

Camp Skyline
Almont, MI
42°53'53" N 83°05'22" W

England 3724 mi

8597 mi New Zealand

Polska
Poland 4461 mi

1873 mi México
Mexico

Haiti 1792 mi

España
Spain 3938 mi

Deutschland
Germany 4189 mi

Česká republika
Czech Republic 4320 mi

9635 mi Australia



WORTH
THE
JOURNEY

Greetings, Team Skyline!

As many of you know, we have a habit of putting meaningful expressions on our camper and staff shirts each year; often they are camp song lyrics. This year we were embracing a theme of Journey. Our camper shirts boasted the quasi-English lyric “Everything’s learny, we’re all on a journey...”. We bring this notion to the campers’ attention with reminders throughout their camp experience that every little incident, accident, interaction, and exploration can be an opportunity to learn. It may be that our version of “everything is a teachable moment” is “everything’s learny!”



Lara from Germany shared her kindness and patience with campers and staff alike.



Harrison from Australia was very popular with the day campers.

Our staff shirts featured a sketch version of the signpost pictured on the cover of this newsletter, accompanied by the phrase “Worth the Journey.” Skyline has welcomed international staff for many summers – but this year we had the broadest diversity of origins ever. Every one of the nations marked on that signpost was represented, along with US-based counselors from as close as one mile away, all the way to Chicago to the west and New Jersey to the east.

To celebrate this breadth of the human community, we tried special meals throughout the summer that were influenced or adopted from the home countries of the counselors. We displayed a collection of national flags in the dining hall, and added a variety of programming so campers could learn about those countries.

We want to thank those Team Skyline folks who created great experiences for our international staff. They visited beaches, islands, museums, and even did a little salsa dancing. It really helped to augment the camp experience and made the whole undertaking “Worth the Journey.”



Julio from Spain brought his creativity and a passion for music.



Vanessa from Mexico planned and hosted the all-camp event, “Mexico Party.”

The international staff come on a J1 Cultural Exchange Visa, a decades-strong program which creates opportunities for foreign nationals to both give and receive rich cultural experiences in the United States. Of course, the campers delight in the accents, stories and personalities that come along, but the aspect of the program which excites me most is how our campers become ambassadors to the world just by being themselves. Is there anything better than a diverse bunch of Skyline campers to show off the very best of who we are? I don’t think so!

Matt Henry

Matt Henry
Executive Director



Tomasz from Poland spread joy all around camp.

100 BUSINESSES WHO CARE

When Aryn Zwierzchowski asked to represent Skyline at the Detroit area networking event called 100 Businesses Who Care (100BWC), of course we said “Yes,” but we weren’t clinging to big expectations. The event brings together business people who come with a charitable organization in mind- and a \$500 check. They each drop their business card in a jar, from which a handful are randomly selected. Those selected have five minutes to convince the crowd that their organization of choice is the worthiest for the accumulated donation! The chances of being drawn out of the jar are so slim, there was nothing really to get worked up about.

When Aryn called one late April morning and said, “Guess what?“, our collective jaws hit the floor! As soon as she said that her business card was drawn out, I knew what was coming next, because Aryn’s enthusiasm for Skyline is personal and broad and deep. Aryn worked for Skyline for several as our Business Administrator, and for many years now has been a camper parent. Her two young adult sons are campers in our special needs camps each summer. Because of Aryn’s unbridled enthusiasm and deep understanding of Skyline’s purpose, it was a no-brainer that the 100BWC participants would vote for Skyline.

We celebrated during Camp Joy with Aryn, a couple of Skyline Board Members and the leaders of 100BWC. Quite a few of the campers wanted to take the nearly \$50,000 check home with them!

During the October meeting of 100BWC, Skyline Executive Director Matt Henry was able to express our thanks in person and share a little of what Skyline is doing and how we are growing. Thank you Aryn for being our champion in the community!



Molly from England and Kate from New Zealand, showing off their moose antlers.



Juli from the Czech Republic shared her love of art and nature as our MakerSpace Queen.



Dani from Haiti shared her culture with our campers through games.



Natalie from New Zealand was an excellent return counselor who will come back in 2020 as the Day Camp Counselor.

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

BUILDING INTO TOMORROW

Skyline's Capital Campaign progresses with some important accomplishments to celebrate, and some exciting possibilities ahead. The north deck on the Dining Hall has already served two summers of hungry campers, having been built largely by Team Skyline volunteers during our 2018 Spring into Summer Work Weekend. The 1350 square foot deck was additionally graced with a 40' x 20' frame canopy with thanks to First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham's First Foundation.



Our two new cabins near the pool, now named Sun and Moon (pictured at the bottom of this page), were in full use this summer for our family camp, overnight camps and band camps. Nearby is our new MakerSpace Hub (see article on opposite page). This 24' x 20' structure (also built by Team Skyline volunteers) serves both a storage and staging function. Campers gather materials, ideas, and encouragement before settling at the tables under the canopy and letting their creativity flourish.



Our current efforts on the project front focus on adding staff housing. Skyline's growth demands the possibility of more on-site staff and we're presently in the various steps of seeking approvals from our township zoning board to proceed.



Skyline received a wonderful boost of almost \$50,000 from the 100 Businesses Who Care networking group, with thanks to our community champion Aryn Zwierzchowski (former staff, current camper parent). This award boosted the campaign, which has now raised 60% of the original \$200,000 target.

To those donors and pledgers that have brought us this far: **Thank you!**

To those who wish to help Skyline's continued strengthening and long-term sustainability, please reach out to executive director Matt Henry to learn how you can participate in this vital mission.



Moon Cabin (left) and Sun Cabin (right)



MOST CAMPERS EVER

Our camper registration numbers almost hit 800 in 2019! That marks the eighth year consecutively for us to be able to say "Most Campers Ever!" We're not aiming at a particular number, we're simply growing as it makes sense to do so and as our capacity allows. Our campers enjoy sessions across a few different categories: special needs overnight camps, typical needs overnight camps and day camps, trip camps and leadership development. We also count

our season-beginning family camp which is always a delightful way to begin the summer. Thanks to all who participated - campers, families, staff - in this wonderful camp season!



Feedback from 2019 Camper Parents:

"Camp Skyline's nurturing climate has provided my children with a joyous summer experience. I appreciate the efforts of all involved for striving to maintain an environment of acceptance and love. Thank you."

"The staff are all incredibly kind, caring, and compassionate. I always felt comfortable dropping my son off, everyone is like family. I tend to be overly protective and my son was always treated as if he was one of their own. Truly a wonderful place and so much outdoor fun and amazing lifelong learning experiences."

MAKERSPACE

We moved out of the tent! For several summer seasons now we've been operating our MakerSpace program (think: arts & crafts with more interesting resources and wide open creative freedom) from an 18' x 18' military tent. It kept people and materials dry, but it was only ever meant as a temporary measure as Skyline continued to grow.

Late in 2018, we broke ground on a peculiar structure down behind the pool area. Our Team Skyline Work Weekend (Spring Into Summer!) turned it from a plan to a reality, and we were able to polish it off just in time for the summer season. The MakerSpace Hub, as we call it, is a combination of a storage and staging area. Campers come in and gather from a huge array of creative resources and work on projects on the adjacent picnic tables.



We want to give a special thank you to Skyline Board Member Cathy Waller whose penchant for labelling and organizing found a wonderful chance to bring the Hub up to speed. And the most enormous thank you to counselor Juli Felixova (returning from the Czech Republic) who staffed MakerSpace all summer long, tweaking and perfecting the organization, adding beautiful artwork, and truly earning the title of MakerSpace Queen.

WILD CHILD'S SECOND YEAR

Skyline's Wild Child program is now in its second year! The program is for 3- and 4-year olds and runs in the fall, winter, and spring. We spend each morning building community through shared experiences and playing in nature. The campers' favorite places at camp are the farm, the climbing pine trees, the mud kitchen, and the Zone. Each week we have new adventures and try new things like picking apples to make applesauce over the fire and becoming nature detectives to observe seasonal changes. We also bring food scraps to the pigs and give them belly rubs, run the sheep out to pasture, go on yoga hikes, and so much more! Each day with our campers has been a delight and we are so glad the program is continuing to grow. Along with the joy in working with the campers we are so grateful for the parents that trust us to care for their children.



Here is some feedback from our first year Wild Child parents:

"I cannot say enough about how much we all love the program at Skyline. The learning experience and joy my kids receive at school makes my heart happy. I love the photos and the book that was put together for the kids. The letter I received about both boys made me cry more than you know just because it showed how much Erin and Liz and everyone else at Skyline knows my children."



"Extremely friendly and caring staff. There's nothing like letting your child experience nature and all it's benefits at such a young age. Let them grow up to appreciate nature and all of its greatness. If we want children to be the difference we have to teach them outside of the box. The Wild Child program is totally outside of the box! They will forever be tested, compared and pushed while growing up, let them enjoy the simplicity of being a child while secretly learning. I highly recommend the Wild Child program at Skyline and can not wait for my children to grow up with memories of spending their childhood there."

We still have spaces available for our winter and spring seasons. Please contact Erin at erin@campskyline.org for more information.

CELEBRATING A DECADE!

Skyline is proud to celebrate the long-standing commitment of many of our staff. This year we are delighted to say that both Debra Mannion and Kendra Erard accomplished the milestone of a decade on Skyline's staff. Deb is one of our cooks, often found in the wee hours flipping pancakes and scrambling eggs for our campers and guests. Kendra, our Guest Services Coordinator, graces us with elaborate desserts and decorations as she oversees the kitchen and housekeeping operations.

Keeping in the family spirit, both of Deb's children, Cody and Brianna, have been past members of staff, and Kendra's grandmother, Lana, is approaching 15 years as a Skyline cook. With Kendra's daughters often at camp, we enjoy quite the generational span!

Deb and Kendra: congratulations on this milestone and thanks for your love and service to Skyline over these many years!



THESE TREES

Counselor Emma Steele (summer staff 2015 & 2019) just finished her degree in Natural Resource Management and wanted to offer Skyline a lasting gift. In addition to blazing a new trail with staff and campers from Cabin 8 to the road this summer, Emma surveyed the land to identify ten different tree stands and two individual trees that camp could use as gathering places. She worked with Skyline neighbor and supporter Paul Kerchen who created the signs. Emma then worked with campers to install some of the signs and finished the job in September.



We sing about trees a lot at camp and find that when you name something, it is easier to give it love and respect. So next time you come to camp, go on a walk and track down **Mulberry Hideaway** or **White Birch Wetland**. If you venture farther out, look for **Tulip Tree Town**, **Red Pine Plaza**, **SassafRAS Station**, **White Pine Way**, **Quaking Aspen Avenue**, **Ironwood Boulevard**, **Cedar Circle**, or **Sugar Land**. The **Wild Apple Tree** is a very busy climbing tree at our campfires and the **Sugar Maple Tree** is the gathering place for Wild Child and for our summer campers, also a major climbing achievement.

Thank you Emma and Paul for this beautiful addition to camp!

IN OTHER NEWS...



Did you know that you can shop Skyline any time? Our camp store is now more than the handful of items squeezed onto the shelves of the dining hall office! When you visit www.campskyline.org/camp-store, you can create customized sizes and colors with a variety of Skyline designs on shirts, hats, outerwear and more!



Our 2020 Calendar is here!

This year's calendar features Skyline's beautiful and varied trees throughout the seasons.

Order yours online at:

www.campskyline.org/camp-store
\$10 each or 3 for \$25

This fall season sees Skyline investing in a lot of new mattresses. Every mattress in the Lodge, and all the lower bunk mattresses in Focus Hall are being replaced after many years of good service. If anyone has a need for dozens of used mattresses, we might be able to help you out!

A note about your name and address...

A perennial challenge for Skyline has been maintaining efficient and accurate data lists. The overlapping messy mix of alumni, donors, current families, former staff etc., are finally all coming under one technological roof, with our CampMinder database. Sometimes the name, address and other details merge inconsistently, producing some errors. We apologize for any such errors and request any corrections from you. We are looking forward to the easier handling of all of this information as we move forward.



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THANK YOU!

Our wonderful donors made camp possible this summer for scores of children and adults. The 100 Campers to Camp Campaign raised over two-thirds of its target, and since not every camper needs a full campership amount, we were able to stretch our support to enable more than 150 campers to be here with that generosity. That's the shiny side of the coin; the other side is that when we fall short, we have to make sacrifices in areas of maintenance and development, so please do continue to share about Skyline among your friends and family, and we will continue to grow stronger for our campers in the years to come.

