

June, July and August

My father would always share his humorous Top 3 list regarding the benefits of the teaching profession – June, July and August. These months mean free time for children but we often forget that summer can be a difficult time for parents in our community. Young children suddenly need day-long care in place of school. Meals need to be planned, transportation is often an issue, and safety is a real concern. Think back to your childhood and the moments which stood out. Chances are they are a combination of exploration, education and physical activity in an atmosphere which was supported by parents and safe for children.

Summer is the ideal time to get children out and exploring, but for some, the end of the school year means no access to the activities that help them learn, grow and thrive. Studies show that children can experience learning loss and even gain weight twice as fast during the summer. For parents and caregivers looking to keep their children's minds and bodies active, the YMCA and other youth service organizations in our communities offer summer programs which give youth an active summer, full of fun and excitement.

Here are **five reasons** why children and teens should attend a summer camps, sports programs, swimming lessons or other activities:

1. **ADVENTURE:** Summer camp, swim lessons and other programs are all about a wide variety of new experiences. A chance for children to explore their potential.
2. **HEALTHY FUN:** Programs offer fun, stimulating activities that engage the body and mind, and also help children and teens learn the importance of nutrition to improve their healthy eating habits.
3. **PERSONAL GROWTH:** Youth are encouraged to learn new skills and develop confidence and independence by taking on new responsibilities and challenges. Day Camps offer cognitive learning and social-emotional development opportunities for achievement.
4. **FRIENDSHIPS:** Amidst the fun of summer activities, children meet new friends and strengthen existing friendships. The bonds formed over the summer are important and lasting for many youth.

5. **MEMORIES:** Camps and other programs are often an unforgettable experience that will provide memories that will last a lifetime. Youth return to school with a healthy spirit, mind and body with plenty of stories to share!

Summer registration is now open at area agencies. The YMCA has a full array of traditional programs along with some new offerings. Day Camp and Swim Lessons both begin on June 4th. A large variety of youth sport programming along with arts offerings take place all summer. New this summer is the "Raise the Bar" Sports Performance Training for teens and Jungle Gym Group Training for all ages. Visit the Y or marshallareaymca.org for more information.

Lifeguards Needed – The Y has immediate openings for lifeguards and certification classes are offered in-house. Contact Matt O'Neal at moneal@marshallareaymca.org