

# YMCA CAMP WIDJIWAGAN

## WILDERNESS ADVENTURES FOR TEENS



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



[widji.org](http://widji.org)  
Ages 11-18

# OUR MISSION

Widjiwagan was founded in 1929 and has been operating continuously since then as a wilderness adventure program.

The “Widji” program offers progressive challenge and growth opportunities for teens ages 11-18. Campers build upon their wilderness skills and take on greater leadership roles as they return to Widji year after year.

Our Mission is simple – “to develop, in young people, respect for self, community and the environment, through wilderness adventure and environmental education.”

## RESPECT IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL WIDJI EXPERIENCES.

### RESPECT FOR SELF

Respect begins by believing in yourself and your own capabilities. At Widji, we stress taking care of yourself and taking responsibility for your actions.

### RESPECT FOR OTHERS

We emphasize goal setting, sharing and working together as a group to accomplish more collectively than would be possible individually. We honor individual differences, believing diversity presents many opportunities for learning and personal growth.

### RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Widji travel in the wilderness follows “Leave No Trace” ethics and standards.

### RESPECT FOR EQUIPMENT

We stress the importance of taking care of the tools and equipment we use in wilderness travel.

#### Scholarships:

Widjiwagan welcomes all who wish to participate and raises funds to ensure camp fees are not a barrier for anyone. For more information about the scholarship process please visit [widji.org](http://widji.org) or call 612-822-2267.



#### COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

At Camp Widjiwagan, we believe that every young person deserves to have access to the transformative experiences that take place in nature and in the wilderness. We also acknowledge that these experiences are not accessible to all young people. We are committed to continuing to work on increasing accessibility, responsiveness, and accountability to communities currently underrepresented and underserved. Fulfilling Widjiwagan’s mission of developing in youth respect for self, others, and the environment demands that we explicitly practice anti-racism in all aspects of Widjiwagan’s organizational culture and curriculum. Check out [widji.org](http://widji.org) to read Widjiwagan’s full Anti-Racism statement and learn about our practices related to gender inclusivity.

# CANOEING ADVENTURES

Campers participating in our introductory and intermediate level canoe trips have the opportunity to experience Widji and develop their canoe, camping and navigation skills through our progression of increasingly challenging canoe trips. Campers will travel in small groups of around 6 people and explore the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota or Quetico Provincial Park in Ontario, Canada. Pristine northern waters offer challenge and beauty, prompt reflection and serve as a backdrop for fun, personal growth, leadership development, practicing resiliency and building friendships. Introductory and intermediate canoe sessions range in length from 5 – 19 days with 1-14 days spent traveling in the wilderness. Visit [widji.org](http://widji.org) for session options, dates and fees.



**“This is a great development opportunity for kids.”**

-Quetico Canoe Camper Parent



# THE WILDERNESS SETTING

Widjiwagan trips operate in areas that are stunningly beautiful as well as rugged and remote. We use the wilderness setting to prompt challenge, develop resilience, cultivate wonder and refine interpersonal leadership skills. However, it is important for parents and campers to understand that communication with emergency medical services is not always possible in the event of an illness or injury due to the remoteness of our trips. While we cannot guarantee accident-free travel, our priority is the health and wellbeing of all our campers. Our attitude and investment in accident prevention and incident response enables our staff to respond appropriately and situationally. Trail Counselors are trained in professional-level wilderness first responder skills, provided with resources and taught skills specific to the areas we travel, and work under established policies and procedures designed to reduce the likelihood of illness and injury.



# BACKPACKING ADVENTURES

Widji's introductory and intermediate backpacking program offers trips of increasing challenge and length designed to match the maturity, leadership and wilderness skill development of our campers. Campers interested in learning to backpack have a number of beautiful destinations to choose from, including Isle Royale and the Porcupine Mountains of Lake Superior, the Bighorn Mountains in Wyoming and the Custer Gallatin National Forest in Montana. Campers participating in these trips will learn hiking, navigation and camping skills. These campers will also build friendships, develop their interpersonal and leadership skills and practice resiliency as they experience the natural beauty of these destinations. Introductory and intermediate backpacking sessions range in length from 12 to 19 days with 8 to 15 days spent traveling in the wilderness. Visit [widji.org](http://widji.org) for session options, dates and fees.



"I think that the most important thing that I learned was how much I can accomplish if I really set my mind to it. I was not confident in my canoe carrying abilities but by the end I pushed myself and was proud of my improvements." - BWCA Camper

# THE WIDJI EXPERIENCE

All Widji sessions begin with two to three days at our base camp on Burntside Lake in Ely, Minnesota. During this time, campers meet their counselors and trail mates and begin planning. Campers are involved in all aspects of the trip preparation: goal setting, establishing a menu, setting a route, and honing the many skills they will use.

The real magic happens “on trail” – friendships form and memories are made! Once on trail, groups spend the rest of their session canoeing or backpacking in wilderness areas. Groups travel most days and camp in a different place most nights. Free from the distractions of their lives at home, groups come together to build friendships and accomplish their goals. Trail groups typically include 3 – 6 campers and one to two trail guides. Campers are grouped according to the gender that they identify with, their age and experience. We select Trail Counselors based on their personal and professional experience in wilderness travel and working with teens as well as their judgment and leadership ability.



## Friend Requests

We encourage campers to come to camp ready to make new friends. Strong friendships formed on trail are a unique part of a Widji trip. We also understand that some campers feel most comfortable coming to camp with a friend. We will try to honor friend requests for pairs but we cannot accommodate requests for larger groupings. Siblings will be placed in separate groups.



YMCA OF THE NORTH  
YMCA CAMP WIDJIWAGAN  
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Visit our website for details on our upcoming registration and scholarship support and New Camper Orientation information.

**HAVE A QUESTION?**

Contact us at 612-822-2267 (Customer Service)

218-265-2117 (Camp Office)

Email us at: [info@widji.org](mailto:info@widji.org)



Visit us at [widji.org](http://widji.org)

YMCA of the North is a not-for-profit 501c3 organization.