

WELCOME TO MACC!



We are so excited for you to join us this week as we take time to elevate ourselves as YMCA camp professionals, our network, our programs, and more! Whether this is your first MACC or your 20th, you should find this guide helpful! For our first timers, you'll find lots of information to help with the lingo of MACC, where various events are held, who to go to with questions, and more! For our returners, take time to review this guide to learn about some of the updates and changes from previous years, as well as ways to help engage the new folks.

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WHAT IS MACC?

The MACC, Mid America Camping Conference, is a cutting-edge community of YMCA camping professionals that is built on the foundation of an annual conference prepared by camp people, for camp people, and hosted at a MACC community camp. It is the mission of MACC to strengthen the foundation of this YMCA movement by educating, connecting, and motivating.

For 80 years the assembled staff who attend the conference have found support in their peers, education in high quality sessions, and solutions from the example of a host camp.

GOALS OF MACC

- Education about the current trends in camping
- Connection with camp peers and mentors
- Motivation to reaffirm our commitment to the YMCA camping movement and our unique place and impact within it

WHO PUTS MACC TOGETHER?

The answer is two fold! You may have heard of "MAYCI" which stands for The Mid America YMCA Camp, Inc. It is the legal entity that annually provides the YMCA Mid America Camping Conference. A 501c3, MAYCI is dedicated to the mission and purpose of advancing the movement of YMCA Camping with an eye towards global initiatives. They will be having a board meeting on Thursday, January 11th at 1:30pm in the Conference Room - All are welcome! Join us!

The other part of MACC is the planning Committee; a group of volunteers who work throughout the year to plan and prepare for this amazing week. Throughout the conference, if you have questions or concerns please find a Committee member. On Tuesday they will all be wearing matching committee gear for easy identification. If you are interested in joining the MACC Committee for 2025 you can apply through the application in Guidebook, or talk to a committee member!

WHO ATTENDS MACC?

So many people! MACC traditionally has approximately 250 attendees. Attendees come from all over the midwest, a few from other places in the country, and international camps! You'll meet people from day camps and overnight camps, people beginning their career to CEOs, first time attendees and people who have attended decades of MACCs!

Category	Percentage of attendees in 2023		
Type of Program	Day: 22%	Day+overnight: 51%	Overnight: 27%
Job Category	FT director: 64%	FT coordinator: 16%	PT/seasonal: 20%
Year at MACC	1st time: 48%	2-5th time: 35%	6+ time: 16%

We also have Rising Stars! They are up and coming camping professionals who are currently operating in seasonal positions. They will have identifiable lanyards during the conference. Take time to introduce yourself and welcome them to the camping community at large.

PREPARING FOR MACC & ARRIVAL

WHAT TO BRING

Clothing & Bedding

- Business casual clothes and footwear - jeans are more than fine! You'll see a lot of winter "camp professional" attire like flannels and vests. Have layers! You'll be outside and in various indoor spaces that will inevitably have a range of temperatures.
- Optional: Swimsuit and/or workout gear. Participants will have full access to the Y facilities
- Pillows, twin sized linens or sleeping bags (you can rent bedding for \$20 if needed!)
- Toiletries
- Towels
- Shower shoes

Gear & Items

- Reusable water bottle
- Flashlight
- Daily backpack/bag
- Auction item donation(s)
- Note taking items
- Money for auctions and vendors
- Materials to share (job postings, brochures, song books, etc!)
- Resumes & Business Cards
- Think of a problem to discuss and brainstorm during Consultative Problem Solving!

LODGING

There are two main options for lodging this year as selected in registration. You can stay on site at Sherman Lake YMCA in the cabins or you can stay off-site in condos at their partner, Gull Lake View Golf Resort.

If you stay on site you'll be in a heated dorm style cabin that has six twin sized bunk beds and a private bathroom. For when the bathroom is occupied and you just can't wait, there are also additional bathhouses that are fully accessible and within 50 yards of all cabins. All cabins are a short 5-15 minute walk from the main camp, dining, and interest session locations.

For an additional fee the off-site condos are just two miles down the road from Sherman Lake Y! There will be daily shuttles to and from the condos for participants that do not have their own transportation, to ensure participants will be able to fully attend the conference. The condos can sleep up to four guests, each with two bedrooms and bathrooms, a kitchen, dining, and living space.

STAYING INFORMED WITH GUIDEBOOK

Download the Guidebook app to access the conference schedule, receive live updates, connect with other participants, and leave reviews for sessions you attend! After you download it, select 'search by passphrase' and then enter the passphrase 'macc2024'. Guidebook is home to the conference schedule, map of Sherman Lake Y, information about our Keynote Speakers and more. You can also curate your own personal schedule by selecting interest sessions you plan to attend. Choose "My Schedule" and tap the + sign next to each event.

HOST SITE INFORMATION

Sherman Lake YMCA is the host for 2024. They are located at 6225 N 39th Street, Augusta MI 49012. They are approximately 25 minutes from the Kalamazoo/Battle Creek Airport, 60 minutes from the Grand Rapids Gerald R Ford airport, and 2-3 hours from Chicago and Detroit airports. You can find more detailed directions on the Host Site page of our website.

ARRIVAL & CHECK IN

Check in begins on Tuesday, January 9th at 10:30am. If you register for early arrival, that begins on Monday, January 8th at 4:00pm. That fee will include an extra night of lodging, Monday dinner and Tuesday breakfast.

Whenever you check in, you'll come to the Conference Room in Kellogg Hall. While there will be plenty of signage to direct you there, Kellogg Hall is the third building/circle drive when you pull into Sherman Lake Y.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

During check in, there will be a table where attendees can make a button that highlights some key information: how many years they have been at MACC, what kind of camp program they work in, and more. The buttons are to help facilitate connections - meet peers who are in similar roles or career stages, newer staff can ask seasoned camp/MACC attendees advice, or long time camp mentors can greet young staff and help them feel comfortable in a new space!

WELCOME MIXER

This is the first networking event of MACC, held at Kellogg Hall. All attendees are welcome to break the ice, make connections and share goals for MACC. There will be an active program and a passive program so everyone can participate in their own way.

This is the first time you'll be meeting people at MACC, and it may feel overwhelming. Do your best to put yourself out there - everyone is looking to meet new people and start getting to know each other!

When you enter, you'll be given a question card - you are encouraged to find another participant, ask them your question, and be asked a question in return. Hopefully this will stimulate some interesting conversation before you switch cards and find someone new. The goal is to make it a little easier to meet new people and get connected!

MACC SCHEDULE & EVENTS

MEALS

Meal times are a cornerstone of the MACC experience for energy and networking. All meals will be served in the Great Hall of Kellogg Hall. Sherman Lake YMCA is well known for its catering, and you'll find plenty of options to fit any dietary needs. To accommodate attendees that may have more severe allergies or dietary restrictions who choose to bring some of their own food, there will be a space to keep those in the kitchen!

Mealtimes can also be very overwhelming if you do not know anyone at MACC, or if you are trying to meet new people. It can feel intimidating, being surrounded by people who have been coming for years, or who are coming with a large group. The best piece of advice is to take a deep breath, smile, and just join a table of people you don't know. Everyone will be welcoming and happy to meet new faces.

Think about what you want to get out of the experience - are you looking to find people in similar positions to discuss your experiences? Are you looking to network in the hopes of finding a new job? Are you wanting to just understand all the different experiences there are in the camping world? Once you have your goal, think of a couple of questions or topics you would like to discuss. It will feel easier to sit down with new people if you have a plan.

And remember, mealtimes are a great time for networking, but they're also a great time to unwind between packed sessions and schedules. It's ok to just talk about movies or hobbies or sports and not always about camp!

TABLE INDICATORS

Meal tables will have colored table indicators so that you can confidently sit at a table that matches your energy. A yellow indicator with the words 'Mix and Mingle' means that the table is for mingling, chatting and networking. A purple indicator with the words 'Working but Welcome' means that the table is going to be low on conversation - for team meetings, getting remote work done or just eating quietly.

AFFINITY GROUPS

Affinity Groups are a meeting during meal times designed to connect folks on a topic that isn't just about their camp self. There are three Affinity Groups this year: Tuesday Dinner is Parents, Wednesday Dinner is LGBTQ+, and Thursday Lunch is BIPOC. If you are interested in joining these conversations, look near the front of the dining hall for the meeting tables.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

The daily Keynote Speakers are sessions that are attended by all MACC attendees. Each day there will be a Keynote Speaker who will teach, challenge and inspire all of us with their unique message. Please be sure to show up early to the Gymnasium in the Rec Center for the Keynotes so you can get a great seat!

The goal of the keynote sessions are to bring us all together in learning and growing with something that is relevant to the Y camping movement as a whole.

Any given keynote may or may not be particularly relevant (or interesting) to you and your camp in particular, but the goal is to expose all attendees to ideas or content that will give you insight into the broader camping movement, or provoke thought about a social/cultural movement that might have an impact on camping. Even if the keynote does not feel relevant to you, there are always takeaways. Think about how it might relate to the population you work with, or how your

organization fits into what the keynote is talking about. Think about how those in positions higher or lower than you might relate to the content, or what you can bring back to them that they might find interesting. Find one piece that you can connect and implement.

INTEREST SESSIONS

Interest Sessions are the breakouts to learn about various topics. There are seven breakouts during each of the Interest Session periods. Review all of your options and choose a session that will help you accomplish your MACC goals. If you are attending MACC with a group, it might be helpful to divide and conquer to get the most from your experience.

When picking the best sessions for you, think carefully about your goals for the conference. Are there specific topics you are looking to dive into? Something you are hoping to add for the upcoming summer? Skills you are hoping to improve? Try to find sessions that align with your position and goals professionally. It's also a good idea to go to at least one session that is out of your wheelhouse - try something you don't have experience with, or that is several levels above where you are now. You'll get a better perspective for the camping movement as a whole and some of the opportunities that are out there.

While attending interest sessions we encourage you to dive in! Participate in anything interactive, take lots of notes (you won't remember it all later, I promise), and ask questions. The presenters are just other camping professionals like you, and they are happy to chat more after the session, or at a meal, if you have questions. And they're also happy to share resources - we want to build each other up at and beyond MACC!

Make sure you complete the session evaluation in Guidebook - it is helpful for the presenters to get feedback on their presentations!

ROUND TABLES

This networking opportunity is designed to help you connect with folks who work in your department of camp. Choose one of the groups that fits your position or camp best to take part in more specific discussions on topics that you as the participant help guide.

The round table time is meant to facilitate discussion on current issues in camping that pertain to your area of interest. You may be talking about challenges and successes from the past summer, ideas and goals for the upcoming summer, working through problems, and more. Here you can really dive into specifics that interest you - and get good ideas and feedback from those that do the same work you do.

Be as open and honest as you can, we are all here to build each other up! The more everyone participates, the more we will all get out of the activity. At the same time, be aware of dominating the conversation. Look to include those in the conversation that might be quieter or more hesitant. Everyone's experience is valuable.

CONSULTATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

This small-group discussion activity will take you on a thought exercise to help you think through scenarios that we should prepare for but hope don't happen. This year, this program will be facilitated by Keynote Speaker Michael Brandwein. Bring with you one or two problems or challenges that you would like advice or ideas on.

This is a great time to get some insight into specific problems people have faced, as well as share how you have handled similar issues. People are likely feeling vulnerable in sharing their difficult experiences. We want to honor that in our respectful participation and discussion.

CAMPFIRE

This is a professional conference but we are here to celebrate all aspects of camp! The goal of campfire is to all come together to participate in a time honored camp tradition, and to share ideas for some new songs or skits you may want to take back to your camp! Join us in the Gymnasium in the Rec Center for the camp feels as we sing songs, share skits and join in community.

Campfire is always more fun if you participate, so get up, do the silly dances and cheers, and show your appreciation for everyone brave enough to get up on that stage! If you are interested in sharing at the campfire, sign up during check in or find a MACC Committee volunteer to help you.

REFLECTION

At the conclusion of each evening, MACC attendees will gather to listen to a thought provoking reflection. The speaker for each reflection is a conference attendee, so you will be hearing from your peers. We will hear stories and personal reflections from the speakers to round out the day.

RECREATION

In the evening after all of the day's formal programming is done, there will be some opportunities to relax and connect with other attendees, if you choose!

The Sherman Lake YMCA Rec Center will stay open until 10pm on Tuesday and Wednesday, with the fitness center, basketball court, hiking trails and games available. Kellogg Hall will also remain open. The Rec Center also opens at 5am for those early workout birds! The pool is open at that time for lap swimming as well.

For folks who want to go off site to socialize and get something to eat and drink, a local golf club restaurant, Charles & Darls, will be open. It is located at the same location as the condos that some attendees are staying at! The address is 7417 N 28th St, Augusta, MI. It's just two miles down the road from Sherman Lake YMCA. If you do not have a ride, many folks are happy to offer space in their cars- just ask!

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

This pre-breakfast time is an opportunity for the early risers to have coffee and convos before the breakfast rush. This time is also often used for checking in with work, having a team meeting, or simply quietly reflecting. Some tables will have discussion prompts, others will simply be open for whatever your morning needs are.

There will also be a local Coffee Truck available from 7am until 10am outside of Kellogg Hall on Wednesday and Thursday!

MORNING INSPIRATION

After you grab some breakfast, we welcome you to gather in the Conference Room for Morning Inspiration. The goal of morning inspiration is to help focus you for the day ahead, and to give you some inspiration for your day or some grounding moments. There will be a different speaker each morning to kick start your day, as well as provide some insight into how other camps begin their daily routine.

SPONSOR FAIR

This walkabout lunch is your opportunity to connect with industry vendors, resources, and sample lots of different food. There will be booths with our MACC Sponsors so you can chat with

representatives and talk about what they have to offer your camp. Food vendors will be giving samples of their food - eat up!

MACC sponsors help make the conference possible through their financial contributions. We want to make it worth their time by engaging with their content!

The sponsor fair can be a learning and growth opportunity, especially if you have never attended one before, and even if you are not in a position to be making purchases. It is a great chance to interact face-to-face with companies you may buy from or use currently or may in the future. This is a great time to ask questions, get a demonstration of products, and build relationships that could turn out to be very useful.

Vendors will be trying to sell you their product. This can be intimidating - it may feel awkward to talk to someone in a transactional way, and you may feel uncomfortable speaking with them if you have no intention of purchasing something from them in the future. Think of it as building a relationship and gathering information. Ask questions about their products, about the company's history, about their partnerships. The more you know, the better informed decisions you can make this year or in 5 years.

SILENT AUCTION

The Silent Auction is composed of items participants have brought, organized into packages. The packages will be stationed in the back of the Gymatorium. Take a look at the packages and if you are interested in bidding on an item, write down your bid with your bidder number. Your bidder number is on the corner of your name tag. Check back on your bids as often as needed to make sure you win your prize! The Silent Auction closes at 6:30pm on Wednesday. Proceeds raised during the silent auction will benefit a cause that will be announced as MACC gets closer. If you win a package, you will pay for your items following the Live Service Auction and then you will receive your items.

YMCA SERVICE AUCTION

This auction is a live auction event held on Wednesday evening in the Gymatorium after the Silent Auction closes. Items that will be up for bid will be displayed in the back of the Gymatorium throughout the day on Tuesday and Wednesday to help you plan your bids. During the Service Auction, bidders will hold up their bidder number card to indicate their bid. You will be given your bidder number card on Wednesday at dinner time. You will pay for your winning items and donations following the Live Service Auction - then you will receive your items.

The goal of the service auction is to raise money for a greater cause. To that end, items will go for much more than they might in the silent auction. You may not be able to afford to bid on any of the items, and that is completely fine. If you are interested in making a donation anyways, there will be an opportunity at the end of the auction.

LEARN, PLAY, CONNECT

On Thursday afternoon, you can choose your own adventure! You can **learn** more about Sherman Lake Y through its Program Tour or its Facility/Operation Tour. Tours are a great way to learn more about how other camps use spaces or run things behind the scene and take some ideas back to your Camp.

You can **play** at Sherman Lake Y at this time; their high ropes course will be open, STEM activities will be running, the Rising Stars will facilitate a game, and a few other activities will be available (use Guidebook, the host camp often has to make decisions on activities based on the weather!)

You can also use this time to **connect!** Connect back to work and answer those emails, connect with people you've met and have informal roundtable discussions, or connect with a regional camp network!

BANQUET

Thursday's dinner is the MACC banquet! After a brief reception with appetizers, join us in the Great Hall in Kellogg for a final amazing dinner along with a celebration of our time together. We will share a slideshow and have a ceremony to celebrate a Legend of Camping, as well as present our other awards. This banquet ends with the final reflection.

The dining hall and food may be fancy, but you are welcome to dress however you like - no need to dress up.

The banquet and final night of recreation is a night you don't want to miss! They're a lovely wrap-up to a meaningful conference, and a final time to connect with your new and old friends.

AFTER MACC

CONFERENCE EVALUATIONS

The Conference Evaluation can be found on the Guidebook app. This is a way for you to share your thoughts and feedback on various aspects of the conference. Please make notes throughout your experience so that you can fill out your evaluation with all of your ideas. The MACC Committee does take time to review the evaluations and make improvements for future MACC experiences.

STAY CONNECTED!

Use Guidebook for participant and presenter information to connect after MACC! Later in the year, make sure to tell the MACC Committee how you took your learnings from MACC and elevated your Camp or yourself!