle more advanced maneuvers, practice capsizing and recovery, and even participate in the Thunderbird Regatta.

Ski Tower

Ski Tower is a high-energy waterfront experience where campers ride behind the boat on skis or kneeboards, glide across the wake, and enjoy tubing and banana boat rides with their cabin.

Swimming

Campers spend time in the pool building swimming skills, practicing different strokes, diving, floating, and treading water. Sessions focus on improving comfort, endurance, and overall water safety.

Lake Toys

Big laughs. Big splashes. Big energy. Campers launch sky-high off the Blob, race across the Wibit obstacle course, climb The Rock, and fly down Wet Wylie before plunging into the lake. This is pure waterfront fun.