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Introduction

Welcome! We are glad to have you with us in the Ridgewood YMCA Adventure Guides Program. This Program is designed to foster the loving relationship that develops between fathers and their sons, during the boys' formidable years. You will soon be enjoying a variety of events, which can provide opportunities for fathers and sons to learn from each other, and grow together. The Program also sponsors events in which the entire family can participate, thus furthering the YMCA's mission to: "Build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities."

This booklet will answer many of the questions that arise during the first few months that you and your son are in the Program. It contains useful information for holding your first Team Meetings, and resources for obtaining Program materials such as vests and Team crafts. There are sections covering the history of Adventure Guides, and the organization's structure. And if your questions aren't answered by this booklet, please feel free to contact one of the Federation Officers. They can be seen at our events wearing unusual hats with their name tags pinned to the side, or you can find their phone numbers printed on the cover of our monthly newsletter, which you'll soon be receiving in the mail.

Joe Friday, an Ojibway Indian who provided inspiration for the Program's development (you'll learn more about that in Section 4), believed that a father and son should "grow up together as two boys and two men". In other words, each should experience life through the other's eyes. We provide the Program for that to happen, and know that with a little effort, patience, and understanding on your part, it will. So prepare yourself for the journey that awaits you and your son. The path ahead is filled with great times and opportunities to watch your son grow. And we'll do all we can to see to it that you and your son find the true meaning of...

"Pals Forever!"



Section 1 - Getting Started

By now you've probably held your initial "Dads Only" meeting with your Advisor and met the other members of your team. The first couple of months can seem overwhelming at first. There seems like a lot to do and think about. Your advisor is the person to help you through these first few months and get you off to a great start. Once your Team gets in the groove the real fun starts. You will be amazed at what a dedicated bunch of dads can do when they work towards a common goal.

Here's a few of the first steps to you will take on your adventure. Much of this is discussed at the first dad's meeting with the Advisor. The most important advice we can give you is to HAVE FUN!!!

Team Name

Think about and select a **Team Name**. (In Section 5 you'll see how your new Team fits into the overall structure of the organization.) Your team name should be something that you and your son's can get excited about and identify your group as something special (here's a secret...they are all special!!). A Team name can only be used if no other team in the organization, including the outgoing Expedition, is using it. Get creative! Grizzly, Cougars, Hiking Vikings, Bone Diggers are just of few of the names currently in use. Once selected, have your advisor inform the Compass Navigator of your choice.

Team Colors

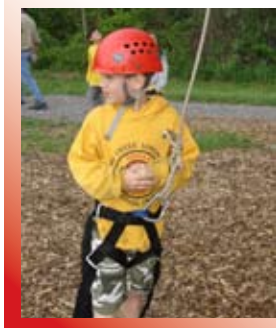
Your Team should select a color from a list provided by your advisor who will immediately contact the Compass Navigator to register your choice. First come first served, so make the call as soon as possible. Once confirmed, the **Team color** should be used to represent your Team on everything from the Team Banner to your logos and other fun things you create.

Program Registration

Your advisor will coordinate your **YMCA Program Registration**. If you haven't yet paid your YMCA Program Registration fees, please do so as soon as possible. This will ensure your eligibility for the upcoming Federation events such as the Car Rally, the Incoming Overnighter, and the Christmas Parade/Party (See the Events Calendar in Section 7 for more details). It also puts you on the mailing list for our monthly newsletter, the *Pony Express*. The mailing list is generated from the paid member roster which is maintained by the Membership Navigator. If you are not receiving your copy contact the Membership Navigator to ensure your information is accurate.

First Meeting

Schedule the initial father/son Team Meeting. It would be ideal to schedule this meeting prior to the date of the Car Rally, so that the Car Rally event could be discussed at the meeting. But it's OK if your meeting occurs after the Rally. You can still attend the Rally -- just tell the guys at the Event Registration Table that you're an "incoming Guide member", and they'll get you on your way. Remember -- this is a family event, so bring mom and all of your Little Adventurer's brothers and sisters!



Your son will amaze you with what he's willing to try... you can amaze your son with how hard you try to encourage him and the pride you share in his successes.

Guide Stick

It may seem odd to think of a walking stick as important but this simple stick becomes an important symbol of your son's growth over the next 4 years. The **Guide Stick** is also a place to keep valuable memories and dreams alive. The **Guide Stick** can be any material you choose as long as your son can carry it easily. It should be cut to the height of your son. The best Guide Sticks are the ones that your son helps create. They can be decorated, painted, sanded and stained, anything you and your son wish.

At each event you participate in, your son will receive a **trail marker**. This is a memento that can be attached to the guide stick. Over four years you will have a tangible record of your shared experiences. You will also see just how much your son has grown in four years. Each Officer has his own trail marker design. If you see one out and about your son can ask him for a trail marker on the spot.

Adventure Names

Once the initial Team meeting is scheduled, you and your son should discuss **Adventurer Names** for each other. Some example names can be found below, and we're sure you can come up with an array of others. Be creative, and have fun with it. Perhaps your son could choose your Adventurer name for you! You will proclaim your Adventurer Names at the initial Team Meeting, and will refer to those names at subsequent meetings.

Some examples of Adventurer Names:

Mountain Man / Rising Sun

Rafter / White water

Grizzly / Cub

Sunrise / Sunset

Thunder / Lightning

Mighty River / Bubbling Brook

Questions on Getting Started

If you have any questions about getting started just ask your advisor or any of the Officers. We are here to address your needs and concerns and make this experience the best it can be. If you have ideas to make the program better we want to hear them as well. Think also about sharing your adventure with next year's new members as an advisor or even an Officer. A strong membership is built on dads and sons that make that extra effort, no matter how large or small.



Greg (Giant Mantis) and Matt (Fire Cricket) Peel, 2005 Elder

Section 2 - Team Meetings

Your Team should try to schedule its first meeting in October, and then monthly thereafter. Your Advisor should take charge of the first meeting. He should set the agenda and control the meeting format. Get into the habit of bringing your planners, PDAs, or other scheduling means to the meetings so you can plan for the meetings and events while you are all together. Your Advisor will gradually turn over the meetings to your Team Navigator. This process may take up to three meetings depending on the amount of previous Guides/Princesses experience your Team's dads have.

Note: **Planning** for events, camp outs, and other "administrative" issues will be a normal part of your participation in Guides. It is usually better to leave these tasks out of the Team meeting agenda in order to keep the boys' attention and to keep them fun for everyone. It has been said, "if you need to spend more than 5 minutes on any particular issue, you're better off to discuss it without your sons present". Some Teams accomplish this through their own monthly Team newsletter or e-mail, and some hold "dads only" meetings at regular intervals. Keep this in mind, and plan for it. It will help keep your Team strong, and active in Federation events. *Believe it or not, some dad's keep their dad's meeting night years after the Guides Program has ended.*

Hints for a Successful Meeting:

- Try to schedule it to occur on a date shortly following the Federation Meeting. That way your Federation Representative will be able to update everyone on upcoming events and other Federation news.
- Be prepared. Have everything you need already set-up (flag, drum, chairs) before people arrive. Set chairs in a circle, and boys sit in front of their dads.
- Start and end on time. Don't wait for late-comers. They can catch up.
- Stick to the Agenda. Don't get too sidetracked with stories about non-related issues. Let the boys do most of the speaking.
- Keep it simple and fun. Touch on issues that involve/interest the boys.
- Try to get everyone to participate, but be flexible. If a boy is too shy to speak, see if his dad will speak with him. Don't pressure the boys.
- Use a "talking stick" to limit extraneous chit-chat. You can make a "talking stick" out of a small branch, decorated with straps, beads, and/or feathers. The person holding the stick should be the only one permitted to speak.
- Serve refreshments afterwards, and provide a craft or something fun to do.

There are many sources for craft, game and story ideas. The internet, books and sources such as the YMCA's Friends Forever program manual.

Team Officers and Their Duties

Team Navigator	Leads the Team at meetings and Federation events. Ensures proper registration and event sign ups. Phone contact for Expedition Navigator
Team Treasurer	Collects and retains Team funds (treasurer)
Team Tally Keeper	Records Team Meeting attendance and minutes. Provides Team information to Membership Navigator. Maintains Team roster
Federation Rep	Attends monthly Federation Meeting and reports meeting issues at Team or Dads meetings. Speaks for Team on relevant Federation issues
Storyteller	Tells a short (5-10 min.) story about some facet of our culture at meetings

The Term of Office for each Officer will vary depending on your Team's previous experience in Guides/Princesses, and on the level of involvement each dad chooses to put forth. But we recommend that you try to rotate the positions, in order to give everyone an opportunity to lead the Team. Some Teams rotate with every camp, others rotate once a year, and some rotate every 6 months. How you do it is totally up to you. You may even choose to never rotate Officers. Remember -- it's much more important to have effective leadership, than a rigid schedule of rotation.

Team Meetings

We recommend a certain meeting format for monthly Team meetings which will be outlined on the following pages. We begin with an opening ceremony, and end with a closing ceremony. During the meeting, each boy gives a "Scouting Report", which describes something fun or exciting that he did since the last meeting, and a "Treasure Report", which describes something he's done since the last meeting that helped him earn money to give to the Team's treasure chest (generally \$1 or \$2, depending on what's been agreed upon by the Team). Even if your meeting involves touring a facility, or some other non-household meeting place, you should try to set some time aside to follow this format.

Typical Team Meeting Format

Everyone forms a circle and is seated with boys in front of their dads.

Navigator: Drum Beater, please call this meeting to order with 12 beats on the drum.

Drum beater (meeting host's son) gives 12 beats on a drum (or a pot, bowl, etc.)

Navigator: This meeting of the Mighty _____ Team is now called to order. We will begin with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Everyone stands, faces the flag, and recites the Pledge of Allegiance.

Navigator: Father, as we gather around this council, be among us and guide us. Give us wisdom and understanding that we may do those things which are pleasing to you.

Navigator: What is an Adventure Guides Father?

Dads: A dad who will always love, and guide his son. A dad who will teach his son the values of patience, obedience, honor, and respect, to one's self, his family, his Team, his village, and the Creator. A dad with a son like mine.

Navigator: What is an Adventure Guides Son?

Sons: A son who will love, and learn from his dad. A son who will be a good listener, will be honest, and will respect other people, animals, and the earth. A son with a dad like mine.

Navigator: What is the daily purpose of the Adventure Guides?

Everyone: We, father and son, through friendly service to each other, to our family, to our Team, and to our community, seek a world pleasing to the eye of the Creator.

Navigator: What is the slogan of the Adventure Guides?

Everyone: Pals Forever!

Navigator: Tally Keeper, will you please call the roll?

Tally Keeper calls each dad & son by his Adventurer Name, and records who is present.

Tally Keeper: Navigator, the roll has been called, and we are ready for the Scouting Reports.

(Scouting Reports are an important part of the meeting. They develop self-confidence in your son by teaching him to stand before the group and express himself. Each child is given an opportunity -- but not forced into it -- to stand before the Team, give his Adventurer Name, and tell the Team about some important experience that has happened to him since the last meeting.)

Navigator: Drum Beater, please stand and give us a Scouting Report.

Host's son stands, provides his Scouting Report, then sits down. This procedure is repeated by each of the boys going around the circle. Use a "talking stick" if needed.

Navigator: Treasure Keeper, what is in our Team treasure chest?

The Treasure Keeper provides a current account balance of the Team's funds.

Navigator: Drum Beater, please stand and give us a Treasure Report.

(Treasure offerings give your son a means to earn a small amount of money for doing a chore, or other responsible task in the time since the last meeting. Each child stands, gives his Adventurer Name, and tells the Team what he did to earn the money. This is done in the same manner as the Scouting Reports, beginning with the host's son. Each dad tells the Drum Beater how many beats of the drum his son deserves for his work (generally 3-4 beats). The money is then collected by the Drum Beater, and given to the Treasure Keeper to be placed into an account, or a safe place at home. When enough funds are saved, the Team decides how to spend them.)

Treasure Keeper: Navigator, the treasure has been collected, and well earned.

Navigator: We will now discuss business of the Federation, and of the Team.

(Navigator provides a brief outline of topics to be discussed in detail after the meeting)

Navigator: Let us close this meeting by standing in a circle and repeating the Omaha Tribal prayer.

Everyone: Father, a needy one stands before Thee. I who speak am he.

Fathers get on one knee in front of sons, and place your left hand on your son's shoulder, as he stands and does the same to you. Shaking hands, recite the line below.

Dads: Pals Forever, Son.

Sons: Pals Forever, Dad.

Meeting adjourns for craft and snacks. Dads discuss any other "boring" stuff while boys eat, make crafts, or play.

Team Meeting Ideas

There are many local attractions that can make for great **meeting places**. Local parks, with ball diamonds and playgrounds, fire or police stations, and tours of manufacturing facilities. Perhaps a few of your Team's dads have places of business that the boys would find interesting. Section 6 has suggestions for general meeting ideas, and some others are listed below.

Note: Call these places prior to scheduling your meeting. Some may have age restrictions, and some may have limited space, or certain "tour" times.

Factory Tours:	Cleveland Plain Dealer Malley's Chocolates Orlando Bakery
Restaurants:	Domino's (Boys may get to make their own pizza!) McDonald's Dairy Queen
Theme Parks:	Swings-N-Things Mr. Divot's Municipal Recreation Centers
Local Events:	High School football games Baldwin Wallace College Football Games Church Carnivals
Public Tours	Fire & Police Stations Ride Downtown on the Rapids The Rock-N-Roll Hall of Fame

Get Creative! Some teams have created their own overnight events at water parks, hotels or simply camping out in one of their backyards. Making meetings fun for the boys is the best way for the dads to connect with their sons. Team meetings are the best opportunities to create shared memories.



Father and son visiting the Ohio Caverns in southern Ohio



*The "Y" hosts several open swims for Guide members.
Great place for a Team meeting!*

Section 3 – Guide Apparel, Guide Sticks & Stuff

Adventure Guide Apparel

The Federation has a variety of **shirts**, **sweatshirts** and other items available in all sizes. This apparel has the guide logo and is bright yellow. The “Outfitter” is the officer in charge of maintaining and selling guide apparel. The Outfitter will have his wares at many events and can also be reached at home. The Outfitter’s phone number and address are printed on the front page of the newsletter each month.

Prior to camp outs, all boys are encouraged to design a logo representing the camp. One logo is selected and printed as an iron-on **t-shirt transfer**. The transfer machine is set up in the camp dining hall. Most members use their guide apparel to create a lasting memory of the camp.

Headgear

Your YMCA New Member Kit will contain a camouflage hat and visor for you and your son. The color of your camouflage will depend upon the Expedition into which you are recruited. The Expedition “colors” are shown below. You and your son will also receive an Adventure Guides patch in the New Member Kit. This patch is to be glued onto your vest. Members attach these patches with stitching or glue or both. If you find a method that works well, share it with your team members. Below is a list of colors that designate teams from each Expedition.

River Expedition	Blue Camouflage
Mountain Expedition	Gray Camouflage
Valley Expedition	Orange Camouflage
Forest Expedition	Green Camouflage

Guide Stick - Team

Each new Team will be presented with a **Team Guide Stick** at its first Induction Ceremony. These sticks can be decorated in any manner the Team deems appropriate, and should be carried at torch parades and other parades.

One great way to decorate the sticks is to try to obtain a trinket from each Officer during Officer raids, and attach them to it. Typically, the Team Navigator’s son would get to carry the Guide Stick, but there are no set rules about this. Additional sticks may be purchased from the Federation Feather Bearer for other Team members, if so desired. Traditionally, this cost has been in the \$15-25 range. Contact the Feather Bearer for current pricing.

Guide Stick - Son’s

During one of your early meetings, your Advisor will assist you in finding a **Guide Stick** for your son. Find a sturdy walking stick and cut it to the height of your child. As you travel through this program, the stick will be a constant reminder of how much your son is growing.

This Guide Stick will also be a holder of memories. Hikers and adventurers have long collected medallions at key milestones along their journey. These medallions (we call them **trail markers**) are affixed to their walking stick as both a badge of honor and a reminder of where they have been. During your travels through the Adventure Guides program, you and your son will collect a variety of items. At the end of your time in the Adventure Guides, this stick will hold significant memories and will surely provide a constant reminder of time spent between father and son.

Team Banner

To add more color and to create a visible identity to the teams, we will be introducing the Team "**Banner**". Your advisor will provide you with a more detailed overview but make every effort to make your Team Banner stand out. This should be a fun and creative way to add character to your Team and the organization as a whole. Include the boys and make this a special memory for all involved.



A unique banner or sign can really make you and your team stand out. Who could forget Chris and his rolling Adventure Guide Banner at the Parma Heights Parade!

Vests

Vests have been used since the beginning of the Guides program. You will find that members in later years have vests covered in patches and other mementos of the program. We encourage the use of vests as well as creativity in their selection. In the past, leather vest kits were the most common; however, the Adventure Guide transition has opened up new opportunities for "creative" expression.

Leather vest kits (and leather crafts) can be obtained locally, from **Cleveland Leather**, or via the internet, by going to any search engine and requesting "leather vest", or some similar heading. Vests come ready to assemble. If you don't have a leather puncher (...or even if you do) it's usually best to buy the pre-punched vests. Cleveland Leather's pricing can be obtained by calling them at (216) 651-5404 and is located at 2627 Lorain Ave., Cleveland (Across from St. Ignatius)

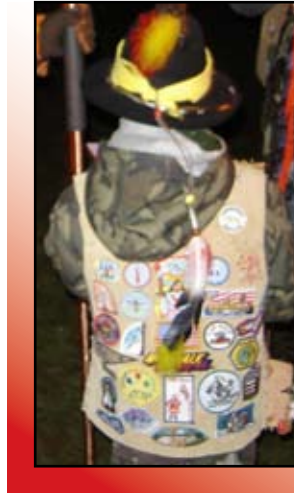
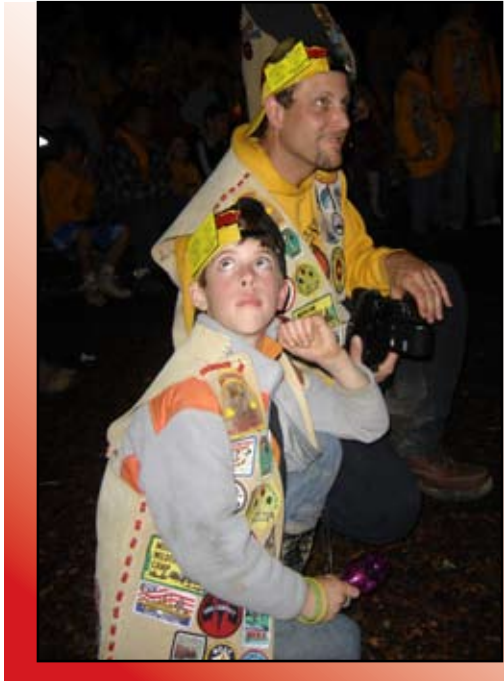
Other vest options that Teams have used include military surplus, law enforcement style, hunting and fishing vests, as well as fleece vests. These can often be found at reasonable prices and have a functional advantage in the many styles include pockets and storage places. Local surplus stores, camping stores and the internet are good places to look.

Vest considerations should include the availability of kid's sizes but **REMEMBER**, your sons may easily fit into an adult small in their 4th year so make sure the size accounts for this. Comfort and ability to clean are also important. Most importantly, make sure patches and other items can be attached to the vest. The vest can hold a great deal of memories and for years after the program ends, will rekindle the Pals Forever spirit between you and your son.

Consider personalizing your vests to highlight your Team. Many teams create **logos** and other items that establish their identity and develop a strong sense of "community within a community". You find that over the years, teams develop personalities and logos and decoration play a big part in this fun process.

Vest Logos and Team Logos

Vest logos or **Team Logos** are a fun way to set your Team apart. Come up with a fun design and make it a permanent image of your Team. A logo can be applied in several different ways: Colored markers; silk-screen; airbrush; fabric paint; etc. Several local artists and print shops offer design and printing services to participants in the Y-Adventure Programs, or you can make the logos yourselves. We recommend going to a few parades, camp outs, or other events, to observe what current Teams have done with their vests. When you see something you like, go up to that dad and ask how/where he did it. Then you'll be ready to do your own! Add your logo to your banner and show your Team pride.



After every event your vest will take on a new look as the patches and other memories fill what was once blank space.

Beads and Decorations

Many Teams will string colored beads between the stitches of their vests. You may purchase beads at Michael's, Pat Catan's, JoAnn Fabrics, Wal-Mart, or places like that. (These places also have great ideas for Team Meeting crafts!) There are no rules but consider using your Team colors. Some Teams alternate between several colors, and some don't use any beads at all. Again -- you're only limited by your imagination. Look around -- see what other Teams have done.

Your Team will really stand out in a crowd when you add personal touches to your vests. Craft supply stores and mail order houses such as Oriental Trader have dozens of unique items to add that special touch.

Team Hats / Shirts

Many Teams choose to design and purchase **Team hats** and **Team shirts** with their **Team logos** printed or embroidered on them. Several local vendors offer these products at discounted prices to Program members. The best thing to do is look around at current Teams, and when you see something you like, go up to that dad and ask how/where he got it.

Making your team stand out is a great way to have fun. Get creative and include your sons in the design and even the production of these items. Another advantage is that your son will be easier to spot in a crowd!!!

Section 4 - History, Expectations, Symbols

History

The Adventure Guides Program evolved out of the former **Indian Guides** Program. The father and son Indian Guide Program was developed in a deliberate way to support the father's vital family role as teacher, counselor, and friend to his son. **Harold S. Keltner**, St. Louis YMCA Director, as an integral part of Association work, initiated the Program. In 1926 he organized the first Team, in Richmond Heights, MO, 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 initiated a Program of parent-child experiences that now involves a half million adults and children annually in the YMCA.

One evening, while Keltner was on a hunting trip in Canada, Joe Friday sat with him at the campfire. He said to Keltner, "The Indian father raises his son. He teaches his son to hunt, to track, to fish, to walk softly and silently in the forest, to know the meaning and purpose of life and all he must know, while the White father allows the mother to raise his son." These comments struck home, and Harold Keltner arranged for Joe Friday to work with him at the St. Louis YMCA.

The Ojibway Indian spoke before groups of YMCA boys and dads in St. Louis, and Mr. Keltner discovered that fathers, as well as the boys, had a keen interest in the traditions and ways of the American Indian culture. As a result, Harold Keltner conceived the idea of a father/son program based upon the strong qualities of American Indian culture: Patience, endurance, spirituality, concern for their families and their natural surroundings.

In early 2002, the YMCA began to lay the groundwork for change from a Native American theme to one with a more universal appeal. The leaders of the Ridgewood YMCA were instrumental in the early phases of designing the Adventure Guide theme both regionally and nationally. The strength of this organization is recognized around the country. This strength is due to committed fathers like you.

The Adventure Guide theme has opened up new opportunities to find ways to nurture the bonds between father and son. As a member, your voice in moving our program into the future is as important as the lessons our history has taught us.

Expectations

"You get out of it what you put into it.", is a phrase commonly associated with the Adventure Guides Program. We do not "force" anything on anyone. Team Meetings and Federation Events are provided for your convenience and enjoyment. Come to as many, or as few as you wish -- your level of participation is totally up to you. We guarantee that the more you are involved, the more you will gain!!!

One thing we DO require is that you attend Team meetings and events with your son. This is an interactive program that takes place between the two of you. This is NOT a Program in which you drop off your son at an event, and pick him up later. Naturally, there are exceptions. If you will miss an event that your son really wants to attend, consider sending him with another consenting male family member unless it is a family event. A member of your Team may offer, but ask yourself, "Am I taking away his time with his son?"

The Federation Officers will work hard to ensure that your experiences in this Program are good ones, which provide a lifetime of pleasant memories for you and your son. Please keep in mind that these dads have volunteered to give of themselves, and their time, (their spouses have not) to contribute to the success of the Program. Work with them, follow the Program's policies and procedures, and feel free to make suggestions for improvements. You may even consider becoming an Officer yourself!

The Compass Rose



The guiding principal of our program are the *Compass Rose and* directional points in our logo. You will find this symbol used often, including a dramatic display during the camp council fires.

North is Family which is the focal point of our organization.

West represents Nature. Through camping, hiking and other outdoor activities, we impart a respect for our surroundings.

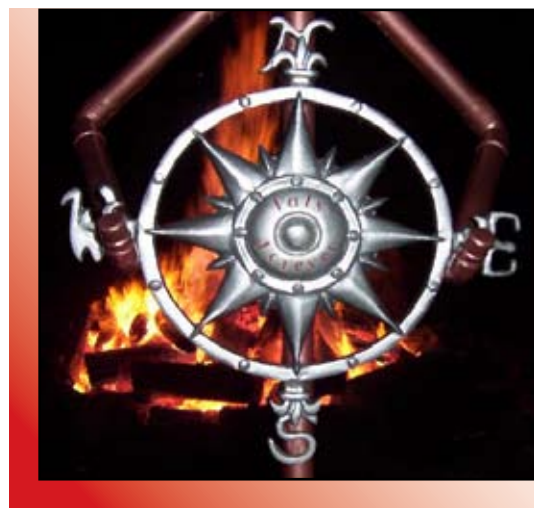
South represents community. The spirit of the program is experienced through belonging to a small community (the Team) and learning how communities can come together to do great things.

West is Fun! We learn and grow by developing activities that both father and son can enjoy.

The YMCA's core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility make up the other directional points. During the Adventure Guide Journey, these principals guide our decisions and serve as a map to reach our destination.

Y-Man

The **Y-Man** was introduced in 2004 and takes part in many formal ceremonies. He is a lasting presence that will be passed on throughout the years. The Y-Man holds the Adventure Guides Compass next to his heart and represents the direction we must travel to become pals forever with our sons.



Section 5 – Organizational Structure

Organization

Leadership

The flow chart in this Section shows the **organizational structure** of the Adventure Guides Program leadership. The operation of the Adventure Guides is conducted by a group of elected Officers who volunteer their time, skills, and energy, to facilitate its success for you and your son. The Officers follow policies set forth by the YMCA, and adhere to a set of written by-laws of the Big Creek Adventure Guides.

Federation

The **Federation** is the total membership. All members are part of the **Big Creek Federation** under the guidance of the Ridgewood Family YMCA. Many local YMCA branches have similar programs. The Big Creek Federation is among the oldest and strongest programs in the country.

Expeditions

Expeditions are made up of Teams from the same grade level. Each year, new members enter the program while in the 1st grade. These members move through the program together.

Teams

Teams are smaller groups of 5 to 15 father/son groups. Teams are formed based on school participation so that members have a group made up of friends or acquaintances from their local area. Teams stay together throughout the program and are the backbone of the organization. Many teams stay in touch long after the Adventure Guides program ends. It is not uncommon to see fathers with college age children taking advantage of our Mohican canoe trip which is open to current and alumni members. Pals Forever in action...

Organizational By-Laws

The Adventure Guides Program operates under a written set of **By-laws** which are maintained by the membership body. The By-laws are open to all members. This should be considered a “living document”. There are protocols available to amend these by-laws to meet our changing needs.

Federation Meetings

Federation Meetings occur monthly, and are an important means of communication between the Federation and its Teams. Meetings are generally held on the 2nd Thursday of each month, at 8:30 p.m., at Yorktown Lanes (Pearl Road, just north of the intersection of Pearl & York). Exceptions to this rule are when the meeting would fall on a holiday, or if Yorktown Lanes has another event scheduled for their big conference room that evening. Refer to the Event Calendar and your monthly edition of our newsletter for actual Federation Meeting dates. Federation Meetings are open to all dads in the Federation. We recommend against bringing sons since they can tend to last for an hour or more, and occur on a school night. We strongly recommend that each Team send at least one member to each Federation Meeting, to stay informed of the Federation business and events. All dads should sign-in at the beginning of the meeting, in order for each Team to receive proper credit for representation (see “Point System” below).

Point System

In some instances, a Federation event may be closed out to some Federation Members, due to capacity limitations. This could occur at camps, or sporting events, where the number of participants is limited by the facility hosting the event. In order to provide a fair and equitable means to provide opportunities for all members to participate in all events, the Federation has implemented a “point system”. The points are based upon each Team’s level of involvement in Federation activities (meetings, events, etc.). A full description of the point system is provided in our By-laws.

Federation Officers

The Federation Officers are volunteer members who are elected to hold a variety of positions. We encourage our members to consider running for an Officer position. Most find it a rewarding experience and our program depends on this group of fathers to operate a first class organization. Becoming an Officer is only one way to help out. Our active membership is what makes this program the best of its kind in the region.

<i>Federation Navigator</i>	Presides at all Federation Meetings, and is responsible for Federation Program activities and appointment of all committees.
<i>Compass Bearer</i>	Assists the Federation Navigator and conducts Federation business in his absence. Is responsible for the Recruitment Program, and the Incoming Team Overnighter. Is a liaison for all Expedition Navigators. Automatically becomes Federation Navigator after his term expires.
<i>Tally Keeper</i>	Keeps attendance of the Federation and Officer Meetings. Records meeting minutes, which are to be read at the following month's Federation and Officer Meetings. Keeps records relating to the Point System, and maintains all Event Folders.
<i>Treasure Keeper</i>	Keeps all financial records relating to the Adventure Guides Program. Provides a written and oral report of the Program's finances at each Federation and Officer Meeting. Cosigns checks for materials or services purchased by the Federation.
<i>Fire Starter</i>	Responsible for Council Fire ceremonies at all camp outs, and for entering the Guides into local parades. Provides activities, songs, stories, and other items necessary to keep member morale high.
<i>Scribe Newsletter Editor</i>	Collects information from the Officers and Teams to publish in our monthly newsletter. Generates mailing labels from a spreadsheet, and works with the YMCA to see that enough copies are made for total membership distribution. Maintains the Federation web site. Must have some computer knowledge, and be able to work within tight deadlines.
<i>Assistant Scribe</i>	Assists the Scribe in any duties relative to the monthly generation and distribution of the newsletter. Recruits Teams to help assemble the monthly newsletter. Automatically becomes the Scribe at the end of his term.
<i>Membership Navigator</i>	Organizes Team registrations and maintains membership database. Reconciles our roster with the YMCA's data. Provides membership mailing data to the Scribe.
<i>Membership Scout</i>	Assists the Membership Navigator in his duties, or performs the Membership Navigator's duties in his absence. Automatically becomes Membership Navigator at the end of his term.
<i>Provisions Keeper</i>	Stores the Federation property and maintains an accurate inventory of such. Provides an inventory report at each Federation and Officer Meeting.

Legend Keeper

Takes photos, videotape, or other records of Federation events, and maintains them in scrapbooks, which are made available to our members (for individual photo purchase). Puts together the slide presentations for our Recruitment Rallies, and our Induction Ceremony.

Assistant Legend Keeper Assists the Legend Keeper in his duties.

Award Maker Provides feathers and patches for each Federation Event. Also provides New Member headgear, and New Team Guide Sticks. Provides Federation Officer head gear, as well.

Outfitter Provides Guides logo clothing and other articles for sale to Federation Members.

Expedition Navigators (4) Provide communications between the Federation Officers and the Teams within the Expedition they represent. Obtain updated Team rosters, and submit them to the Membership Navigator.

Expedition Scouts (2) Assist the first and second year Expedition Navigators (typically our biggest Expeditions), or perform the Expedition Navigators' duties in their absence.

Forward Scout Assists any Officer, as needed, with approval from the Federation Navigator.

Elder Provides guidance and assistance to the Federation. Office is automatically given to the Federation Navigator, when his term expires.

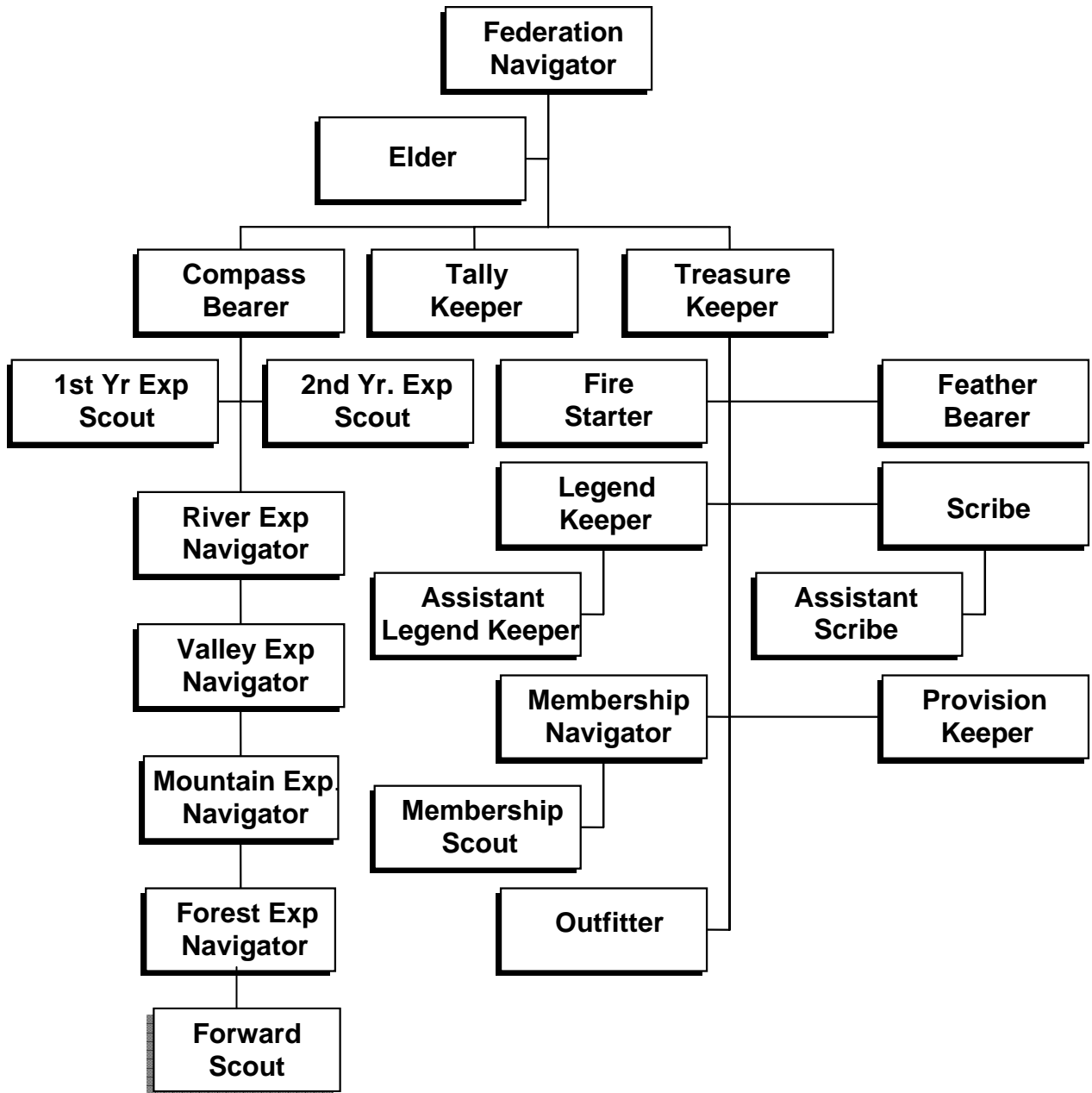


**Jim and AJ
2005 Fire Starters**



**Greg and Matt Peel
2005 Elder**

Leadership Organization Structure



Think about becoming an Officer. This is a rewarding experience for both fathers and sons. Officer elections are held at the December Federation Meeting. Want to learn more? Ask any of the current Officers about their position.

Section 6 - Camp Info, Policies, Maps

Camps

We generally have three camps per year that involve the father and son. Throughout the year there are other camping events available, such as the Family Camp, Mohican Canoe Trip, and Ledges Overnighter, but they will be discussed adequately at Federation Meetings and within the newsletter. We won't discuss them in this booklet.

Camping with the Adventure Guides is one of the greatest experiences you can have with your son. The Council Fire is sure to please as well as the full range of activities. Horses, BB's, archery, fishing, model rockets, sports and just hanging around together. Memories are made here!

Teams can make camping even more fun by organizing so that each dad in the team takes on part of the responsibilities. You'd be surprised how many teams wind up with 20 packs of hotdogs for their 10 members every camp out.....

All camps are approved for use by the YMCA and chosen by the Federation Officers (all camps current to this writing are YMCA run facilities). Camps have a variety of cabin and cab-ent sleeping facilities and a trained staff to make for a safe and fun environment.

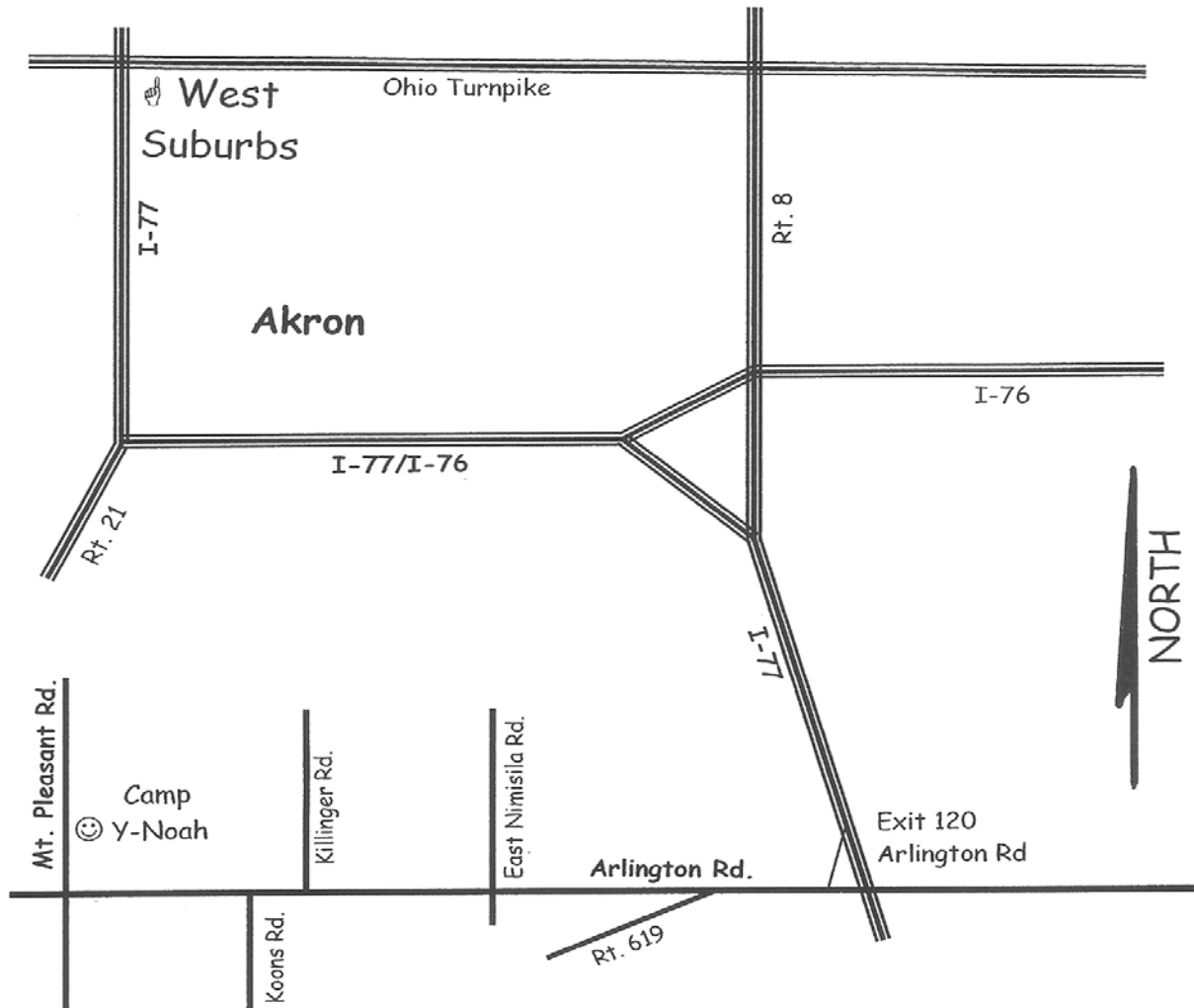


Saturday night Council Fires create lasting memories! Jerry Davidian, 2005 Federation Navigator, shares a moment with his sons.

Winter Camp

Our *Winter Camp* is the first camp available to New Members once they properly registered for the program. It's typically held during the first or second weekend in January (See Section 8, or the newsletter), at **Camp Y-Noah** in Akron. *Team skits* are conducted at this camp after the Council Fire on Saturday night. So start thinking about those skit ideas for your Team now -- and you'll be prepared to blow away the competition! At your first winter camp out, bring 2 marked sticks: "Patience"; "Obedience". The purpose of these sticks will become clear at the council fire on Saturday Night. (Hint: don't expect them back but that's our little secret, let the boys find out for themselves)

Map to Camp Y-Noah



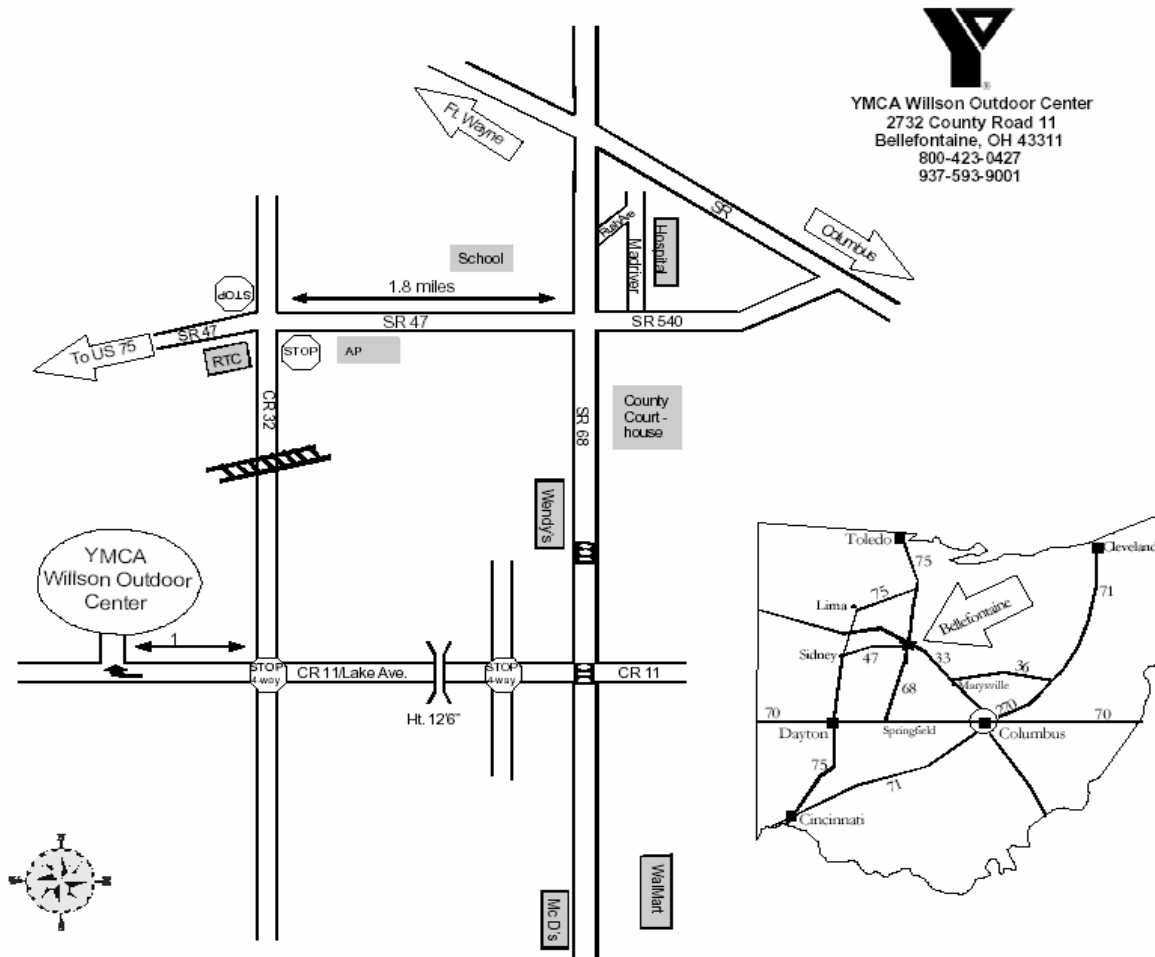
Take I-77 South around Akron
South of Akron, I-77 & I-76 merge. Continue
to follow the signs for I-77 South
Exit at Arlington Rd. (Exit 120), and turn right.
Follow Arlington Rd. to Mt. Pleasant Rd.
Turn right onto Mt. Pleasant; Camp is on the right

Camp Y-Noah
Mt. Pleasant Rd., Clinton Twp., OH
(330) 896-1964



Spring Camp

Our **Spring Camp** usually occurs during the second and third weekends in May (See Section 8, or the newsletter), at **Camp Wilson Outdoor Center**, near Marysville (see map in this Section). This camp is loaded with activities. The area also hosts two outstanding cave tours that many members make part of their weekend. This camp location may change as we are always evaluating new facilities to make our camps memorable and accessible to our members.

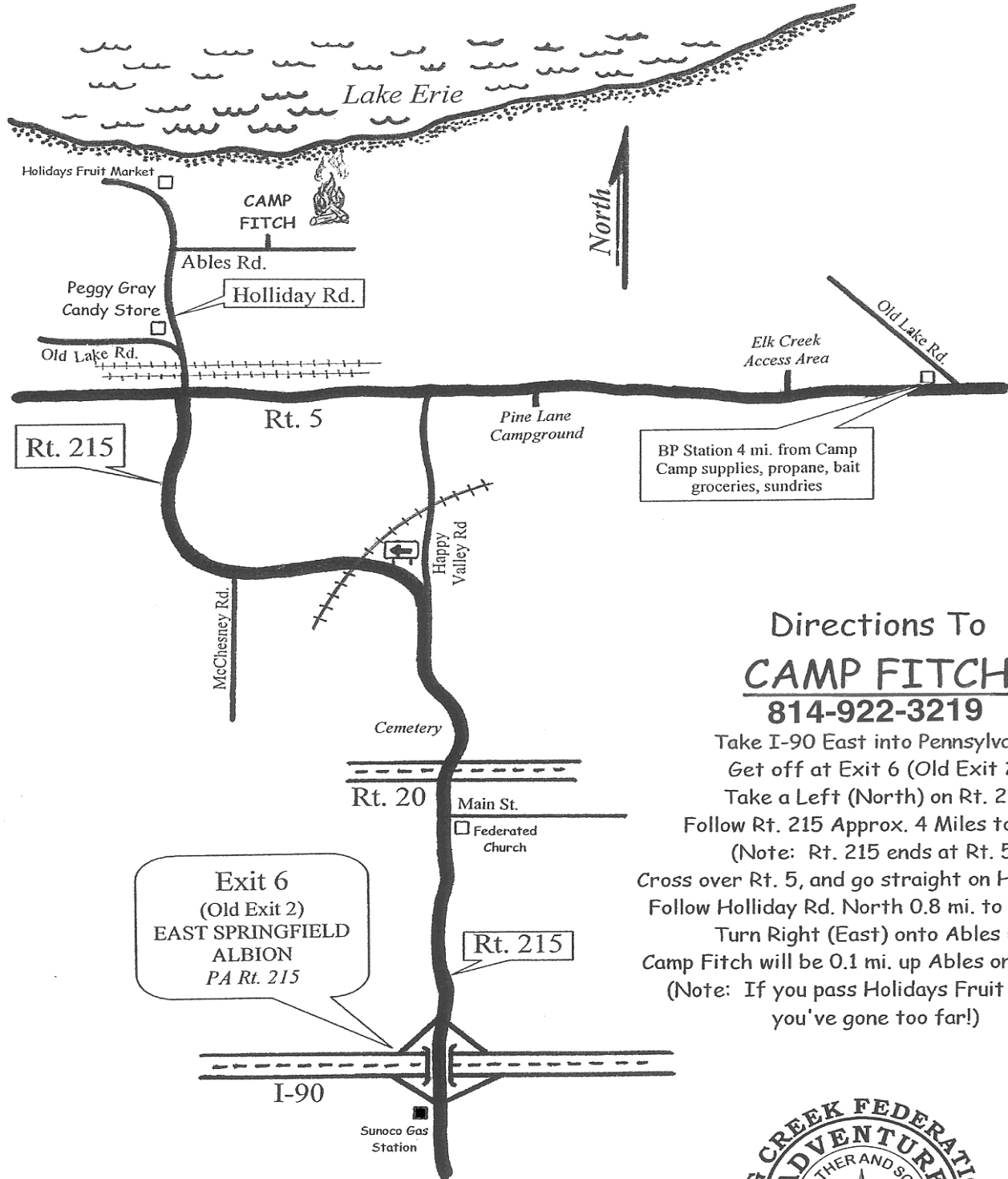


DIRECTIONS---One Of A Few Different Ways To Get There

Take I-71 south toward Columbus. Before Columbus, take exit 131 and then US-36 west through Delaware and Marysville. Take US-33 west to Bellefontaine. The third Bellefontaine exit is US-68. Take US-68 south through downtown Bellefontaine. Make a right (west) on CR-11/Lake Avenue. The camp is located 2.7 miles on the right.

Fall Camp

Always a favorite amongst our Members, **Fall Camp** usually occurs during the last weekend in August (See Section 8, or the newsletter), at **Camp Fitch**, right on the shores of Lake Erie, in Western PA (see map in this Section). Saturday afternoon's Rocket Launching event is ALWAYS a BLAST! (...sorry) If the weather is good, the outdoor pool will be open, where dads can try their skills at the belly flop competition!



Directions To **CAMP FITCH** 814-922-3219

Take I-90 East into Pennsylvania
Get off at Exit 6 (Old Exit 2)
Take a Left (North) on Rt. 215
Follow Rt. 215 Approx. 4 Miles to Rt. 5
(Note: Rt. 215 ends at Rt. 5)
Cross over Rt. 5, and go straight on Holliday Rd.
Follow Holliday Rd. North 0.8 mi. to Ables Rd.
Turn Right (East) onto Ables Rd.
Camp Fitch will be 0.1 mi. up Ables on the Left
(Note: If you pass Holidays Fruit Market
you've gone too far!)



Camp Policies, Procedures, and Camp Checklist

Camp policies and procedures are really very simple. Most rely on common sense, and the law. NEVER do anything which would endanger yourself, your son, or others. Respect the camp's property and equipment. Obey all laws and Camp, or Federation policies. Firearms, Fireworks, and Alcohol are STRICTLY prohibited at any camp or other Federation sanctioned event. If you are found to have these items, you and your son will be asked to leave the event immediately. In addition, these acts can result in the loss of use privileges for our organization for future camps or events. Please be responsible -- don't jeopardize your son, or the Guides.

Horseback riding is provided at camps, weather permitting. Horseback riding typically involves an additional (nominal) fee at Y-Noah and Wilson Outdoor Center (payable at the Camp Store), but is normally included in the camp fee for Fitch. You must sign a waiver provided by the Camp, in order for your son to ride. There are typically no age restrictions for the boys (dads don't ride), but in the recent past, Camp Fitch has changed its policy so that boys under the age of 8 may ride at the stables, and 8 or over may ride on the trails (refer to the newsletter for the most up-to-date information). These rules change and they are under the discretion of the camp facility.

Camp Sign ups - The designated registration period for camps will be spelled out in the Pony Express at least 2 months prior to the event. The registration process is based on Team sign ups. Your team should make every effort to turn in a completed registration form and all necessary monies prior to the deadline. The Federation Navigator collects all camp sign ups. Individual sign ups are taken but due to the volume of participants and the need to develop cabin assignments the Federation Navigator cannot guarantee these individual registrations will be housed with their Team.

Refunds - The Federation Navigator will make every effort to refund registration fees. If scheduling conflicts arise prior to the registration deadline you must contact the Federation Navigator and confirm that your registration is being cancelled. Situations do arise and we will make every effort to secure a refund for you. However, the camp is paid during the weekend of use and will not refund monies after the final bill has been submitted. Please make every effort to contact the Federation Navigator including leaving a message with the camp facility during the weekend of camp.


Camp out Checklist Note: Some items are seasonal. Plan accordingly!

Adventure Guide Items		Miscellaneous	
	Headgear		Bug spray, lotion, citronella candles/torches
	Vests		Camera, Camcorder, Film
	Guide Stick		First Aid Kit
	Torch/Rag (Dad only!)		Batteries, Flashlight, Lantern
	Team Banner or Sign		Games, Sports Equipment, Fishing Poles
Toiletries (Mostly for Mom's benefit!)			Clothespins, Clothesline
	Comb, Razor, Shampoo, Soap, Etc.		Duct Tape (Thousands of uses!)
	Toothbrush, Toothpaste		Lawn chairs
	Towels, Washcloth (Yeah...This will get used!)		Sleeping Bags, Pillows
	SUNSCREEN SUNSCREEN SUNSCREEN!		Small folding table
Extra Clothing			Sleds (NO METAL RUNNERS)
	Boots		Bikes (CAMP FITCH ONLY)
	Gloves/Mittens	Food	
	Jacket		Coffee
	Poncho		Hot Dogs
	Shoes (Bring extras! They'll get wet!)		Pop / Snacks
	Socks (They'll get wet, too!)		Marshmallows
	Sweater/Sweatshirt		Fruit (In case Mom reads this!)
	Swimsuits	ITEMS NOT TO BRING!	
	T-Shirt (for tie-dye, or T-Shirt Transfer)		Alcohol, Firearms, Fireworks
	Did I mention SUNSCREEN?!		Grouchy Dads!

Section 7 - Upcoming Events Calendar

This **Event Calendar** shows a typical year in the Adventure Guides. The accuracy is good enough for long term planning purposes and it enables you to block out times for those events which interest you. Sometimes, an event date or time MAY change. If so, that information will be published in the newsletter, on our web page, and discussed at the Federation Meetings (This is why EVERYONE SHOULD COME TO FEDERATION MEETINGS!).

This Calendar is published in the Pony Express each month and is updated often. If you have any questions about any of the events, please ask a Federation Officer.

		
Ridgewood YMCA Adventure Guides Event Calendar for end of 20XX and 20xx		
(D) = Dad Only (D/S) = Dad and Son		(F) = Family Event (D/M) = Dad and Mom
These dates are tentative and meant as an overview of the upcoming year. Always refer to the latest <i>Pony Express</i> and attend monthly Federations Meetings for updated information.		
20XX (New members join in October)		
October	November	December
Federation Meeting (D) Car Rally (F) Officer Meeting (D)	Recruiter/Advisor Swim (D/S) Federation Meeting (D) Incoming New Member Overnighter at the YMCA (D/S)	Christmas Parade (D/S) Christmas Party (F) Federation Meeting (D) Officer Meeting (D)
20XX (+1)		
January	February	March
Camp Y-Noah 1, 3-4 Year (D/S) Federation Meeting (D) Camp Y-Noah 2, 1-2 Year (D/S) Officer Meeting (D) Induction Ceremony	Federation Meeting (D) Bowling Tournament (D/S) Officer Meeting (D) Cleveland Force Soccer Clinic (F) Barons Game (F)	Night at the Races (D/M) Federation Meeting (D) Car Race (F) Officer Meeting (D)
April	May	June
Dad/Son Federation Meeting (D/S) Roller Skating Party (F) Officer Meeting (D) Cavs Game/Court of Dreams (F)	Federation Meeting (D) Spring Camp (D/S) Officer Meeting (D) Family Camp Fitch (F) Parma Hts Parade (D/S)	Federation Meeting (D) Mom's Night Out (D/M) Clean Ohio (D/S) Boat Race (F)
July	August	September
Norwalk Night Under Fire (D/S) Parma Parade (D/S) Federation Meeting (D) Mohican Canoe Trip (D/S) Putt Putt (D/S) AG/AP Recruiters Meeting (D) Officer Meeting (D)	Olympics (F) Federation Meeting (D) AG/AP Recruiters Meeting North Royalton Parade Bike Hike Officer Meeting	Camp Fitch (D/S) Recruiting Rallies (D/S) Federation Meeting (D) Recruiting Rally (D/S) Advisors Meeting (D) Officer Meeting (D) Golf Outing (D)
October	November	December
Overnighter (D/S) Federation Meeting (D) Car Rally (F) Officer Meeting (D)	Recruiter/Advisor Swim (D/S) Federation Meeting (D) Incoming Member Overnighter at the YMCA (D/S)	Christmas Parade (D/S) Christmas Party (F) Federation Meeting (D) Officer Meeting (D)

Glossary

Some terms may be unfamiliar to you as you enter this Program. The following list defines a few that you'll be hearing at events, or reading in this booklet. If you're at an event or a meeting, and you hear a term that you don't understand, please ask any Officer, or existing Guides member, for its meaning. We'll be glad to let you know!

Advisor - An existing (or former) Guides dad who volunteers to oversee the formation of a new (incoming) Team. He organizes their first meetings, and answers their questions.

Banner – Introduced in 2006, Teams are encouraged to create a banner which can be carried in parades and torch parades and displayed at events and council fires. Teams are encouraged to be creative and include their sons in the design and creation of the banner.

Council Fire - A bonfire that occurs on Saturday night during each camp. If pleased by the strength of father & son friendships the Navi-ghost will often appear to light this ceremonial fire. Great memories are built at these council fires. It is where we sing songs, and listen to the Fire Starter's stories.

Expedition - A grouping of Teams in which all of the boys are in the same year of the Program. There is one "Expedition" for each Program year (4 Expeditions, total). When your Team is assigned to an Expedition, it remains in that Expedition for the duration of the 4-year Program (See Section 5).

Expedition Navigator - A Federation Officer that serves as the primary line of communication between the Federation and the individual Teams. He contacts each Team Navigator with information or changes regarding upcoming events.

Federation - The administrative branch of the Organization (See Section 5).

Federation Meeting - A monthly meeting held by the Federation Navigator, to discuss events, and other relevant issues with representatives from all of the Teams. Meetings are typically held on the 2nd Thursday of each month, at 8:30PM, at Yorktown Lanes, and are open to all dads in the Program. Each Team is encouraged to have at least one representative at all Federation Meetings (refer to "Point System" in Section 5).

Guide Stick - A stick that is cut to the boy's height when he enters the Program. As the boy collects items from events and officer raids, he and the dad attach them to the stick. The sticks are carried by the boys in parades and during other events. After 4 years, the boy's growth can be measured when compared to the stick.

Incoming Team - A new Team, comprised primarily of 1st Grade boys and their dads, recruited in the fall of any given year. The Team is referred to as an "incoming", or "new" Team, until the next Induction Ceremony (January). At the Induction Ceremony, the incoming Team receives a patch representing its 1st year in the Program, and is then referred to as a "First Year" Team.

Navi-ghost – Our guiding spirit who may join us at ceremonies and council fires.

Night at the Races – This is our one and only fundraiser and is a great time for all. Your team, your friends, your friends friends are all invited. All proceeds go directly to the Federation which helps us run our events and programs.

Officers - A volunteer dad & son who have been elected by the membership and are committed to serve a specific tenure of office and assist in the operation, affairs, activities and programs of the Big Creek Federation.

O.I.C. – This is the “Officer – In – Charge” of an event or activity. These officers oversee and coordinate the events.

Patience & Obedience Sticks - Each Incoming Team son is asked to bring 2 sticks with them to the Winter Campout. The sticks can be branches, popsicle sticks, paint stirrers, or other pieces of lumber. Write “patience” on one stick, and “obedience” on the other (a Sharpie marker works well). The sticks will be added to the Council Fire, and the Fire Starter will tell a story of their significance to our Program.

Pony Express – This is our monthly program newsletter and contains all the details on upcoming events and issues concerning the Adventure Guides program. This newsletter is mailed to each paid member. If you are not receiving the newsletter, contact the “Membership Navigator” to resolve any issues.

Raid – An organized waylay by a team going to an officer’s home to collect items for their guide sticks. The officer dad can also be asked for these guide stick items anytime he is spotted by a young adventurer of the Big Creek Federation while out in public. At the discretion of the officer, the young adventurer may be asked some questions about the slogans or aims of the program to in effect, help make them “earn” the item they will place on their guide stick. Your advisor can explain this process more in detail and often times will assist you in organizing your first raid.

Talking Stick/Feather - A small branch, or feather, that is decorated with beads, straps, or other decorations. It is used at Team Meetings by the person who is speaking. When holding the Talking Stick (or feather), that person should not be interrupted by others, or by background conversations.

Team - A small grouping of boys and their dads, generally from the same school, neighborhood, or church, who participate in monthly Team Meetings, and events.

Torch - A torch is carried by the dads during our Torch Parade (see below). It is constructed by affixing a soup can, or other suitable can, to a branch, broom handle, baluster, or other piece of lumber. Bring rags with you to camp, to act as a wick. Prior to the parade, the torch will be filled with kerosene by an Officer.

Torch Parade - A parade held on Saturday night during each campout. Dads and sons wear their Expedition Hats and vests, and wait by their cabins for the Officers to come over and light the dads’ torches, and welcome them into the Federation. The parade winds through camp until all of the Teams are picked up, and then ends at the Council Fire.

Y-Man – The “Y-Man” is a symbol, unique to our program. You will see him at many events holding the Adventure Guides compass rose. He serves as a reminder to all members of our Federation on what our mission and program goals are to help us build a strong healthy relationship between father and son.



Father - Teacher, guardian, providor, mentor, coach, partner, and most important.... Friend!

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Jerry Davidian presents much deserved trophies at the 2005 Car Race.



**Your adventure starts now.
Your memories will last a lifetime!
Pals Forever!!!**