

THE BIRCHBARK MAY 2026



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CAMP SLOANE YMCA

124 Indian Mtn. Rd, Lakeville, CT 06039

The Birchbark Newsletter

May 2026

www.campsloane.org

A Camp Sloane Newsletter



SUMMER IS COMING



Gina Lucas
Interim CEO

Dear Friends,

I finally got to attend my first Camp Sloane Volunteer Weekend earlier this month. The experience was remarkable, rewarding, fun, and, most of all, inspiring. I want to thank everyone who came out to help and gave their time, hard work, sweat, and effort to prepare camp for the new season. It was an incredible gathering of dedicated volunteers who had one clear and simple goal: Ensure camp is safe, clean, and comfortable so that children and staff can enjoy their best summer yet.

I was a part of the unofficial Dining Hall Crew which involved cleaning windows, floors and lights. We were comprised of alumni, returning campers, campers-to-staff, a new camper, and a new camper parent. At first, we had the great idea of listening to music while we worked. My overwhelmingly loud vacuuming of windowsills quickly ruined that plan. But we easily transitioned into our own rhythm of vacuuming, washing, rinsing, drying, and repeat. We had a system, and we were excited as each group of windows looked as sparkling from the inside as possible. Just like every group this weekend, our Dining Hall Crew worked efficiently with teamwork to accomplish as much as possible in a short period of time. Taking care of Sloane mattered to them and they wanted to give back and pay it forward without fanfare. While our work was certainly important and why we were there, I became more focused on and moved by what was naturally on display with our team without any prompting – camp's spirit of "Others" and the power of kindness.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

OPEN HOUSE
JUNE 7, 12PM-3PM

Take a tour of camp, meet the staff and try our famous cookies!

STAFF AUCTION
JUNE 27

Donate an item or experience to our staff auction to help bring more kids to camp

FAMILY CAMP
AUG SEPT 4-7

Join us for [Labor Day Weekend at camp!](#)



HELP US BRING MORE KIDS TO CAMP THIS SUMMER

Our goal this spring is to raise funds for our financial assistance program so that all campers can experience Camp Sloane.

Your gift today will provide essential support that will make camp possible for hundreds of families. Thank you!

Donate [here](#).

SUMMER IS COMING... (con't.)

During our time together, I listened as a fellow alumna from around my time spoke with current campers and soon-to-be staff. They shared stories along with current and old traditions. I watched as our team helped each other with tasks and made sure people had what they needed. I heard conversations about what people were looking forward to this summer and what they liked about Sloane. But what touched me the most was when I saw these current campers and young staff immediately welcome in the new

camper who was experiencing her first hours ever at Camp Sloane. The effortless acts of kindness and genuine gestures of friendship were made to help this new camper feel like this was already her home and that people were happy she was here. By Sunday afternoon I had already forgotten that the new camper was, in fact, new because of how she quickly became a part of the Sloane family. I already think of her and her mother when I look at some of the clean green lights in the dining hall. They did that.

As we look to the summer just weeks

away, I am filled with gratitude for how caring for others and believing in kindness aren't simply concepts on a page. They are alive and well at Camp Sloane and are demonstrated by actions big and small. May our summer be filled with new moments of inspiration like the ones that overflowed during Volunteer Weekend. Finally, I can't wait to see my new Dining Hall Crew friends again soon.

Warmest Regards,

Gina Lucas
Interim CEO

GET READY FOR 2026!

As always, we spend the winter thinking about all our programs and facilities, making improvements and adjustments, big and small, that we know you're going to love.

We've built a prep station at the Hiking Hooch for Outdoor Cooking, completed the new library remodel, and around camp we've been busy making things beautiful, with some brush clearing, pool painting and more!

The biggest upgrade this year though is the brand new bathroom for Pioneer and Junior Hill ... we can't wait for you to see it!

REFER A FRIEND

Did you know you can get a referral credit of up to \$150 per camper you refer? AND anyone who refers a friend to camp will get a super cool limited edition t-shirt!

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

DAY CAMP

Our Day Camp is almost full in every session – we now just have a handful of spots in specific age groups in some sessions. Session B is completely full for Mountaineers (rising 5th–6th grades), with Sessions A and D not far behind! Sessions B, C, and D are full for Explorers (rising K–1st grades). There are a few spaces remaining for rising 2nd–4th graders across the summer.

Sessions A and E currently have space in all age groups, but we don't expect this to last long! We have also opened up new pre-camp 'Spring Vacation Days' (June 23rd–26th) as well as our post-summer 'Vacation Days' (Aug 31st–Sep 3rd) – register by the day!

OVERNIGHT CAMP

In overnight camp Sessions 2 and 3 are filling fast... Session 2 has less than 20 spaces available for Seniors and Students on the Hill, while in the LEAD program, there are only 5 spots remaining!

In Session 3 we have waitlists for younger campers (4th–7th grades) in the Valley, and there are only 10 spots left for younger Hill campers. The LEAD program in Session 3 now only has availability for Valley campers.

Riding Camp has just 3 spaces left. There are still Horseriding and Waterski lessons available in some weeks – please reach out to us (info@campslope.org) to add these to your camper's session.

ALUMNI PROFILE: BILL SCHNEIDER

Being a Camp Sloane alum is a Schneider family tradition that started in 1928 when my dad was a camper. He later became a staff member, and it was there that he met my mom. Fast forward to the 60's, when my mom, brother, and older sister were on staff and my younger sister and I were campers. The family tradition of attending and working at Sloane also includes multiple cousins, nieces, and nephews, and my own two children have been campers and staff members. I worked at Sloane as a counselor, (68) in the kitchen as a dishwasher, and steward (69-70), and in the mid 90s I joined the board, serving as chair from 2006 to 2020.

As a kid I went to camp for 10 weeks every summer. Camp is where I learned to swim, row a boat, paddle a canoe and sail. I started swimming as a minnow but eventually worked my way up to become part of the beta group for the new Porpoise club. I remember making a wallet at arts and crafts and learning to play field hockey. During the summer that I was in Senior section I went on so many overnight hikes, that it seemed like I spent more nights away from camp than in it. I did the tri-state hike twice!



Back in the 60's campers came for a month, July or August. I remember watching fireworks in camp on the 4th of July and the Olympics in August. I remember visitors' days, when parents came and brought enormous amounts of food and candy, usually leaving lots of leftovers, which had to be eaten by sundown to avoid wildlife invasions. The day included a horse show, aquatic demonstrations, and displays of projects at Nature and Arts and Crafts. I remember Chapel and Oval hour. I will never forget waking up to a recording of reveille being played over the camp wide PA system. In boys' camp we often had to get up and out for calisthenics. That was followed by the Call to Post, which sent one camper from each tent to the dining hall to be the waiter/waitress.

One memory that stands out from all the others is July 20, 1969, when Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed on the moon. It was late at night, but all the staff and campers assembled in the Girls' Dining Hall to watch the landing on television.

Today I continue to participate in camp activities by attending Volunteer Weekend, every year, rain or shine, to help put up the tents, install bunks and cubbies, paint, set up the camp store and do other tasks to prepare for the arrival of the campers and staff. I recommend Volunteer Weekend and Family Camp to all alumni who want to reconnect with Camp Sloane.



A MASSIVE THANK YOU

A few weeks ago, we were joined by over 100 volunteers who came to help us put the tents up, get the bunks and cubbies out, clean cabins, and complete a wide array of projects. This has given us a huge head-start in getting camp ready for the summer, and we are incredibly grateful to our Sloane family for all their hard work and enthusiasm, even with the rain (and snow) and chilly temperatures!

A special thanks to the crews from Project Goal, Valiant Energy Solutions, and HOUZPITAL, who joined us for the weekend.



REGISTER AS A SLOANE ALUMNI

Our **100th** anniversary is just around the corner.

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!

CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIALS

