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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

CLOTHING AND GEAR

Trailblazers Information Packet

Greetings from the trip center! Proper gear for your adventure is important and exciting to learn about. This packet provides detailed information about all of the essential clothing and gear items you will need for your backcountry adventure with Camp Echo. Our goal is to prepare all our campers well in advance of their trips so that every participant arrives at camp with a thorough understanding of what to expect on their adventure.

If you have questions about your trip or what to bring, please call the Echo office at (847) 475-7400 ext. 261 (school year), (231) 924-7076 (summer), or email Charlie, our Adventure Trips Coordinator at charless@mcqawymca.org.

WHAT WE SUPPLY

Camp Echo's trip center provides each adventure trip with all the food, water, and shelter-related items including stoves, cooking supplies, water purification systems, tents, tarps, and ropes. The trip center also supplies all necessary first aid equipment and emergency communication devices.

The trip center has a stock of personal gear items to loan out if needed. We encourage you to borrow gear, especially if this is your first adventure trip experience. Camp Echo's trip center has some outdoor clothing and personal gear items that campers are welcome to borrow. However, our selection is limited, so please call or email the office prior to your trip to let us know what you would like to borrow, and we will let you know what we have available.

WHAT TO BRING

Our adventure trips often encounter unpredictable weather. For this reason, having the proper clothing is critical. Please bring all of the required items on your trip's packing list, or confirm that the trip center has one you can borrow. Some of the required items on your list will be provided to every camper on the trip. These items are indicated by a star. However, we do not require participants to use Camp Echo's gear. If you already own a starred item or would like to purchase or borrow your own gear from another source, you are welcome to do so.

Outdoor apparel is an investment. Shop around before you buy anything, read product reviews, and try everything on. Outdoor gear is meant to keep you warm, dry, and comfortable. Many Echo guides and participants use the following retailers when purchasing gear:

Recreation Equipment Incorporated (REI) - www.rei.com
Sierra Trading Post - www.sierratradingpost.com
Uncle Dan's The Great Outdoor Store - www.udans.com
Backcountry - www.backcountry.com

FABRICS

Warm, comfortable, quick-dry clothing is best in the backcountry. Preferred fabrics include polyester, polypropylene, fleece, acrylic, rayon, and wool. Popular name brands for these materials are Polartec™, Thinsulate™, COOLMAX, and Capilene. Synthetic materials are always recommended for wilderness recreation as they are able to retain their insulating qualities when they get wet. **Please do not bring cotton, unless otherwise indicated on your packing list.**

PACKING AND STORAGE

Pack your clothing and gear in a duffel bag or small suitcase. Once you get to camp, your trip guides will go through the packing list with you and the rest of the group again to be sure you have everything you need. During this process is when your guides will make sure you receive any gear that you are borrowing. Your personal gear will be transferred to the appropriate, trip-specific bag. Additionally, you may want to bring a small backpack or tote bag to pack items you might want in transit to and from the trip, but not on the trip. Any items you brought to camp that will not be going on the trip with you will be stored at camp until you return. Please be sure to leave expensive items, such as jewelry or electronics, at home.

MEDICATIONS

Please do not pack any medications you take, prescription or over-the-counter. All medications must be checked in with a staff member at the departure buses in Evanston, or brought to the clinic by a parent if you are dropped off at Camp. Prescription medication must arrive in its original container with the prescription label intact. Remember to include detailed instructions for each medication on your health form.

EYE CARE

Every Echo tripper is required to bring a pair of 100% UVP sunglasses with a strap. Long days in the sun can be hard on the eyes, so it is very important that you bring sunglasses and wear them all day.

Camp Echo recommends glasses with a strap rather than contact lenses for our adventure trippers. It is more difficult to maintain adequate hygiene when wearing contact lenses in a wilderness setting. Wearing contact lenses puts you at risk of several conditions and infections. These conditions can develop very quickly and can be very serious. If you do choose to wear contact lenses, it is recommended to use dailies, or at least have a backup pair and either way you will need a pair of glasses. Be sure to bring enough contact lens solution and be diligent in your contact lens routine.

SKIN AND HAIR CARE

All of our trips pack out with a liberal supply of sunscreen and bug spray; however, participants who are particularly prone to sunburn or who react strongly to bug bites are encouraged to bring their own supply of skin protection. If you expect to need lotion or other products to care for your skin, you may bring unscented lotion.

During the back country portion of the trip, participants will not have access to modern amenities and showers. This means campers will not be able to wash their hair. They may bring biodegradable soaps for washing in rivers or lakes but this will not be an everyday occurrence. They are encouraged to bring shampoo and other hair care products for showers before and after the backcountry time. For campers concerned about damaging their hair while on the trip we suggest a protective hair style (e.g. braids, twists or locks) that will last for two weeks. For these please bring the products/materials needed for maintenance.

Any product you bring must be unscented, as scents will attract animals and bugs to the campsite. Try to bring lotions and other liquid products in smaller containers. If you are only able to bring them in large containers, staff will work with you to transfer the amount needed while in the backcountry to a smaller container to reduce the weight/size that you will be carrying with you throughout the trip.

CAMERAS

If you want to take pictures on your trip, we recommend waterproof, disposable cameras. If you decide to bring a non-waterproof camera on your trip, we strongly encourage you bring a waterproof case or dry bag to prevent damage. Our trips are rugged and rigorous, and there is always a risk of losing or damaging your camera. Cell phone cameras are prohibited.

MONEY

All costs are covered within program fees. Meals during travel and on trail are included in program fees, as are travel snacks. Groups choose a souvenir that each member of the group receives (i.e. sticker, patch, etc.); so, there is no need for extra spending money. Spending money can be brought, but we recommend discretion and not to exceed \$20 per two weeks.

MAIL & CAMPER COMMUNICATION

Mail and Email delivery is not available while participants are out on their trips. Trippers on Trailblazers return to Camp Echo at the completion of their trip and will receive any mail sent to them over the course of their session. The Echo staff will forward any mail received at Camp Echo after the session is complete.

TELEPHONE

Trip participants will be in remote wilderness settings and unable to place or receive phone calls. Cell phones are not permitted on any of Camp Echo's trips. A satellite phone is carried by the guides on every trip and used in the event of an emergency and for regularly scheduled check-ins. If an emergency situation arises and a parent or guardian needs to get in touch with a camper, please contact Camp Echo's summer offices at 231-924-7076 and we will pass on the information as soon as possible to the participant.

SLEEPING BAGS

Temperature and weather are unpredictable on our trips, so it is critical that your sleeping bag will keep you warm and dry. The sleeping bag you bring on your trip should be warm, lightweight, and packable. The best, insulating sleeping bags are made from down or synthetic materials. Bring a sleeping bag that is designed for temperatures of 35°F or colder.

Your sleeping bag should pack down to 20 liters or less; for your own packing ease, we strongly recommend bringing a sleeping bag that packs down to 15 liters or less. We also encourage you to pack your sleeping bag in a waterproof stuff sack; if your sleeping bag ever gets wet, it will be fully protected in a waterproof sack, and you will not risk sleeping in a damp bag!

Take time to shop around for your sleeping bag. Outdoor retailers like REI are excellent resources and their staff will be happy to help you find the best option for your trip. Also, be sure to "try on" your sleeping bag before you arrive at camp. Fully zip yourself inside, lie down, and wiggle around as you assess for warmth and comfort. The bag should be long enough to fully cover the top of your head while leaving room for your feet at the bottom.

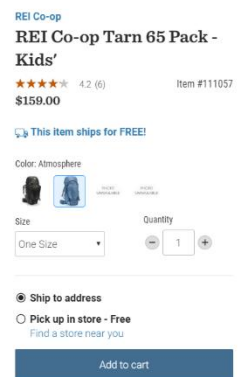
SLEEPING PADS

Your sleeping pad provides a warm, protective layer of insulation between your sleeping bag and the ground. Reliable brands include Therm-a-Rest® and REI. Inflatable pads provide more comfort and keep you warmer on cold nights. You can also look for a closed-cell foam pad at least 3/8-inches thick. At a minimum, your shoulders and hips should fit on your sleeping pad, though many people opt for a length that fits the whole body. Your sleeping pad should roll up to a small enough size that it can be easily packed into a backpack or strapped to the outside. Most sleeping pads are waterproof or water resistant, so you need not worry about getting a waterproof stuff sack. However, a stuff sack can help keep your sleeping pad cleaner and protect it from damage, so bring one if you like.

BACKPACKS

We guarantee a backpack to every Trailblazer who wants to borrow one, free of charge. The packs that Camp Echo loans campers are similar to the design shown to the right of this text, which features a great deal of adjustability for campers of different sizes.

If you would like to bring your own pack, be sure to bring one with a minimum capacity of 55 liters. We recommend 65 liters, as this size is required for all Camp Echo backpacking trips.



As with all other outdoor gear, spend lots of time shopping around for your backpack. Outdoor retailers like REI will be happy to spend time trying on different sizes and brands with you. Be sure to fill packs when you try them on; walking around with an empty backpack will not give you an accurate idea of what your pack will feel when it is filled with gear. Spend time adjusting the straps and walking around the store. Once you have your backpack, look over your trip's gear list and practice stuffing in your personal gear. Your guides will go over packing your backpack once you arrive at camp, but practicing ahead of time can't hurt!

DRY BAGS

We can guarantee a dry bag to every participant on Trailblazers. If you would like to bring your own dry bag, it must be 20 liters. Recommended brands include Sea to Summit and SealLine®. If you want, you may also bring a second personal dry bag for small personal items, like lip balm or a camera. Your personal bag's capacity should not exceed 8 liters.

FOOTWEAR

Proper footwear is essential for a safe and fun trip. Your trip will be much more enjoyable if you break in the shoes you plan to wear prior to the start of your session. Please take time to shop around for footwear. Try everything on before making any purchases. Take the following information along with you when you shop:

BOOTS

The best boot for our trips is a light- to medium-weight boot that has ankle support. We recommend boots made of leather, nylon, or Gore-Tex with a hard rubber sole, which looks like a tire tread. Do not buy mountaineering boots or high boots that constrict the calf. Your boots should be waterproof and comfortable.

FITTING YOUR BOOTS

The only way to get a good feel for your boots is to wear them a lot, and you are unlikely to judge this by walking around a store. Some retailers will allow you to purchase your boots with the understanding that you only wear them indoors for several hours, and if they are not a good fit you can return them. Try lacing the boots different ways to find the most comfortable fit. The heel should have a snug fit in order to prevent heel-lift, which can lead to blisters. There should be plenty of toe room, even when walking downhill. Be sure to try your boots on an incline and a decline. Try your boots on and break them in with the wool socks you plan to hike in on your trip.

A few things to keep in mind as you shop for boots:

- Be sure to try boots on with the wool socks you will wear on your trip.
- With the boots unlaced and your toes touching the front of the boot, the boot should be large enough to place your pointer finger between your heel and the heel of the boot.
- With the boot laced, your heel must be firmly lodged in the heel cup with very little lift when you walk.
- The boot should fit snugly around the ball of your foot so that when you twist your foot it does not move or slip inside the boot.
- When on a steep incline, or when tapping the front of your boot against the floor, your toes should not hit the end of the boot.

Your boots should be broken in long before your trip. Wear them as much as you can before your session begins. We recommend you put 10+ miles of walking into your boots, walking on both level and uneven terrain. If you start feeling hotspots on your feet, treat them immediately. [Click here to learn more about hotspots, blisters, and how to treat them.](#)

The boots you bring must be waterproof. Some boots are waterproofed when you buy them; if they are not, follow the sale associate or manufacturer's recommendations concerning what type of waterproofing materials to purchase.

WATER SHOES & CAMP SHOES

Water shoes are required whenever Trip Guides or participants enter the water or are in a small boat (kayak/canoe) while on trail. This includes swimming at the end of the day of getting in and out of a boat before/after paddling. Water shoes are crucial for protecting our feet from sharp rocks and other unknown hazards in the water, which could cause injury to our feet. Your water shoes must be secure to your foot and completely cover your foot. (Note: Though Chaco, Teva, KEEN, etc. make watershoe options, their traditional sport sandals are NOT acceptable as water shoes. Old, quick dry, sneakers also work.)

Water shoe examples: (Can be found at sites such as [Sierra Trading Post: Water Shoes](#))



For backpacking trips, water shoes can also work well as camp shoes to wear instead of hiking boots when in camp. On water trips, we recommend an additional pair of camp shoes to wear instead of camp shoes at the end of each day. Camp shoes must strap to or slip on securely to your foot - sport sandals or Crocs ARE acceptable as camp shoes. Lightweight sneakers also work well. Flip-flops or sliders increase likelihood of foot injury and are NOT permitted on trail for any purpose.

WHAT TO BRING

Trailblazers



Camp Echo has partnered with Uncle Dan's (www.udans.com, 1600 Sherman Ave, Evanston, IL). Uncle Dan's is offering a 10% discount on items that are not already on sale.

Do not pack medications (prescription or over-the-counter) in your luggage – you will need to check them in with staff at the buses.

Required Clothing

- 1 pair of light- to mid-weight hiking boots
- 1 pair of water shoes
- 1 rain jacket with a hood
- 1 pair of rain pants
- 1 long underwear top (synthetic/wool; no cotton)
- 1 long underwear bottom (synthetic/wool; no cotton)
- 1 pair of warm long pants (fleece or wool)
- 2-3 pairs of wool socks
- 2-3 pairs of quick dry shorts
- 2-3 t-shirts (quick-dry preferred; cotton is OK)
- 1 fleece pullover or jacket
- Underwear-whatever is comfortable for 8 days
- 1-2 swimsuits
- 1 hat with a brim
- 1 warm winter hat

Required Gear

- 1 20 liter dry bag*
- 1 55-65 liter hiking backpack*
- 1 sleeping bag
- 1 stuff sack for sleeping bag (waterproof preferred)
- 1 sleeping pad

Other Required Items

- 1 toothbrush
- 1 tube of travel-sized toothpaste
- 1 tube of SPF lip balm
- 1 pair of sunglasses with a strap
- 1 flashlight or headlamp (headlamp preferred)
- 1 box of one-gallon re-sealable freezer bags
- 2 32-oz. hard plastic water bottles
- 1 plastic bowl
- 1 spoon

Optional Items

- 1 bottle each of personal sunscreen & bug spray*
- 1 pair of camp shoes
- 1 2 liter 3 liter hydration pouch (also called a bladder)
- 1 mosquito head net
- 1 small camp towel
- 1 small camp pillow
- 1 camera (also recommended: waterproof case)
- Journal
- Book
- Playing cards
- Insulated mug with lid
- Extra batteries for flashlight or headlamp
- Camp suds (travel-sized and biodegradable)
- Lotion or skin/hair care products (travel-sized and unscented)
- Hairbrush or comb (travel-sized)
- Spending money

Do Not Bring

Electronic Screens or WiFi-enabled Products:

- Cell phones
- Game devices (i.e. Nintendo DS or PSP)
- MP3 players with a screen (i.e. iPod Touch, Classic, or Nano)
- Devices with Internet connectivity
- E-readers (i.e. iPad, Kindle, or Nook)

- Glass containers (aerosol cans discouraged but permitted)
- Guns, knives, weapons of any sort
- Bottled drinks or food (other than for bus to camp)
- Alcohol, tobacco products, illegal drugs, or intoxicants
- Money, valuable jewelry, or keepsakes (or pets!)
- Matches, lighters, firecrackers, sparklers, or equivalent

This packing list reflects an itemized list of gear that participants will need specifically for the backcountry portion of their program. Please bring extra clothing for approximately four days at camp and for travel.

*These items WILL BE PROVIDED to every camper on Trailblazers. If you already own these items or feel that you may need an extra supply, feel free to bring them for your trip.

The McGaw YMCA is not responsible for lost or stolen clothing or items. Please label everything.