



WESTERN CAMPING CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER
10-13, 2025

AGENDA

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10

- 2:00pm: Check in begins and lodging opens – **Bolling, Jennifer & Luce**
*Choose your primary program- OE, Summer, Day, Family, Conferences etc.
*Bring auction items to McKinney dining hall – **Lindsey, Danielia & Ashley**
- 4:00pm: Conference begins- Welcome + camp tour, ONC Peer Community –
ONC Team, Nat & Laura Mahan
- 5:30pm: Dinner
- 7:00pm: Evening program – Campfire with YMCA Camp Colman

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 11

- 8:00am: Breakfast
- 9:15am: Welcome
- 9:30-10:30am: **Keynote: Data driven camping – Laura Mahan**
- 10:30am: Break
- 10:45am-12:00pm: **Workshops**
- 1: Inclusive Design for Camp Facilities – Zay Thompson:** Learnings from YUSA sponsored Inclusive Design audits of over 50 YMCA overnight camps. Avoid missed opportunities during repair/replacement/development by considering site strengths, challenges, and opportunities in order to intentionally work towards a facility that continually strives to meet the full range of human needs.



2: Working with the youngest campers – Jennifer Hardy: Ever wonder why our youngest campers feel just a little more challenging than the older children? Learn the basics of child development for children ages 4-6 and why these milestones matter when planning for day or overnight camp. Simple strategies presented will support your youngest campers in having a great camp experience and help your staff feel more equipped to work with this age group.

3: YMCA Spain Global Leaders Camp – Will Jones: Discover YMCA Spain's dynamic international camping programs, focused on sending and receiving global campers to foster cross-cultural exchange and youth development. This session will also introduce our innovative Global Leaders Camp—an exciting new initiative designed to cultivate leadership, global citizenship, and lifelong connections. Join us to explore how these programs are shaping the next generation of changemakers.

Roundtable #1: Outdoor Education – Bolling Keogh
Executive Meeting – Laura Mahan

12:30pm:

Lunch

1:30pm:

Auction bidding begins – CaYPS and Colman Team

2:00–3:15pm:

Workshops

4: Preparing for ACA Accreditation – Lindsey Preovolos: Whether you're new to ACA Accreditation or have been through it before, the process can feel overwhelming. In this session, learn how the San Diego YMCA has developed streamlined processes and standardized forms to simplify preparation and reduce stress during your accreditation visit.

5: “Zero tolerance policy” and how it creates inequity in camping– Ashley Gibson- Camps across the country are pushing to find ways to diversify their camper base, but campers of color are more likely to be removed from programming or sent home because of behavioral concerns. Find balance for your camp by exploring the problematic history of the “zero tolerance policy,” and learning about alternatives that camp help your camp prioritize equity.

6: Teen Programming –Jessie Emmons: YMCA Camp High Harbour has an incredibly successful multiyear teen program that serves over 350 teens each summer and leads to 100% staff retention. I will explain in detail the leadership program, our evaluations, and how that leads to staff retention.

Roundtable #2: New Director Resource – Camp Cabinet P.I.T
(Professionals In Training) Alumni



3:15pm:

Break

3:30-4:45pm:

Workshops

7: Clockwork your camp- surprising tips to make programs efficient –

Danielia Barron – Keeper of Chaos was my summer 2025 superlative. Camps are known as places of organized fun that is messy. Chaos and efficiency do not have to be in conflict with one another. In this session, we will explore efficiency in the world of camp. Systems don't have to be complex to be helpful. Work life balance does not have to be a dream for retirement. Stop by and have some fun learning some simple but effective tools to help ride the chaos wave.

8: Behavior management tools – Makenzie Good – Explore a fresh approach to behavior management rooted in neurodevelopmental models. I'll introduce new tools that assess camper strengths, identify missing skills, and outline concrete steps for building those skills—while also offering the potential to collect data and measure success. Drawing from our first summer of implementation, I'll share outcomes, lessons learned, and future plans to refine these tools for even greater impact.

9: International staff welcome week – Payton Schoonmaker & Sharnaye Neale: Want to create a magical first impression for your international team? Join this upbeat session packed with creative tips, cultural celebration ideas, and ways to build a strong, inclusive foundation before domestic staff step on site.

Roundtable #3: YMCA 7 Council Fires programs – Andy Corley

5:30pm:

Dinner

7:00pm:

Evening program – Game night with YMCA Camp Marston, Raintree Ranch and YMCA Camp Surf

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 12

*Day Camp single day

8:00am:

Breakfast

9:15am:

Welcome with 7 Council Fires

9:30-10:30am:

Keynote – Dan Weir

10:30:

Break



10:45am–12pm:

Workshops

10: ACA: Exploring American Camp Association Resources – Sandy Sultz: The American Camp Association is a community of camp professionals who, for over 100 years, have joined together to share knowledge, elevate industry standards, and enhance the quality of camp experiences. Join us to learn about valuable resources your camp can utilize this summer. We'll explore tools for online training, in-person conferences, research, professional development, staffing support, grant opportunities, peer connections, and more! Additionally, we'll provide insights into the voluntary, peer-reviewed ACA Accreditation program and how it can benefit your camp.

11: It Starts With Us: The YMCA of San Diego County's Commitment to Youth Mental Health through Positive Youth Development– Jacqui Karran: Connection is protection. At the YMCA, we believe you don't have to be a therapist to be therapeutic – every staff member can support youth mental health. In this session, we'll explore how the YMCA of San Diego County is making mental health a strategic priority through Positive Youth Development (PYD). Participants will gain practical, evidence-based strategies to create safe, supportive environments where youth and young staff feel seen, valued, and connected — and leave inspired to play their role in building belonging, resilience, and well-being across camps and youth programs.

12: Find your voice; camp professionals who hate talking to people – Ashley Gibson – There's no avoiding it – camp is designed for extroverts. It is hard to break into the industry, and harder still if you struggle with talking in front of large groups, calling guests or parents, and leading a staff meeting. Discuss tips and tricks to develop your camp persona and gain confidence in a different type of leadership.

13: YUSA Leading practices: From Backpacks to Bug Spray: Bridging OST Seasons – Curtis Lemieux: Day camp and afterschool programs share common goals but operate in very different rhythms. This workshop explores how Day Camp Directors can create smoother transitions between these two worlds—leveraging staff, culture, and systems to maintain continuity and quality. We'll unpack strategies for aligning expectations, preserving relationships, and adapting programming across seasons. Whether you're scaling up for summer or winding down into fall, you'll leave with practical tools and inspiration to make each shift feel intentional and energizing.

Roundtable #4: Executive meeting – Dan Weir

12:30pm:

Lunch

1:30pm:

Group photo at Pirate ship



2:00–3:15pm:

Workshops

14: Trends Shaping the Future of Day Camps: What Every Director Needs to

Know– Dan Weir: Taking the trends covered in the keynote, Dan will break down the most important trends influencing day camp success today, with insights from Y day camps, additional non-profit programs, and for-profit operations. We'll explore shifts in enrollment patterns, approaches to programming, and what's working in staff recruitment and retention. Whether you're looking to innovate or stay ahead, this session will leave you with practical takeaways and a broad perspective on where day camping is headed next.

15: I Love a Clean San Diego – Inspiring Ocean Stewards & Protecting

Our Waterways – Ali Nicoloff: Whether you're located on the coast or tucked away in the mountains, we all have an impact on the health of our watersheds. Learn about the ways our everyday actions are connected to the ocean, and how we can get the next generation involved at any age. This workshop will include engaging hands-on activities, lesson plans, and resources for educators, along with a discussion of unique programs that spark environmental passion in San Diego.

16: Death by 1000 cuts: Microaggressions are killing your culture – Danielia Barron

Microaggressions are an often-unaddressed culture killer. Diversity, equity, and inclusion work is taking a hit nationally. Camps have been pushing a diverse group of participants and staff teams to represent those they serve for years. As YMCA's continue to push DEI initiatives, let's explore how you can recognize, train, and stop microaggressions from taking over your culture and harming those you serve.

17. ACA: Lessons from the ACA Crisis Hotline Team– Sandy Sultz. Each summer, camps navigate complex challenges, from camper and staff mental health concerns to child abuse reports, difficult parent interactions, staff judgment issues, healthcare procedures, and more. Using data from the American Camp Association's Crisis Hotline, this session will highlight key trends and pressing issues from the previous camp season. Learn how other camps have managed these challenges, explore best practices in risk management, and update your crisis response plans. Through real case studies, participants will gain practical insights, assess their policies, and develop strategies to prepare for emergencies.

Roundtable #5: Learn Fresh games – Rebecca Wong: Through the session, educators will learn best practices for implementing the NBA Math Hoops game and curriculum, gain free access to the Learn Fresh program management platform and all program materials, and learn about opportunities to extend students' learning through community events.



- 3:15pm:** YMCA Tijuana and raffle funding – Valeria
- 3:30–5:00pm:** **Vendors:** CSS, 7 Council Fires, ACA, YOUSchool, ILCSD, Learn Fresh, TEC, Signature research– Shelby, Kim, Christie
- Camp Store open**
- Auction bidding closes @5pm – Danielia, Ashley, Lindsey**
- Camp activities – Payton**
- Screen printing t shirts/totes – Anahuac**
- 5:30pm:** Dinner
- 7:00pm:** **Keynote: World service – Han Lee**
- Evening Program – Loteria – Nat Corral**
- Auction – Daniela, Ashley, Lindsey, Shelby, Kim, Luce**

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 13

- 8:00am:** Breakfast
- 9:00am:** Welcome final day
- 9:15–10:30am:** **Keynotes: YOUSchool with Scott Schimmel**
- 10:40am:** Final message
- 11:00am–1:00pm:** Depart Camp

