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**YMCA CAMP HI-ROCK**  
162 East Street, Mt. Washington, MA  
camphirock.org  
October 2012

News from YMCA Camp Hi-Rock, a branch of the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA



## NEW PROGRAMS, HAPPY CAMPERS

**Stand-Up Paddle Boarding, Explore 30 Reading and American Sign Language were big hits in 2012!**

Stand-up paddle boarding debuted with a splash to a chorus of giggles as campers, counselors and the occasional pair of program directors attempted to master this fun and challenging new sport. Core muscles were strengthened along with self-confidence as campers gained new skills and new friends in stand-up paddle boarding classes.

In it's inaugural year, the Explore 30 reading program had pages turning all over camp. Approximately 90 percent of campers accepted the challenge to read or be read to for a minimum of 30 minutes each day. Once they got going, some found it hard to stop. One camper from Bridgeport, CT inspired a new camp safety rule, "No reading while walking!"

The return of **Zoe Buzzi**, a volunteer from 2010 who returned in 2012 as a counselor, brought her sign language skills all the way from Florida where she is studying American Sign Language. Zoe's excitement about sign language was contagious and led to campers signing up for her class week after week. Her namesake, Zoë, a Woodlands camper, signed up for the class three weeks in a row and described the highlight of the class as "learning how to sing Itai's songs in sign language."

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**ALUMNI REUNION**  
August 30 - September 2, 2013

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## BOUNDLESS THANKS!

Big thanks to all who donated books for our new camp library! Through your generosity, the Explore 30 Reading Program was a huge success! Special thanks to Scholastic for donating book sets for group reading, **Jan Berrick** for donating four new book cases, the 2012 LITs for organizing the books and New Alliance Foundation for supporting a reading space and library as part of the Parker Seeley Lodge reconstruction.



## HI-ROCK ALUMNI ON BOTH SIDES OF THE AISLE



Hi-Rocker's around the world are watching closely as election season heats up. Three Hi-Rock alumni who serve in the Connecticut State Senate are part of the race.

Connecticut State Senators **John Kissel**, **Anthony Musto** and **Andrew Roraback** are all Hi-Rock alumni. All three are also practicing attorneys in addition to their work as public servants. John is a Republican currently serving his tenth term and seeking an eleventh representing the towns of East Granby, Enfield, Somers, Suffield, Windsor Locks and portions of Granby and Windsor. He is the Senate's Ranking Member on the Committees on Judiciary and Program Review & Investigations and serves on the General Law and Legislative Management Committees. Anthony is a Democrat serving his second term representing the towns of Bridgeport, Trumbull and Monroe and is seeking a third term. He is the Majority Whip, served as chairperson of the Select Committee on Children for two years, and currently serves as chairperson of the Human Services committee. Andrew is a Republican who has served in both the State House of Representatives and more recently the State Senate where he is the Ranking Member of the Legislature's Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. He is currently running for election to represent Connecticut in the United States Congress.

We were able to ask John and Anthony about their experiences at Hi-Rock and found that the things that had a lasting impact on them thirty years ago continue to play powerful roles in the experience campers have at Hi-Rock today.

John speaks passionately about the six summers, beginning in 1978, when he worked at Hi-Rock in roles including Abnaki counselor, the first ever unit director of the Woodlands Unit (when it housed the youngest boys on camp), unit director in the Mohawk Unit and Program Director.

As he contemplated the importance of Hi-Rock to today's children, John explained that at Hi-Rock you can "feel more free and more self-confident and leave your regular self behind, unafraid to put on your silly self. You are with brand new people and you can make yourself into whatever you want to be. It is a unique environment to spread your wings and where you are encouraged to do it." He recalls of the summers he spent at Hi-Rock, "There was never any feeling that you would be kidded or that there would be any down side if you tried and failed."

Anthony attended Hi-Rock as a camper for four summers approximately thirty years ago. He recounts his experience learning how to waterski and the support he felt while trying, with difficulty, to learn something new, "I kept falling on the waterskiing, but I kept getting up and finally I got it. My counselor didn't let me give up, and I still remember how happy he was when I finally made it. It made me feel great."

When asked about the importance of Hi-Rock for kids today, both John and Anthony highlighted the benefit Hi-Rock offers campers in the opportunity to live and learn with such a diverse community of campers and staff. Anthony commented that, "Being away from home and learning to get along with other people from different places is essential these days. We work and live in a much larger world than we used to. We need to understand that other people have different ideas and react to things differently than we. Being at camp is a great first step to learning how to listen to others and to understand them."

Indeed, John credits Hi-Rock with helping him develop the skill of listening that he finds vital to his work as a senator. John says that each of the jobs he held at Hi-Rock "demanded that you listen before you do anything." Whether he was listening to his nine campers when he was a counselor or putting his ear to the ground to understand what was going on with all of the camp staff he relied upon as program director, John learned at Hi-Rock that "you need to be able to listen to be there for people."

After telling tales of the wonder his campers felt upon sharing their first porcupine sighting, discovering roots that glowed in the dark on a night hike, and seeing more stars in the sky than they had ever seen John concluded, "There is a place for Hi-Rock now and there will be a place for Hi-Rock 100 years from now."

# OLYMPIC HI-ROCKERS:

## TIM MOREHOUSE – THREE TIME OLYMPIC FENCER, AND MORE!

Many Hi-Rock campers spent this summer dreaming about being in the Olympics someday. Alumnus **Tim Morehouse** has realized that dream three times as part of the US Olympic fencing team. He is an Olympic silver medalist in fencing ('08 Beijing Games), two-time individual U.S. National Champion ('10 and '11), 7-time world cup medalist and was #1-ranked U.S. men's saber fencer from 2008-2011. He also counts teaching President Obama how to fence in 2009 as one of his memorable fencing moments and returned to the White House this past September with the US Olympic and Paralympic Teams to visit the President and enjoy a hug from First Lady Michele Obama.



Tim has been busy since he last worked at Hi-Rock. In addition to the fencing achievements described above, Tim has a long list of accomplishments. He spent seven years working for Teach for America – three as a seventh grade teacher and four as a teacher trainer. In 2011, he founded the Fencing-in-the-Schools foundation – a non-profit program dedicated to bringing the sport of fencing to under-served communities throughout the country. He is also the founder and producer of the Fencing Masters Tournament, the largest spectator fencing competition in the U.S. and the only non-Olympic televised tournament in the United States. In April 2012, his auto-biography, *American Fencer: Modern Lessons from an Ancient Sport*, was published. To read more about Tim, visit [timmorehouse.com](http://timmorehouse.com).

## JUNIOR OLYMPIAN MADDIE LESKO PASSES HER SKILLS ALONG TO HER CAMPERS

Campers who took martial arts as a coaching period this summer had a special treat – an instructor who just returned from the Junior Olympics in Texas where she won a bronze medal in Tae Kwon Do! **Maddie Lesko** was a day camp counselor this summer and taught martial arts to day and resident campers. Maddie became a Hi-Rock camper when she was 13. Her mother, Pauline Lesko, describes Maddie's time at Hi-Rock as "part of her journey of self-confidence." Maddie recalls trying sports at Hi-Rock, like wakeboarding, and getting excited about trying and mastering new sports. When asked what she likes most about teaching campers Maddie explained she "likes the feeling of their excitement when they get something - when they couldn't understand it and then they get it and they become happy and their happiness spreads!"



## TEAM HI-ROCK MAKES LONDON THEIR SIXTH OLYMPIC GAMES – AS SPECTATORS!

A group of Hi-Rock alumni (and other friends of **Merritt Hopper**) have been making their way from one Olympics to the next since the Salt Lake City games in 2002. This summer's Olympics brought Merritt, **Mat Brown, Justin Caplicki, Lauren Beckett, Monette DeBaun Stransom, Richard Stransom, Anthony Fletcher, Scott Elliot, Rob Oakley, and Tracey Baranck** together in London. Of the experience, Merritt writes, "...we, as co-counselors, have made lifelong bonds. So many of our great counselors came from the United Kingdom in the 90's so meeting at the Olympics in London was the perfect way to reunite!"



## HEARD IT FROM THE CHIPMUNKS

**Ira Wurcel**, alumnus and board member, and **Lisa May** welcomed baby Gabriel Hamilton Wurcel this past winter.

**Gabrielle Provencal McVicker**, alumna and board member, married Shawn McVicker on the first day of summer camp in June!

**Zach Gross**, former Hi-Rock camper, counselor, and photography instructor, has had an exciting year as a photographer reaching international acclaim with his work appearing in the New Yorker. Check him out at [zachgross.com](http://zachgross.com)

**Andy Ice** has worked for Disney as an artist in the animation industry for 16 years. He lives in California and is married with two granddaughters who "would love Hi-Rock...."



Family camper, camper parent and board member **Sandra Fischer** has changed careers from attorney to pastor. She graduated from the Yale Divinity School in May and will be ordained as a minister of the United Church of Christ this fall. She has begun work as Associate Minister of Membership and Adult Spiritual Life at South Congregational Church, UCC, Granby, CT.

Alumna and board member **Susan Buckwalter** graduated from Cornell University's Johnson School of Business, has moved to Manhattan and recently began a position at Unilever in brand management.

**Kate Levy Sawyer and Ian Sawyer** were married three years ago and now live in Oakbank, Manitoba.

**Dana Levy Dolyak** was married in Cancun in April and teaches high school math at Staples High School in Westport, CT.

Alumnus **Timothy Cha** graduated from Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, moved to Erie, Pennsylvania and recently began a position at General Electric in human resources.

**Kathy Kern-Ross** has been the president of Kaleidoscope Entertainment since 1993. She is married and has a ten year old daughter named Kayla. She "would love to hear from old Hi-Rock staff & campers!"

Alumna and board member **Kelly O'Grady** is engaged to Nick Ross! Kelly is a pharmacist and resides in Stafford Springs, CT.

Alumna and board member **Marla Strickland Lutter** accepted a new position at the Trustees of Reservations where she helps celebrate and protect the "places that matter" in Massachusetts as their Director of Advancement Services.

**Kathleen Bailer Adams** completed her first year as the principal of an elementary school in Gill, MA.

**Philip J. Dwyer** is serving on the Fairfield, Connecticut Board of Education following his retirement from the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA.

Since leaving Hi-Rock seven years ago, Lars Gothaab Nielsen spent 6 years at Outward Bound Hong Kong as an Instructor, Course Coordinator, Senior Course Coordinator, Staff Manager and Program Scheduler and has spent 1 year so far at Dragonfly Outdoors Hong Kong as the Sai Kung Site Manager. Lars wrote recently, "All this was in large part possible because of the knowledge, skills and values instilled during my 2 years at YMCA Camp Hi-Rock :-)."

**Amy Baddeley** is pursuing a PhD in Statistics!

**Floyd Corbin** writes, "After leaving camp, I got a rip saw and subsequently a buzz saw. This was followed by several years spent as a lumberjack in the remote Alaskan tundra. (Not True)" The truth is, Floyd is living in Salt Lake and expects to complete his MBA this year.

Following her last summer as a counselor at Hi-Rock, **Dana Corl** spent two years writing for Saturday Night Live and now works for J. Crew in the Creative Department. She is "still wishing [she] was a camp counselor though!"

**Andy Bartram**, MD, is a surgeon currently training to be a maxillo-facial surgeon. Andy recently returned from a humanitarian outreach mission to the Ladakh region of India.

**Lindsey Hulet** is a foreman and electrician working for Mercury Solar Systems in the tri-state area.

**Stephen Gross** studies sports management and finance at UMASS. He recently interned with Major League Lacrosse.

## HEARD IT FROM THE CHIPMUNKS

**Ken Seidler** wrote to let us know he has been working in mental health, first as a lay practitioner out of college, then for about fourteen years as a Masters level clinician in Portland, Oregon, and since 2010 as a doctoral student at the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California. I've worked with kids and adults, but I really love play therapy and plan to continue emphasizing that aspect of my practice until my dying cough. Along the way helped form a couple of collective workplaces, co-ops, and grassroots advocacy orgs. I'm married, and my wife Julie and I have two kids, boys aged 7 and 4 (and a half!). These guys love camping and would totally love Hi-Rock!!!"

**Megan Kirchner** is currently living in Fort Collins, CO working at Colorado State University in the Veterinary Teaching Hospital as a dentistry and oral surgery technician.

**Aaron (EMT Aaron) Peck** still works in EMS and has been a paramedic for almost ten years. He is married to Carolyn Gonzalez and has "3 awesome kids." Sons, AJ and Matty are 8 & 7 and daughter Samantha was born in February.

**Stacey Ponzio DiCairano** married her husband this year! Stacey has been working in the NY metro area as a commercial furniture designer for the past five years.

**Amy McClean** lives in Fort Collins, Colorado, with her husband, Tyler. She teach students with severe and multiple disabilities at Rocky Mountain High School (she writes, "job rocks"), and spends as much time as she can outside.

**Aaron Peskin** writes: "... I went to school in Philadelphia at Penn (with a semester in Prague!), where I fell in love with Philly. After Penn, I worked for two years as a paralegal at a large law firm in DC, then went to law school at UVA, where I met my future wife. I got married shortly after law school, moved back to Philly, and have been a practicing attorney since. I'm currently at Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell & Hippel, LLP, where I specialize in commercial litigation and e-discovery. Also, my wife and I just welcomed our first child in February. Charlotte is already looking forward to becoming a camper at Hi-Rock!

**Anna Woodward** is currently taking some time at home to look after her two daughters. Prior to that she spent time working at the NHS and an educational charity working with disadvantaged young people.

**Florian Girnuks** is studying computer science at TU Dortmund and is also working at the university.

**Donald Cooley** taught history and psychology at Watertown High School from 1977 until 1990 when he went into the family business. He moved to North Carolina in 1996.

**Ryan Boyce** writes he's travelling around the country waiting for Hi-Rock to "hire [him] back so [he] can live there forever."

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## HI-ROCK BRINGS HOME THE GOLDEN TOILET

The YMCA Camp Hi-Rock versus YMCA Camp Sloane staff soccer match has been held each summer since 2008. It has always been a close competition with no team ever winning back-to-back games. The series currently stands at 3-2 in Hi-Rock's favor. The trophy which spends the year at the winning team's camp, is a golden toilet, formally dubbed the Berkshire Bowl.

This summer's match went into extra time. A 3-1 win began with a brilliantly timed cross from Mohawk Unit Director **Itai Gruss** which left **Fergus Butt**, a day camp counselor, with the simple job of connecting with the ball to put the visitors in front. Sloane then equalized from the penalty spot and the game got tight with Frontier UD **Ian Ruiz-Carlile** pulling off a string of game saving saves. After an inspiring huddle with the team manager, Assistant Day Camp Director **Ahren Parry**, they headed into extra time. Hi-Rock went in to the lead after Mohawk counselor, **Daniel Holden**, dispatched a stunning free kick from 30 yards away. The scoring was complete when Frontier counselor **Ollie Kent** neatly went around two defenders and slotted home the winner to secure victory.



## STRONG KIDS

A YMCA Initiative

## STRONG KIDS CAMPAIGN HEADS INTO THE FINAL STRETCH; LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS GET INVOLVED

As we go to print, we are thrilled to report we've raised \$80,000 in pledges toward our 2012 Strong Kids Campaign. Volunteers and staff are gearing up for an exciting fall campaign to raise the remaining \$35,000 to meet our goal of \$110,000 which will be a record breaking campaign for Hi-Rock! This important campaign makes it possible for one out of every five Hi-Rock campers to attend camp through our Strong Kids Campership Program. We are grateful to be a part of such a generous camp community where alumni, parents, staff, community organizations and other friends of camp come together to make it possible for all campers to grow, learn and play together.

Thanks to a new initiative spearheaded by Sheela Clary, a West Stockbridge resident, former teacher, and advocate for children in the southern Berkshires, funds were raised specifically to help children from our neighboring towns attend Camp Hi-Rock. Sheela's efforts brought together RBC Wealth Management, local non-profit organizations including Railroad Street Youth Project, and individual donors, to contribute funds to make it possible for local students whose families face financial challenges to attend camp this summer. Students from Muddy Brook Elementary School who would benefit from the program were identified in collaboration with the Berkshire Hills Regional School District. We are thankful for this generous local support and for Sheela's leadership and look forward to working together in the future.

Please join us to raise critical funds for the Strong Kids Campaign. It will be an exciting fall as we work to secure the last third of pledges needed to hit our 2012 goal. We've got a variety of volunteer opportunities including calling prospective donors at a phone-a-thon in your region, hosting a phone-a-thon, calling, visiting or writing to prospective donors on your own, creating your own personal online fundraising page and sending it to friends and family, or committing to join us for the annual Ice Breaker's event and help us raise pledges in honor of your willingness to do so. If you are interested in helping, please contact Charles Hirsch at [seniorcampdirector@camphirock.org](mailto:seniorcampdirector@camphirock.org).

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN HEATS UP!

As we have been making our way along the capital campaign trail, we have been encouraged and inspired by the love for Camp Hi-Rock we've seen among the friends we have visited and the volunteers who have joined us in telling the Hi-Rock story. We've had a great time sharing the opportunity to revitalize camp with alumni, camper parents, community organizations and foundations, and other friends of camp. Our generous community has pledged \$1,186,000 in support of this campaign so far toward a goal of \$2.8 million to make it possible to address critical capital needs. Hi-Rockers of all ages, from the littlest Chipmunks in day camp on up, are beginning to cheer in anticipation of the reopening of Parker Seeley Lodge!

### CAPITAL PROJECTS

- Rebuild Parker Seeley Lodge
- Rebuild cabins
- Resurface ball fields
- Rebuild shower houses
- Renovate staff housing including the Wheel House
- Strengthen our foundation by reducing our debt burden

### A HI-ROCK LEGACY

Did you know that friends of Hi-Rock who include the camp in their estate plans are members of the Hi-Rock Heritage Society? This group gathers annually for fellowship and a dinner honoring the generous commitment they have made. If you would like to know more, please contact Jessica Speer-Holmes at [executive@camphirock.org](mailto:executive@camphirock.org).

## FALL IS FABULOUS AT YMCA CAMP HI-ROCK



## YMCA HONORS STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

This year Hi-Rock honored three extraordinary individuals for their contribution to Hi-Rock. **Shelly Folsom** and **Caroline Qualey** were recognized as our Volunteers of the Year and **Jan Berrick** received the Judith A. Johnson Staff Excellence Award.

As a volunteer camp nurse in 2011, Shelly brought remarkable technical skills, palpable compassion, tireless devotion and an essential (and contagious) sense of humor to one of the most difficult jobs on camp. The way in which this highly competent nurse puts parents, co-workers, local physicians and most importantly – campers – at ease is a camp director’s dream come true. Beyond her contribution as a nurse, Shelly contributes her time, her talent and her resources to many aspects of camp, from redecorating the nurse’s office with hand painted artwork to helping out with arts & crafts. We are grateful for all of the ways in which Shelly is involved.

Caroline spent six long weeks as a volunteer resident camp counselor at Hi-Rock in 2011 when a 14 hour day is a short day! She was always willing to take on any role that was asked of her. Her devotion to Hi-Rock and the campers we serve was evident in everything she did. She brought the silliness that is the essence of camp coupled with a wisdom and maturity beyond her years. Young people like Caroline are the future of Hi-Rock and she makes the future look very bright.

As the camp advisor, Jan is the go to person for campers and staff when it comes to personal and social challenges at camp. Jan builds relationships by treating people in a way that fosters self-respect and personal control. He cares deeply for our campers and for his fellow staff members and works hard to help them grow while they are at camp. The depth of Jan’s passion for helping children succeed in the camp environment and his intuitive ability to help campers and staff navigate challenging circumstances allow him to cultivate a supportive and nurturing culture for which we are very grateful.



## ICE BREAKERS TAKE THE PLUNGE TO HELP BUILD STRONG KIDS

In a spectacular display of courage and silliness, 18 Hi-Rockers submerged themselves in a very chilly Plantain Pond on January 8, 2012. While the relatively warm winter saved us from having to saw through the ice to gain access as we have had to do in years past, those taking the plunge did have to step carefully over a strip of ice along the pond’s edge. Their efforts raised \$6,624 for the Strong Kids Campaign which helps send campers to Hi-Rock. An added benefit was the thrill of the plunge and the joy of fellowship in coming together with members of the Hi-Rock family for some mid-winter fun. In volunteer **Dave Vitti’s** words, it was “better than coffee!”

**Jenna Abriola** made a splash in a killer whale suit, custom made for the occasion. **Paul Taylor**, **Ali Holmes** and camper **Zoë Holmes** enjoyed the plunge so much they went back in for a second time! **Many thanks to our brave participants:**

<b>Ali Holmes</b>	<b>Jenna Abriola</b>
<b>Annabel Holmes</b>	<b>Julian Park</b>
<b>Audra Coulombe</b>	<b>Pam Banks</b>
<b>Caroline Qualey</b>	<b>Paul Taylor</b>
<b>Charles Hirsch</b>	<b>Ryan Bradshaw</b>
<b>Dave Bjorklund, Jr.</b>	<b>Tanya Gaudette</b>
<b>David Bjorklund</b>	<b>Tulika Verma</b>
<b>Dave Vitti</b>	<b>Warwick Holmes</b>
<b>Giselle Cahalan</b>	<b>Zoë Holmes</b>



# NOT YOUR GRANDFATHER'S BUG JUICE



When **Don Hutchinson**, Hi-Rock alumnus and member of the Plantain Pond Mortgage Club, visited Hi-Rock this summer for the first time in years, he had his heart set on a cup of good old fashioned bug juice! The juice he was served did not resemble that which he recalled from his youth. This past summer, Hi-Rock stopped serving traditional bug juice, a concoction comprised primarily of sugar and food coloring and offering little nutritional benefit. Parents cheered and campers seemed to barely notice as the infamous "blue juice" was replaced with 100% fruit juice from apples, grapes, cranberries and oranges and a larger dose of water than is suggested by the manufacturer resulting in a less sugary and more nutritious drink for all.

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## GET OUTSIDE, HELP CAMP, ENJOY TIME WITH FRIENDS

**November 9 - 11, 2012**

As we shift into the quieter time of year we have a lot to prepare for. To help us prepare for the frigid temperatures, feet of snow, and winter retreats we rely on our wonderful volunteers each year at our Fall Work Weekend.

We will provide the projects, the tools, and the food. All you need to bring is a little bit of elbow grease and your passion for helping camp. As always, we have projects for the pros, weekend warriors and the "What does a drill do?" crowd.

Space in heated lodges is limited so please RSVP to David Bjorklund at [summer@camphirock.org](mailto:summer@camphirock.org) soon!

## GET THE "WORM"

And by worm, we of course mean all of the benefits of the Early Bird Camp Registration. **All 2013 YMCA Camp Hi-Rock Early Bird Registration forms must be received by November 30th** to qualify for the 2012 camp fees in 2013, a \$40 store credit and our early bird t-shirt. Register now to receive all of the benefits.

Registering early will also ensure your child reserves a place at Hi-Rock in 2013!

The early bird registration is available on the resources page of our website: [camphirock.org](http://camphirock.org)