FROST VALLEY YMCA

FOUNDATIONS

A Frost Valley experience is as timeless as it is timely. Needed now more than ever, through outdoor, community focused experiences in nature, art and recreation, young people and families build lifelong connections, develop a sense of belonging and acquire skills to live healthy and fulfilled lives. These experiences will predominantly take place in three areas: Summer Camp, Year-Round Programs (Outdoor School Programs, Group and Family Retreats, Team Building Retreats) and Community Programs (including the arts and recreation), and these experiences are delivered by you, our staff. This document summarizes the foundational beliefs and approaches that guide how we work together, how we approach programming, how team leaders guide their teams and how individual team members choose to act – providing shared language and expectations for professional excellence.

MISSION and VALUES

We envision a world where all people have opportunities to connect with others, through nature, the arts and recreation, to cultivate healthy and fulfilled lives.

We aspire to be a place where people from all backgrounds and experiences can connect, belong and grow, through engagements in community, nature, the arts and recreation.

The YMCA's character values of Caring, Honesty, Respect & Responsibility guide Frost Valley YMCA's core organizational values, which serve as pathways for our guests as they engage with nature, art and each other.

WE ARE:

INCLUSIVE and DIVERSE
above all we aim for a community where all feel they belong

CARING and CONNECTED
we prioritize our connection to others in a caring community

HONEST and RESPECTFUL
we are honest to and about each other and ourselves, and appreciate and respect our shared experiences and differences

RESPONSIBLE and ACCOUNTABLE
for and to ourselves, each other and our environment.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Built on strong fundamentals and a deep history, Frost Valley's creative program design and delivery creates an environment in which young people can truly be themselves, and then be challenged, guided and invited to develop a broad set of skills predictive of long term thriving. The right environment, paired with intentional strategies rooted in youth development practices, is our catalyst that drives long term change and impact.

PROGRAM BUILDING BLOCKS

Informed by HISTORY and TRADITIONS

Since 1885, a program rich with traditions that drive connection and community

SKILLED and DIVERSE STAFF

Staff who are passionate, well trained and diverse, with an unmatched guest to staff conversion

Infused by VALUES

A values driven program that threads values throughout the program experience

SMALL and DIVERSE GROUPS

Guests of all ages spend time together in small groups, within a large group, as a part of a larger community

THE OUTDOORS and OUR FACILITY

A backdrop of acres of pristine and forever wild natural land supported by a great facility

INNOVATION and LEADERSHIP

A commitment to be a leader in our field, from how we train our staff to how we develop and evaluate our programs.

A TOUCH OF (CAMP) MAGIC

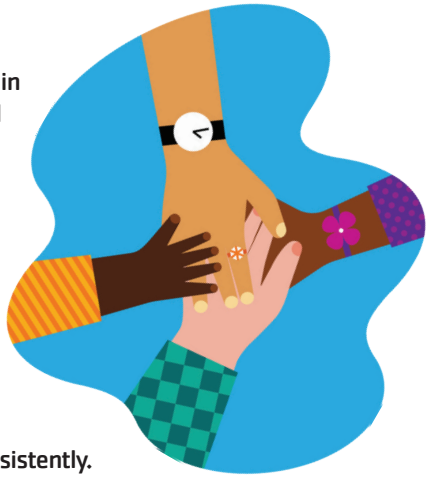
Organizations like ours often have a special sauce that is unique to them – this is especially true for programs with a storied history like Frost Valley YMCA. Camp Magic, more than just magic, and more than just present within camp programs, is the deliberate and intentional inclusion of activities, traditions and routines in all our offerings that are the connecting glue to the experience. It includes:

ROUTINES,
like dining hall and cabin routines

SONGS,
chants and other identity building tools

TRADITIONS
and activities unique to Frost Valley

OUR COMMITMENT TO FOR ALL



Frost Valley YMCA has a long history of inclusion, inclusive programming and a spirit of inclusion in all we do. We strive to be a place where all people belong, where our work increases inclusion and diversity, where equity is evident in our decisions and actions, and where all are respected. We do this to ensure that all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity.

INCLUSION PRINCIPLES

- We believe that Diversity and Inclusion work is everyone's work; as leaders we take responsibility to lead the way and engage our teams in this work
- We recognize that our dominant culture is an inherent obstacle to inclusion
- We design with the most marginalized in mind (here and here)
- We apply an inclusion lens to all our work (here), and require our teams to apply this lens consistently.
- We prioritize action over inaction, change over stagnation
- We prioritize people by proactively designing for success for all our team members and guests
- We commit to learning how to guide our people and teams through difficult conversations and make space for mistakes.

OUR CORE STRATEGIES

1. Activities and experiences that focus on **COMMUNITY and the SOCIAL EXPERIENCE** A powerful social experience centered in emotional safety
2. Activities and experiences that focus on campers developing new **SKILLS and EXPLORATION** A program that infuses opportunities for new and advanced skill building throughout, or opportunities to explore potential areas of interest
3. Activities and experiences that focus on **CHALLENGE and HEALTHY RISK TAKING** An intentionally designed program to push young people's boundaries and experiences
4. Activities and experiences that focus on **TIME SPENT IN NATURE** A program that prioritizes spending time in nature and being outside rain or shine in all seasons

OUR IMPACT

Our impact focuses on and aims to collect data in four main areas:

1. The development of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills as a predictor of long-term success and ability to thrive
2. Increased affinity and concern for nature
3. Enhanced and deepened connection and bonds with family, friends and other guests
4. A sense of belonging to a greater community and cause

WORK CULTURE – LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Related to but separate from our organizational values, are the leadership principles that guide how we show up, how we approach our work and how we contribute to the work culture at Frost Valley. We aim to provide our Leaders at Frost Valley – in all our departments ranging from program focused to operational in nature – high-quality career development opportunities for excellence and success during and beyond their time at Frost Valley YMCA, the larger Y network or in other professional organizations.

Executive Leaders

- Manage and lead departments
- Hold/pursue the Ys organizational leader certification

Senior Leaders

- Lead larger teams
- Hold the Ys multi-team leader certification

Department Leaders

- Lead a single team
- Hold/pursue the Ys team leader certification

Leaders

- Usually part of a single team
- Hold/pursue the Ys leader certification

Our Leaders Seek to Inspire

People want to be led by authentic leaders who have strong professional standards, and who they respect.

We lead with VISION

- We are clear on how our work connects to the organizational strategy
- We make time to think ahead

We prioritize GROWTH

- We seek out the knowledge and develop the skills needed for our role
- We follow the 70/20/10 principle

We practice SHARED LEADERSHIP

- We collaborate where needed but focus on our work
- We empower others to lead

We are ACCOUNTABLE

- We meet deadlines and own our work
- We aim for excellence in our part of the work

We lead with JOY

- We practice what we preach, demonstrating values through our actions.
- We approach our work and our teammates with gratitude, respect and positivity

Our Leaders are Skilled, Knowledgeable and Strategic

We recognize that staff excellence requires 10% training, 20% coaching and 70% practice and seek out the knowledge and the coaching to be successful at the mechanics of our job using:

- An up to date job description
- A Personality Profile
- Metrics for success for your role
- Feedback and Reverse Reviews
- Competency based performance review systems
- Ongoing professional development and individual development/training plans
- Frost Valley Foundations
- The current Strategic Plan
- The Strategic Balanced Scorecard
- Industry standards and role-specific knowledge

Our Leaders Lead by Example

We set the example on professional behaviors and approaches and help our staff stretch.

We COMMUNICATE clearly and consistently

- We focus on transparency and clarity in interactions
- We encourage our team to ask questions

We are FLEXIBLE and ADAPTABLE

- We prioritize and drive positive change
- We change course if needed

We encourage, give and seek FEEDBACK

- We seek and offer constructive criticism
- We are active listeners and seek to understand first

We show CARE for our team members

- We show understanding, empathy and care in our leadership
- We take time to build relationships with our team and its members

We take INITIATIVE

- We lead with proactive, solution-oriented actions
- We take healthy risks and try new things

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

What measures will guide our success – how will we know we are doing well or are improving? Our Strategic Plan includes organization score cards which guide us in the pursuit of excellence, both in the short and the long term. Examples of what we measure to hold ourselves accountable include:

PROGRAM METRIC

- SEL scores
- Guest satisfaction score
- Net promoter score
- Parent surveys by program

STAFF METRIC

- Staff retention
- Exit data
- Staff satisfaction

DIVERSITY METRIC

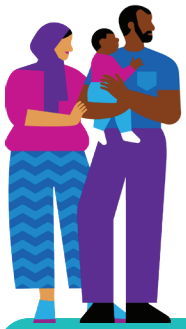
- Diversity benchmarks per category
- Score on internal DEIB survey

FINANCIAL METRIC

- Meeting Budgets
- Building Reserves
- FA and TIER support given as % of budget?

INDUSTRY METRIC

- Media mentions
- Media placements
- Conference presence



over 11,750 guests served

through our Group & Family Retreats, Team Building, and Community Programs in 2023.

nearly 4K campers served

at our Day & Overnight Camp Programs during summer 2023.

nearly 10K schoolchildren served

during 2023 through our Outdoor School Programs.

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