



2026
new ENGLAND
camp conference
american *CAMP* association®
New England

March 26 - 28, Manchester, NH

Schedule at-a-Glance
Session & Speaker Info
CampExpo

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2026 New England Camp Conference Schedule at-a-Glance

This is an overview of offerings at the New England Camp Conference and is not comprehensive. Download the Guidebook app (via App Store and Google Play Store) and search for “2026 New England Camp Conference” to download the guide on your mobile device. Click [HERE](#) to access the same info on your laptop or desktop.

Thursday, March 26

- 9:00 am – 10:30 am Conference Welcome & Education Breakout Session 1
- 11:00 am – 12:15 pm Education Breakout Session 2
- 12:15 pm – 1:45 pm Lunch on your own (concessions available)
- 12:45 pm – 1:30 pm Lunch & Learn A (short sessions/round tables)
- 1:45 pm – 3:30 pm Leadership remarks, awards, and Keynote Address (Armory)
sponsored by Camp Scheduling Pro
- 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm CampEXPO grand opening, hors d’oeuvres & cash bar in Expo Hall
- 5:00 pm – 5:45 pm LGBTQIA+ Affinity Space (Webster)
- 5:45 pm – 6:30 pm BIPOC Affinity Space (Pierce)
- 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm Dinner on your own
- 7:30 pm – 10:00 pm EPIC Meet & Greet, ACA After Dark (Assembly & ballrooms, The Penstock)
sponsored by Camp Scheduling Pro

Friday, March 27

- 8:45 am – 10:15 am Daily Welcome & Education Breakout Session 3
- 9:45 am CampEXPO opens
- 10:15 am – 11:00 am Coffee & bagels in the Expo Hall, Board President meet & greet
- 11:15 am – 12:30 pm Educational Breakout Session 4
- 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm CampEXPO Open, Lunch on your own (concessions available)
- 1:00 pm – 1:45 pm Coffee & Camp Chat: Table Talks Edition (Expo Hall)
- 2:00 pm – 2:45 pm Education Breakout Session 5
- 2:30 pm CampEXPO closes
- 3:15 pm – 4:30 pm Education Breakout Session 6
- 5:00 pm – 6:30 pm State meetings (various locations), Community Connections Buddy Dinner (meet in DoubleTree lobby)
- 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm Film screening, “Boys of Summer”
- 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm Let’s Get Social with EPIC (offsite at the Thirsty Moose)

Saturday, March 28

- 7:00 am Pre-Reveille Run Club (meet in DoubleTree lobby)
- 7:45 am – 9:00 am Breakfast available (Armory)
- 9:00 am – 10:30 am Daily Welcome, All-Conference Plenary (Armory)
- 10:45 am – 12:00 pm Education Breakout Session 7
- 12:00 pm – 1:15 pm Lunch on own (concessions available)
- 12:15 pm – 1:00 pm Lunch & Learn B (short sessions/round tables)
- 1:05 pm – 1:15 pm Final Raffle Drawings (Assembly)
- 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm Conference Closing & Education Breakout Session 8

Daily Kick-Off & Educational Session 1, Thursday, March 26, 9:00 am - 10:30 am

Friends, Foes, or Figure it Out: Fostering Positive Co-Counselor Relationships

Pemigewasset

Kim Aycock - Kimspiration, LLC

Working, living, and “co-parenting” with someone you just met can be equal parts rewarding and rocky. Co’s might feel mismatched, misunderstood, or just unsure how to make it work—but strong co-counselor relationships don’t happen by accident. They are built through awareness, communication, and intentional effort. In this session, we’ll unpack what makes co-counselor dynamics thrive by exploring hidden and spoken expectations, clarifying roles, and identifying shared values. Walk away with practical tools to help staff build trust, resolve conflict, and present a united front for campers—and each other.

The Really Scary Stuff: Self-Harm and Suicidal Ideation at Camp

Frost/Hawthorne

Dave Brown - Fence Post Learning/Mountain Camp

Self-harm and suicidal ideation are two of the scariest situations we’ll encounter at camp. We want to respond in ways that support campers and staff, while also remaining within our “scope of practice” as camp professionals, not mental health professionals. We’ll discuss these unique challenges and appropriate responses with the goal of feeling better prepared as camp leaders.

Camp Security - A Practical Solution

Contoocook

Joseph Hileman - Hileman Security Training Group

Today's threats are extremely dangerous and challenging! Many times, organizations will create policies, procedures, and plans that have been "generally accepted" on a national level. However, these plans often look good on paper but won't work during a real incident. This training will discuss realistic options & realistic solutions that start with the proper mindset. This course has been labeled "the most empowering course I have ever taken". Mr. Hileman has designed this course to be powerful and effective without creating unnecessary fear! If your EAP is based solely on Law Enforcement responding and stopping the threat, you have a policy and a training problem. It's time for realistic solutions that empower, not scare, our employees!

Micro-Trainings & Safety Huddles: Fast, Focused, and Impactful Staff Engagement

Piscataquog

Katie Johnson - Chalmers Camp Insurance

Summer camp moves fast and keeping staff consistently focused on safety can feel like a full-time job. This session is designed for camp leaders who want to keep safety top-of-mind without adding a 2-hour lecture to the schedule using micro-trainings & safety huddles. Learn creative, time-efficient strategies that reinforce protocols, build accountability, and fit seamlessly into your camp’s daily rhythm—no long lectures, just real talk and tools that will resonate.

What Would You Do? Responding to Peer-to-Peer Abuse at Camp

Webster

Jeff Jubelirer – AMSkier

Every camp season brings moments that test your judgment and compassion. When campers cross physical or emotional boundaries with one another, how do you know what counts as peer-to-peer abuse—and when to report it? And how do you know if and when (as well as how) to share it with your camp community? This interactive workshop will help you determine appropriate follow-up and navigate the difficult conversations that follow. We’ll explore how to communicate transparently and effectively with parents, staff, and other stakeholders. Through realistic camp-based case scenarios, participants will practice making tough calls and developing written communications to affected families while maintaining trust across your camp community.

How to Apply for, and Learn from, the Character Grant Program

Stark

Brian Massey - American Camp Association

The American Camp Association's Character Grant Program will be accepting applications in Spring 2026 for its second wave of funding. Join the ACA's Director of Innovation to learn more about how your camp can learn and grow by engaging with the grant program and the larger Character at Camp Initiative. We'll discuss high-level topics like how to strengthen character development at your camp, and we'll share tips and timelines for camps interested in applying for a Character Grant. Bring your questions, your ideas, and your enthusiasm for broadening and deepening the impact of your camp's programs.

Don't Call Us, We'll Call You: A Guide to Accessible Hiring Practices

The Penstock

Briana Michele Mitchell - Change Summer & S'more Summer

Finding and retaining mission-aligned team members is a challenge for all camp professionals. An additional and related challenge is both attracting and retaining a diverse pool of applicants. This session will walk participants through what it looks like to apply an equity lens to the entire recruitment and hiring practice. Participants will receive guidance and practical application centering on ensuring accessibility and inclusion. Session participants will have an opportunity to learn best practices as well as be provided with an opportunity to examine their own recruitment and hiring practices through an equity lens.

Nature Programming in a Backpack

Armory

Shawn Moriarty - Mass Audubon, A Single Footstep

Camp can be an amazing place to help campers and staff connect to the natural world around us. And it can be done at a camp in the city, on the trail, or while waiting for an activity area to open. This session will show how you can have a nature program that fits in a backpack. We will be experiencing several activities that can be done almost anywhere with few or no additional props other than note cards or digital files. Come and learn how you can have a nature program in your backpack.

Succession Planning for Camp - Are You Ready For Change? (You Better Be!)

Dartmouth

David Phillips - Immersive1st

Only 27% of organizations are genuinely prepared for leadership transitions — are you one of them? Whether it's a planned handoff or an unexpected shift, the difference between readiness and chaos can define your organization's future. In this session, we'll explore what "ready" really means, uncover the risks of ignoring succession planning, and identify the steps to build a clear, confident path forward. You'll learn how to engage key players — from board members to donors — and use a VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity) lens to find allies who can champion the process. Succession planning isn't optional anymore; it's your insurance policy that helps guarantee stability, continuity, and long-term success.

Tackling the Business of Camp: Maintaining a Financially Healthy Camp While Meeting Your Mission

Merrimack

Nicholas Teich - Fairwinds Camp Consulting

Most of us get into camp directing because of our love of camp, not because we are businesspeople or accountants. With expenses on the rise, it can be difficult to maintain a clear road to continued financial health. In this session, we'll dive into how to look at your camp goals, your books, and your general operations to guide in decision-making about what and how to add, edit, and/or subtract to keep your camp at its best. This session will cover for both private and non-profit camps of all types. Some examples of what we'll be looking at: How do you calculate your true cost-per-camper? Is your camper tuition truly up to date? How

many extra staff can you support? How do you incorporate planning for maintenance & facilities improvements?

Educational Session 2, Thursday, March 26, 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

Top 10 Things Your Facilities Director Wants You to Know

Stark

Kelly Alford - Kingsley Pines Camp

Your facilities team is a crucial part of the success of camp, but it can sometimes feel like a disconnected department with its own schedule, tasks, and even language. During this session, we will cover some of the top things that your facilities team wants you to know including what plunger to use and why it matters and what is actually happening when a breaker trips. We will also discuss how your facilities team fits into the culture of your camp community. After years of work in programming, leadership, and facilities, the goal of this session is to provide some perspective and strategies on how you can work with your facilities department to support the goals of camp.

The Power Trio for Nonprofit Impact: Lead, Tell, Fund

Merrimack

Eric Arnold - Eric Arnold, LLC

Nonprofit financial sustainability is not just quality programs and a fundraising calendar - it requires a trifecta for a philanthropic culture. This session focuses on three pillars: board engagement, compelling storytelling, and disciplined fundraising. We cover strategies to enhance board commitment, impactful stories that inspire, and fundraising practices that ensure long-term stability. Together, these elements build a foundation for a thriving, well-resourced nonprofit mission.

From Fragility to Fortitude: How Camp Directors Can Build Trust and Partnership with Parents

Contoocook

Jolly Corley - Camp Robindele

Parents want their children to build confidence, independence, and resilience—but it's hard to watch them struggle. We know growth happens when kids face challenges, yet parents need help trusting that process. This session explores how to shift parent conversations from selling to partnering, frame difficult moments as essential social-emotional learning, and use consistent messaging that builds trust before, during, and after camp. Participants will leave with practical tools, sample language, and reflective prompts to guide parent interactions year-round—strengthening confidence in both parents and staff that camp is the right place for kids to do hard things and grow through them.

Severe Weather Preparedness: What Are Your Threats? Are You Prepared?

Piscataquog

Donald Dumont - National Weather Service Gray, ME Forecast Office

In this session, you will learn about summer weather threats, specifically focusing on low-predictability events with short warning lead times. We will then discuss which areas in the New England region are most vulnerable to these hazards. Following this, we will review weather response plans and alert notifications to ensure they address all necessary requirements. We will conclude with an interactive short exercise scenario to practice decision-making based on realistic forecast information that you will receive. This talk will be beneficial for those who write policy and are responsible for safety and training at your camp.

It's Not a People Problem, It's a Systems Problem: Project Management Tools for Camp Leaders

Frost/Hawthorne

Marcie Glad - Help My Spreadsheets

When camp operations feel chaotic — registration, check-in, medication distribution, parent pick-up, cleanup — it's rarely a people problem. It's a systems problem. Learn to apply systems thinking and user stories to

design workflows that actually work. Through real camp scenarios, you'll see tools like process mapping and RACI matrices in action, practice writing user stories for your own challenges, and leave with templates to implement immediately. This practical session focuses on clarifying roles, reducing bottlenecks, and increasing accountability. Bonus: These strategies support succession planning, ensuring your knowledge lives in documented systems — not just in your head.

The Psychosocial Cascade: When One Camper's Sparks Light a Group Fire

Pemigewasset

Emily Golinsky - Bright Moose, LLC

It starts with one camper's impulsive outburst or social misstep. Friction ripples through the group: there's eye rolls, teasing, exclusion, and before long, low-level bullying. Staff do what they can but aren't effective in quelling the drama or the behaviors, and now, left unchecked, this "psychosocial cascade" drains staff energy and destabilizes the group dynamic. It also frustrates parents who can't understand what went wrong and definitely blame someone else's kiddo or worse, your staff! Join Emily as we confidently navigate this frustrating situation. You'll leave with strategies to help you check the sparks, equip staff to constructively address all campers' needs, and navigate the often-tricky parent conversations that follow.

Measuring Camp Outcomes and Comparing Them to A Global Dataset

Dartmouth

Matt Pines - Maine Teen Camp, Sapien Labs

Sapien Labs (<https://sapienlabs.org/>) has been measuring mind-health and factors that impact it, since 2017. To date they have collected data on over 2 million participants, in over 130 countries. Their dataset "The Global Mind Project" is used to make policy recommendations by the UNDP, elite colleges, and Fortune 500 companies. Starting in 2024, Sapien (and UC San Diego) started looking at the impact of device-free summer camp experiences as a potential intervention for changing mind-health. This session will share some of the early findings of this ongoing research, describe ways in which this type of data can be used to improve camp outcomes, and broader implications for summer camp in public health policy making.

13 Lessons from the Field: Five Years of LGBTQ+ Equity in Camping

Webster

Chris Rehs-Dupin – TQAMP

What has five years of queer and trans equity work in camping taught us? These 13 lessons shine with joy, resilience, and real talk about systems, solidarity, and sustainability. Come ready to reflect, laugh, nod along, and take away fresh insights you can apply to your own leadership and organizational growth.

Wild Neighbors: Inspiring Care for Animals from Forests to Cities

The Penstock

Lexi Rolfe & Sidney Tuttle - ZooCamp at Zoo New England

From squirrels and turkeys to bald eagles and bears, this session will leave you feeling confident in your ability to guide campers toward respecting wildlife of all kinds. Collaborate with educators from Zoo New England to design and adapt programs that help campers understand the role animals play in our world. Together, we'll explore the difference between forest wildlife and urban wildlife and discover strategies to help campers see that every creature, large or small, deserves consideration. Whether your camp is nestled in the mountains of New Hampshire or set in a Boston neighborhood, you'll leave inspired with practical tools to help your campers appreciate and respect the natural world around them.

When Cultures Collide: Using the Upside Down Activity to Develop Empathy at Camp

Jarod Wunneburger - Thrive Point Studio

Armory

Campers and staff from different backgrounds often misunderstand each other at camp. This interactive session puts participants directly into the "Upside Down" simulation, where you'll experience cultural confusion as it happens in real time. After running through the complete activity, we'll debrief and discuss

adapting for different ages. You'll leave with an experiential activity you can use and practical tools for supporting diverse staff and campers. Don't worry, no running or jumping involved!

Lunch & Learn A, Thursday, March 26, 12:45 pm - 1:30 pm

Believing in Your Staff: Taking the Red Light / Green Light Approach

Dartmouth

Alexis Dascoulias - Camp CenterStage

With an 85% staff retention rate, Alexis will share insights and action steps on how to keep your staff coming back for more each summer. Explore strategies that provide supportive incentives that encourage staff to return. Using a traffic light approach to creating working agreements, debriefing, and year-round communication will empower you and your staff! This session will empower camps to build stronger teams and scaffolding supports.

Attendee Experience Round Table

Piscataquog

Stephan Lockney - MetroWest YMCA

How can we make the conference experience as transformative as the camp experiences we create? This interactive round table examines the professional journey right here at the ACA New England Camp Conference. Join a collaborative conversation dedicated to the attendee experience. We'll discuss what makes a conference truly valuable: meaningful networking, session content and formats, logistical flow, and the elements that inspire and energize us as professionals. This is a chance to exchange feedback on what works, share challenges, and brainstorm practical ideas in real-time. Come ready for a participant-driven discussion. We'll share observations and identify best practices that enhance our collective time together. Your perspective is essential to this dialogue.

How To Ask Strategic Questions

Frost/Hawthorne

Ryan Moore - Kaleidoscope, Inc.

To get the best results, we have to ask the right questions, in the right order. From high level strategic thinking to seasonal staff interviews, the best leaders ask strategic questions. This workshop will explore the principles and mental frameworks that camp professionals can use to ask more strategic questions of themselves, their teams, and their constituents. This skill will help leaders develop better plans, navigate change management, and create durable stakeholder relationships.

Serving Campers Facing Economic Hardship/Barriers to Attending Camp

Webster

Terri Mulks - Camp Susan Curtis

Join your colleagues who serve campers facing economic hardship or other barriers to attending a traditional camp experience for a robust discussion that will include the following questions: What did you learn in 2025 and how are you moving forward in 2026? What does funding look like right now? What barriers are kids facing and how are you addressing them? Provide support and connections for one another as we discuss the challenges and rewards in our unique environments!

Improving the International Staff Experience Round Table

Merrimack

Jen Brady - Kamp Kohut & Rene Cote - Kingsley Pines

Creating a strong and meaningful experience for our international staff is important. Join this lunch-hour conversation to discuss what we can do to set our international staff up for success this coming summer – from before the summer event begins through the summer season. The conversation will be guided by staff responsible for international staff experiences at several New England camps.

Daily Kick-Off & Educational Session 3, Friday, March 27, 8:45 am - 10:15 am

Mental Health at Camp for Leadership Staff

Pemigewasset

Dave Brown - Fence Post Learning/Mountain Camp

Most leadership staff are not mental health professionals. But we can still be prepared to support staff and campers who are struggling or even suffering while they're at camp. This session will offer a framework for approaching "mental health" at camp in a functional way that is within our "scope." We'll explore strategies to prevent problems before they occur, as well as specific tools and techniques for supporting staff and campers when they need individual intervention.

From Land to Sea- Let's Take Land Games and Use Them to Teach Boating

Armory

Abby Burbank - Outdoor Educator

Come Play! We'll play games and experience activities which all serve a purpose- making your participants better boaters and excited to be at the waterfront. Ever played water polo in a kayak? We'll do that. Ever played frisbee golf on a SUP? YUP, we'll do that. Flag football in sailboats, that too! We'll experience the games and look at how to incorporate the watercraft skills into the play, how to teach boating skills even on days when you can't get on the water. We'll look at ways to seamlessly incorporate camp culture into the activity and make boating about more than just maneuvering the watercraft.

Feedback as Fuel: Empowering Leaders to Give & Receive Staff Feedback

Piscataquog

Jen "Dusty" Clitheroe - Clitheroe Consulting, LLC

Tired of giving feedback that tastes like a stale "Feedback Sandwich" (praise, criticism, praise)? Let's toss the soggy bread and get right to the good stuff! Come focus on moving camp leadership away from traditional, often dreaded, end-of-season evaluations toward a model of continuous, developmental, two-way communication. The ultimate goal? To make giving and, more importantly, receiving honest feedback so normal, natural, and non-scary that your staff feels fueled, trusted, and ready to come back next summer! Participants will learn and practice specific, non-judgmental feedback frameworks, soliciting honest feedback from their teams to foster a culture of trust and high performance that directly supports staff growth and retention.

Building a Strong Foundation: Essential Skills for Effective Property Management

Pierce

Gerry Donaghue - GT Donaghue Construction & Metal Roofing, LLC

There is so much involved in keeping a camp thriving and moving forward: Staff, Program, Training, Family Communication, Marketing, Registration, the list goes on. But Property Management? Many times this falls to the bottom of the list, and is only dealt with on an emergency basis or as a major capitol project. Where to even start?! Gerry Donaghue has been in the construction industry for almost 40 years and has seen it all! Let him take you through the basics of Property/Facilities Management taking into account how to prioritize projects, the impacts of major climate changes, and an inside look at sustainable products and solutions. Don't just put a bandaid on your camp repairs-make a plan and keep your camp moving forward!

Empathy is Fun!: How Perspective-taking Games Can Foster Empathy Skills

The Penstock

Carolyn Doremus - Buttonwood Park Zoo

Empathy is one of the most essential skills that we practice while engaging with nature and other people around us - but how can it be presented and taught in a way that's interesting and accessible to kids?

In this session, you will learn about the fundamentals of empathy and how they can be applied to increase understanding and harmony within a camp community, as well as different perspective-taking activities (with animal and nature-related themes) that you can add to your toolkit. These exercises give experience that can then be applied to interactions with fellow campers, adults, and wildlife, to strengthen that feeling of connection that results in positive actions by the individual.

Building Braver Spaces with Care, Intention, and Psychological Safety

Stark

Simone Gamble – OAAARS

This interactive session explores how as leaders we can work to create brave spaces rooted in trust, respect, and care, where people can navigate challenges together and emerge stronger. We'll reflect on the idea of camp as a utopia versus a microcosm. Participants will explore what it takes to build psychological safety within their teams and programs, and how a shared sense of purpose and connection can strengthen relationships over time. Through guided reflection and group activities, we'll explore ways to create environments where everyone feels valued and supported.

HR Without an HR Department: What Camp Directors Need to Know

Merrimack

Donna Johns-Thomas - Indigo Consulting

Most camp directors wear the HR hat whether they meant to or not. From hiring and documentation to corrective action and terminations, there's a lot to manage—and even more that can go wrong if you don't know what's required. This session breaks down how to tell if your camp is truly compliant and what common pitfalls trip up even the best leaders. We'll cover the basics: what needs to be documented, what doesn't, and when to loop in outside help. You'll leave with clarity on what good HR looks like in a camp context—no jargon, no panic, just practical steps to protect your people and your program.

Camper Care: The Benefits of a Fully Dedicated Position

Contoocook

Terri Mulks, Dakota Brichetto - Camp Susan Curtis; Becky Alford - Kingsley Pines & Brianna Braden - Broad Meadow Brook

Camper care is an integral component of any camp program and campers are requiring more and more specialized care. A dedicated position allows for increased flexibility in managing daily and long-term challenges, balancing camper needs, and training staff in prevention and intervention tools. What do those positions look like? How can they be integrated into your team AND your budget? What are the benefits and the challenges? Join a panel discussion representing two types of Overnight Camps and a Day Camp that have successfully built this position.

Trends – A Strategic Look into the Crystal Ball

Dartmouth

David Phillips - Immersive1st

The camp industry is rapidly evolving, shaped by powerful external forces and emerging trends. In this interactive session, we'll take a strategic look at the principal threats and opportunities likely to impact camps in both the near and long term. Drawing on insights from a sector-wide consultant, we'll explore five key areas of change, discuss how to anticipate and respond to these shifts, and share practical approaches for future-proofing your organization. Join us to learn how to use data and observation to spot trends, plan operationally and financially for what's ahead, and engage your team in proactive problem-solving. Be prepared to share your perspective and help shape the future of our industry.

Effective Group Management with Practical Tools

Frost/Hawthorne

Dr. Happi Price - Improv 2 Improvement, LLC

Intentional preparation is crucial for effective group management, and equipping yourself with the right tools can help mitigate common challenges. This session outlines practical techniques for structuring and presenting learning experiences, enabling them to develop naturally and progressively over time. The focus is on refining your abilities and providing proven methods to elevate both your delivery and the overall group experience, enhance your interactions, and improve the quality of engagement within group settings.

Educational Session 4, Friday, March 27, 11:15 am - 12:30 pm

Beyond the Sales Pitch: Communicating the True Camp Experience to Today's Staff

Merrimack

Kim Aycock - Kimspiration, LLC & Jolly Corley - jolly corley, llc

"More staff than ever are arriving at camp feeling misled about what the job really entails. Some leave early in the season—or never show up at all—because what they were “sold” during recruiting doesn’t match the reality once on site. We see international staff requesting transfers and domestic staff ghosting before/during orientation or quitting once campers arrive. Discover ways to close the expectation gap with intentional communication throughout hiring and onboarding. Clearly convey the full camp experience—from daily rhythms to real challenges—so staff arrive prepared, engaged, and ready to fulfill their commitment. These actionable strategies will reduce early turnover, build trust, and boost overall staff retention."

Help Parents Help You: Preparing to Send Their Kids to Camp for the First Time

Frost/Hawthorne

Matt Brand

Figuring out which camp to send your child to, and then preparing that child (along with yourself as a parent) is incredibly overwhelming. Over his decades of camp involvement, Matt Brand has had countless conversations with parents about this very topic. As a former director and parent who sent his kids to camp, he has lived the experience himself. In this session, we'll discuss how to best set up parents so they can properly prepare their children for a summer away. In doing so, it will make your job easier too.

Reflection Skills and Methods

Armory

Phil Brown - High 5 Adventure Learning Center

Reflecting and debriefing are terms used in the Adventure/Experiential Education realm as an opportunity to connect lessons learned in the program to the outside world. This has most commonly been done by sitting or standing in a circle with the facilitator asking questions and the participants answering. This workshop aims to give both ideas and activities to help facilitate discussion within your group in order to get the most out of activities and also to ensure there is follow-up at the end of the program.

Are We Ready for a Campaign? Assessing Your Camp's Readiness for Fundraising Success

Emily Chaleff - Evolve Giving Group

Stark

Your camp may be dreaming big—upgrading facilities, expanding programs, or celebrating a milestone—but is your team truly ready to launch a successful campaign? This session will guide camp professionals and development leaders through the essential steps of assessing campaign readiness. Together, we'll explore leadership alignment, financial preparedness, donor engagement, internal systems, and case development. Participants will leave with a clear understanding of what it takes to responsibly plan and launch a campaign that strengthens both your camp's infrastructure and its long-term sustainability.

Our Staff Are Changing... Maybe It's Time Our Interviews Did Too

Piscataquog

Max Claman - VestEd Consulting

The staffing landscape continues to evolve each year, as do the staff that come with it. With the ability to effectively source and screen applicants, particularly domestic ones, becoming increasingly challenging, many camps find themselves in a position where they are “selling” camp to prospective staff, rather than interviewing them. This session will propose a new paradigm for the camp interview process, drawing from the perspectives of both camps and the staff members they're hiring — while also examining how trends outside of the industry might be useful for camps to explore and implement as well. Participants should come prepared to answer some interview-style questions and should bring their favorite interview questions as well!

Balancing Act: Aligning Camp Policies with Practical Implementation

Dartmouth

Brad Halsey - Brad Halsey Consulting

As a supervisor or policymaker, bridging the gap between written policies and the on-the-ground realities faced by leaders can be both a significant challenge and a missed opportunity. This session will equip participants to interpret policies, uncover their underlying goals, and communicate them to frontline leaders in a clear and approachable way. As well as develop and advocate for policy changes that align with practical application in your camp's unique context.

“I Want to Go Home!”: A New Paradigm for Responding to Homesickness

Contoocook

Chris Hudson - Planetchris Consulting

When a child says “I want to go home,” we often treat it as a problem to fix. What if it's an opportunity to listen, honor feelings, and model consent? This session reframes homesickness from “endurance test” to “relationship moment,” connecting camper autonomy with program goals. We'll unpack how homesickness shows up, what kids are communicating, and how staff responses can either escalate or repair. Attendees will examine common scripts that backfire, practice consent-centered alternatives, and consider a simple “stay/try/go” framework that aligns with family communication and program integrity. Expect a blend of story, psychology, and practical language you can take back to your team.

But We've Always Done It This Way!

Webster

Katie Johnson - Chalmers Camp Insurance

“But we've always done it this way” is a common response in camp risk management. While traditions offer stability, they may also hinder innovation. This session explores the pros & cons of relying on long-standing practices and the impact on risk exposure, safety culture, and resilience. Through case studies & discussion, we will examine when tradition supports safety—and when it is time to challenge norms for more effective operations while maintaining the integrity of the program.

Why They Come Back - Keeping Seasonal Staff Engaged, Invested, and Returning

Pemigewasset

Jason LeVasseur & John Suito - Camp Timanous

Seasonal staff don't return because of pay or perks alone - they return because they feel connected, trusted, and part of something meaningful. Drawing on decades of experience at Camp Timanous, Jason LeVasseur and John Suito explore the cultural and leadership practices that keep staff coming back summer after summer, and directly responds to the challenge many camps face: how to retain great seasonal staff in an increasingly competitive landscape. By examining the full staff experience - from the first day of training through the end of the summer and beyond - this session helps camps shift from reactive retention tactics to intentional relationship-building. Participants will learn how everyday leadership behaviors, growth opportunities, and a sense of belonging turn a “summer job” into a long-term commitment.

Positive Coaching (for Campers): Carrying a Compliment

The Penstock

Chris Wiley - The Story School

Positive Coaching (for campers) is one of the most important tools in youth development, yet one of the hardest to perform consistently. When observing campers, we address those arguing, wandering off, or breaking rules, instead of the ones behaving appropriately. Even when delivered kindly, corrections are negative feedback, and it takes at least three genuine, specific praises to offset the adverse effects. We'll share tools to reduce corrections and increase meaningful praise. Explore and discuss effective praise types and methods for neurodiverse campers; practice (through play) "praise sandwiches," peer-led, and parallel praise techniques. And we'll give you our most unique method: skill tokens—tangible compliments that campers can carry with them.

Educational Session 5, Friday, March 27, 2:00 pm - 2:45 pm

Developing a Productive Enterprise by Saying 'Yes' to Weddings at Camp

The Penstock

Becky Alford - Kingsley Pines Camp & Rory O'Connor - Kamp Kohut

We strive to make camp a beautiful and welcoming space for our campers each year. Why not expand that experience to reach hundreds more people annually? Extending your season to include weddings and corporate events can increase your visibility and boost your property's income during peak season. In this session, you'll explore different wedding model options, hear insights from camp professionals about staffing and financial considerations for hosting and marketing events at camp, and enjoy a comprehensive Q&A to address all your questions so you can effectively evaluate if adding pre- and post-events to your camp makes sense.

Farm to Camp: Incorporating Gardening and Cooking for your Campers

Webster

Lindsey Bogott & Karley Besozzi - MetroWest YMCA

Come learn about the ways in which the MetroWest YMCA is incorporating farm to school and nutrition education into our summer camps! By integrating options for gardening and cooking at camp we are able to help our kids understand where their food comes from and how to make healthy choices for their minds, bodies, and the Earth. In this workshop you will walk away with practical lessons and activities that you can incorporate into your camp, even if you don't have a kitchen or a garden just yet. Become inspired by the possibilities that exist regarding closed loop food systems, sustainability, and growing and cooking your own food!

The Role of Introverts Within the Camp Community

Merrimack

Elizabeth Broughton & Amber Cardwell - Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow

Camp culture often celebrates extroversion, but what about the quieter voices? This session explores how to recognize, support, and celebrate introverted campers and staff. Learn strategies to foster inclusion, design activities that engage all personality types, and create a universally designed camp day. Discover the strengths introverts bring to your community and how to amplify their voices, build authentic connections, and ensure every camper and staff member feels seen, heard, and valued.

Are You Ready for It? Safety Starts with You!

Piscataquog

Angela Connolly - New England Science and Sailing

Join me for an engaging, hands-on session designed to dive into your camps practical safety skills, emergency preparedness, and strategies to build a strong culture of safety. Through interactive exercises and real-life scenarios, attendees will enhance their situational awareness, strengthen teamwork during incidents, and

leave with increased confidence in keeping their staff and campers safe. This session is full of energy, collaboration, and actionable takeaways — because at camp, safety truly starts with you!

Honk If You (Want To) Love the Car Line

Stark

Zach d'Arbeloff - Belmont Day School

Do you have too many cars and not enough space? Are you locked in a constant battle with traffic control? Join us for a session all about the car line at day camps! We'll discuss basic organizing principles for a successful arrival and dismissal, how to communicate and guide parents, and ways to use technology as your ally. Bring along your frustrations, your ideas, and a map of your driveway (optional) and we'll dive in feet (wheel?) first!

What is ACA Doing in Washington DC and How Can My Camp Benefit

Frost/Hawthorne

Tammy Fortune - Camp Wa-Klo

Come and hear about ACA's ambitious federal agenda, and how you can support our advocacy efforts in DC. Current hot topics include protecting the Bridge USA J-1 visa programs, future federal support for the role camps play in MESH support for campers and staff, recognition of the workforce development value of working at camp, making sure camps can secure property insurance in a challenging market, the deductibility of overnight camp tuition, and other important federal matters. We will also discuss ACA's Hill Days on April 28-30, and how you and your camp community can participate!

Medication Management at Camp: What's the Big Deal?

Dartmouth

Tracey Gaslin - Alliance for Camp Health

We may forget or fail to realize the responsibility of our roles as camp professionals. Camp is just what we do and we love our daily work. Within our operations, especially in the health services space, we provide services that are high risk such as medication management. This session will be a discussion about the key considerations when providing medication services and steps to take to promote a healthier camp for all.

The Neuroscience of Safety: What Every Camp Leader Should Know

Contoocook

Jacqueline McDonough - Camp Jamison

When campers or staff are dysregulated, our reactions can either calm or escalate the moment. This session explores what's really happening in the brain during stress and how camp leaders can use that understanding to create environments where safety and joy thrive. Drawing from neuroscience and real-world camp examples, participants will learn simple, practical strategies to help youth and staff regulate emotions, strengthen relationships, and build resilience. You'll leave with actionable tools to make your camp calmer, more connected, and more compassionate this summer.

It Gets the People Going

Armory

Chad Nelson - Texas A&M University/Camp Millican

Join Dr. Chad Nelson for an engaging and interactive session designed to enhance your skills in facilitating camp games and group activities. "The Art of Camp Games and Group Activities" will provide you with practical tips, proven techniques, and valuable take-home resources to elevate your program offerings. These activities can be used for 100+ participants to less than 10.

Digital Campfire - Warming Up to Your Database

Pierce

Chrissy Schoenberg - The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp

Learn best practices for using your camper database from Hole in the Wall's Director of Camper Admissions. You too can better utilize reporting within your existing database! Learn strategies on how to use data to create community, while making your job easier and reducing redundancies and human error.

Educational Session 6, Friday, March 27, 3:15 pm - 4:30 pm

Orienteering for Camps

Dartmouth

Barb Bryant - Navigation Games

Orienteering is a physically active learning experience that develops map navigation skills. Learn how to incorporate progressive orienteering lessons into your camp to help kids observe and experience the environment, develop spatial reasoning, practice critical thinking, and gain confidence at navigating in both familiar and new places. You'll come away with activity plans and knowing how to get an orienteering map made of your camp. ***Weather permitting, we'll do an outdoor orienteering activity nearby, so please dress to go outside!***

Camp's Role in Disaster Emergency Management

Contoocook

Stephanie "Ruby" Compton - Ruby Outdoors LLC

Hurricane Helene devastated the mountains of Western North Carolina in Fall 2024. Many area camps promptly served as hubs for the community and emergency response officials while infrastructure was rebuilt. Six months later, wildfires plagued these same areas and camps found themselves again playing a key role in emergency response. Whether you are camp with a facility or a mobile program, join Ruby for a closer look at how summer camps can serve in the aftermath of natural disasters and how to plan to take on this role in an ever-more volatile climate.

Belonging Is the New Inclusion: The Importance of Friendships & Meaningful Participation

Lisa Drennan - MERGE Inclusion Consulting

Pierce

You've broken down access barriers and fostered a culture of disability inclusion in your camp programs—fantastic progress! But real inclusion goes beyond access. In this session, we'll explore the 8 core elements of belonging, such as feeling invited, valued, and truly known. With a focus on meaningful participation and authentic friendships, we'll dive into strategies to highlight each camper's strengths and unique contributions, creating pathways for genuine connection. You'll leave with a practical tip sheet outlining actions, supports, and strategies to deepen belonging for all participants. Join us to create a pathway to friendship and belonging FOR ALL.

Creating Irrational Loyalty from the Inside Out: Building a Staff Culture That Markets Itself

Deb Gabor - Sol Marketing/Hatch

Piscataquog

Your brand isn't your logo or tagline—it's the feeling people have about your camp and the stories your staff tell when you're not in the room. In this fast-paced, hands-on session, brand strategist and bestselling author Deb Gabor shares how to build a staff culture so emotionally connected to your camp's purpose that it becomes your strongest marketing asset. Through her Irrational Loyalty® framework, you'll participate in practical exercises to define your camp's internal brand promise, identify your ideal staff archetype, and create simple rituals to build belonging—tools you can take back and use with your team the very next day.

From 'I Can't Even with This Kid' to 'I've Got This': Coaching Staff Through Camper Burnout

Emily Golinsky - Bright Moose, LLC

Pemigewasset

Care fatigue, empathy erosion, compassion crash...whatever you call it, it's the look we've all seen on a counselor's face when they're just done with "that camper." Even the most dedicated staff reach a point where they become emotionally numb, irritated, or even resentful, and they're convinced that they've already given all they've got. Join Emily to explore why staff hit that wall, how to acknowledge and normalize it (without

shame!), and a toolbox of strategies you can use to help staff pause, reset and successfully re-engage with campers. You'll leave this session with answers to the burning question: "What can we do to keep staff grounded and effective when the patience runs out...but the camper's still there?"

Build A Better Budget: Values and Viability

Stark

Ryan Moore - Kaleidoscope, Inc.

At their core, budgets are statements of organizational values. They reflect the mission and strategic priorities for a camp's operation. But they also must reflect financial realities: there are limited funds to work with and ever-increasing expenses! Leaders need tools and a framework to understand their data, develop true costs for camp programs, and project income and expenses. This workshop will provide simple structures that leaders can use to align mission and long term viability. Spoiler alert: it will feature spreadsheets.

Intentional Debriefing for Contribution and Inclusion

Armory

Dr. Happi Price - Improv 2 Improvement LLC

Regular check-ins with staff and students, both at the beginning and end of each day or activity, play a vital role in nurturing a positive group culture. By employing debriefing modules and frameworks, facilitators can collect objective and subjective information in an engaging and manageable way. These strategies are designed to elevate group outcomes, encourage meaningful feedback, and provide opportunities to address relevant challenges as they arise. Through intentional debriefing, participants are empowered to contribute thoughtfully and feel a sense of inclusion within the group dynamic.

When People Get Mad: Supporting Big Feelings (Youth & Adults)

Merrimack

Chris Rehs-Dupin - TQAMP

From campers to coworkers to parents, people get mad. This session equips you with de-escalation tools rooted in care and dignity. Learn how to regulate escalated moments, repair harm, and respond to conflict in ways that strengthen relationships instead of straining them.

Fostering Alumni Relationships

Frost/Hawthorne

Dan Weir - Day Camp Community/Immersive1st

For the long-term success of your camp, come learn how to keep alumni as your best friends. We'll define what alumni are and why they are so passionate about camp. We'll dive into the benefits of cultivating alumni for nonprofit and for-profit camps. Takeaways will involve best practices on how to communicate effectively, provide realistic accommodations, and turn them into your biggest advocate. We'll also cover how to avoid pitfalls and stop yourself from setting yourself up to fail with alumni.

The Missing Piece: How Competency Models Bridge the Gap Between Job Descriptions and Daily Success

Webster

Jarod Wunneburger - Thrive Point Studio

Job descriptions check the HR box, but competency models give you something that helps staff understand their day-to-day work and measure performance. Summer camps often have management roles with multiple supervisors, gray areas, and complex interactions that job descriptions cannot capture. This session teaches a practical approach to building competency models for camp roles like camp directors and staff coordinators. Using backwards planning from success, participants learn to identify specific behaviors and skills that lead to high performance, then create frameworks that inform hiring, staff development, and performance management. Moving beyond waiting for unicorn staff, we will build systems that help regular people succeed.

Educational Session 7, Saturday, March 28, 10:45 am - 12:00 pm

A New Era in Camper Recruitment: How Camps Can Better Connect with Today's Families

Max Claman - VestEd Consulting

Pemigewasset

With fewer than one-third of U.S. children enrolled at camp each summer, camps have a tremendous opportunity to extend their reach and expand their enrollment. And while finding ways to reach these families can be challenging, it starts with understanding what they are looking for and the types of messaging that resonates with them. Utilizing analysis of real-time consumer habits and market trends, this session will share practical tips camps can use to engage more effectively with prospective families, particularly those who are unfamiliar with camp, and how they can elevate their marketing, messaging, and recruitment efforts.

10 Best Practices for Aquatics at Camp

Stark

Stephanie "Ruby" Compton - Ruby Outdoors LLC

Whether you have a small splash pad, a swimming pool, miles of natural shoreline, or a pond, aquatic programs are a big draw at camp. During this session, hear about ten ideas for making your aquatic areas safer including ideas for motivating and strengthening your lifeguard team, improving swimming skills, and teaching general water safety. This is a must-see session for any camp pro who oversees aquatic programming or who hires aquatic staff.

Essential of Camp Health for Camp Directors

The Penstock

Tracey Gaslin - Alliance for Camp Health

In many camp settings, Health center operations is under the responsibility of camp leadership. Therefore, what is it every Camp Director or Leader should know about their health services? In an effort to understand regulations and practice guidance, directors need education to understand the health landscape. This session will outline key considerations for camp leaders to guide safe supportive care for all participants.

Camp Finance Without the Snooze Button: Turning Numbers into Stories

Frost/Hawthorne

Hunter Gold - Immersive1st

Most camp leaders didn't choose this field for the spreadsheets, but every budget tells a story. This interactive session makes finance engaging and accessible by helping participants translate their camp's numbers into mission driven narratives. Through live examples and hands-on decoding, we'll demystify budgets, cash flow, and P&L statements, showing how data reveals priorities, values, and opportunities. Walk away ready to talk money with your board, donors, and staff in a way that inspires, not intimidates.

Program Architects: Crafting Purposeful Camp Experiences

Piscataquog

Brad Halsey - Brad Halsey Consulting

This workshop invites camp professionals to explore the art of creating meaningful experiences that leave a lasting impact on campers. Participants will learn how to align activities with their camp's core values, design engaging programs that balance fun and intentionality, and craft moments that foster connection, skill-building, and holistic growth. By the end of the session, attendees will think like true program architects—equipped to design camp experiences with purpose, clarity, and intentionality, ensuring every moment contributes to the camp's mission and vision.

How White Leaders Can Build Camp Cultures that Empower Black Youth

Webster

Jacqueline McDonough - Camp Jamison

Many camps want to create diverse and inclusive spaces but struggle to move from good intentions to meaningful change. This session invites camp leaders—especially white leaders—to examine how leadership practices, policies, and culture can either empower or unintentionally harm Black youth and staff. Drawing from 15 years of leading Camp Jamison, a Philadelphia-based overnight camp serving primarily Black youth, participants will learn practical frameworks, reflective tools, and leadership actions to build equitable, joyful camp communities where everyone feels seen and valued.

So, Your Counselors are Losing It. Now What?

Contoocook

Haley Pogachefsky - Hidden Valley Camp

OT offers an approach to teaching stress management that is both evidence-based, and easy to implement—yes, even at your camp. In this hands-on workshop, you will learn the basic tenets of occupational therapy, and how they apply to your unique setting. You will learn a wide range of activity-based stress response techniques that you can teach your staff. You will leave with a take-home "Stress Pizza" craft project embedded with stress management skills that your staff can use to support themselves and each other when they start to lose it. This workshop will teach you how to teach your staff the emotional regulation skills they need to know, so they can get it together and keep it together all summer long.

Playing with Sustainability: Engaging Campers and Staff Through Play

Armory

Danny Sudman - Green Camps

Sustainability education doesn't have to be heavy—it can be joyful, active, and memorable. This session invites participants to explore how games, challenges, and team-building activities can be used to engage campers and staff around sustainability concepts like waste reduction, energy awareness, composting, and resource conservation. Participants will experience hands-on examples from Green Camps' library of "green team-building" activities and learn how to adapt them to fit their camp's age groups, themes, and facilities. Leave inspired, equipped, and ready to play your way toward a more sustainable camp culture.

Developing Future Camp Leaders with CIT Programs

Merrimack

Dan Weir - Day Camp Community/Immersive1st

Finding the staff that want to work with kids and be part of your camp's culture can be challenging. A high-quality CIT or leadership program will cultivate leaders into staff. Programs must be based on providing mentorship and developing future leaders beyond just giving an opportunity to be at camp for another summer. We will explore characteristics of a successful program, pitfalls to avoid, and tips for transforming a program into a robust leadership pipeline. We will cover best practices and share real examples.

Lunch & Learn B, Saturday, March 28, 12:15 pm - 1:00 pm

The Retention Revolution: Strategies to Keep Your Superstars

Piscataquog

Mikele Block - Camp CaPella

Please welcome Mikele Block, the retention guru and dynamic Camp Director at Camp CaPella! With 12 years of youth experience and a passion for people, Mikele is here to share the secrets behind their phenomenal 95% staff retention rate last summer. Get ready for an inspiring, fun session on leveling up your hiring and keeping your top talent!

Pediatric Disaster Preparedness for Camps**Merrimack***Shaileen McVeigh - Pediatric Pandemic Network*

Children are uniquely vulnerable in emergencies due to their developmental and physiological differences. Camps, as seasonal homes for thousands of children, must be equipped to respond effectively to disasters. This session introduces camp professionals to pediatric-specific disaster preparedness strategies developed by the Pediatric Pandemic Network (PPN), in collaboration with the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response (ASPR). Attendees will explore tools that can assist in building tabletop exercises, learn about evacuation and reunification protocols, and discover free, peer-reviewed resources tailored for emergency planning in child-centered environments.

Union to Unity: What I Learned from Teen Staff Who Tried to Organize**Webster***Chad Norton - Town of Wellesley*

When a group of teen staff at Chad's camp jokingly tried to form a "union," it sparked a deeper conversation about trust, communication, and leadership. This funny, heartfelt session unpacks what that moment revealed about Gen Z's needs—and how it reshaped staff culture. Participants will learn how to turn staff frustrations into opportunities for collaboration, how to invite youth voice without losing leadership authority, and how humor and humility can bridge generational gaps. It's part leadership story, part group therapy, and all about creating a culture where everyone feels heard.

Fun With Names: Boost Everyday Belonging, Team Culture & Connection**Dartmouth***Kaomi Joy Taylor - Museum of Names*

Want stronger teams, deeper connection, and a culture where everyone truly belongs? Harness the hidden superpower already on the tip of your tongue. How names are noticed and treated in your camp shapes culture, influences relationships, and transforms group dynamics. Cultivating Name Fluency builds trust, strengthens bonds, welcomes diversity, and combats bullying and exclusion. In this interactive session, you'll uncover surprising insights about the profound power of names - including your own! - and gain practical tools to bring new energy, understanding, and connection back to your camp, team, or organization to make everyone feel more seen, valued, and included.

Camps at Cultural Institutions: Resource Roundtable**Stark***Sidney Tuttle - Zoo New England, Franklin Park Zoo*

Day Camps at cultural institutions like zoos, aquariums, museums, arboretums and more, are often crucial for building community connections while providing unique educational opportunities for campers. This session aims to foster a collaborative environment where professionals from cultural institutions of all sizes can create and sustain fresh camp programming. Participants will engage in conversation to share and take away ideas, connect with colleagues, and consider best practices for camps to run on-site at their institution. Participants should be sure to bring their questions, resources to share, and an excitement for camps rooted in educational practices.

Educational Session 8 & Conference Closing, Saturday, March 28, 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Body Lingo Bingo

Armory

Alexis Dascoulias - Camp CenterStage

It is estimated that 55% of communication is through Body Language (BL)! This Extremely interactive session will explore posture, gestures, body shifting, eye contact, facial expressions and more. Take control of a group before speaking a word and gain confidence while reading other people's BL. Identify BL indicators from campers, parents, and staff. Interactive activities that can be reproduced and used during any camp staff training. Many "ah-ha" moments when you realize WHY we read our staff's attitude before they speak a word. Great for anyone who presents in front of groups of any size or for those who recruit for their camp AND for those who want to train their staff on the importance of Body Language.

Disability Inclusion: No Budget? No Problem! Creative, Collaborative DIY Strategies **Merrimack**

Lisa Drennan - MERGE Inclusion Consulting

You don't need a big budget or a dedicated inclusion specialist to create meaningful, accessible, and welcoming camp experiences. In this practical and empowering session, participants will explore low-cost, high-impact ways to implement inclusion in any camp or recreation program. We'll bust the myth that inclusion is only possible with full-time experts and show how staff, volunteers, families, and participants themselves can become part of the inclusion equation. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to address behavior, promote belonging, and tap into local expertise—proving that inclusion is truly everyone's job.

One Click at a Time: Transforming Your Hiring Process

Dartmouth

Heather Logee - Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp

A staff member's first impression of your camp culture begins the moment they click on your application link. Many camps, including ours, have faced seasons of too few qualified applicants. By streamlining your hiring process and providing clear, honest information, you can help prospective staff make informed decisions—and increase both the quality and quantity of your applicants. In this interactive session, we'll explore how small, strategic adjustments can make your hiring process more engaging, approachable, and effective. Collaborate with fellow camp professionals to identify quick wins that can boost applications in the short term and develop longer-range strategies to strengthen your recruiting pipeline for future seasons.

Know Your Buttons: A Dysregulated Adult Can't Regulate a Dysregulated Child

Contoocook

Tara McKernan & Andrea Howell - Echo Consulting

Children exhibit a range of temperatures, from cool and under responsive disconnection to fiery, overheated explosion. As counselors, our job is to be the thermostat for campers, helping to cool down their emotional overheating by modeling calmness and control. This session will show how you can use your own self-regulation effectively when a child is struggling with emotional regulation.

The Parent Trap (In a Good Way!): Making Caregiver Communication Work for You

The Penstock

Carrie Milton - Girl Scouts of CT

Caregiver communication doesn't have to feel like a trap! In this lively, hands-on session, discover how to transform even the trickiest parent calls into positive, productive, and, yes, enjoyable conversations. You'll learn to connect with caregivers before, during, and after camp using tools like social media, open houses, and even a good old-fashioned postcard. Through laughter, improv, and real-world camp examples, we'll explore how to reframe stress into partnership, respond with confidence, and reassure families in ways that build

lasting trust. You'll leave with communication frameworks, sample scripts, and fresh ideas to make every interaction work for you, not against you.

Staffers Unite: Enriching Your Camp Culture

Piscataquog

Chad Nelson - Texas A&M University/Camp Millican

Please join Dr. Chad Nelson in this session as he discusses 'Staffers Unite: Enriching Your Camp Culture' and gain valuable insights to elevate your camp experience. In this session, you'll learn to align your program with its mission and values, ensuring staff decisions are guided by these principles. Discover how a positive camp staff culture not only enhances the camper's journey but also strengthens your staff's bonds. Additionally, you'll explore various developmental relationship concepts and practical applications, equipping you with the tools to foster growth and connections within your camp community.

Rooted & Radiant: Creating Belonging Through Social-Emotional Learning and STEAM Webster

Kelsey Norton - YWCA National Capital Area/Empower STEAM Summer Academy

Youth thrive when they feel seen, supported, and inspired. This interactive session explores how to create belonging through hands-on STEAM activities designed to promote social-emotional learning and authentic connection. Using a Positive Youth Development framework, participants will practice strategies that elevate youth voice, build emotional safety, and affirm identity, all within the context of fun, low-cost projects. A heightened focus will be given to culturally responsive practices that empower girls and youth of color. Attendees will leave with a toolkit of ready-to-use activities, rituals for connection, and reflection practices that turn everyday programming into powerful moments of creativity, belonging, and growth.

Speakers

Kelly Alford – Facilities Director, Kingsley Pines Camp

Kelly started his professional camp journey in the summer of 2006 when he took a job as a counselor to “try something different.” In the 19 years since, he has gone on to work in camps, wilderness programs, and municipal recreation in Ohio and throughout the southeast. During the camp closures of 2020 and 2021, Kelly took an opportunity to diversify his experience working under master plumbers to become qualified as a mechanical contractor. Kelly is currently the Facilities Director at Kingsley Pines Camp and uses his experience in programming, leadership, and the trades to bring a unique perspective and skill set to his role. He strongly believes in the impact camp has on the lives of both kids and staff.

Becky Alford – Camp Experience Director, Kingsley Pines Camp

Rebecca Alford, LMSW-CC, MSW, serves as the Camp Experience Director at Kingsley Pines, primarily focusing on supporting the social-emotional wellness of campers and staff throughout the summer. As a member of the leadership team at Kingsley Pines Camp, she takes on various roles, including Weddings Director. Becky has professionally supported over 50 events at KP and other organizations, spanning development, marketing, design, and execution. Her passion for weddings comes from a desire to help couples create a magical event centered around love and connection. A camp wedding provides a unique opportunity to introduce hundreds of new people to the camp each year, aiming to build a pipeline for guests to return in the future.

Eric Arnold – Advisor/Consultant, Eric Arnold, LLC

Eric Arnold is an accomplished nonprofit executive and consultant with more than 30 years of experience leading and advising mission-driven organizations. He is the former Executive Director of Hale Education, where he advanced educational initiatives, led significant land conservation efforts and developed a culture of philanthropy for organization sustainability. Eric provides strategic guidance, fundraising, governance, and leadership coaching for nonprofits, and is recognized for his integrity, compassion, and commitment to community impact. He holds a Master in Educational Leadership and Business Administration from Lesley University and a dual Bachelor’s degree in Geography and Mass Communications from the University of Denver.

Kim Aycock - Speaker/Trainer/Educator/Consultant, Kimspiration, LLC

Kim Aycock, MST, equips emerging leaders with skills robots are unable to do. While blending the talents of a master teacher with the knowledge of a seasoned camp expert, Kim ignites learning for varying levels of camp pros worldwide through her interactive & innovative presentations. Kim speaks at regional/national conferences, contributes regularly to Camping Magazine and serves as co-chair of ACA’s Staff Recruitment & Retention Committee/Staffing Summit. She can be reached via kimdaycock@gmail.com or kimaycock.com.

Karley Besozzi – Director of Nutrition Education, MetroWest YMCA

Hello! I’m Karley Besozzi I am the director of nutrition education at the MetroWest YMCA. I have worked for the Y for six years now. In my role I work directly with kids and families during cooking classes and after school

programming while also supporting other food programming across our association when I'm not at work, I enjoy spending time with my friends and family reading a book and listening to podcasts!

Mikele Block – Camp Director, Camp CaPella

Mikele is an energetic Camp Director at Camp CaPella and a retention superstar! With 12 years of experience working with kids and a Human Services background, Mikele knows what makes a team tick. She spends summers supporting staff and campers with a hands-on approach and in the off-season she focuses on public speaking and program development. Mikele enjoys learning new ways to support the camp community and devotes her free time to volunteering with her family.

Lindsey Bogott - Farm to School & Food Access Coordinator, MetroWest YMCA

My name is Lindsey Bogott and I am the Farm to School and Food Access Coordinator at the MetroWest YMCA. I have a BA in Environmental Studies and a passion for teaching people where their food comes from and how to live more sustainably. I have been growing food for 5 years now and when I'm not in the garden you can find me making jewelry, knitting, crocheting, sewing, or doing some kind of arts and crafts. I love giving back to my community and volunteer regularly at repair cafes, for a non-profit called Natick is United, and as a town meeting member of Natick. Ultimately, I want people to feel empowered to grow their own food and take care of their mental and physical health, while simultaneously giving back to the earth.

Jennifer Brady – Staff Coordinator, Kamp Kohut

Jennifer Brady started at Kamp Kohut as a Climbing Counselor in the summer of 2022. As of 2025 she joined Kohut's year-round team on an 18-month Trainee/ Intern Visa and undertook the position as Staff Coordinator. Jennifer believes that a positive staff experience is fundamental to a successful summer. Heading into her fifth summer, she understands the importance of a cultural exchange for international staff, many of whom, like herself, will not have been to the United States before working at camp.

Brianna Braden – Behavior Specialist, Broad Meadow Brook Mass Audubon

Brianna Braden is the former behavior specialist at Mass Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook summer camp in Worcester, Massachusetts. She worked with BMB for three years developing their social-emotional curriculum for their summer camp. She graduated from Spring Hill College with a BA in English Literature and from Boston College's School of Theology and Ministry with an MA in Theology and Ministry. Brianna's background is in education and social services, and she currently works in human services at Advocates, Inc. serving the greater Boston/Metro-West area. She enjoys reading, nature, her cats, and spending time with friends and family.

Matt Brand – Software Engineer & Author

Matt Brand is a husband and a father of two teenaged daughters. He is a self-proclaimed (and others-proclaimed) nerd, author, software engineer, elected member of his local school board, and a life-long summer camp person -- including a former summer camp director. While he believes he is a funny person, his daughters think he's "mostly cringe." Matt and his daughters agree to disagree. Matt has published 3 books: "Nature & Nurture: A Journey Through the Fog of Parenting," is about his parenting experience. "The Paradox of Fine: A

Midlife Health Transformation” is about finding health, physically and mentally, as you age. "Welcome to Camp: A Family's Guide to the Summer Camp Journey," is about figuring out camp for your kids.

Dakota Bricetto – Support Team Director, Camp Susan Curtis

Dakota has been involved with Camp Susan Curtis for 21 years, seven of those years as a camper. As a camper Dakota knew that she wanted to be a lifeguard and worked hard to earn multiple waterfront related certifications, including LGI and WSI. Dakota worked in a leadership role at the waterfront for seven summers creating a safe environment, building programming, adapting teachings for the at-risk youth population, and mentoring and training staff to be successful. In addition to being a professional at the waterfront, Dakota has begun to work as an Occupational Therapist at Camp Susan Curtis.

Elizabeth Broughton – Camp Director, Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow

Elizabeth (she/her), a self-proclaimed introvert, has been a camp director at Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow Day Camp since 2014. Outside of camp, she is part of Mass Audubon’s year-round education team, coordinating and teaching homeschool programs, school field trips, scout badges and programs for families. Elizabeth holds a Bachelor of Science in microbiology and was a stay-at-home mom for many years while raising her four children. In her role as Camp Director, she is inspired by a love of all things nature and her commitment to educate people of all ages and abilities.

Dave Brown - Camp Director/Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Mountain Camp/Fence Post Learning

Dave Brown is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who has worked in nonprofits, public schools and camps. He has worked as a Director for Mountain Camp in CA since 2010, where he focuses on staff and camper well-being and development. He offers training, consulting, and speaking through Fence Post Learning, an online staff training resource, and maintains a small telehealth therapy and coaching practice from his home in the Bay Area. He loves beach volleyball and daydreams of owning vintage musical instruments he can’t even play. www.fencepostlearning.com

Phil Brown – Senior Trainer, High 5 Adventure Learning Center

Phil, originally from England, joined the High 5 team in May 2015. Phil brings high energy and devotion to the Adventure field and has presented at many national and international conferences. He is also one of the co-authors of the book “Tinker: Building Purposeful Experiences from Classic Adventure Activities” and the producer/host of “Vertical Playpen” – the podcast all about Adventure and Experiential Education.

Barb Bryant – President, Navigation Games

Barb Bryant is the founder of Navigation Games. She has been collaborating with educators to bring orienteering-based education to camps and schools since 2004. Barb is active with Orienteering USA, and currently chairs the Youth Mapping Program. Barb believes that getting kids running around with maps builds critical thinking, teamwork skills, confidence in unfamiliar situations, and an appreciation for the natural environment.

Abby Burbank – Outdoor Educator

Initially acquiring her passion for boating at summer camp, this love of water has never waned. Abby has been an instructor or instructor trainer for ACA Canoe for 30 years and currently teaches Canoe, Kayak and Stand Up Paddleboarding. A former camp director, and college coach whose practice field was often mistaken for a day care center due to the number of props used for teaching. She loves inventing new ways to teach, using games as the catalyst for learning, and having a blast along the way.

Amber Cardwell – Assistant Camp Director, Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow

Amber (she/her) is Assistant Camp Director at Mass Audubon Wachusett Meadow for three seasons with prior experience as Camp Director and Staff in various camps across the country. During the “off-season” she teaches science to first through fifth graders in Worcester. As an extroverted introvert, she enjoys the energy of camp camaraderie while still needing time to sit with her own thoughts.

Emily Chaleff – Consultant, Evolve Giving Group

Emily Chaleff has over 25 years of experience helping organizations unlock their full potential through strategic growth and operational excellence. A seasoned nonprofit leader and consultant, she brings deep expertise in fundraising, organizational development, and executive leadership. Emily’s career includes transformative achievements in capital and annual campaigns, program expansion, and board development at faith-based, Jewish communal, and arts and culture organizations. As co-founder and director of Camp Alsing, she combined her operational expertise with her passion for inclusive programming.

Max Claman – Principal Consultant, VestEd Consulting

A former camp director and executive, Max has worked in the education field for close to two decades. Having previously held Director roles at both day and residential camps, Max now serves as a consultant, speaker, and author, facilitating workshops across the country. Max has helped support dozens of camps throughout North America and has led programs for thousands of camp professionals and seasonal staff since 2008. His workshops have ranged in size from one-on-one coaching sessions to large-scale programs with over 1,000 participants.

Jen “Dusty” Clitheroe – Principal Consultant, Strength Perspective

Jen Clitheroe is CEO of Clitheroe Consulting and Co-Founder of Strength Perspective, empowering leaders and their communities to create inclusive organizations. She holds a BA in Psychology and an MS in Organizational Leadership. She has served on several non-profit boards, including the Farm & Wilderness Foundation, working to support inclusion, sustainability, strategic planning, leader development, governance, and change management. She also serves on the ACA New England Board.

Stephanie “Ruby” Compton – Chief Exploration Officer, Ruby Outdoors LLC

Ruby Compton is an outdoor educator and guide, aquatics professional, and former camp director. She focuses on inspiring folks to foster deeper connections with nature, design intentional staff trainings, and set practical

and healthy boundaries. She is passionate about the Blue Ridge mountains where she resides. Ruby is the Chief Exploration Officer for Ruby Outdoors which is a Licensed Training Provider of the American Red Cross.

Angela Connolly – Safety Director, New England Science & Sailing

Angela Connolly is the Safety Director at New England Science & Sailing (NESS) in Stonington, Connecticut, where she brings over 20 years of experience in the camp and youth education field. A passionate advocate for building strong safety cultures, Angela leads comprehensive safety trainings, in-services, and drills that empower staff to respond confidently and effectively in any situation. As a certified Lifeguard Instructor Trainer and Handle with Care Instructor, she combines technical expertise with a hands-on, team-centered approach to training. Her work focuses on making safety not just a requirement, but a shared value across programs.

Jolly Corley – Director/Leadership Development, Camp Robindel

Jolly Corley, M.S. develops emerging leaders and fosters dynamic, thoughtful cultures. As Director of Camp Robindel, she oversees staff training, camper recruitment, parent engagement, and facilities—driving 25% annual enrollment growth since taking the helm. Each summer she mentors 350 staff & campers to turn their experience into tools for reflection and lifelong leadership. Through jolly corley, llc, she partners with organizations across industries to strengthen leadership, engagement, and team culture. She can be reached at jollycorley@gmail.com or jollycorley.com.

Rene Cote – Program Director & Hiring Manager, Kingsley Pines Camp

Rene (Rainy) first began working at Kingsley Pines in 2018 and has worked in several different positions from Cabin Counselor, Dining Hall/Awards Coordinator, Assistant Program Director and Boys Campus Head. He has always enjoyed engaging with campers and staff to create a supportive community that truly changes lives. He is passionate about supporting international staff in their development and engagement at camp.

Zach d’Arbeloff - Director of Summer Programs & Transportation, Belmont Day School

Zach d’Arbeloff has been working in camping since 2008. Zach is the Director of Summer Programs at Belmont Day School in Belmont, MA, with previous stops at Drumlin Farm and Blue Hills as a camp professional and environmental educator. Zach is an ACA lead standards visitor, and a co-chair of the ACA New England Conference planning committee. Hobbies include skiing, ultimate frisbee, disc golf, and basking in nature.

Alexis Dascoulias – Camp Director/Owner, Camp CenterStage

With 30 years’ experience as camp director, theater director, and educator, Alexis shares firsthand experiences applied to the joy of camp leadership. With a MS in Camp Administration and Leadership, she moved to Maine in 2018 to fulfill her lifelong dream of building a camp where leadership skills combine with the arts. She has directed residential and day camps from Maine to Maui and currently serves as Dean of Students and District Title IX Coordinator in Winthrop, ME. Trained in Level 2 of CampWell Mental Health. As a guest presenter at Rotary International conventions, STEM conferences, and many ACA conferences, she strongly believes in the power of camp and that an “attitude of gratitude” is always the best way to live!

Gerry Donaghue – Owner/Lead Sales, GT Donaghue Construction & Metal Roofing, LLC

Gerry Donaghue has been the Owner and Lead Sales of GT Donaghue Construction for almost 40 years. His expertise ranges from ground up new builds to remodeling classic New England homes & buildings. Gerry has a range of finish carpentry experience, but mainly focuses on exteriors and roofing. Gerry's family connected him to camp where he was able to consult on future plans as well as complete regular property maintenance projects. Does your camp need some love but not sure where to start? Gerry can guide you with no nonsense advice taking into account logistics, climate impact, and a variety of budgets. Gerry understands the power of camp and wants to help you create (or maintain!) a safe space for young people to grow and learn!

Carolyn Doremus – Education Specialist & ZooCrew Director, Buttonwood Park Zoo

Carolyn Doremus is an early-career Education Specialist at Buttonwood Park Zoo, and the director of the zoo's educational day program, ZooCrew. ZooCrew combines the framework of a traditional day camp with the enthusiasm that kids have for wildlife to foster learning about conservation and inspire youth to develop their connections to the natural world around them. Having grown up attending and working at camps and graduating with a BS in Biology in 2023, Carolyn is thankful to be able to channel both of these passions into her work to promote positive change through engaging conservation-focused outreach that builds empathy.

Lisa Drennan – Founder/Inclusion Consultant, MERGE Inclusion Consulting

Lisa is dedicated to fostering inclusion for individuals with disabilities. Starting at New England Village in Pembroke, Mass., she progressed from direct support professional to designing and opening the Sollar Wellness Center, offering aquatics, fitness, music, art, and education for people with disabilities. At the South Shore YMCA, she expanded programs and trained staff on social and recreational inclusion. In 2018, she founded MERGE Inclusion Consulting, sharing expertise in staff training, consultation, and systems implementation to create more inclusive communities.

Donald Dumont – Warning Coordination Meteorologist, National Weather Service Gray, ME Forecast Office

Donny Dumont serves as the Warning Coordination Meteorologist (WCM) at the National Weather Service in Gray, Maine. With 25 years of meteorological experience spanning the globe, Donny leads the inter-agency coordination between the NWS and state, local, and tribal emergency management agencies in Maine and New Hampshire. His mission is to ensure a seamless, coordinated response to high-impact hazardous weather. A Massachusetts native and Plymouth State College alumnus, Donny's career includes NWS posts in Vermont, Nevada, and Maine, as well as service as an Air Force Weather Officer with tours in New Mexico, Germany, and the Middle East, and as an Air Force Weather Officer with tours in New Mexico, Germany, and the Middle East.

Tammy Fortune – Owner/Director, Camp Wa-Klo

Tammy has been in the camping industry for 30+ years starting as a camper and currently the owner/director of Camp Wa-Klo in Dublin, NH. After earning her master's in education and teaching for a few years, she decided to make camp her year-round profession. Additionally, she is on the ACA's Government Relations Committee and the chair of Legislative Committee for the NH Camp Directors Association. She recently helped ACA create Emerging Camp Advocates group.

Deb Gabor - Brand Evangelist/Bestselling Author/CEO, Sol Marketing/Hatch

Deb Gabor is a bestselling author, brand strategist, and founder of Sol Marketing. Creator of the Irrational Loyalty® methodology and author of "Branding Is Sex," "Irrational Loyalty," and "Person-ality," she helps organizations build brands people would tattoo on their bodies. Deb has led brand strategy for beloved companies, including Dell, Microsoft, NBC Universal, VRBO, Andrew Harper, Travelzoo, and Exclusive Resorts. A former camper and counselor with a lifelong love of camp culture, she's spoken at the ACA Tri-State Conference and for ACA New England, inspiring camp leaders to create cultures of belonging and loyalty that start from the inside out.

Simone Gamble – Founder, OAAARS

Simone Gamble (they/them) is a NYC-based community organizer, educator, and social impact entrepreneur with deep roots in the South Bronx. They have led workshops and trainings across the country for nonprofits, schools, and after-school programs, focusing on intersectional, anti-oppressive practices. With over a decade of experience in the camping world—from counselor to Assistant Camp Director —Simone now consults with camps nationwide on aligning their practices with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) values. They are also the founder of OAAARS, a BIPOC consultancy of changemakers who lead equity-centered trainings and professional development to support transformative change in workplaces and communities.

Tracey Gaslin – CEO, Alliance for Camp Health

Dr. Gaslin completed her PhD in Educational and Organizational Leadership and taught for 10 years specializing in pediatric development, service leadership, and research on gratitude. Dr. Gaslin publishes the majority of her work in the areas of pediatrics, camp nursing, behavioral health, and service leadership and has co-authored several texts. She currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the Alliance for Camp Health where she travels and trains individuals regarding health services and well-being of youth and young adults. She continues to be an active speaker, writer, and publisher representing the Leading Voice in Camp Health to promote hope and healing in youth serving programs across the US and Canada.

Marcie Glad – Spreadsheet Consultant, Help My Spreadsheets

Marcie Glad had her first summer camp experience going to church camp at the age of 12 and she HATED it! Luckily, she got over the homesickness, made friends, and embraced a career in the camp industry. After 15 years in the professional camp industry, she started a spreadsheet consulting business (Help My Spreadsheets) to help camps, schools, and small businesses improve systems and make the most of their time. Marcie earned her MBA from Boston University and has a PMP (Project Management Professional) certification. She loves gardening, houseplants, snowboarding, and cooking. Her superpower is knowing the exact size of Tupperware to use for leftovers.

Hunter Gold – Senior Consultant, Immersive1st

Hunter Gold, MBA is a Senior Consultant with Immersive1st, specializing in strengthening the financial and operational foundations of camps, retreat centers, and mission-driven organizations. With over 25 years of leadership experience in both nonprofit and for-profit camps, Hunter has led day and overnight camps as a

CFO, Executive Director, and consultant. Known for making finance approachable and engaging, Hunter helps camp professionals and boards turn data into strategy and build long-term sustainability.

Emily Golinsky – Founder/Owner, Bright Moose, LLC

Emily’s sessions get called “tremendously helpful,” and “not to be missed—a reason to come to the conference!” Emily was the Executive Director at Camp Starfish (NH) before, creating Bright Moose, LLC (www.brightmoosetraining.com) to provide training, consultation, and PD for camps, schools, and youth orgs nationwide. Emily holds a BS (Health Psych), MS (Camp Admin/Leadership), and a recently completed Higher Ed Teaching Certificate from Harvard. She is President of NHCamps, an ACANE committee member and accreditation visitor, Special Ed Advocate, MHFA instructor, and honored recipient of the Peter Kerns Award for Advancement of Professional Development. Fair warning: she is an avid collector of sarcastic humor and terribly awesome puns.

Brad Halsey – Camp Professional & Consultant, Brad Halsey Consulting

With 20 years of diverse experience in camps and not-for-profits, Brad has worked with various organizations in three countries and three provinces impacting children, teens and young adults. Most recently, he has served as Director of Programming at a not-for-profit and camp in Alberta, Canada, where he has been instrumental in designing and implementing comprehensive training programs, establishing effective policies, and developing mentorship resources. His leadership has focused on cultivating a positive culture and fostering interpersonal growth, ensuring the professional development of staff and volunteers and the overall success of the organization.

Joseph Hileman – President, Hileman Security Training Group

Joe Hileman brings more than two decades of law enforcement experience as a Detective with the Jaffrey (NH) Police Department and as Assistant Team Commander of the Monadnock Regional Special Response (SWAT) Team. Before entering law enforcement, he served as a security supervisor at the corporate management level for a Fortune 500 company. He also has more than a decade of public speaking under his belt where his sessions are often rated the # 1 training at a conference!

Andrea Howell – Behavior Specialist, Parent Coach & Educator, Echo Consulting

Andrea Howell is a dedicated parent coach and behavior consultant with over 30 years of experience in education, specializing in early childhood and special education. She collaborates with families and organizations to address and support children facing challenging behaviors, utilizing her extensive background to create effective, tailored strategies that empower both parents and children.

Chris Hudson – Consultant, Planetchris Consulting

Chris Hudson (he/him) is a consultant, speaker, and youth development specialist who helps camps and organizations build inclusive and accountable cultures. With more than 30 years in camping and social work, Chris brings both heart and strategy to his work on leadership, behavior, and belonging. He co-founded Camp Highlight, a sleepaway camp for children of LGBTQ+ families, and co-hosts the CampHacker Podcast. Through

his company, Planetchris Consulting, Chris partners with camps, schools, and nonprofits across North America to translate values like empathy and equity into daily practice.

Katie Johnson – Senior Risk Consultant, Chalmers Camp Insurance

Katie Johnson, M.S., is a Senior Risk Consultant at Chalmers Camp Insurance. With nearly 30 years in camps and youth-serving organizations—including 8 years with the American Camp Association—she blends risk expertise with a passion for transformative experiences. Driven by her passion for the magic of camp, she empowers leaders to create strong safety foundations, ensuring they can focus on inspiring growth, connection, and adventure in the communities they serve.

Donna Johns-Thomas – Founder, Indigo Consulting

Donna Johns-Thomas (She/Her), SHRM-CP, is the founder of Indigo Consulting, where she provides training, strategy, and support for people who lead people. With 30 years in camp leadership, HR, and professional development—including roles at Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston and ACA New England—Donna helps youth-serving organizations build systems that keep staff supported and programs safe. Her sessions blend real-life camp experience with warmth and humor to make learning stick. Learn more at IndigoConsultingJT.com.

Jeff Jubelirer – Public Relations Partner, AMSkier

Jeff Jubelirer has served as AMSkier's Public Relations Partner since 2018. He specializes in public relations and media support, with a particular emphasis on crisis management. Along with being a former camper and camp counselor, Jeff comes to AMSkier with over 25 years of professional experience and serves as a camp public relations expert to help with media, parents and virtually any kind of communications needed.

Jason LeVasseur – Speaker/Educator/Musician, The Rock Star Project/Camp Timanous

2026 New England Camp Conference Keynote Speaker

Jason LeVasseur is an award-winning keynote speaker, leadership educator, and musician whose work is deeply rooted in more than three decades of summer camp experience. His camp journey began as a homesick nine-year-old camper and grew into a lifelong calling that has shaped every stage, classroom, and conference room he steps into today. Blending the heart of a camp counselor with the perspective of a touring musician, Jason brings music, storytelling, and interactive experiences to his keynotes—helping people feel confident in the “instrument” they bring to the band. As the founder of The Rock Star Project®, he uses the metaphor of a band to explore teamwork, leadership, and belonging. Jason is a Certified Speaking Professional (CSP™), Certified Master Trainer™, and Virtual Master Presenter™, and has received more than 25 national awards, including Speaker of the Year and Entertainer of the Year. His message is simple and enduring: what you bring matters - and how you show up makes the band better.

Stephan Lockney – Associate Executive Director of Camping Services, MetroWest YMCA

Stephan is a Master level Community Social Psychologist and 30-year YMCA Camping professional working in both the residential and day camp fields. He developed an inclusive day camp model in the 90s that was recognized and funded by the state of Massachusetts. He furthered that work coming out of COVID by getting

a National YMCA grant to build all gender housing at Camp Frank A. Day. He is a L.E.A.D certified Summer Camp Mental Health and Transplaining LGBTQIA2s+ Inclusion at Summer Camp Trainer. Stephan loves leading camp programming as he believes it is one of the best social emotional learning centers for children and young adults.

Heather Logee – Camp Director, Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp

Heather Logee started at Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp as a camper at age 7. She grew up at camp and gained experience in just about every possible staff role before becoming Camp Director in 2007. Heather has a Master's Degree in Camp Administration, serves on the Connecticut Camping Association Board and also serves on Connecticut's Youth Camp Safety Advisor Council. Heather enjoys helping campers/staff find their love for summer camp, helping them grow as leaders at camp and in their communities.

Brian Massey – Director of Innovation, American Camp Association

Brian Massey has been an educator and camp professional for 15 years before starting as Director of Innovation with ACA in December 2024. He lives in Mount Rainier, MD with his wife, Ellie, and their two sons, Rye and Cypress.

Jacqueline McDonough – Founder & Executive Director, Camp Jamison

Jacqueline McDonough, M.Ed., is the Founder and Executive Director of Camp Jamison, a Philadelphia-based overnight summer camp dedicated to creating joyful, inclusive spaces for children of color. With over 15 years in public education and youth development, Jacqueline blends research on neuroscience, equity, and peacebuilding into practical tools for camp leaders. She has spoken nationally on empowering Black youth, staff leadership, and the brain science of safety. Her sessions invite reflection, courage, and actionable change within camp communities.

Tara McKernan – Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, Echo Consulting

Tara McKernan is a licensed clinical counselor who operates a thriving private practice, offering therapy services to clients of all ages. With 24 years of experience in education as a special education teacher and school counselor, Tara brings a wealth of knowledge in understanding the emotional and social needs of children and adolescents. Her approach integrates therapeutic techniques that foster resilience and growth. Being raised by parents who started a residential summer camp, Tara spent her formative years growing up with camp magic. She is a full believer in the transformative powers of camp.

Shaileen McVeigh – Hub Site Manager, Pediatric Pandemic Network

Shaileen McVeigh is a dedicated champion for pediatric care, child safety and emergency preparedness, with over 20 years in healthcare and public service. As Hub Site Manager for the Pediatric Pandemic Network at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital/ Yale University, she leads efforts to strengthen disaster readiness in child-serving environments. Her frontline experiences as an EMT, 911 dispatcher, and Emergency Department R.N. have provided a multifaceted background that equips her with a unique perspective on the intersection of

healthcare, public safety, and pediatric care. Shaileen now builds networks, develops protocols, and champions policies that prioritize children's needs during public health emergencies.

Carrie Milton – Manager of Summer Camps, Girl Scouts of CT

Carrie Milton is an active leader in the Girl Scouts of CT summer camp and year-round outdoor program community. She blends creativity, organization, and a deep love of nature to design meaningful, hands-on experiences that help children build confidence in the outdoors. From campfire cooking, to archery, to map & compass adventures, Carrie's programs encourage Girls to challenge themselves, explore new skills, and connect with the world around them. She believes outdoor learning fosters practical know-how and also resilience, empathy, and leadership. Carrie also values strong caregiver communication, ensuring families feel informed, supported, and included every step of the way, creating a partnership that extends far beyond the camp season.

Briana Michele Mitchell – President of Strategy & Operations/President, Change Summer/S'more Summer

Briana is the President of S'more Summer, a Change Summer initiative, where she partners with camps to create more summer experiences that center joy, equity, and belonging. She is also the President of Strategy and Operations for Change Summer, which creates high-quality, transformative summer opportunities for students from under-resourced communities. Briana previously served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Camp Association of New York and New Jersey as well as the co-chair of the affiliate's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee. A self-proclaimed master of the bucket brigade, Briana spent her formative summers at a sleepaway camp in Pennsburg, PA before serving as the Director of AF Camp.

Ryan Moore – Consultant, Kaleidoscope, Inc.

Ryan is a consultant with KALEIDOSCOPE, Inc, a firm that works exclusively with camp and retreat centers across the country. Camp has been his entire career, serving at camps in SC, MT, TX, and TN prior to joining KALEIDOSCOPE full time. He has great skill in strategic leadership and analysis, working well with groups to gain clarity in purpose and vision. He is an engaging speaker that blends wisdom and wit to communicate complex ideas in a simple, straightforward way.

Shawn Moriarty – Camp Director/Lead Education Coordinator, Mass Audubon/A Single Footstep

Shawn has spent his whole career since 1983 working with summer camps and outdoor education programs. He worked at a day camp in Connecticut for 11 years before beginning his residential camp career. In 1988 he began working in the ropes course industry with running ropes course programs, and teaching others how to run and build them. Shawn has worked at 8 camps in 6 states and directed 3 of those camps. Along his camp journey Shawn got involved in learning place-based skills, deep nature connection, storytelling, and presenting at camp and experiential education conferences around the country. He is the author of the Ropes of Ecology and co-author of The Adventure Trail.

Terri Mulks – Camp Director, Camp Susan Curtis

Terri L. Mulks holds a BSW from Southern Connecticut State University and brings over 30 years of experience working with youth facing economic hardship, mental health challenges, and barriers to opportunity. A passionate advocate for trauma-informed care, Terri designs and implements systems and programs that support both youth and staff, creating safe and hopeful experiences. She has been the Director at Camp Susan Curtis for the past 16 years after an early career with the Y. She is an ACA Visitor, member of the New England Conference Committee, and President of Maine Summer Camps. Terri, her husband, and rescued pets are Mainers who are $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through a personal mission to have adventures in all of America's National Parks.

Chad Nelson – Instructional Associate/Director, Texas A&M University, Youth Development Initiative/Camp Millican

Dr. Chad Nelson an Instructional Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications. Dr. Nelson has taught students across undergraduate and graduate levels, covering subjects such as experience design, youth and adult intentional programming, facilitation, leadership, and youth camp management. He has been awarded Provost Academic Professional Track Faculty Teaching Excellence Award and Association of Former Students College-Level Teaching Award. He currently serves as the Camp Director for Camp Millican. This program focuses on inspiring youth to learn, play, and grow in the spirit of healthy adventure and fun in nature.

Chad Norton – Deputy Recreation Director, Town of Wellesley

If sunscreen, walkie-talkies, and organized chaos sound like home, you'll get along with Chad Norton. With over 25 years in parks and recreation, Chad serves as Deputy Director for Wellesley Recreation (MA), where he leads day camps centered on connection, compassion, and growth. Passionate about staff well-being and youth leadership, he blends humor, heart, and hands-on experience to help camps build cultures that support mental health, spark confidence, and create lifelong community.

Kelsey Norton – Manager of Youth Programs, YWCA National Capital Area; Empower STEAM Summer Academy

Kelsey Norton is a youth development professional with over a decade of experience creating equitable, engaging learning spaces for young people. She serves as Manager of Youth Programs at YWCA National Capital Area, where she leads Empower STEAM, a five-week summer academy sparking curiosity and confidence in girls through hands-on exploration of science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Her career has focused on ensuring marginalized and underrepresented youth, particularly girls of color, have access to opportunities that foster belonging, leadership, and self-efficacy. She emphasizes the power of community, mentorship, and representation in helping youth see themselves as future leaders and innovators.

Rory O'Connor – Assistant Director, Kamp Kohut

Starting as a music and general land sports counselor in Summer 2012, Rory O'Connor moved into a year-round position for Kamp Kohut in 2015. As Kamp's Assistant Director and Head Counselor, his primary roles

throughout the “off-season” are camper recruitment and retention, marketing, and alumni engagement. Starting in 2019, he spearheaded Kamp’s foray into postseason events. Six seasons later, from weekend weddings to high school retreats, rental groups have turned into a reliable part of Kamp’s overall business. While a lot of work, Rory believes in rental groups as a way for summer camps to utilize their facilities to the fullest, while sharing the beauty of Kamp with hundreds of new people each season.

David Phillips – Principal, Immersive1st

David is the Principal of Immersive1st, a consulting firm specializing in fundraising, strategic planning and visioning, governance, executive recruitment, succession planning, program development, and organizational analysis. A lifelong community professional with a trademark British sense of humor, David is passionate about doing meaningful work with good people that makes a difference. He earned his MSW from the University of Pittsburgh, with a focus on community organizing & development. He lives in Florida with Karen (they met at camp) and a dog named Murray. He travels across the country, helping organizations thrive, and proudly stirs up “good trouble” along the way. His not-so-secret passion? Football — the real one!

Matt Pines – Camp Director, Maine Lakes Retreats (formerly Maine Teen Camp)/Sapien Labs/Maine Education Policy Research Institute

Matt is a seasoned camp professional, with 25+ years working with adolescents in an overnight camp setting. He will complete his PhD at University of Southern Maine next month, and has been involved with a research project looking at how summer camp stacks up as a “mind-health” intervention compared to globally normed initiatives, since 2024.

Haley Pogachefsky – Occupational Therapist, Hidden Valley Camp

Haley is an occupational therapist and longtime camp enthusiast! Sitting in her doctoral OT classes wondering, "Why don't all camp professionals know this OT stuff?!" she got an idea.... teach them this OT stuff! Now, in addition to working with people of all ages clinically as an OT, she teaches the grown ups who work with kids how to think like OTs so they can better support themselves and their campers.

Dr. Happi Price – Founder/CEO, Improv 2 Improvement, LLC

Dr. Happi Price utilizes applied improvisation principles to deliver practical tools, techniques, and strategies that advance the educational objectives of individuals and groups. Through these evidence-based approaches, he equips students and organizations with structured pathways to foster connectivity, creativity, collaboration, and essential skill development. His experiential methodology promotes purposeful and flexible learning environments that support long-term growth and advancement across diverse contexts.

Chris Rehs-Dupin – Founder & President, TQAMP

Chris Rehs-Dupin (he/him) is a nationally recognized camp leader, author, and speaker. He founded TQAMP to help camps and youth-serving organizations build cultures of belonging for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and staff. Known for his humor, strategy, and unapologetically bright wardrobe, Chris blends decades of experience in youth development, inclusion, and leadership. His writing appears in Camping Magazine, and his upcoming book,

Impounded: Lessons in Leadership, Humanity, and Holding the Line, expands on his belief that inclusion—like camp—thrives at the intersection of courage, vulnerability, and joy.

Lexi Rolfe – Education Manager, ZooCamp at Zoo New England

Lexi has a combined ten years of experience in the wonderful world of summer camp! She was a Camp Counselor at YMCA's Camp Massapoag from 2016-2018 before spending 2019-2020 at Stone Zoo's ZooCamp! Lexi served as Stone Zoo's Camp Coordinator from 2021-2025 and is now the Education Manger. In her new role, she oversees the Camp Coordinators at both Stone Zoo and Franklin Park Zoo! She is so excited to support two camp sites and watch each one flourish.

Chrissy Schoenberg – Director of Camper Admissions, The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp

Chrissy Schoenberg, M.Ed (she/her) Director of Camper Admissions at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp. Chrissy brings a wealth of knowledge to the Camp Community from working at Hole in the Wall as well as out-of-school-time programs at community centers and children's museums. She is a tech-guru and believes in empowering non-profit leaders to better utilize their database systems to best serve their communities.

Danny Sudman - Executive Director, Green Camps

Danny Sudman is the Founder of Green Camps, a national nonprofit helping camps model sustainability through education, assessment, and certification. A ropes course professional inspector, trainer, and builder, Danny blends his background in team building and experiential education with his expertise in sustainability to create innovative learning experiences. His “Green Team Building” approach helps camps use play to build stronger teams and greener communities.

John Suitor – Director, Camp Timanous

A career educator, John grew up in Raymond, Maine. He has spent 17 summers at Timanous, first as a camper, then as a counselor, and now as Director. Prior to becoming Director at Timanous in 2025, John enjoyed a 30+ year career in independent schools, the last 12 of which he served as Head of School at Boulder Country Day School. John is profoundly optimistic regarding the benefits of summer camp and firmly believes that children of any age have an opportunity to change the world. He and his wife Gail (a champion of neurodiversity) have been married for 34 years and have three daughters, all of whom benefitted from a summer camp experience. John loves the outdoors, travel, and adventure, and is a certified sports nut. He is honored to be a 3rd generation director of Camp Timanous and feels deeply grateful to continue the nearly 90 years of service the Suitor family has devoted to the Timanous community.

Kaomi Joy Taylor – Founder & Chief Namiac, Museum of Names

Kaomi Joy Taylor, MPA is the Founder and Chief Namiac of the Museum of Names. After more than a decade helming teen residential programs for the Governor’s Institutes of Vermont, Kaomi founded the Museum to help people harness the transformative power of names to strengthen community, belonging, and inclusion. Now as a speaker and consultant, she helps educators, camp professionals, and organizational leaders build name-fluent communities that foster belonging and resist bullying. She is also the author of “Fun With

Names", a practical guide on using names for team-building and inclusivity. Kaomi holds a Master's degree and Certificate in Adaptive Leadership from Harvard Kennedy School and is a leadership trainer at the University of VT.

Nicholas Teich – Owner, Fairwinds Camp Consulting

Dr. Nick Teich is an executive coach and consultant for camp directors and owners, helping them with their camp's unique needs and goals. He has been working with camps for over 25 years and was a former longtime residential camp director. Nick is a recent recipient of ACA New England's Peter Kerns Award for the Advancement of Professional Development at camps. Nick is also on the ACA New England Board of Directors. He is a trained social worker and holds a doctorate in social policy. Nick lives in the Boston area with his wife and two kids.

Sidney Tuttle – Education Coordinator & ZooCamp Coordinator, Zoo New England, Franklin Park Zoo

Sidney joined the Zoo New England Education team in March of 2024 and jumped right into her first summer as the Franklin Park ZooCamp Coordinator. Prior to joining the Zoo New England Education team, Sidney spent two years working as an educator for the Museum of Science, Boston before spending four years teaching English in a K-5 Lakota Language Immersion school in Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Sidney has enjoyed watching campers learn in a camp setting and is excited to continue to share a message of conservation and empathy for animals with the children of Boston. She is excited to be back in the city that initially inspired her love of informal education and is excited to continue to learn more about helping campers thrive at camp!

Carly Vargas – Associate Director/Head Counselor, Kamp Kohut

Carly Vargas is the Associate Director and Head Counselor at Kamp Kohut in Oxford, Maine. A passionate educator and leader, Carly is known for her ability to bring warmth, structure, and creativity to every corner of camp life. She oversees camper experience, staff development, and program excellence, helping ensure each summer at Kohut delivers on its 120-year tradition of friendship, growth, and adventure.

Dan Weir – Founder & Senior Consultant, Day Camp Community & Immersive1st

Having visited over 80 camps in action over the past three summers, Dan Weir is obsessed with the influence of leaders at summer camps. He is the co-founder of Day Camp Community, a support network for YMCA Day Camps. As the Senior Consultant for Immersive1st, he specializes in camper recruitment, executive director searches, and strategic planning. With a Master's Degree in youth development, Dan has been recognized for his work in program innovation and research excellence.

Chris Wiley – Executive Director, The Story School

Chris Wiley is a nerd, father, actor, game designer, and camp professional. He honed his skills in education and entertainment, graduating with degrees in Theater and English. Moving to Boston in 2008, Chris worked as a special education teacher, actor, and eventually camp counselor at Wizards & Warriors Camp. Over 16 summers, Chris worked as a counselor, program director, and camp director. He helped transition the programs into a nonprofit, The Story School, in 2013. Three kids and one pandemic later, he is now Executive Director,

launching the new Camp FABLE and Camp Grimoire. These programs transform neurodivergent, LGBTQ+, and nerdy campers into heroes through story-based, immersive, and educational adventures.

Jarod Wunneburger – Camp Consultant, Thrive Point Studio

Jarod Wunneburger (goes by "W") is Owner & Education Consultant at Thrive Point Studio and Assistant Principal in Winooski, Vermont. He presents at conferences on behavior management, coaching systems, & organizational design. Previously served as Director of Programs at Farm & Wilderness Foundation overseeing seven camps and directed Camp Timberlake for five years, significantly increasing staff diversity. Former special education teacher and school administrator in NYC. Has presented at 13 conferences on classroom management, program design, and staff development. His work bridges classroom strategies with camp settings, creating organizational systems. Holds MA degrees in School Leadership from Harvard & Special Education from St. Johns.

CampExpo

120Compressions, Booth: 6

Eric Cantor, 401-526-3360

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Michael Lawton, 800-275-0185
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m.lawton@ppentertainmentgroup.com

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Power Performers Inc., Booth: 30

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Project Adventure, Booth: F

Alex Kramer, 978-524-4500
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info@pa.org

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RadioBoss 2-Way Radios, Booth: 4

Adam Smith, 516-521-7529
28 Baiting Place Road, Farmingdale, NY 11735
adam@radioboss.com

RadioBoss 2-Way Radios is a sales, rental, and service provider for staff communication radios. Free demos available. Additional related systems are radio repeater, base station, callbox, and PA system! www.radioboss.com

Rangeland Communications LLC, Booth: 37

Jake Liebrock, 781-856-5160
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jake@rangelandcomms.com

Rangeland Communications doesn't just sell radios. We solve communication chaos. Leading provider of Motorola, Hytera, RCA & Maxon — full lifecycle support, every step of the way.

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Regpack, Booth: 54

Edgar Carrasco, 619-500-1150
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The Rental Company of NY, Booth: J

Ian Kusinitz, 516-888-3627
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ian@EmpireRAC.com

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S&S Worldwide, Booth: P

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SERO Sailing, Booth: 35

Todd Riccardi, 203-915-9915

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StickersandMore.com, Booth: 44

Toby Hancock, 888-644-7745

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Student Transportation of America – STA, Booth: 2

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Super Bakery, Booth: 51b

Michael Luch, 734-679-7090

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michael.luch@superbakery.com

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Tavezio (formerly H & H Purchasing Services)

Booth: 42

Josh Cohen, 561-444-2521

12012 South Shore, Suite 110, Wellington, FL 33414

josh@tavezio.com

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Thrive Point Studio, Booth: 64

Jarod Wunneburger, 512-660-0071

1329 Cumberland Head Rd, Apt A

Plattsburgh, NY 12901

jarod@thrivepointstudio.com

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Trellis Press, LLC, Booth: Bookstore

Angela Gwizdala, 773-501-4205

angela@trellispress.com

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bookstore.acacamps.org

Trinity/HPSI, Booth: 29

Jarrod Ramsey, 615-672-0229

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jarrod.ramsey@trinity-usa.net

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Ultimate Ninja Course Builders, Booth: 62

Anthony Giallanzo, 516-880-4220

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info@ultimateninjacoursebuilders.com

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UltiPlay Parks & Playgrounds, Booth: 34

Mike Parody, 617-908-7836

43 Main St, Blackstone, MA 01504

mparody@ultiplayus.com

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United Studies, Inc., Booth: 45

Gail Leopold, 501-321-2000

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www.unitedstudies.org

Urban Harbour LLC, Booth: 10

Annie Cooke, 772-713-5433

Hingham, MA

outfitterannie@gmail.com

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Vernon Computer Source, Booth: S

Janette Conlin, 203-295-7626

300 Wilson Ave, Norwalk, CT 06854

jconlin@vernoncomputersource.com

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Julia Elliott, 737-284-9739
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jelliott@allianceabroad.com

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