Hello camp family!

Welcome and thank you for choosing Camp Southwest as part of your summer experience! My name is Mike Heppner, and I am proud to be Camp Director this year. Ever since the first grade I’ve attended a YMCA summer camp, and I can honestly say I would not be the person I am today without camp. Summer camp is a magical place. As a camper, it’s almost like a fresh start! You’re away from your normal group of friends, around new people. You’re able to talk and befriend others that you may not have befriended while at school. You get to sing, shout, play, and discover. My goal is to capture the magic of camp that I felt as a camper, and spread that to every single family that comes to Camp Southwest. This camp guide is meant to give you an idea of what your child can expect everyday. It also will serve as a resource for you, going over in detail, our policies and procedures. We are a state licensed program through the Onondaga County Health Department, so many of our rules and regulations are actually mandated through them. Our camp is inspected twice every year, and all inspection reports are filed at the following address:

Onondaga County Health Department
Division of Environmental Health
John H. Mulroy Civic Center, 12th Floor
421 Montgomery Street
Syracuse, NY 13202
Telephone: (315)435-6617

Every decision we make is for the safety and well being of all of our campers, and I thank you for your understanding of this. If you have any questions or concerns about Camp Southwest, feel free to contact me by email at mheppner@syracuseymca.org, or by phone at (315)498-2893.

Again, welcome to Camp Southwest! I look forward to getting to meet all of our new families this year.

Thank you,

Mike Heppner
Camp Director
YMCA OF GREATER SYRACUSE MISSION STATEMENT
“To put Christian Principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.”

YMCA CAMP SOUTHWEST GOAL
Our YMCA camp program is designed to give all campers a positive, enriching experience through large and small activities, crafts, and projects under the guidance of well trained, caring staff leaders. We want to provide an experience to our campers that will last a lifetime.

THE YMCA IS FOR
Youth Development – At the Y, we believe all kids have potential and should have the opportunity to discover who they are, express themselves, and be nurtured in all their possibility.
Healthy Living – We believe that everyone has the desire to be well and that well-being is best cultivated by providing supportive relationships and environments. We also believe that all people should have the opportunity to be well in spirit, mind, and body.
Social Responsibility – We believe that we have a duty to try to help where help is needed. We believe that with support, resources, and guidance, people can improve their own lives and the lives of others. We believe we are part of a global community with global responsibilities. We believe that people want to help.

OUR OBJECTIVES
- Provide a safe and fun environment
- Foster friendships between campers regardless of differences between race, economic, or religious backgrounds
- Encourage children to express themselves creatively
- Develop sportsmanship through supervised sports play
- CHoRR Values – Caring, Honesty, Respect, and Responsibility

LOCATION AND PHONE NUMBER
YMCA Camp Southwest is located in the SRC Arena on Onondaga Community College’s campus.
Camp Southwest Phone Number: 315-498-2893
Southwest YMCA Phone Number: 315-498-2699
Fax Number: 315-498-2863
Mailing Address:
YMCA Camp Southwest
4585 West Seneca Turnpike
Syracuse, NY 13215
Website: www.syracuse.ymca.org
Camp Director: Mike Heppner
315-498-2893
mheppner@syracuseymca.org
CAMP HOURS
Camp Hours: 9AM-4PM Monday through Friday
AM Care: 7AM-9AM
PM Care: 4PM-6PM

CAMP CHECKLIST
Everyday, please try to send your child with a backpack with the following items:
- Backpack
- Close toed shoes (sandals and flip flops can actually cause toe injuries while running around!)
- Sunscreen
- Bathing suit (for those hot days to play water games)
- Lunch (We are a peanut and tree nut free environment)
- A change of clothes (especially for our younger campers)
- Water bottle
- Rain jacket

Please make sure to label all your child(ren)’s belongings, this way if they lose track of them we can manage to return them to the right person.

CAMP SOUTHWEST STAFF
At Camp Southwest, we take hiring the correct staff very seriously. Each staff member hired by the YMCA goes through a rigorous interview and hiring process, which includes a criminal background check. Hired counselors have experience working with children, and before the first day of camp, each staff member goes through at least 20 hours of camp staff training to make sure that they are prepared for the summer. We train on emergency procedures, creating a bully free environment, dealing with difficult behaviors, and playing different games and activities. Safety of campers is drilled into our staff from day number one, and is always the top concern of any staff member. Staff are also trained as mandated reporters, and how to identify physical and sexual abuse, and neglect. If you have any questions about staff certifications and qualifications, please contact the Camp Director.

STAFF SUPERVISION
As a state licensed program, our largest staff-to-child ratio is 1 staff per 12 children, though at Camp Southwest we do our best to keep a 1 staff per 10 children (or less) ratio. With our youngest campers (Kindergarten through 2nd grade), we strive to maintain a 1 staff per 8 children ratio. This allows for tighter age groups, and better supervision of the entire group. Each camper will be assigned a group for the week, and that group will have a consistent counselor that will get to know them extremely well. Campers are not allowed out of visual or auditory range of their counselor. At the beginning of each new session, counselors will go over these rules with each camper in their group.

BABYSITTING
It is the camp’s policy that no staff members babysit any camper(ṣ) who they meet at camp. An exception exists if a prior relationship exists between the staff member and the family of the camper. In this case, the Camp Director must be notified in writing.
ATTENDANCE AND SIGNING YOUR CAMPER IN AND OUT
Each counselor is responsible for keeping track of his group. Many times throughout the day, counselors will count each of their campers to make sure that the entire group is staying together as they follow their schedule. When dropping off your camper, you will find the lead staff (usually the camp Director) who will help you through the sign in process. After signing in with the Camp Director, your child will be guided to his or her counselor, where they will mark your child in on their own personal attendance sheet. Please note that if you are dropping off your child later than 9am, you will have to find the Camp Director first to sign in before dropping off your child to his or her group.

Signing out your child(ren) is very similar. You must find the Camp Director (or designated staff) to sign out your child. **Any adult signing out a child must present a valid photo ID**, and that adult must be on the authorized pick up list that is submitted when each camper is registered for camp. If you’d like to add additional names to the authorized list, please let the Camp Director know in writing. Please note that you cannot pick up campers directly from their group. Counselors will not release any camper to an adult unless they have permission from the Camp Director. This is for the safety of all of our campers, and we thank you for your understanding.

AM Care and PM Care
Our traditional camp day may start at 9am and end at 4pm, but for many of our working families AM care and PM care is needed daily. If you are signed up for AM care, you may drop off your child between 7am and 9am. For PM care, pick up is between 4pm and 6pm. Please note that if you are not signed up for either AM or PM care, but you drop off and pick up before 9am or after 4pm, you may be charged appropriately.

If you are dropping off your child for AM care, you will either drop off within the YMCA in our School Age Child Care room, or under the tent outside. This is weather dependent for most days. For PM care, pick up will always occur under the tent outside, unless the weather is poor and forces us inside. It will then take place in the School Age Child Care room.

LUNCH AND SNACKS
Camp Southwest does not provide lunch. Each camper is responsible for bringing their own lunch to camp. If a camper does not have a lunch, a parent or guardian will be contacted to either drop off a lunch or pick up their child. The camp schedule has a lot of fun, but very physical, activities. It is unhealthy for a child to go through the day without anything to eat. Please make sure to send your camper with their lunch everyday they attend camp.

Please note that, due to the severity of allergic reactions, **Camp Southwest is a peanut and tree nut free environment**. If your child is sent to camp with peanut or nut-based products, they will be allowed to eat them, but they will have to eat separated from their group, and the parent and/or guardian will be contacted upon pick up. If a child is sent to camp repeatedly with peanut and tree nut based products, suspension or expulsion may be necessary.

Some groups will have a designated snack time during the day (especially our younger campers). Any campers signed up for our PM care program will be provided a healthy snack at the end of the day.
MEDICATIONS
Any campers that could potentially need emergency medications administered, such as an Epi-pen for allergies or an inhaler for asthma, needs to have the proper paperwork and documentation filled out prior to their first day of camp. If the proper documentation is not filled out, or the medication itself does not meet standards, your camper will be sent home. This is a state regulation, and there is no exceptions made. Southwest staff members are trained to handle many medical emergencies. The Camp Director and the Camp Health Director are in charge of maintaining the medical paperwork, monitoring, and accounting for all camper medication. If you have any questions about medications at camp, please contact the camp director.

CAMP RULES
The following are our general rules of camp. Please go over these with your children before sending them to camp, this way there is a consistent message of what the rules are between our program and home. Individual groups may have additional rules, depending on the activities of the day or the group dynamic:
1. Campers must ALWAYS stay with their groups and counselor.
2. Respect and follow directions from all staff members (Counselors and Camp Director).
3. Respect all equipment as if it were your own.
4. Please leave all personal toys and equipment at home. Electronic devices are not allowed at camp.
5. Put your name on any personal belongings (such as backpacks, water bottles, etc.).
6. Physical confrontations are not tolerated at camp.
7. Follow the GOLDEN rule: “Treat others the way you would like to be treated”.
Many of these rules are put in place for safety reasons, or to make sure that a safe, positive environment for campers is in place. Camp Southwest implements a progressive discipline policy, which is consistent with all campers. Depending on the situation, certain infractions could lead to a suspension of the program, or expulsion. Infractions that could lead to a suspension could include, but are not limited to:
- Swearing and/or cussing
- Using inappropriate language and terms
- Running from the group and/or staff members
- Hitting, kicking, biting, or fighting
- Consistent refusal to any directions given by staff members
- Any act that puts themselves and/or others at risk
Camp is a lot of fun, but safety always needs to come first. Counselors are responsible for all campers in their group. Any action which requires a counselor to focus solely on one camper and not the rest of their group puts other campers at risk, and impacts their day in a negative way. If you have any questions about this, please reach out to the Camp Director.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS AND SCREEN TIME
At Camp Southwest we ask that all personal belongings, such as phones, tablets, toys, and games, stay don’t come to camp with campers. Camp Southwest has plenty of fun activities, games, and toys of our own! We aren’t responsible for personal equipment that is brought in, and do not allow toys from home to be played with while at camp. Camp Southwest also has a strict “no screens” policy. This means no phones, tablets, or TVs are allowed. If your camper is required to have a phone on them for emergency purposes, please contact the Camp Director for approval. Any contact via phone can be made through the Camp Director.
**FURNACE BROOK FIELD TRIPS**

Once per week we take a miniature field trip to the Furnace Brook retreat home. This smart home, owned and operated by Onondaga Community College, has a TON of activities for our campers! Between short nature trails through the woods, a huge grassy field, a outdoor sand volleyball pit, and pavilion, we’ll be having a ton of fun in the sun! Please make sure to pack sunscreen and bug spray for your camper on these days, as we do spend all day outdoors (aside from if it thunderstorms).

For Furnace Brook days, campers are dropped off and picked up at Furnace Brook, which is located right next to the main campus of OCC. The physical address is:

4527 West Seneca Turnpike  
Syracuse, NY 13215

For the 2018 Camp Season, our Furnace Brook days are going to be every Wednesday. If you have any questions, please let the Camp Director know.

**BILLING**

Upon registering for camp you were asked to make a $20 per week deposit. On the Monday before your camper is scheduled to attend camp, you will be charged the remainder of the balance if you have set up an auto payment. If you have not set up auto payment, payment for a week of camp is due on the Monday before your camper is scheduled to attend camp. You may set up a different payment schedule with the Director if needed.

Any changes in schedule or cancellations must be made in writing two weeks prior to the start of that week of camp. The $20 deposit paid for each week is non-refundable. Any cancellation or schedule changes made after the two week window may not be honored, and parties will be responsible for full payment of camp.

**SEE YOU SOON**

I hope that our families have found this guidebook useful. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me either by email or by phone. Our goal at YMCA Camp Southwest is to provide the best experience we possibly can, and to constantly improve our program. Feedback is extremely important, and all feedback received is taken seriously. I look forward to meeting all of our families this summer.

See you soon!

Mike Heppner  
Camp Director  
Director of Child Care Services  
(315)498-2893  
mheppner@syracuseymca.org