

2025 ICEP PARENT GUIDE

TRAVEL AND SERVICE PROGRAMS

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

SERVICE LEARNING

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA offers a wide variety of leadership development programs for teens. Travel and Service Programs are educational experiences requiring a high level of commitment, as each participant will be challenged mentally, physically and socially. Travel and Service Programs are highly selective. Keep in mind that these programs are very different from the in-camp experience at Chimney Corners Camp and Camp Becket. By the very nature of these experiences, campers must be able to exercise a higher degree of decision-making and accept greater responsibility for their own actions.

The goals and objectives of the Travel and Service Programs follow closely with the mission of the Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA to build communities that nurture personal growth in spirit, mind and body. The Travel and Service Programs have been designed to offer opportunities which foster responsible citizenship, healthy lifestyles, environmental stewardship, international understanding, service, and respect for individual differences. Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA welcomes and encourages participants of all races, nationalities, socioeconomic conditions, and religious faiths.

Parents have found this booklet to be a helpful resource throughout the Travel and Service Program experience. We suggest that you place this booklet in a safe place so that you may refer to it as needed.

2025 TSP CALENDER

	DESCRIPTION	DATE
Program Placements Announced	Participants are emailed their program placements and paperwork	January 19
Paperwork Due	Deadline for first round of paperwork – see checklist	March 1
TSP Online Presentation	TSP will host a webinar to help you learn more about your program. See Parent/Participant Webinars for more information.	Spring
Paperwork Due	Deadline for second round of paperwork - see checklist	May 1
Flight and Program Information	Flight itineraries, program itineraries and leader bios will be emailed	May
Leader Phone Call	TSP Leaders will call to speak with parents and participants before arrival at camp to introduce themselves.	Late June

ABOUT TSP

The Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA offers one leadership development opportunity: International Camper Exchange Program (ICEP). All Travel and Service Programs include a two to three day, in-camp orientation. Our participants carry the responsibility of conducting themselves in a manner which represents the YMCA mission and values. Upon their

return, participants are required to spend two days at camp debriefing and sharing their experiences with the campers at Camp Becket and Chimney Corners Camp.

Program Goals

YMCA youth programs like these equip teens with tools that strengthen who they are and allow them to make significant contributions in the world. Leadership Development

Learning and practicing techniques of positive leadership in group situations. Participants will work with their leaders to develop their leadership skills and will complete an evaluation to document their progress. Each participant will have an opportunity to serve as Leader of the Day (LOD).

Service Learning

Providing physical labor, humanitarian service or a combination of both heightens the importance of volunteer service for the benefit of others. Cultural Understanding

Connecting participants on ICEP Programs to new cultures including teen interaction, and cultural learning activities.

Environmental Awareness

Challenging teens to think and live in a globally sustainable manner. Participants will learn and practice Leave No Trace Wilderness Ethics.

PARTICIPANT ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Your program check in and checkout dates are listed on the coversheet of this guide. All TSP trips begin and end at camp. Each program will start with a two day on-camp orientation before departure and finish with a two day debrief before being picked up by parents. Unless otherwise noted, all check in and check outs will be at the Chimney Corners Sign Barn across the street from the Administration Building parking lot. Please park in the lot and meet TSP staff in the Barn. It's very important that campers attend the full program including orientation and debrief. Please do not ask to take your child out of orientation or any part of their program.

About Check Ins

All check ins will take place at the CCC Sign Barn across from the Administration Building. Upon arrival, families will be asked to check in with TSP staff, submit any missing paperwork, and turn in all camper medications, prescriptions and non-prescription (see 'Health Procedures' below for more details). TSP Staff will hold a brief meeting with families to introduce participants and go over emergency contact information and health procedures. This is a great time to ask any last minute questions before saying goodbye to your participants. Participants will then go with their leaders to start their orientation. Please expect to stay for about an hour and a half. A light snack will be available.

About Check Outs

All check outs will also take place at the CCC Sign Barn across from the Administration Building. Please arrive on time as the group will present a slideshow of their trip to parents. Please expect to stay for about 1 hour. A light snack will be available.

TRANSPORTATION TO CAMP

We encourage parents to drive their teens to and from camp. For those wishing to use a public bus or train service, we can meet participants at the bus stop in Lee, MA, or at the bus or train station in Pittsfield, MA. Participants arriving by air should arrive at Bradley International Airport in Hartford, CT or Albany Airport in Albany, NY. With proper advance notification we are able to coordinate pick-ups and drop-offs outside of camp. There is a charge for these services. If you need to sign up for camp transportation, please contact us.

TUITION INFORMATION

The tuition fee includes the orientation program at camp, all travel costs, daily meals, lodging, educational sightseeing, and ICEP participants' traveler's insurance. Participants are responsible for their own spending money to buy souvenirs

(see below for recommended amounts). Leaders will carry camp issued credit cards. In the event that a participant needs emergency funds to cover unanticipated personal expenses, (e.g. health or travel emergency) BCCYMCA will cover the cost initially and will bill families after the program.

Tuition Payments Payment Plans:

A payment plan must be selected and scheduled with a form of payment at the time of enrollment. We strongly recommend setting up a monthly payment plan; however, you may choose from the following payment plans: Pay in full at the time of enrollment. Monthly Payment Plan - Pay the deposit now. Monthly payments will be automatically charged to your credit card or ACH account on file in your camp account on the 3rd of the following month until the balance is paid in full April 1, 2025. Payment in full February 1 - Pay deposit now - Remaining balance will be charged to your credit card or ACH account February 1, 2025. Payment in 2 installments - Pay deposit now - Remaining balance will be charged to your credit card or ACH account in 2 installments February 1 and April 1, 2025 Applying for Aid - Tier 5 - Pay deposit now - only to be chosen by those applying to SSS for financial aid. Application must be completed within 30 days.

Cancellation and Refund Policy:

Please contact us within 10 calendar days of registration if you wish to cancel this reservation. Refund Policy: 10 business days after enrollment, the deposit becomes non-refundable. If you cancel before February 1, any tuition above your \$500 non-refundable deposit will be refunded. After February 1, 50% of the tuition becomes non-refundable and nontransferable, and the full tuition becomes non-refundable and non-transferable after April 1, 2025. If your child leaves the program early for any reason (voluntary or not), there will be no refund of tuition.

SPENDING MONEY

The Travel and Service Program tuition is all inclusive; however, spending money is the responsibility of the participant. Spending money can be used for the purchase of snacks and souvenirs. Our concern is to help participants manage money wisely and keep their expenditures within reasonable bounds. We recommend you give your teen no more than \$300. Visa and MasterCard ATM cards are widely accepted all over the world and debit cards are the most hassle free form of currency. We do not recommend Traveler's Checks or Visa Gift Cards as they are difficult to cash/not accepted overseas. If you send your child with a credit card, check for a pin number which could be used at ATM machines and notify the company that the card will be used overseas.

In case your teen needs more money while away, or if for some reason their debit card is not working, there are ways to provide them with additional funds. Our leaders carry credit cards with access to ATMs, and can issue spending money to a participant as needed, with prior approval.

Please note there is typically a fee incurred to do this that will be billed to families typically ranging from \$5-\$10.

PARENT/PARTICIPANT WEBINAR

In order to accommodate as many families as possible, TSP is now hosting online presentations that you can participate in from home. TSP will send out reminder emails as the date approaches. These meetings are not required, but we highly recommend that you and your child attend – you will have the opportunity to learn more about TSP staff and the programs. Topics covered include but are not limited to: packing, homestays, service projects, leadership development, cultural activities, emergency communication, trip leaders, medical and emergency procedures, cell phones, spending money, etc.

As the meeting approaches, we'll email families detailed instructions on how to attend. The meeting will be recorded so you can view it at a later date if you are unable to attend the live version.

TSP TRIP LEADERS

Each program is led by two adults who have proven to be caring and competent individuals. We look for leaders who have been recognized as positive role models for young teens, are mature, responsible, able to problem-solve effectively, and understand the objectives of the Travel and Service Programs. About 90% of our leaders have experience working for BCCYMCA as counselors, BOC facilitators or prior TSP leaders. Those who come from outside our organization have a

variety of experiences that make them qualified for these programs including teaching experience, outdoor leadership, trip guiding, and social work. Each leader of our Travel and Service Programs is required to go through an interview process and participate in a training program prior to the beginning of their assignment. All leaders are also certified in CPR, Wilderness First Aid, and Lifeguarding for programs with swimming.

Participants will be emailed bios of their leaders in the spring.

PROGRAM RISK MANAGEMENT

Safety is the top priority of the Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA. While the staff will make every reasonable effort to minimize exposure to the known risks associated with the programs, all hazards cannot be foreseen. By participating in our programs, participants and their parents willingly and knowingly assume all risks/hazards associated with participation in a Travel and Service Program. Participants and their parents should understand fully that even after reasonable precautions have been taken, occasionally accidents do happen.

Travel and Service Program leaders are required to follow specific policies related to water safety, transportation, communication, and other high risk areas. All of our Travel and Service Program leaders complete a comprehensive training program at the beginning of the summer, which includes Wilderness First Aid, CPR, transportation safety, as well as an aquatic safety workshop. In addition, our leaders review and become familiar with the Travel and Service Program emergency procedures.

In the event of illness, injury, family emergency, or behavioral problems that necessitate a participant leaving a program early, the following steps will be taken:

1. Leaders will notify the TSP Director.
2. TSP Director will communicate with parents and coordinate logistics for the return trip home. Please note: BCCYMCA does not guarantee that participants will be supervised on their flight home. This is dependent on the airline.
3. Parents are responsible for any expenses incurred due to returning early.

HEALTH INFORMATION

It is extremely important for anyone traveling to a foreign country to not only research the culture of the area to be visited, but also potential health issues. To reduce health risks while abroad, we have compiled the following recommendations from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO). Each participant and their parents/guardians should read them closely and plan accordingly.

1. CHECK YOUR CURRENT VACCINATIONS

Check with a healthcare provider to make sure you are up to date with all routine vaccinations (i.e., measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, hepatitis A and B, meningitis, and polio). Diseases such as measles and mumps remain common in many parts of the world, including some developed countries.

2. VISIT YOUR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

It is necessary that you visit your primary physician and inform them about your travel itinerary. It's important that your doctor knows the locations the group will visit, length of stay in each location and a general description of activities. This information can be found below. Participants need to visit their healthcare provider or a travel medicine specialist, ideally 4-6 weeks before travel, to get any additional vaccinations, medications, or information you may need to stay healthy. If it is less than 4 weeks before travel, a healthcare provider should still be consulted, as there may be some vaccinations, medications, or prevention information that could be beneficial to you. In all cases, please check with a qualified physician before getting any vaccinations. All vaccinations should be received prior to coming to camp. No vaccinations will be given at camp.

3. VISIT A TRAVEL CLINIC

We strongly recommend visiting a travel clinic for participants with complicated travel itineraries (e.g. travel to rural areas of developing countries) or who have medical problems that will need to be managed while abroad. Students visiting developing countries are at greater risk for illness or injury than those who travel to developed countries (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Western Europe), where the health risks are compatible to those found in the United States. Travel clinics are aware of the latest travel health conditions worldwide and can provide you with personal evaluations and recommendations for preventive measures and medications you might need. In order to receive health recommendations from a travel clinic, you will need to schedule an appointment with one of their physicians to discuss your personal health history. For a list of travel doctors in your area, visit <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/find-clinic>. Please be sure to bring the following information for your doctor with you to the clinic:

4. RESEARCH THE CDC AND WHO

Educate yourself about any disease risks and preventive measures for the countries where your child is traveling to. It may be advised that they get certain vaccinations for the destination and visiting the Center for Disease Control website is the first step in learning which vaccinations may be needed. Please see below for links to these websites.

5. VISIT THE DENTIST

A dental check-up is advisable before travel to developing countries or prolonged travel to remote areas. This is particularly important for people with chronic or recurrent dental problems.

6. PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

Any traveler with a chronic illness should carry a sufficient supply of medication for the entire duration of the trip in their hand luggage. The name and contact details of their physician should be carried on their person with other travel documents, together with information about the medical condition and treatment, and details of medications (generic drug names included) and prescribed doses. A physician's letter certifying the necessity for any drugs or other medical items (e.g. syringes) is recommended to assist with the entrance procedures by customs officials.

7. EPI PENS

Due to Massachusetts state laws, our trip leaders do not carry extra epi pens in their first aid kits. If your participant carries an epi-pen at home, it is very important that they bring two on their program.

8. CALL YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY

As part of the ICEP tuition, the Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA will purchase an international travel insurance policy, including evacuation and major medical, for each participant. This policy is supplemental to your family's medical insurance coverage, and will not cover routine visits to a doctor. We strongly encourage you to review your policy with your own medical insurance agent to see what, if any, medical treatment will be covered outside of the United States and what documentation they will require. We recommend Travel and Service Program participants carry an insurance card that clearly identifies the name of the insurance company and policy number.

9. POST TRIP HEALTH

On return from your trip, if you are not feeling well or have been injured, get medical attention, including psychological support and counseling, if necessary. It is especially important for you to get health care if you have a fever, rash, cough or difficulty breathing, or any other unusual symptoms. If you are returning from malaria risk areas and become sick with a fever or flu-like illness for up to 1 year after your return, get immediate medical attention and be sure to tell the doctor or healthcare provider your travel history.

*Health care recommendations should come from a physician who can review the participant's health history. BecketChimney Corners YMCA staff are not health professionals and will not be able to provide medical advice or information on what others or we have done in the past.

All of the information listed above can be found online at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization.

a. CDC: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

b. WHO: <http://www.who.int/en/>

HEALTH PROCEDURES

Upon arrival at camp, participants will be asked to turn in all prescription and non-prescription medication to the health center. All medications must be in the original container, and prescribed medications must bear the pharmacy label which shows the prescription number, date filled, physician's name, name of medication, directions for use, and the participant's name. Requests for dosages which differ from the label or the recommended dosage for the teen's age/weight will only be accommodated with written instructions from a physician. Non-prescription medication must come in the original package with written permission from the parents/guardians. No medicine may be kept by any participant while at camp and while on program.

Health forms must be completed, signed and in camp's possession prior to arrival day in order for us to accept your teen. Participants without completed health forms will not be allowed to participate under any circumstances. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health requires that all participants be immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps and rubella. If your child is not vaccinated, please contact us. While at the Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA, most illnesses and injuries will be handled by BCCYMCA Health Services at the camps. Upon arrival, as well as before departure and upon their return, campers will be given a health screening. In addition, campers may be asked questions regarding their general health. When necessary, referrals Berkshire Medical Center for X-rays, further laboratory evaluation, subspecialty referral, or hospitalization will be available. The medical staff will contact you if your teen needs emergency care, new or additional medication, or in cases of extreme illness. In some cases, participants may receive medical treatment before a parent is contacted. Every effort will be made to give your teen the best possible care as well as keep you informed. The health service team will not contact you for routine visits to sick call, bumps and bruises, or mild illnesses.

Coverage of any medical, dental, prescription services or eyeglasses repair not provided by BCCYMCA Health Services are NOT included and will be the responsibility of the parents or their insurance providers through direct billing. When the group is out of camp, leaders will handle minor illnesses and injuries, as well as monitor and supervise participant administration of their medication. If further evaluation is needed, a visit to a clinic or the nearest doctor will be arranged, and the Travel and Service Program Director will notify parents. Program leaders have been trained in Wilderness First Aid and CPR.

INSURANCE

Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA requests that families submit a copy of their health insurance card prior to camper's arrival for orientation. It's a good idea to call your health insurance provider and check on out-of-state/country health coverage. Any medical costs incurred on the trip will be initially paid for by the leaders on their BCCYMCA credit cards and billed to families post program. We recommend Travel and Service Program participants carry an insurance card that clearly identifies the name of the insurance company and policy number.

ICEP: Most US based health insurance companies will not cover overseas medical costs. As part of the ICEP fee, an international travel health and evacuation insurance policy will be purchased by the YMCA for each participant. This policy is supplemental to your family's medical insurance coverage. You will receive information describing this policy in the spring. We strongly encourage you to review this policy with your own medical insurance agent. Please note that traveler's insurance is secondary to any other insurance you obtain.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

All TSP staff members have been selected based upon their ability to work effectively with teens. We go to great lengths in our staff training program to teach staff positive discipline techniques that guide and encourage teens, as well as how to create clear boundaries and expectations of behavior.

At all times staff are guided by the principle that all youth and adults deserve to be treated in a respectful and caring manner. Campers are expected to treat fellow campers and staff with respect and to abide by all established rules. Rules are initially established and discussed during the orientation period. Each individual is accountable for their own actions. Campers are expected to participate in a wide variety of daily duties such as setting up and breaking down camp sites, preparation and clean-up of meals, and maintaining the cleanliness of their lodges/program space and vehicles in which they are transported.

If behavioral problems do arise, parents will be consulted and a plan for behavior management will be developed. In the event the camper's behavior does not improve after reasonable avenues of intervention have been explored, or when one camper's actions are detracting from the experience of others, the camper will be sent home.

There are some actions that require immediate dismissal from TSP programs. We term these offenses as, "Non-Negotiables." These actions include but are not limited to: smoking, possession or use of tobacco products, consumption or possession of alcohol and/or illegal drugs, sexual activity, anything illegal, or endangerment of self or others.

Campers will hear directly from TSP staff about the non-negotiable rules as well as BCCYMCA expectations for behavior on program during orientation. Campers sent home because of behavioral problems will not be entitled to any refund of fees and parents will be responsible for any additional transportation costs incurred. Campers dismissed for behavioral reasons will not be invited to participate in BCCYMCA programs the following summer. **Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA programs are not designed for nor is the staff trained to handle campers with severe emotional disturbances, chemical dependency, violent behavior, or campers who routinely violate rules and policies.**

SWIMMING

Swimming is not a main activity of TSP programs; however, some programs in warmer climates do have opportunities for swimming. If there will be swimming on the program, Travel and Service Program participants are given a swim assessment on the first day they arrive at camp, similar to normal in-camp procedures. As a result of his/her performance during the assessment, swim levels will be determined and will regulate where participants can swim and what equipment they might use. In all programs, swimming will take place only with lifeguards present.

FOOD

During orientation and debrief, groups will eat in respective camp dining halls. Types of meals and meal options on trip will vary based on the program. We make every effort with our partners, leaders, and host YMCA organizations in the U.S. and abroad to ensure that well-balanced and nutritious meals are provided to our participants. In order to help us serve your teen better, we request that you notify us of any special dietary considerations of which you would like us to be aware. For this purpose, we ask that parents/guardians fill out the online camper wellness form thoroughly.

There may be a number of situations in which participants will encounter foods and dishes which are quite different from what they would usually eat at home. This is but one aspect of the whole experience, and participants are encouraged to be open to new eating habits and to try new dishes when they are offered to them. While our program hosts will make efforts to accommodate special dietary needs, we do ask that you understand that in many situations, choices and availability of food may be limited. It is especially important that you inform us of any eating irregularities, so that our staff can be aware of the situation and be prepared to handle it effectively.

Vegetarian options will always be available, although they may not be what your teen is expecting. Every host will provide the group with a vegetarian option based on their cuisine.

In accordance with camp policy, we ask your cooperation in not sending or bringing candy or other food items to camp.

SPIRITUALITY / CHAPEL / GRACE

Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA's core values are community, commitment, belonging, and compassion. As part of the Travel and Service Program orientation, your teen might participate in some of the all-camp programs, like Chapel, which is a non-religious service held in each camp every Sunday.

While at camp, a grace is offered at each meal. Grace is chosen by the camp staff and reflects the diverse spiritual community of our camps.

Due to the cultural educational component of Travel and Service Programs, participants may experience spiritual practices different from their own faith. All participants are required to attend all of the program components of their specific program.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & TEAMWORK

One of the main goals of a TSP trip is to help participants develop a better understanding of their leadership strengths and how they contribute to a positive group dynamic. TSP uses program activities, written goal setting, and one-on-one mentor meetings with leaders to help guide participants towards stronger leadership skills. Orientation Activity

During the two-day orientation at camp, the TSP trip leaders will facilitate an activity to help participants identify their own natural leadership style. This activity is based off a leadership theory called Behavioral Interaction Styles.

Participants will gain a better understanding of what makes an effective leader and the vast variety of leadership qualities (e.g. not all leaders are extroverted, etc.), as well as leadership vocabulary to practice throughout the trip. The goal is for participants to not only learn about their own style, but also about the leadership make-up of the group. Key questions for participants to think about are: what leadership style is your strongest? How does your leadership style change depending on who you are with – are you the same with your closest friends as you are in front of a class of peers? Who do you identify as a good leader – which leadership styles do they practice most? Leadership Record (CCR) and Mentoring

During orientation, trip leaders will also introduce participants to the TSP Participant Leadership Record. This is how participants and leaders will document leadership goals and progress throughout the program. Leaders will meet formally with participants three times throughout the trip to have one-on-one conversations about leadership growth, goals for the program, and any issues or concerns that might come up on program. These meetings can be a very helpful time to give and receive specific feedback on how the trip is going. Demonstrating Leadership on Program*

*Derived in part from the National Outdoor Leadership School, for more information visit

http://www.nols.edu/about/leadership/leadership_roles.shtml

Self-Leadership

While on program, participants will be asked to demonstrate leadership on a day-to-day basis through Self Leadership. Self-Leadership means being aware of your needs and making choices that promote your health and happiness. For a TSP participant this can include staying hydrated, getting enough sleep, eating healthy food, fostering positive relationships, etc. It also means demonstrating an awareness of how a participant's actions affect others in the group.

Active Followership

Throughout the program we are also looking for participants to demonstrate leadership in the form of Active Followership. Active Followership means helping to support the Leader of the Day and taking initiative to support a positive group experience. This includes but is not limited to: helping others, noticing a task or problem and doing something about it, contributing to group discussions, and generating ideas. Leader of the Day

Participants will be designated the Leader of the Day, or the LOD, at least once over the course of their program.

Participants may be working on their own as the LOD or paired with a peer as co-LODs. On the program, an itinerary has been established ahead of time to give structure to every day. As the LOD, their responsibility is to look at the itinerary and work with the trip leaders, the host or service partners, and his/her fellow group members to help ensure the day runs smoothly. The days a participant is responsible for could be as varied as a day-long service project in the pouring rain, getting the group organized and to a train station for an overnight commute, having a completely unscheduled day that needs to be planned out, or perhaps a day where the group is only together for a few hours to volunteer in a Kindergarten classroom before returning to separate homestay families. Regardless of the day's events, participants will be asked to delegate tasks to their peers to help with the day's responsibilities and will have an opportunity to lead Cabin Chat or group debriefs.

We encourage participants to start looking for leadership opportunities at home, in school, on the playing field, and in youth organizations. We encourage all TSP participants to reach out to peers and adults to get their views on

leadership and take time to think about the following questions before the summer: ● What does leadership mean to me?

- Think of a few people you consider good leaders. How were these people similar? How were they different? What specific skills or characteristics did each person have?
- What are some skills I already have that make me a good leader?

PACKING

Packing lists are emailed to families and available for viewing and download in the Document Center in your UltraCamp account.

Clothing and Equipment

TSP packing lists have been thoroughly vetted by participants on our programs and include items that past groups have found helpful and/or necessary. We encourage families to stick to the packing guidelines and contact us with any questions. Keep in mind that our trips are not rugged experiences, and it is not necessary to buy top of the line equipment for these experiences. Typically, items and clothing that participants have at home will work fine on a program; however, there are a few essential items for each program (e.g. sleeping bag, rain jacket, hiking boots) that are marked as important on the packing list. Many of these items can be borrowed from friends or bought for significantly less at less expensive retailers.

Participants who bring drugs, weapons, alcohol, drug paraphernalia or cigarettes to camp will be dismissed from the program.

Personal Property

The Becket-Chimney Corners YMCA assumes no responsibility for loss or damage by any cause to personal property of participants. Travel and Service Program participants are responsible for their belongings. We strongly encourage participants to think carefully about the items they bring on program. Thefts have occurred on past trips and it is important that if participants choose to bring valuable items, they know they are ultimately responsible for caring for them on program.

COMMUNICATION

TSP participants are allowed to bring a cell phone with them on program. However, it is not required. Access to phones will be on a limited basis. We expect participants to respect the rules of using a cell phone on program. We ask that you refrain from using social media to protect the privacy of you and your group. TSP participants are responsible for keeping their belongings safe and secure. BCCYMCA will not be responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged cell phones.

Aside from the use of cell phones/wifi, there are plenty of ways for participants to contact home over the summer:

Mail: Leaders can help participants purchase stamps on the program so they can write home if they choose to. Parents will also be provided mailing addresses so they can mail letters to campers throughout the program. The mailing of packages will not be allowed.

Phone/Skype/Zoom: Campers will be given opportunity to make calls home a few times throughout the program. Not all participants choose to call home and leaders will not regulate who has called and who has not. We strongly encourage parents to be flexible with their expectations for communicating with their child. Typically, not hearing from participants means they are immersed in the program (which is a wonderful thing!). We encourage families to assume they will not hear from their participant and be pleasantly surprised if and when they do. For ICEP, we encourage participants and parents to set up a Zoom or Skype account. Most trips will have occasional access to computers and will be able to make phone calls home.

Email Updates: TSP staff will update parents throughout the program via email. Parents will receive notification of when the group has arrived safely after flying and will then get email updates roughly once per week on what the group is

doing. Consistency of these emails will depend on how often the group has access to email, but on average, most groups will be able to email once per week. TSP will also update parents of other pertinent information such as major flight delays, major itinerary changes, etc.

Health/Emergency Communication

TSP leaders will carry cell phones on the program for emergency use and to connect with administration staff and program contacts. In the case of an emergency with a participant, leaders will contact TSP staff as soon as able. TSP staff will then reach out to parents using contact information listed on the health card to inform them of the situation and coordinate future contact between parents and the participant. Please note: any time participants are taken to higher level medical care (even for minor issues), TSP staff will contact parents regardless of the time of day/night. Just because we call, it does not necessarily mean there has been a major emergency.

If an emergency has occurred at home and parents need to connect with participants, they should contact TSP staff on the on-call cell phones (these numbers will be given at the check-in). **The quickest and most direct way to get in touch with participants is to call the on-call cell phones.** Not only is it the quickest way to reach participants in an emergency, but it is also important that the Travel and Service Programs office understands anything that is influencing the TSP experience. Our leaders can deal with problems much better if they are aware of them from the start.

Aside from emergency communication, BCCYMCA encourages parents to reach out to us as needed throughout the summer if you have a concern. We would much rather discuss an issue when it is small than wait until families feel really nervous.

VISAS

All participants traveling to New Zealand will need a visa to enter the country. All visa application fees are included in the tuition and parents are not responsible for applying for the visa online.

ACCREDITATION

Camp Becket and Chimney Corners Camp are accredited by the American Camping Association.

Camp Becket and Chimney Corners Camp comply with regulations of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and are licensed by the Town of Becket Department of Public Health.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If there is something that we forgot to put on the camper wellness form, what should we do?

You can update your health information on your online account. If you have a specific concern that you would like to speak to an administrator about, please contact Brittany James at bjames@bccymca.org or 413-623-8991 ext.176. It is critical that we are aware of any health concerns your child may have. We can accommodate many health needs, but we must know in advance of the program.

Who is responsible for medication?

Our leaders tend to get stopped at customs if they are carrying 14 different medications in all different names; therefore, campers are responsible for carrying their own medications through the airport. The ICEP participant will turn in any medication to the infirmary while the group is in camp. Our leaders will be responsible for medication administration. Participants will be responsible for their medications while traveling through the airports.

Can you get refills for prescriptions easily in host countries?

No. Make sure that the ICEP participant has enough medication to last the entire program and some extra just in case. Bring along a doctor's prescription for medication and glasses and bring medications in their original containers. It is easier to bring extra than to obtain more in a different country.

Are the destinations wheelchair accessible?

In most cases the level of accessibility is not as good as in the United States. However, most tourist destinations will be accessible, and we will be able to work with our YMCA partners to find the best accommodations with host families.

Can you accommodate vegetarians or other dietary needs?

Yes. Make sure that you inform TSP BEFORE you arrive at camp. That way we can inform homestay families and our YMCA partners to avoid any cultural misunderstandings. This is also true for any other food concerns including allergies.

What is the screening process for homestay families?

Our YMCA partners will help us identify families that are members of their YMCA or are personally known by their staff or volunteers. All families go through an orientation to learn about BCCYMCA homestay guidelines. Homestay guidelines include supervision requirements, approved/unapproved activities, transportation restrictions, etc. Our partners understand that ideally, we would like children to be present in the home, but this can vary depending on the country and year. It's important to understand that every homestay experience is different depending on the family. Families may come from various socio-economic backgrounds, hold differing religious beliefs, or have hobbies that are different from your own. Each family is screened by the local YMCA and participates in a Child Abuse Prevention training in their native language provided by BCCYMCA. During the actual homestay, our leaders will call each of the host families to make sure that the experience is going well. If you have any allergies, including to pets, please be sure to update your health forms so we can accommodate your needs in a homestay.

Do the homestay families speak English?

Some families will speak English, but not all. Since we are visiting their country, it is important for ICEP participants to try to speak the host country language. We recommend buying a phrase book and practicing before your arrival at camp. ICEP leaders will help participants prepare for how to navigate their homestay experience without a shared language.

What will group members do in their homestays?

This is the part of the program that differentiates our program from a tourist experience, and where our campers get to experience the daily lives of families in another culture. Meal times, short hikes, and personal tours of a local family's favorite part of their community are where you will learn the "real" culture of the country. It is important that campers actively participate and be willing to make a sincere effort to try new things, especially the language of the country you are visiting.

Will my participant be with another participant during the homestay? Our Host YMCAs will make an effort to accommodate both individual and paired homestays, depending on the preference of our ICEP families. We cannot however guarantee a particular placement as this really depends on the flexibility of our hosts. Please notify TSP ASAP if you have a strong preference and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Do ICEP participants meet during the day while on their homestay?

ICEP participants will get together some of the days to do group activities. Based on past itineraries, we expect that participants will get together at least every third day during a homestay and usually more frequently.

Have participants ever been expelled from the ICEP program?

Yes – BCCYMCA is very mindful of the risks associated in international travel programs and will not tolerate behavior that threatens the well-being or experience of a participant, the group, or our hosts. It is essential as a participant of the Travel and Service Programs that you are a positive ambassador for BCCYMCA and the United States. TSP has a set of 5 non-negotiable rules that if broken, will result in immediate expulsion from the program: Drinking alcohol, smoking, anything additionally illegal, sexual activity, and sneaking out. Participants have been sent home for other issues including health problems, disrespectful behavior, or disengagement from the program. It is our priority to ensure that these trips are positive experiences, and we reserve the right to remove any participant from a program who we feel is violating our guidelines.

What type of travel insurance does the YMCA provide and what should the participants have?

BCCYMCA will purchase travelers' insurance for each participant which covers their time overseas. Coverage amounts will be shared with ICEP families. If you are not satisfied with the amount of coverage, we recommend you contact your own insurance company or purchase additional coverage. Families will need their own insurance for the time spent on camp during orientation and debrief.

BCCYMCA will also carry evacuation insurance for each of the ICEP participants. This will cover the costs for evacuating a participant or the entire group from the host country and also basic medical procedures.

How much “free” time will the participants have in cities?

Program itineraries are designed by our hosts and most days will be filled with service projects and cultural activities. There will be down time each day for participants to rest and spend time with the group. Additionally, each itinerary will have scheduled free days where the ICEP group will get to choose activities to do together. Occasionally, ICEP participants will be allowed to explore an area (e.g. a mall, market, section of a city) with defined parameters in groups of 4 or more. Trip leaders will prep participants for this experience and make sure they know what to do in case of emergency.

What is the YMCA’s policy on swimming?

Swimming is only permitted when there is a BCCYMCA certified lifeguard present or host lifeguard with certifications approved under the American Camp Association.

What are the mailing addresses?

The mailing addresses will be available at camp check-in.

What will the weather be like on my program?

For programs located below the equator (New Zealand, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay) it will be winter when you are on your trip. Temperatures tend to be in the 50s – 60s and can drop down to the 40s at night. Sweden will experience similar weather conditions to summer time in the Berkshires. Japan and Spain can be very hot and humid during the summer.

Who is responsible for the participant’s passport?

Each participant is responsible for their own passport. They will need it to change money and use it as identification during the entire program. The leaders will check with the participants regularly to assure the safety of this important document. We will keep a copy to assist in replacing a lost passport. Please be sure you have a copy of your passport at home as well.

What if I lose my passport?

We have experienced lost passports on programs and the process is manageable but does require additional paperwork. We encourage parents to have a copy of the participant’s birth certificate on hand along with passport (or ID) copies of both parents. This will help speed up the process if a passport is lost. Additionally, if a participant is adopted or has single parent custody, it is helpful to have a copy of this paperwork on hand to prove legal guardianship.

What is appropriate dress in host countries?

You will be representing the BCCYMCA and it’s important to be presentable to show respect as a tourist. Clothes that are ripped/dirty send a negative message that is culturally confusing and disrespectful. While locals may not comment on your attire, they may still feel offended. ICEP programs will often visit schools and orphanages which tend to be a lot more formal than those in the US. Wearing clean clothes is important and it is good to cover their shoulders and avoid short shorts. For more information, please see the packing lists.

Does camp provide bottled water where needed? Yes.

What does the YMCA recommend for luggage?

You are welcome to pack in either a backpack, duffle bag (rolling is required), or suitcase; however you must be able to carry all of your belongings at one time and be able to negotiate transfers from buses to the airport and short distances throughout the program. It would be a good idea to bring a small daypack as a carry-on bag for the airplane and to use to carry personal belongings on a day hike.

What are the service projects in each destination?

The goal of all service work on ICEP is to provide an opportunity for our participants to learn about the culture they are visiting. We are not there to fix problems, and this is important for all ICEP participants to understand. We work with our partners to provide a service to the host community that may change from year to year. Currently our partners are setting up service projects for the coming summer – we will have more information for families and participants during our webinars.

We try our best for each program to have a balance of physical and social projects, but some programs may be weighted towards one or the other. Common service projects across our programs have included working with children in schools or orphanages, minor construction, weeding or tree planting, and working with the elderly.

How many hours of community service are there in each destination?

Most programs average between 20-50 hours of service, but it varies year to year.

What type of sleeping bag do we need on ICEP?

Sleeping bags with stuff sacks are easier to pack on an ICEP program and usually can fit right into your backpack.

There is no need to buy the top-of-the-line, -100 degree bag, unless you plan to do some serious arctic camping after ICEP. A 20-degree bag will do just fine. Spain and Japan will not require sleeping bags on program because of the heat, but it is helpful to bring one for your time at camp.

What type of camera should the ICEP participant bring?

While it is important to document this extraordinary experience, families must also remember that anything expensive tends to draw attention and may end up broken or missing. A small camera or disposable cameras work just fine for this program. You can choose to bring the more expensive camera, just make sure that you take care of it and are willing to cope with any consequences. Our leaders will be carrying digital cameras and will give families access to the photos post program.

How much money should a participant bring on ICEP? What do they have to spend money on?

We recommend bringing no more than \$300 on TSP. The YMCA pays for all program expenses and meals. The ICEP participant only needs money for souvenirs, gifts, and additional snacks.

Are traveler's checks the best currency or credit/debit cards?

We highly encourage participants to bring MasterCard or VISA debit cards that can work both as a credit card and to access money from an ATM. Talk to your bank to discuss options for getting a card for a minor. We discourage traveler's checks and VISA gift cards as we have found them difficult to use overseas. Some countries have slightly different requirements – check your packing list for more information.

Can I bring an instrument like a guitar?

Yes! That is a great way to share your own culture. If the added weight is a problem for you, just let us know and we will see if it is possible for our YMCA counterpart to supply the instrument.

Will we get a more detailed itinerary?

A more detailed itinerary will be sent out prior to your arrival at camp.

How are the leaders selected?

Each program is led by two caring and competent adults. We look for leaders who are positive role models for young teens and understand the objectives of our Travel & Service Programs. They must be mature, responsible, and able to problem-solve effectively. TSP leader candidates complete a written application, submit three references, and are interviewed by the TSP Directors. Each leader is required to get certified in CPR, Wilderness First Aid, and Lifeguarding (if there is swimming on program). All leaders participate in an additional 9 day training program prior to the beginning of their trip.