



Shambala Warrior & Nature Day Camp 2012 for 8-15 year olds



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About the Location, Activities & Staff

Shambala Warrior & Nature Day Camp is a week of aikido training (a traditional Japanese Martial art, translates as “way of harmony”) and nature awareness in the woods designed for youth ages 8-15 years old. Aikido, like most martial arts, began in nature and was guided by observing animals, birds, rocks, wind, rivers, trees and becoming attuned with the energies of life. We will also work on our scout skills – our ability to move through the woods quietly and to sneak up on each other, maybe even a coyote! And maybe, in our quiet sneaking we will glimpse aspects of nature that only the stealthiest, most compassionate get to see.

The name is inspired by the 1200 year old Tibetan prophecy of the Kingdom of Shambala. It is said that a time would come when all of life hangs by the finest of threads threatened by powers that would destroy all life. In that time, the Kingdom of Shambala will emerge – not a place or a people per se, but warriors who train in and use the weapons of compassion and insight to go into the halls of power and dismantle the weapons of destruction. This interpretation of the prophecy comes from Joanna Macy spent considerable time with a group of Tibetan monks in the 1970s and early 1980s. She shares this prophecy at her workshops and in her book, “Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect our Lives, Our World.”

The roots of aikido and the nature awareness skills that will be shared in this camp are very much rooted in developing compassion and insight in caring for Life. The founder of Aikido, O-Sensei Morehei Ueshiba, was known to say "If you have injured your opponent, you have injured yourself." Jon Young, one of the leaders of the Nature Connection movement, has also shared extensively how compassion and true helpfulness emerge in youth and adults rooted in nature connection and mentoring relationships. As Shambala Warriors, we will train for compassion and insight into Life – and have fun, joy, and wonder as we explore nature and the martial arts.

The camp is at 1180 Hale Rd in Guilford, VT – just 15 minutes from West Brattleboro, VT. Campers will spend time exploring the 96 acres of diverse habitat including wetland, streams, a 1-acre pond, forested wetland, mixed hardwood forest, and field. Regular animal residents on the land include red and grey fox, coyote, bobcat, black bear, wild turkey, white-tail deer, white-footed mice, woodland jumping mice, green frogs, woodfrogs, American toads, grey tree frogs, spring peepers, eastern garter snakes, red efts, broad-winged hawks, barred owls, wood thrushes, eastern cottontail rabbits and much more including the occasional moose passing through. The diverse, hilly landscape with large rock outcroppings and mountain views readily capture the imaginations of children and provide worthy challenges for children seeking to know themselves in relationship to the world. It is truly a magical place for children and teens to deepen their relationship with nature and become at home in the world.

We also have access to an indoor house space in the case of severe weather or for bathroom emergencies.

Camp activities and curriculum fall under two general categories:

Naturalist and Sensory Awareness Skills

- Sensory engagement games and activities,
- Nature observation and sitting quietly in the woods,
- Learning to move quietly in the woods,
- Sneaking games,
- Noticing patterns such as tracks and asking what those patterns communicate to us,
- Imitating the movement of animals,
- Learning to blend in the natural world including camouflage,
- Aidless navigation (finding your way on the land without map and compass), and
- Learning about the natural world through observation, experience and research.

Aikido & Related Martial Arts

- Learning to fall while protecting oneself (basic back falls and forward rolls);
- Basic attacks, grabs, stances and wrist controls;
- Introduction to staff and bokken (wooden sword);
- Stretching exercises and care of physical self;
- Physical exercise & challenge including a nature-based obstacle course;
- Dynamic sensory awareness of self, others and surroundings;
- Care of others, self, and nature – “if you have harmed your opponent, you have harmed yourself”
- Value of service, compassion, and seeking understanding
- Conflict Transformation, seeking to see from the others perspective and seek out their needs and your own needs to find a path of resolution.

Safety and caretaking the land, plants, trees and animals are all emphasized in these activities. We also have at our base camp a well-rounded Nature Library with a variety of field guides and a Nature Museum for campers to use in different activities learning about the natural world. The exact activities will vary depending upon the interests of the campers, the weather, what the natural world offers up, and what the staff brings to the camp.

Instructor Bios:

Amy Hyatt is the Field Director and Lead Instructor. She has had passion for nature awareness since a child in the woods sneaking with her brother and his friends that has continued well into adulthood. She has been steadily training in aikido since 1998 and currently holds the rank of Ikkyu in the United States Aikido Federation. She is preparing for her black belt test (or shodan). She has been sanctioned by her Sensei to teach aikido and has been teaching classes over the past two years to children and adults. She has been teaching nature awareness and survival skills year round since 2001 and is a graduate of the Vermont Wilderness School Instructor Training Program, the Art of Mentoring Workshop, and Kamana Naturalist Program. She is certified in Wilderness First Aid and CPR.

Information on assistant instructors and volunteers will be available once confirmed. If you have any questions, please contact Amy Hyatt at 802-257-8570 or Hyatt@VermontWildernessSchool.org.