

YMCA JOHN ISLAND CAMP ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



YMCA JOHN ISLAND

Dec. 2016

The Official Newsletter of the YMCA John Island Camp Alumni

RETURN OF HIGH WATER UNEXPECTED BUT WELCOME

The experts said it would never come back to the heights of the 60's and 70's, but along came 2016. The water height may not have reached the highest it has been in the past 25 years, but it certainly approached it.

This is a welcome change for the camp as we have been able to use the old original dock (now referred to as the "High Water Dock", The dock was not in a good state of repair, but thanks to the Rotary Club and many other volunteers and staff, the dock was made quite useable for the season.

For everyone younger than 20 years of age, using the original dock was a new experience with a new entry point into the camp. Of course a new sign helped make the new entrance to camp even more exciting.



Rainboth Cabin proudly displaying the new camp sign

John Island Spring Work Weekend

Keep the weekend open and join us for this year's
Annual Work Weekend - May 26 - 28th
Info coming soon on: www.johnisland.ymca.ca

ARBORIST DONATES FULL DAY TO JIC

Alex Lozier, owner and operator of Tamarack Expert Tree Care in Sudbury, spent a day at John Island Camp this past spring, together with two of his employees, donating a full day's work to the camp.

What does an arborist do? An arborist is knowledgeable about many aspects of trees, including the removal of trees that have become dangerous to those around them. One of the trademark pines in front of the dining hall camp was one of those trees. Not only



The old pine was a mighty big tree



Alex Lozier (centre) and crew

skillfully bring down the stately pine, but in a matter of minutes had it neatly sawed into moveable chunks. A number of other trees were removed or thinned to make camp a safer place.

The Impact of Camp

Inside this newsletter you will find a few of the comments made by our 2016 staff at John Island. We asked what they felt the impact has been on them as individuals. We received an overwhelming response and we wanted to share some of them with you.

Think back on your own John Island experience. The responses, in many cases, will be the same as your own and provide the motivation to help the camp perform its magic.

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WARM WISHES DURING
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

JOHN ISLAND STAFF RAISE OVER \$7,000 FOR STRONG KIDS CAMPAIGN

No one knows the value of a camp experience to a child better than the staff who help make that magic happen. Every summer the staff at John Island hold an auction amongst themselves to ensure that all youth have a chance to get to camp.

Homemade bracelets, retro t-shirts, coverage for evenings off, cookies, etc. are all prepared by staff to be auctioned off by the "auctioneers of the evening". It is a raucous and fun-filled evening as bidding on some items gets extremely competitive.

The end result this year was over \$7,300 raised, making the John Island staff the largest per capita (on average) donation by any staff group to the Strong Kids Campaign in the Sudbury YMCA.

When you see the results of the use of the funds raised as the camp staff does, it makes it easier to donate.....and have fun at the same time.



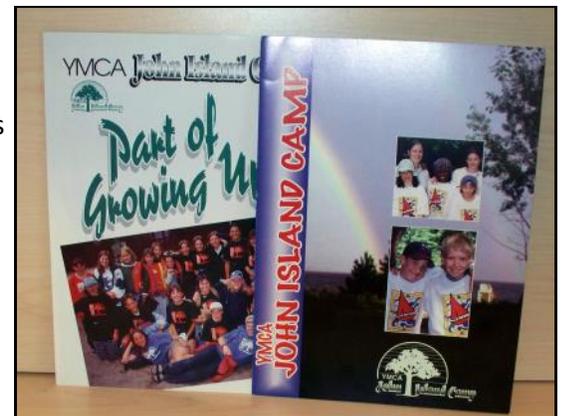
Sixty John Island Camp staff raise over \$7,300 for Strong Kids

LOOKING FOR A CAMP BROCHURE? DON'T LOOK IN YOUR MAIL BOX!

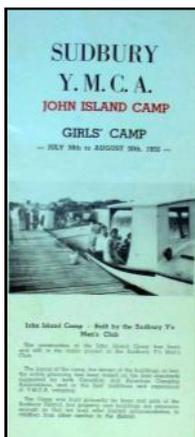
Parents and campers would anxiously wait for the mail delivery, hoping the camp brochure for the upcoming season would be there. When it arrived, the family would gather around and peruse every page, photos and written details. If you go back far enough, it would be as big an event as the arrival of the new seed catalogue or Eaton's.

Today's youth would look at us as being strange if we attempted to explain the excitement of a new camp brochure arriving in our mail box. It just doesn't happen any more.

Read about JIC 2017 online. It is already on our website and families have already been making plans to register. Social media and our website contain more info and photos than we could ever put into a printed brochure. Using the internet has ended up being far-reaching, instantaneous, and considerably less expensive than anything delivered to thousands of homes throughout Canada. Information can be updated regularly and registrations can be handled online quickly and accurately. once registrations begin on January 3rd, 2017.



In 1997 and 1998 these John Island brochures were the main source of camp information for parents. Today, information is obtained on the internet.



Not just the brochures have changed. In this 1955 Girls' Camp brochure, it says, "Travel to Spanish Ontario will be by train or bus." Can you imagine using the train today?

The electronic age has taken over. If you have any doubts of its effectiveness, look up John Island Camp right now on facebook on your cell phone - - - wherever you are in the world.

The Impact of John Island - by Sefra Scarfone (First Year Counsellor, 2016)

John Island is a magical place where one can always count on being accepted, feeling at home, and being part of something greater than one's self. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the camp to help make each camper's experience possible as well as my own.

CHANGES TO THE CAMP HIGH ROPES COURSE

by Rob Groccia

A shift has started at the High Ropes Course at John Island from elements that were built for the purpose of individual fun to team building elements with smoother transitions from one to the next.

Elements are being designed and built to meet the needs of participants as they become more comfortable on the Ropes Course and have an achievable goal for the next element they want to try complete either individually or as a team.

Two summers ago saw the start of this transition with the Dango-Duo and Cat Walk being built. The Cat Walk is the starting point for all of our Ropes participants' journey. A familiar element to a part of the low ropes course, just a bit higher! It introduces the importance of the support your cabin provides by positive reinforcement and encouragement on the ground and the safety your counsellors provide with our belay systems.

The Dango-Duo being a cooperative element for older campers goal is to encourage problem solving on how to get to the top together, a feat near impossible to do on one's own. To help with smaller participants being successful on this element, we will be adding a third belay line this spring.

This spring will also see the addition of the Team Multi Vine to the Ropes Course at John Island. This element, also familiar to a part of the low ropes course, will be the second step for our Ropes participants to take on. Participants individually or in partners will attempt to cross the elevated cable suspended between two trees. Ropes will be hanging down from a cable above getting further and further apart until the mid-point where they start to get closer again. More experience participants will also be able to start on opposite ends and need to pass each other mid-way. Additionally this spring the John Island Zip Line will see a face lift with a new platform built and the replacement of the staples in the tree participants climb.



THANK YOU JOHN ISLAND ALUMNI

As John Island heads into its 63rd year of operation, it is once again the alumni that must be thanked for continuing to help keep not only the camp but the real spirit of the camp alive. Thanks to contributions of time, skills and financial resources, the camp is recognized as a great place to send kids.

One parent told us this year, "This was the first year of attending both Youth Camp A and B. Absolutely loves John Island Camp! We feel very lucky to be able to attend a truly great camp, one that is still a 'real' camp." Another parent wrote, "Thanks to everyone involved in organizing the camp."

These comments, and several others like them, are due to the support the camp gets each year from our alumni. The help with the Spring Work Weekend, the support letting others know about the value of camp and of the sessions available, and, of course, the financial contributions that help keep the camp fresh, up to date and filled with new activities for returning campers each year is what make these comments from parents possible. If you would like more information about our Work Weekend, our camp sessions or how to make a financial contribution in time for this year's tax year, information is available on line on the camp website or you can phone the camp office in Sudbury at 705-674-6171. Your support will be appreciated.

The Impact of John Island - by M.J. Rivest (Norquay River Leader, 2016)

Camping has been part of my life of as long as I can remember. Coming to John Island camp as a camper really helped me put myself out there and gain confidence. After becoming a staff member, I was given the opportunity of being part of something bigger than just me. I worked in a challenging and fun environment surrounded with enthusiastic people. I didn't know how much I liked working with kids and teenagers up until the deadline to register for a Camp counsellor job with papers everywhere, scanned copies of every certification that I possess scattered and in between studying and going to bed. For everyone else, friends, family, it's a very odd perspective to apply for a job 7 months in advance. It's not a job that you do for the money nor is it to gain experience in the field you are studying in

SANDHILL CRANES INVADE JOHN ISLAND

Invade might be a strong word to use, but if you were trying to sleep at 6:00 am any morning at camp this year, you would probably be well aware of the loud cry of the sandhill cranes. Wikipedia says, *"These cranes frequently give a loud, trumpeting call that suggests a rolled "r" in the throat, and they can be heard from a long distance. Mated pairs of cranes engage in "unison calling". The cranes stand close together, calling in a synchronized and complex duet. The female makes two calls for every one from the male."*

These birds are relatively new to the John Island landscape, probably attributable to climate change due to global warming. The birds are found across North America in varying densities and fly south for the winter. They can be found in flocks of up to 10,000 birds.

According to Wikipedia, *Sandhill cranes raise one brood per year. In migratory populations, laying usually begins in April or May. Both members of a breeding pair build the nest using plant material from the surrounding area. Nest sites are usually marshes, bogs, or swales, though occasionally on dry land. Females lay one to three (usually two) oval, dull brown eggs with red-dish markings. Both parents incubate the eggs for about 30 days. The chicks are precocial; they hatch covered in down, with their eyes open, and able to leave the nest within a day. The parents brood the chicks for up to three weeks after hatching, feeding them intensively for the first few weeks, then gradually less frequently until they reach independence at 9 to 10 months old.*

On John Island, Sandhill Cranes are subject to the ravages of other creatures of nature. Crows and ravens, both found in large quantities around the camp like to feed on the eggs and foxes and raccoons fancy the young birds as a tasty meal. However, the young rascals are good at evading the inevitable as their numbers are increasing quickly year after year at the camp.



Sandhill cranes with young



Photo courtesy the Audubon Society

INTERESTING ITEMS FOR SALE

Tuck has changed over the years. From a real emphasis on snack foods and shoe laces in the 1950's to only two snack food items to a myriad of take-home kinds of items, tuck is still very popular.

Another change - you can order special Holiday Season items from the JIC tuck shop for gifts and Christmas Stocking Stuffers and have them mailed to your home. Pictured here are a few of the available items. Bernie Poulin numbered and signed lithograph prints of the John Island dining hall are also available. Bernie Poulin is a noted Canadian artist with a gallery in Ottawa. Just let us know what

you would like by e-mail and we will get back to confirm your order. Our e-mail address is:
summer.brooks@sudbury.ymca.ca

Cost of the items is: - 2017 JIC Calendar (\$10.00); John Island Hat (\$10.00); JIC Holiday Ornament (not shown) (\$5.00); JIC Notebook (\$5.00); Stickers (\$2.50 each); JIC Sun Glasses (\$6.00); JIC Carabineer (\$2.50); Tuck Gift Card (\$5 to \$25.00); JIC Cards (blank inside) (\$1.50 or 3 for \$5.00); John Island Dining Hall Print (unframed) (\$250.00)



The Impact of John Island - by Zane Johnston (First Year Counsellor, 2016)

Camp was a place that let me truly be me. I found who I was at camp.



Justin Michaud

TUCK GOES ELECTRONIC - THANKS TO YOUTH!

If you need to understand your computer or cell phone these days, you find a twelve year old to get help. If you want to create a computer program to use with tuck purchases, inventory control, refund computing, profit margins, pricing, etc.....try a grade 12 student and have a program made.

John Island was fortunate this past season as grade 12 grad Justin Michaud spent a good part of the winter while on a co-op placement at the Y writing such a tuck program. It has resulted in accurate record keeping, speedy refund production, incredible inventory control. . . and even prints individual receipts for each camper detailing every tuck purchase, original deposit into their tuck account, and the amount of their refund of unspent money.

All this sounds incredible, but Justin is a very capable young man. Forget a summer camp that offers typical activities such as swimming, hiking and archery — Justin headed to SHAD in 2015, a prestigious science, technology, engineering and math summer program for youth offered by McMaster University. In 2016, Justin was one of 2 students from Northeastern Ontario and 5 in all of Canada to win the Horatio Alger Scholarship -- handed out each year to high school students who have "overcome significant adversity while demonstrating strength of character," as well as shown learning prowess and a desire to contribute to society, according to the Horatio Alger Association of Canada. The \$10,000 scholarship will go a long way to helping pay for university costs at Waterloo where he is now attending university.

YMCA John Island Camp has been the fortunate recipient of the computer genius of Justin.

DRONE SHOWS US WHAT IT WAS REALLY LIKE

In the past few years, we have had a couple of drone enthusiasts at camp and they have told us much about life on the island before our time as campers. The two photos taken below from a drone over the back bay show both our low water dock and the area where the pilings still exist east of that dock. The sun was bright and photos show extensive pilings of first cuts of the lumbered logs from the mill.



The underwater scrap from logs in the inner back bay



The piles of first cuts from logs by the low water dock.

The Impact of Camp - by Fiona Mendell (First Year Counsellor, 2016)

...For me, camp is a magical place where the experience goes so much deeper than just simply "having fun" (which, of course, is one of the main things that happens there regardless!); it is where so many people find themselves learning to appreciate the world around them, to try new things, and accomplish feats they never thought they could. For me, camp fostered so much of my self discovery and taught me so many character-forming life lessons that I have no idea who I would be without it. Perhaps more importantly, John Island is where I have gained some of the strongest friendships I have, and probably ever will have. There's something about camp friends where, despite the distance during the year, you know in your heart that you'll be friends for a very long time because of the experiences you shared together over the summers.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME - JOHN ISLAND TIME!

Our John Island Alumni come from various decades of the camp's operation. Can you recall some of the items we recalled from 1954 to 2016?

The 50's and 60's

- Volunteers (Y's Men's Club) completes construction of the camp
- Camp opens in 1954
- "Kismet", "Maxie M" and "Flora B" bring campers to camp from Spanish
- Flush toilets at the central rub-a-dub/shower house
- Poison ivy everywhere
- Song favourites include "Green Grow the Rushes Ho" and "Titanic"
- A crackling radio telephone is our only communication
- Staff ride the Kismet to Spanish for days off
- "Ma Strain" sets high standards for camp meals
- "Ironsdies" joins the camp fleet
- Camp opens with archery and music instructors

The 80's

- New high ropes course created
- New staff cabin built to accommodate 24 staff
- NHOJ MPAC
- Favourite camp songs include "Henry VIIIth" and "John Island is the Best"
- Majority of campers from Sudbury area come by bus
- Electricity reaches most cabins in camp
- Earthkeepers program begins as fall program and attracts hundreds of school youth
- Cabins named after islands in the area
- Camp sessions expand to accommodate high demand

The 2000's and 2010's

- Capital campaign unveiled resulting in over \$1.2 million in capital improvements to the camp
- Camp Falcona joins Sudbury Y Camping Services as a Y owned camp
- Favourite campfire songs include "the Bubblegum Song", "the Penguin Song" and the "Pony Song"
- Water level stays low until 2016 when the original camp dock is used after 18 years non use
- Two additional new Stanley boats added to our fleet to replace the retired "Ironsidies" and "Earl M".
- Camp Director's position returns to a year-round position in 2016

The 70's

- 3 new square cabins built (currently Papineau, Darch and the Shower House)
- Senior cabin (Eagle/Talon) is completed
- Spring outdoor education programs begin
- Camp goes co-ed
- Flush toilets replaced with standard out-houses
- Family Camp starts again
- Song favourites include "The Happy Wanderer" & "Barges"
- Camp acquires some buildings from the closure of - - Camp Y-Land on Ramsey Lake
- Camp canoe fleet expands to 12
- "Capture the Flag" continues to be the number one camp game
- The Camp Museum and Old Mill Tour Guide were developed thanks to a government grant

The 90's and 2000's

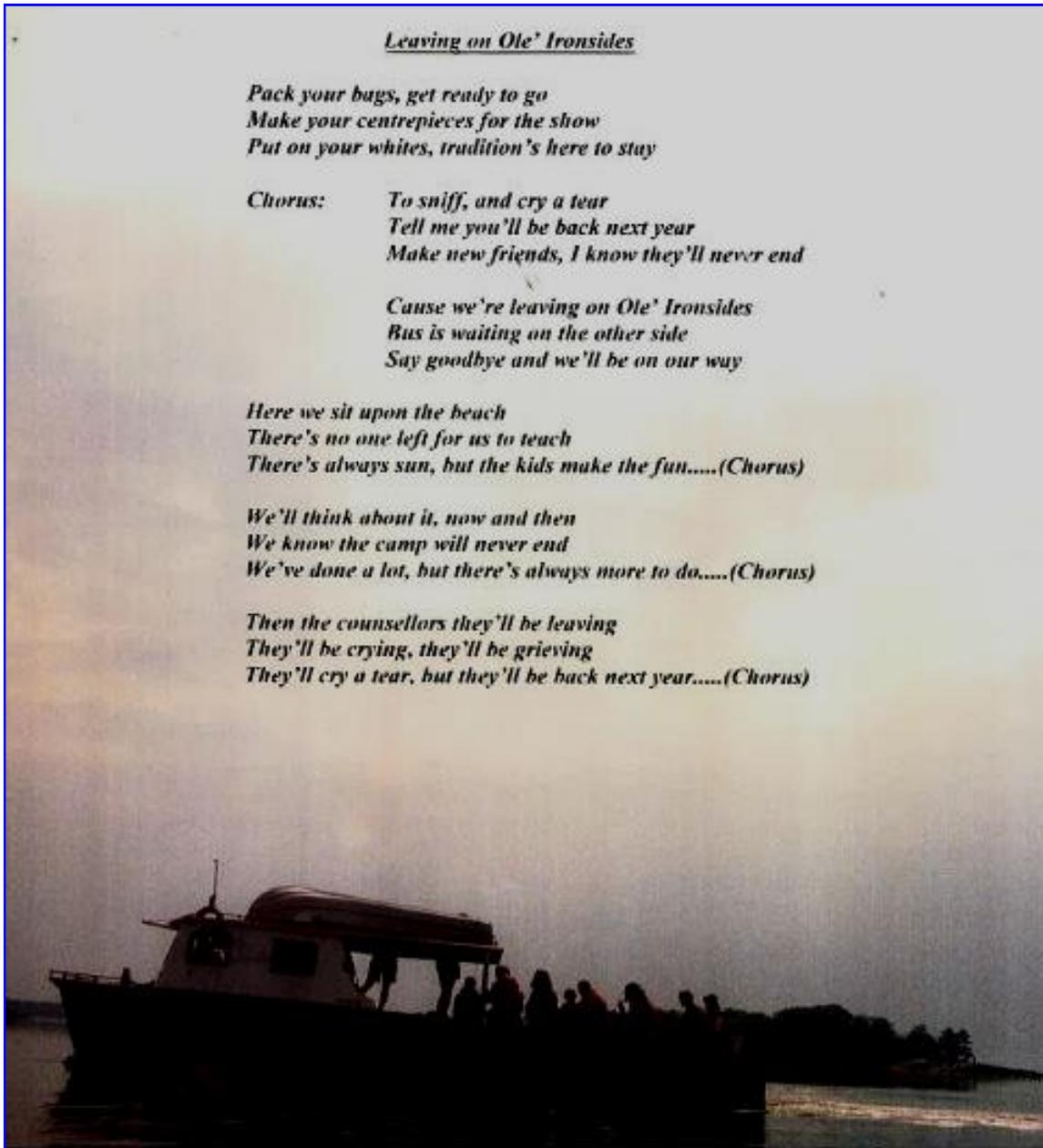
- "Earl M" is christened by Earl Mitchell & joins camp fleet
- "Science North" boat and the new "Garoo" also obtained
- Dining hall under goes renovations in back areas
- New campfire circle built and dedicated
- New health centre completed
- Tripping program expands to extended trips on northern Canadian rivers
- Leadership grows to include over 100 teens a year
- Camp website is unveiled
- Exchange programs begin with Egypt and New Zealand
- Internet discussion forums used to fuel camp interest

The Impact of John Island - by Amelia Crichton (Program Director, 2016)

My John Island experience has taught me how to take a step back from it all and appreciate the things that really matter. It has taught me to not only look at the bigger picture but also to focus on other people and how we can all work together to accomplish the same goals. John Island is a place of serenity and adventure, where we can appreciate all nature has to offer while embarking on long out-trips around the province. John Island is home.

MEMORIES. . .

For many alumni, Ole' Ironsides was not only a popular closing campfire song, but a vary familiar boat that transported campers and staff as well as supplies and equipment to camp every year. Perhaps you recall singing this song at closing campfire when you were at John Island Camp. It can still be heard coming from the lips of some of us today!



Leaving on Ole' Ironsides

*Pack your bags, get ready to go
Make your centrepieces for the show
Put on your whites, tradition's here to stay*

*Chorus: To sniff, and cry a tear
Tell me you'll be back next year
Make new friends, I know they'll never end*

*Cause we're leaving on Ole' Ironsides
Bus is waiting on the other side
Say goodbye and we'll be on our way*

*Here we sit upon the beach
There's no one left for us to teach
There's always sun, but the kids make the fun.....(Chorus)*

*We'll think about it, now and then
We know the camp will never end
We've done a lot, but there's always more to do.....(Chorus)*

*Then the counsellors they'll be leaving
They'll be crying, they'll be grieving
They'll cry a tear, but they'll be back next year.....(Chorus)*

The Impact of Camp - by Callie Silverton, (First Year Counsellor, 2016)

My roots at John Island are pretty deep. My mom went there as a teenager back in the 80's and although I wasn't born until long after she had stopped going to camp, John Island Camp stuck with her. Stuck with her enough that she has sent me 7 hours up north to an island every summer for the past 8 years. It says something about a place when it can withstand time and distance to become a home away from home for multiple generations. There is no place I would rather be than on John Island and I'm grateful to everyone and everything that has help the camp running.

ROUND & ABOUT



Jim Blake

Dr. Aaron "Biff" Livingston and Ashley recently gave birth to a daughter, Grace. Biff is currently a doctor in Ottawa.

Our sympathy is extended to **Jim Blake**, JIC Camp Director 1993 and 1994 whose father recently passed away at 91 years. Jim tells us his dad got him started going to Y camp as a kid and encouraged him to work as a camp counsellor. He said "I don't care if you make much money, it's the best job you can have to set you up for life." Wise man!

Jim is a consultant at Haliburton County Development Corporation.



Jamie & Laura

Jamie Thomas and **Laura (Wadsworth)** recently welcomed daughter Sadie into the world. Jamie and Laura met when they worked on staff at John Island and were married last fall at YMCA Camp Falcona. The family is living in Sudbury

JIC Alumni **Brian O'Neill** and Rebekkah also presented a future John Island camper to the world this past summer with the birth of their daughter Evie. Brian has contributed many hours to John Island as he re-built the old craft shop into the new Leadership Centre, Museum and Craft Room.

Jody Waddell (JIC Alumni) took the jaunt down the primrose path this past summer with his fiancée Karen Splinter. Jody we all know as a long time volunteer with the mechanical operation of John Island and has ensured we have good diesel power to operate with all season. Karen is a doctor in Sudbury and they have made their home in the city.



Drew & Ericka

Drew Beaumont (JIC Alumni) and **Ericka Bonderenko**, (JIC Alumni) who were married mid year 2016, recently announced the birth of their first child, Eli. Drew and Ericka both come from Sault Ste. Marie but have moved to Chapleau where Drew is a teacher. They will soon be moving to Elliot Lake where Drew has taken a job teaching recently.



Biff Livingston



Sadie Thomas



Evie O'Neill



Eli Beaumont

The John Island Camp Alumni Newsletter is available 3 ways:

1. On line at: www.johnisland.ymca.ca
2. By e-mail
3. Printed and mailed

WE NEED TO KNOW YOUR PREFERENCE(S)

Send us an e-mail to: gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We all know that camp friendships last a lifetime.

However, time can separate us and send us to unknown addresses and even distant countries.

Send us an e-mail about yourself—where you live and what you are doing and whatever else you would like to share with those who you may have lost touch with. We have an active mailing list of over 750 alumni and hundreds more check us out on the John Island website.



YMCA SUDBURY CAMPING SERVICES

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For past newsletters - visit the Alumni section of the John Island website.