



Beat Retreat camp



What is the Beat Retreat?

The Beat Retreat is a fun-filled, four-day weekend for adults with congenital heart disease. You'll have an opportunity to participate in a mix of traditional camp activities – all geared to your physical ability and comfort level. Equally important, you'll have an opportunity to make new friends and learn from the experiences of other CHD patients. You'll also have an opportunity to chat with healthcare professionals in a relaxed and informal setting. In short, it's a weekend of fun, friends, firsts, and great food.

A picture is worth a 1,000 words.

Check our promotional video [Beat Retreat YouTube video](#)

Check out our photo album on [The Beat Retreat Facebook page](#).

When is the Beat Retreat?

The retreat is held the **2nd weekend in September**. If you can't make it for the entire weekend, that's okay – come for the part that you can.

Where is it held?

The retreat is held at Camp Ki-Wa-Y – conveniently located on beautiful Paradise Lake, just 15 minutes north of Kitchener-Waterloo. You can learn more about Camp Ki-Wa-Y at www.ymcacambridgekw.ca/en/camp-outdoor-centre/kiway/index.asp

What happens at the retreat?

While the itinerary may change from year to year, the basics are there every year. You can look forward to a range of activities, such as campfires, canoeing, crafts, archery, initiatives course, scavenger hunt, yoga, badminton, hiking, board games, kangaroo court, skit night, and a polar bear dip. We'll also include an informal educational component where you'll have an opportunity to ask questions of cardiac healthcare professionals. All activities are geared to heart patients and you decide which activities are right for you – based on your interests, physical ability and comfort level.

Where do we stay during the retreat?

We offer a true “camp experience.” That means you’ll stay in a comfortable, but rustic lodge. You’ll enjoy the “luxury” of a heated sleeping cabin, but you’ll also be sharing a room with others and sleeping on a bunk. Linen and pillows are not provided, so you’ll need to bring a sleeping bag and a pillow.

How much does it cost?

Our goal is to make the retreat as financially accessible as we can. With that in mind, the Canadian Congenital Heart Alliance (CCHA) subsidizes much of the cost. All you pay is \$150. That covers your food, accommodation and activities for all four days (although if you want to book a massage while you are at camp, you’ll need to pay a bit extra). That’s a fantastic deal! In fact, it’s about half the actual cost; fundraising and CCHA covers the rest. (This fee may be reduced or waived if you can prove financial hardship).

If you can afford more than the \$150 registration fee, however, we urge you to make a donation to the CCHA to help us offset costs. If you wish to make a donation (this is an amount over and above the \$150 registration fee), please send a second (separate) cheque made out for the desired amount and be sure to write “Beat Retreat Donation” in the memo line or donate online and select Beat Retreat to direct your donation. Tax receipts will be issued for donations over \$20.

Is there a minimum age for attending?

Yes. You must be at least 18 years of age by the first day of the retreat (September 7, 2023).

Do I need to be a member of CCHA to attend the Beat Retreat?

Yes. Membership is free and you can sign up online via the link at the top right of the website's home page. Being a member automatically makes you part of the congenital heart disease community - which helps when we go to industry and the government for funding for our programs. You will also receive email updates from us (but not too many!).

How do I get to the Beat Retreat?

Unfortunately, we don’t provide transportation. But if you don’t have a car, we’ll do our best to get you there. If you need a ride, let us know and we’ll try to match you up with someone from your area who can give you a lift. Alternatively, you can take the train or bus to Kitchener or Waterloo and will arrange to pick you up at the station.

How do I register for this year's camp?

Visit our registration page at <https://www.cchaforlife.org/beat-retreat-2023>

Where can I get more information?

- You can send us an email at thebeatretreat@cchaforlife.org.
- You can go to our Facebook page and post your question.

Keep in mind that there are only 50 spots available, which we expect will fill up quickly – so get your application in soon.

What have others said about The Beat Retreat?

Here are some quotes from past attendees:

- *“The opportunity to ask questions and just chat about life experiences with others who have shared similar experiences is invaluable.”*
- *“The laughter, the support, and the people. The Beat Retreat is a weekend like no other. It’s not to be missed.”*
- *“In any setting, I’m always amazed to be around people who have had similar medical experiences, and persevered. Camping with them brings our collective strength to a whole new level!”*
- *“Never a dull moment – there was always something to do... be it low ropes, initiatives, rock climbing, yoga, canoeing, arts & crafts or hiking.”*
- *“My favourite part of this year’s camp was all of us sitting around a campfire, roasting gooey marshmallows for our s’mores, and listening to the stories, issues, and concerns we all share.”*
- *“I found it was a great opportunity to meet, interact and share stories with others, who like myself, have lived with cardiac challenges, setbacks and triumphs all of their lives. It was a great experience.”*
- *“I thoroughly enjoyed experiencing The Beat Retreat. It was my first time camping and it proved to me that people with heart conditions can handle the outdoors, no problem.”*
- *“The Beat Retreat is an amazing and life-changing experience. The people you meet are all so wonderful and beautiful.”*
- *“The campfires were a blast. It’s always a great experience to connect with other people who have CHD and see what they have achieved in life.”*
- *“The Beat Retreat is a wonderful setting to forge new friendships.”*

Interested in starting a Beat Retreat camp in your province?

The Beat Retreat is looking to expand. If you are interested in helping to bring the Beat Retreat to your province, please email Jennifer at info@cchaforlife.org.

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