

YMCA CAMP MINIKANI



2025 GRATITUDE REPORT

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THANK YOU for being a member of YMCA Camp Minikani and for supporting the generations of campers, staff, and alumni who call Minikani their home. We are so glad to have you as a part of the Camp Minikani family!

In 2025, our Summer Staff, Environmental Education Staff, and community, created formative memories, friendships, and lifelong experiences for more than 4,000 kids. Regardless of program or season, each camper and guest has a chance to experience Camp Minikani's natural beauty, passionate and knowledgeable staff, strong traditions, and inclusive culture.

Thank you for your generous gift to support Camp Minikani in 2025. Know that with your support, we can continue to serve our campers and guests as we have for over 100 years. Thanks to our generous community, 136 campers received the financial assistance they needed to continue their Minikani journey.



THE VALUE OF CAMP

From our beginning, Camp Minikani has been a cherished summer home for campers from all walks of life. In an environment free from daily distractions, Minikani campers explore new passions, nurture their talents, find their direction, motivate themselves and others, and build lifelong friendships. The character development and intrinsic values like empathy, independence, and resiliency nurtured at Minikani help them become leaders in their communities and in their lives moving forward.



SUMMER 2025 RECAP

- 189 Campers began their Minikani journey in our Minicamp.
- 747 Day Campers enjoyed traditional camp activities like archery, climbing, swimming, and arts and crafts.
- The quintessential Minikani experience, Overnight Camps included 1,373 kids for one- or two-week immersive stays at camp.
- The year-round Leaders in Training (LT) program includes trips to the Superior Hiking Trail, service trips around Milwaukee, and onsite leadership preparation. In total, we are serving 200 LT youths in all three categories 1s, 2s and 3s.
- Our trip programs saw campers traveling into the woods of Rhinelander, kayaking between the Apostle Islands and expeditioning into Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, creating personal growth for 359 youth.
- Our counselors are always Camp Minikani's strongest asset! With the majority having grown up as Minikani campers, they are well positioned to positively impact the next generation of campers. They serve as strong models of the Y's core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility for each camper.

WHAT MINIKANI PARENTS ARE SAYING

"I give so much credit to the counselors and staff for helping both kids set goals and for maintaining standards of respectfulness and inclusion during camp!"

"Yes, our daughter's needs were embraced openly and without reservation. She was made to feel welcome and part of the cabin/camp while still honoring who she is and her differences."

"My son had amazing things to say about his counselors this year. It was one of his best experiences at camp because of them. They went out of their way to make things special for the boys."

"Camp is a great way to really learn your boundaries and to start to learn independence. Camp provides a place away that pushes you in so many ways that even the best parents can't replicate."





OUR COMMUNITY CARES

The Minikani community generously donated \$150,000 towards camper scholarships used in 2025. Through your generosity, the gift of Minikani was shared with 136 campers and their families this past summer, an increase of 30 campers compared to the prior year.



MEET OUR ADVISORY BOARD

2023-2026 CLASS

August Herschede
Kate Hoffmann
Paul Ellsworth

2024-2027 CLASS

Jill Kohli
Hillary Phelps Lobenstein
Andy Wiegman

2025-2028 CLASS

Greg Valde – Board Chair
Michael Mierow
Kevin Wright
Julie Molsky
Aaron Bell

IN THE MONTHS AHEAD

With the close of summer 2025, focus is now firmly on the fall, winter, and spring months of the Minikani calendar. Through our Environmental Education and retreat programs, Minikani will work with over 60 groups in the coming year. By hosting local schools and groups, more individuals can experience Minikani and enjoy the same meaningful experiences as our summer campers. Camp truly is year-round, with LTs participating in multiple on-site trainings, as well as programs and events that keep campers connected, while engaging community members new to Minikani.

We look forward to seeing you in the coming months:

- Cookie House – December 6, 2025
- Winter Break Camp – December 27 – 30, 2025
- Spring Break Day Camp – March 30 – April 3, 2026
- Pancake Breakfast – May 3, 2026
- Family Camp – May 22 – 25, 2026



THANK YOU

For over two decades my family has made our home on the shores of Amy Belle Lake. I have had the privilege of stewarding camp forward in a positive way to impact numerous generations of campers. I have personally seen camp change thousands of kids' lives through the unique power and impact that exists at Minikani. Watching kids grow in independence, make new friends, and build self-esteem is so impactful, all while being guided safely by college-age role models that campers look up to and aspire to be.

It takes a village of stakeholders for camp to be successful – thank you for being one of those stakeholders, from camper parents, alumni, lake neighbors, staff, board, to our generous donors. We see your impact every day.

“We are so very thankful as parents that camp is a safe place for all, regardless of color, gender and economics.” We deeply appreciate all that you do to build and preserve the Camp Minikani experience, together, creating memories that our youth will never forget.

Gratefully,

Eli Fyksen
Executive Director
efyksen@ymcamke.org



THE MINIKANI MAGIC IN ACTION

Pictures and written words can only communicate so much. Catch a glimpse of the past summer, and hear how Minikani has had an impact on our campers and staff. Click the image to the right to watch our summer camp video!



**Thank you to each of these donors who generously made a gift between
September 1, 2024 and August 31, 2025 to support Camp Minikani!**

\$10,000+

**In memory of Dennis Kois, Sr.
John and Patricia Konkel
Lutz Family Charitable Trust
Catherine and Timothy Mattke
Henry H. Uihlein & Marion (Polly) S. Uihlein Foundation
YMCA of the USA**

\$5,000+

**Alexander Charitable Foundation
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Greater Milwaukee Foundation – Camp For Kids
Minikani Alumni Community
Don and Mary Peterson
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Third Space Brewing**

\$1,000+

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US Bank Foundation
Greg Valde
YMCA Camp Minikani Summer Staff**

Thank you to each of these donors who generously made a gift between September 1, 2024 and August 31, 2025 to support Camp Minikani!

\$250+

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Kate Hoffmann	Timothy and Stacy Ward
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\$250 and less

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