YMCA CAMP INDEPENDENCE OVERNIGHT CAMP

2027 PROGRAM GUIDE



SESSION 1:	SESSION 2:	SESSION 3:	SESSION 4:	SESSION 5:	SESSION 6:	SESSION 7:
6/13 – 6/18	6/20 – 6/25	6/27 – 7/2	7/6 – 7/9	7/11 – 7/16	7/18 – 7/23	8/2 – 8/7
(WOMEN AGES 16+)	(YOUTH AGES 7–13)	(ADULT AGES 20+)	(YOUTH MINI AGES 7–13)	(TEEN AGES 14–19)	(ADULT AGES 20+)	(YOUTH AGES 7–13)



ADVENTURE AWAITS AT YMCA CAMP INDEPENDENCE!

AT YMCA CAMP INDEPENDENCE, WE BELIEVE THAT EVERY PERSON DESERVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN, GROW AND DEVELOP TO THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL! CAMP INDEPENDENCE IS A SPECIAL PLACE WHERE CAMPERS WHO HAVE SPINA BIFIDA ARE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE THE MAGIC OF A TRADITIONAL OUTDOOR CAMP.

Camp Independence is a second home for campers ages 7 and up as well as their families. Located near Fox Lake in northern Illinois, our YMCA staff are committed to making sure that every family that chooses Camp Independence has a positive camp experience.

Our professional staff are dedicated to making a difference in the lives of children and adults. College-aged staff undergo an intensive hiring and background check process and are carefully selected based on their maturity, judgment, camp skills, and ability to relate and work with children and adults. Staff and counselors receive comprehensive training prior to the beginning of camp. Our highly qualified staff, some of whom are international, add to the spirit of diversity and inclusion at Camp Independence.

The medical team is led by Dr. Robin Bowman, MD, Medical Director and board member of the Multidisciplinary Spina Bifida Center and Associate Professor of Pediatric Neurological Surgery at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Dr. Bowman leads well-trained, qualified nursing staff who provide medical supervision for each camper and who are on duty 24/7.

A DAY AT CAMP*

- 7 a.m. Wake Up
- 8 a.m. Flag Ceremony
- 8:15 a.m. Breakfast
- 9:15 a.m. Cabin Clean Up & Bathrooms
- 9:45 a.m. Activity Period
- 10:45 a.m. Intervention
- 12 p.m. Lunch
- 1 p.m. Rest Period
- 2:30 p.m. Pool Time or Boating & Fishing
- 4 p.m. Activity Period
- 5 p.m. Camp Store Visit
- 5:15 p.m. Flag Ceremony
- 5:30 p.m. Dinner
- 7 p.m. Evening Program
- 8:15 p.m. Snack, shower, and bathrooms
- 9:15 p.m. Cabin Chats
- 10 p.m. Lights Out

*This daily schedule is subject to change.

"I liked swimming and playing basketball. I also enjoyed running around with my friends. My other favorite activity was taking a ride on the lake in a paddle boat. This is the second year that I attended Camp Independence, and I hope to go back again next year!"
– Camp Independence Camper



TRADITIONAL CAMP OPTIONS

Our Youth, Teen, and Adult Overnight Camps deliver all the classic joys of overnight camp: friendship, adventure, and personal growth in an environment designed specifically for campers who have spina bifida.

YOUTH OVERNIGHT CAMP | AGES 7–13

SESSION 2 (6/20 – 6/25), **SESSION 4** (7/6 – 7/9), & **SESSION 7** (8/1 – 8/6)

TEEN OVERNIGHT CAMP | AGES 14–19

SESSION 5 (7/11 – 7/16)

ADULT OVERNIGHT CAMP | AGES 20+

SESSION 3 (6/27 – 7/2) & **SESSION 6** (7/18 – 7/23)

WOMEN'S OVERNIGHT CAMP | AGES 26+

SESSION 1 (6/13 – 6/18)

Camp Independence is situated on 300 acres of land and a semi-private lake. Camp Independence operates from a state-of-the-art facility with two dormitory-style sleeping rooms, several fully accessible bathrooms, and a full basement for activities that also functions as a storm shelter. A swimming pool, large sport fields, kayaks, basketball courts, campfire ring, and accessible playground with swings are a part of our exciting program and facilities! Meals are served in our beautiful Great Room or at our main lodge. Campers enjoy three nutritionally balanced, "camper friendly" meals daily as well as an evening snack.



We understand that choosing a summer camp is about more than just the activities offered or the quality of the camp facilities. Beyond our offerings, we promise to help campers grow and gain independence in a safe and fun environment. Camp Independence provides an opportunity for campers to develop meaningful friendships, explore their creativity, and make lifelong memories. Campers learn, laugh, and gain self-confidence and independence all under the careful supervision of our highly trained and responsible staff.

Camp Independence also offers a personalized approach for each camper. Campers are encouraged to become active participants in their own care as well as their continued development towards independence. Each session, campers participate in an intervention program where they work on both a social and health goal during their time at camp and beyond. Campers will have the opportunity to choose their own activities each day. In the evening, campers participate in full-group camp activities such as talent shows, theme nights, or a game of mission impossible.



2027 SUMMER SESSION RATES

For 2027, we are introducing a tiered payment structure that gives campers and families options based on their financial circumstances, while providing a clearer picture of the cost of attending camp. Our goal is to keep Camp Independence accessible while helping families understand the support that makes each camper's experience possible. Families will select a payment option that best meets their family's financial situation.

CAMP INDEPENDENCE ACTIVITIES

- Arts & Crafts
- Archery
- Boating
- Campfires
- Drama Activities
- Fishing
- Playground Time
- Sports
- Swimming
- Tie Dye

VISIT CAMP INDEPENDENCE

OPEN HOUSES

There's an unforgettable adventure waiting for you at YMCA Camp Independence. Join us for an informative (and exciting!) open house where you'll get a sneak peek into Camp Independence. We're hosting an Open House on April 11, 2027, and registration is required. RSVP today.

PERSONAL CAMP TOURS

Interested in a personal camp tour? We offer tours until Friday, May 15, 2027 Email Katie at kehedges@ymcachicago.org to schedule a tour.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



REGISTRATION

Campers are encouraged to register early as there are limited spaces available each session! Registrations are processed on a first come, first served basis. The necessary deposit is refundable for medical reasons only, and it is issued upon receipt of a Doctor's authorized medical note. Families can register online and find all our forms at ymcacampindependence.org, or request forms by emailing campduncan@ymcachicago.org.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

At Camp Independence, we believe that all children deserve an opportunity to experience YMCA Overnight Camp. Our financial assistance options are listed on our registration form, and our financial assistance application is included in our registration materials and linked here.

CAMPER HEALTH & SAFETY

We understand that leaving your camper in our care is a huge step for most families. The health and safety of every camper is our highest priority. Our camp staff monitor campers' health and work side by side with our nursing staff. All of our counselors are certified in First Aid, CPR/AED, basic water safety, and they also receive extensive onsite training in camper care and supervision skills.

Once a camper is registered, the parent or guardian is required to complete an annual health form, have it signed by their physician, and provide a copy of a medical insurance card. The health form gives our nursing staff the necessary information in case medical needs arise during the camp experience.

TRANSPORTATION

Camp Independence requires families to drive their camper to camp. This is an important opportunity to meet your camper's counselor, the camp director, and the health care team. You can also tour the camp facilities and help your camper get settled.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to attend Camp Independence, a camper must:

- Have spina bifida
- Be 7 years of age or older
- Be able to function successfully in a group living environment

Campers with severe allergies or other special medical conditions are considered on a case-by-case basis by our camp professional staff, Dr. Bowman, and our nursing team. The ratio of staff to camper ranges from 1:1 up to 1:3 depending on the individual camper's needs.

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT CAMP INDEPENDENCE.

We'd love to hear from you!

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ACCREDITED