



McGaw YMCA Adventure Guides Frequently Asked Questions

Adventure Guides programs launch parents and their children on a journey of discovery, with the child as the *explorer* and the parent as the *guide*. Adventure Guides encourages parents to *get to know your kid while your kid is still a kid* with group activities such as games, crafts, songs, stories, skits, ceremonies, and outdoor pursuits such as camping, hiking and swimming. The one-on-one time in a fun, special environment builds important bonds through shared experiences.

The McGaw YMCA program is for dads and their kids in grades K-4. Each father/child pair is placed in a circle, which typically includes 8-12 pairs from the same school and grade. Circles usually meet monthly for activities, games, and outings. Each circle is also part of a larger expedition, which includes several circles from the same school. There are three expedition overnight campouts each year: Fall, Winter, and Spring. These campouts are held at nearby cabin camping facilities. There are also other expedition events throughout the year, including swim parties, YMCA sleepover parties, a Balsawood Derby, and the Daddy-Daughter Sweetheart Dance.

There are nine expeditions affiliated with the McGaw YMCA, which include over 1000 families across the North Shore. We have participating families from Highland Park, Glencoe, Winnetka, Wilmette, Kenilworth, Evanston, Skokie, and Chicago.

To find nearby expeditions, circles, and additional information, visit the Adventure Guides page at mcqawymca.org

How Do I register?

New and Returning Participants

- You can register online at [by clicking here](#). Or visit mcqawymca.org. The barcode for 2011-2012 is **5508**. When you register online, please make sure to register yourself and **all** children participating.
- Call our Program Support team at 847-475-7400 x287.
- Send a registration form to McGaw YMCA Program Support, 1000 Grove St, Evanston, IL 60201.. Fax the registration form to 847-475-1989 ATTN: Program Support. You can find the registration form at mcqawymca.org

Why do I pay an annual registration fee?

Registration fees cover mailing, program manuals, program patches, and general YMCA administrative support concerning campout contracts, insurance, and non-profit status, as well as support for the Expedition Leaders and Circle Navigators (both are volunteer).

You don't have to pay the annual fee.

If you feel that you won't take advantage of the full year of activities and programs, you can attend events by paying an additional \$20.00 per person fee. This covers the same services listed above. If you find that you attend an additional event, you'll pay the additional \$20.00 AND then be enrolled as a full Adventure Guide participant.

Can I be in a circle with my friend?

Yes, please note this on your registration form.

What additional costs are involved?

Each expedition campout carries an additional fee to offset the cost of each campout. A typical campout fee is anywhere in the range of \$50 to \$100 per person. Participants are also responsible for any extra costs incurred during circle meetings.

What happens after I register?

You will receive a confirmation email from the McGaw YMCA letting you know you have been registered and what your expedition is. Circles usually have their first meeting in late September or early October, before the first campout.

How will I be placed in a circle?

Circles are often organized by school, gender, grade, and/or neighborhood, but this varies from one area to another. You may also request to start a new circle with interested friends.

Can I start my own circle?

Yes, please contact Dan Bulf at 847-475-7400 x282 for more information or email Dan at danb@mcqawymca.org

When and where are the campouts?

Campout dates and sites vary by expedition. Yearly campout dates are listed in early September at www.mcqawymca.org.

Do I have to be a dad to participate?

No. Any child's adult male role model can participate – an uncle, a mentor, an older brother, etc.

Can I try out Adventure Guides before registering?

There are several opportunities throughout the year for dads and kids to enjoy Adventure Guides activities, please check the McGaw YMCA website for updated event information. If you would like to check out the official kick off to the program, visit the annual **Lakefront Campout on September 10 – 11, 2011**. The campout will take place in Centennial Park in Evanston. If you would like more information concerning this event, please contact Dan Bulf by email at danb@mcqawymca.org.

Adventure Guides Event Information

All Federation Events

Federation events are open to all Adventure Guide participants or interested dads and their children. The costs can range from event to event, but are usually for one dad and all children wishing to attend. Advanced registration is usually not required, but is recommended.

Individual Expedition Events

Typically each expedition has 3 annual campouts. The fall and spring campouts are hosted at nearby camps in cabin-style campgrounds. Campouts usually start at 12:00 PM (noon) on a Saturday and end on Sunday morning before 11:00 AM (some campouts may have a Friday night stay for a small additional cost). These campouts are usually filled with activities such as, but not limited to: climbing tower, archery, boating, hiking, team building, campfires, and crafts. The volunteer Expedition Leaders help us determine the fee for each campout based on individual camper cost. For the winter campouts, some expeditions opt to visit nearby water park resorts in lieu of the campground. The cost per campout can range from \$50 to \$100 per person. Some expeditions may decide to do additional events aside the regular campout schedule. To register, a barcode for the campout will be created by YMCA staff. Once a barcode and fee have been assigned, dads will then have the opportunity to go online to register for the event. This information is sent via email through Constant Contact. Because most of the program information is sent via email, please make sure we have your most up to date email address in our system. If you wish to add or change an email, please send an email to info@mcgawymca.org.

Family and Friends Events

The Y invites Adventure Guide participants to introduce the program to family and friends at the Y sponsored events listed below and on the right side of this page.

Lakefront Family Campout

This is the annual kick off to the Adventure Guides program every year. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the Adventure Guides program if you are a new participant. This event is usually scheduled the second Saturday in September, beginning noon on Saturday and ending at 9 AM the following Sunday. The afternoon event includes outdoor games, arts and crafts, face painting, cotton candy, popcorn, entertainment, information and an optional overnight stay (you must provide your own tent). The day includes a closing ceremony. As everyone packs up in the morning, we will serve coffee/juice and bagels. Please check out the McGaw YMCA website for more information concerning this campout. The website is www.mcgawymca.org.

Adventure Guides Leadership Meet and Greet

The Adventure Guides program is a volunteer run program with the help of the McGaw YMCA Adventure Guides Program Coordinator. Volunteer Circle and Expedition Leaders bring the enthusiasm to this program. All expedition events are planned by the volunteer dads in collaboration with the Program Coordinator. The dads and the coordinator meet together twice a year to foster fellowship and to discuss announcements/planning. If you would like to volunteer in this program, please contact Dan Bulf at 847-475-7400 x282 or by email at danb@mcgawymca.org.

Boys Night at the Y

The dad and son expeditions take over the McGaw YMCA gym and pool for one evening. Please check out the McGaw YMCA website for dates. We will finish the evening with pizza and games in the Youth Lobby.

Daddy-Daughter Sweetheart Dance

This event is for all dad and daughter participants (as well as family and friends). This event is scheduled in February around Valentine's Day, for a sweetheart celebration between dads and their daughters. The McGaw will provide the DJ and the food, and the dads with their daughters will bring all the fun.

Balsawood Derby

All expeditions will have the opportunity to join in this event, usually scheduled the second Saturday in March. Those expeditions who are up to the challenge will race their homemade balsawood cars in 90-minute intervals. This event will also offer arts and crafts, concessions, and a moon jump located in the Sebring-Lewis Center of the McGaw YMCA. There is no fee to register for the program. Car kits can be purchased at local craft stores or online and are the responsibility of each dad. Be sure to purchase a Balsawood kit. (Pinewood cars do not fit our track).

Please visit the www.mcgawymca.org for additional information and dates. You can find the Adventure Guides page by hovering over "Families" and selecting "Adventure Guides".

If you have any questions about program content, please contact Dan Bulf at 847-475-7400 x282. You can also email Dan at danb@mcgawymca.org

If you have questions regarding registration, please contact the Program Support Office between the hours of 9 AM to 5 PM, Monday-Friday, at 847-475-7400 x287.