



# DALLAS YMCA ADVENTURE GUIDES

Mission Statement: To put Christian values into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.



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YMCA Adventure Guides leads a parent and a child on a journey of discovery and uninterrupted time together as members of a larger group, building lifelong memories and bonds. Through activities such as monthly group meetings, weekend camping trips, games, ceremonies and family adventures, parent and child will create memories that neither will ever forget.

# PROGRAM

## PURPOSE

# THEN

The first Y-Indian Guide Program was developed to support parents' vital role as teachers, counselors, and friends to their children. Harold S. Keltner, St. Louis YMCA Director, initiated the program as an integral part of Association work. In 1926, he organized the first tribe in Richmond Heights, Missouri, with the help of his good friend, Joe Friday, an Ojibway Indian, and William H. Hefelfinger, chief of the first Y-Indian Guide tribe. Inspired by his experiences with Joe Friday, who was his guide on fishing and hunting trips into Canada, Harold Keltner established a program of parent-child experiences that now involves over 200,000 children and adults annually in the YMCA.

# NOW

## PROGRAM HISTORY

For 89 years, the Indian Guides program was the cornerstone for family programs in YMCAs across the country. Because of the changing world today, the YMCA adapted to the cultural sensitivity of Native Americans. Being a nationally recognized organization with the reputation of being respectful, honest and responsible prompted YMCA staff and volunteers to adapt the parent child program to be more susceptible to the changing world. Thus, the name Adventure Guides replaced the original, but the mission has remained the same.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Adventure Guides is a program whose sole focus is to foster the relationship between a parent/guardian and child. Every activity or event is designed to make memories that will last a lifetime and ensure a lasting bond between parent/guardian and child. This requirement of 1v1 interaction at all times is what sets the Adventure Guides program apart from other similar youth programs.

Once enrolled in the program everyone is divided into a small group of parents and kids. These small groups are made up of parent/child pairs within the same community and age range. Each group is led by a parent or guardian of a child who is in the group. Within these small groups the YMCA encourages monthly participation in meetings that are planned and implemented by the group themselves.

The highlight of these monthly activities are the seasonal campouts. Most campouts are held at campsites within a couple of hours of the metroplex. Each campsite provides sleeping quarters in cabins and dining facilities if you choose not to cook your own meals. All campouts start on Friday evening and end on Sunday morning.



## PROGRAM LEAD

Helps with the direction and organization of the AG program for the entire association.

## PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Delivers the program and handles all administration duties including emails, rosters, cabin assignments, meetings, etc.

## GROUP LEADER

This volunteer will help run individual groups or circles. This includes recruitment, rostering and communicating with Y staff. They should attend leaders meetings prior to the campouts as well as the Friday campout meetings.

## CAMPOUT LEADER

Our campouts are run by lots of volunteers! They are the ones that make the stories, walks and songs special for participants.

## PROGRAM LEADER

Program leaders help us ensure this is the best program we can offer! This group of people will be the ones guiding the campout volunteers and group leaders through the program. They will help lead volunteer meetings and local events as well as organize the volunteer roles at campouts. They will provide insightful feedback and direction as we continue to grow the program.

# WHO IS WHO IN AG LEADERSHIP



# REGISTRATION & FEES



## PROGRAM REGISTRATION & FEE

This fee is per school year for each child in the program. This is where we gather all the information we need to know to put the pair in the right group. This fee goes to pay for administration and anything not covered by the campout. We do offer 2nd child discount for this fee.

## CAMPOUT & EVENT REGISTRATION

ALL campouts and some local events require separate registration and will vary on price based on the camp/event you are going to be attending. This registration covers the child and one adult. Everyone must be registered for the campout or event. We do allow other parental figures to attend campouts if the parent/guardian is unable to attend. Refunds will be given up until the Monday of the campout/event.

All campouts have a maximum number of beds which is usually the camp's occupancy limit. Campout registration will be closed at this point. Please be aware that we do not reserve cabins per group, all beds are on a first-come, first-serve basis.



# CAMPOUT INFORMATION

Most groups are scheduled to go on one campout in the fall and one in the spring. The campouts will change each year and most groups will go to Camp Grady Spruce one time per year.

## CAMPOUT OVERVIEW

### Campout Locations:

- Sky Ranch
- Collin County Adventure Camp
- Camp Grady Spruce
- Camp Classen

### Friday:

- Check in will start late afternoon depending on campout
- Everyone is required to check in with AG Director
- Leader's Meeting with AG Director and Camp Staff
- Usually a Friday activity to get the entire group together

### Saturday:

- Activities will usually run 9-5 PM
  - BBs
  - Horses
  - Climbing Wall
  - Hikes
  - Water Slides- Sky Ranch ONLY
  - Archery
  - Canoes
  - Zipline
  - Fishing
- Breakfast and lunch are provided by camp
- Bonfire and procession will happen usually around sunset
- Other AG activities may be provided

### Sunday:

- No staffed activities available
- Breakfast is provided
- Chapel will run right after breakfast
- Most camps want groups out between 10 AM-12 PM



# PROGRAM SAFETY

Many of the adventures found within the Adventure Guides program have inherent risks and parents have accepted these risks with the understanding and appreciation that children and adults alike benefit from age-appropriate events and activities that challenge their limits by heightening awareness and building confidence and discipline.

To ensure the safety and success of the Adventure Guides program, we must work together to:

- You are responsible for the supervision of your child at all times.
- Know, understand, and comply with all rules, policies, and procedures
- Model safe behaviors when participating in Adventure Guides events and activities.
- Encourage staff, volunteer leaders, and youth members to share in the management of safety.
- Promote, provide, and, when appropriate, require health and safety training.
- Follow all guidelines related to archery and riflery and fire.
- Campouts and AG Events are alcohol, tobacco and drug free. We do have a zero tolerance policy.
- Aquatic Safety: All camps we go require lifeguards during aquatic activities. If there are no lifeguards present those aquatics activities are not permitted. All participants need to follow the aquatic guidelines set by the camp.
- Fire Safety: Must obey all camp and local fire policies - including any burn bans. Please make sure all fires are kept within the fire rings. Avoid oversaking with a fire accelerant. Fireworks are prohibited at campsites. All fires should be 4-5 feet of the base of the fire. All fires should be completely out by Sunday.
- Follow "Leave No Trace" principles and reduce impact as much as possible.
- For the safety of all, please do not be alone with any child, besides your own, at anytime. Practice the "3 and me" rule of always having at least 3 kids with you."

## CIRCLE/GROUP MEETINGS

- These should be child involved meetings
- Schedule them out and make them fun
- Utilize YMCA events
- They can either be at someone's home or community location
- Ideas:
  - High School Football Game
  - Main Event and other similar venues
  - Circle/Group Naming Meeting (create the flag)
  - Service project through other local non-profits
  - Have each dad sign up for a month to host the "meeting/outing" then they are in charge of location, event, etc.

## CREATE GROUP UNITY PRIOR TO CAMPOUT

- Have matching vests/t-shirts/patches so your group stands out
- Make sure you have group/circle name and chant before your first campout
- Schedule dads only meetings to plan out campouts
- Create a torch

CREATING  
THE MAGIC



# DURING THE CAMPOUTS:

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- Take time to make rounders, one for you and one for your child.
- Bring a broomstick (or find a stick) your first weekend and make it your child's "walking stick"
  - Build on this during every campout, make it the same size as your child is it at the time.
  - Use feathers, beads, etc. —each one represents a memory
  - It is a great way to show how tall your child has gotten throughout the years
- Participate in Adventure Guides Activities during campouts:
  - They may look different based on what campout you attend
  - Great bonding between you and your child
  - Activities include: flashlight walk, nation games, bonfire, chapel/feathers, awards, mustard, etc.
- Volunteer! These campouts are run by volunteers so we always need more help!
- Don't be afraid to spilt up the group during the campout
- Other group activities:
  - Apple Hour: Give each parent and child one apple. Give each pair one full hour to eat the apple together alone anywhere in camp. They must stay together the entire hour.
  - Frisbee Golf- Simply pick a tee-off location and select a tree or other safe object to be the "hole." Count the throws it takes to hit the hole
  - Scavenger Hunt- Ask an AG leader for a list or look at the campout packet
  - Group Skits
  - Chain Stories
  - Storytelling - ask volunteers for suggestions!

\*please remember you are responsible for the supervision of your child at all times.



# ADVENTURE GUIDES TRADITIONS



## AIMS:

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

**MOTTO: FRIENDS FOREVER**

**TRADITIONAL CLOSING PRAYER**

And now (finger pointing to the ground), may the Great Spirit (one hand with pointed finger rising in circular motion) of all Great Spirits (now both arms with fingers pointed rise in while drawing circle in the air)  
be with you (point at other members of circle)  
now (point straight down)  
and forever more (action of shooting bow and arrow, kids really like making the noise of the arrow leaving the bow too, so encourage it!).

- This is key for running an active circle.
- As the leader, you are the go-to person for that circle. The Y/campout volunteers may go to you first before contacting the other circles.
- With that information, you can then remind your families of deadlines and upcoming campouts and events.
- Not only communicating with your dads in the circle, but also communicating with the Y.
  - Update rosters and make sure they are accurate
  - Special circumstances in regard to campouts
  - Improvements

## BEFORE YOUR FIRST CAMPOUT

- Make sure there is a game plan for dinner on Friday and Saturday night. As well as snacks and drinks throughout the weekend.
- Assign roles and duties to specific parents. It helps keep everyone involved, accountable and ensures it doesn't fall on the leader.
- Bring plenty of coolers, etc. as most cabins do not have refrigerators.
- Have a group name created. It creates a sense of program identity and fun. The name could also reflect who they are as a group, a vision of the future or a goal they want to achieve. Names should be Y appropriate.
- Create a torch



- Most cabins are between 12-16 people per cabin. If your cabin is over this, you may have a spill over cabin(s). This means that some of your dads/kids may be sharing a cabin with another circle. If you have a very small circle, you may be the spill over cabin.
- The Y will ensure that every circle has their own fire pit and a base cabin.
- You are more than welcome to bring cots, sleeping bags, double up, etc. so everyone can fit in a cabin.
  - Sometimes this is the only way that we can ensure everyone gets a bed.
- Please make sure this is communicated to your families before the campout begins.
- The earlier the registrations come in, the easier it is to do cabin assignments and work around these issues.

## RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

### FAST & FURIOUS 6 WEEKS

Now that you have a group and participant email addresses the next month is critical to connect to the participants to create a successful Circle. If you don't capture the attention of the parents and the imagination of the kids in 6 weeks, you will lose them for the year. Schedule your first meeting and host it yourself or invite someone in the group to host. Deliver invitations with your kid and then double check to make sure everyone will be attending. Make sure at that first meeting everyone leaves knowing where and when the next meeting will be and that everyone has an updated and accurate roster. Kids need to leave with something as well, even if it's just a picture of their new Adventure Guide Circle with their New Adventure Guide name. Make sure the host of the next meeting has something planned.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## CODE OF CONDUCT

Every parent signs a Code of Conduct for themselves and their child(ren) when they register for the Adventure Guide program. The Circle Leader helps ensure that all participants have the best experience possible by making sure the Code of Conduct is followed.

We expect everyone to follow the Y core values:

- Caring
- Honesty
- Respect
- Responsibility

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

At the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas, we feel strongly that income should not be a barrier to becoming a member of the Y or participating in any of our programs. Financial assistance is available to any family who may need it.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For the most prompt response, please email [AGinfo@ymcadallas.org](mailto:AGinfo@ymcadallas.org)

This ensures all AG directors get the communication.





# CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AWARENESS:

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## CHILD PROTECTION- KNOW, SEE, RESPOND

Ensuring children are safe from abuse and able to learn, grow and thrive is the highest priority of the YMCA. We are committed to creating programs that protect children from abuse but we are also committed to providing our families and community with information to keep kids safe everywhere. It is the power of our community knowing, seeing and responding which will make it more difficult for offenders to abuse.

What can you do to protect kids? Visit [www.ymcadallas.org/cap](http://www.ymcadallas.org/cap) for more information.

- Know
  - How to recognize boundary violations and how offenders operate
  - Teach your child rules about their bodies
  - Learn about [YMCA Child Protection Policies](#) and let us know if someone is not compliant
- See
  - Warning signs of abuse
  - Emotional boundary violations
  - Physical boundary violations
  - Behavior boundary violations
- Respond
  - Whether you suspect abuse, observe policy violations, or just have an odd feeling about someone or their behavior, acting is the most important role you can have
  - Concerns about child safety? Report anonymously through the Values Line at 844.992.4795
  - Adults in Texas are mandated to report suspected abuse. Do so by calling the hotline or reporting online
    - Hotline: 1-800-252-5400
    - Online: <https://www.txabusehotline.org/>
  - Report by hotline if situation is urgent and needs to be investigated within 24 hours.
  - Report online for situations that do not need to be investigated right away.
  - If an individual is in immediate danger, call 911.