



PINES TO PALMS



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YMCA OVERNIGHT CAMPS
MARSTON | SURF | RAINTREE

ymcasd.org/camps P 760.765.0642

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A newsletter for Alumni & Friends of YMCA OVERNIGHT CAMPS – MARSTON | SURF | RAINTREE

A CENTURY OF SERVICE



It all started in the spring of 1921. YMCA Founder George Marston invited Colonel Ed Fletcher, Roscoe Hazard, Judge L.A. Turrentine and Boy's Work Secretary Ted Smith for a buckboard stage-ride to the mountains of Julian. Their goal was to scout a site for a new Boy's Summer Camp in the Pine Hills District of Julian. Local lore has it that, by the time these civic leaders had made the bumpy, hot dusty ride in the stage, they were ready to agree to anything that Marston requested.

As that day ended, a 2-acre site was identified as a suitable location for a camping area, and the "Pine Hills Camp for Boys" was founded. Colonel Fletcher leased those two acres to the Y, and 1921 is recorded as our first summer camp season.

Early camp days were filled with calisthenics, bible study, minstrel shows, swimming and hiking. In 1929, the facility name was changed to YMCA Camp Marston, honoring George. Over decades to follow, land parcels were purchased, donated or traded to grow Camp Marston into the 250-acre natural wonderland it is today.

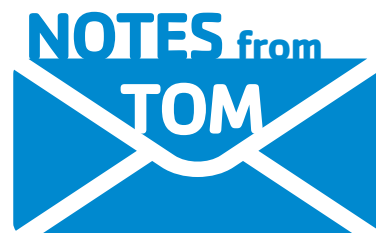
As we celebrate this history, we do so with the knowledge that outdoor spaces are fast disappearing. Today's youth are disconnected from their natural roots. Immersing children in the outdoors is more impactful than it has ever been.

Mr. Marston, we thank you. Your vision in the spring of 1921 has held tremendous benefit to the San Diego community. As we approach a century of life-changing experiences in the outdoors, we are grateful for the many donors and staff that have supported and expanded YMCA Camp Marston.

Our YMCA Camping Centennial Celebration date has been set for Saturday, August 28, 2021. Detailed plans will be announced next year, but for now, please mark your calendars and plan to reconnect with fellow alumni on this special day.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:
We're looking for volunteers for the
100th Anniversary Planning Task Force.
If interested please contact Tom Madeyski,
tmadeyski@ymca.org



By Tom Madeyski
Executive Director

"Why is camp cancelled?
"Can we bring our church group to camp?"
"Our 6th Grade School Camp?"
"Please tell me you're open..."

These are the questions I've been fielding in recent weeks. Not everyone knows that our fall-winter-spring "off-season" is actually quite busy with weekend retreats and thousands of Outdoor Education School Campers. During summers, we serve 4,000 children. During non-summer months, we host 22,000 guests.

(con't on next page)

NOTES FROM TOM... (con't.)

So, it is with great sadness that I announce that our Fall, 2020 season is cancelled. We are closed to normal business until at least the end of this dismal year. Public Health Officials have not issued authorization for overnight camps like ours to operate. Without that guidance and permission, we simply cannot open. I'm so sorry!

**Tell yourself,
"I can handle this."
A few positive words
go a long way.**

I am heartbroken for all the children and families that will not be able to attend camp this year. Prior to the pandemic, we talked a lot about children, excessive screen time and social isolation. Quarantine life has only exacerbated that trend. In these virtual times, camp is more important than ever.

The pandemic has been especially difficult on our staff. Just six months ago, we employed

72 full-time staff at Surf-Marston-Raintree. Today, that number is 8. Careers have been halted and our young Program Staff have moved on. Our staff truly made camp what it is and I am heartbroken to see them impacted like this.

When I lead Sunday Chapel services at camp, I often tell stories that address determination, grit, resilience and optimism. From the shipwreck-sailor story, I recall two key points:

First, tell yourself, "I can handle this". A few positive words go a long way.

Secondly, consider that, compared to what others have been through, I don't have it so bad. When I think those two simple thoughts, I garner strength to keep on keepin' on!

We will continue to plan (with optimism) Summer Camp 2021, our 100th anniversary year. In the spring, if pandemic conditions change for the better and we receive authorization, we will trumpet it from the hillsides! I look forward to that day.

In the interim, we are authorized to operate "Family Cabin Rentals". Check our website for opportunities to rent a cabin at Marston

or Surf. Although we can't offer meals or staffed activities, there's still plenty to do at our amazing outdoor locations. We'll also be posting volunteer opportunities on the web and social media.

Lastly, I ask your help. Our precious camps have been financially slammed by the pandemic. I know community needs are great, but if you're able to help Camps Marston, Surf or Raintree Ranch with a charitable gift, we would so appreciate it. Gifts can be made conveniently online: www.ymcasd.org/give (be sure to specify which camp you'd like to support from the drop-down menu).

To our campers, staff, parents and alumni; I wish continued health, and I pray for our communities as we navigate uncharted waters. I find comfort knowing that someday, "this too shall pass".

In the interim, reach out to me anytime, I'd enjoy hearing from you.

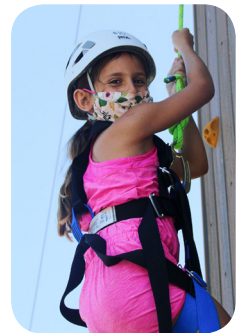
Tom Madeyski, Executive Director
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UNSTOPPABLE CAMP SPIRIT

**By Brent Ayers
Marketing Director**

In a typical year, Camp Surf would host 80-90 day campers each week in addition to its overnight camp program. With no overnight camp option in 2020, that number was expanded to 200 day campers! Once the green light was given, a herculean effort took place in order to make the new program a success. New schedules needed to be created from scratch. New check-in processes developed. New methods to submit registration documentation were designed and communicated to parents. New hand washing and sanitizing stations were constructed. **EVERYTHING** felt new...not only to the first-year staff but to the veteran staff as well.

And then it arrived! Check-in day for the first session of Summer Day Camp 2020. For many campers it was the first time they had been around someone outside of their immediate household in almost 4 months. This was not virtual. This was not on a screen. This was actual real live CAMP! And despite the necessary face masks hiding our smiling faces, we could feel the camp energy and see those smiles in every camper's excited eyes. Groups of campers moved from activity to activity, challenging themselves, and connecting in-person (in a socially distanced fashion) for the first time in way too long. All the hard work and preparation had paid off. Camp was alive once again!



The camp spirit was as strong as ever in 2020 and, in many ways, it was almost more impactful than in years past. Surfing, archery, the climbing tower, arts and crafts...everything had more meaning. The camp community (campers, parents, donors, board members and especially the staff) succeeded in working together to keep everyone safe, and once again provided opportunities for our campers to connect and grow in a way that only camp can accomplish.

Shots from Summer!



WHAT CAMP IS TO ME by SAVANNAH KNAPP

And with the sunshine and the calm breeze, I know camp is the place for me. You can take the kid out of camp but **Y**ou can't take camp out of the kid.

Camp makes you a better person, I go to ca**M**p expecting to make friends but I come back with family. Camp is where you learn about yourself, facing fears, trying new things, making memories and accepting yourself. Most days I **C**an't tell you the date, but I can tell you how many days til camp. I am the person I **A**m today because of camp.

I'm thankful for the counselors who spend their summer at camp because they have forever changed my life for the better, and all the beyond amazing friends I made along the way.

They say the happiest place on earth is Disneyland but they **C**ouldn't be more wrong. It's camp!

There's no denying the power of summer camp. Camp isn't **A** place, it's a mindset.

That's why even if we can't go to camp this year, we can get into the **M**indset that is camp.

It's easy to forget how effortless the smile was and how free we felt at cam**P** so even if we miss

the campfire and s'mores or the waves and sand between our toes, can still have the memorie**S** from the past year and hope for the years to come. You can leave camp but it never leaves yo**U**. Time passes weird at camp, when you return next year it feels like you never left. Camp is whe**R**e no one looks at the color of your skin but the color of your sunburn. Negativity is drowned out by the ocean waves and the sound of laughter.

The only fires are the camp**F**ires and everyone is welcome. Camp is home, and I think we all miss the salty air and messy hair. Oh how I miss the ocean blue, it couldn't come to soon.



About the Author - Savannah obviously LOVES camp and it shows. "Jetty Shredders" are campers who have attended 5 summers of camp...Savannah became a "Shredder" in 2018, at the ripe old age of 12. In total, Savannah has attended Camp Surf for 16 weeks of overnight camp. If summer 2020 hadn't been canceled that number would have been 21 weeks! It's not a stretch to say that Savannah probably knows the Camp Surf activity schedule better than some of the first year staff!

Savannah is just one of the many campers (and staff) who really count on their time at camp each summer. We all processed the loss of Summer 2020 in different ways. Savannah chose to share with us this amazing poem, and equally impressive layout...and it definitely brightened our spirits! We can't wait to get Savannah and all of our campers back to where they belong...at camp!

FAMILY RETREATS A Change of Scenery

After months of socially distancing in their own homes, families were able to safely experience the outdoors and modified camp programs through newly created Family Retreat programs at Camp Marston and Camp Surf. With traditional overnight camp experiences on hold due to COVID-19, both Surf and Marston had unused cabins during the Summer of 2020. Rather than let these fantastic resources sit idle, both camps offered families a chance to get away from the virtual world and have memorable camp experiences in the outdoors.



Assisted by a generous gift from **Noreen McKinney**, camp was able to provide Family Retreats to 35 military families from Camp Pendleton.



"My daughter was supposed to attend sleep away camp at Camp Marston for the first time ever this summer, and was so sad and disappointed when it had to be cancelled. But this weekend made up for it in so many ways."
"My little camper Vincent had the most amazing time and his eyes swelled up with tears as we drove away. He asked if I could please pay for another night!"
"Camp Marston helped our family to have a relaxing yet engaging time away from home and away from screens. Your program kept the little ones entertained while learning. THANK YOU!"



STAY CONNECTED

It's never been easier to keep in touch with camp news, camp friends, and find out about all the alumni events happening throughout the year!

Find us on [Facebook](#)

Follow us on [Instagram](#) & [YouTube](#)

We're social.



[@ymcacampmarston](#)

[@ymcaraintreeranch](#)

[@ymcacampsurf](#)

and of course there's always....

www.ymcasd.org/camps/camp-alumni

OUR MISSION

The YMCA of San Diego County is dedicated to improving the quality of human life and to helping all people realize their fullest potential as children of God through the development of the spirit, mind, and body.

COMING SOON

ANNUAL SUPPORT CAMPAIGN

Let's all come together to support the places and programs we know and love. Together we can ensure that camp's positive impact will continue to be felt for generations to come.

www.ymcasd.org/give