

MCGAW Y LAUNCHES 100TH YEAR CELEBRATION OF CAMP ECHO

Camp Echo, News / September 6, 2023

A year-long celebration of special events and activities are planned to honor a century of adventure, growth, and community.

EVANSTON, IL. – McGaw YMCA is proud to announce the celebration of Camp Echo's 100th year anniversary. Since its inception at its current home in 1924, Camp Echo, one of the longest-standing YMCA camps in the nation, has remained a beloved destination for generations of children and families seeking a summer camp adventure away from home.

Nestled in the woods of Fremont, MI, Camp Echo has helped transform the lives of countless campers by providing immersive outdoor experiences that combine adventure, education, and a sense of community. Each year, over 1,500 campers from Evanston and beyond enjoy summer at Camp Echo as a chance to unplug from life's demands, form connections in spirit, mind and body.

"Camp Echo leaves an imprint on your soul," said Monique Parsons, McGaw YMCA President/CEO. "It inspires youth in our Evanston community to dream bigger than they ever thought possible, and to experience new things, outside, in an environment that is safe and fun. McGaw YMCA is so proud to mark this incredible milestone in the history of Camp Echo."

While always holding some traditions dear, Camp Echo's ongoing priority is to increase access and design the camp experience with and for all people, particularly those who have been historically excluded from camp. As Camp Echo looks forward to its next century, the YMCA remains dedicated to providing new generations of campers with transformational, inclusive, outdoor experiences while addressing historical and present challenges. The year-long celebration of Camp Echo's 100th year is a chance to reflect on the camp's progress, acknowledge harms, and design the path forward towards becoming a camp where everyone belongs.

YEAR-LONG CELEBRATIONS

To celebrate the 100th year anniversary, McGaw YMCA Camp Echo has planned a series of special events and activities throughout the year. The centennial celebrations will honor the past and engage the community in shaping a renewed vision for the camp's future. Highlights include:

Opening Event & Fundraiser, "Same Spirit, New Century" – October 12, Double Clutch Brewing Co., Evanston: Kicking off the celebrations, this camp casual 21+ event will bring together camp alumni, staff, and supporters for an evening of reminiscing, storytelling, and reconnecting. Camp Echo attire welcomed and encouraged. Tickets are \$100. Plus, the first 150 people to register will receive a special gift! Purchase tickets at ymcacampecho.org/celebrate/register.

Community Circles at McGaw YMCA: The 100th anniversary is a perfect time to chart a course for Camp Echo's second century. Throughout the year, staff will engage camper parents, young alumni, former staff, and volunteers in a series of community circles to focus on the legacy of the last 100 years and vision for the next 100. These circles will reflect the Y's unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

McGaw YMCA Gala – January 20, 2024: The centennial celebration will ramp up at the [YMCA's signature gala event](#), providing a fitting tribute to Camp Echo's enduring legacy.

Echo Fest Community Day at McGaw YMCA – April 27, 2024: Everyone who is excited to celebrate Camp Echo's 100th anniversary is invited to this free, one-day celebration in the heart of Evanston! Stop by McGaw YMCA between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. for fitness, food, and festivity — including fitness classes and activities led by YMCA instructors; Family Fun Gym; arts & crafts and camp activities; and so much more!

Summer Camp Celebrations at Camp Echo: The regular summer camp sessions will be infused with special activities and themed events to make the 100th year anniversary a memorable experience for all current campers and staff.

Centennial Celebration Weekend at Camp Echo – September 20-22, 2024: The year-long celebration will culminate during a special weekend celebration at Camp Echo. Families and alumni are invited to join in the festivities, which will include camp activities, campfires, songs, and stories. A variety of housing options will be available, from private cabins to yurts and tents.

"For a century, Camp Echo has been a place of personal growth, friendship, adventure, and fun." said Bernard Rocca, Executive Director, Camp Echo. "We invite everyone to join us in celebrating this extraordinary journey. Together, we will define what camp might look like for many years to come and invest in another 100 years of serving community."

Throughout the year, Camp Echo will also be engaging in outreach efforts to reconnect with alumni, share stories, and create opportunities for philanthropic support to ensure that the camp can continue to provide life-changing experiences for generations to come.

McGaw YMCA invites all campers, alumni, friends, and supporters to join in the Camp Echo centennial celebrations. For updates on events, initiatives, and ways to get involved, please visit ymcacampecho.org/celebrate or contact Bernard Rocca at bernardr@mcgawymca.org.

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