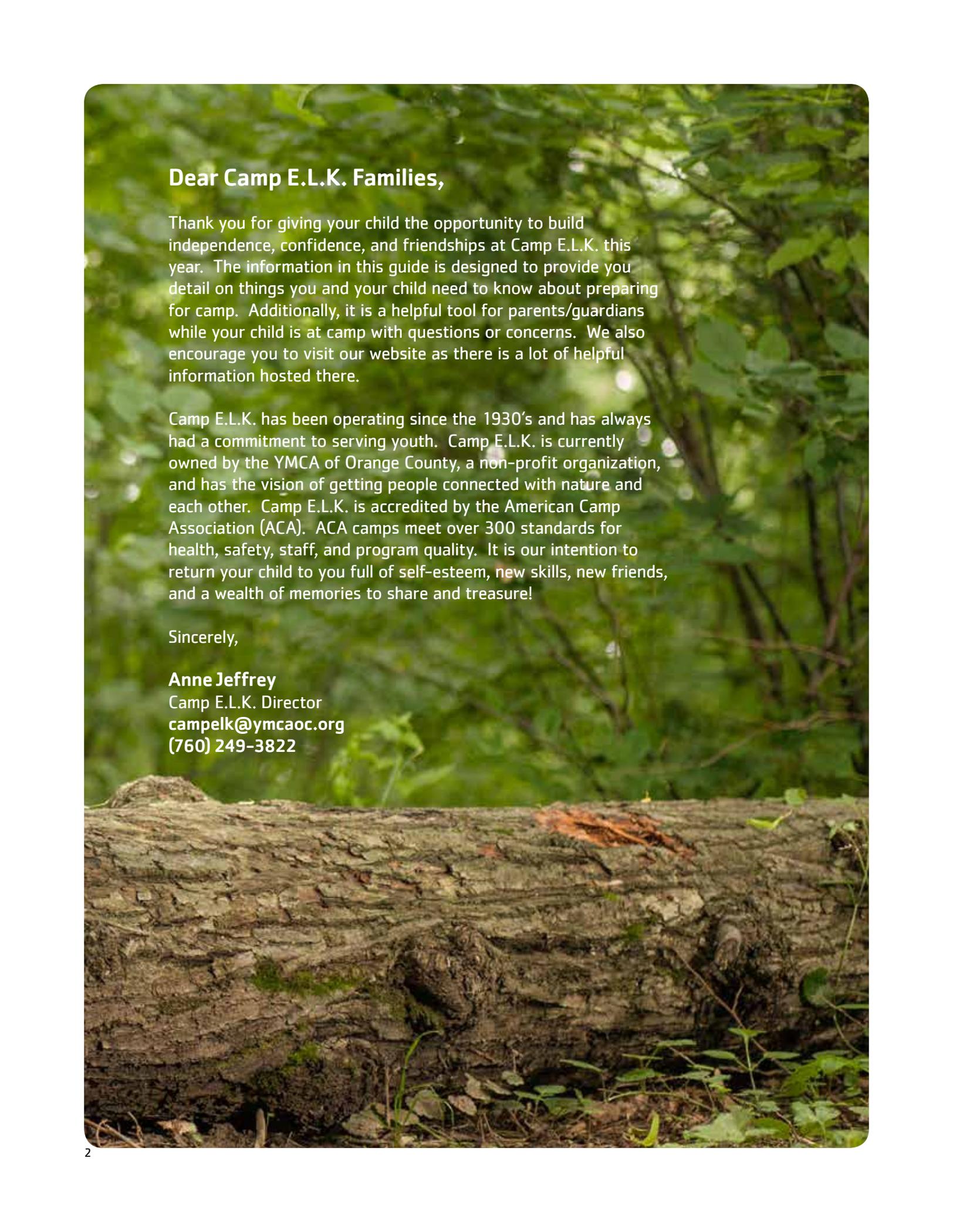




# UNPLUG EXPLORE CONNECT

Camp E.L.K. Parent Guide





## Dear Camp E.L.K. Families,

Thank you for giving your child the opportunity to build independence, confidence, and friendships at Camp E.L.K. this year. The information in this guide is designed to provide you detail on things you and your child need to know about preparing for camp. Additionally, it is a helpful tool for parents/guardians while your child is at camp with questions or concerns. We also encourage you to visit our website as there is a lot of helpful information hosted there.

Camp E.L.K. has been operating since the 1930's and has always had a commitment to serving youth. Camp E.L.K. is currently owned by the YMCA of Orange County, a non-profit organization, and has the vision of getting people connected with nature and each other. Camp E.L.K. is accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). ACA camps meet over 300 standards for health, safety, staff, and program quality. It is our intention to return your child to you full of self-esteem, new skills, new friends, and a wealth of memories to share and treasure!

Sincerely,

**Anne Jeffrey**  
Camp E.L.K. Director  
[campelk@ymcaoc.org](mailto:campelk@ymcaoc.org)  
(760) 249-3822

## **YMCA of Orange County**

Our mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Our vision is to deliver programs in youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility driven by passionate staff and volunteers. At the Y, strengthening community is our cause.

## **Camp E.L.K. Goals & Philosophy**

Camp E.L.K. is a place where kids can unplug and connect with themselves and others. Camp has three main goals: 1) We teach 21st Century life-skills to help campers become their best selves, 2) We build confidence and character (respect, responsibility, caring and honesty), and 3) We build skills by exploring the outdoors.

Camp E.L.K. provides a positive atmosphere of safety, support, and care for all participants and supports the personal growth and development of each camper. Our camping programs utilize the resources of the natural environment to provide campers with recreational, creative, and educational experiences that build spirit, mind, and body. Campers develop friendships, form memories, and acquire skills that will be with them throughout their lifetime.

## **American Camping Association**

Camp E.L.K. is an accredited camp by the American Camping Association. ACA camps meet over 300 standards for health, safety, staff, and program quality to ensure the best camper outcomes. We encourage you to visit their website [www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org) for camp resources and information.

## **Registration**

Spaces at camp are limited and are available on a first come, first served basis. At the time of registration a \$100 non-refundable deposit is due to secure your child's space. Final payments are due June 1st for summer sessions and December 1st for winter sessions with full registration packets. Payments can be made online, by mail, via phone, or at local Y branch locations. Registration packets can be mailed, emailed, or dropped off at local Y branch locations. Part of the registration packet is a medical evaluation so please plan ahead. Refund/cancellation requests are taken on a case by case basis after the June/December 1st deadline.

At registration you are given the option of adding on a \$25 Camp Store Credit. Camp E.L.K. signature items (i.e. flashlight, hat) and toiletries are available. We do not take cash, leave it at home. Camp Store Credit may be purchased by contacting the office if you forgot to do it at registration. The Y is not responsible for camper purchases. Any unused funds will not be returned and will go towards Camp E.L.K.'s Campership Fund.

Qualifying families unable to pay the full cost of participation are encouraged to apply for YMCA Financial Assistance. Please see the Camp Director for more information and eligibility requirements.

## **Camp Activities**

Camp is fully programmed from sun rise to set with both group and individual experiences. The following activities are included in each day: Educational Activities (i.e. nature education, STEM projects), Recreational Activities (i.e. swimming, archery), Leadership & Character Activities (i.e. ropes courses, team building games), and Camp Rituals (i.e. campfire, morning chapel).

Each week features a new themed session. See back of brochure for a full list and description of each session!

## **Camp Life**

On arrival day campers are placed into cabin groups that they will spend the majority of their time with at camp. Our ratio of campers to staff is 1:5 or less, so most cabins will have 10 campers and 2-3 staff. Campers are grouped by age and gender. At camp our goal is to encourage new friendships. However, if you must have your child with another camper it must 1) be stated in your registration packet prior to arrival, 2) be requested by the other camper, and 3) the campers must be of the same gender and age. We do not take cabin or counselor requests.

Camp is fully programmed all day with the exception of Siesta for one half hour each afternoon. This is an opportunity for campers to be on their bunks resting, reading, writing, playing quiet games, etc. Campers are encouraged to bring materials for this time, especially letters and stamps for writing home.

Being away from home will provide your child a chance to be independent and take charge of their personal care. We will remind and encourage normal routines (i.e. brushing teeth). If there are special situations or concerns we should know about, please be sure to include them in your registration packet.

Each day breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack will be provided. We serve nutritious food that campers like to eat. Service is buffet style so children have choices and each lunch/dinner includes a salad bar. Milk or juice and water are provided at each meal. Our staff will try to accommodate most dietary needs, with prior communication in the registration packet, giving us plenty of time to meet the needs before arrival. Food cannot be kept in the cabins because it attracts ants, rodents and other campers. Please do not send snacks, candy or gum with your camper!

## **Inclusion for All Children**

Camp E.L.K. welcomes all children. To the extent it is reasonably able to do so, the YMCA will provide services to children with disabilities or special needs in the same manner as comparable age. Camp E.L.K. is, however, unable to provide one-to-one care for any child except on an intermittent basis. Additionally, families must keep in mind the open natural environment, natural hazards, camper independence, personal care routines, and recreational activities associated with resident camping when deciding if the program is a good fit.

It is key that families start working with the Camp Director during the enrollment process on any special needs children might have. Each camper's needs are taken on a case-by-case basis to provide the best service and determine if the program is right for your child.

## **Camp Behavior Policy**

Camp Staff are highly trained in providing quality care for our campers and will try several methods to correct undesired behavior (i.e. redirection, removal from an activity). If a situation arises where a camper threatens the safety or security of another camper, or if a camper shows a complete disregard of camp community rules, the child may be dismissed at the discretion of the Camp Director. Parents/guardians will be responsible for any costs associated with the camper's dismissal for behavioral reasons. If a camper is removed from camp for behavioral reasons, no refund will be given for any portion of the camp session. Parents/guardians are responsible for picking up their camper in Wrightwood (including expenses to do so) should it become necessary to send a camper home.

## Homesickness

Camp staff are trained to detect early symptoms of homesickness and approach it with caring and supportive methods. It is common for a few campers to experience this at the beginning of the week. If you have questions about your child's progress at camp, you may call the Camp Director but remember campers are the priority and it may take some time to get back to you.

However, you can help minimize homesickness at home. First and most important, show your excitement for your child to attend camp! Keep them focused on the positive, all the new things they will learn and do. Second, keep your child informed about what to expect at camp. Go over important items in this guide, packing lists, FAQs on the website, etc. Finally, send your child letters before they leave so it will be waiting for them at camp when they arrive.

## Medical Information

Camp E.L.K. is well prepared for medical situations. We have necessary supplies (i.e. AED) and extensive staff training in this area. All staff at camp are Red Cross First Aid and CPR certified and our Camp Nurse is always on site or readily available in our Health Center. Due to the nature of our outdoor activities, scrapes and bruises are bound to happen. If we feel a phone call home is necessary, we will make this a priority. If your child becomes ill at camp you may be contacted to come and pick them up as our medical facility is not equipped to take care of ill children for a long period of time. If an attempt to contact you has been made with no response, an attempt to contact those on the emergency medical form will be the next step, and if still no response, emergency medical personnel will be contacted, followed by the police. If a trip to the hospital or medical clinic became necessary, 2 staff members will accompany your child and our Camp Director will contact parents/guardians immediately.

**Medical Exam:** Your child must have a medical examination performed within 12 months of arriving at camp as part of your registration packet. If your child has had an exam already falling within the 12 months before camp, you may fill in the results on the child's medical form and please attach a note and signature from your child's doctor or signed health passport.

**Medications:** Do not pack medications in your child's luggage. This includes vitamins and over-the-counter medications. Give medications to Nurse/Health Center staff at check-in on arrival day. All medications must be in the original packaging (bottles, blister packs, etc.) with the name of the camper clearly labelled. This is because our Nurse is only legally permitted to dispense medications in their original containers. Do not send any unlabeled medications to camp with your child. All dosages and indications must match the prescription. If your child's dosage of a particular medication is different from indicated on the bottle/package you must get the prescription changed by your doctor prior to attending camp.

**Arrival Day Health Check:** Part of check in at the camp bus stop will be a health check by our staff team. One of the things we look for is lice. Any camper with lice or nits will not be able to attend camp. Please check your child in advance to ensure they can board the bus. We also ask if there have been any recent bed bugs at home. If you have, all items being sent to camp must be treated or new.

## Child Abuse Prevention

The Y maintains a policy of Child Abuse Prevention Practices, which include procedures related to employee hiring, staff training, relationships with children, and camp visitors. Additionally, we must comply with Section III66 of the Penal Code that requires us to report known or suspected instances of child abuse to a protective agency. This would include emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

## **Packing List**

Gathering and packing the proper clothing and equipment are important parts of your child's camp experience; be sure to involve your child in the packing process. It also makes it more likely that everything that goes to camp will come home again! Make sure to label EVERYTHING your child brings to camp with their name. Note: the Y is not responsible for camper's personal belongings, do not bring valuables.

The packing list on the website is the best place to find a good printable list of items to bring. When packing please keep in mind that children will be in the great outdoors for 100% of their week. Pack clothing that can get dirty, protect children from sun with hats and sunscreen, provide layers for a variety of weather, and ensure that closed toe shoes are worn.

The following items must not be brought to camp and will be taken from campers until departure day: money, any form of technology (i.e. cell phone, laptop), hair styling tools (i.e. blow dryers, curling irons), food, candy, gum, dangerous items (i.e. matches, knives), illegal items (i.e. fireworks), toys, and animals.

## **Lost & Found**

Upon arrival at home if you find that your camper has forgotten items; we can make arrangements for you to pick them up at camp or at a YMCA fitness location. We will only hold items for pickup for 10 days after your child's camp session commences.

## **Arrival Day**

Transportation to and from camp is included in fees. Please see website for full details on bus locations and times. On arrival day to camp, families will visit three stations prior to boarding the bus: Camp Nurse, Health Check, and Registration. All medications will be submitted to the Camp Nurse, so do not pack them. All campers must visit the nurse regardless if they have medications. The nurse will be reviewing other items with families like allergies, dietary needs, emergency protocols, etc. An overall health check by staff will be completed, including lice check. Finally, a review of payment and registration paperwork will be completed and campers will be signed in by a parent/guardian. Campers will then load their luggage and board the bus. Families should not leave until their camper has boarded the bus. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CAMPER EATS LUNCH BEFORE CHECKING IN, we will not be stopping for lunch and dinner will be served at 5:30pm at Camp.

Please note that luggage is limited to two bags plus a sleeping bag and pillow. Please put your child's name on all luggage and personal belongings going to camp including sleeping bag and pillow.

The bus will not wait for any campers or last minute items. If a camper missed the bus, the parent/guardian will be responsible for transporting the child to camp and the costs incurred. Families will receive an email when children have arrived at camp.

## **Departure Day**

When the buses have departed from camp families will receive an email. No other communication will be given unless there is a significant delay in timing.

In order to pick up your child from the departure locations you must be listed on the authorized release form and bring a valid, government issued photo ID with you to be able to sign for release. Anyone without proper authorization or identification will not be allowed to sign-out a camper. In case of emergency, a parent/guardian may give temporary permission for a child to be picked up in the registration packet or in writing. At the time of sign-out medication will be returned and campers will receive their photo.

If a child has not been picked up 30 minutes after arrival, phone calls will be made to emergency contacts, and a late fee of \$25 will occur. 1 hour after arrival, the local authorities will be contacted if a child has not been picked up.

## Emergencies

Camp is well prepared for emergencies. We have emergency supplies (i.e. rations), trained staff, are monitored by agencies (i.e. Fire Department), have procedures in place (i.e. evacuation), and drill to our expectations. In the unlikely event that there was an emergency change at camp or in the surrounding area, parents will be contacted promptly by phone and updated on the situation at hand.

## Family Communication

Parents/guardians will receive four mass communications while campers are in session via email, so be sure we have the correct email. Families will receive an email when campers arrive to camp. There will be a newsletter sent on the second and fourth full day of camp via email. Finally, families will receive an email when campers have departed camp on the last day.

To help each camper experience the rewards of a successful, independent stay at camp, we believe it is best to limit telephone contact from home. Telephone calls are only permitted under emergency circumstances. You can however call the office and speak to a staff member who can provide you with information. Please keep in mind that camp operations are our first priority, so allow time to return your call.

For the same reason we do not allow visitors up to camp. Visits to camp can be disruptive and counter-productive, especially for campers prone to homesickness. Please refrain from stopping by and instead phone the Camp Director for an update on your child's progress.

We encourage campers to write home, feel free to send your child with letters, postcards & stamps in their bag.

## Camper Communication

You may email your child while they are away at **elkcampermail@ymcaoc.org**. This is one way email so no responses will be provided. There will be no emails distributed on departure day.

Everyone likes to receive letters and postcards so please write! Make sure you clearly indicate your campers name and session. Please try to mail one to two weeks prior to start of camp. Our mail comes via a P.O. Box so no packages will be accepted. Please write to our P.O. Box, mail is not delivered to our camp directly.

YMCA Camp E.L.K.

(Your child's name and session dates)

P.O. Box 2828

Wrightwood, CA 92397

On the last day of camp we allow campers to exchange contact information with each other if they would like to stay in contact after camp. However, please know that we do not permit staff to have contact with campers outside of camp or Y approved functions. Our staff work with your child in the context of a visible, well-scrutinized community that has many built-in checks and balances. Since we are unable to monitor activities outside of camp, it is our policy that there is no camper-staff contact.

## Camp E.L.K. Contact Information

Please direct all inquiries regarding registration, payment, and campership subsidies along with any questions about your camper's progress or activities to **campelk@ymcaoc.org** or by calling the Camp Office at (760) 249-3822. Our Camp Director and Counselors would be happy to update you on your child's development at camp!

YMCA Camp E.L.K. is located in the heart of the beautiful Angeles National Forest in California's San Gabriel Mountains near Mountain High Ski Resort. Camp E.L.K. has an elevation of 5750' and is located just outside of Wrightwood, CA at 21280 Big Pines Hwy.



## OUR FOUNDATION

### Our Mission

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

### Our Vision

To improve lives and strengthen character through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility driven by passionate staff and volunteers.

### Our Values

Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility – Our values are celebrated by staff and members and provide a positive foundation for all Y programs and a healthy connection with others.

### Our Cause

Strengthening the foundation of communities.

### Our Commitment

The Y is a nonprofit charity that serves the entire community. Donations support our scholarship program and our commitment to keep programs open for all.



#YGOALS

[campelk.org](http://campelk.org)

## Summer Camp Weekly Activity Themes

### Session 1: It's a Pirate/Pixie Life for Me

A week dedicated to unplugging from everyday life, exploring the outdoors, and connecting to oneself and others around them! This week's focus is on having fun through self-expression and outdoor activities. A great time for some of our favorite programs, like outdoor cooking, swimming, and hiking!

### Session 1: LIT/CIT

This week is offering an experience like no other week this summer. LIT is our Leadership in Training, for ages 15-17, focusing on leadership and personal/professional development. Our goal is to provide these young adults useful skills to help them succeed in the work environment. LIT can work towards becoming volunteers and even camp counselors!

### Junior Camp

A week of camp specifically for our younger campers, ages 5-8, and our theme this year is Disney! We are excited to see our little ones have a magical week at camp! The camp will be filled with Disney decorations and spirit. With only 40 campers, we can give our young campers more of that needed attention, however spots are limited!

### Session 2: Space Theme!

This week's camp will focus on mindfulness and all things space. With our awesome astronomy program and beautiful night sky that has almost no light pollution will provide an unforgettable week at camp. Our goal this week is to talk about our place in the universe and set substantial and lifelong goals!

### Session 3: Creative Expressions

"The Arts Camp"! Campers can rejoice for this week, where we focus on the arts, including music, all kinds of paper art, and even theatre. We are excited to create an environment where our campers can be themselves and also try activities that are new and fun. Art is an area that our Camp Staff is passionate about and we can't wait to experience it with our campers.

### Session 4: Time Travelers Tech Camp!

A camp geared toward the future and step by step goal setting. With this brand new program, electric art using circuitry will be like no other summer camp week! Using STEM core values, our goal is to provide the most learning knowledge focused week at camp. We will also be creating a time capsule to allow our campers to leave an everlasting mark on camp!

### Session 5: Ultimate Sports Theme!

This week we will use our amazing environment to our advantage. Being outdoors with fresh air gives us the opportunity to have an outside play land with the abundance of activities that Camp E.L.K. provides, like Gaga Ball, archery and many more. Our goal is to promote healthy lifestyles and sportsmanlike competition.

### Winter Camp: Elegance on Ice!

Camp is quite likely to have snow which allows for additional activities, like sledding, snow science, winter survival skills, NYE party and more!