

ACTIVITY OFFERINGS

The following pages include descriptions of the various activities offered for group's attending the Outdoor Education Program or Leadership Development Program at the Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA. All activities are included with the program fees, with the exception of the Alpine Tower and High Ropes activities.

PLEASE NOTE:

Certain elements of these programs are physically, socially and emotionally demanding. While the program and it's staff will make every reasonable effort to minimize exposure to the known risks associated with these activities, all hazards associated with the program cannot be foreseen.

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

- All classes can be structured for anywhere from 1 hour to 2 hours, depending on your school's schedule.
- These activities are designed for groups of 12-17 participants.
- Classes are appropriate for any age group, except where indicated
- Classes are coded according to subject:
 - T = Teambuilding/Group Challenge
 - O = Outdoor Skills
 - S = Science and Nature
 - H = Humanities
 - C = Cultural/Historical

ALPHA BETA (H)

Objectives: To identify components of culture
To come to an understanding of cultural relativity
To role play a different culture from our own

This fun game can be taught as a class or with a large group. The students will play the role of a member of either Alphaland or Betaland society, and throughout the game will gain an understanding of cultural differences and learn to break down some cultural barriers.

THE BEAST (T)

Objectives: To learn first hand the importance of effective communication
To understand how to communicate effectively and what kinds of communication do and do not work well

This activity can be taught either as a class or as a large group activity. The students are shown a model of "the Beast" and asked to duplicate it. However, the student who sees the model is not the student who does the building. The Beast focuses on effective communication and working together.

BUBBLES (S)

- Objectives:
- To understand the chemistry of soap
 - To explore the physics of light and surfaces
 - To understand and use the scientific method

Students will have a chance to discover the wonders of chemistry while experimenting with a favorite pastime – blowing bubbles. They will learn about surface tension and the Law of Least Space in this soapy, sudsy class.

COLONIAL LIVING (C)

- Objectives:
- To foster within students knowledge about history (particularly colonial living)
 - To develop the students' understanding of colonial crafts and skills and give them an opportunity to experiment with them

Students step back in time to the 18th century America with a visit to the Brewster House, built in 1786 and located at the entrance of Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA. Here they may learn hands-on how our forefathers made cider, bread, soap or butter. They can use pioneer tools, work in the garden or make traditional crafts.

EARTHQUAKES (S)

- Objectives:
- To gain an understanding of what an earthquake is and where they originate
 - To learn how scientists measure earthquakes, and the tools they use to do so
 - To understand basic definitions associated with earthquakes

The Earth will shake and buildings will come tumbling down. Well, a plaster of Paris Earth, and buildings constructed of toothpicks and gumdrops. Students will create the Earth's mantle and crust from Plaster of Paris and sand, and then try to construct a building which can withstand an earthquake. They will learn about what earthquakes are, where they originate, and how scientists use a seismograph to measure the intensity of a quake. The whole experience culminates with simulated earthquakes.

THE GREAT EGG DROP (S)

- Objectives:
- For students to work productively together in small groups
 - To gain an understanding of marketing techniques
 - To practice designing and building a product designed for a specific purpose

Students use their marketing, design and engineering skills to design a carrier for a raw egg. Each group is given materials to choose from and must work together to come up with an idea that uses the least amount of materials possible to deliver the egg to the ground safely. They also devise an ad and/or jingle to market their product. And at the end of the class, each carrier is tested from the top of the climbing tower (or another suitable height).

NATIVE AMERICAN LIVING/DREAMCATCHERS (C)

- Objectives:
- To learn how to construct a dreamcatcher
 - To gain an understanding of some Native American customs and rituals

This is a great chance for students to learn the history of the Native American tribes that lived in this area. They will hear of local battles, treaties and famous Native Americans, and they will also learn how to make the popular Native American craft, dreamcatchers.

GET LOST! (ORIENTEERING) (O)

- Objectives: To become familiar with map reading skills
 To learn to navigate with confidence

There are many fun activities students will be able to do once they master the art of using a map and compass in this active, outdoor class. They may use the map to find a specific area of camp, or both map and compass to find their way around the orienteering course. Either way, they'll have a great time getting lost (and then found!)

OUTDOOR LIVING SKILLS (O)

- Objectives: To prepare the students for meaningful outdoor experiences
 To teach students how to make responsible decisions when participating in outdoor activities such as hiking, picnicking, outdoor cooking and camping
 To understand the impact of such activities on people and the environment
 To develop within each student a desire to maintain environmental quality

Fire building, shelter building, knots and first aid are all topics covered and practiced in Outdoor Living Skills. Students will get the chance to go out into the woods and try their hand at these skills while learning a bit of what it takes to get along in the wilderness as well as learning the basics of staying warm in winter and cool in summer.

PAPER MAKING (H, S)

- Objectives: To gain an appreciation for the art of making paper
 To understand the process of making paper starting with trees
 To understand the importance of recycling paper products

Where does paper come from? What is pulp? What trees are used to make paper? How do they get it so flat? These questions and more will be answered in Paper Making, while students make their own paper which they can take home.

F-14 (PAPER PLANES) (S)

- Objectives: To learn about the physics of aerodynamics
 To use the scientific method to explore how flight works
 To understand Bernoulli's Law and it's relationship to flight

Students will learn about the forces of thrust, lift and drag by making their own paper air planes and finding out what flies the best. The scientific method is key in the procedure of this class.

SQUIRRELMANIA (S)

- Objectives: To gain an understanding of how animals forage and store food for winter
 To appreciate the interaction between animals that live solitary lives
 To experience competition between animals through a fun game

This frantic game involves the students as squirrels (without the use of their thumbs) foraging and competing with one another for nuts and shelter for the winter. At the end of this class students will have learned quite a bit about these plentiful, local rodents.

STONES AND BONES (H, C)

- Objectives: To overcome superstitions about cemeteries
 To learn a bit of Becket history from gravestones

Graveyards don't have to be scary places! We turn our local cemetery into a social studies class by learning more about those who came before us and how different cultures address the concept of death, dying and the after-life. This activity requires a _ mile hike to the local cemetery.

TEAMBUILDING (G)

- Objectives: To foster teamwork and communication
 To learn the components of an effective team and put them into practice
 To challenge the students physically and mentally

Using a series of trust building activities, physical obstacles and nonphysical challenges, the initiative sessions focus on cooperation, effective communication and the development of trust between individuals within a group.

TRACKING (S)

- Objectives: To learn to identify animal tracks based on signs like shape, depth, track patterns, etc.
 To be able to look for and identify other signs of animals, including nests and dens, scrape marks and “leftovers”.

Students will discuss the different ways in which animals move and what animals they may hope to find evidence of in the area, then go on a hike in search of animal tracks and other signs of animals. Winter is the best season for this class, since at other times of the year clean tracks may be difficult to find.

TREE ID (S)

- Objectives: To learn to identify local trees
 To understand why trees are an important part of an ecosystem

Through interactive learning students learn to discover the flora and fauna of Western Massachusetts, and explore the forest on the Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA property.

BEAVER FEVER / CANOEING / LAKE EXPLORATION (S)

- Objectives: To understand the concept of adaptation
 To examine how a beaver is adapted to its environment
 To explore beaver habitat and look for signs of beaver

These classes can be taught in any combination or by themselves. Beaver Fever is a fun study of beavers, which involves one student dressing up as a beaver. Then, the class will visit a beaver lodge and hope to catch a glimpse of these large rodents. In canoeing class, students will learn the basics of canoeing, and have some fun on the lake with races and canoe games. While on the lake, students can study the ecology of the water and search for life on the lake from their canoe.

POND PROBE/BOG WALK (S)

- Objectives: To explore a freshwater habitat
 To examine adaptations to this habitat

Hiking to and exploring one of our numerous ponds or walking along the Bog at Becket is the bulk of this class, as well as testing water clarity and learning to identify various species of pond life. (Can also be done in winter as Ice Harvest or Stream Study.)

WINTER ONLY

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING (O)

- Objectives:
- To understand the difference between cross-country and downhill skiing
 - To understand safety issues associated with cross-country skiing
 - To understand the proper use of ski equipment
 - To develop basic techniques for touring

From beginners to seasoned skiers, everyone will get to practice on our camp ski trails. Instructors will give pointers and help ensure a fun, safe skiing experience. Ski boots and skis are available.

ICE HARVEST (S)

- Objectives:
- To discover the winter ecology of the pond
 - To learn the skills of colonial ice harvesting

Using an old-fashioned ice saw, students will cut out a block of ice and scoop out the plant life of the lake as it is in winter. Then they will examine what they find, to see how the biology of the lake changes in winter.

SNOW SHOEING (O)

- Objectives:
- To understand the uses of snowshoes, and learn the basics of snowshoeing
 - To be able to identify the equipment and use it properly
 - To learn about different snowshoeing activities, their safety issues and have fun exploring the trails

The basics of snowshoeing are taught, as well as what snowshoes are used for. Students will take a snowshoe hike, and finish the class with the world famous Snowshoe Olympics.

STAYING ALIVE (S)

- Objectives:
- To learn the difference between hibernation and torpor
 - To experience how animals find and select a safe den
 - To see how the environment affects an animal's lifestyle

Jell-O becomes a learning tool as students try to find a hibernation spot suitable to keep an animal alive throughout the winter. They will learn about the changes animals go through when winter arrives, and the difference between hibernation and torpor.

LARGE GROUP ACTIVITIES

These activities also make great evening activities.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING

Objectives: To introduce the idea of land use planning
To take a stand and develop persuasive arguments in defense of it

This innovative role play activity helps the participants get a better grasp of how government and the private sector come together in order to establish public policy and laws that affect everyone.

FOLLOW THE DRINKING GOURD (UNDERGROUND RAILROAD)

Objectives: To learn about the Underground Railroad through role playing
To gain an appreciation of the hardships of escaping slavery
To learn about basic historical facts and figures associated with slavery

Travel the Underground Railroad as a runaway slave headed north toward freedom and a better way of life. Follow the Drinking Gourd, otherwise known as “the Big Dipper”, and learn about how Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass played key roles in supporting the abolitionist movement of the late 18th century in America.

NEW GAMES

Objectives: To understand, use and develop some group dynamic principles
To create the sense of being part of a group
To foster the students’ responsibility towards one another
To develop a sense of fun and cooperation instead of competition

New Games provide an introduction to group cooperation through noncompetitive-fair play where everyone is a winner. This session can help establish an atmosphere of having fun for fun’s sake, and it is a great way to kick off an overnight retreat or day program.

ON THE STREETS (daytime only)

- Objectives:
- To gain a general understanding of the homeless situation, it's causes and who is homeless
 - To experience what it is like to try and get help from welfare agencies
 - To begin to understand the confusion, anger, frustration, hopelessness and other emotions brought out in a desperate situation.
 - To relate the experience to the realities of homelessness
 - To discuss ways in which people can help those in this situation

This simulation game places students on the streets trying to find a job, a place to live and something to eat. Before their "day" is over, they will deal with employment agencies, welfare offices and landlords, among others. Teachers take an active (and fun!) part in teaching the students the frustrations of trying to get started in the "real world". Students' stereotypes of homelessness change dramatically after playing this game.

PREDATOR AND PREY (daytime only)

- Objectives:
- To understand the concepts of food web and trophic pyramid
 - To experience predator-prey relationships
 - To explore bioaccumulation
 - To understand what a dynamic equilibrium is and how it is maintained in nature

All things are interdependent in this come-to-life role play activity where students learn about food chains, predator-prey relationships and the web of life that connects all living things.

ZINGERS

- Objectives:
- To work as a group to complete tasks in a given time period
 - To develop time management skills

Time management is crucial in this fast paced, action packed game. Students are divided into "teams" and travel from station to station, with each station consisting of a high energy task.

BROWN BAG SKITS – Each group will be given a brown bag containing miscellaneous fun items and their task is to make up a skit using all the items and everyone in their group! The result is a students working together to be creative, and of course, lots of laughter!

CAMPFIRE – Our talented staff can get your campfire off to a roaring start with stories, songs and skits that will entertain young and old alike. Camper skits and songs are welcome and encouraged.

DUTCH AUCTION – It’s neither Dutch nor an Auction, but it’s always fun! Students are divided into groups, then our “Auctioneer” will ask for an item, action or some sort of performance. Groups will be rewarded for creativity, enthusiasm and good sportsmanship, and they are certain to have a blast!

NIGHT HIKE – This is a program that all ages can enjoy and appreciate. It’s not so much a night hike, but rather a night experience. Students will learn about the ways in which the nocturnal world comes alive through games and experiments involving all of the senses. Sensory awareness, predator prey relationships and the anatomy of animal eyes and ears are just some of the topics of discussion and activity on this night time excursion.

SING DOWN – Teams think fast to come up with songs containing a certain word. Lots of singing and laughter!

OUTSIDE PRESENTERS– The Director of Outdoor Center Programs can help you arrange an outside presenter to come to camp to provide the evening activity for your group. Examples of such presenters are might be a Square Dance Caller, Folk Singer, Magician, Scientist, Animal Presenter (i.e. ornithologist or reptile specialist who brings animals with him or her). These programs require an additional fee as determined by the programmer, and are subject to the availability of the presenter.

RECREATION TIME

Recreation time can be a valuable part of a student’s experience, giving them time to unwind and let off some steam. Playing fields and sports equipment are available for your use, including basketball, softball, soccer, volleyball, 4-square and tether ball. Please arrange for these resources prior to your arrival so that we may be prepared for your needs. Canoeing, kayaking and swimming are great fun, but require advanced planning and the Outdoor Center staff to supervise.

ADVENTURE/CHALLENGE PROGRAMMING

The Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA Outdoor Center is pleased to be able to offer Adventure Programming designed for older students, those who have visited us before, or those students looking for group and individual challenges. There may be an additional charge for staff and equipment, please call the Director of Outdoor Center Programs for further details and to find out if an Adventure Program is right for your group.

Alpine Tower

The Alpine Tower, located at Chimney Corners Camp, provides students with the same challenges as rock climbing and traditional high ropes elements. Each student will be aided with safety gear and a staff member while they ascend the tower and its obstacles. The Alpine Tower is designed to allow participants to choose their own goals for success, and can be a highly rewarding experience for anyone. *Participants must be 12 years or older in order to use the Alpine Tower.*

Teambuilding/Low Ropes Course

Both camps have an extensive, newly built low ropes course. These courses are designed to provide challenges for a group of 10-15 students, involving group work, cooperation, and effective communication skills. The low ropes course can be physically challenging, and is a great introduction to challenge course work for those groups planning on participating in our Alpine Tower or High Ropes Program.

Bouldering Room

At Camp Becket, students can learn spotting and climbing techniques at our innovative new bouldering room. The bouldering room has climbing holds throughout the inside and outside of the structure. Because students will climb no higher than 8 feet, they do not need to wear a harness, but instead are spotted by group members and staff. The challenge is to climb horizontally around the structure without landing on the ground.

High Ropes Course

A High Ropes Course consisting of 12 elements designed to challenge students mentally and physically is available at Camp Becket. Participants use harnesses and are belayed by our qualified staff to the tops of elements constructed on telephone poles, such as the zip line, cat walk or burma bridge. *Participants must be 12 years or older to participate in the High Ropes Course.*

Climbing Towers

Each facility has a climbing tower for students to learn the basic elements of rock climbing skills, as well as to experience the belay safety system. Our climbing towers are designed to provide a variety of difficulty and skill levels, to challenge each participant. Our staff ensures that all climbing is conducted with the highest standards of safety established.

As with all of our programming, safety of the participants and staff is our highest priority. Anyone wishing to participate in the Alpine Tower or High Ropes Course must be 12 years of age or older and have a release form signed by a parent or guardian (if the participant is under the age of 18). Our staff will not compromise safety under any circumstances, and guidelines and rules can not be altered. Participants are expected to respect and follow all standards and guidelines for participation as set out by the Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA staff. Please call the Director of Outdoor Center Programs with any questions regarding these standards.