



Just the Dads Weekend Handbook

About the Weekend



Just the Dads Weekend has been offered since 2001 and brings together girls and boys ages 4–17 who are affected by an inherited bleeding disorder, along with their father or male caregiver. The weekend focuses on building confidence, strengthening family connections, and learning through shared activities and education sessions. Each year features a unique program theme that brings fresh energy to the weekend, shaping activities, discussions, and the overall vibe in a way that keeps the experience exciting for returning families and makes each year something different to remember.

Just the Dads Weekend takes place each fall at YMCA Camp Ki-Wa-Y in St. Clements, Ontario, just outside of Kitchener. The program typically runs in September and brings together roughly 50 participants from across the province. Although the age range spans the full 4–17 bracket, the weekend is designed so that every age feels included. Families consistently tell us that the mix of ages, the camp setting, and the shared experiences make it a genuinely awesome time for everyone who attends.



Message from the Program Manager



Welcome to Just the Dads.

As someone living with severe Hemophilia A, I know firsthand how important connection, confidence, and support can be for a family. Growing up, my dad loved and supported me in every way he could, but bleeding disorders were never something he fully learned much about. Looking back, I think there was always a part of me that wished we had more opportunities to navigate that experience together.



That's why programs like Just the Dads matter so much.

This weekend is bigger than camp activities or games. It's about creating space for dads and kids to connect, build confidence, share experiences, and make memories alongside other families who truly understand this life.

Although I didn't create Just the Dads, I've had the privilege of watching its impact for years and honestly, it has become one of the most meaningful parts of my job. There is something incredibly special about seeing families arrive as strangers on Friday and leave on Sunday feeling like part of a community.

I can't wait to see you at camp.

- Luke Chasse



How to Get to Camp



Tips

- Follow Hessen Strasse 4km
- YMCA Outdoor Centre sign on left side, at top of hill
- Turn into the driveway and follow until the very bottom
- Park in the field on the left



Arrival & Check-in

- Check in is between 6:30PM and 7:45PM on Friday in the Dining Hall
- Snacks provided: A light evening snack will be available after check-in. *Please note: dinner is not provided on Friday night.*
- Cabin access: You may drive to your cabin to unload your luggage, but we ask that vehicles not remain parked at the cabins afterward.
- Late arrivals: If you expect to arrive later due to travel or other circumstances, just let staff know ahead of time.
- Contact Luke Chasse – Program Manager at 905-522-2545 or the YMCA Outdoor Centre at 519-699-4484



What to Expect

Group Games



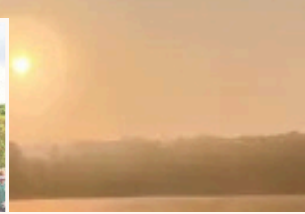
Step outside your comfort zone together. From team challenges to outdoor adventures, these moments build confidence, resilience, and trust between dads and their kids.



What to Expect

Real Conversations & Connections

This weekend is about more than activities, it's about connection. Meet other families, have the conversations that don't always happen at home. Share openly, listen deeply, and walk away feeling understood and supported.



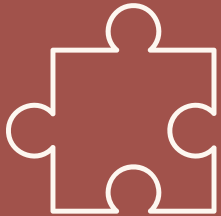


What to Expect











Education

Take part in meaningful conversations and sessions designed to support you and your family. Learn from experts, peers, and lived experiences in a relaxed, welcoming space.














Example Schedule

FRIDAY		
TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
6:30–7:45 PM	 Arrival & Registration	 Dining Hall
7:45–8:05 PM	 Welcome, Orientation & Snack	—
8:05–8:20 PM	 Distribute Team Materials	—
8:20–9:20 PM	 Challenge #1:	—
9:20 PM	 Movie Night	 Program Pod



SATURDAY		
TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
7:30–8:00 AM	 Polar Bear Dip	Docks 
9:00–10:00 AM	 Breakfast	Dining Hall 
9:30–10:00 AM	 Prophylaxis for those on treatment OR Free Time	—
10:00–11:00 AM	 Education Session #1: Adults & Older Kids	Dining Hall 
10:00–11:00 AM	 Education Session #2: Younger Kids	Program Pod 
11:15–11:45 AM	 Challenge #2:	Field 
12:30–1:30 PM	 Lunch	Dining Hall 
After Lunch	 Group Photo	Dining Hall Porch 
2:00–3:00 PM	 Education Session #3: Adults & Older Kids	Dining Hall 
2:00–3:00 PM	 Education Session #4: Younger Kids	Program Pod 
3:00–6:00 PM	 YMCA Activity Rotations (Archery, Waterfront, High Ropes/Climbing Wall)	—
6:00–7:00 PM	 Dinner	Dining Hall 
7:45–8:30 PM	 Challenge #3:	—
8:30 PM	 Campfire	Campfire Area 
9:00 PM	 YAMP: The Night Quest	Program Pod Porch 

SUNDAY		
TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
7:30–8:00 AM	 Polar Bear Dip	Docks 
9:00–10:00 AM	 Breakfast	Dining Hall 
9:30–10:00 AM	 Prophy	—
10:00–11:00 AM	 Challenge #4:	Field / Shelter Building Area 
11:00 AM–Lunch	 Panel	Dining Hall 
After Lunch	 Home Time	—



Medical & Support

Please come prepared with all factor product, infusion supplies, and any medical items your family may need throughout the weekend.

While there is no onsite medical team, refrigeration will be available and staff are always available to help support families in the event of an emergency.



Emergencies

The nearest emergency department is Grand River Hospital, located approximately 20–25 minutes from YMCA Ki-Wa-Y by car.

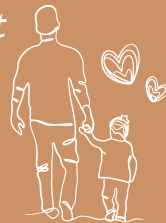
Families should be prepared to transport their child in the event of a medical emergency or if intravenous support is required beyond what staff are able to assist with.

From camp, head south toward Kitchener via Lobsinger Line and follow regional roads toward King Street West.

Testimonials

"I've been attending Just the Dads camp with my children for about 14 years now. It is always a privilege to witness the community come together for the weekend. Kids of all ages get to come and be kids if even for just 2 days. I find I'm always learning something new at JTD. This year, for example, I learned a heck of a lot more about gene therapy. Now I can help support my children in making that decision, should it be offered to them in the future. Being able to bond with the dads over the weekend through team challenges and fun activities is an invaluable experience! It is very reassuring that we are not alone in the journey with a bleeding disorder."

"The Just the Dads weekend has had a very positive impact on our family, and in particular on my relationship with my son. As my wife is a nurse, she shouldered a large part of the burden for the care of our son who has severe hemophilia A. This has led to a very strong bond between them, at some points to the detriment of my relationship with him. Going to the Just the Dads weekend has helped significantly in bringing my son & I closer."



Registration Information

Thanks to the incredible support of our sponsors and donors, families attending the program pay only 25% of the total program cost, helping make this weekend accessible to more members of our community.

Whether you are attending for the very first time or returning to for another weekend of memories, we can't wait to welcome you to camp for another unforgettable weekend of connection, adventure, and community.

Registration can be found at:

<https://www.hemophilia.on.ca/programs/just-the-dads-weekend/>

If you have any questions about registration, financial assistance, accessibility, or the weekend itself, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Hemophilia Ontario team.

Our Sponsors

