

THE BIRCHBARK MAY 2025



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CAMP SLOANE YMCA

124 Indian Mtn Rd, Lakeville, CT 06039

The Birchbark Newsletter

May 2025

www.campsloane.org

A Camp Sloane Newsletter



SUMMER IS COMING



Paul "Bear" Bryant
Executive Director / CEO

Dear Friends,

Spring is always an exciting—and often frenetic—time of year at Sloane. In the camp community, we have a saying: "Once January arrives, June feels like it's only a few short weeks away." That sentiment rings true every year, as preparations for the summer ramp up in both scale and urgency.

Rhino and Ru have been hard at work hiring staff since September. By January 1st, we're typically close to fully staffed, but filling a few specialized roles—such as nurses, a driver, and some key program positions—often stretches into May. And as always, last-minute cancellations pop up, particularly among international staff who may be denied visas. Each vacancy triggers a fresh round of recruitment. While not quite a Sisyphean task, it is certainly a test of our patience and time. Still, year after year, Rhino and Ru manage to build a remarkable team of dedicated, talented role models ready to lead and inspire our campers.

Spring also brings a flurry of activity to physically prepare camp for the hundreds of campers we welcome each week. Our Maintenance team—led by newly promoted Facilities Director Dave Wright and his right-hand man, new Camp Caretaker Will Steere—begins the intricate process of turning on the many camp water systems that were winterized last fall. It's no small feat and demands long hours and a lot of elbow grease.

A huge highlight of our spring calendar is Volunteer Weekend, when nearly 100 volunteers descend on camp to give us an enormous boost. This year, under challenging conditions—heavy Saturday rains and a cold, windy Sunday—they managed to:

- Erect every tent
- Install most bunks and cubbies
- Build stools for the Creative Arts building
- Prep the camp store for Opening Day
- Clean the Dining Hall

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UPCOMING EVENTS

OPEN HOUSE
JUNE 1, 12PM–3PM

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

STAFF AUCTION
JUNE 21

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

FAMILY CAMP
AUG 29–SEPT 1

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



HELP US REACH OUR SPRING FUNDRAISING GOAL

\$25,000

This Spring, we have a goal of raising \$25,000 to support our financial assistance program. Every year we provide hundreds of families with financial support so that ALL campers can come to Sloane and enjoy the real camp experience. Help us send more kids to camp? Donate [here](#).

\$1,785



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

- Install new benches in the Chapel
- And complete dozens of other essential projects

"Troopers" is the word that comes to mind when describing this incredible crew.

Among them were volunteers from our partners at Valiant Energy Solutions, as well as a 30+ person team from Project GOAL, a program founded by Sloane alum, Darius Shirzadi. Project GOAL blends academics and athletics to support students who face financial, cultural, or logistical barriers—providing a completely free, coeducational

opportunity for learning and growth. Their presence was a powerful reminder of how far Sloane's influence reaches. Also among our volunteers was a camper who chose to spend their birthday flying in from California just to take part in Volunteer Weekend—thank you for showing us what it means to put OTHERS first. We were also joined by current campers and their families, Sloane alumni, board members, and staff families. Your efforts helped move us significantly closer to being camp-ready, and we are deeply grateful.

Of course, there's still work to be done before the magic of summer fully arrives. One of the most impactful ways you can

support camp right now is through a gift to our **Spring Financial Assistance Campaign**. One in three Sloane campers attend with the help of financial assistance. This year, we'll award over \$300,000 in aid—and we can't do that without your generosity.

Consider covering the cost of a day of camp for \$194 or a full week for \$1,358. Show your Sloane Spirit and commitment to putting OTHERS first by contributing [here](#).

Thank you, as always, for being part of our camp family.

See you 'round the campfire,

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2025?

Did you watch our 'Summer of Fun' update video back in March? If you haven't, [go watch it now!](#) In the video, we talk all about some of the schedule changes we're making this summer, including adding a 4th elective activity each day, a new free-choice hour called 'Odyssey', and Sunday Carnival day!

Some other additions and upgrades we've made this year include a huge pavillion tent for Day Camp, new changing stalls at the waterfront, new stools at Creative Arts, and of course, the incredible new bathrooms for Senior and Student Valley.

We can't wait for you to experience it all!

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.

One item in particular we are looking for is an upright freezer for our snack shack... we've got to keep those ice pops cold!

Email us [here](#).



ENROLLMENT UPDATES FOR SUMMER 2025

DAY CAMP

Our Day Camp is exploding at the seams – we now just have a handful of spots in specific age groups in some sessions. Sessions B, C, and D are completely full for Explorers (rising grades K-1st) and Buccaneers (rising grades 3rd-4th), with just a few spaces remaining for rising 2nd, 5th and 6th graders.

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 our 'Vacation Days' at the end of the summer (August 25th-28th) – register by the day or for all 4!

OVERNIGHT CAMP

In overnight camp it is the older villages that are likely to fill first – Senior and Student Hill (rising 8th-10th grades) has just 10 spaces remaining in Sessions 2 and 3, while in the Valley there are only 15 spots available for Seniors and Students in Session 4. In the One-Week session there are only 6 spaces left for younger Valley campers (rising grades 4th-7th).

Waterski Camp is completely SOLD OUT, while Riding Camp has just 3 spaces left. We do still have space in Performing Arts Camp – did you hear we're putting on 'Guys & Dolls' this summer?

IN MEMORIAM: SUSAN SENK

Former Camp Sloane Board member, Susan Senk, passed away on Saturday, April 5th.

Susan was resilient, having a heart transplant in 2007 and living 17 amazing years full of travel, friends, theatre and so much more.

She was a Sloane camper back in the 1960's and served on the camp's board from 2004 until 2019.

Susan worked in the film industry for much of her career. In fact, whenever you heard someone say, "I'd like to thank The Academy" at the Oscars, they were talking about Susan. She worked on over 400 films during her career including doing the publicity and promotion for the films, Dirty Dancing and Glengarry Glen Ross.

Susan was a big proponent and supporter of camper financial assistance at Sloane. She also she loved the fact that table tennis was such a big tradition here at camp (a table in every village). She regularly paid for table tennis equipment and even paid for an outdoor table. Because of her enthusiastic support of that program, the CEO of Sloane dubbed her H.R.H (Her Royal Highness) of Table Tennis.

Susan loved Camp Sloane and she will be missed by all who knew her. Her family has asked that we establish the Susan Senk Memorial fund in her honor. 100% of the donations to the fund will support camper financial assistance at Sloane if you'd like to make a donation to the fund you can do so [here](#).



A HUGE THANK YOU

During the last weekend of April, we had almost 100 volunteers come and 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 torrential downpour and chilly temperatures!



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

