

CANYON ECHOES

A PUBLICATION OF



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

FALL 2025

FRIENDS ABOUND AT CAMP!

This just might be the single greatest gift we provide our campers and retreat guests at YAA!

As camp begins on Sunday afternoon the air is charged with excitement. Every camper arrives hoping to see a friendly face. Some sign up with a friend and when they spot each other they run toward one another exclaiming their greeting.



Some campers are first timers who brave arrival day wondering if they will be known by anyone. Soon they find themselves swept into new friendships and quickly start forming bonds that result in tearful goodbyes as the week comes to an end!

The commotion amongst the parents can be as enthusiastic as between the kids! Bringing people together is what camps and retreats do best. It is a time to reconnect for old friends and a place to build new friendships. Everyone seems to stand a little taller and walk a bit more comfortably after being seen and known by someone who cares.

“Lasting Connections” is one of YAA’s core values and we as a staff team put effort in at every level to make each encounter with each person one that matters. From initial phone calls seeking information to the end of session farewells, it is our goal to make others feel welcome, seen, valued and known.

“Thank you for taking such incredible care of my kiddo and showing her such a wonderful time. It was Lucy’s first time at YAA, and she came home saying it was the best camp ever. And we have tried several. I was so thrilled to hear she played hard and enjoyed the music and connection and made friends. And most of all that she felt safe, well taken care of and able to be herself. It was such a great experience for her on many levels. Camp built her confidence, encouraged her contemplation, reignited her playfulness, and introduced her to new perspectives. She hasn’t stopped talking about it two days later.”



As I finish writing this, I would like to invite you to pay us a visit and join the friends of YAA. I am confident that you will be invested in, escape your worries for a while, be accepted, and leave with new friends.

Jim Hawthorne
Executive Director



HARVEST MARKET 2025

was a wonderful success despite cold and rainy weather—welcoming more than a thousand guests who enjoyed vendors, fall activities, and the beauty of YAA. The community’s enthusiasm and support made the day a joyful celebration of the season!

2025 SUMMER IMPACT

07 WEEKS

14 CAMPS

790 CAMPERs

373

LIFE-CHANGING DECISIONS

53

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

FALL 25 | WINTER 26

OCTOBER

5th Annual Harvest Market
Many Hands Serve Week
Public Laser Tag Events

NOVEMBER

Public Laser Tag Events
Wreath Making Night

DECEMBER

Merry Christmas from us to you!

JANUARY

Lakeview Cabins come online!
Cosmic Tubing & Tubing Events
Snowcraze 1

FEBRUARY

Cosmic Tubing & Tubing Events
Snowcraze 1

MARCH

Beyond the Pines
Fundraising Gala

Find information
on all of YAA’s
events here!



JOIN OUR SUMMER TEAM

VOLUNTEER

Volunteering at YAA for a season of ministry is a meaningful way to give back. Each summer, we welcome adult volunteers to serve in key support roles. If you’ve ever thought about stepping away from your daily routine to make a difference, reach out—we’d love to connect!

JOSHUA PROJECT

The Joshua Project is the heart of our camps. Counselors, worship leaders, kitchen assistants, and more help create an environment where the Gospel is shared and lives are changed. As a Joshua Staff member, you’ll impact campers directly while growing alongside a team passionate about serving Jesus. Paid positions and fundraising options are available.

TIMOTHY PROGRAM

The Timothy Program equips high school students to grow spiritually, build leadership skills, and encounter Christ through adventure, service, and friendship. Program cost: \$700–\$750, depending on the year of attendance.



WAYS TO GIVE

PROGRAM MATERIALS

Help us keep our equipment in tip-top by shopping our Amazon wishlist!



CAMPER SCHOLARSHIPS

Give to ensure that every person is able to experience camp!



OPERATIONAL FUND

YAA relies on the generosity of our donors to fund one-third of our operational budget. This helps keep camp thriving year-round.



ASCEND CAMPAIGN

If you are interested in partnering with us on our campaign journey, please reach out directly to Jim Hawthorne | jim@yaacamp.org

Scan QR codes to give. Gifts may also be received by mail.

Thank you for helping us keep the YAA mission alive!

ASCEND CAMPAIGN

The Ascend Campaign has seen tremendous progress in recent months. In May, we broke ground on the first phase of construction, and by summer's end, five new two-story cabins have moved from blueprints to reality.

Foundations are poured, walls are framed, and roofs are being completed, bringing us one step closer to welcoming campers and guests into these much-needed spaces. This expanded lodging means that for the first time, YAA will be able to comfortably host groups larger than 100 guests without the space constraints we have historically felt. These cabins will also give us flexibility to serve multiple guest groups simultaneously, opening the door to expanded ministry year-round.

One of the most exciting projects in motion is the excavation of a lake on the side of our mountain. This is a first in YAA history! Crews have been hard at work with excavation, and the vision of campers running, splashing, and learning water skills in a safe and beautiful setting is quickly moving from dream to reality. The lake will provide an entirely new dimension of aesthetics to our property. And the outdoor activities like kayaking, swimming, the waterslide and more will enhance the YAA experience for generations to come.

Progress has been steady despite the challenge of balancing a full summer camp season alongside active construction. Our staff and contractors worked tirelessly to ensure safety, minimize disruptions, and keep camp life running smoothly. We are grateful that our full summer season of programs ran safely without any mishaps. We don't take this reality for granted, and thank the Lord for his protection and provision over the whole property.

We are deeply grateful for the dedication of the **TruNorth** crew, and for the continued support of so many friends who are rallying around this campaign.

The Ascend Campaign is about far more than buildings and activities—it's about preparing YAA to serve more campers, families, and guests with excellence. It's about creating spaces where people encounter Christ, build lasting friendships, and experience the joy of God's creation. Every step forward is a testament to your prayers, generosity, and belief in the mission of camp.

As we look to the months ahead, we are excited to see construction continue and momentum grow. Thank you for walking alongside us in this journey—together, we are building a stronger foundation for ministry for decades to come.

BECOME A PARTNER IN MINISTRY

PARTICIPATE

Join us at camp for one of our many programs and events. Bring your family to Family Camp or send your child for an unforgettable experience.

PRAY

Partner with us in prayer! Our ministry thrives when it's rooted in faithful prayer support.

PROMOTE

Share your YAA experience with others! Invite friends to camp—your word-of-mouth is our greatest promotion.

PROVIDE

Every dollar spent on capital improvements is provided by individuals, foundations and organizations who value the outcomes of our efforts and choose to direct their investments with us. We invite you to consider doing the same!



This fall, Yellowstone Alliance Adventures celebrates an exciting new beginning with the launch of LEAP—Little Explorers Adventure Precamp. This program is designed to combine the wonder of outdoor exploration with the foundations of early childhood learning. LEAP is already off to a solid start, and we are thrilled by the enthusiasm from both families and children.

LEAP offers a unique preschool experience where young learners are immersed in the beauty of God's creation. Each day is filled with discovery—hiking our trails, exploring the changing seasons, engaging in hands-on activities, and learning alongside caring teachers and staff. Our focus is on nurturing curiosity, building social and emotional skills, and laying a Christ-centered foundation for lifelong learning.

From the very first week, our LEAP campers have jumped into this adventure with joy. We've watched them light up as they spot wildlife tracks, collect leaves, or share stories with one another around the circle. Parents are already seeing the benefits as their children eagerly share about their discoveries, gain confidence in their abilities, build resilience playing outdoors in the rain or snow, and come back excited for the next day of learning. The combination of structured learning around a circle or a table, and unstructured time outdoors is proving to be a wonderful balance that encourages creativity, resilience, and a love for God's creation.

Our Lead Teacher, Sarah Nitzsche, along with our team, has been encouraged by how smoothly the program has launched and how quickly a sense of community has formed among our first group of Little Explorers. Miss Sarah brings with her more than eight years of Preschool Classroom experience, along with years of nannying the Burleigh children through all seasons outdoors. These two distinct skill sets have made for a very natural progression into the LEAP program. It is clear that this program is meeting a real need for families who want an introductory educational option that goes beyond the classroom, offering children the chance to learn, grow, and play in the outdoors.

Because of the strong start and the interest we've already received, we are growing the LEAP program in January 2026. To help us prepare and ensure that families have the best chance of securing a spot, we are opening ten additional spots for a Tuesday/Thursday morning class. If you are interested in enrolling your child in LEAP, or know a family who might be, we invite you to submit an inquiry today at our website. yaacamp.org/LEAP



Sarah Nitzsche, LEAP Lead Teacher



LEAP Students painting with mud



First Day of School