



## ***Oyase Community School***

*A Program offered by Community Wilderness Initiative*

*in cooperation with Vermont Wilderness School*

(802) 257-8570

PO Box 2585

Brattleboro, VT 05303

[www.VermontWildernessSchool.org](http://www.VermontWildernessSchool.org)

[office@VermontWildernessSchool.org](mailto:office@VermontWildernessSchool.org)

### **Oyase Community School Overview Information**

Oyase Community School is a series of nested programs offered by Amy Hyatt and Community Wilderness Initiative (CWI) in cooperation with Vermont Wilderness School. Amy Hyatt has been a staff director of the program since 2006 and today directs the program with the support of parents past and present and the program staff – all whom make up the Community Wilderness Initiative Council. Vermont Wilderness School (VWS) is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to building resilient communities and relationships rooted in nature connection. Vermont Wilderness School is the organizational home for Oyase Community School. Collectively, everyone is committed to creating a web of relationships and culture surrounding our children valuing the intangible skills of thankfulness, awareness, respect, observation, and common sense as well as the tangible skills of building shelters, matchless fire making, plant identification, silent movement and other earth living skills. We invite you to join us on an adventure of discovering and deepening our relationships to self, each other, the natural world, and our relationships to all that is.

#### ***When:***

The core Weekly Oyase Children's Program runs from 9:00 am to 3:15 pm, Thursdays from fall to late spring, (with periodic Thursdays off for seasonal and holiday breaks). The weekly program meets 27 Thursdays with one session in March extending into an Overnight for a total of 28 Program Days. The first session is Thursday September 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Monthly Oyase Program meets concurrent with the Weekly Oyase Program on nine Thursdays and includes the March Overnight totaling 10 Program Days. The first session is also Thursday September 25<sup>th</sup>. *The Monthly Program is primarily for Oyase students who have attended at least one year of the Weekly Program.*

#### ***Where:***

Oyase Community School meets at former Camp Arden - a beautiful and varied 80+ acres of land in Dummerston, VT with some frontage on the West River. The Farwell Family graciously allows us to be on this land at no cost for which we are continuing to be deeply grateful. We have met on this land since September 2006 which has allowed us to get to know the land well as well as invest in building a large lodge, a primitive cooking area, and deep relationships with the land.

#### ***A Typical Program Day:***

We usually have games and natural mysteries while people are arriving. Around 9:30am, we circle up for a welcome and thanksgiving with everyone – this usually happens in the Village which is a 10-15 minute walk from the Parking Area. Following Morning Circle the children separate into groups based on age and/or interest until the Afternoon Story and Sharing Circle around 2:30pm. The small group activities during the day range widely based on weather, season, and the energy and interest passions of the group. Examples of activities include: a woods wander to see what we find and practice how not to get lost; introduction to or further practice on a skill such as fire making, cooking, shelter building, cordage, plant identification, tracking, camouflage and stalking; sit spot; sensory awareness games and challenges; bird language; naturalist journaling and research. All of the days, parents and siblings are welcome to spend

time on the land as part of the Red Oak Clan, working on your own skills and passions and learning from each other and nature.

**“Typical” for the Monthly Day:**

In 2012-2013, we began offering a monthly option for older Oyase students who wanted to continue coming but could not come on a weekly basis. One the hallmarks of Oyase and magic of the program is having a mix of different ages ranging from 6 or 7 up to 15 or 16 years old. Most students who start with us young, can name an older student who they looked up to and many of the older students appreciate having the chance to help out the younger children and to share what they have learned over the years. So, it was important for us to adapt the program so that the older students could continue to have a presence at Oyase both for their continuing learning journey and for the younger students.

For the monthly program for older students, we circle with the weekly students in the morning and afternoon and then during the day our focus is particularly on survival skills and seasonal themes. Amy Hyatt will be leading the Monthly Program once again.

**Trial Period for Oyase Weekly Program:**

For those unsure about committing to the program fully, you can sign your child up for the four week Trial Period. If the program doesn’t feel like a good fit for your child after 4 weeks, there will be an opportunity to withdraw at that time with no further commitment. The cost of the trial period is \$200 regardless of income or number of children in the program. If you and your child decide it is a good fit, then you complete a contract for the year with \$200 as a first payment on the year’s tuition.

“Trial” Periods for the Monthly Program can be discussed. Please contact Amy if you would like to explore that possibility.

**Cost:**

The cost of the programs is on a sliding scale based on gross family income. *This is a guideline – please consider extenuating circumstances your family may have such as having a large family or long commute.* Also take into consideration that the actual cost of the weekly program is around \$1400/student and \$500/student for the Monthly/Overnight programs. Also remember that we are committed as a community to covering our expenses (and we are very frugal with our budget).

Gross Family Income Greater than \$60,000	Gross family income Between \$40,000 - \$60,000	Gross family income Less than \$40,000
\$1850 – Weekly \$660 – Monthly \$720 – Teen Overnight	\$1550 – Weekly \$555 – Monthly \$615 – Teen Overnight	\$1250 – Weekly \$450 – Monthly \$490 – Teen Overnight

**Multi-child Tuition Discount per child:**

1 <sup>st</sup> Child	2 <sup>nd</sup> Child	3 <sup>rd</sup> Child	4 <sup>th</sup> Child
Full tuition	\$100 discount - Wkly \$50 discount – Mthly	\$150 discount - Wkly \$75 discount- Mthly	\$200 discount - Wkly \$100 discount -Mthly

**Payment Plans:**

We do have a variety of payment plans to meet the variety of income patterns present in our community. You can pay in full, on a quarterly basis, monthly basis or weekly. However, you do have to make an overall commitment at the beginning of the year once trial periods are over (or before if you can). Please don’t hesitate to contact the office about different payment options.

***Financial Aid:***

If you cannot afford the bottom of the scale, you can apply for financial aid (this application process does ask for information regarding your financial situation). We are limited in our financial aid capacity and can only grant up to a 50% tuition financial aid. If the financial aid available to your family is insufficient for your child to attend, you can apply to the Vermont Wilderness School Great Blue Heron Fund. We are also willing to work with you to figure something out. We as a community are committed to allowing participation of everyone regardless of income.

***Community Service:***

One of the unique aspects of Community Wilderness Initiative and our programs is that it is based in the community and depends on community contributions of time, skills, talent, wisdom, and love to function. As such we require a minimum level of participation from each family with children in Oyase. Each family is asked to contribute 10 hours of service throughout the year. There are many ways families can contribute including: attending and contributing to Community Councils, serving on the Advisory Committee, publishing a newsletter, heading up one of our community celebrations, assisting with celebrations, making phone calls, helping with projects on the land, organizing the community service activities of the families, or organizing and hosting “neighborhood gatherings.” If you absolutely do not have any time to serve, there is a “buy-out” option of \$150.

Please keep in mind, we believe this community service helps build and deepen our relationships together as a community for our children, each other and the future generations—one of the goals of Community Wilderness Initiative.

***Getting Registered & Oriented:***

The beginning of August, you will be receiving forms to fill out for each child registering for the program. This year’s parent handbook and calendar will be emailed to you in electronic form. We appreciate you getting the forms filled out and sent into the office by September 5<sup>th</sup>. This gives our staff a chance to plan appropriately for the beginning of the year. Then we will be launching the beginning of the program year with a community celebration, council and mandatory orientation on September 11<sup>th</sup>. The first program day will be September 25, 2014.

Please contact Amy at Vermont Wilderness School for registration forms, information and questions, (802) 257-8570.

Look forward to adventuring with you!

Amy Hyatt, Program Director



For more information or to contact **Community Wilderness Initiative:**  
PO Box 2585 • Brattleboro, Vermont, 05303  
802-257-8570 • [www.VermontWildernessSchool.org](http://www.VermontWildernessSchool.org)  
[office@VermontWildernessSchool.org](mailto:office@VermontWildernessSchool.org)