



**ti** lindsey meyer  
teen institute

## 2026 Parent/Guardian Handbook

Everything you need to know about sending your student to the Summer Leadership Conference

LMTI is a program of Partners in Prevention.

# IMPORTANT INFO

## Conference Location

YMCA Camp Ralph S. Mason  
23 Birch Ridge Rd. Hardwick, NJ 07825  
Phone: (908) 362-8217  
Fax: (908) 362-5767  
[www.campmason.org](http://www.campmason.org)

## EMERGENCY 24-HOUR CAMP CONTACT NUMBER

908-362-8217 (After hours press 1 for emergency)

Camp Mason Office Number (9:00am-5:00pm)  
(908) 362-8217

## STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

LMTI Director: Rachel Taylor, [rtaylor@pipnj.org](mailto:rtaylor@pipnj.org)  
Assistant Director: Kira Chontow, [kchontow@pipnj.org](mailto:kchontow@pipnj.org)  
Vice President of Prevention Services & Expansion: Ayla Bower, [abower@pipnj.org](mailto:abower@pipnj.org)

## SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE DATES

Monday, August 24 - Friday, August 28

## OFFICE/MAILING LOCATION

110B Meadowlands Parkway, Suite 302  
Secaucus, NJ 07094  
Phone: (201) 614-2117

## SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS



Welcome to the Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute! The Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute is a program of Partners in Prevention, and a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. We are dedicated to providing young people with opportunities to become strong leaders. At LMTI, we firmly believe that middle and high school students are not the leaders of tomorrow, but rather they are the leaders of today. New Jersey students know best what challenges exist in their schools and communities; they are the ones who walk through the hallways and down the streets each day. Accordingly, they must be the ones to create change.

Through LMTI, students learn to look at challenges not as roadblocks to be feared or ignored, but as opportunities to be embraced and overcome. Furthermore, students are given the chance to work in a climate that puts them in control with adults there as guides and advocates for their vision. Students leave LMTI programs with a sense of confidence, purpose, and motivation that continues on throughout the school year- and also throughout their lives.

*Our Mission: "Our mission is to guide young people to realize their leadership potential and become empowered to create positive changes in themselves, their schools, and their communities."*

*Our History:* Teen Institutes (TI) are comprehensive programs designed to train, mobilize and empower youth to prevent the illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and self-destructive behaviors in themselves and their peers. Teen Institutes emphasize peer leadership and positive life skills development. There are Teen Institute programs for middle school and high school age youth, and the model also has been applied to elementary and college aged youth.

Teen Institutes have been in the United States since 1965, and in New Jersey since 1986. In 1986, TI's first pilot program was launched at Camp Mason for 60 high school students. The program quickly gained momentum and since that initial year, thousands of high school students have participated in the Teen Institute. LMTI was originally named the Teen Institute of the Garden State (TIGS), but in 2005 was renamed to honor Lindsey Meyer.

Lindsey was a Teen Institute participant in 1998, and a youth staff member in 1999 and 2000. A student at St. Mary High School in Rutherford, NJ, Lindsey was also the President of her school's prevention group. Lindsey lived each day with the debilitating disease Cystic Fibrosis, which greatly affects the respiratory and digestive systems of the body. Lindsey never allowed her illness to stand in the way of what she wanted to achieve. In addition to her work with Teen Institute, Lindsey was well known for leading support groups during her numerous hospital stays, helping younger patients cope with their illness and learn from Lindsey's experiences.

On February 8, 2001, Lindsey lost her long and fiercely fought battle with Cystic Fibrosis. In her life, Lindsey gave tirelessly to others and reminded everyone to look at life as a challenge to be embraced, not feared. Lindsey embodied the spirit of Teen Institute and laughingly taught others to not only take from life, but to also give back as much as possible. We are honored to carry on Lindsey's messages of strength, hope, passion, and laughter through LMTI.

# WHAT TO EXPECT

The Summer Leadership Conference is the cornerstone of the LMTI experience and we are excited that your child will be taking part in this unique opportunity. While the conference is only five days, it is a jumpstart to a full year commitment for participants & advisors. The goal of the Summer Leadership Conference is to provide "Action Groups" (students from the same school/community) with the tools and knowledge necessary to develop and successfully implement peer-focused prevention strategies to enact positive change. The LMTI staff will work closely with participants throughout the school year to provide support as needed. Here are descriptions of just some of the activities that LMTI participants will enjoy:

## Action Planning Sessions

- At least once a day, participants will meet with the students from their own school/community to develop a prevention plan to implement back home. Students will have the chance to candidly identify risk and protective factors in their school/community.

## Challenge Course

- One of the teambuilding highlights of the LMTI is participation in an ASE (Action Socialization Experience) low ropes challenge course. This unique experience will help foster group cohesion and individual self discovery amongst each Action Group.

## Free Time & Other Activities

- Each day of the conference is packed with activities designed to facilitate personal growth and information gathering; but there is also time, just about each day, to relax, swim, play games, and participate in both structured and unstructured fun activities.

## Keynote Presenters

- LMTI keynote presenters have been carefully selected to insure the highest levels of quality, creativity, and effectiveness. Don't expect any lectures – get ready for dynamic and enthusiastic comedians, musicians, and actors who address topics such as leadership, diversity, self-esteem, and alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

## Small Group Discussions

- All LMTI participants will be randomly placed into small group discussion groups called "Process Groups." This enables youth to meet new people and to openly discuss topics that are presented during the week. These discussions are facilitated by trained volunteers and are designed to build skills, friendships, and self-esteem while encouraging networking among youth from all across of the state.

## Workshops

- Workshop sessions introduce participants to additional skills and resources to enhance their current prevention efforts. Many of these workshops feature evidence-based curriculums and programs. Youth gain access to all materials needed to utilize these programs in their communities and leave these experiential workshops with increased knowledge as well as tools to utilize in their Action Groups.

**For more info, you can join LMTI at an optional online info session for guardians and students via Zoom on either**

**August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30pm**

**or**

**August 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm**

LMTI has a full time staff that prepares and implements the Summer Leadership Conference annually, and then works with participants throughout the school year. We also are happy to welcome adult Action Group Advisors, adult volunteers, college age staff, and youth staff as part of our team. All staff members participate in training sessions prior to working with students. College and youth staff members undergo an intensive application, selection, and training process to prepare them for their unique roles. LMTI also contracts with two registered nurses who remain on the grounds and are accessible 24-hours a day to all participants. In addition to the LMTI staff, we also consider Camp Mason staff as part of our extended team, and we work closely with the camp to ensure a successful and safe program. Camp Mason hires teaching specialists for activities such as swimming and adventure based programming. Camp Mason support staff work in the office, kitchen, and at maintenance. Thoughtful hiring, training, and shared experience create a collaborative staff at LMTI that is energized, dedicated, and focused on providing an exceptional experience for children.

The Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute is committed to creating a safe environment for our participants. We adhere to stringent hiring procedures when selecting both paid and volunteer staff. All adult staff members, including college students, undergo criminal background checks prior to their participation in the Summer Leadership Conference.

#### Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute Professional Staff:

Rachel Taylor, Director	Rtaylor@pipnj.org
Kira Chontow, Assistant Director	Kchontow@pipnj.org
Madie Jones, Senior Program Coordinator	Mjones@pipnj.org
Mariela Ramos, Program Coordinator	Mramos@pipnj.org
Caitlin Bradley, Program Coordinator	Cbradley@pipnj.org
Jocelyn Ramos, Program Coordinator	Jramos@pipnj.org

Camp Mason offers a beautiful, natural setting for the Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute Summer Leadership Conference. Facilities that LMTI utilizes include numerous recreation lodges, an arts center, playing fields, basketball/volleyball courts, a heated swimming pool, low ropes courses, and miles of hiking trails.

Most activities occur in an outdoor setting so that participants can enjoy the beauty of Camp Mason. Camp Mason has a large open air pavilion in which most group activities occur. Smaller group activities take place in various lodges and other rooms.

Sleeping Arrangements Cabins are simple and comfortable. Most cabins are duplex buildings that sleep approximately 12-14 individuals on each side. Each cabin has electricity and full dormitory-style bathrooms. Participants and staff sleep in sturdy bunk beds in the main cabin area. Each cabin is chaperoned by an adult staff member, a college staff member, and at least 2 youth staff members. Students are purposefully placed into cabins with participants from other schools to allow them the opportunity to get to know more people. Male cabins are located in one area of camp and female cabins are in another as well as a gender neutral cabin space. Students are not permitted into each other's cabins unless it is during a structured group meeting supervised by a staff member. Lights out occurs at approximately 11:00-11:30pm each evening, at which point the LMTI staff does a security sweep to make certain that everyone is accounted for. The nurse and LMTI Staff are available 24 hours a day via radio and all staff members are trained to know what to do in the event of an emergency at night.

# Health & Safety

**COVID-19 Protocol** It is essential that if your child is sick with a fever, experiences vomiting or diarrhea, or symptoms of Covid-19 within 48 hours prior to the start of the conference, that they do not attend. While we want everyone to have the chance to participate, we also need to ensure the overall health and wellness of our camp population to avoid outbreaks of illness. Thank you for your understanding!

**Notification of COVID-19 Cases** In the event that there is a positive case, staff will notify all identified close contacts of their exposure to a person with confirmed COVID-19. If they are experiencing symptoms, they will be immediately tested by nursing staff. If the results are positive, guardians will be notified; if the results are negative, they will continue to follow regular camp protocols and guardians will not be notified.

**Additional Safety Measures** There will be enhanced and increased cleaning procedures in place this summer. High touch surfaces will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day. All participants will receive their own supplies in order to eliminate the necessity for sharing. All cabins will be equipped with additional health & safety supplies such as disinfecting products and hand sanitizers.



## QUESTIONS

Our goal is to make sure that all participants feel comfortable and safe during their time at the LMTI Summer Leadership Conference. If you have any questions at all regarding health and safety, please do not hesitate to contact us!



**NJLMTI.ORG**



**KCHONTOW@PIPNJ.ORG**



**201-614-2117**

# DINING ARRANGEMENTS

Everyone at camp eats together in the dining hall and on nice days, participants are encouraged to also eat outside at picnic tables. All meals are served buffet style by the experienced Camp Mason food staff. The kitchen is equipped to deliver healthy meals in sufficient quantity. YMCA Camp Mason is accredited by the American Camp Association ([www.acacamps.org](http://www.acacamps.org)). The camp complies and is licensed with all state and local health authorities and is inspected annually by the local health department.

Camp Mason recycles its food service and all participants will be taught proper recycling methods in the dining hall. Lunch and dinner offer a full salad bar in addition to meal options. Please alert the LMTI Staff of any dietary restrictions or allergies, such as peanut allergies, so that we can talk to the kitchen staff prior to your arrival. Here are some notes about dietary restrictions:

NUT ALLERGIES Camp Mason is considered a “nut-safe” environment. This means they have as few nuts as possible, but there may still be trace amounts in certain foods. Announcements will be made at each meal about items students with nut allergies should avoid.

## GLUTEN ALLERGIES

Gluten-free options are available at every meal.

## VEGETARIAN

Vegetarian options are available at every meal.

## VEGAN

Vegan options are available at every meal.

## OTHER FOOD RESTRICTIONS

Reach out to Kira at [kchontow@pipnj.org](mailto:kchontow@pipnj.org) to discuss accommodations and options.

If you have any questions regarding allergies or dietary needs, please do not hesitate to contact us so that we can be sure to best accommodate your child! E-mail Kira at [Kchontow@pipnj.org](mailto:Kchontow@pipnj.org) with any questions or concerns.

***\*\*Please note\*\**** All meals and snacks will be provided by Camp Mason. Please do NOT send any additional food with your child, unless they have specific health requirements that merit this (if this is the case, please notify us first). Food attracts animals into cabins and we do not want that!

# SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

## WHAT TO BRING

- Bedding & Towels: a sleeping bag and/or bed linens and a blanket, pillow, towels & washcloths (Camp Mason will provide a mattress all other bedding must be brought)
- Clothes: shorts, jeans, t-shirts, sweatshirts, socks, light weight jacket, waterproof jacket or poncho, sturdy sneakers, pajamas, hat (weather can vary- please be prepared for very hot, cold, and/or rainy weather)
- Toiletries: toothbrush & toothpaste; shampoo, soap, personal items, tissues
- Miscellaneous: flashlight, sunscreen Optional: bathing suit, flip flops for the shower, backpack, bug spray, water bottle, musical instrument for Open Mic sessions

## WHAT NOT TO BRING

- iPads, Notebook computers, or any other portable electronic devices: We do not want participants to lose these valuables during LMTI. In addition, due to an extremely full schedule, there will not be time to utilize these items.
- Food/Snacks: All meals will be provided at LMTI. Bringing food and/or snacks can attract animals into cabins.

### **A Note About Cell Phones**

There is little to no cell reception at Camp Mason. If your child brings a cell phone, we ask that they only use it to take pictures, to provide music during our Open Mic sessions, or during free time.

# CONFERENCE RULES

The safety of your children is of the utmost importance to us while they are at the LMTI Summer Leadership Conference. Please review these rules with your child before they attend the conference to make sure that you are both aware of our policies. Any rule violation may cause a participant to be sent home. If a participant must leave the conference for any reason, the parent/guardian is responsible for transportation home.

- LMTI is all about teaching you that you can have fun without the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs—so these substances are not allowed.
- We want to keep everyone safe and healthy during their stay with us. Thus, all prescribed medication must be turned in to the Nurse upon arrival and will be dispensed by the Nurse as required. All medication must be in an original bottle with a clearly legible label.
- You'll be having so much fun, you won't want to leave, but please keep in mind that no one may leave Camp Mason unless they have been authorized to do so by the LMTI Staff.
- We want to create a fun environment that is separate from our technology-dependent day to day lives. If you do bring a cell phone, we ask that you only use it for taking pictures or to provide music during Open Mic. Do not bring other electronic devices (tablets, computers, etc.).
- We ask that you do not require your child to call home upon arrival. Our staff will review a complete list of participants and if any discrepancies arise, you will be contacted. Thus, you should not expect to hear from your child during the week. No news is good news! In the event of an emergency, if you need to contact the LMTI Staff, you can do so by calling 908-362-8217, if it is after hours press 1.
- In order to help us move the week along smoothly, we'll need your help- you must attend and be on time for all activities, including meals.
- Let's be respectful of each other-- aside from scheduled group meetings, you are not permitted in someone else's cabin without permission.
- If you drove here, we want your car and any belongings you have inside to be safe- all automobiles must be parked in designated areas and kept locked.
- We love Camp Mason! The staff is incredible, the camp is beautiful, and we are so lucky to be able to have the Summer Leadership Conference there. Please help us to respect Camp Mason by cleaning up any areas you use and disposing of all garbage in appropriate receptacles.
- It's important that while you're with us, we know where you are. To help us keep you safe, please remember that no participant is permitted out of their cabin after lights out. Youth staff may only leave their cabins if given permission to do so by their cabin chaperone in the event of an emergency.
- We want to get to know you! Wear your name tag at all times.

# REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Full participant applications must be completed in order for us to admit your child into the Summer Leadership Conference. We unfortunately cannot make any exceptions to this policy. Copies of these documents are available in PDF format on our website.

**Arrival** All students must arrive at Camp Mason between 10:00am and 12:00 noon on Monday. Youth staff must be present for Staff Training on Sunday and will receive arrival time instructions at their last training in August. Please be sure to check with your school/community group's advisor for transportation information if they are providing a bus. If you are dropping off your child, please upon arrival, approach the registration area at which point, you will be guided through the process by a staff member. If you have any questions at that time, we encourage you to approach our knowledgeable staff who will be happy to answer your questions.

**Health Services** Our Health Services staff includes two Registered Nurses at all times. In case of emergency, we use Newton Memorial Hospital (175 High Street, Newton, NJ 07860), which is twenty minutes from camp. When your child arrives at camp, they are required to check in with the Nurse. The nurse will check your child's Health Form and ask for any necessary clarification. If you are not present and the Nurse has any questions, they will contact you.

All medication must be turned in to the nurse upon arrival. This includes prescriptions, over the counter medications, and vitamins. All prescription medication must be brought to the nurse in the original container, from the pharmacy, with the participant's name and the proper administration directions on the label. Our medical staff can administer over-the-counter products with a parent's permission and instructions, as indicated on the health form. Medications for your child not following these requirements cannot be accepted or administered. If your child is taking a new medication and it was not indicated on their original application, please bring the new medication with you to Registration and inform the Nurse at that time. Medications will be returned on Friday before departure.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Each day at the LMTI Summer Leadership Conference is different, but there is an overall structure and flow that exists throughout the week. The schedule is packed with activities, presentations, and discussions that are designed to engage participants in a truly experiential learning process. Each day has a different focus and so the agenda builds upon itself as more topics are addressed and students become more familiar with the format of the conference.

All staff begin their day at 7:30am with a staff meeting in which the agenda is reviewed and questions are answered. All participants begin their day at 8:00am with breakfast. On any given day, there is at least one Action Group meeting, one Process Group meeting, 1-2 General Sessions, 1 workshop session, and free time. There are also other fun activities such as a mid-week dance and fun celebrations on our last evening. Each evening ends with a presenter or fun activity and lights out is approximately 11:00-11:30pm.

# TELEPHONE POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS

At LMTI and at Camp Mason, we work to develop strong, independent young people who can function on their own during their stay with us. Our staff members are ready to assist campers in dealing successfully with any challenges that arise during their stay with us. Cell phone usage by campers is counter-productive to this process. It takes away from the development of confidence in a community setting, removes the opportunity to resolve conflicts, and deters our ability to provide guidance within a given situation. If they bring their cell phone, they are only permitted to use it for purposes of taking pictures or during free time. Cell reception is incredibly unreliable at Camp Mason, so if you must get an important message to your participant, we will pass it along. The camp office is open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM every weekday, and the 24-hour Emergency Number is listed on the first page of this manual.

Communicating with the LMTI Director: The LMTI Director is available through the camp office or by the provided 24 hour number in case of emergency. The staff is also able to access email while at the conference, so please send any questions to [rtaylor@pipnj.org](mailto:rtaylor@pipnj.org) or [kchontow@pipnj.org](mailto:kchontow@pipnj.org)

## Communicating With Your Participant Letters:

It is just five days, but who doesn't like to receive some mail from home? If you'd like to send mail to your child while they are at the Summer Leadership Conference, please address it to:

YMCA Camp Mason  
23 Birch Ridge Rd.  
Hardwick, NJ 07825  
ATTN: Your participant's name, School

## LMTI STORE

The LMTI Store will be open during the week. Items such as t-shirts and other clothing items, key chains, stickers, and other merchandise will be available for purchase at this time. For a frame of reference, a t-shirt costs \$15-\$20. Parents are encouraged to bring money with them on Friday so that students do not have to worry about holding it during the week. Payments can be made via cash, check, credit card, or Venmo.

## DEPARTURE

The Summer Leadership Conference ends on Friday at 3:00pm. It is extremely important if you are transporting your child home that you arrive on time. Camp Mason must prepare the camp for an incoming group and we want to give them as much time as possible so that others can enjoy the wonderful accommodations that we've had the privilege of enjoying.

# OTHER FAQs

**Laundry:** There are no provisions for doing laundry at the conference, so please be sure to send a sufficient supply of clothing, as per the packing list. Please make sure that all clothing and luggage are well labeled.

**Lost and Found:** We cannot urge you strongly enough to mark or tag all of your child's belongings. Lost and found is kept for one week after the end of the conference and then donated to a local charity. Please instruct your child to check the lost and found area under the pavilion prior to departing from the conference.

**Homesickness:** Homesickness is a normal and healthy response to being away from home. Our staff members are well-trained in techniques that help participants develop coping skills for overcoming the challenges of separation from home and family. These skills often lead to more confidence and independence, a key outcome of the LMTI experience. If you do end up talking to your child or receiving texts from them while they are at LMTI, resist the temptation to include phrases that would lead them to believe you or other family members are missing them or that your child is missing out on important things at home. Keep your conversation positive and supportive if you speak to them- let your child know how proud you are that they are facing this challenge. And finally, feel free to call the LMTI Director at any time if you still have concerns. In our experience, putting participants on the phone with parents seriously compounds homesickness issues and typically makes the situation more difficult; however our staff is always willing to speak with you regarding your child's experience. We can also get you in touch directly with their school/community group advisor.

## Refunds and Cancellations

- Participants
  - A full refund will be provided upon request in writing/email up until July 31st. After this date, no money will be refunded. Any individual student replacement or substitutions
  - may be made with no penalty before the first day of the conference. If a substitution cannot be made after this date, no money will be refunded.
  
- Youth Advisory Council (YAC)
  - A partial refund of \$150.00 will be given if a student is unable to serve as a YAC for any reason up until the overnight training in June.
  - If a student is unable to serve as a YAC for any reason after the overnight training, no money will be refunded.

**Donation Opportunities** As a charitable organization, the Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute is dependent on contributions to maintain the quality of our programs. Gifts to the Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute help provide tuition assistance for the Summer Leadership Conference, fund programs, support staff development, and assist in creating other exceptional leadership opportunities for staff and participants. Online giving is available by visiting our website at [www.njlmti.org](http://www.njlmti.org).

# DIRECTIONS

## **Camp Ralph S. Mason**

**23 Birch Ridge Road, Hardwick, NJ 07825**

Camp Mason is located north of the Delaware Water Gap, in rural Warren County. It is about 1.2 hours from the George Washington Bridge, and 2 hours from North Philadelphia, traffic expected.

To reach Camp Mason, take the most direct route to Interstate 80, near the New Jersey, Pennsylvania border. From the New York area, take I-280, I-287 or the GSP to I-80. From the shore, take the GSP to I-287 or I-280 to I-80. From Trenton/east Philadelphia routes 31 or 206 north to I-80. From west Philadelphia, or Bucks County rt. 611 N or the N.E. extension to 78/22, east to rt. 33 then North to I-80 East.

### ***From Interstate 80 West Bound (NYC & New Jersey)***

1. Take exit #12, Blairstown/Hope. Proceed North off the ramp on 521, towards Blairstown
2. At the T-junction with Rte. 94, turn left (The Forge restaurant is on corner)
3. Proceed  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile to Sunoco and Valero gas stations on left. Turn right, opposite gas stations, and then another quick right onto Main Street
4. Follow "From Blairstown" directions below

### ***From Interstate 80 East Bound (Pennsylvania and Del Water Gap)***

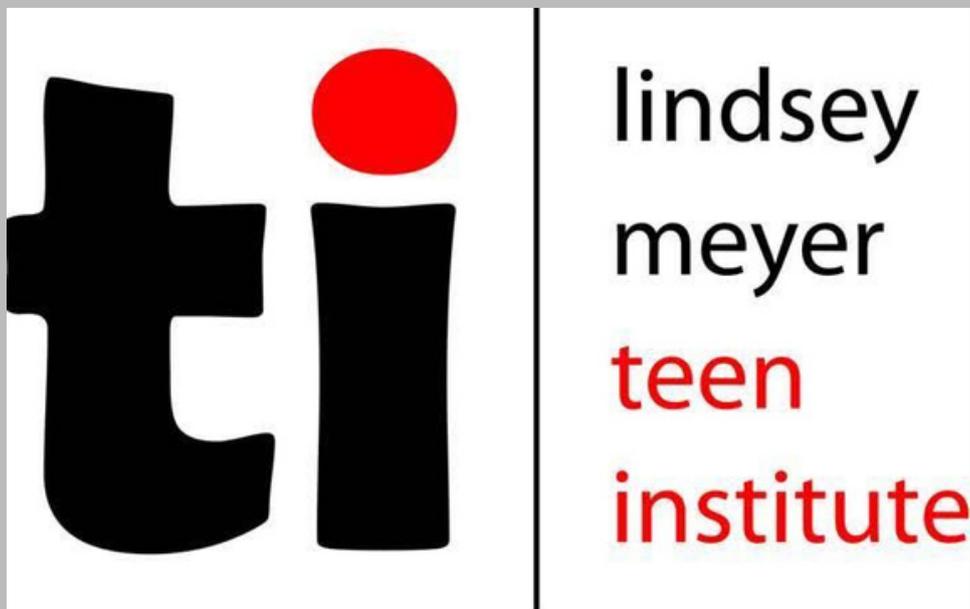
1. Take exit 4C (Blairstown, Rte 94 North)
2. Follow Rte. 94 North to Blairstown (approx. 7 miles)
3. You will pass A&P center and go through one traffic light. At Valero gas station (on right) turn left and then immediately right onto Main Street
4. Follow "From Blairstown" directions below

### ***From Blairstown***

1. At the old mill with stone arches (waterfalls and park behind) bear left and go up short, steep hill.
2. At top of hill, bear left at split, and proceed towards Millbrook, on Millbrook Rd. (multi-camp signs on corner)
3. Stay on Millbrook Rd. for about 3 miles. Just past Princeton Camp, watch for Birch Ridge Rd., a right turn. YMCA Camp Mason sign is on a tree on the corner. Pass one house. Camp Mason sign and driveway are on the left. Proceed to the end of driveway to enter camp.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Lindsey Meyer Teen Institute  
110B Meadowlands Parkways, Suite 302  
Secaucus, NJ 07094  
(201)614-2117 p  
(201)298-1618 f  
[www.njlmti.org](http://www.njlmti.org)



Also, please visit these websites to learn more about our organization and partners:



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

