



FamilyMeans  
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

# Family Handbook



## Welcome!

WE'RE PLEASED that you chose FamilyMeans as a place for your children to spend some of their after school and summer hours. This Handbook will help you learn more about who we are, what we do and why we do this work. Also included are our expectations for youth.

FamilyMeans has been providing youth programming for over 20 years. We began our Landfall program in 1993, and Cimarron program in 2008. Our work helped the City of Landfall win a national award—being named one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People—three years in a row. Our Cimarron staff were given the Quality Star award by the City of Lake Elmo for their positive contributions to city life. Our youth programs and organization meet the high standards of the Council on Accreditation, an international, independent, nonprofit, human service accrediting organization.

## ALL OF OUR YOUTH PROGRAMS ARE FREE

Each year FamilyMeans does extensive fundraising and grant writing to make our programs available to you without cost.

### Our Three Goals for Your Children

- 1** Our first goal is to provide a safe and welcoming place for your kids that they want to come back to day after day. Our staff are skilled at teaching and modeling good decision making, good person-to-person behavior and helping kids work through all the challenges of growing up into adults. Staff also have training in practical skills like First Aid, CPR and safe food preparation.
- 2** Second, we want our programs to be a place where children and teens can try new things, discover what they are good at and develop a positive view of themselves and who they can become. Our Youth Programs' mission is *equipping youth to learn, thrive, connect and contribute throughout their lives*, and guided by this we create activities and experiences we believe help your children turn into capable, more confident people.
- 3** Third, we want to work with you to help prepare your children for life after high school. Our **Ready To Be...** program will guide your children in discovering their strengths and interests, learning how their strengths connect with a future job, understanding what they must learn and do to get that job, and helping them gain the skills, information and experiences necessary to be successful in the workplace.

## Enrollment

We only require you fill out a registration and emergency contact form. You and your children choose how often they participate.

### Our Programs

#### Year-round Programs

*For children in Kindergarten through 5th grade:*      *For youth in grades 6-12*

**Cimarron Kidspace**

**Cimarron Teen Center**

**Landfall Investigation Station**

**Landfall Teen Center**

These programs are open Monday through Friday afternoons throughout the year. Occasionally, we offer morning, evening and weekend activities.

School buses take Cimarron youth directly to our building.

#### Summer Programs

*For youth age 9 and up*

**Cimarron Youth Bicycle Program**

**Landfall Youth Bicycle Program**

**Youth get to choose their daily activities.  
Activities change often.**

Most activities are hands-on and include cooking class, the arts, indoor and outdoor games, science, music and reading. iPads and gaming systems are available for other fun and appropriate online and indoor fitness activities. Computer access along with staff and volunteers help youth complete school homework assignments. Fun, active, educational and volunteering field trips are scheduled throughout the year.

We hope that all teens enroll in our **Ready To Be...** (RTB) program. RTB guides teens in making a thoughtful plan about the job or career they pursue after high school. Staff help youth make choices about going directly from graduation to work, to apprenticeships, college or technical schools, and the military. This program will help teens meet professionals from many fields of work; visit, apply to, and enroll in colleges; and learn independent living skills like budgeting, managing credit and choosing housing.

During the summer, our Cimarron and Landfall Youth Bicycle Programs teach youth ages 9 and up bicycle repair and offer weekly bike rides. Youth can use their repair knowledge and effort to earn a bike or bike parts. Bike rides can range from a 2-mile trip to a 3-day, 100-mile bike camping trip.

All programs serve youth a snack each day.

*Please talk to a FamilyMeans youth program coordinator if you have any questions.*



Summer bike rides



Life skills



Field trips & nutrition



Art & creativity



Youth theater



Fitness activities



Teen adventures

## Program Hours

### School Year

**Kidspace:** Monday-Friday, opens immediately after school until 5:00 p.m.

**Investigation Station:** Monday-Friday, opens immediately after school until 5:45 p.m.

**Teen Programs:** Monday-Friday, open immediately after school; closing times vary during the week

### Summer (mid-June through August)

Summer program times are Monday-Friday afternoons.

Summer hours may change year-to-year based on the activities offered. A summer schedule is published in late spring.

## Special Events

Family events are offered throughout the year. A Cimarron Summer Barbeque, helps kick off the summer season and informs you of the summer schedule. In late August both sites hosts Back-to-School events, when school supplies are distributed, along with the fall program schedule. Santa's Workshops take place in mid-December. You can select holiday presents for your children—teens will even gift wrap them for you! Staff host Parent Meetings to get feedback on our program, announcing upcoming events and help you connect with other parents.

## Program Closings

**Holidays.** Our program is closed on most major holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

**Weather-Related.** Whenever the schools close because of severe weather, our programs will also be closed. We don't want to have your children risk weather-related harm traveling to and from our program site.

**Unscheduled Program Closings.** There are times when our programs might close unexpectedly. We can inform you of these closings through same-day voice, text or email messages. Sign up for this communication service on our Registration Form.

## Program Expectations

### Expectations of Youth

Although all youth are welcome to participate, this invitation remains open only as long as our expectations for positive behavior are met. These include:

- Contributing to a clean, safe, enjoyable atmosphere;
- Treating people and property with respect—violence, harassment, discrimination, theft or destruction of any kind are all considered unacceptable behaviors.

Youth who engage in unacceptable behaviors may lose privileges within a program, or be suspended from participation for a period of time. Serious offenses, such as stealing or injuring others, may be reported to the police. Parent/youth/staff conferences may be required to resolve any problems and allow reentry into our program.

To reduce the spread of illness, we ask that youth who stay home from school because they are sick do not attend our programs until they return to school.

### Expectations of FamilyMeans

Nearly all of our programming is offered on a walk-in basis. We assume responsibility to provide an enjoyable and safe atmosphere for youth. We DO NOT assume the responsibility of holding a youth at our program sites or knowing his or her whereabouts after leaving.

**Telephone use by youth.** Youth can request to use our program phones to contact you or other family members to check-in or request a pick-up.

**Medication policies.** FamilyMeans staff will not administer any medications (other than external first aid) without your consent. We may refuse this request if we feel it is beyond the capabilities of our staff.

**Bringing personal items into the program.** Youth may bring personal possessions into our programs, but do so at their own risk. FamilyMeans will not take responsibility for any loss or damage to these items.

### Youth Internet Access

All of our program sites offer access to the Internet. Youth are expected to use the Internet for learning, appropriate entertainment and communication. Staff monitor the appropriateness of youths' online activities as much as possible.

At Kidspace and the Investigation Station, we request that children keep their phones or other digital devices turned off unless they are communicating with family members.

If staff discover online engagement that is not age-appropriate or not meeting general program expectations, they will request that youth stop such activity,

even if it is on a personal device. The respectful use of the Internet at FamilyMeans is a privilege, not a right, and may be lost if abused.

You have the option of denying Internet access for your children.

## Communication

We want to make it easy and simple to share information about our program activities. Here are ways you can choose to automatically hear from us:

- **Unexpected Program Closings:** Receive advance notice through text or email
- **Digital Program Registration and Activity Permission Forms:** Sign up to receive and complete registration and field trips forms on your phone, tablet or computer.

*Sign up for these services on our Program Registration Form, or talk to a Program Coordinator*

- **Digital Portfolios:** Keep track of what your child learns and accomplishes with us. We are creating “digital portfolios” where your children can post writings, photos or videos of program activities and achievements. Eventually, these can be used to help create resumes and college applications. We share the link to their portfolios, which you can view on any device that can connect to the Internet.

*Request the link from a Program Coordinator*

## Parent/Family Involvement

**You are always welcome to contact staff  
or come into our program spaces!**

Feel free to step in to pick up your child, ask a question, share a concern, seek information, or just watch an activity. Staff are happy to schedule a personal meeting or phone call with you. If you have a skill or passion you want to share with kids, you can register to be a FamilyMeans volunteer. Talk to a Program Coordinator about how to do this.

## Participant Evaluations

At times throughout the year, FamilyMeans evaluates the effectiveness of its programming through participant and/or parent/guardian surveys or interviews. Participation in these evaluations is entirely voluntary.

## Photo Release

FamilyMeans seeks to document program events for history, evaluation or fundraising. Because of this, we ask that you give your consent (on the registration form) to us to photograph, video or audiotape your child(ren).

## Our Program Sites



**Landfall Investigation Station**  
(in Landfall City Hall)



**Landfall Teen Center & Bike Shop**



**Cimarron Youth Center & Bike Shop**



## **Participant rights**

The staff of FamilyMeans Youth Programs strives to provide youth with safe, fair and respectful services.

In the FamilyMeans Youth Programs, youth participants have the right to:

- Be and feel safe;
- Be treated with respect;
- Not be bullied or treated unfairly because of gender, race, nationality, religion, or disability;
- Have fair opportunities to participate in activities;
- Participate in decision-making about what programs and activities are offered;
- Be listened to and express opinions;
- Speak out with any concerns;
- Expect that personal information will be kept private and not be shared without youth, or parent permission;
- Request an interpreter when seeking information, asking questions or expressing concerns about our program.

## Filing a Grievance

If you feel your child has not been treated in a safe, fair and respectful manner, we request that you first discuss your concerns with the Program Coordinator or Director of Youth Programs. If this does not lead to a satisfying result, you have the opportunity to file a complaint by following the steps described below.

A youth, parent, legal guardian, legal representative or interested individual can file a complaint. Complaints will be handled as much as possible, within the limits of confidentiality.

It is FamilyMeans' goal that your filing of a complaint shall not affect your participation in Youth Programs activities.

### Steps in filing a Grievance

**Step 1:** You present the complaint in person or in writing to the staff person with which he/she may have the complaint. That staff person will meet with you as soon as possible to discuss and work towards resolving the complaint.

**Step 2:** If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you may appeal their complaint to the Youth Programs Director (651 439-4840). The Director will meet with you at a mutually agreed upon time to discuss and work toward resolving the complaint.

**Step 3:** If the complaint is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you may appeal their complaint to FamilyMeans' President (651 439-4840). All complaints submitted to the President must be in writing, describing the specifics of the complaint. The President will meet with you at a mutually agreed upon time to discuss and work toward resolving the complaint.

**Step 4:** You will receive written notification of the final resolution and outcome of the complaint within five working days of the hearing. A record of the final resolution and outcome of the complaint will be entered into a Youth Programs Complaint file and reviewed by the President. The information to be recorded in the case record will include:

- a) name of person filing the complaint.
- b) relationship to the Youth Programs participant, if not the youth himself or herself.
- c) facts and details regarding the issue and applicable policies
- d) efforts to resolve the complaints, and
- e) the conclusion

**Step 5:** The President will keep the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors apprised of all complaint procedures requiring the attention of the President and their outcomes.

## Program Staff

Caring and committed people staff each of our programs. Youth always report they feel well supported by our coordinators.



### **Jaime Staska**

Cimarron Kidspace Program Coordinator  
(on staff since 2008)  
(651) 436-5117-Voice only.  
[jstaska@familymeans.org](mailto:jstaska@familymeans.org)



### **Taherah Shamsulbari-Cobb**

Cimarron Teen Center Program Coordinator  
(on staff since 2017)  
(651) 436-5074-Voice only  
[TShamsulbariCobb@familymeans.org](mailto:TShamsulbariCobb@familymeans.org)



### **Erin Patchin**

Landfall Investigation Station Program Coordinator  
(on staff since 2010)  
651 730-1046-Voice only  
[epatchin@familymeans.org](mailto:epatchin@familymeans.org)



### **Carey Garcia**

Landfall Teen Center Program Coordinator  
(on staff since 2018)  
651 578-1483-Voice only  
[cgarciaheublein@familymeans.org](mailto:cgarciaheublein@familymeans.org)



### **Tom Yuska**

Director of Youth Programs  
& Landfall Youth Bicycle Program Leader  
(on staff since 1993)  
651 439-4840 x 4060-Voice only  
[tyuska@familymeans.org](mailto:tyuska@familymeans.org)

## About FamilyMeans

FamilyMeans is a 50+ year-old nonprofit organization based in Stillwater. Our mission is to strengthen communities by strengthening families.

FamilyMeans believes a family consists of two or more people, whether living together or apart, related by blood, marriage, adoption or commitment to care for one another.

### In addition to youth programs,our services include:

**Financial Solutions**—offers tools and education so people can regain financial stability and reduce unmanageable debt.

<https://www.familymeans.org/how-can-we-help.html>

**Counseling and Therapy**—FamilyMeans offers counseling and therapy for individuals, couples, groups and families to help them with all manner of difficult issues.

<https://www.familymeans.org/counseling-therapy.html>

**Caregiving and Aging**—FamilyMeans is here to support you as you care for a child or adult with a chronic illness, disability or frailty.

<https://www.familymeans.org/help-for-caregivers.html>

**The Center for Grief and Loss**—The Center offers specialized therapy for complicated grief, trauma, and life transition, providing caring support to individuals, couples and families who are experiencing loss or trauma.

<https://www.familymeans.org/center-for-grief-loss1.html>

## Youth Program sites

### Cimarron Youth Center & Bike Shop

873 Lake Elmo Avenue North, Lake Elmo, MN 55042

### Landfall Investigation Station

52 Aspen Way, Landfall, MN 55128

### Landfall Teen Center & Bike Shop

58 Aspen Point, Landfall, MN 55128

### FamilyMeans Main Office

1875 Northwestern Avenue South, Stillwater, MN 55082

651 439-4840



# FamilyMeans

A BETTER LIFE IS POSSIBLE