

THE BIRCHBARK DECEMBER 2025

A Camp Sloane Newsletter



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CAMP SLOANE YMCA

124 Indian Mtn Rd, Lakeville, CT 06039

The Birchbark Newsletter

December 2025

www.campsloane.org



A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE

In this season of gratitude and as I immerse myself into the day-to-day work of camp, it has been easy to feel deeply appreciative for the key ingredients that make Camp Sloane such an incredibly wonderful place.

It's our talented leadership staff who embody dedication and commitment all year long and who share a collective passion for camp that is infectious. It's the summer staff already excited to return and create an engaging camper experience every single day. It's the parents and families who choose Camp Sloane and who entrust us with their children so that we can help each child grow and thrive while enjoying all that camp has to offer.

It's the Board of Directors whose volunteer leadership helps ensure our mission has the resources it needs. Most importantly, it's the campers who show what friendship, kindness, and character look like with every activity, adventure, and interaction.

Even though we are entering the throws of winter, the excitement for summer 2026 couldn't be greater. Our commitment to providing best-in-class programming runs deep, and everything we do over these next few months is with the goal that all children who spend time at camp will have a safe, fun, and impactful experience. We can't wait to see you there.

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WELCOME TO THE FAMILY

On November 10, Ru, Aaron, and Leo welcomed their newest addition, Winifred Frances Burke.

Everyone is happy and healthy, and baby Winnie can't wait to meet you all next summer!



HELP US REACH OUR YEAR END FUNDRAISING GOAL

\$396,476

\$382,380

In 2025 we provided over 400 campers with some form of financial assistance. We would not be able to do this without your help. We are just **\$14,096** away from reaching our end of year fundraising goal, which will ensure that no camper is turned away in 2026. Change a child's life and make your donation [here](#).



MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE... (con't.)

Over the last couple of weeks, I have been reminded of just how incredible the broader Camp Sloane family is. I have heard from board members, alumni, and parents, and the love and enthusiasm for Camp is so strong.

As an alumna camper, former counselor, former board member, and now Interim CEO,

these messages bring me such joy.

Your support of Camp Sloane makes everything we do possible, and so I express my deepest thank you for believing in our mission and for your generosity. I look forward to communicating more with all of you in the new year.

We hope you enjoy this latest Birchbark and that you are as excited as we for all that is ahead for the summer. Best wishes for

a joyous and peaceful holiday season!

Warmest regards,

Gina Lucas
Interim CEO



OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

GIVE TIME

Sign up for Volunteer Weekend to help us get camp ready for the summer. We have plenty of jobs and different tasks for all ages, whether you are feeling strong and want to put up some tents; you'd rather spend the weekend getting our staff cabins ready; or you want to do some organizing and set up the camp store with all the new merch.

April 25-27.

All food & lodging provided.

Register for the weekend [here](#).

GIVE VOICE

Did you know you can get a referral credit of up to \$150 per camper you refer?

Tell your friends about Camp Sloane and all the amazing experiences they could enjoy here in summer 2026.

Fill out a referral form [here](#).

GIVE A GIFT

Take a look at our [Amazon wishlist](#) or get in touch with us to find out what other items we're looking for this year.

Email us [here](#).



ENROLLMENT UPDATES FOR SUMMER 2026

Camp is filling faster than ever before! [Save your space today!](#)

DAY CAMP

Our Day Camp is so incredibly popular, so we have expanded our capacity to allow for even more kids to enjoy the summer here! Every age group across all of the sessions have less than 15 spaces open. Sessions C & D have even less spaces available – waitlists will start in January!

OVERNIGHT CAMP

New families are registering and that means that spaces are quickly filling up! The Sessions that we are watching closely to fill first are:

Session 3 Hill campers

Session 4 Valley campers

We have added a LEAD program during Session 1

With the high interest in our 11th grade leadership program, we've opened up another Session!

Session 3 LEAD is full for Girls+, Session 2 has 1 space open for Girls+ and Session 4 has 1 space open for Boys+.

ALUMNI PROFILE: VIOLET PIPER

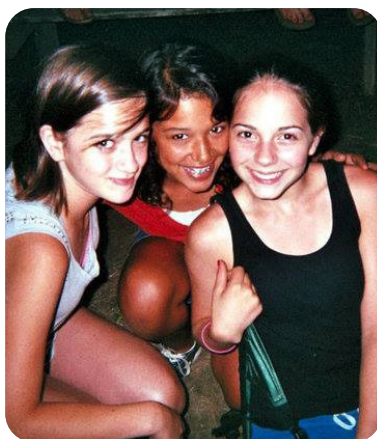
I arrived at Sloane as a twelve-year-old terrified of the dark and quiet. That first night was hard, but every one after felt perfect. I still make my husband do vespers with me; I sometimes miss my bug net.

I came up through the LEAD program, was once a (mediocre at best) Junior Counselor, and years later returned as a Village Director, Hill Director, and finally Summer Assistant Director. Nothing was more fun or fulfilling to me than spending my summer at Sloane, but by that time, I was pursuing a master's and hadn't even considered a career in camping.

About a year ago, Ru encouraged me to apply to the first-ever class of the [Camp Career Accelerator Program](#). Alongside two other fellows, I spent this past summer bouncing between five camps across the country, asking a thousand questions, learning from remarkable leaders, and stealing every good idea I came across. Part of me worried I'd find camps that made Sloane look behind the times – that I'd discover we'd missed some crucial system, resource, or philosophy about child development.

Instead, the experience only made me prouder of where I came from and of everything Sloane has achieved over the last hundred years as an independent, nonprofit Y camp. KAOS, Eventide, Oval – our magic is so moving and unique.

Last month, I joined Camps Kenwood and Evergreen as the new Program Director. I learned everything I know from Ru, Rhino, Bear, Dani, and a handful of counselors who probably thought they hadn't made a dent. Sloane is a pillar of my personhood – the best dent I've got!



L-R: Violet, Chanel, Cali (Seniors, 2010)



ALUMNI REUNION

At the end of November we took a trip down to New York City for our 4th annual Alumni Reunion. We were joined by a great crew of alumni from various different Sloane generations, who had many stories to tell of their camp memories.



Opening Campfire, 2015



Dani and I (Oval, judging The Big Cheer, 2022)

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIALS



REGISTER AS A SLOANE ALUMNI

Join our Alumni database to be kept up to date with all future camp news and information – register [here](#).

We also have an [Alumni Facebook group](#) where you can connect with fellow Sloanies!

A YEAR OF SLOANE IN 2026

JANUARY

January 10–11
Staff Retreat

FEBRUARY



Feb 1
Family Camp
registration opens

Date TBD
Instagram Live

MARCH

March 4
Online Info
Session

APRIL



May 1–31
Spring Fundraiser

May 1–3
Volunteer Weekend

May 3
Open House

JUNE



June 7
Open House

June 28 / June 29
Session 1 / DC Session A

JULY



July 12 / July 13
Session 2 / DC Session B

July 26 / July 27
Session 3 / DC Session C

AUGUST



August 9 / August 10
Session 4 / DC Session D

August 24
DC Session E

SEPTEMBER



SEPT 4–7
Family Camp

OCTOBER



October 1
2027 Registration
opens

NOVEMBER

November 10
Camp T-Shirt Day

Date TBD
Alumni Reunion

DECEMBER

December 1
Giving Tuesday

December 2 – 31
End of Year Campaign