



YMCA CAMP
KITCHIKEWANA



SOUP STRAINER

SPRING 2023

Dylan's Letter, Director, YMCA Camp Kitchikewana

Campers, Families, Alumni and Friends,

The camping team has been working hard at gearing up for this upcoming camp season. We have been blessed with an early spring and have begun opening the site.

This time of year has always been one of my favourites at camp. Leaves cover the paths, sailboats and canoes fill the Dining Hall, and our docks all are huddled together. While there are so few of us at camp, it is a unique opportunity to experience the full breadth of the National Park. Every spring, deer, fox and other wildlife explore the site. It is their playground to explore, for a time.

This time of year teaches you the importance of moments at camp. It teaches you that our time at camp can be fleeting. Slow down, experience the moment you are living in; make a new friend, comfort someone who is homesick, play gagaball for an entire Awesome Time, wake up early and watch the sunrise. Like the deer and fox, take advantage of the playground that is Camp Kitchikewana. It is yours, for a time.

While we may move on from camp, it remains a place to explore, to cherish and to learn from for future generations. We as alumni, families and staff become stewards of the land ensuring that camp's legacy may continue for future deer, fox and campers.

Take care everyone, and happy camping!

Dylan Lalande



The Dr. Bill Bryant Memorial Fund and Why it is There

In the 2022 Soup Strainer, Jim Wilgar's article reported the launching of the Dr. Bill Bryant Memorial Fund. Now some months later, the project is well on the way to raising funds for needed improvements to the Wellness Centre and upgrades to some of its medical equipment. Here is a brief report on how things are proceeding; also, an afterthought on how memories of Kitchi camping in youth inspire the alumni and friends of the camp now to work with the Y to keep Camp Kitchikewana strong and vibrant.

“The thought occurs that lots of great doctors, nurses and paramedics have served as Kitchi medic; why are we singling out Bill Bryant?”

The notion of a Bill Bryant Memorial germinated from conversations at Bill's bedside in his last days with an old Kitchi friend about how campers' medical needs are more complex now than in times past. Bill worried about these needs being met. Some of Bill's oldest Kitchi friends took his concerns to heart and started a conversation with the Y, who then got estimates amounting to about \$78,500 for the work needed. It was agreed that the alumni would raise \$60,000 from alumni and friends, and the Y's Philanthropy Department would raise the rest from foundations. The Philanthropy Department would serve as a secretariat for the alumni's fundraising. Kitchi's great friends at the Midland, Penetanguishene & District Builders Association would make an in-kind contribution. By the time we gather for an Alumni Weekend at Kitchi on September 22 -24, 2023, some of the work will be

completed, some will be in progress, and some will be imminent. We will have a quiet ceremony to put up a plaque with a picture of Doctor Bill and a brief biography. Another plaque will be added to recognize donors.

As of April 2023, the Y Philanthropy Department has commitments from foundations more than covering its share. With mainly pledges and donations from a small group of alpha donors, the alumni and friends share is up to about \$15,000. This is in spite of a slow start, because one of the organizing team had recurring illnesses over the winter months that kept him from getting going. A team of canvassers is just now beginning to reach out to the broader community.

You can pitch in by joining the team of canvassers and reaching out to a dozen or so of your Kitchi friends for a donation. You will have a detailed guide on how to be a canvasser. If you want to volunteer, please get in touch with Ed Bridge, ebbridge@generalfiltration.com. You can donate by going to the website at www.ymcasm.ca/BryantMemorial; or by phone or mail to the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka.

The thought occurs that lots of great doctors, nurses and paramedics have served as Kitchi medic; why are we singling out Bill Bryant? His friends who originated the project see Bill as an exemplar of how Kitchi camping starts the young on flourishing lives of contribution to their families, to their communities, to their profession, and back to their camp. We want to hold up Bill as a model of how “to be the best that we can ever be.”

Now, for that afterthought on what summer camp does for people like us, and why we do what we do for the camp. Dr. Elizabeth C.

Corey, Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Honors Program at Baylor University, has written an insightful article: www.firstthings.com/article/2019/12/notes-on-summer-camp. She writes as an alumna and as mother of a camper of Green Cove, a girls' camp in Asheville, NC; you could think you were reading the thoughts of a Kitchi alumna about our camp. She is full of wisdom about camp as a tradition, and she articulates things we have all thought about what camp means to us, and to the broader culture that we live in:

What I have described is not as elevated as a religion. It is not as venerable as an intellectual or moral tradition. Nonetheless, this camp experience is bounded and visible; it illuminates what traditions offer to human beings. It requires what all traditions do: that we interact with other people who share our loves and inclinations. This doing-with-others happens not just once but regularly, year after year.

And again, she writes:

The most important work takes place at camp and in places like it, with no mention of the word "tradition." We do not need to tell anyone that we are conserving something valuable. We do not need to let slip that we are forming people, giving them a group, and saving them from alienation and loneliness. We can keep secret the idea that role models will benefit them as they grow older; that constraint, order, and judgment will not hurt them but help them to flourish. We must merely go about our business with confidence, secure in the knowledge that traditions remain living possibilities and may yet serve as restorers of culture.

Ed Bridge

(YMCA Camp Kitchikewana, 1950 – 1963)



Father & Son: A conversation between Brian (Kitchi '91-'08) and Henry (Kitchi '22-Present)

Brian: Last summer was your first time at camp. What did you like about it?

Henry: I really like camp because you can go with friends (like I go with my cousins) and you can also meet new friends. Was it like that when you were a kid, or different?

Brian: I also went with my cousins, but I made a lot of good friends there, too. Many of them are still my best friends over thirty years later.

Henry: One of my favourite parts of camp is the songs at campfire. Did you sing songs around the campfire when you are a kid, too?

Brian: Yes. Campfires (especially opening and closing campfires on the Rock) were my favourite. I loved listening to the counsellors sing songs like Wish You Were Here, Country Roads, You Ain't Goin Nowhere. As a counsellor, and later as a section head and camp director, I loved playing guitar and singing to the campers. What is your favourite part of the day at camp?

Henry: I like "Awesome Time" because you get to do whatever you want, like tower jumping or art, and lots more stuff that you've done earlier in the day. I like that you get to pick what you do.

Brian: That's fun. I remember when Awesome Time was still called Free Time. Same thing, but when they changed the name to "Awesome Time" it just made it that more "awesome". Do you have a favourite camp meal?

Henry: I like the dessert "worms in dirt".

Brian: What is that?

Henry: Chocolate pudding with gummy

worms. What was your favourite meal when you were a kid?

Brian: Honestly, the food sounds like it is a lot better now than it was when I was a kid. I remember that I liked the food best on overnight canoe trips. You are going on your first overnight this summer, right? How are you feeling about it?

Henry: I am looking forward to it. I was a Waterbug last year, so I didn't get to go on a trip. I also didn't have skills – what was your favourite skill when you were a camper?

Brian: I really liked sailing. How did you like sleeping in a cabin when you were a Waterbug last summer?

Henry: I really liked sleeping in a cabin. My counsellors read books to us some times and sometimes it was just fun socializing with other kids in the cabin.

Brian: Cool. I am really excited for you to go back to camp next summer. It's my favourite place and it means so much to me that you get to enjoy it, too.

Henry: Do you think there is something special about Kitchi that other places don't have?

“...I really felt that camp felt like home and I quickly forgot about my “real home” because I was having so much fun at Kitchi.”

Brian: I do. I can't really explain it. But you know that song, "Everyday People"?

Henry: Yes.

Brian: I think there's a lot of truth to that song – Camp Kitchikewana always felt like "home" to me. Even more than my actual home did. That's kind of special, isn't it?

Henry: Ya. I feel that way too. Even though I

missed my real home a little bit when I was at camp, I really felt that camp felt like home and I quickly forgot about my “real home” because I was having so much fun at Kitchi.

Brian: Anything else you want to share?

Henry: I really liked being surrounded by nature – even including the rattlesnakes. It was really cool.

Henry Shelley is a ten-year old student from Midhurst. When he’s not at camp he likes baseball, music, skiing and skateboarding; he has a little brother named Jack.

Brian Shelley is a former camper and staff member of Camp Kitchikewana; he and his wife Maaike got married at camp in 2008

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How Part of the Island is Always with You

By Brenda French/Frenchie

I clearly remember that first day on the docks at the Delewana; waiting for the boat with my mom and dad. My thoughts were uncertain on how this would go. I really wanted to go to camp with a buddy of mine from my public school, but I had never been away from home.

Austin jumped off the boat and introduced himself to my parents. My Dad was a YMCA guy, so they had an instant connection. He looked at me and said, "you are going to love it!" Before I knew it, I was in the boat and on my way with luggage in hand. How right Austin was, as I did love my time and friends at Camp Kitchikewana, and still do today.

"Everyone seemed to be caring and supportive at Camp Kitchikewana. If you doubted yourself, the staff and other campers helped to instill confidence."

On arrival, there was the infamous swim test and cabin assignments. It was all so new and exciting. To me the counsellors all looked like models, the tuna casserole was the best I had ever tasted, and the sing songs at lunch were a WOW!!! It was a world where we were all equal and there were no cars. What a magical place.

The camp wide events were one of my favourite things. I remember that first Family Day as a junior camper. It was my job in the relay to run from the boathouse to the well, and then drink three Dixie cups of water. During that run I felt the entire team depending on me as they cheered me on, and that showed me what "team work" was about. Who knew a few years later that I

would be Bob Morton's wife and heading up the JOY Family.

A big challenge for me was to conquer the whip kick. I needed to get this to pass my next swimming level. Lloyd had a band from a tire inner tube that he put around my knees and kept me after class for days until I got it! Putting that extra effort in got me "to be the best that I could be". A few summers later, I was Water Front Director with Lloyd at boy's camp.

Sunrise water skiing with Bruce and John before the campers got up, folk festivals with Curtis at boy's camp, the end of summer play at girl's camp, and room jams in Lloyd and John's cabin, "The Icebox". So many memories that I am sure you all have from the different generations.

Everyone seemed to be caring and supportive at Camp Kitchikewana. If you doubted yourself, the staff and other campers helped to instill confidence. This later grew into leadership, so I could do the same for others along the way. At that final campfire when you wore your blanket, sang songs, and enjoyed the entertainment, you knew how lucky you were and you did not want it to end.

It did not end; the memories and skills just got used in a different way, as they will always be a part of you. That is why, in some sense, the island is always with us.

Hope to see some of you at the September Alumni Weekend. Cheers to Camp Kitchi!



New Kitchi Chapters

By Julian Swinkin

The lights are dimmed in my room and the curtains are drawn as I write this on my laptop, tapping the keys as quietly as possible. My 11-week-old baby boy is sleeping in the crib beside me, but sleep, I know, is tenuous at this young age and every nap is a careful balancing act! My wife and I spend large chunks of our time as new parents gazing at this little baby's face, imagining his life stretched out before him, trying to picture the various paths that he'll take; what kind of man will he turn into, and what will he inherit from each of us?

In these imagined trajectories, Kitchi is never excluded - camp factors into ALL of his possible lives (the only real debate being July or August...). But I've found, in fatherhood, that my whole perspective of camp has taken on a new lens and undergone a certain shift. For the first time, I'm thinking about camp as a parent! What will the counsellors be like with my son? Will he be a canoeist or sailor? Will he make friends with his cabin mates? Will he boldly touch poison ivy to prove his immunity? Will he end up in the Wellness Centre with incredible rashes up and down his forearms? Will he love pizza rolls with the same determination that I did? Will they even still serve pizza rolls?

When my wife and I found out we were pregnant last year, it was in the Spring and the world felt like it was maybe finding its footing once again after such a long time crawling through the pandemic. We were both registered to attend the Kitchi volunteer work weekend, but decided it was best for me to go solo, an island not being the ideal place to be during your first trimester. We weren't sharing our news yet, so as I walked all the familiar paths around the camp that

weekend I felt like I was carrying this secret egg with me, a little sesame seed in the palm of my hand that nobody else knew about.

Walking from the Wanakita section up to the fire pit I suddenly saw it through the eyes of my future child and I was quietly stunned by the wonder of it all! What a place to be a child! To discover the world! To experience the joys of tower jumping with your friends, walking around camp in a wet bathing suit, and smelling dinner as the bell rings. To be just a boy and to set out in a canoe for his first overnight trip! To be without parents for weeks at a time, and to share a bunkbed! To live in the woods, swim in Georgian Bay, and see the stars every night. To fall in love perhaps, and perhaps to have his heart broken.

"I'm not sure I'll be ready for the moment that I wave goodbye to him as the bus pulls out of whatever parking lot it will be in 6 years, but I know it will mean a tremendous new chapter in my own Kitchi story is beginning."

Kitchi is, on the whole, a fairly stable entity. In the last century, of course it has grown and changed, but not really all that much. And yet, we change in our own life paths, and so do our perspectives. Like many people who have called Kitchi home at one point or another, camp holds a certain magic for me that is tethered and inseparable from my own summer experiences. That perspective will of course remain with me for my whole life, but I am excited to open these new "father" eyes to the Kitchi experience as my son prepares for his own Kitchi journey; camp is, after all, for children! I'm not sure I'll be ready for the moment that I wave goodbye to him as the

bus pulls out of whatever parking lot it will be in 6 years, but I know it will mean a tremendous new chapter in my own Kitchi story is beginning. I can already feel a jolt of excitement as I imagine him being whisked out of Big Dog Channel, one hand holding his hat tightly to his head, the other gripping the rail of the barge, not knowing what adventures await him as the Main Docks come into view...



YMCA Camp Kitchikewana Wall of Distinction

In celebration of the camp's continued legacy, the Camp Kitchikewana Alumni Advisory Committee, working in consultation with the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka Camp Staff, will recognize two key contributors to the camp over each decade / era from the time of the camp's founding until now.

Any former Kitchi camper, camp staff member, or camp supporter is eligible for selection. Individuals will be selected from nominations, which meet the following criteria:

1. Embodiment of YMCA core values of kindness, integrity, inclusiveness, respect, and optimism.
2. Those who have had a profound impact on the camp, which has benefitted a wide group.
3. Those who have had a significant impact on the culture of the camp and/or the physical camp site.

The committee is seeking nominations from the following 5 eras:

- 1919-1939
- 1940-1960
- 1960-1980
- 1980 – 2000
- 2000 - 2022

The Alumni committee will accept nominations from Alumni & Friends of Camp Kitchikewana until July 1st, 2023. Nominations must be accompanied by a biography of the nominee, along with an impact statement outlining the reasons as to why the nominee should be inducted based on the criteria outlined above.

The Alumni Committee will vote on the nominees to decide on the inductees. Selections will be announced during the

Friends of Kitchi Fall Weekend –
September 22-24, 2023.

Interested parties should submit nominations by July 1st, 2023 electronically to:
dylan.lalande@sm.ymca.ca

Please send this to your Camp Kitchikewana friends so that everyone has a chance to nominate deserving members of our community for the Wall of Distinction.

Wall of Distinction

We are recognizing key contributors to the camp. Any former Kitchikewana camper, camp staff member, or camp supporter is eligible for selection. We will be inducting eight new contributors this fall.

Kitchikewana has been very lucky to have so many wonderful people invest their heart and soul into the camp. We strongly encourage you to nominate those that you feel deserve recognition.

To read about past Wall of Distinction members, please follow the link below.

ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca/ymca-camp-kitchikewana/alumni-information

YMCA Camp Kitchikewana Endowment Proposal – 2023

Camp Kitchikewana has a strong legacy of receiving charitable support through our alumni and supporters' generous efforts and gifts. As part of the 100th Celebration, we launched the Camp Kitchikewana 100th Anniversary Endowment Fund to provide permanent, annual funds to support and enhance the camper experience at YMCA Camp Kitchikewana. Interest generated by the fund is disbursed annually and is used to improve and replace program equipment and camp facilities to enhance the camper experience.

The camp is fortunate to have had program equipment to use with campers for years, but with use and time comes wear and tear. This year the advisory committee proposed the replenishment and repair of program equipment. The areas of focus included: sailing, canoeing, mountain biking, kayaking, archery and drama. Updates you will see this year will consist of the following:

- Repair canoes in our fleet
- Purchase parts needed for our Pico sailboat fleet
- Run an engaging Arts and Crafts program
- Purchase Tripping supplies and equipment
- Realize program team wish lists


With this investment into replenishing and repairing program equipment, we will be able to welcome our full capacity of campers and families back to Camp Kitchikewana sands with our best foot forward. Camp Kitchikewana is known for offering an incredible camper experience. Along with activities that promote active fun adventures, there is an opportunity for campers to focus on skill development. Thanks to the yearly endowment allowance, Camp Kitchikewana can invest back into the camp quickly, ultimately investing in campers.

If you would like to know how to contribute to Kitchikewana's Endowment Fund please reach out to: kate.meeks@sm.ymca.ca.


There is still time to give.

Please consider a gift to the Camp Kitchikewana 100th Anniversary Endowment Fund. Your generosity will allow future generations to enjoy the same experiences we did at "the camp we love and long will cherish well".

 GivingBack@sm.ymca.ca

 7315 Yonge St. #1, Innisfil, ON L9S 4V7

 [GiveToTheY.ca](https://www.givetothey.ca)

 (705) 726-9622 ext. 1450

Charitable Registration #119215119RR0001

Exciting News at Camp

It Takes a Village

We are pleased to share that the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka is supporting the following major projects at camp this spring:

- Repairing the Main Docks
- Renovating and updating our camper laundry facilities
- Repairing Wanakita, Treasure Leadership and Smitty's porches
- Painting several camper cabins

Thank you to Sitescape, Treesource Canada and the Home Depot who have had made incredible donations of materials and labour to these projects.

This work would not have been possible without the tremendous support of Joe Szolopiak and James Cammaert-Wilken, two dedicated friends of Kitchi.

Photos and updates on the projects will be provided in the Fall edition of the Soup Strainer.

Friends of Kitchi Fall Weekend 2023

We are very excited to announce that we will be hosting our first Friends of Alumni event since the 100th Anniversary in 2019. The weekend is open to any Kitchi alumni above the age of 18.

To register follow the link:

ymcacampkitchi.campbrainregistration.com

We will be taking the opportunity this Fall to commemorate the life of Dr. Bill Bryant and his legacy at camp. Through the help of generous donors, Jim Wilgar and Ed Bridge have assisted in raising funds to renovate the Wellness Center at camp.

We will be commemorating the renovated building on Saturday, September 23. Friends are welcome to camp for the day to participate in the ceremony and camp camaraderie.

We hope to see you there!

We want to hear from you. Do you have personal news, a special memory or camp related story?

The Soup Strainer wants to know!

Please reach out to us at soupstrainerinfo@gmail.com with your contributions for future editions. We look forward to hearing from you.



Call for Committee Members

The Alumni Advisory Committee is seeking new members.

Are you interested in contributing to the on-going success of Camp Kitchikewana? We are currently seeking applications for individuals to join the Alumni Advisory Committee.

The function of the committee is to provide guidance and input on matters brought forward by camp leadership. Committee members are also responsible for stewarding the mission of the Endowment Fund by reviewing and voting on expenditures proposed by the Camp.

Six spaces will become available in the fall. Members are asked to serve a 3-year term, with option of renewal at the end of their first term.

If you are interested, please email Dylan Lalande at dylan.lalande@sm.ymca.ca
Deadline for applications is June 20, 2023