



CAMP CHIEF HECTOR YMCA ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



The Alumni Newsletter is a place to read about Camp news, Alumni events, Camp revitalization projects, and more!

Newsletters will be sent out on a regular basis (a few per year). We are busy creating opportunities for Alumni to spend time at Camp and play in the outdoors. We are also planning social events in Calgary and at Camp.

ALUMNI BBQ

October 7
at Camp

Activities, Hikes & Tours 1pm
Dinner (cash bar) 5pm

[GET TICKETS](#)

MUSIC IN THE MOUNTAINS

October 28

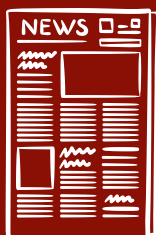
at Ironwood Stage & Grill

Doors at 6pm
Music at 7pm

[GET TICKETS](#)

COMING IN 2024!

Alumni Work Day(s)
Alumni Family Weekend
Golf Tournament



Know someone who would like to receive the alumni newsletters?
Forward this [link](#) to them.

Join the CCH Alumni program by completing our short [survey](#).



GREETINGS FROM CAMP

TRENT DIAZ, CAMP DIRECTOR

Hello CCH Alumni,

Summer 2023 is in the books!

We have had a very successful summer with 1,895 campers in overnight camps, and 208 campers in day camps. This past summer saw the return of the 18-day Leadership Hike and Canoe programs as well as the Sac Dene program. I sincerely believe that the return of these programs symbolizes the rejuvenation of the expedition program at Camp Chief Hector. With these programs comes additional staff training and certification, such as Swift Water Rescue courses. It was great to see the development and leadership of our staff and how they led their campers through their outdoor adventure in a fun and safe environment.

Though our camp programs evolve over time, one thing remains true, we are creating positive impact on youth through outdoor experiences that encourage belonging and growth. The spirit of camp is alive and well and I can't wait for opportunities to share it with you all!

Sincerely,

Trent Diaz
Camp Director,
Camp Chief Hector



DEAR ALUMNI

A LETTER FROM LACHIE MCKINNON

Dear friends of Camp Chief Hector,

On the eve of school starting up again, our family dinner conversation turned to highlights of summer 2023. Almost in unison, my three daughters (14, 12, and 10) exclaimed, "CAMP!" (I shouldn't have been surprised: they've been wearing their Camp Chief Hector sweatshirts and trucker caps almost daily since their return.)

I thought back to pick-up day. Campers everywhere laughing and hugging (such a stark contrast from the awkwardly silent kids standing in the check-in line looking like they were being enlisted). Smiles beaming out from under their awesome new CCH trucker hats. Healthy glows (and lots of new freckles) from being solar- and human foot-powered for a change. Our 14 year-old Pioneer camper, her wrists wrapped up in colourful new friendship bracelets, begged us to go down the road to Hector end to pick up her sisters first so she could squeeze out a few more precious minutes with her yurt-mates. We obliged.

"Yurt-mates"? It still feels a bit strange not to talk of tipi groups, but the verdict from our kids was that these new abodes are cozy, smoke-free, and pretty awesome. I ran into a few alumni I'd worked with back in the day, and it was pretty cool to see them now as parents picking up the next generation of campers. We reminisced about the ancient times of the 1990s, and begrudgingly noted some obvious benefits of the new yurts. Change happens -- and sometimes it's even good!

The entire car ride home, and for most of August, our daughters told camp stories. And sang cheers. Oh, the cheers.

But back to last night's dinner conversation. I asked our daughters what impact camp had had on them. Sabrina, my 14-year old, said, "I feel I became more resourceful. I figured out more stuff on my own. And I was really proud of myself to do that 6-day hike!"

Vivian (12), said, "I think I'm less fussy about stuff. Like, if something falls on the ground, I'll still eat it." Eloise (10), mostly talked about how much fun everything was. And she meant, "Everything".

As parents, Julianne and I have noticed how helpful they've become at home: keen to assist with meal prep, looking after their stuff, engaging in interesting conversation. And suddenly, they think they've got a PhD in table-wiping.

I know my kids were great before they went to Camp this summer, yet somehow they have come back as even finer versions of themselves. That's a credit to the magic that happens at Camp Chief Hector, and the terrific team that works so hard and joyfully for all kids.

I'm now at a stage in life where my Hector connection is one degree removed from when I was a camper and a staff, but experiencing camp vicariously through my kids has created a new layer of joy and meaning.

Lately, on those increasingly frequent days when the whole world can feel aggressive and more fragmented than ever, I'm grateful that each summer 2400 kids at Camp Chief Hector are getting an immersive experience of respecting themselves and those around them. Being active outdoors and forging friendships through hiking, not scrolling. The world needs more camp.

I suspect you could point to a camp experience, challenge, or friendship that played a significant role in shaping who you are, too. If you'd been at our dinner table and I'd asked, "What impact has Camp had on you?", what would you say?

I'm excited that there will be several opportunities in the year ahead for Alumni to "draw nearer". Come see what's going on; catch up with friends who will always be united by a special bond. Complete the [Alumni Survey](#) if you haven't already to reconnect with Camp and the new Alumni Program.

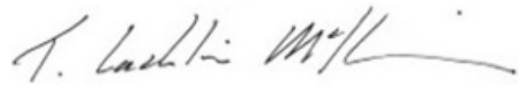
Finally, you may have noticed some big new signs on the Trans-Canada, or grabbed a sticker when you picked up your child at Camp. They're part of an exciting "Love, Camp" campaign ("CAMPaign"??) to rebuild some important infrastructure and facilities on site. It's a chance to "Show Camp Some Love" after all the love Camp has shown us.

Julianne and I are pleased to be contributing to the campaign to ensure that Camp will continue to inspire youth for generations to come. I hope you will consider joining us.

But mostly, I hope you truly feel welcomed back to Camp, where fires of friendship burn bright.

Forever.

With gratitude,



Lachie McKinnon



MEET BRENT HARRIS

CAMP ALUMNUS

Camp continues to influence Brent to this day.

“There’s a magic about Camp... it’s hard to put into words, and it keeps me connected.”

Now retired and living in Kimberly, B.C., Brent has experienced every touchpoint of Camp, and his kids have gone there, too. And he has yet to ‘slow down.’

Discovered Camp:

At age 8, when my dad was a camp counsellor.

First Camp Experience:

I went at age 9, when it was located at the foot of Mount Yamnuska, off the 1A. It was 2 weeks camping in a tipi with a group of boys, horseback riding, doing multi-day hikes and canoeing.

Highlights: When I hit the big time, the Pioneers, there was more emphasis on the tripping. We did a backpacking trip for one week, came back and then either horseback riding or canoeing from Lake Louise to Calgary. We’d finish in Prince’s Island Park, and Mom and Dad would come pick me up there. It was marvellous.

Learnings:

It’s both the hard and soft skills. I’ve learned about leadership, decision-making and being mindful of the needs of the group. We were given a tipi in this dark little area, the canvas was saggy and it wasn’t the best spot. Together with the kids I was looking after in my group, (11 and 12 year old boys), we took it down and set it up on top of a hill facing Yamnuska. All within 2 hours. We gained a beautiful site that is still used to this day. I learned I could identify a problem and come up with great solutions in that moment.



Lifelong Connections:

I met my wife Tracey at Camp. I also made many friends there that I still have, and I’m in my 64th year. I still go on trips with my buddies who I met at Camp.

We joke that we have a support group for spouses who didn’t go to Camp, but they understand what we got out of it, and have been welcomed into the tipi family. Camp is full of mentors, too. I learned from some of the best.

Giving Back:

It’s the Y ethos. I’ve helped with fundraising for Camp and co-organized "Music in the Mountains" events, providing a way for alumni to give back and for others in the community to experience the impact.

We started out at Camp and shifted to the Ironwood Stage & Grill in Inglewood. We were loaned the venue for free and would fill the set with Camp alumni who were also musicians. For 10 to 14 years, we've supported kids who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford to go.

Real-World Benefits:

There's a magic of growing together and having shared lived experiences. It's hard to put into words, and it keeps us coming back, keeps me connected. I have the tipi canvas, and will pitch it again for my kids and grandkids. It's also that personal growth into to a well-rounded individual, sharing and helping others. You get an experiential education in the real outdoors. And you really gain an understanding of the codependence of everything in our natural world. You don't have the constant supervision of parents, so you learn about the consequences of your behaviour. So if you let your stuff get wet, you're gonna be cold and uncomfortable for awhile! Plus, you learn that your success and your quality of experience rests largely on your ability to see the needs of others and help out. It's better when everyone cooperates and works together.

"I want people to understand the impact that camping life had on me and my family, and encourage people to send their kids to camp, or donate to Camp to continue the legacy."



Artistic credit to Steve Musson



FROM THE CHEF

VEGAN CHILI

Winter Camp Hike Chili

Makes around 2.5 Liters

INGREDIENTS

2 large onions - chopped
2 large carrots - peeled and shredded or chopped
2 red bell peppers - chopped
1L veggie stock or water
6-10 cloves garlic - chopped
1 can vegetarian baked beans
2 can beans (black, garbanzo, navy, etc) - drained
2 cans diced tomatoes (reserve liquid)
3 Tbsp tomato paste
3 Tbsp blackstrap molasses
3 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
½ cup chilli powder (or mix cumin, coriander, paprika, oregano, nutmeg, and a DASH of clove)
2 Tbsp salt
1 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
1/2 cup Quinoa

DIRECTIONS

Preheat a Large stockpot or Dutch oven on medium heat with ¾ cup Canola oil
Sauté veggies with half the chili powder, until onion is translucent and carrots have softened
Add tomato paste and cook off
Add diced tomatoes with liquid
Cook until tomatoes soften and start to break apart
Add the beans, quinoa, and the veg. stock
Add the rest of the spices, molasses, vinegar and stir
Put the lid on, turn the heat to low and simmer for at least one hour. Check the pot once in a while and add more liquid if necessary to stop it from burning
Before serving, season as desired with salt, molasses, apple cider vinegar and chili powder
You can also add: BBQ sauce, roasted red peppers, diced sweet potato, or turnips
Serve with rolls/bun of choice, and top with shredded cheese.



Camp Chief Hector YMCA is beloved by thousands of Albertans, who have paddled, climbed, and hiked on the 1,000 acres in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. For over nine decades, Camp has taught problem solving and resilience, leadership and independence, and created positive, character-building memories, stories and joy. Both campers and staff recall their camp days with a big grin on their face. Recalling that it was a fun, inclusive, memory-filled cornerstone in their young lives.

We are now envisioning what is next for Camp Chief Hector as it approaches its centennial year as a place for fun, belonging, and making memories that last a lifetime.

The Love, Camp Campaign will enable strategic infrastructure improvements that will allow Camp to continue to be that magical camp in the Rocky Mountains - where some of life's best stories come from.

Coming this fall:

A new Higher Ground Ropes Course

Two new Washroom/Shower facilities at mid-camp and Hector-end



**"Goodbye old friend."
Hector wash building
demolished August, 2023**

UPCOMING EVENTS

TOUR/LUNCH at Camp - Missed our summer tours? Haven't been to Camp in ages? Curious to see what's new?

We are happy to host you at Camp for a tour and lunch during the Outdoor Education season.

Most Wednesdays 10-2pm

Contact [Samantha](#) to book (at least a week ahead).

ALUMNI BBQ at Camp - October 7

Activities, Hikes & Tours begin at 1pm

BBQ dinner (cash bar) begins at 5pm

Reconnect with Camp!

[Get Tickets](#)

MUSIC IN THE MOUNTAINS - October 28

Alumni Fundraiser including silent auction, 50/50 raffle

Ironwood Stage & Grill, Calgary

12-4pm

[Get Tickets](#)

Want to be part of the organizing committee? Want to play on stage?

Want to volunteer at the event? Contact [Samantha](#).

COMING IN 2024!

Alumni Work Day at Camp

Family Weekend for Alumni

Golf Tournament