

International Camper Exchange Program 2008 Destinations

The Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA is pleased to offer seven ICEP programs for the summer of 2008. All of the ICEP programs offer teens unique cultural experiences through youth-to-youth interaction, service/community development opportunities, homestays, and some educational travel. You will experience a way of life that is truly different from your own. The ICEP experience is valuable preparation for life in a world that is growing increasingly interdependent.

The seven destinations being offered this summer are Costa Rica, Japan, Peru, New Zealand, Vietnam, Chile and Sweden/Russia. Due to the current U.S. exchange rate, our Australian YMCA partner was not able to offer the same quality experience as in past years and we have agreed to not to offer the program in 2008.

On January 15th we will begin notifying all of the applicants of their program destination, as well as sending a packet of information including country specific information, health and safety information, and a planning checklist. 2008 Destination Specific Itineraries will be reviewed at our Parent/Camper Meetings in April and May of 2008.

ICEP destinations are subject to change and/or cancellation due to natural disaster, other acts of God, or political, social, economic unrest of a particular country or region. All Travel Dates are tentative, and will be confirmed after airline tickets are reserved in January 2008.

COSTA RICA **June 28th – August 2nd**

Costa Rica is a middle-income, developing country with a strong democratic tradition. Spanish is the official language. While it is a small country, approximately the size of West Virginia, Costa Rica is one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world. Rising up between the Atlantic and the Pacific as part of the land bridge between North and South America, Costa Rica's natural features include tropical forest, high mountains, beaches and volcanoes.

Our partnership is with the Costa Rica YMCA, based out of the city of San Jose. Homestays will be taking place in the greater San Jose region. ICEP participants will complete service projects affecting the local community and youth and participate in cultural activities with their YMCA teenagers. Participants will travel to and learn from indigenous communities along the Caribbean coast and travel to Guanacaste to experience Costa Rican culture and traditional lifestyles. The group will have multiple opportunities to hike and explore Costa Rica's varied geography.

JAPAN **July 8th – August 12th**

Japan, a country of islands, extends along the eastern or Pacific coast of Asia. Japanese is the official language. In total land area, Japan is slightly smaller than California. Japan's population, currently some 127 million, has experienced a phenomenal growth rate during the past 100 years. Shintoism and

Buddhism are Japan's two principal religions. Throughout the country there is a great mix of both urban and rural landscapes, with a rich variety of cultural attractions, food, and people.

Our YMCA Partner in Japan is with the Tochigi YMCA, located in the prefecture of Tochigi. Their main YMCA is located in the city of Utsunomiya, which is approximately two hours north of Tokyo by train. Homestays for the program will be primarily based out of this city. Our Japan ICEP Program will include travel into Tokyo to visit some of the many Japanese temples and shrines, as well as participating in service projects at the Asian Rural Institute (a sustainable agricultural training center for people from Africa and Asia). Tochigi prefecture is also well-known Nikko, a popular hiking destination and home to many of the Japanese “Onsen’s” (Baths).

PERU

July 8th – August 12th

Located in western South America, Peru is a coastal country that borders between Chile and Ecuador. The geography of Peru is punctuated by the rugged Andes Mountains and coastal planes which provided shelter and supplies to ancient Andean civilizations, most notably the Incan Empire. Since the empire was captured by the Spanish conquistadors in 1533, Peruvian culture has established rich and diverse heritage and traditions. The official languages are Spanish and Quechua (an indigenous language of the Andean region).

Our partnership is with YMCA Peru, based in the city of Lima. Homestays will take place in Pueblo Libre (a region of Lima), with YMCA members and the group will travel to regions south of Lima including Azpitia, to stay at their winter camp. The trip will include a tour around the historical centre of Lima (catacombs), the coast, museums with over 10,000 years of history, a folklore afternoon, among many other activities. Community service will be taking place in the YMCA’s social development programs in Lima and at their YMCA campsites. Interaction with Peruvian teenagers, sharing their culture and learning from each other is one of the main goals of YMCA Peru.

NEW ZEALAND

July 8th – August 12th

New Zealand is a highly developed, stable parliamentary democracy, which recognizes the British monarch as a sovereign. English is the official language. New Zealand is in the Southern Hemisphere and stretches 1600 miles north to south. The country consists of two main islands, the northern island is full of fertile agricultural land, forests, beaches and thermal features such as volcanoes, geysers and hot pools. The southern island landscape is dominated by the snow capped Southern Alps, glaciers, lakes and fjords. The original inhabitants of New Zealand were the Maori, or moa hunters, Polynesian descendants who traveled to this island nation located 1,000 miles southeast of Australia.

Our partnership in New Zealand is with the Auckland YMCA. The program is based out of the Waiwera Lodge, located on the Hibiscus Coast north of Auckland. During the program, participants will complete service projects in some of the regional parks and with the local community centers, hike many trails and experience some of New Zealand’s unique geographical features. ICEP participants will also spend time learning about the Maori culture and history. The majority of the program will take place on the north island; however, the group will travel south to Wellington and take a ferry to the South Island to

explore coastal features. The group will not travel too far south in order to avoid the more “artic” conditions of New Zealand’s winter.

VIETNAM – *NEW for 2008*

June 28th – August 2nd

Vietnam, located in Southeast Asia, borders Cambodia, Laos and China and stretches over 1600km. Vietnam has a mountainous region in the west and it’s eastern border consists of coastline along the South China Sea. Vietnamese is the official language along with 53 local dialects. More than 80 million people, mainly young, live on an area of 329,566km, particularly in Northern Delta of Red River and Southern Delta of Mekong River, known locally as the “River of Nine Dragons”, because it was divided into 9 estuaries before flowing into the sea. Vietnam, with 4000 years of culture has become a peaceful country which attracts a lot of overseas visitors because of its hidden charm, safe destinations and hospitality.

Our YMCA partner in Vietnam, the VN YMCA in Ho Chi Minh City, has been serving local communities for the past 15 years and is very active in supporting many activities and programs that meet the needs of their members. The itinerary for the ICEP program will focus on the southern and central regions of the country. Community service projects will be organized in rural villages in the Mekong delta. Educational travel will take place in cultural and historical sites of Ho Chi Minh City and the Hue Citadel. Homestays will be organized in Danang, which is well known for its Japanese cultural remnants. Participants will also have opportunities to interact with local people and Vietnamese teens through various activities throughout the program. This spring, Becket-Chimney YMCA staff will travel to Vietnam to work with our YMCA partners to continue developing the ICEP itinerary. A detailed itinerary will be available at the Parent / Camper Meetings in April/May 2007.

CHILE

June 28th – August 2nd

Chile is a long country that spans many different environments from the tropics to the Antarctic. Spanish is the official language. It is a mestizo country, of mixed European and indigenous decent. The Europeans arrived in the 16th century and the native people that were ruled by the Inca Empire, were then colonized by the Spanish. The California gold rush put Valparaiso on the map as a critical port for the transport of gold to Europe.

Our partner in Chile is the YMCA in Valparaiso. Homestays will take place in the greater Valparaiso region. Community service projects will take place among the poor hills of Valparaiso at daycare facilities and/or local schools. ICEP participants will have interaction with Chilean teens through activities provided by the Valparaiso YMCA. Educational travel will take place in Santiago, Vina del Mar, and Valparaiso.

SWEDEN/RUSSIA

June 28th – August 8th

Russia is the largest country in the world. Four of the world’s largest rivers (Lena, Ob, Volga, and Yenisey) and the world’s deepest freshwater lake (Gaikal) are in Russia. Slavic people settled in

Eastern Europe during the early Christian eras. Early in the 13th century, Mongols conquered the Slavs and ruled for 240 years. In 1547, Ivan the Terrible was the first Russian ruler, crowned Czar of Russia. Russian is the official language.

Sweden, one of the “three fingers” of Scandinavia, is slightly larger than the state of California. Sweden has been inhabited for nearly five thousand years and is the home of the Gothic peoples who battled the Roman Empire. In the ninth century, Rurik, a semi-legendary chief of the Swedes, is said to have founded Russia. Swedish is the official language.

Our partner in Sweden is the Brevik YMCA Camp. In Russia, our partner is the Ozerky YMCA in St. Petersburg. The primary emphasis of the ICEP program is a two and one-half week Swedish camp experience, highlighted by a weeklong canoe trip with Swedish teens and daily interaction with Russian teens through YMCA activities. Homestays will take place both in Sweden and Russia. ICEP participants will travel by boat from Russia to Sweden. and educational travel will take place in Stockholm, St. Petersburg, and Pushkin.