

CANYON ECHOES

A PUBLICATION OF



**YELLOWSTONE
ALLIANCE
ADVENTURES**



CHRISTIAN CAMP
& CONFERENCE
ASSOCIATION



FALL 26 | WINTER 27

OCTOBER

Joshua Project Applications Open
6th Annual Harvest Market
Many Hands Serve Days

NOVEMBER

Timothy Program Applications Open
Summer 2027 Registration Open
Wreath Making Nights
Thanksgiving

DECEMBER

Give the gift of camp & Register Early
Merry Christmas from us to you!

JANUARY

Cosmic Tubing & Tubing Events
Snowcraze 1

FEBRUARY

Cosmic Tubing & Tubing Events
Snowcraze 2

MARCH

Spring Break
Easter

APRIL

Beyond the Pines Fundraising Gala

**FIND INFORMATION
ON ALL OF YAA'S
EVENTS HERE!**



JOIN US NEXT SUMMER!

JOSHUA PROJECT | 5/22/27-7/31/27

The Joshua Project is the heart of our camps. Our team helps 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. yaacamp.org/joshua

TIMOTHY PROGRAM | 6/6/27-7/17/27

The Timothy Program equips high school students to build leadership skills and encounter Christ through adventure, service, and friendship. Program cost: **\$725-\$775**, depending on year of attendance.

RIDGE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Ridge Leadership Initiative exists to develop young adults into spiritually mature, ministry-minded leaders through hands-on service, intentional discipleship, and immersive community life.

RLI internship is a 15-month ministry program designed for college-age young adults who want to grow in their faith, deepen their leadership, and take the step into ministry. Apply Today!



PARTNER WITH US

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!



REFLECTIONS FROM JIM & ANDREA

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

If quitting is not part of one's nature, then how does one know when it is time for a change? Through the years, I have listened to far too many platitudes that make me cringe and aren't worth repeating.

Consider me sentimental, but above my office door rests a board, salvaged from a construction jobsite trailer that was donated to YAA circa 1997. That trailer became our first office building and served to catapult this little camp into the big leagues where meetings could be held, and three people could have their own desk space along with a worktable.

It arrived in need of a new layer of tar on the roof to keep it from leaking, but boy oh boy, I was thrilled to have an official office to go to. Fast forward to 2009 and we were putting sheet metal down on the floor to keep people from disappearing as they stepped through the doorway. We squeezed as much life out of that trailer as we could, until we managed to construct a beautiful new office building that we still enjoy today.

In the case of the office trailer, the change needed was obvious to all. Everyone eagerly awaited getting out of that dumpy trailer into brand-new digs. However, I held great attachment to that workspace and shed a few tears when it was torn apart.

To my surprise and delight, my summer staff recognized the memories that space held for me, rescued a board from its wall, and wood burned this truth into it.

"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the heavens. A time to tear down and a time to build"

But for the not-so-obviously-needed changes of life, the question remains: How does one know when the right time for a change is? Today, my answer is this: be sure to surround yourself with wise, insightful, and caring people who love you. – The kind of folks that truly will the good of you and of the organization they are responsible for, then lean into and follow their advice.

Today, Yellowstone Alliance Adventures is a flourishing Christian camp that has positioned itself with a highly talented staff aptly carrying out our ministries and continuing to provide our generous hospitality to the ever-expanding communities of Montana and beyond. YAA is vibrant, and I invite you to pray over the leadership as they discern who is the next, right person, to take the helm and catapult YAA once again, into the next level of significant service that changes the world.

For 31 of its 65 years, Andrea and I have loved every day of our tenure here and hope to discover new ways to remain engaged. We don't know yet what this transition means for us, but we are confident of this: Another God-opened door is before us, and He is providing us with the strength and courage to step through it. We may be uncertain of what is on the other side, but we are certain that the same God who opened the door to YAA 31 years ago, is also on the other side of this one, waiting to accompany us on our next adventure.

As I vacate the position of Executive Director and this corner here in Canyon Echoes, I do so with immense gratitude for each person Andrea and I have had the opportunity to meet because of this role. Each and every one of you enriched our lives to one degree or another. Undoubtedly, I have forgotten the majority of names and even faces, but I want you to know that encountering each of you has indeed changed my world for the better.

Jim Hawthorne
Executive Director

FALL 2026

Gathering Around the Table

This summer we went to a concert for The Arcadian Wild. They opened with the song "Welcome," which resonated with me deeply. The lyrics put words to the joy I have experienced over 31 years at YAA, specifically in the camp kitchen and dining hall.

*"Every night we wonder who
Could it be anyone but you
Whatever you brought here tonight
We will feast and find the light
Drink in every cup of joy and grief.
Only God knows why we all
Stumbled in this DINING HALL
Searching for the food that we all need.
Let us gather round the table
Come and eat!"*

From meals I made that were resounding successes to others that helped me learn to laugh at myself, the camp kitchen and dining hall have been my home. It has been a happy place for me to exercise my love of hospitality, service, relationships, community, rich conversation, and discipleship.

Few things have brought me greater joy than looking out into the dining hall and seeing children and adults gathered around a table, enjoying good food and engaging in family, fellowship, and community.

Gathering around the table is God's idea. I am thankful that I have been able to participate in this work of my hands, made holy by Him- to serve those that He brought into the dining hall.

A phrase from the song says, "This is our meal, it is an act of war." I am deeply humbled and grateful that I have had the privilege of joining God in fighting back the darkness of loneliness and isolation in our world as I helped "set the table" for people to feast and find light and hope.

The YAA CAMP DINING HALL has been the space for me to love God with my whole heart, soul and mind and to love and serve others deeply.

This has not been just a job for me...it has been a life that I have loved!

Andrea Hawthorne



**SCAN TO READ YAA'S ANNOUNCEMENT
REGARDING LEADERSHIP TRANSITION**





Cassidy & Evan Anderson Wedding April 2025



Justin, Katie & Lyla Moore (former & future camp staff)

In May 2017, I arrived at YAA for the first time with my mom. We arrived at the entrance sign and snapped a photo as I was a few days early for the start of the Joshua Project. Standing there, seeing YAA for the first time, I felt the nerves of not knowing anyone coupled with the excitement of a brand-new camp experience. I had no idea then the depth and abundance of how the Lord would provide for me through YAA for years to come—quite literally, through meeting my husband.

While on summer staff, I heard the names of many “camp legends,” those who had served on staff years before me. I took part in the deep traditions of songs and skits and made friendships that have lasted a lifetime.

Many of you may have a similar story. Perhaps the details of your summer have faded with time, but the place, the traditions, the laughter, and the people have remained etched on your heart.

More than 400 summer staff have passed through YAA over the years, and we want to know what has happened next for you. Where has life taken you since your summer at camp? Maybe you moved across the country, found your dream job, got married, welcomed children—or perhaps even grandchildren! (Yes, I’m pretty sure there are a few of you out there!)

We are excited to begin hearing from our YAA alumni so that we may be able to celebrate these milestones with you.

And to get us started, we’re excited to welcome one of our youngest future campers! Justin (2016, 2017, 2020) and Katie Moore recently welcomed their daughter, Lyla, into the world. Welcome to the YAA family, Lyla!

We want to hear your story and celebrate the ways God has continued to work in your life since your time at YAA. Please share with us what’s happening in your life. To provide an update or share a life change, please use the QR code to complete the questionnaire. We will continue to share these updates in future issues of *Canyon Echoes*.



Grace and peace, Cassidy (Bultena) Anderson (2017, 2018)

Summer 2026 was an amazing season for YAA Day Camps!

All four weeks had kids laughing, playing and rejoicing in who God created them to be. Throughout the summer, we explored what it means to follow God’s wisdom through the story of Israel’s journey to Mount Sinai in Exodus 13–26.

To bring the story to life, our team created a play that unfolded a little more each day: The Trek to Mount Everlight. In this fantastical adventure, an elf and a dwarf journey to find their way back to the High King’s Mountain—with no lack of trouble along the way! Dwingle and Elia quickly became beloved characters among both campers and staff.

Through the adventures of these characters, campers explored what happens when we follow our own desires instead of God’s wisdom, what it means to listen for God’s voice, and how we can trust God’s character as a good and loving Father.

We are so grateful your child was part of YAA Day Camp this summer. We hope they came home with great memories, new friendships, and a deeper understanding of who God is and who He created them to be. We hope to see you back at camp next summer. God bless, Luke Smith



Day Campers engaged in a science experiment



Day Camp staff performing daily skit

LEAP’s second year is off to a wonderful start, with two morning class options for these little explorers. We’re grateful to see this program grow and delighted by the curiosity, laughter, and joy our youngest adventurers bring to YAA.



WE HAD OUR 6TH ANNUAL HARVEST MARKET ON OCTOBER 3RD. THANKS FOR JOINING US FOR A BEAUTIFUL DAY!



LEAP



Our first year of the Ridge Leadership Initiative is off to a strong start! Four students accepted the invitation to join us for this 15-month internship program, designed to give them hands-on experience in the many facets of year-round camp ministry while investing deeply in their personal, spiritual, and leadership development.

Throughout the year, these interns are becoming an important part of the day-to-day ministry of YAA. Rachel is serving as the Assistant Teacher in our LEAP preschool program during the school year, while each member of the team is gaining experience across a variety of departments and responsibilities. They are helping host and serve retreat groups, supporting our maintenance and facilities team in caring for our property, assisting with program preparation and activities, and stepping in wherever extra hands are needed to help create an excellent experience for our guests.

They are also getting a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to operate a year-round camp ministry. From setting up spaces and preparing for incoming groups to serving meals, facilitating activities, helping with special projects, and supporting administrative and ministry needs, they are learning that camp ministry involves countless details—and that every role carries a unique contribution to the larger mission of YAA.

As the seasons change, so will many of their responsibilities. They will help make some of YAA’s largest annual events possible, including Harvest Market and our fundraising gala, serve alongside our team during retreats and winter programming, and eventually step into significant roles during the summer camp season. Through it all, they are gaining experience not only in doing ministry, but also in hospitality, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, communication, and serving others well.

Alongside this practical experience, the four interns are participating in book studies, receiving intentional discipleship and mentorship from our full-time staff, and learning from team members who serve in different areas of the organization. Living together on-site also gives them the unique opportunity to experience the rhythms of life and ministry in YAA’s close-knit community—learning what it looks like to serve, work, grow, and do life alongside one another.

We are incredibly grateful for the energy, flexibility, and service each of these young adults is already bringing to YAA. Even more, we are excited to watch them grow in their faith, discover and develop their individual gifts, gain confidence as leaders, and deepen their understanding of what a life of ministry can look like. Whether their futures lead them into camp ministry, the local church, missions, education, nonprofit work, or an entirely different vocation, our hope is that this season equips them to serve Christ faithfully wherever He leads.

Please join us in praying for this team throughout the year as they learn, serve, grow, and discover more of our God and themselves!



Rachel Honaker | OH



Michael Meredith | MT



Jack Simkins | MT



Israel Gingerich | OH