

American Camp Association

A VOICE FOR EXCELLENCE





The American Camp Association is a comprehensive resource for:

- Parents and families
- Residential, day, and travel camps
- Camp staff
- Afterschool and out-of-school time programs
- Community recreation programs
- Youth-serving agencies
- Child and youth development professionals
- Educators
- Students and young professionals
- Religious organizations
- Health professionals
- Enrichment programs
- Outdoor education and adventure programs
- Elected and appointed government officials



Children and youth need a community that . . .

- Encourages achievement and builds self-esteem
- Promotes healthy lifestyles, fitness, and activity
- Teaches in a classroom without walls
- Instills appreciation, respect, and responsibility for the natural world around them
- Inspires the confidence and courage to become the leaders of tomorrow

Camp is truly that community.

The American Camp Association (ACA) has been enriching and advancing the camp community for more than one hundred years — with the goal of offering the benefits of camp to as many children and youth as possible. ACA works with camp and youth professionals and families to share knowledge and experience, and to provide quality camp experiences and developmentally appropriate opportunities. Through our diverse membership and exceptional programs, children, youth, and adults have the opportunity to learn powerful lessons in community, character-building, skill development, and healthy living — incomparable understanding gained uniquely in camp.

Influence



ACA's Growing Influence

- Over 11 million children, youth, and adults attend more than 12,000 camps (7,000 resident and 5,000 day) nationwide each year.
- The number of children at ACA camps is estimated at 5.1 million.
- Seventy-five percent of ACA camps are run by nonprofit organizations.
- Thirteen percent of ACA camps serve children with physical or mental challenges.
- The ACA camp community provides \$39 million annually in camp scholarship funds.
- Approximately 38 percent of ACA camps incorporate community service into their programs.
- Approximately 1.2 million camp jobs are filled each year by college students, teachers, doctors, nurses, and others who want to make a positive difference in the lives of the nation's youth.
- Camps employ approximately 25,000 international staff annually to provide an enriching cultural exchange experience for campers and American staff.

Research Matters

Campers Say

- Camp helped me make new friends. (96 percent)
- Camp helped me to get to know kids who are different from me. (93 percent)
- The people at camp helped me feel good about myself. (92 percent)
- At camp, I did things I was afraid to do at first. (74 percent)

Parents Say

- My child gained self-confidence at camp. (70 percent)
- My child continues to participate in new activities he or she learned at camp. (63 percent)
- My child remains in contact with friends made at camp. (69 percent)



Collaborations

Changing the lives of today's children, youth, and adults takes a cooperative effort. ACA collaborates with many organizations to further the camp experience:

- 4-H
- American Cancer Society
- American Diabetes Association
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Red Cross
- America's Promise Alliance
- Association of Camp Nurses
- Boy Scouts of America
- Camp Fire USA
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Character Counts! Coalition
- Children & Nature Network
- Christian Camp and Conference Association
- ecoAmerica
- National FFA Organization
- Girl Scouts of the USA
- Hooked on Nature
- Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development
- Jewish Community Centers Association
- Leave No Trace
- National Collaboration for Youth
- National Recreation and Park Association
- National Summer Learning Association
- National 4-H Council
- The Ohio State University
- Safe Sitter, Inc.
- The Salvation Army
- Stop Bullying Now! Campaign
- Teach for America
- Texas A&M University
- Virginia Tech
- The University of Arizona
- The University of Utah
- YMCA of the USA

Connectivity

*“Because of Camp . . .[™]
I discovered my true self,
made lifelong friends, and
gave the same invaluable
gift to my children.”*

— Rick Roth,
ACA board member



Government Relations and Public Policy

The American Camp Association partners with elected and appointed government officials at federal, state, and local levels to protect the safety of children, youth, and adults participating in camp experiences. By integrating the communications, research, and professional development plans of the association, ACA builds influence with key decision makers. ACA also works to encourage federal, state, and local governments to collaborate with nongovernmental organizations, such as ACA, to further advance youth development programs and opportunities.

Parents and Families

At camp, when children make new friends, explore the world around them, and learn that “I can” is much more powerful than “I can’t,” magic happens. In an environment created just for them, children learn real-life skills, develop self-esteem, and gain a sense of independence and community. Whether children are playing, exploring nature, conquering new heights, or becoming part of a camp family, they are creating memories that will last a lifetime.

ACA’s Web site for families, www.CampParents.org, is a comprehensive camp resource — offering expert advice from camp professionals on camp selection, readiness, child and youth development, and issues of importance to families. ACA helps find the right camp for every child.

Find a Camp

ACA’s Find A Camp database allows families to look for one of ACA’s 2,400 accredited camps based on region, activity, cultural focus, budget, session length, and much more! Visit www.CampParents.org/find_a_camp.

ACA Programs



Professional Development Center

ACA's Professional Development Center is built on a framework of expanding knowledge, skills, and abilities for every individual. The center connects learners with professional development opportunities, and offers both guided and self-directed paths, as well as an online professional development portfolio where individuals can maintain a record of their accomplishments. Accessible online, dashboard features offer resources, webinars, services, information about certificate programs, a Knowledge Center, a directory of related graduate and undergraduate programs, and much more. Visit www.ACAcamps.org/professional-development-center.

e-Institute

ACA's online learning center provides a variety of distance learning opportunities for directors and staff. Group subscription pricing is available for many e-courses, and member discounts apply. Visit www.ACAcamps.org/einstitute.

Some courses featured in the current catalog are:

- Awesome Campfire Programs
- Camp Is for the Camper
- Communicating in a Time of Crisis
- Connecting Children with Nature
- Creating Positive Youth Outcomes
- Criminal Background Checks — Dispelling the Myths and Confronting the Realities
- Designing Quality Youth Programs
- Health and Safety: Preventing Injuries and Illnesses (Four Part Series)
- Marketing Essentials for the New Economy (Three Part Series)
- Ticks, Tears, and Toothpaste: A Counselor's Role in Healthcare

ACA Bookstore

Operating for over fifty years, the ACA Bookstore offers hundreds of print and DVD tools — many of which are available only through ACA. The association publishes materials on staff training, youth development and behavior management, outdoor skills, risk management, programming, and camp operations. Visit www.ACAbookstore.org.

Educational Conferences

ACA hosts conferences throughout the country, including an annual conference known as the ACA National Conference and several regional conferences. All feature educational sessions offered in a variety of formats, networking opportunities, and a range of special events. Most conferences include an exhibit hall featuring companies and organizations with products and services that support camps and out-of-school time programs. We encourage you to review the educational programs offered at ACA conferences and participate in one or more, each year. Conference participation is a great way to boost your personal professional development, learn about innovative programs you can apply in your setting, talk face-to-face with other youth development professionals about emerging issues, and reenergize your passion and purpose in the camp community. For more about this year's calendar of conferences and other educational events, visit www.ACAcamps.org/education/calendar.php.

Find a Job

ACA's Find a Job Web page offers resources on summer jobs at camp, year-round jobs at camp, and job fairs. Staff-hiring resources are available to camps, including the ability to post open seasonal and year-round positions. Additionally, the Camp Jobs search database enables job seekers to post a resume, receive job alerts, and filter job listings by function, work setting, and location. Visit www.ACAcamps.org/jobs.



ACA Programs

ACA accredits over 2,400 camps.

Accreditation and Standards

ACA accreditation signifies to parents and the public that a camp cares enough to thoroughly review its operational practices, seek the wisdom of other camp professionals, and make necessary improvements to comply with up to 300 professional camp standards. ACA standards are recognized by courts of law and government regulators as THE standards for camp. Our standards establish criteria for:

- Emergency preparedness
- Staff training
- Personnel
- Living areas
- Food service
- Developmentally appropriate activities
- Health care
- Transportation
- Administrative procedures

Visit www.ACAcamps.org/accreditation.



Research

ACA is committed to ongoing research and evaluation efforts for the camp and youth development communities that provide needed evidence for improved practice, trend analysis, and the identification of key elements important to the camp experience. Visit ACAcamps.org/research.

Camp Business Research

- ACA conducts research on camp operations on a three-year cycle in the areas of Camp Business Operations; Camp Sites, Facilities, and Programs; and Camp Compensation and Benefits.

Developmental Outcomes of the Camp Experience

- The first large-scale national research project to measure outcomes of the camp experience is available online at www.ACAcamps.org/research/directions.pdf.
- ACA's *Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB)*, a compilation of age-appropriate, camp-tested, customizable youth scales measuring friendship skills, independence, teamwork, affinity for nature, and more, is available at www.ACAcamps.org/members/outcomes/index.php.

Camp Enrollment and Staff Recruitment Trends

- ACA collects enrollment and recruitment data every spring and fall to better understand how camps are meeting the needs of parents and families to more accurately identify trends around camper enrollment, and to identify enrollment challenges faced by camp professionals.

Camp Emerging Issues Research

- ACA is learning important information about "hot topic" camp issues and trends based on feedback from camp directors across the U.S.

Injury and Illness Prevention Research in Camps

- Funded by Market Insurance, the Healthy Camp Study is ACA's five-year (2006–2010) monitoring study of illnesses and injuries in camps to improve the quality of the camp experience for both campers and staff. Updated newsletters, illness/injury prevention tips, and related *Camping Magazine* articles are available at www.ACAcamps.org/research/enhance/reduce_injury_illness.php.

National Benchmark Study of Positive Youth Development in Camp

- This multi-year project identified levels of quality supports and opportunities for positive youth development provided by camps. The results and action steps for program improvement are available online at www.ACAcamps.org/research/Inspirations.pdf and www.ACAcamps.org/research/enhance/innovations.php.

ACA hosts a Camp Research Symposium each year at the National Conference. Presentations from the symposiums are available online at www.ACAcamps.org/research/connect/research_symposiums.php.

ACA Programs

Publications

Camping Magazine

Published six times a year, *Camping Magazine* provides articles on the most recent trends in the camp and outdoor industry, the latest research in the field of youth development, critical management tools, and innovative programming ideas. Visit www.ACAcamps.org/campmag.

The Campline

The Campline, ACA's online newsletter with camp-specific knowledge, is published three times a year and includes timely and vital articles on legal, risk management, legislative, regulatory, and personnel management issues, and an annual review of the lessons learned and case studies from ACA's 24/7 Camp Crisis Hotline. Visit www.ACAcamps.org/campline.

ACA Now

ACA Now, ACA's weekly e-newsletter, provides members with the latest news on issues such as public policy, education, member benefits, and research. Visit www.ACAcamps.org/acanow.

CAMP e-News

A quarterly e-newsletter, *CAMP e-News* offers camp resources and timely information specifically for camp parents and families. Visit www.CampParents.org/newsletter.

Web Sites

ACAcamps.org

This important resource has more than 1.2 million page views annually. Visit ACA's Web site for information on:

- Member and Customer Services — ACA supports and informs its members and customers with the latest developments in the camp community.
 - Learning resources for camp and youth development staff
 - Research, jobs at camp, camp vendors and services, knowledge resources, bookstore, networking, crisis support, communications toolkits
 - Public awareness outreach and camp listings for parents and the public
 - News, alerts, and critical reports — articles, news releases, hot topics, and critical developments
- Professional Development Center — ACA is committed to the advancement and lifelong learning of all camp and youth development professionals.
 - Online training and professional development opportunities
 - A comprehensive knowledge center
 - ACA national and regional educational conferences and networking opportunities
 - Certificate programs
 - A directory of related graduate and undergraduate programs
 - A directory of mentors
 - A job center
- Government Relations and Public Policy — ACA partners with elected and appointed government officials at federal, state, and local levels to protect the safety of children, youth, and adults participating in camp experiences.
 - Current information on the laws and regulations that impact camp programs in each state
 - Opportunities to advocate for issues that protect children and support the camp community as an expanded learning opportunity
 - Partnerships that encourage government to collaborate with nongovernmental organizations to further advance youth development programs and opportunities

CampParents.org

Offering resources for camper parents and families, this Web site is available in both Spanish and English formats. Find information on health and safety at camp, camp benefits, and youth development.

Camp Crisis Hotline

The ACA Camp Crisis Hotline is a 24/7 service to all ACA-accredited camps. The hotline serves as a resource for camps in crisis and provides callers the opportunity to talk through their crisis with a trained, third party. While the hotline is not a medical or legal "expert" call line, it can help you think through your issues and discuss options.



Because of Camp . . .™

Camp provides children with the opportunity to connect with nature, to participate in human powered activities, and to benefit from personal and primary relationships. *Because of Camp . . .*™ so much is possible. Visit www.campparents.org/because-of-camp.

This PSA Campaign is made possible, in part, by generous funding from the Legacy Fund sponsored by the Association of Independent Camps and the Lilly Endowment Inc.

Support

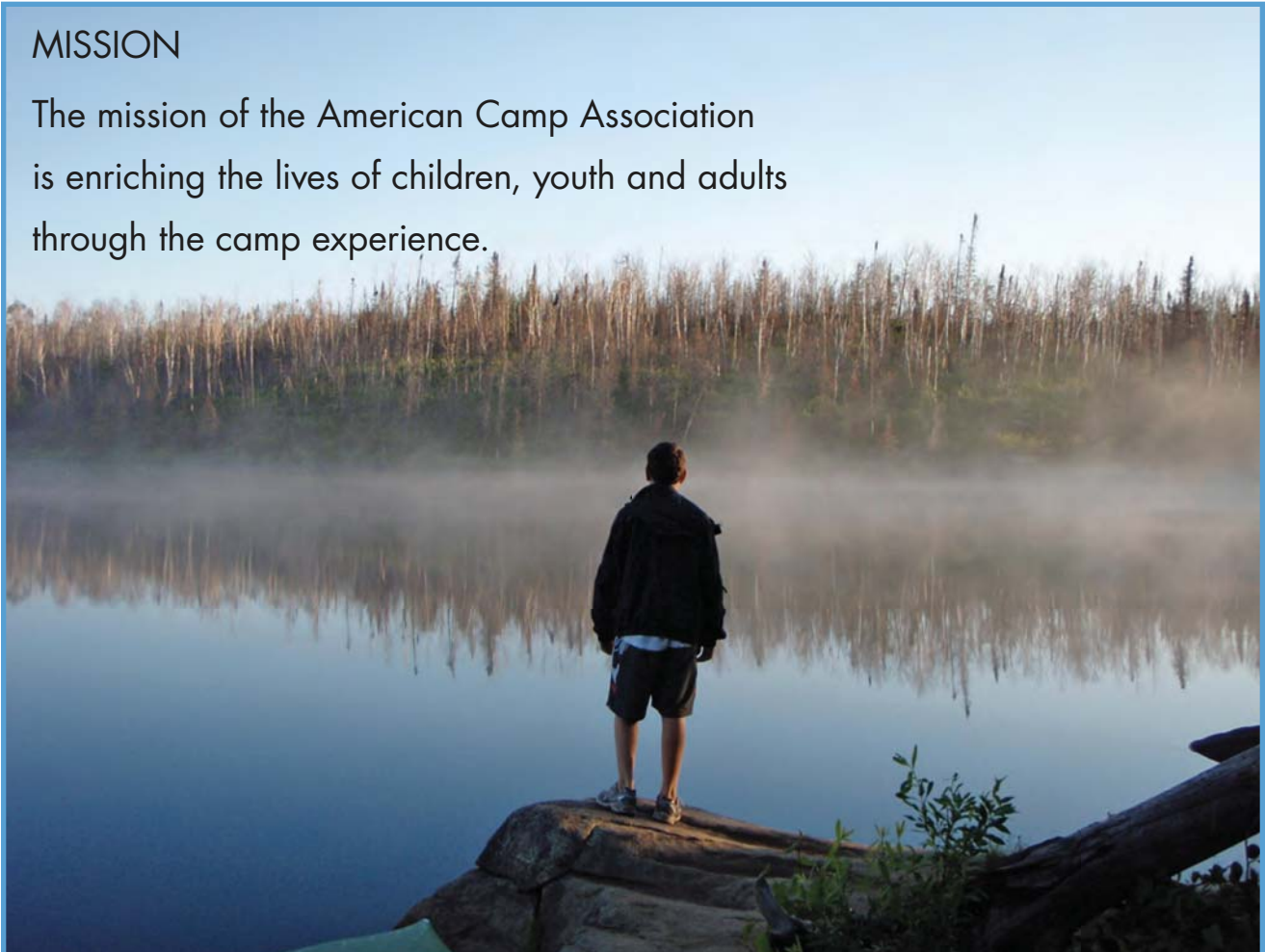
Camp is an experience every child deserves. There's nothing quite like watching a child's face light up with the joy of discovering new friends, the pride of accomplishment and finding their own voice, and the wonder that nature offers. Your charitable contribution to the American Camp Association supports innovative initiatives that help to ensure quality programs at camp and that all children who want to spread their wings and soar at camp will have that opportunity. To make a donation, visit www.ACAcamps.org/support.

“Camp is a classroom without walls — an expanded learning environment that plays a crucial role in the education and development of the whole child. By providing children with the opportunity to connect with nature, participate in human powered activities, and benefit from personal and primary relationships, camp is helping the youth of today develop into the leaders of tomorrow.”

— Peg Smith, CEO, ACA

MISSION

The mission of the American Camp Association is enriching the lives of children, youth and adults through the camp experience.



*“Self-confidence and growth in relationship skills, love of physical activity, and understanding responsibility to community and our environment . . . **camp** contributes to strong individuals and engages each camper in the next step of development.”*

— Peter Surgenor, president, ACA, 2008–2011

Enriching
Lives
Through
Quality
Camp
Experiences



The American Camp Association
is a private, nonprofit, educational
organization.

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Learn more about ACA.

Visit us at ACAamps.org.

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