

Dear Ranger Parents,

The Ranger Program is run through YMCA Camp Ockanickon, Inc. and is a chance for the oldest campers to learn the skills to go on wilderness trips. There are two instructors from each camp to lead the campers on the trip.

In Sessions 2, 3, and 4, the Rangers will be on an eight-day trip that is half hiking and half canoeing. The hiking portion is on the Appalachian Trail in New Jersey, between Sunrise Mountain and the Delaware Water Gap. The canoeing portion will take place on the Delaware River from Matamoras, PA to the Delaware Water Gap in New Jersey.

While one program is hiking the other program will be canoeing. The boys and the girls will then meet half way to switch gear and receive a re-supply of food and clothing for the next half of their adventure.

The trip will take place in a moderate to heavy use area. The campers will need minimal wilderness skills. The skills required will be taught to the campers during the first few days at camp and on the trip. Before the trip, they will be instructed on the following:

- Use of a camp stove and flammable fuel
- Use of water purification devices
- Setting up and breaking down campsites including tents in fair and foul weather
- How to pack for the hiking portion of the trip
- How to pack for the canoeing portion of the trip
- How to right an overturned canoe
- Use and care of Personal Flotation Devices
- Their swimming abilities will be assessed on Check-In Day
- Prior to leaving, their physical fitness will be assessed through a day hike on the camp property with full packs.
- They will be trained in how to store food and set up a campsite that will not invite animals, including bears.
- They will be trained in the recognition of approaching weather patterns that may impact the participants with unusually cold or hot weather and will be instructed on how to prevent hypothermia and heat exhaustion or stroke.

The campers who participate in this trip need basic canoeing skills and medium endurance ability. It is up to the campers and their parents to assume responsibility for maintaining a minimal to intermediate fitness level before undertaking this trip. Obese or physically frail campers who do not engage in normal physical activity everyday and those campers with physical limitations (bad knees, backs, etc.) should be discouraged from taking this trip. Campers will need to provide the Camp Health Form filled out by a

doctor stating that the camper is capable of participation in the trip. The hiking portion of the Appalachian Trail in Sessions 2, 3, and 4 will have elevation changes from 1000 to 2000 feet. The hiking days can be as long as 6-12 miles in a day. The canoe portion of the trip will cover from 10-20 miles a day. It is not considered whitewater, however there is an occasional ripple or Class 1 whitewater occurrence, which is the lowest rated whitewater level, and easily negotiated by beginner to intermediate canoers.

In case of emergency, the group carries a cell phone and will be within a few hours hike or paddle to the nearest public or private phone. An instructor for each trip will be certified in Wilderness First Aid. Once the authorities are contacted, emergency assistance can be available by vehicle, boat, or helicopter, depending on the nature of the emergency. The group will take with them a list of campers, their home and emergency phone numbers, a copy of their personal health forms and phone numbers to call in case of an emergency.

If a Camper cannot continue the trip for medical or behavior reasons, the Camp will be notified by the trip leaders at the first opportunity by land line or with help of local authorities. The Camper(s) will be picked up by a Camp vehicle and transported back to Camp. If bed space allows, the Camper(s) may be allowed to complete the session at Camp. Each situation is different and the respective Camp Director, in consultation with the Camp leadership staff and the parents, makes this decision. The respective Camp Director makes the final decision with the best interest of campers and Camp in mind.

If you have any questions, you can contact us at 609-654- 8225.

Sincerely,



Brent Birchler
Camp Ockanickon Director



Gabrielle Ostroski
Camp Matollionequay Director

Ranger Program

Who can do it?

The Ranger Program is for campers ages 14 to 16 who want a challenging and exciting program off the camp premises. The trips are physically demanding with canoeing up to 20 miles a day and hiking with a 25 lb pack for an average of 8 miles a day. We offer trips for both the boys and the girls.

Who is the staff?

There are two Ranger Instructors that are with a group of nine campers at all times. As Ranger Leaders, they have extended experience in canoeing, backpacking, and outdoor living skills. They also have certifications in Wilderness First Aid, CPR for the Professional Rescuer, and Lifeguard Training.

How do we get ready for the trip?

The Rangers spend the first few days of camp preparing for the trip. During this time they stay very active learning new skills and understanding what to expect from the trip. To start off their preparation, all the campers will have their personal gear checked by the Ranger Instructors to make sure they have brought the proper gear and that their boots are broken in enough to use on the trip.

The instructors will discuss with the campers what to expect on the trip, the proper usage and care for the equipment, and low impact camping etiquette. The campers will also be introduced to the duty teams. Each team is responsible for a different duty that must be done throughout the trip. The teams include: cooking team, tent team, bear bag team, canoe team, and water purifying team. Once everyone has an idea of what to expect, the instructors will start with teaching the campers the hard skills they need to know. They will learn such skills as how to pitch the tents, using the camping stoves and water filters, hanging the bear bags, portioning and packing the food for the trip, and packing the hiking packs and dry bags. At this time they will go on a mock hike around the camp to get comfortable with the packs and give the campers an idea of how they are going to feel.

To prepare for the canoeing portion of the trip, the campers will go out on one of the camp's lakes and go through lifejacket usage, canoeing instruction, capsizing, re-entry, and learning how to pack the canoes. Also during the day, the instructors will discuss what the campers will need to know about canoeing on the Delaware and Mullica Rivers, how to handle class one rapids, eddies, and reading the river.

What is the trip like?

The trip is 8 days long, consisting of two parts – one is four and a half days of hiking and the other is three and a half days of canoeing. The trips take place in North Jersey with the Rangers hiking on the Appalachian Trail and canoeing along the Delaware River.

The mornings are spent in duty teams breaking down camp, packing up and eating breakfast. Throughout the day there will be breaks for water and snacks, which are usually 5 to 10 minutes long. There are pack breaks on the hiking portion that are a little longer and allow the campers and instructors to take off the hiking packs and sit down for 15 – 30 minutes, eat lunch and check everyone's feet for blisters. In the evening, the duty teams are back again setting up camp and preparing dinner. After dinner the campers and leaders have time to hang out, relax, and play some cards.

How do I get more information?

If you have any other questions about the Ranger program, please give us a call at 609-654-8225.

YMCA Camps Application For Ranger Program

Please check camp and session: Ockanickon for Boys Matollionequay for Girls

Session 2 (July 4-16) Session 3 (July 18-30) Session 4 (August 1-13)

Camper Name: _____ Home Phone#: _____

Other Phone#: _____

Address: _____

_____ Grade enrolled (2009-2010): _____

Age (as of 6/1/2010): _____

_____ T-Shirt Size: _____

School: _____ D.O.B.: _____

Gender: M F

How did you hear about program?

Please explain why you would like to participate in the program.

What experience do you have in outdoor living skills, camping, hiking, and canoeing? _____

Please list extracurricular activities you are involved in (sports, leadership groups, clubs, etc.). _____

PLEASE READ AND SIGN BELOW

RANGER PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT:

I understand that the Ranger trip is physically demanding and will require hiking distances of 6-12 miles per day while carrying camping equipment, and canoeing distances of 10-20 miles per day. I attest that my child is in good physical condition to complete the trip. I further understand and agree that if my child cannot complete the Ranger trip for any reason, (including but not limited to homesickness, disruptive behavior as determined by the Camp Director, illness, accident, or injury) no refunds of the program fee will be issued.

I, the undersigned, have carefully read and gone over the above Ranger Participation Agreement with my child, and agree and give consent to the terms and conditions included therein.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____

Date _____