



The  
**Robert H. Spitz**  
Foundation



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Historic Pocono Camp Awarded Grant to Bring Outdoor Learning to Delaware Valley Elementary Students**

**Dingmans Ferry, PA** — Camp Speers YMCA has been awarded a \$10,000 grant by the Robert H. Spitz Foundation, administered by Scranton Area Community Foundation. The grant will fund outdoor environmental education for local elementary schoolchildren onsite at the historic sleepaway camp.

The Robert H. Spitz Foundation supports programs that break the cycle of poverty by providing access to housing, transportation, and education. Environmental education is one of the Foundation's 2025 priority areas. Camp Speers has incorporated environmental preservation into its curriculum since 1989, when a rare, endangered plant was discovered on its grounds.

### **WHY IT MATTERS:**

Research shows environmental education provides significant benefits:

- Environmental education has been tied to better student performance in science, math, and reading<sup>1</sup>
- It also correlates with a 46% improvement in health-related quality of life<sup>2</sup>
- Environmental education leads to increased connectedness to nature and pro-social behavior in children<sup>3</sup>
- Exposure to these subjects also opens career paths in education, museums, NGOs<sup>4</sup>

"Camp Speers is so excited to be able to expand our Outdoor Education programming and partner with the Delaware Valley School district to serve even more children," says Jackie Pentecharsky, Camp Speers YMCA's Executive Director.

<sup>1</sup> <https://lloydcenter.org/exploring-the-benefits-of-environmental-education-for-children/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32440617/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.648458/full>

<sup>4</sup> <https://leadthechange.bard.edu/blog/what-can-i-do-with-a-masters-in-environmental-education>

"Students will get the opportunity to take a break from their classroom to experience what the outdoors can teach! We are grateful to the Robert H. Spitz Foundation for powering this partnership's expansion."

Camp Speers YMCA opened in 1948 as the first racially integrated American YMCA summer camp. Since then, Speers has welcomed 200,000 youth to the camp's 1,100 acres of pristine woodlands. Today, Camp Speers' facilities have grown from one old inn surrounded by borrowed tents to a campus of more than 60 buildings, centered around Lake Nichecronk. The camp continues its commitment to inclusion through programs like Dragonfly Forest, a specialty overnight camp for children with various medical conditions, served by trained counselors and medical teams.

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#### **ABOUT THE GREATER PHILADELPHIA YMCA:**

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits, strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Throughout the Delaware Valley, the Greater Philadelphia YMCA serves more than 200,000 individuals each year – regardless of age, income or background – across 16 service locations in Berks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Pike, Burlington and Camden counties. Coupled with 80+ childcare sites, 30+ day camps, and one overnight camp in the Poconos, the Y has extraordinary reach in connecting people to healthier lives. For more information, please call 215-963-3700 or visit [philaymca.org](http://philaymca.org).

#### **ABOUT THE SCRANTON AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION:**

Scranton Area Community Foundation has served as administrator of the Robert H. Spitz Foundation since 2016. The Robert H. Spitz Foundation is a tax-exempt, private foundation that supports initiatives and programs serving the residents of Lackawanna County and Northeastern Pennsylvania. Formed in 2015 through the estate of Mr. Spitz, the Robert H. Spitz Foundation supports an array of projects and programs that improve the Northeastern Pennsylvania region. To date, the Robert H. Spitz Foundation has provided over \$6 million in funding to the community. More information about the Scranton Area Community Foundation can be found at <https://safdn.org/foundation/robert-spitz-foundation/>.