



# **YMCA Camp Minikani Explorer / Expedition Handbook**



Dear Families,

We look forward to working with you in order to ensure a fun and enriching experience for your teenager this summer. This guide will help prepare your teen for Explorer Camps at YMCA Camp Minikani. **Please read and save this guide**, as it will be a useful resource when questions arise in the coming months.

For more than 40 years, the Explorer program has been the ultimate summer camp experience. Explorers begin their session at Minikani in preparation for a trip to Wisconsin's northern woods or the Rocky Mountains in Colorado. Your teenager will learn to cook their meals, hike and camp outdoors. These experiences will provide them with confidence, independence and enough tenacity to overcome life obstacles for years to come.

Each summer, more than 300 teens take a trip led by counselors who were once Explorers themselves. Staff members are selected for their maturity, character and leadership capabilities, as well as their desire to be positive a role model for your teenager. Most of the counselors on the trip were once Explorers at Minikani and have been trained through our extensive three-year Leadership Training program.

We are excited to share these aspects of Minikani with your family this summer. If you have any questions that are unanswered in this guide, please feel free to call or email the office at 262-251-9080 or [minikani@ymcamke.org](mailto:minikani@ymcamke.org).

In the Spirit of Minikani,

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## **Trip Program Descriptions**

### **Explorers Camp (Ages 13-14)**

Sessions offered: 1, 2, 3, 3B, 4

During their first week, Explorers learn wilderness and trip-planning skills taught by well-trained counselors and directors at Minikani. The entire group, including counselors and directors, then travels to Rhinelander to backpack, tent camp and canoe down the Wisconsin River. **Campers must be 13 by June 15.**

### **Master Explorers Camp (Ages 14-15)**

Sessions offered: 1B, 2B

Master Explorers spend their first week at camp in preparation for their second-week trip. Master Explorers travel to Little Sand Bay Campground in Bayfield, Wisconsin. From there, Master Explorers will kayak on Lake Superior and explore the Apostle Islands and its wildlife trails, rustic lighthouses and sandstone cliffs. Campers are accompanied by trained staff and a professional outfitter who safely guide the adventure. Spaces fill quickly for this popular program. **Campers must be 14 by June 15.**

### **Expedition (Ages 15-17)**

Session offered: 2

Camp Minikani goes to the Rocky Mountains! Campers will fly from Milwaukee to Denver for a two-week hiking and rafting trip. We work with YMCA Camp Chief Ouray staff to outfit and accompany campers on our adventures in the Rockies. Campers need to be prepared for the physical nature of this trip. The Expedition program is limited to 10 campers. Please call the camp office for details and to register. **Campers must be 15 by the first day of their session.**

### **Equestrian Explorers (ages 13-15)**

Session offered: 3

Equestrian Explorers learn important horseback riding and outdoor skills while forging new friendships during their first week at YMCA Camp Minikani. The second week, Equestrian Explorers and trained staff venture to the beautiful Northern Kettle Moraine, where they camp with the horses, trail ride, hike and enjoy the area lakes. **Campers must be 13 by June 15.**



## Trip Ability Requirements

Camp Minikani offers a variety of trip programs which require different levels of physical ability:

- The Explorer Program is a moderate trip experience. Campers participate in a two-day canoe trip, a full day of hiking and other wilderness-based activities at base camp near Rhinelander.
- The Master Explorer program is a bit more strenuous. Campers paddle for three full days on Lake Superior between the Apostle Islands, where conditions can be challenging. Campers are accompanied by trained staff and a professional outfitter who safely guide the adventure.
- The Expedition program is the most physically strenuous program we offer to campers. This program involves three days of whitewater rafting on the Colorado River and four days of backpacking in Rocky Mountain National Park.
- Equestrian Explorers: Extensive horse knowledge is not required; however, one completion of an equestrian camp or regular lessons are mandatory. Participants must be able to ride at the minimum of a walk and trot independently in an open setting.

Before registering your camper for a trip-based program, please have a conversation with them regarding the physical demands of the program in order to determine the best fit.

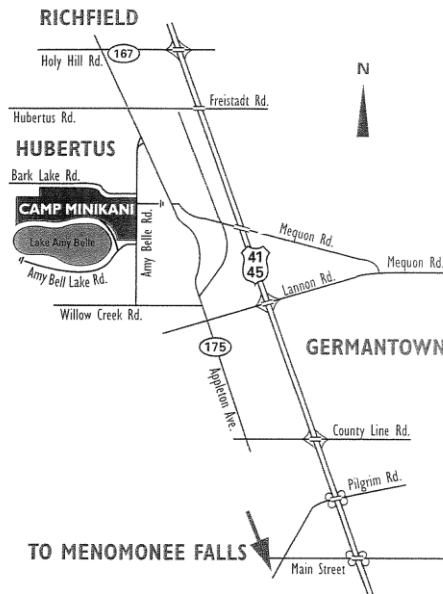


## YMCA Camp Minikani

875 Amy Belle Rd

Hubertus, WI 53033

262-251-9080



### Directions

YMCA Camp Minikani is located about 30 minutes from downtown Milwaukee at **875 Amy Belle Road in Hubertus, Wisconsin**. Please note that many GPS units and online maps may direct you to our Equestrian Center located at 860 Amy Belle Lane, which is on the **opposite side** of the grounds from the main entrance. Here are detailed directions to Minikani's main entrance:

#### From Milwaukee

- Take US-41/45 north from Milwaukee and exit on Lannon / Mequon Road.
- Go LEFT on Lannon Road to the second set of stoplights, which is Hwy 175 (Appleton Avenue).
- Turn RIGHT on Hwy 175 and proceed one block to Willow Creek Road.
- Turn LEFT on Willow Creek Road and drive west for about one mile to Amy Belle Road.
- Turn RIGHT on Amy Belle Road and go one mile to the camp entrance, which will be on your left (there is a large camp sign just after the driveway).

#### From the North

- Take US-41/45 south and exit on Lannon / Mequon Road.
- Go RIGHT on Lannon Road to the stoplights, which is Hwy 175 (Appleton Avenue).

- Turn RIGHT on Hwy 175 and proceed one block to Willow Creek Road.
- Turn LEFT on Willow Creek Road and drive west for about one mile to Amy Belle Road.
- Turn RIGHT on Amy Belle Road and go one mile to the camp entrance, which will be on your left (there is a large camp sign just after the driveway).

## **Camp Policies and Information**



Camp Minikani is accredited by American Camp Association by meeting more than 300 individual health, safety, and program quality standards. These standards establish criteria for program, personnel, transportation, administrative procedures, health care, food service, program activities and emergency procedures. Accreditation assures parents and campers that Minikani has been measured against national standards in the camping industry. We are proud to be among the 25 percent of accredited camps in the United States.

### **Behavior Expectations**

In order to promote a positive experience for everyone, campers are expected to behave appropriately while at Minikani. YMCA Camp Minikani has a strict policy against bullying and harmful behavior in order to ensure the physical and emotional safety of all campers. If behavioral issues arise, a director will work on a resolution with the camper and their parents or guardians.

Due to the nature of the trip and the importance of safety, it is very important that campers behave appropriately in their cabin groups. For this reason, if a camper is consistently displaying inappropriate or disruptive behavior at camp, they will not be permitted to continue with the trip portion of the session. If necessary, we will ask parents to pick-up their camper if bullying or behavior issues are a continuous problem. Please note that refunds will not be given in such cases.

### **Cabin Mate Requests**

The camp experience is intended to allow campers to make new friends and allow room for individual growth. Camp Minikani believes some of the best experiences occur while providing opportunities to step outside your comfort zone. For this reason, campers in the



Explorer, Master Explorer, Expedition, and Equestrian Explorer programs are not allowed to make cabin mate requests.

## **Payment and Camp Store Information**

### **Fees and Cancellation Policy**

At the time of registration, a \$100 deposit per week, per child must accompany a camper's registration and will be applied to the total camp fee. The remaining balance is due by May 1. We understand that circumstances change and should a camper be unable to attend camp, we will refund in full up until **March 1**. Camper's sessions may also be changed at no additional charge as long as there is availability in the desired session. A physician-authorized medical excuse is required for a refund of full camp fees (including the deposit) after May 1. In case of dismissal due to poor behavior or voluntary withdrawal (including homesickness), there is no refund of fees.

All late payments will be assessed a \$25 late fee. All registrations made after May 1 need to be paid in full at time of registration. There will be a \$30 charge for all returned (NSF) checks.

### **Financial Aid**

YMCA Camp Minikani is committed to making camp available to as many children as possible. Through the generosity of many donors, the YMCA Camp Minikani Annual Campaign provides funds to families that would otherwise not be able to send their child to camp. For financial assistance information, please contact our office at 262-251-9080. You may also contact us regarding donating to the Annual Campaign.

### **Payment Plans**

You may set scheduled payments before your balance is due by May 1. If you are interested in a payment plan, please contact the office at 262-251-9080.

### **Camp Store**

The Minikani Camp Store is fully stocked with tons of great apparel and souvenirs for our campers. The store is open at check-in and check-out so that parents and campers may make purchase decisions together.

## **Healthcare Information**

We have a well-equipped Health Center with a nurse onsite 24 hours per day. Counseling staff is also trained in emergency First Aid and CPR. Parents and guardians are contacted if the camper has any physical injury that is apparent or at all severe, such as scrapes or bruises. In case of sickness, campers may stay in the Health Center for no more than 24 hours. If deemed necessary, we will make arrangements to send sick campers home. If

campers are ill; have been exposed to a contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat or whooping cough in the last 24 hours; or have a temperature, we ask that they not be sent to camp.

In case of injury, health care staff will take necessary steps to ensure proper emergency care, which may include treatment by staff for minor injuries, phoning the parent for instructions, calling local EMS providers or transporting to a doctor or emergency care facility. If an emergency were to occur during the explorer trip, a director will contact you regarding the injury and location of the hospital. Emergency services will transport to the nearest hospital. Here are the hospitals near our basecamps:

- Equestrian Explorers
  - [Froedtert Kewaskum Health Center](#)
  - [Aurora Advanced Healthcare](#)
- Explorers
  - [Ascension St. Mary's Hospital](#)
  - [Tomahawk Sacred Heart Hospital](#)
- Master Explorers
  - [Memorial Medical Center](#)
  - [Red Cliff Community Health Center](#)
  - *If Flight For Life was needed for more serious injuries:*
    - [Essentia Health St. Mary's Hospital-Superior](#)
    - [St. Luke's Hospital](#)
- Expedition
  - [Middle Park Medical Center](#)

Parents must provide **complete emergency contact information and health history** on their online family account, located at [www.minikani.campbrainregistration.com](http://www.minikani.campbrainregistration.com). If parents will be travelling while their campers are at camp, please list an itinerary and phone numbers where they may be reached. In the event of an injury requiring medical attention,

we will make every attempt to contact the parents prior to treatment. In the event that parents are unable to be reached, we will have the health form on file, with parents' written authorization to treat the injury. Health forms are completed through the online family portal at [www.minikani.campbrainregistration.com](http://www.minikani.campbrainregistration.com).

### **Insurance**

Parents or guardians are responsible for all medical costs incurred because of injury or illness while children are at camp. Please upload a copy of your most recent insurance card to your online account.

### **Health Forms**

**All Campers MUST have a completed health form.** Campers are unable to attend camp without this form. Parents complete health paperwork through their existing online portal at [www.minikani.campbrainregistration.com](http://www.minikani.campbrainregistration.com). A physician must complete and sign the examination form indicating the camper has had a health exam less than 12 months prior to their session. Please call our office at 262-251-9080 if you have questions accessing or completing these forms.

### **Medications**

**Do not pack any medication in your camper's luggage.** All prescription and over the counter medications, vitamins and creams must be submitted to the health care staff in the original container with the licensed physician's instructions. Please place packaged medications in a clearly labeled bag (zip-lock bags work well), with camper's name, dosage and directions for administering on the Authorization to Administer Medications form, which you will complete and print through the [online family portal](#). All medications are administered by the camp health staff per the physician's instructions. All medications must be listed on the Authorization to Administer Medication form. Unused medications will be returned with the camper at check-out. Please note, unless taken on a daily basis, over-the-counter medications should not be brought to camp. The health care staff keeps a supply of common non-prescription medications on hand and will administer as necessary.

### **Meals/Dietary Restrictions**

Balanced meals are planned and served by the food service staff. Campers eat family-style meals in cabin groups in the dining hall. Cereal is available as an alternative to hot breakfast and a salad bar is available for lunch and dinner each day. In addition, vegetarian meals are prepared for our vegetarian staff and campers. Please include information about food allergies or special dietary restrictions (including if the camper is a vegetarian) on the electronic health form on the family portal. Peanuts are not used in any of our meals or

desserts due the high number of peanut allergies. Please contact the camp office to discuss further dietary concerns or accommodations.

### **Meals on the Trips**

While on trips, campers and staff will be burning more calories than normal from hiking, canoeing, kayaking and other strenuous excursions. We take this level of physical activity into account when planning full, well-rounded meals for their trip.

As an Explorer, campers will select and pack their own food with the help of the trips staff while at camp. Guides prepare food for the Master Explorers and Expedition trips. On the trip, they will work with their counselor to learn camping and cooking skills so they are ready to be an active and participatory member of the group while on their trip. Here are a few examples of self-prepared trip meals: **Oatmeal and fruit, pancakes, English muffins, pita pizzas, chicken quesadillas, and burgers.**

### **Dietary Restrictions on Trips**

Meals on the trip are planned to accommodate most dietary restrictions. All meals include a peanut-free option. Vegetarian options are also available (very few meals on the trip have meat as the main ingredient). **Peanuts may be available while campers are on trips.** If your camper has a serious nut allergy, please call the camp office to ensure our Explorer staff meets those needs. If your camper has any dietary restrictions that are not already accommodated by the meals provided, please contact the camp office so we may work with you to ensure your camper receives well-balanced meals on their trip.

### **Personal Food**

Campers may not carry or keep personal food in their tents under any circumstance due to the risk of attracting wild animals. If dietary restrictions require separate food, please contact the camp office. We will then ensure that this food is kept in an animal-safe location.

### **Lice Policy**

Camp Minikani maintains a strict lice- and nit-free policy for our campers and staff. All campers are checked for lice and nits within 4 hours of their arrival at Minikani. If lice or nits are found, staff will contact the parent or guardian and ask that they pick up their camper to be treated. Campers may return to camp 24 hours after being treated, if they are 100 percent lice and nit free. Camp Minikani recommends treatment by a lice specialist or through your family physician. We do not recommend over-the-counter lice treatment products as they are not always effective. Upon their return, the camp nurse will clear the camper before they may return to their group.

For a more detailed description of our policy or if you have any questions call the main office at 262-251-9080.

### **Tick Policy**

In the northern woods of Wisconsin, ticks are plentiful at the beginning of the summer. Wisconsin is home to both wood and deer ticks—the latter being more of a health concern. Deer ticks are the primary carriers of Lyme disease, which is a bacterial infection that affects the entire body. Before leaving for the Explorer trip, we spend time teaching your child about ticks, ways to prevent bites and how to examine oneself for ticks.

Checks occur three times per day in order to catch ticks before embedding in the skin. Should a tick be found embedded, the Explorer directors will transport the camper to a local hospital for removal. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns regarding tick procedures. Please also consider reading about tick prevention together by visiting [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme/).



### **Packing for Camp**

Consider a few non-material things to give your child before they attend Minikani. Prior to their arrival, share your enthusiasm for the new friends that they will meet or the new activities they will try.

Since the majority of camp play time is outdoors, please do not pack clothing that is too valuable to be dirty or stained. **Please mark all clothing and equipment with the camper's name to ensure that lost items have better chance at being returned.** Laundry facilities at Minikani are only available in special cases.

- Sleeping Bag, Pillow & one fitted twin bed sheet
- Toiletries
- Pajamas
- Sweatshirt (two)
- T-Shirts (10)
- Shorts (four pairs, one non-denim)
- Pants (two pairs, one non-denim)
- Swimming suit (two)
- Underwear (10 pairs)
- Long-sleeve shirt
- Long underwear
- Socks (10 pairs)
- Sneakers/sandals: Hiking shoes & Canoeing shoes (closed toed or supportive sandals with socks)
- Hat / cap with brim
- Bandana
- Warm sweater or jacket
- Towels (one bath & one beach)
- Raingear/poncho
- Insect repellent, sunscreen & lip balm (SPF 15 or higher)
- Backpack
- Flashlight
- Water bottle

**Returning campers: don't forget to bring your rag!**

Campers do not return to cabins between activities, so they need a bag/backpack to carry their swimsuit, water bottle, etc.

**Additional items needed for Equestrian Explorers:** Boots with a heel, two breeches or jeans for riding, equestrian helmet (camp has helmets to borrow, if needed), half chaps or gloves (optional).

**Additional items needed for [Expedition](#)**

**Absolutely NO cell phones, video cameras, personal music or video game devices, laptops or other electronics, pets, fireworks, aerosol spray cans, alcohol, tobacco products, illegal substances or weapons of any kind should be brought to camp. These items will be confiscated.**



## **Arrival & Departure Information**

We are looking forward to welcoming your family to camp this summer, and that process begins even before you arrive! By Thursday evening the week before camp, all families will receive a call from the child's counselor or unit director to touch base with parents and introduce themselves to the camper. We encourage you to use this time to ask any questions or share any concerns you have – we are here to help!

Arrival on Sunday is between 1:30 to 2 p.m. Upon arrival, an administrative staff member will welcome you in your vehicle and to ensure your forms and payment are complete. Check-in goes smoothly if all the necessary information on file. Please note that if you are bringing medication to the Health Center, please [print the online Authorization to Administer Medication form](#) and place it in a bag with the medication. The bugle sounds promptly at 2 p.m., indicating that campers, accompanied by a parent, may move into cabins.

While the official check-out for camp begins at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, you may join us earlier, if you would like. Parents may arrive as early as 8:40 a.m. to watch the closing password at Council Bluff prior to camper dismissal. Please note that pets are not permitted on the grounds. Please note that pets are not permitted on the grounds.

**For the safety of our campers, all parents must present a valid photo ID at the cabin, prior to departure.** Please check that your camper has all belongings before leaving camp. We ask that you pack your car before touring camp or visiting the camp store. If a camper will be arriving or departing at a time other than those indicated above, please contact our office as soon as possible to make those arrangements.

Free bus transportation is available from the Northside YMCA, located at 1350 W North Avenue in Milwaukee. The bus departs at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday and returns to the Northside Y at 10:15 a.m. on Saturday. Please call the office at 262-251-9080 to make bus reservations. Your **photo ID is needed** to drop off and pick up your camper from the bus. You will receive a phone call from a camp staff person if there are any changes or emergencies that would affect your child's pick-up or drop-off time or location.

### **Lost and Found**

The camp experience is an opportunity for a child to learn responsibility for their personal items. As a family, please discuss the importance of caring and keeping track of gear as Camp Minikani is not responsible for lost or missing items. If an item is lost, please check the lost and found table during check-out. Every effort is made to return *clearly marked* items; however, due to the large volume of items we accumulate, long-term storage is not

possible. Unclaimed items are held for two weeks before they are donated to local charities.

### **Staying in Touch with Your Camper**

We encourage letters from parents as the best way to communicate with campers. Positive, supportive letters let campers hear from home in an encouraging way. Letters should be sent a few days prior to the session start date to ensure that they are received while campers are at camp. Parents (and guardians, grandparents, etc.) may also e-mail their campers through our website during their time at camp. Please note that we receive hundreds of e-mails daily and family members are limited to no more than one email per day so that we can deliver them in a timely fashion. E-mails are printed at lunchtime and delivered with mail in the afternoon. Emails received after **10 a.m. on Friday** will not be delivered.

**Camp staff will be contacting you via e-mail prior to, during and after your child's stay.** The e-mail will come from [minikani@ymcamke.org](mailto:minikani@ymcamke.org). Please ensure this address is not blocked as spam. Contact our office immediately if your e-mail address changes. You may also stay updated on daily events on Minikani's Facebook page. Daily photos are taken and uploaded to the album of your session at [www.minikani.smugmuq.com](http://www.minikani.smugmuq.com). While we do our best to make sure that we take photos of all campers during the week, we only upload a limited number to show what happened at camp that day.

### **Communication on Trip**

Any mail camp receives while campers are on a trip will be delivered when they return to camp. For Explorer and Expedition trips this will not be until the last day of camp.

If there are any changes to trip itinerary or adjustments made for weather or other safety concerns, we will send an email to parents via the information provided from registration. You can also watch Facebook for updates.

If there is an emergency and you need to get ahold of your child while on a trip or at camp, please call the office at 262-251-9080.

### **Letters, Emails and Faxes**

Mail **must** include the following to be delivered: 1) Camper name 2) Session number and 3) Cabin name or number. Letters may be sent to:

Camp Minikani c/o Child's name, session, cabin  
875 Amy Belle Rd  
Hubertus, WI 53033

Family and friends may email campers a message. These emails will be printed and hand-delivered to campers with the daily mail. Emails may be sent by completing the form here: [www.minikani.org/camp\\_email](http://www.minikani.org/camp_email).

Campers may reply to emails by sending hand-written letters. Campers are unable to access the internet during session\*. We suggest that parents and guardians help campers pack paper and pre-addressed and stamped envelopes.

\*In the event of an emergency or emerging issue, campers may absolutely speak with their parents and/or guardians by the phone.

### **Care Packages**

In an effort to create an environment of equality across socio-economic statuses, we strongly discourage parents from sending care packages to your campers. Care packages may trigger feelings of missing home and may lead to inequality in the cabin, however if you deem it necessary to send a care package, we will accept one package per week, preferentially in a flat 9x12 envelope.

Due to the prevalence of food allergies (and to avoid unwanted critters), **care packages cannot contain food or beverages**. Camp staff will screen all packages prior to delivery and will confiscate all food, which will be available on the last day. Baked goods and items with nuts will be discarded and undelivered.

### **Birthdays**

We love to celebrate birthdays at camp. If your child has a birthday while they are at camp, please feel free to drop off a card, present or balloons at the office in Halquist Family Lodge. We will also sing a special birthday song for your camper at dinner!



### Sample Daily Trip Schedule

7:00 a.m.	Wake Up	4:30 p.m.	Pick-up Hikers
7:45 a.m.	Breakfast / Password	5:30 p.m.	Dinner
11:00 a.m.	Hikers Leave	7:30 p.m.	Evening Activity
12:00 p.m.	Lunch	9:15 p.m.	Endaba
1:30 p.m.	Canoers Leave		

### Sample Daily Camp Schedule

Each day at camp is packed full of fun activities where campers focus on learning new skills and making new friends. For more information on our schedule and skill choices, please visit [www.minikani.org](http://www.minikani.org).

7:15 a.m.	Wake Up and Cabin Cleanup	2:30 p.m.	Cabin Activity Time
8:00 a.m.	Assembly, Flag Rising	5:30 p.m.	Dinner

8:10 a.m.	Breakfast	6:10 p.m.	Camper Choice Time
9:15 a.m.	Skill Session 1	7:20 p.m.	Flag Lowering
10:15 a.m.	Skill Session 2	7:30 p.m.	Evening Activity Time
11:15 a.m.	Skill Session 3	9:15 p.m.	Cabin Vespers
12:30 p.m.	Lunch	10:00 p.m.	Lights Out
1:15 p.m.	Rest Period		

### **Leadership Training Programs**

Explorer and Master Explorer campers ages 14 and 15 have the opportunity to apply to be a Minikani Leadership Trainee, which is a year-round training program for boys and girls culminating after three years of commitment. The goals of the program are threefold:

1. To instill a commitment to YMCA core values and a service toward others.
2. To develop leadership skills such as respect, responsibility, communication, and decision making—in an outdoor setting, at Minikani and within the community.
3. To create a well-trained group of young adults committed to leadership and helping others.

#### **The Application Process**

On the last day of their camp session, campers will meet with the Explorer Unit Directors to discuss the nature of the program and the application process. There they will fill out a brief form noting whether or not they are interested in applying.

While we would love to accept all applicants, our spots in the Leadership Training program are limited. After the summer, all applications will be compiled and candidates will be selected based on the leadership skills they exhibited at camp. In October, letters will be sent to all applicants informing them of their status in the program.

If a camper is not placed in the Leadership Training program, their time at camp is not necessarily over! They may still be eligible for our Master Explorer program. Through this program they will also have the opportunity to reapply to the Leadership Training program

the following summer. Campers may not apply to the Leadership Training program from the Expedition program.

**We hope that this information helps you and your camper prepare for camp. Please feel free to call or email the office if you have any questions.**

**YMCA Camp Minikani**

875 Amy Belle Rd

Hubertus, WI 53033

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