

MACC Conference Event	Times	Location	Description (Optional)
Tuesday, January 14th			
Rising Stars Meeting	10:00 AM	Markham Room (Rec Center)	Rising Stars Kick off meeting - Mentors please join us at 11:30am.
Arrival and Check In	10:30 AM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	Check in and receive your nametag, MACC Swag, housing assignment, and more!
Welcome Mixer	11:45 AM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	A welcome mixer for attendees to get connected and feel comfortable at MACC!
Lunch	12:15 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	Check out the slides for menu information!
MACC Kick Off	1:15 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	Let's get MACC started!
			They Just WON'T DO IT: How to Help People Get Unstuck
Keynote #1 - Dr. Matthew Zareski	1:30 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	One of the hardest things about working with other people is their resistance to participating in activities. These refusals can be incredibly frustrating for teachers, parents, coaches, coworkers, and mental health professionals and often result in significant conflict between these people and their systems. Understanding how and why individuals get "stuck" allows for meaningful and empathetic engagement around these behaviors, which raises the likelihood of everyone attempting and completing their work.
Building Communities	2:45 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	Join us in the gymatorium to connect with fellow participants! We will be connecting, problem solving, and getting to know our fellow MACC attendees with intentionality. Building communities is challenge by choice. Be ready to engage and have fun! Dr. Matthew Zakreski (Keynote Speaker)
1A - Table Top! Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Games that Your Students will Actually Like	4:00 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	Many children can struggle with the social and emotional skills necessary to create and maintain relationships. While many Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs exist in schools, they are often not adapted to the unique needs of the camping population. This presentation will also demonstrate some techniques on how to teach and model SEL skills for children through the gamification of the lessons, both through the demonstration of games designed for this population and instruction on how to adapt games. Jordan Baxter (YMCA Camp Jackson)
1B - Motherhood in Camping - Is it possible? Challenges, Joys, Boundaries, Tips and Connection	4:00 PM	Multipurpose Studio (Rec Center)	This session is designed for mothers in camping and women aspiring to balance a camping career with family life. It will be a discussion-based gathering, inviting a collective conversation about the unique challenges and joys of being a mom at camp. By sharing personal experiences, participants can foster connections, exchange resources, and offer practical tips for addressing issues such as childcare and establishing boundaries in this context. Eddie Norgard (YMCA of Metro Fort Worth)
1C - From Rags to Riches: Camp Success on a Shoestring Budget	4:00 PM	Markham Room (Rec Center)	Drawing from personal journeys, Eddie will delve into the remarkable transformations achieved when faced with limited budgets and seemingly scarce resources. Having navigated the challenges of running camps with modest financial means, I understand the art of turning limitations into opportunities. This presentation will be a testament to the power of creativity, innovation, and sheer determination in crafting unforgettable summer camp experiences. I'll share success stories, practical tips, and imaginative solutions that allowed me to create some of the most fun and engaging summer camps, even when resources were scarce. Whether you're a camp director or counselor, our session will leave you inspired and armed with strategies to breathe life into your camp, no matter the budget as we explore endless possibilities. Get ready to discover how to transform your camp from "rags" to "riches" in the most enriching way possible!

1D - Supervising This Generation	4:00 PM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	Demi Kapler & Margret Windebank (Camp Olson YMCA) Gen Z staff members bring unique needs, perspectives, and expectations to the workplace. This interactive session delves into practical strategies for effectively supervising and supporting this generation, focusing on a back-to-basics approach to leadership. Key topics include clear communication, consistent feedback, and fostering a positive and inclusive work environment. Join us for a collaborative discussion on navigating challenges, celebrating the strengths of Gen Z staff, and adapting your supervisory style to cultivate a thriving camp community.
1E - AmeriCorps, the Y and You: Building a Partnership that Works	4:00 PM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	Maggie McCrosen (YMCA Camp Kern) How can you make AmeriCorps service work for you and your camp? And, how can building a partnership elevate the experience for both AmeriCorps teams and Hosting sites? Service teams are an incredible recourse for improving camps from trail work and conservation work, rural or urban development, infrastructure improvement, and other service learning opportunities. Hosting a team for 7 weeks creates a unique opportunity to connect with our mission as the Y, connect and mentor young leaders, and continue our mission work in different and exciting ways.
1F - Training Staff as Easy as P.I.E.	4:00 PM	Nature Center (Kellogg)	Grant Jasper (Camp Crosley YMCA) Staff training and preparation is an important part of summer camp for all Directors (current and future). Each camp spends a lot of time, money and effort getting their summer staff ready to work with campers and hopefully make a very positive impact on them. I have found that no matter what topics we are covering (hard-skills/soft-skills/policies/concepts/ etc...), it is best done by weaving into all sessions 3 key concepts - P.I.E.: P stands for Plusing - the art of looking at every program/area and seeing ways to bring just a little improvement and add to the impact. I stands for Intentionality. E stands for Empathy. These three attributes can be taught, practiced, and improved. Planning your entire staff training and every training/meeting afterwards by consciously weaving the 3 attributes of P.I.E. can absolutely transform staff and your overall summer program. That's what it did for me.
1G - Unstructured Networking Area	4:00 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	
Dinner	5:30 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	
Rising Stars: Community Problem Solving Pre-Meeting	6:15 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	
Community Problem Solving - Marketing	6:30 PM	Multipurpose Studio (Rec Center)	This session creates an interactive space for YMCA camp professionals to come together, share ideas, and collaborate on finding solutions to common challenges. The group will focus on maintaining a solution-oriented environment, with everyone invited to contribute. Facilitators will lead the discussions using a structured format, tackling key topics like building brand awareness, increasing camp registrations, and engaging with the community. Participants will break into smaller groups to brainstorm solutions, share successful strategies, and develop practical takeaways to apply at their camps. The session will specifically address challenges related to Camp Marketing, led by Susan Coker and Andra-Coberly Webster of the YMCA of Northern Colorado.
Community Problem Solving - Overnights Camp and Equestrian Camps	6:30 PM	Gymnasium (Rec Center)	This session creates an interactive space for YMCA camp professionals to come together, share ideas, and collaborate on finding solutions to common challenges. The group will focus on maintaining a solution-oriented environment, with everyone invited to contribute. Facilitators will lead the discussions using a structured format, tackling key topics like camper behavior, staff training, and program development. Participants will break into smaller groups to brainstorm solutions, share successful strategies, and develop practical takeaways to apply at their camps. The session will specifically address challenges related to Overnight Camps and Equestrian Camps, led by Sean Diamond of YMCA Camp Manitowish.

Community Problem Solving - Day Camps at a Resident Camp Facility	6:30 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	This session creates an interactive space for YMCA camp professionals to come together, share ideas, and collaborate on finding solutions to common challenges. The group will focus on maintaining a solution-oriented environment, with everyone invited to contribute. Facilitators will lead the discussions using a structured format, tackling key topics like camper behavior, staff training, and program development. Participants will break into smaller groups to brainstorm solutions, share successful strategies, and develop practical takeaways to apply at their camps. The session will specifically address challenges related to Day Camps at a Resident Camp Facility, led by Peggy Aylmer of YMCA Camp Duncan.
Community Problem Solving - Day Camps at a Branch	6:30 PM	Markham Room (Rec Center)	This session creates an interactive space for YMCA camp professionals to come together, share ideas, and collaborate on finding solutions to common challenges. The group will focus on maintaining a solution-oriented environment, with everyone invited to contribute. Facilitators will lead the discussions using a structured format, tackling key topics like camper behavior, staff training, and program development. Participants will break into smaller groups to brainstorm solutions, share successful strategies, and develop practical takeaways to apply at their camps. The session will specifically address challenges related to Day Camps at a Branch, led by Ben Breuer of the Feith Family YMCA.
Community Problem Solving - Outdoor Education	6:30 PM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	This session creates an interactive space for YMCA camp professionals to come together, share ideas, and collaborate on finding solutions to common challenges. The group will focus on maintaining a solution-oriented environment, with everyone invited to contribute. Facilitators will lead the discussions using a structured format, tackling key topics such as school recruitment, staff training, and program development. Participants will break into smaller groups to brainstorm solutions, share successful strategies, and develop practical takeaways to apply at their camps. The session will specifically address challenges related to Outdoor Education, led by Shayla "Mickie" McNear of YMCA Camp Kitaki.
Community Problem Solving - Retreats and Conferences	6:30 PM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	This session creates an interactive space for YMCA camp professionals to come together, share ideas, and collaborate on finding solutions to common challenges. The group will focus on maintaining a solution-oriented environment, with everyone invited to contribute. Facilitators will lead the discussions using a structured format, tackling key topics such as group recruitment, staff training, and customer service. Participants will break into smaller groups to brainstorm solutions, share successful strategies, and develop practical takeaways to apply at their camps. The session will specifically address challenges related to Groups and Conferences, led by Tom Monroe of the Des Moines Y Camp.
Community Problem Solving - Executive Directors	6:30 PM	Nature Center (Kellogg)	This session creates an interactive space for YMCA camp professionals to come together, share ideas, and collaborate on finding solutions to common challenges. The group will focus on maintaining a solution-oriented environment, with everyone invited to contribute. Facilitators will lead the discussions using a structured format, tackling key topics. Participants will break into smaller groups to brainstorm solutions, share successful strategies, and develop practical takeaways to apply at their camps. The session will specifically address challenges related to Executive Directors, led by Brandon Dreffs of the YMCA of Greater Flint.
Campfire	8:00 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	
Reflection	8:45 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	This evening's reflection will be lead by Thomas Bawden. Thomas Bawden has been involved in camps since the age of 10, when he first went to summer camp. After that, he worked as a seasonal staff member until he began his professional career running day camps and school programs in 2015. He believes in the profound impact camp experiences can have on personal growth and community-building. Outside of work, Thomas enjoys playing guitar and spending time with his wife and two dogs.
Rising Stars Meeting	9:00 PM	Markham Room (Rec Center)	Rising Stars please meet directly after reflection to close out your day
Wednesday, January 15th			
Coffee & Conversation	7:15 AM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	Coffee Rescue, a beverage truck, will be parked in front of Kellogg from 7am - 10:30am. They accept cash or card for all of your caffeine emergencies!

Breakfast	7:45 AM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	
Morning Inspiration	8:45 AM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	Join Joan Wilson for a morning inspiration. Joan Wilson is the Groups & Rentals Program Director at Camp Y-Noah in Akron, Ohio. Joan's camp story is the age old tale of needing a Summer job in college and having it wonderfully and unexpectedly transform her life. Over the last 10 years, Joan has done a little bit of everything at Camp Y-Noah: counselor, Day Camp Director, Group Coordinator, Summer Camp Director, and her most loved job, Store manager (aka merch Queen). Joan is a lover of all things crafts and has recently taken the plunge into the world of Sourdough bread. Dan Weir (Day Camp Community)
2A - Navigating the Fall Season at Overnight Camps: Mission, Money, and Management	9:30 AM	Gymnasium (Rec Center)	Fall is filled with opportunities for overnight camps, but it comes with its own set of challenges. In this session, we'll explore how camps can effectively serve during the fall by balancing their mission with financial sustainability. Through surveys, philosophical discussions, and practical strategies, participants will gain insights into optimizing fall operations. Topics will include staffing, the role of outdoor education, and tips for navigating conversations with stakeholders. This session will empower attendees to leverage the fall as a time of growth, reflection, and strategic planning. Bobby Thomas (YMCA Camp Cullen)
2B - Global Camp Connections: Learning About, Building, and Sustaining International Camp Partnerships	9:30 AM	Multipurpose Studio (Rec Center)	Join me for an exploration of the exciting potential of establishing international camp partnerships to enrich the your camps experience and broaden cultural understanding. No, I don't mean scouring Camp Leaders or Camp America for summer staff to hire. I mean a real partnership where you both benefit (non-monetarily) and you both find a sense of connection and purpose in sharing the camp ride together. I will share what has been successful for the camps I have been able to lead, how I have stayed involved, and you'll get some suggestions on how to create and sustain successful collaborations with camps worldwide. "BuT wHaT aBoUt My BuDgEt..." We'll put the budget aside and discuss strategies for overcoming logistical challenges, aligning goals, fostering meaningful cross-cultural experiences and getting your association bought in. This may be perfect for camp leaders looking to expand their camp's reach and bring the world to their campers. Megan Muma (YMCA Camp Algonquin)
2C - Burnout: How to Recognize and Recover	9:30 AM	Markham (Rec Center)	We work in a giving industry where we put everyone and everything before ourselves. On average 52% of US employees reported they experienced feelings of burnout in 2024. In this presentation we will take a deep dive into the causes, symptoms, and takeaways to help you begin to love the work again. Susan Coker & Andra Coberly-Webster (YMCA of Northern Colorado)
2D - Year-Round Parent Communications	9:30 AM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	Parent communication doesn't end at closing camp fire. Connect with parents, keep campers engaged and extend camp life throughout the entire year. Using social media, email, surveys and other marketing and engagement tactics, we will discuss how and when staff should be connecting with parents pre and post summer. Don't let those embers cool down! Engaging camper families is a year-round job. Gigi Calvache Hernandez (Sherman Lake YMCA) Jesus Castaño (YMCA Camp Kern)
2E - Supporting International Staff for a Successful Camp Experience	9:30 AM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	This session will focus on practical strategies to create an inclusive and supportive environment for international staff, ensuring they feel valued, integrated, and empowered throughout their camp experience. We'll explore cultural awareness, communication tips, and practical support for navigating a new environment, as well as ways to foster teamwork and celebrate diversity. Participants will leave with tools to help international staff thrive both personally and professionally, building a stronger, more cohesive team for a successful camp season.

2F - It Can Really Happen to You - Lessons from the ACA Crisis Hotline Team	9:30 AM	Nature Center (Kellogg)	<p>Anna Danila (ACA)</p> <p>Every summer camps face tough situations, including camper and staff mental health issues, child abuse, challenging parents, staff judgment, healthcare procedures, staff pregnancy and others. In this session, we'll share the biggest areas of concern that raise tough questions facing camps using American Camp Association's Crisis Hotline data from the previous season. Learn about how other camps managed some of these issues, gain resources, explore lessons learned, and update your plans for emergencies and crisis. Practice with real case studies and explore lessons learned, spend time considering your policies, practices, and what you can do to plan for emergencies.</p>
3A - The Day Camp Director: Perspectives & Possibilities	11:00 AM	Multipurpose Studio (Rec Center)	<p>Dustin Slaughter (Mankato YMCA) E Hennies (Lake County YMCA)</p> <p>Calling all new and upcoming Day Camp Directors! In this session, you will get tangible takeaways (schedules, templates, theme ideas, etc.) to enhance your Day Camp for years to come! Dustin & E both have the same goal while running Day Camp but accomplish that goal in different ways! Join them as we go through all the topics that make a Day Camp successful!</p>
3B - Navigating Strategy vs Tactics	11:00 AM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	<p>Laura Mahan (Y-USA)</p> <p>As camp leaders, we can get caught in the trap of just thinking about next summer. This can also cause us to be solution forward – solving problems that we have not really identified. If camps want to be successful and sustainable, leader have to learn the difference between tactics and strategies becoming solution neutral until the problem is clearly identified. Leaders who are able to distinguish between strategy and tactics understand the difference between being busy and being impactful and how to ask powerful questions.</p>
3C - Trauma Informed Camping	11:00 AM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	<p>Sean Carr & Emily Carr (YMCA Camp Nissokone)</p> <p>Camps are places of incredible inclusion, acceptance and opportunity for campers from very diverse backgrounds. Some of our campers that can be hardest to understand are kids coming from trauma permeated backgrounds or home lives. The pain, fear, worry, and anxiety traumatic experiences drive can express and communicate itself in challenging ways, including behavior. As a former camp program director, and current social worker and therapist who concentrated on childhood and developmental trauma, we believe camps are a unique opportunity to experience many of the most important healing factors for kids in pain- but that can only happen if our camp professionals understand developmental trauma, and know what helps.</p>
3D - Building Culture at Your Camp	11:00 AM	Nature Center (Kellogg)	<p>Zach Klipsch (Sherman Lake YMCA)</p> <p>Culture eats strategy for breakfast. It's a quote heard often, but how do you actually implement it? This presentation will give you some tactics to build a strong, positive culture at your camp. Be prepared to think deeply about your team and what you can do to make it the strongest team possible.</p>
3E - 16 Things I Learned This Year	11:00 AM	Pilates Studio (Rec Center)	<p>Bernard Rocca (McGaw YMCA Camp Echo)</p> <p>2024 was Bernard's 11th season as the Executive Director at Camp Echo and, just like the first 10, he learned a lot. Being a Camp Director requires a growth mindset and curiosity to keep learning about all aspects of a camp operation. Bernard will share a laundry list of things that he learned this past year and how they are deepening Camp Echo's impact. With examples ranging from improved supply storage to credit card fees and fishing dock railings to forest carbon offsets, they'll be something for everyone.</p>
3F - Making A World of Impact: Global YMCA Camping	11:00 AM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	<p>International Participants (Y-Global)</p> <p>Join us for an enlightening workshop focused on exploring YMCA camps and camping programs from around the world, including Serbia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Moldova, Peru, Chile, and the broader Latin American region. This workshop will provide a unique opportunity to learn about the diverse approaches and innovative practices used in these international camps.</p>

Rising Stars: Sponsor Fair Pre-Meeting	12:15 PM	Lobby (Rec Center)	
Lunch and Sponsor Fair	12:15 PM	Gymnasium (Rec Center)	This is a roaming lunch to visit with sponsors who provide services to the camping industry.
Rising Stars Meeting	1:30 PM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	
4A - Responding to Reports of Physicality Between Bunkmates	2:30 PM	Multipurpose Studio (Rec Center)	Rena Paul (The Paul Firm PLLC) Camps are increasingly fielding reports of physical conduct between bunkmates, including intimate touching, simulated sex, and sexual teasing and aggression. This conduct poses legitimate risks to camps. It can have a harmful impact on the affected campers and camp culture and can trigger legal reporting requirements, disciplinary action, and the need for difficult conversations with campers, staff, and parents. In this session, experienced camp legal advisors will discuss the risks camp administrators face when a report of this nature is made and share best practices for addressing these situations in a way that safeguards a joyful camp experience for all its campers.
4B - Resilient Camp Landscapes for a Sustainable Future	2:30 PM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	Amy Syverson-Schaffer & Sandy Bliesener (Landscape Forms, Inc) Join two landscape architects to shine a light on the power of your camp site to contribute to an authentically sustainable future for all. We'll discuss the landscape's relationship to healthy air, water, species and systems: touring proven frameworks and hearing stories of practical camp applications.
4C - Behavioral Health Support: A Case Study	2:30 PM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	Melanie Mellinger & Alex Kretzinger (Des Moines YMCA Camp) Join us as we share our journey of creating a more inclusive camp environment through our partnership with KultureCity and the development of our Wellness Team. We weren't the first camp to partner with KultureCity, but we've seen firsthand the impact this organization has on camps. Our Wellness Team, two seasonal staff with backgrounds in psychology, supports campers' social and emotional growth while keeping open communication with families. From our first year's lessons to incorporating NAMI resources, we've gained valuable insights into meeting campers' needs and adapting our wellness approach. Join us for an honest look at the evolving journey of implementing wellness initiatives in camp, the ongoing adjustments that keep us growing.
4D - Office Politics: How to Survive a Multi-Generational Office Environment Without Losing Your Cool	2:30 PM	Nature Center (Kellogg)	Shelby Sever (YMCA Camp Tumbleson Lake) Navigating office politics- everyone's least favorite topic but an incredibly needed skill. Join the conversation to learn how to work your way through upper management, middle management, entry level, and anything in between. What's the best way to advocate for yourself? How do you get the most out of your budget? What should you say to that coworker who mildly irritates you? Bring your questions, bring your office woes, and let's find solutions!
4E - Exploring American Camp Association Resources	2:30 PM	Pilates Studio (Rec Center)	Anna Danila (ACA) The American Camp Association is a community of camp professionals who, for over 100 years, have joined together to share our knowledge and experience and to ensure the quality of camp programs. Join us to learn about resources your camp can lean on this summer. We will explore resources in online training, in-person conferences, research, professional development, staffing, connection to your camp peers, and more! We also increase your knowledge of the voluntary, peer-review ACA Accreditation program and the new Character at Camp grant initiative including the grant application process, opening in mid- January.
4F - Better than You Found It - Influencing Staff and Career Sustainability	2:30 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	Brian Miller (YMCA Camp Timbers) None of us will be at our camps forever, and leaving camp better than you found it may be an aspirational goal. This session isn't about leaving your camp. It's about influencing and improving your camp with a focus on two areas: staff professionalism and career sustainability. Learn about one camp director's 9-year process to boost staff professionalism, to influence policies to make the job more sustainable, and generally find ways to make working at camp work better for him and his family. Leave with tangible steps and practical examples of ways you might do likewise.

5A - How to Market When Attention Spans are 3 Seconds	3:30 PM	Gymnasium (Rec Center)	<p>Dan Weir (Day Camp Community)</p> <p>The essence of a camp experience can be challenging to express. Communication is key in every relationship, including camp families. Now on social media, it is documented that the attention span is around 3 seconds long. To keep a person's attention, all posts, images, and videos must fall into one of three categories: educational, empowering, or entertaining. We will talk about best practices with social media, crafting a call-to-action, and create FOMO (fear of missing out) for every camper and staff.</p>
5B -	3:30 PM	Multipurpose Studio (Rec Center)	<p>Shelby Sever (YMCA Camp Tumbleson Lake)</p> <p>Tell me about a time... you wanted to bolster your interview process to recruit the best candidates for your camp and mission? No need to reinvent the wheel - join us to learn about our behavioral-based interview methodology, the real-time outcomes you could experience for yourself, and our upcoming applications you could be using this season, including the green flag answers we identified and what red flags you should listen for. Learn how to adopt this model with full access to our resources!</p>
5C- Evening Programs: Intentional Design for Lasting Impact	3:30 PM	Markham (Rec Center)	<p>Alex Kretzinger (Des Moines YMCA Camp)</p> <p>At the end of a long day filled with exciting activities and fun, too often camps lose steam and miss out on one of the best opportunities to make lasting impacts: Evening Programs. While opening campfires and closing programs are pillars of Y Camping, the nights between are also filled with potential for lasting, meaningful character development, relationship building and mission advancement. This session will focus on using intentional design to help finish each day of summer camp with impactful, meaningful programs that enhance your campers' experiences.</p>
5D - Camp Management through an Academic Lens	3:30 PM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	<p>Ben Wittig (YMCA Camp Roger & YMCA Mill Hollow)</p> <p>Managing camp is a dynamic, every changing environment - no two seasons look the same. However, we can look to apply academic principles from Recreation Management studies to create consistency and structure to how we operate with our staff, customers, and community.</p>
5E - Heads On Beds: the science of selling camp	3:30 PM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	<p>Susan Coker & Andra Coberly-Webster (YMCA of Northern Colorado)</p> <p>Think outside the mailbox! There are numerous ways to sell your camp to new and former families. We go through a traditional camp marketing mix while also sharing new and fun ways to engage and connect with potential campers and parents. Bring your ideas to share! How are you filling cabins?</p>
5F - National PIT Crew Summer Projects	3:30 PM	Nature Center (Kellogg)	<p>KJ Williams, Miki Serin, Morgan Holle & Shayla Mcnear (Professionals in Training (PIT) Crew Members)</p> <p>Members of National PIT (Professionals In Training) cohort 2024 will share their summer project experiences as emerging camp leaders. Discussion will include career development for campers, supporting different generations of staff, seasonal staff coaching, and more! We look forward to connecting, sharing, and working together to further enhance Y Camping!</p>
Affinity Group Round Tables - BIPOC	5:00 PM	Multipurpose Studio (Rec Center)	<p>The affinity group session at the camp conference offers a space for individuals to connect within specific communities, including LGBTQ+, BIPOC, women, parents, and emerging leaders/executive panels. Participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences, build a sense of community, and discuss strategies for supporting these groups within the camp environment. The session is open to anyone interested in learning more about fostering inclusive, supportive spaces for these communities at camp, whether as a member or an ally. The session will specifically address experiences of BIPOC folks, led by Frizzy Stuhr of the YMCA Camp Kitaki and Adriana Stanovici of the Y-USA .</p>

Affinity Group Round Tables - LGBTQ+	5:00 PM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	The affinity group session at the camp conference offers a space for individuals to connect within specific communities, including LGBTQ+, BIPOC, women, parents, and emerging leaders/executive panels. Participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences, build a sense of community, and discuss strategies for supporting these groups within the camp environment. The session is open to anyone interested in learning more about fostering inclusive, supportive spaces for these communities at camp, whether as a member or an ally. The session will specifically address experiences of LGBTQ+ folks, led by Isabel Schneider of the Old Colony YMCA.
Affinity Group Round Tables - Women in Camping	5:00 PM	Markham Room (Rec Center)	The affinity group session at the camp conference offers a space for individuals to connect within specific communities, including LGBTQ+, BIPOC, women, parents, and emerging leaders/executive panels. Participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences, build a sense of community, and discuss strategies for supporting these groups within the camp environment. The session is open to anyone interested in learning more about fostering inclusive, supportive spaces for these communities at camp, whether as a member or an ally. The session will specifically address experiences of women in camping, led by Jenna Johnson of YMCA Camp Greenville and Sarah Hooper of YMCA Camp Carson.
Affinity Group Round Tables - Executive Director Panel for Emerging Professionals	5:00 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	The affinity group session at the camp conference offers a space for individuals to connect within specific communities, including LGBTQ+, BIPOC, women, parents, and emerging leaders/executive panels. Participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences, build a sense of community, and discuss strategies for supporting these groups within the camp environment. The session is open to anyone interested in learning more about fostering inclusive, supportive spaces for these communities at camp, whether as a member or an ally. The session will be a panel of executive directors, answering questions about their experience and practical advice for emerging leaders, facilitated by Drew Kelley of YMCA Camp Bernie and Eddie Norgard of the YMCA of Metro Fort Worth.
Affinity Group Round Tables - Neurodiversity	5:00 PM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	The affinity group session at the camp conference offers a space for individuals to connect within specific communities, including LGBTQ+, BIPOC, women, parents, and emerging leaders/executive panels. Participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences, build a sense of community, and discuss strategies for supporting these groups within the camp environment. The session is open to anyone interested in learning more about fostering inclusive, supportive spaces for these communities at camp, whether as a member or an ally. The session will specifically address experiences of neurodiverse folks, led by Megan Muma of the YMCA Camp Algonquin
Affinity Group Round Tables - Parents	5:00 PM	Nature Center (Kellogg)	The affinity group session at the camp conference offers a space for individuals to connect within specific communities, including LGBTQ+, BIPOC, women, parents, and emerging leaders/executive panels. Participants will have the opportunity to share their experiences, build a sense of community, and discuss strategies for supporting these groups within the camp environment. The session is open to anyone interested in learning more about fostering inclusive, supportive spaces for these communities at camp, whether as a member or an ally. The session will specifically address experiences of parents in camping, led by Brian Miller of YMCA Camp Timbers and Jordan Baxter of YMCA Camp Jackson.
Dinner	6:00 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	
Rising Stars: Mentor Dinner	6:00 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	
Silent Auction Ends	6:59 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	Final bids accepted until 7pm!
YMCA Service Auction	7:00 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	

Reflection	8:00 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	<p>Our Service Auction is raising funds for YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly to assist in their continued recovery efforts from damage sustained during Hurricane Helene. Greg Hall, VP of Mission Impact at YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly joins us this evening for our reflection.</p> <p>Greg has been with the YMCA since joining the Tri-City YMCA Leaders Club in 1977 in Northern Kentucky. He had held many positions with Y's in Cincinnati, Lexington, KY, Atlanta, New Orleans, Winston Salem, and Charlotte. While out of front line camp leadership for a few years, Greg fondly recalls his time at Camp Ernst in the 80's. He also provided 8 years of camp training and other mission aligned work as a senior YMCA consultant with Redwoods... (yes he is the shark guy in the blood borne pathogens video). His career is noted by a lifetime commitment to the YMCA's service to teens. In every aspect of the work, camps, clubs, employment.... Greg has championed keeping teenagers fully engaged. This year will mark his 48 consecutive year attending YMCA Blue Ridge Leaders School and he is winding down his directorship of that event in 2026. He will remain as the VP of Mission Impact as they navigate the multiyear hurricane rebuilding chapter. If you see him staring at a screen...He is most likely watching endless loops of his favorite show, The West Wing, or listening to the music of his dear friend David Wilcox.</p>
Thursday, January 16th			
Coffee & Conversation	7:15 AM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	Coffee Rescue, a beverage truck, will be parked in front of Kellogg from 7am - 10:30am. They accept cash or card for all of your caffeine emergencies!
Rising Stars Meeting	7:30 AM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	
Breakfast	7:45 AM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	
Morning Inspiration	8:45 AM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	Join YMCA Camp Kitaki, located in Nebraska, for a peek into how we lead our non-denominational, morals-based morning inspiration during summer camp. Camp Kitaki is an overnight camp hosting approximately 300 campers per week for ten weeks of the summer. Camp Kitaki also facilitates camper, teen, Outdoor Education and Retreats programs year-round. Come prepared to sing along and join in the fun!
Keynote #2 - Julia C Rock	9:30 AM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	<p>In the keynote Recharge Your Spark: Lead the Way without Losing Yourself, attendees will explore how to prevent burnout and challenge the "martyr mindset" by emphasizing that overwork and overwhelm don't serve the mission; healthy leaders set healthy examples.</p> <p>By taking care of themselves, leaders can sustain their passion, lead with clarity, and inspire both their teams and campers.</p> <p>Through this session, attendees will learn how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redefine self-care to fuel long-term energy and leadership effectiveness - Reconnect with your why to stay motivated and grounded, even during challenging seasons - Model healthy habits and prioritize balance to positively impact your team and set the right example
Group Photo	10:30 AM	Basketball Gym (Rec Center)	
6A - Every Day Feels Like Friday! Unraveling the Burnout Dilemma for Teams	11:15 AM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	<p>Julia C. Rock (Keynote Speaker)</p> <p>Research shows that a staggering 60% of the global workforce now experiences emotional detachment at work. The World Health Organization also highlights that anxiety and depression cost the global economy over \$1 trillion in lost productivity annually. This session is tailor-made to equip attendees with the essential tools to exhibit heightened empathy, re-engage, and inspire their teams, while fostering workplace cultures that kindle enthusiasm rather than burnout.</p>

6B - When Staff Say 'I Just Don't Wanna' – A New Wave of Camp Counselors	11:15 AM	Multipurpose Studio (Rec Center)	Eddie Norgard (YMCA of Metro Fort Worth) & Ben Green (Greater Grand Rapids YMCA) This session addresses the evolving attitudes, work expectations, and challenges in managing today's generation of camp counselors. With shifting dynamics in workplace culture and mental health priorities, some staff may appear disengaged, unmotivated, or reluctant to take on traditional camp responsibilities. This session will explore the root causes behind these behaviors and equip camp leaders with tools to re-engage, inspire, and retain this new wave of counselors. Be prepared - this session will challenge your conventional ways of supervising staff!
6C - Yoga as a State of Being - Radically Slowing Down at Camp	11:15 AM	Markham (Rec Center)	Jordan Baxter (YMCA Camp Jackson) No poses needed. In this session you'll learn a variety of restorative practices that can help everyone at camp from Directors to frontline staff to campers feel safer, calmer, more rested, and more grateful. We always say "camp is different" it's not like the "real world." Come learn about another way we can cultivate a culture that is meaningfully different. Discover how radically slowing down, providing time to rest, practicing gratitude, breathing and mindfulness can improve your camp culture, foster wellness, and reduce burnout at all levels. From quick tips you can practice yourself, to rituals and routines you can adopt as a community - you'll walk away with a notebook full of new ideas to keep yourself and your camp feeling healthier and less stressed.
6D - The Dichotomies of Camp	11:15 AM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	Jason Smith (YMCA Camp Kitaki) In this discussion activity based session, participants will explore the concept of camp and how we intentionally build incredible outcomes in our programming. Utilizing two opposing ideas of camping organizational theory, and taking them to extremes, we will engage in deep conversations to better understand the choices we make in our camp operations, and how they may be influencing the experience and outcomes of our campers and staff. Participants should expect to walk away with a different lens on camp that will help them better make decisions on camp programming to reach positive goals and outcomes.
6E - Branding within the Brand	11:15 AM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	Melanie Mellinger (Des Moines YMCA Camp) As YMCA camps we are all a part of the overall YMCA brand, from the cache fonts to the color schemes, it is important that we recognize that this branding is essential for fostering a sense of familiarity and unity within our organization. However, YMCA camping offers unique programs, evoking different emotions and connections compared to the traditional gym side of our associations. In this session, we will explore the concept of "finding your brand within a brand," and why identifying a way to portray the impact that your camp brings is an important piece of the marketing puzzle. Join us as we delve into identifying your camp's distinctive qualities and learn effective strategies for showcasing them across all marketing platforms. Enhance your camp's presence while staying true to the YMCA mission!
6F - Tech Tips for Camps without an IT Department	11:15 AM	Nature Center (Kellogg)	Joel Sieplinga (Camp Tecumseh YMCA) Technology Advice from a guy who still puts two spaces after a period. Sharing software and hardware tools that I and others at Camp Tecumseh use in an effort to stay organized and efficient. Includes both simple/free tools you can use now, as well as larger, campwide solutions.
6G - Unstructure Networking Area	11:15 AM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	
Lunch	12:30 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	
Rising Stars Lunch	12:30 PM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	
Recreation - Tour 1: Program Tour	1:30 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	Join this 45 minute tour to see all the different activities and facilities at Sherman Lake Y, and learn how each SLY program uses the space in a different capacity. Meet in the front of Kellogg Hall to start, either at 1:30 or 2:30pm. Led by: Gigi Calvache and Alex Kinney

Recreation - Tour 2: Facilities / Operation Tour	1:30 PM	Lobby (Rec Center)	Join this 45 minute tour to learn more about all the behind the scenes areas that keep Sherman Lake YMCA running smoothly! You'll tour our kitchen, maintenance areas, and various facilities, as well as learn about some of the history of SLY, the more innovative projects like our solar panels, and more! Pending the weather conditions, we may do this tour in the Camp van. Meet in the front of the Recreation Center to start, either at 1:30 or 2:30pm. Led by: Zach Klipsch, Brian Julian, and Amanda Redebaugh
Recreation - High Ropes Course Adventure	1:30 PM	Basketball Gym (Rec Center)	Sherman Lake Y's indoor high ropes course is one of its most unique and exhilarating program spaces. Come participate or cheer on others in our ropes course that is (literally) above the basketball court in the Recreation Center. Please wear comfortable clothes and closed toe shoes if you plan on participating. Led by: Cassie Whately
Recreation - Pickleball	1:30 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	Everyone has heard of pickleball, but do you know how to play? Come get an introductory lesson and try your hand at a few rounds, with our expert Rec Center staff! You'll leave learning more about the supplies needed, basic rules, and see if it's something you can implement at your Camp! Led by: Sheila Jeske and Sally Kenyon
Recreation - Snacktivity and MACC Kahoot	1:30 PM	Nature Center (Kellogg)	Come get a snack and see how Sherman Lake Y implemented "snacktivity" with Day Campers this past summer. (Pssst, if you get grant money for educational activities, these are perfect activities to count for it). We'll also have a Kahoot game running with MACC facts and history! Led by: Paula Vande Streek
Michigan YMCA Camp Network	1:30 PM	Markham Room (Rec Center)	The Michigan YMCA Camp Network will meet in the Markham Room in the Rec Center at 1:30pm. All camp staff at Michigan Camps are welcome to attend!
MAYCI Meeting	1:30 PM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	Starting at 1:30 in the Conference Room, the MAYCI board will have their regularly scheduled meeting. All are welcome to attend! Bobby Thomas (YMCA Camp Cullen)
7A - Cultivating Camp Culture: Strategies (that have worked for me) for a Safe and Supportive Staff Environment	3:30 PM	Gymatorium (Rec Center)	Join me as we dive into the essentials of cultivating a vibrant, supportive overnight and year-round camp culture that encourages personal growth, lasting friendships, and inclusivity. I'll share some of the practical strategies that have worked for me to create an environment where campers and staff feel valued and connected. We'll discuss the importance of camp vernacular, team-building practices, inclusive programming, and ways to foster resilience, empathy, and joy—transforming camp into a memorable experience, starting with your staff team. Whether you're new to camp leadership or a seasoned pro, this session provides some actionable steps that may help in enhancing your camp culture from day one.
7B - Parents are our Partners - Our Communication Strategy	3:30 PM	Multipurpose Studio (Rec Center)	Megan Kneifl & Olivia Nelson (YMCA Camp Kitaki) Parents are an integral part of our camp community, and how we communicate with them before, during and after their camper's experience has an incredible impact. We'll share with you how we actively utilize these support networks to help make campers' experiences as successful as possible, while working with parents to share tools and resources from their child's experiences outside of camp. We'll share our peaks and pitfalls, tools we use to train our seasonal leadership staff on connecting with parents, ways we share success plans among our summer team, and what we have learned along the way (and are still learning!)
7C - Character at Camp	3:30 PM	Markham Room (Rec Center)	Karen Christopherson (YMCA Camp Manito-wish) Nicole Deir (Sherman Lake YMCA) What does character look like at your camp? Let's delve into how you define character at your camp and explore ways to intentionally integrate it into your daily program. We'll share simple resources and facilitate discussions to help you develop your program plan for the upcoming summer. Bring a team member to brainstorm and leave with a concrete plan!

7D - Building Your Network (Association Relationships 2.0)	3:30 PM	Conference Room (Kellogg)	Laura Mahan (Y-USA) Life is a yes and proposition. We will focus on the benefits and challenges of our powerful camping peer network and how augment it with building networks within your association/community. It is important to have a well rounded network that includes camp peers, your camp/association leaders, and subject matter experts. Not only can understanding yes/and enhance your effectiveness as a leader, it can also open doors for you to be an influencer to leaders outside of camping. Great leaders build powerful networks.
7E - 496 to 1052: Camp Marketing Strategies and Lessons Learned	3:30 PM	Art Studio (Kellogg)	Brian Miller (YMCA Camp Timbers) This is a deep dive into one camp's approach to marketing. YMCA Camp Timbers has experienced summer overnight camp enrollment growth from fewer than 500 campers in 2015 to more than 1,000 campers in 2024. Join Brian, as he shares the marketing-related philosophies, strategies, and processes that contributed to this growth. Specific marketing and communication examples will be shared. Spoiler alert - rather than any ground-breaking original ideas expect a combination of concepts gathered from and inspired by many others throughout the camping industry and beyond. A copy of their most-recent camp marketing plan will be discussed and shared.
7F - Decision Making Matrix	3:30 PM	Nature Center (Kellogg)	Brad Murray (Camp Wood YMCA) The average human makes 35,000 decisions a day. With that many, how do you go about making the best ones for your camp? This session will dive into creating filters and tools to help you in your decisions, and the staff you supervise to make their own, freeing you up to focus on the most important elements of camp.
7G - Unstructured Networking Area	3:30 PM	Lobby (Rec Center)	
Reception	5:00 PM	Lobby (Kellogg)	Come enjoy appetizers, celebrate all you have learned this week.
Banquet, Slideshow, Reflection, and Closing	5:30 PM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	Round out your time at camp with dinner and the celebration of our week together with a closing reflection by Shannon Raab of YMCA Camp Watia. "I'm a camp enthusiast with more than 19 years of experience in the YMCA camping industry. My passion for camp was ignited in 1998 when, as an eighth grader, I was fortunate enough to attend a school overnight camping trip in Michigan. Finally, in 2005, I began my YMCA camping career as a summer camp counselor and am now an Executive Director. When I'm not at a camp, I enjoy exploring new trails in North Carolina, or searching for the next best Wacky Wednesday outfit."
Friday, January 17th			
Coffee, Goodbyes, and Grab & Go Breakfast	7:45 AM	Dining Hall (Kellogg)	Safe travels! We hope you continue to learn and network from each other! See in you in 2026!