FROST VALLEY YMCA
STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENT

This document is intended for everyone participating in the development of a new strategic plan for Frost Valley YMCA, and is designed to ensure conversations are grounded in the current reality. Peruse this at your leisure.

Mission and Vision

Frost Valley YMCA is a values-driven organization that fosters youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility through outdoor educational and recreational programs for all.

We are guided in this pursuit by our eight core values, which serve as pathways for our guests as they bond with nature and each other. They are:

- Caring
- Community
- Diversity
- Honesty
- Inclusiveness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Stewardship

Frost Valley YMCA is a Camp, Retreat Destination, & Environmental Education Center offering people of all ages and abilities enriching, even life-altering, outdoor experiences. Located on over 5,500 acres in the heart of the Catskill Mountains – just 2 hours north of New York City – we provide year-round access to nature, adventure, growth, and fun.

WHAT WE DO:

Each summer, Frost Valley YMCA provides exceptional outdoor experiences for over 4,000 children through day and overnight camp programs that include but are not limited to: equestrian camp, farm camp, adventure trips, a “Kidney Camp” for children with kidney disease or transplants, and of course the traditional overnight camp that Frost Valley has provided since 1885.

During the school year, Frost Valley serves more than 35,000 school children, college groups, families, scouts, religious organizations, corporate teams, and others on its 5,500-acre property. Educational school field trips bring science lessons to life in the most natural of learning environments – the great outdoors.
Team building retreats strengthen bonds while challenging participants to move out of their comfort zones and into their growth zones. Weekend retreats and family reunions provide the foundation for lifelong memories and traditions that span generations. Community programs such as after-school care, seasonal free events, daycare, outdoor sporting programs, and so much more ensure that our neighbors have ample opportunity for experiences and resources that make living in the Catskills the best choice for families.

Guided by a mission to serve all, Frost Valley provides financial assistance and full scholarships to thousands of children and families who otherwise might not experience the great outdoors. As can often be heard in the dining hall or on the scenic trails of this exceptional camp, “There's something for everyone in the Valley.”

**Inclusion statement:**

Frost Valley strives to be a place where all people belong, where our ongoing work increases inclusion and diversity, where equity is evident in our decisions and actions, and where we are all respected. We do this to ensure that all people have the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity.
Communities We Serve

Geographic Communities: We serve the greater NY, northern NJ area including all five boroughs of NYC, Westchester County, the Hudson Valley, and northern New Jersey including Essex County. We also serve a significant portion of Long Island.

Community Groups: YMCA programs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, church groups, college activity groups, hobby groups and/or special interests (hiking, for example), etc.

School Groups: we service approximately 135 schools from the tri-state area

Identity Based: We serve humans of all races, ethnicities, creeds, religions, sexual orientations

2019-2023
All Mappable Inquiries*

*23% of all inquiries did not contain geographic data
Our Current Model

FV THEORY OF CHANGE

Our theory of change centers our programs in a unified approach and forms the basis for program planning work.

Built on strong fundamentals and a deep history, Frost Valley's unique 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 – strategies rooted in best youth development practices – immediate change that drives long term impact.

FV FUNDAMENTALS

The following pieces underpin and guide our work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informed by HISTORY and TRADITIONS</th>
<th>SMALL and DIVERSE GROUPS</th>
<th>SKILLED and DIVERSE STAFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since 1885, a program rich with traditions that drive connection and community</td>
<td>Young people spent time in small groups, within a larger group, within a large community</td>
<td>Staff who are passionate, well trained and diverse, with an unmatched camper staff conversion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE OUTDOORS and OUR FACILITY</th>
<th>Infused by VALUES</th>
<th>INNOVATION and LEADERSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A backdrop of acres of pristine and forever wild natural land enhanced by a supportive facility</td>
<td>A values driven program that threads values throughout the program experience</td>
<td>A commitment to be an innovator in our field, from how we train our staff to how we develop and evaluate our programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FV CORE STRATEGIES

We view the following as the core components of the FV programs. Each program has a different emphasis on how these are rolled out and even from village to village these may look different. They each are considered essential, however.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAMP MAGIC BACKBONE – activities, traditions and routines that are the connecting glue to the experience:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Camp routines, like dining hall and cabin routines (clean up, devo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Songs, chants and other identity building tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Traditions unique to FV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities and experiences that focus on COMMUNITY and the SOCIAL EXPERIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A powerful social experience centered in emotional safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities and experiences that focus on CHALLENGE and healthy RISK TAKING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An intentionally designed program to push young people’s boundaries and experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities and experiences that focus on campers developing new SKILLS and EXPLORATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A program that infuses opportunities for hard skill building throughout, or opportunities to explore new areas of interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities and experiences that focus on TIME SPENT IN NATURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A program that prioritizes spending time in nature and being outside rain or shine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Programs and Service Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>TYPE</th>
<th>LENGTH</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Camp</td>
<td>Overnight Summer Camp</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>East Valley Farm</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Valley Ranch Camp</td>
<td>Overnight Equestrian Summer Camp</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>East Valley Ranch</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Valley Ranch Camp</td>
<td>Overnight Equestrian Summer Camp</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>East Valley Ranch</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Valley School Trips</td>
<td>Environmental Education</td>
<td>day, 1 or 2 overnights</td>
<td>East Valley Ranch</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Valley Weekends</td>
<td>Overnight Family Programs</td>
<td>2 to 3 overnights</td>
<td>East Valley Ranch</td>
<td>820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Fall Day</td>
<td>Community Program</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>East Valley Farm</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Rainbows</td>
<td>Day Care</td>
<td>Year round</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aftercare</td>
<td>SACC</td>
<td>School year</td>
<td>Tri-Valley</td>
<td>25-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Camp</td>
<td>Day Camp</td>
<td>1 week</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halloween at Camp</td>
<td>Community Program</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday Dinner</td>
<td>Community Program</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor School Programs</td>
<td>Environmental Education</td>
<td>day, 1 or 2 overnights</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>8505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group and Family Retreats</td>
<td>Overnight Family Programs</td>
<td>2 to 3 overnights</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>8971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Camp</td>
<td>Overnight Family Programs</td>
<td>Week-long</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team building</td>
<td>Team building</td>
<td>day, 1 or 2 overnights</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wawayanda</td>
<td>Overnight Summer Camp</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hird</td>
<td>Overnight Summer Camp</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure Program</td>
<td>Overnight Adventure Program</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure Trips</td>
<td>Overnight Adventure Trips</td>
<td>2-4 weeks</td>
<td>Travels</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustang/Durango</td>
<td>Overnight Equestrian Summer Camp</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor-In-Training</td>
<td>Leadership Program</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
<td>Main Camp and East Valley</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>Overnight Summer Camp</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>Main Camp</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Current Partnerships

- A.B.C.- Association to Benefit Children
- Abbot House
- A.C.A.- American Camping Association
- Benjamin Banneker Academy
- Blue Star Families
- Boys & Girls Club of Newark
- Brilla Elementary Charter School
- City of Newark
- East Orange School District
- Ruth Gottscho Kidney Foundation
- La Casa Don Pedro
- Liberty School District
- Link Community Charter School
- N.S.L.A.- National Summer Learning Association
- YMCA Of Greater NYC
- Poughkeepsie School District
- Prep For Prep
- Summer Search
- UA Gateway- Urban Assembly School for Technology
- Yonkers YMCA
- CARY Institute of Ecosystem Studies
- Central Connecticut State University
- Cornell University
- National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP)
- National Audubon Society
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation/Biodiversity Research Institute
- NYS Mesonet
- Rondout–Neversink Stream Management Program
- Stroud Water Research Center
- SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry
- SUNY Plattsburgh
- Syracuse University
- USDA Forest Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Air Status and Trends Network (CASTNet)
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC)
Demographic data

EMPLOYMENT TYPE

122 Employees as of October 2023

- Regular Full Time: 80.3%
- Regular Part Time: 14.8%
- Seasonal: 4.9%

GENERATION

- Pre Baby Boomers (1900 - 1944): 40.2%
- Baby Boomers (1945 - 1964): 28.7%
- Generation X (1965 - 1980): 23.0%
- Millennials (1981 - 1994): 7.4%
- Generation Z (1995 - 2010): 0.8%
**ETHNICITY**

- White: 73.8%
- Black: 6.6%
- Two or More Races: 5.7%
- Hispanic: 4.9%
- Not Defined: 4.9%
- Other: 4.1%

**PAY TYPE**

- Hourly: 67.2%
- Salary: 32.8%

**GENDER (LEGAL)**

- Female: 60.7%
- Male: 39.3%
Program impact data

On a scale of 1-10, our summer campers and their families across all overnight programs answered questions about how they have grown while at camp. 1 is being no change at all and 10 being a drastic change:

- *Campers appear more independent 8.29
- *Willingness to try new or challenging hard things 7.8
- *Made new friends at camp 8.96
- *Gained a better understanding of their friend’s feelings 8.03
- *Gained new skills 8.1
- *Increased their enjoyment of the outdoors 8.8

Farm Campers experienced their preferred learning methods. The top four most enjoyed learning styles were “Hands on Project or Activity,” “Work with Peers,” “Learning on their Own,” which was tied with “Physical Activity/Sports. The top three most experienced learning styles were “Physical Activity/Sports,” “Work with Peers,” and “Group Learning,”. There were sharp increases in the amount who experienced ”Physical Activity/ Sports“ and ”Group Learning“.

In Outdoors SEL, a majority of East Valley Ranch Campers succeeded in two capacities, and 44% succeeded in all three. The top two were “Support for the Environment,” and “Connection to the Outdoors,”
Industry Trends

SUMMER CAMP

Affordability: Families are looking for more affordable overnight summer camp programs. This is due to a number of factors, including rising costs of living and the increasing popularity of overnight summer camps.

Diversity and Inclusion: Families are increasingly looking for overnight summer camp programs that are diverse and inclusive. They want their children to have the opportunity to learn about and interact with people from different backgrounds and cultures. Families are seeking a sense of connection and belonging.

Technology: Families are looking for overnight summer camp programs that use technology to enhance the camper experience. This includes things like online registration, communication tools, and camper tracking apps. But are also looking for campers to disconnect.

CAMPER

Mental, Emotional, Social Health - More external needs to support campers with a rise in mental health challenges.

Variety of Activities: Campers are interested in programs that offer a variety of activities, including STEM, arts, and outdoor recreation. They want to have the opportunity to try new things and learn new skills. Achievement is important to our campers and their families.

Personalization: Campers want to feel like they are part of a community and that their individual needs and interests are being met.

Social–emotional Learning: Campers are increasingly looking for programs that focus on social–emotional learning. They want to learn how to build relationships, manage their emotions, and resolve conflict.

STAFF

Professional development: Staff are looking for programs that offer professional development opportunities. They want to learn new skills and grow their careers.

Competitive salaries: Staff are also looking for programs that offer competitive salaries. This is especially important in today’s competitive job market.

Work–life balance: Staff want to work at camps that offer more flexible schedules to allow life during the summer to be with friends and family.
OUTDOOR SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Outdoor education has historically been adventure-based education, with a focus on individual health and personal growth through camping and survival skills. Recent trends in outdoor education are shifting the focus away from individual health and wellness goals to fostering environmental stewardship through connections to the outdoors.

- to produce students who will take care of the environment, and even work or make sacrifices toward mitigating global problems such as climate change and loss of biodiversity, outdoor educators need to take students outside and provide them with experiences that will help them feel connected to nature
- focus on issues related to environmental justice, climate change, and their impacts on marginalized communities. Educators are addressing these topics to empower students to take action.
- incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the practice of outdoor education (concept of decolonization is complex, and can be difficult to develop curriculum for, because it is necessary to recognize the diversity among Indigenous cultures)
- Place-based education is another recent trend, which encourages teachers to focus their lessons on local places that students can relate to (rather than broad thinking, like what’s happening in the Amazon)
- Representation in the outdoors – increase in race and ethnic diversity. Currently, 72 percent of outdoor recreation participants are white. Emphasis on making outdoor education and experiences more inclusive and accessible to diverse groups of students, including those with disabilities, different cultural backgrounds, and various socioeconomic statuses.
- Mental health benefits of being outdoors – restorative and help people who have impulsive tendencies, are unable to concentrate, or are mentally fatigued, to work better and think more clearly. Developmentally – learning to work in groups, take turns, and understand social norms
- Environmental education vs. Outdoor school – lots of talk on the naming of what this is. Environmental education focuses more on the interconnectedness of humans with the natural world, how to care for it, protect, and revere nature. Outdoor school focuses more on general multifaceted learning happening within the outdoors. At FV – I’ve seen less focus on environmental education based trips and more focus and ask for general outdoor school/recreation in the outdoors
- A strong need to introduce more innovative teaching methods and activities to improve students’ environmental skills
- Loss of staff retention post-pandemic. Ample teaching/group mgmt skills and historical knowledge has been lost. A great time to rebuild programs and classes to be more relevant and modern.
- Standardizing “outdoor school for all” at the state level! Legislation has been passed in OR, WA – working on ME & MD. Would love to see NY join that :)
- Social–emotional learning – looking for programs that focus on social–emotional learning. They want to learn how to build relationships, manage their emotions, and resolve conflict.
Revenue streams

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEGMENT</th>
<th>REVENUE IN MILLIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident Camp</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Valley Ranch</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Programs</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups and Retreats</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Building</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Programs</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributed</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FUNDING PARTNERS (OPERATIONAL, PROGRAM AND CAPITAL)

- SCOPE
- RK Johnson Foundation
- CVS
- National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NYouADP)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Air Status and Trends Network (CASTNet)
- Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC)
- Rondout–Neversink Stream Management Program
- NYS YMCA Alliance – Arthur B. McComb Scholarship