



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LEARN GROW THRIVE

Outdoor Education
YMCA CAMP EBERHART





CURRICULUM GUIDE

At YMCA Camp Eberhart, we are committed to helping kids in our community to reach their potential and graduate from high school. We know that when we work as one, we can move students toward that goal. We have carefully designed the following programs to fit the needs of students taking the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP) and the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests. Our Outdoor Education program is available to your school groups during all semesters of the school year. However, not all programs are offered at all times. Please use the following Availability Key to identify the courses that are seasonally offered.

AVAILABILITY KEY:

- S = Spring**
- W = Winter**
- F = Fall**

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ANIMAL ADAPTATIONS (S, W, F)

Jump, crawl, fly, walk, or slither your way to learn why and how animals have adapted to survive within their ecosystem.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to animals, adaptations, body characteristics, and predator/prey concepts
- Discuss the needs and adaptations of different animals in a variety of habitats and ecosystems
- Look at different types of animal skulls, pelts, feathers, wings, feet, scales, and body structure

ACTIVITY: Together we trek to our nature hut and view wildlife specimens. We use Animal Survival Games to make learning the stresses animal adaptations for survival easy to understand and memorable.

Students will create their own animals and explain how they might survive in a specific habitat.

ARCHERY (S, F)

Shoot into the world of archery by learning to safely use a recurve bow as well as a brief history of the bow and arrow.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Behaviors such as communication, cooperation, and following rules develop respect and responsibility to self and others.

ACTIVITY: Students will use a bow to shoot arrows at a target after reviewing the safety rules.

ASTRONOMY (S, W, F)

Let us put stars in your eyes with our astronomy program; where students will gain a better understanding of constellations, solar systems and the night sky.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to the solar system
- Discussion of constellations
- How to use a telescope

BIG LITTLE WORLD (S, F)

Let's venture into the life going on under our feet and investigate the happenings of the first 1-inch above our Earth's surface. We will use magnifying glasses and 30X microscopes to examine our discoveries.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to life at a macroscopic level
- Explain the community and population concepts in this setting
- Discuss the lives of various common insects and how they impact our world

ACTIVITY: Taking an up close and personal look at the ground we walk.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER (S, F)

Flap your wings and come join us for an exciting trip into the world of birds to discover the different adaptations birds have made to survive.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to the different type of physical and/or behavioral characteristics of birds.
- Discuss the different adaptations that have helped birds survive
- Observe different bird species and determine different adaptations they have made

ACTIVITY: Play a hands-on game that allows you to discover how and why birds eat different things by using different types of "beaks" to "eat."

OR dissect owl pellets for an additional fee of \$2.

Extra activity: Taped owl calls on a hike.

CANOEING (S, F)

Learn the history of the canoe, the parts of the paddle, and how to safely maneuver around Corey Lake.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- History of the canoe.
- Rules about the canoeing experience.
- Parts of the paddle (and canoe if time permits)
- Different paddling techniques.

ACTIVITY: Canoe around Corey Lake and observe the natural world from a canoe.



THE CLIMBING WALL (S, F)

Take confidence building off the ground and utilize our 32' climbing wall, stressing the team cooperation theme. Our specially trained staff will encourage students to challenge themselves as well as build confidence in their classmates to scale the climbing tower.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Correctly learn how to put on a harness, use the challenge course words and get tips on climbing, and belay techniques
- Safety and encouragement stressed
- Climb the wall!

NOTE:

Extra fee of \$6.00/person.

Release forms for all participants will be required prior to climb and sent to the school.

COULD YOU SURVIVE? (S, F)

What do we really need to survive in the natural woods of YMCA Camp Eberhart? Learn basic sense of survival and the difference between needs and wants. Then implement fire and shelter building skills in our pine and deciduous forest.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Discussion of survival
- Introduction to wants and needs (food, water, shelter, air and space)
- Debris hut building
- Fire building
- Basic survival techniques

- Ski on the trails of YMCA Camp Eberhart

GONE SENSELESS (S, W, F)

What happens when you lose one of your five senses? Find out the importance of the five senses and experience nature with a temporary loss of one.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Exploration of your 5 senses
- Discussion on how you compensate when one sense is lost
- Trust walk, smelling a variety of spices, and a writing activity

- Discussion of how to properly encourage fellow students

HIGH ROPES CHALLENGE COURSE (S, W, F)

Experience YMCA Camp Eberhart from above, through voluntary participation in our high ropes challenge course that invites students to conquer their fear of heights in a safe exciting environment.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Basic terminology
- Orientation includes equipment lesson and demonstration
- Opportunity to climb our 15' or 30' ropes course

NOTE: Participants under 12 cannot participate in the entire High Ropes Course. (Call for details)

A minimum of two staff are required for this activity and no more than 18 participants are allowed in any one group.

Extra fee of \$12.00/person.

Release forms for all participants will be required prior to climb.

HORSE SCIENCE I (S, W, F)

Trot on over to our horse barn and learn about horses from mane to tail.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- How to act around a horse and basic safety tips
- How to groom a horse
- Basic terminology and parts of the horse
- Habitat and place in the food chain
- The horse as prey – defenses and adaptations
- How they survive domestically

ACTIVITY: Meet our horses up close and personal while you touch and groom them.

NOTE: There is no actual riding in this class.



ACTIVITY: A game that focuses on what we really need vs. what we want to take into the woods for survival.

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING (W)

After an introduction to the sport of cross-country skiing and the skills needed to use the equipment involved, we'll go on an adventure through the woods and experience the winter life of the animals around us.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- History of the cross-country ski
- Basics about how to use equipment

ACTIVITY: Many activities to increase the awareness of the senses.

GROUP DYNAMICS (S, W, F)

We'll work with your class on leadership, teamwork, student corporation and increase encouragement among students by working together to problem-solve and overcoming obstacles on the group dynamics field and low-ropes course.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Elements and activities on our course



HORSE SCIENCE II (S, W, F)

Sit in a saddle for a bit and gain knowledge about horses as well as experience around and on a horse!

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- ½ of class rides, other half participates in Horse Science and “meet our horses”

NOTE: Extra fee of \$12.00/person to ride.

All students must be able to ride!

School needs to provide 2 extra staff (parent or teacher) to help with this class.

Release forms for all participants will be required prior to ride.

INDOOR INITIATIVES (S, W, F)

Build confidence in yourself and trust in each other by working as a team to complete various tasks.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Use problem solving skills and teamwork
- Complete various tasks and games which build group cooperation, trust and confidence

LAKE COMMUNITIES (S, F)

Increase your student’s understanding of lake communities through hands-on activities, the use of the microscopes to view microorganisms, and an introduction to the ecology of and the food web within a lake.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to the difference between a lake and pond
- Discussion on lake succession
- Discuss the Lake Community as a whole and its parts
- Habitat and species discussion that flows into the food chain

ACTIVITY: We waded in Corey Lake to collect samples to view through microscopes.



NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES (S, W, F)

Gain a basic understanding of how the Native Americans of Michigan lived, communicated, and recreated.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to tribes in Michigan and types of Indians
- Discussion on food, family roles and communication the Native Americans used
- Native American games
- Native American stories
- The legend of the dreamcatcher

ACTIVITY: Your students will make a dreamcatcher or other Native American crafts and play games based on this rich culture.

NATURE HIKE (S, W, F)

Hike to a deeper appreciation for nature by exploring for yourself, while instilling the principle of leaving the forest as you found it, so that everyone can appreciate nature without taking something from it.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to the hike to set the tone
- Hike to various places around camp, including our swamp deck, to investigate nature

ACTIVITY: Nature Hike

ORIENTEERING AND TOPOGRAPHY (S, W, F)

Gain a basic understanding of how to read, understand, and use a compass as well as a basic understanding of map reading, interpretation and use.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to topography
- How to read a map using cardinal and intermediate directions
- Use the map symbols to identify landforms
- Introduction to the compass and history behind it
- Learn the parts of a compass and how to use it properly
- Use compasses to navigate YMCA Camp Eberhart’s Orienteering Course

PLANT /TREE IDENTIFICATION (S, F)

We will identify some of the diverse plant and tree populations and grow your knowledge of the natural world around you.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to our plants and trees
- Learning identification techniques
- Discuss the different types of plants and trees found

ACTIVITY: Walk through the forest to discover and identify plants and trees.

SNOWSHOEING (W)

Snowshoeing has been around for thousands of years and is a terrific low-impact way to stay fit in the winter months.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- History of snowshoeing
- Brief instruction

ACTIVITY: Snowshoe games and a nature hike.

NOTE:

- Groups of 5-8

TRACKS AND SCAT (S, W, F)

Take a closer look at the fascinating indications that an animal has been in the area by observing the tracks, scat, and other signs that animals leave behind.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to tracking
- How to tell the difference between the prints and patterns
- Basic animal tracks and footprints
- Identify basic differences in animal scat

ACTIVITY: Hike to find signs of animal life and make plaster casts of animal tracks.

TUBING (W)

Experience the thrill of sliding down the hill.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Learn how to safely enjoy the sport of snow tubing

**WINTER ECOLOGY (W)**

Focus on the amazing changes our natural environment undergoes when winter arrives. Learn what ecological changes take place and how plants and animals adapt to this chilly time of the year.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to ecology and winter
- Students will calculate the amount of water on the land
- Animal adaptations
- Snow mound building
- Fire building
- Solar still if time permits

WINTER TRACKING & BIRDING (W)

Let us introduce your students to the basic methods of bird and animal track identification and an exploration of the woods to find interesting winter life.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Tracking basics
- Birding basics
- Hike – students will go out and try to find tracks and birds in the woods or camp area. A bird blind and feeders will be used to observe the birds.

WINTER SURVIVAL AND SNOW MOUND BUILDING (W)

Discuss the importance of staying warm in a survival situation and learn how to build a fire, collect water and construct a shelter using what we find in the woods.

CLASS STRUCTURE:

- Introduction to wants and needs (food, water, shelter and fire)





AND WE OFFER JUST FUN STUFF!

Basketball
Soccer
Baseball/Softball
Kickball
Sand Volleyball
Ball, Ball, Ball
Fishing (Must bring own equipment)
YMCA Camp Eberhart Quiz Show
Parachute Games
Disc Golf
Ice Skating
Flag Football
Tennis
Group Games
Winter Tubing
Staff Choice

EVENING PROGRAMS OFFERED

CAMPFIRE: Always a favorite, the campfires are a great time filled with singing, dancing, skits, jokes and stories. A campfire at YMCA Camp Eberhart is a truly memorable experience and a really fun way to end the evening...especially with s'mores!

CAPTURE THE FLAG: This camp classic has the students in two teams searching through the woods and fields for the other team's flag. Put the opposing team in jail or run to try to find and capture the other team's flag, but watch out for those tricky hiding places!

DUTCH AUCTION: A fun team activity where various, random items or skills are called for, e.g., a person who can wiggle their ears, the most intriguing animal sound, the smelliest shoe contest, the funniest joke or even a great imitation of your favorite teacher, counselor or friend.

EGG DROP: Students will receive a bag full of random objects (straws, marshmallows, cups, tape...) to make a contraption that will save their egg from being broke when dropped off our balcony. This activity provides the students with teamwork along with science skills to save their egg!

MEET YOUR COUNSELOR/TEACHER: This fun and interesting activity starts out by the students in groups asking a teacher or YMCA Camp Eberhart instructor questions about themselves. Then the students are given a list of questions that they need to answer without their instructor/teacher there. For example: What is their favorite TV show? This game provides the students with a way to get to know their teacher, adult chaperone or instructor a little more personally.

NIGHT HIKES: More than just a walk through the woods, this session includes games, activities and demonstrations to prove to the students that their night vision can be far better than they had imagined. Students will learn about the parts of the eye and their functions.

OWL TREK: The evening portion of the Owl Trek class. Before heading out in search of this fascinating bird of the night, students will understand what makes these raptors so special. Out on the trail, taped calls are used to try and lure in species such as Screech and Great Horned Owls.

RELAYS: We have many different relay games that we play in our Athletic Field. From your basic team relay to crazy relay games that make the students laugh and cheer on their teammates!

SING DOWN: Another team activity where students perform together, singing the line of a well known song containing the designated word—for example, "If you're happy and you know it..." or "Happy birthday to you..."

STEEPLECHASE: Written clues are given to the students, which leads them on a course through all the areas of camp. This fun and exciting game has the students figure out riddles and clues to get to the next place.

Note: If you would like evening snacks on evenings other than a night with a campfire, please inform the staff ahead of time.

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