

THE BIRCHBARK DECEMBER 2024



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT*
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CAMP SLOANE YMCA

124 Indian Mtn Rd, Lakeville, CT 06039

The Birchbark Newsletter

December 2024

www.campsloane.org

A Camp Sloane Newsletter



LOOKING BACK AT 2024



Paul "Bear" Bryant
Executive Director / CEO

As the year draws to a close, I like to reflect on our progress as a camp. When you are in the moment or running the camp program it is often hard to see the amazing things happening all around you. It is only when the fields, woods, villages and program areas fall silent and the camp enters what can be best described as "hibernation mode," that I am fully able to take stock in what we have accomplished over the past year.

This year we served over 1,100 campers in our sleepaway and day camp programs – it was the third best year for enrollment in the last 20 years. 325 of those campers were here due to the generosity of others. So far, we have raised over \$300,000 this year in donations and grants. We are well on our way to our goal of \$327,000. These funds not only help campers who cannot afford the full cost of camp but also help make camp great for everyone by improving the camp facility.

One of the priorities of our strategic plan is to create the best environment possible with premier buildings and facilities. One of the tasks which supports this goal is for us to design clean, safe (private) and accessible bathrooms and changing spaces that promote inclusion. In 2023, we received a matching grant to help us renovate the LEAD shower house and make the facility Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. The grant also helped us to add features to the facility which greatly increased the privacy in the toilet stalls and showers. We received another matching grant this year to do the same for the Valley Senior and Student shower houses. As we speak, they are putting the finishing touches on the buildings and they will be open for summer 2025.

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THE END OF AN ERA

This month we say farewell to Chris Wadsworth who, after an impressive 43 years at Sloane, will be retiring at the end of the year. We owe a lot to Chris, his hard work and dedication has kept this place going, and we're going to miss him a lot. We know we'll be staying in touch though – after all, he knows all of camp's secrets!



HELP US REACH OUR YEAR END FUNDRAISING GOAL

\$323,000

\$298,567

In 2024 we provided 325 campers with some form of financial assistance. We would not be able to do this without your help. We are just \$24,433 away from reaching our end of year fundraising goal, which will ensure that no camper is turned away in 2025. Change a child's life and make your donation [here](#).



LOOKING BACK... (con't.)

We have applied for another matching grant for 2025 to do the same to the Pioneer/Junior Hill shower house next fall. It is our hope that all village shower houses will be renovated in this fashion in the next four years.

Another issue we are tackling this year is to do a major overhaul to the septic system near the Logan triangle (A.K.A. the day camp drop off area located at the bottom of the hill). This system was designed as an evaporative system which, by design, is not the most nasally appealing on some days. This project will

change the system from an evaporative one to a system which is completely enclosed. We hope to have the system up and running sometime in 2025. This will solve a decades old issue which has offended the olfactory senses of Sloanes dating back more than a half century!

Looking back on 2024, it has been an eventful year at Sloane. It was a year that saw nearly \$500,000 invested in capital improvements at camp. We welcomed a new Food Service Company this past year and the food was great! We are looking forward to working with them again in 2025. It was also a year in which we made

significant strides in meeting our strategic plan goals.

Going forward, our enrollment numbers are ahead of last year at this time. Note: if you haven't signed up for Day Camp yet, better get a move on. We have already sold 573 sessions of the 605 available! Also, like last year, there will be waiting lists for some villages in sleep away camp. I am really looking forward to 2025 and hope that you will be joining us for another great year at Sloane.

See you 'round the campfire,

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 2025.

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 2025

Camp is filling faster than ever before!

DAY CAMP

With the youngest age groups already full in some sessions, Day Camp only has a handful of spaces open across all ages and dates - we are currently at 98% of capacity! If you are one of the first on the waitlist, it is still likely that a spot will open up... we'll contact you when a space becomes available.

OVERNIGHT CAMP

For summer 2025 we are making a change in our enrollment process. We are registering campers in two groups, 'younger' and 'older'. 'Younger', rising 4th-7th grades, will be placed in Pioneer and Junior villages. 'Older', rising 8th-10th grades, will be placed in Senior & Student Villages.

Sessions 2 & 3 are going to be the first to fill, with the older (8th-10th) Hill villages at over 80% capacity already. In the Valley the younger villages (4th-7th) are over half full in Sessions 3 & 4. There is just ONE open spot in Waterski Camp, and our Riding Specialty camp has just 5 spaces remaining.

ALUMNI PROFILE: RYAN MANN

My name is Ryan Mann, and Camp Sloane holds a special place in my heart. My experiences there are among the most significant of my life. I was a camper from 1990 to 1992 and returned as staff from 1999 to 2002 and again in 2005. It was at Sloane that I discovered my passion for sailing, thanks to a camper in my tent who signed up for the activity. I joined him and felt an instant connection to the sport, which has since grown into a deep fanaticism.

After several years in land conservation, I relocated to Cape Cod, MA, where my love for the water has only intensified. I now coach and train young people in sailing and am actively involved with Scouting America. I serve as a leader in a local Cub Scout pack, a Scoutmaster for a new girls' troop, and a district committee member.

My family and I cruise and race our 37-foot sloop throughout New England. I've also participated in regional and international inshore and offshore races, recently completing my sixth passage to or from Bermuda. Professionally, I thrive as a top real estate broker on the Cape, living with my wife Adrian, a geochemist with the US Geological Survey in Woods Hole, our 10-year-old son Rowan, a flock of laying hens, and our 2-year-old Golden Retriever, Scupper the Sailor Dog.

Camp Sloane gave me my passion for the water, profoundly shaping my life. Through my time on staff, I learned the value of hard work and the gratification of seeing young people grow through experiential learning.

Editor's Note: This past summer, Ryan and his fellow crewmates exhibited the Camp Sloane motto of putting OTHERS first. At 3:30 a.m. during the Newport (R.I.) to Bermuda race, the crew on Ryan's boat (Ceilidh – pronounced Kay-lee) heard the distress call of a crew whose boat was sinking rapidly. Ryan and his fellow crewmembers sailed to the rescue and plucked the stranded sailors from their life raft. See the dramatic rescue [here](#).



Ryan on staff in 1999

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIALS



ALUMNI REUNION & CHAIR'S ROUND TABLE

At the end of November Bear, Rhino, and Ru took a trip down to New York City for our 3rd 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.

Just last week we went back to the city for our Chair's Round Table event, sharing with our donors how much we've raised this year, and the impact their generosity has on our campers.

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 2025

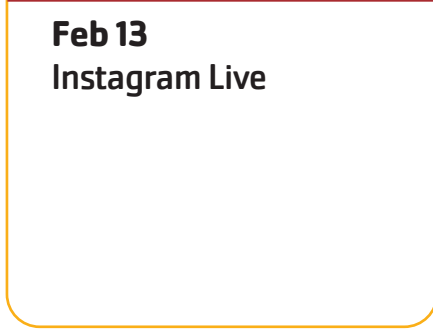
JANUARY

Jan 18-19
Staff Retreat



FEBRUARY

Feb 13
Instagram Live



MARCH

March 6
Online Info Ses-
sion



APRIL

April 25-27
Volunteer Weekend

April 27
Open House



MAY

May 1-31
Spring Fundraiser



JUNE

June 1
Open House

June 22 / June 23
Session 1 / DC Session A

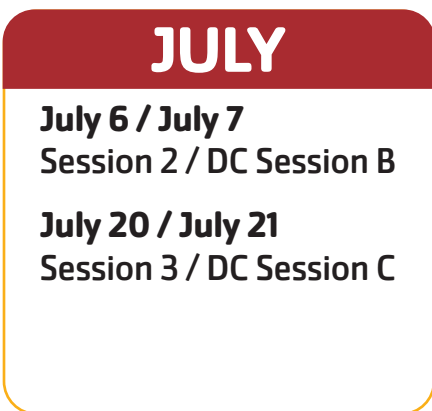
June 29
One Week Session



JULY

July 6 / July 7
Session 2 / DC Session B

July 20 / July 21
Session 3 / DC Session C



AUGUST

August 3 / August 4
Session 4 / DC Session D

August 18
DC Session E



SEPTEMBER

Aug 29 - Sept 1
Family Camp



OCTOBER

October 1
2026 Registration
Opens



NOVEMBER

November 15
Camp T-Shirt Day

Date TBD
Alumni Reunion

Date TBD
Chair's Round Table Event



DECEMBER

December 1 - 31
End of Year Campaign

