

## MSC Members Gather at Annual ACA, New England Conference

Opportunities to learn and connect with colleagues throughout the region

In a three-day gathering marked by a vast range of educational sessions, chances to connect and reconnect, a robust Expo, and some dicey weather to wrap things up, MSC was well represented at ACA, New England's annual conference in Manchester, NH on March 21-23.

Participants enjoyed an animated and information-packed keynote address, "Disrupting Burnout," from Dr. Patricia Buckner Jackson, as well as workshops addressing dozens of issues affecting camps and camp professionals. Conference co-chair Terri Mulks, director of Camp Susan Curtis, and Andy Lilienthal, owner/director of Camp Winnebago, both gave presentations at the conference and MSC President Matt Pines brought his therapy dog, Paddington, who provided 90 minutes of calming stress reduction for dozens of conference participants.

Two Maine camp professionals received awards at the conference:

### **Luke Joines, Program Director, YMCA Camp of Maine**

**Community Honor Award:** This award is given for outstanding contributions to organized camping or to ACA, New England. It is presented to individuals, groups or organizations that may or may not be members of ACA to recognize their support of quality camp experiences.

### **Nick Teich, PhD, LCSW, founder and principal, Fairwinds Camp Consulting**

#### **Peter Kerns Award for the Advancement of Professional Development:**

This award is given to an individual, group or organization that has shown extraordinary commitment to the development of camp professionals. This award celebrates the life of Peter Kerns who inspired and challenged us to continually enhance the camp experience for all.

Maine Summer Camps held its semi-annual membership meeting on Friday afternoon, followed by a social hour sponsored by Chalmers Camp Insurance and Norway Savings Bank.

The conference, co-chaired by Terri Mulks, director of Camp Susan Curtis, benefited from the volunteer efforts of many MSC members. In addition to Mulks, Maine was represented on the conference committee by Carly Vargas (Kamp Kohut), Luke Joines (YMCA Camp of Maine), Carissa Chipman (Chalmers



At ACA, New England: from left to right, Page Allie (Fernwood Cove), Carly Vargas (Kamp Kohut), Beigette Gill (Fernwood Cove) and Stevie Faulk (Fernwood Cove). More ACA, New England photos on page 14.

Camp Insurance), Lisa Thatcher (Camp NETOP), and Annie Bowe (Camp O-AT-KA). In addition, many MSC members are active in the New England region. ■

### **MSC members on the ACA, New England Board:**

Heather Plati – Camp O-AT-KA (Vice President)  
Anna Hopkins Buller – Friends Camp (Secretary)  
Garth Altenberg – Camp Timanous (Vice President)  
Jeff Gleason – Y Camp of Maine (Incoming Treasurer)  
Catriona Logan Sangster – Camp Wawenock  
Page Rich – Alford Lake Camp  
Carly Vargas – Kamp Kohut  
Stevie Faulk – Fernwood Cove  
JD Lichtman – Camp Tapawingo

### **EPIC (Emerging Professionals in Camping) New England**

Em Bruce – Camp North Star of Maine  
Stevie Faulk – Fernwood Cove  
Jonathan Caflun – Camp Wekeela  
Carissa Chipman – Chalmers Camp Insurance  
Luke Joines – YMCA Camp of Maine  
Nate Podgajny – Pine Tree Camp

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MSC Historian – Henry Paul Johnson

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Mary Ellen Deschenes, *Emeritus*  
Jack Erler, *Emeritus*  
Lucy J. Norvell, *Maine Summer Camps*



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## MESSAGE FROM THE MSC PRESIDENT

APRIL 2024

*Happy Spring (he writes from a house running on generator power after an ice-storm)...*



*Summer 2024 is almost here. As we clean up winter storm damage, rush construction work to completion, and put the finishing touches on staff training plans, let's take a moment to think about what this summer can mean for our campers and staff.*

*In the wider world, 2024 promises to be a bruising affair: a presidential election, multiple wars, increasing climate instability, and an increasingly toxic digital ecosystem. To live, work and study in 2024 is a LOT, and exacts a toll on every one of our campers and staff.*

*Fortunately, as summer camps we hold forth the opportunity for both a respite, and a fortification, from the corrosive "real world."*

*This summer, "the bubble" that camps create is even more important and allows our camp populations the opportunity to live in the present, forge lasting connections, and find space for reflection and identity. By preserving a "media free" landscape, we help break the cycle of attention-sapping, morale-depleting headlines.*

*Further, and perhaps most importantly, by maintaining our camps as device-free spaces, we give campers (and often staff) the opportunity to have a device-free lived experience, often for the **first** time in their lives, without FOMO or addiction. If you haven't picked up Jon Haidt's new book *The Anxious Generation*, stop reading this and go read that. Then remember that camp directors and staff have known for a really long time what a lot of researchers are just figuring out: **Spending time with peers, in the woods, without phones or screens, for a few weeks at a time, is good for all of us.***

*This is certainly turning out to be a fun, memorable spring.*

*Keep shoveling,*

Matt Pines, MSC Board President, Maine Teen Camp Co-Director

# MYCA UPDATE

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We had a great turnout for the semi-annual membership meeting at the ACA, New England conference on March 22. We outlined several of the items the MYCA board has been working on since our fall 2023 membership meeting, on behalf of all members.

**Click on bold type to access reports.**



- ▶ MERIT resource memo (**The Hall Monitor December 12, 2023**)
- ▶ FAME forgivable loans round 1 & 2: MYCA followed up with the Finance Authority of Maine and were pleased to see several camps receive funding.
- ▶ Webinar presented by Nancy Marcus (Curtis Thaxter) & Newell Augur (Pierce Atwood) on Camper Privacy & Parents Rights. **Contact MSC ED Lucy** if you would like the link to the recording of this helpful webinar.
- ▶ Bills MYCA signed onto, now in appropriations: Maine Trails Bond (possibly on the November ballot) Funding for the prevention of invasive aquatic infestations (LD 2141)
- ▶ Abuse prevention policy compliance, Title 22 (**MYCA special bulletin February 20, 2024**)
- ▶ Boating Laws for Camps 101 resource memo (**The Hall Monitor March 14, 2024**)
- ▶ Supporting Governor Mills' proposed 'Blanket Sale Tax Exemption for Non-Profits'
- ▶ Monitoring the camp insurance landscape, employment bills in the legislature

Also at the semi-annual meeting, Newell Augur (MYCA government relations & lobbyist) gave a thorough (and entertaining) summary of the status of licensed youth camps rules, known as "the 208 rule". Highlights included confirmation that no new rule will be in place for summer 2024 (other than submitting abuse prevention policies under Title 22, which is a legislative mandate) and the legislative committee on Health and Human Services voting unanimously for an emergency resolve requiring the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to withdraw the December 27, 2023 proposed rule. As this Newsletter goes to press, MYCA is still awaiting confirmation that the proposed rule has been withdrawn.

Coming soon, MYCA will be updating you via spring Hall Monitors:

- ▶ Updated COVID-19 isolation guidance
- ▶ New legislation re: wakesurfing requirements (300' from shore, 15' lake depth)
- ▶ Beneficial Ownership memo from Nancy Marcus (Curtis Thaxter)
- ▶ Federal Motor Carrier Safety Act (FMCSA) compliance updated memo
- ▶ Paid Family Medical Leave employer requirements (starts in 2026)
- ▶ MYCA will be hosting a webinar on April 11, 11:00 a.m. "12 Angry Camp Directors." Join us for a review of the regulations, state and federal, which camps must comply with as we continue preparation for our 2024 season.

All of this information and these resources would not be possible without each member of the MYCA Board, the MSC/MYCA legal counsel, and their hard work. And thank you to all of the members and business members of MSC who responded to the Call to Action earlier this winter regarding the proposed 208 rules. Your outreach to DHHS and your representatives made such a tremendous impact on the success of MYCA's work. ■



Laura Ordway  
President MYCA Board  
Winona Camps, [laura@winonacamps.com](mailto:laura@winonacamps.com)

*MYCA (Maine Youth Camp Association) is an affiliated organization to Maine Summer Camps (MSC). MYCA's mission is to monitor, publicly comment and interpret state and federal legislation on behalf of MSC, with the purpose of furthering the welfare of camps in Maine. We maintain relationships with agencies and policy officials for camp advocacy. Additionally, our 501(c)(4) non-profit status allows for limited activities supporting political campaigns. As a member of MSC, your camp is also a member of MYCA. The LDs and laws in rulemaking above have been more thoroughly explained in the most recent Legislative Report which is sent to members prior to the annual and semi-annual membership meetings.*

## Maine Camp History

# Maine Summer Camps Celebrate Greater Than 100 Years

By Henry Paul Johnson, Maine Summer Camp Historian

A huge shoutout to the many children's summer camps that have existed in the State of Maine — some for well in excess of 125 years. Maine summer camps have provided youth (some beginning as young as age 6) the wonderful opportunity to make friends, hone skills, and develop both a sense of independence and the importance of group dynamic, just to name a few of the important components of the Maine camp experience.

We know that summer camps in Maine entered the Maine landscape just prior to the turn of the 20th Century. The **Norway Pines Camp** on Casco Bay was established in 1898; **Pine Island Camp** located on Great Pond was established in 1902; **Kennebec** on Salmon Lake in 1906; **Androscoggin** on Lake Androscoggin in 1906; **Maranacook** in Readfield 1908; **Mowana** on Echo Lake in 1912, **Arcadia** for Boys in North Belgrade in 1913, **Wildemere** on Long Lake in Harrison in 1903, **Wyonee** on Long Lake in Harrison in 1909. **Camp Wyonogonic** according to many accounts is the oldest girls camp in Maine and for several generations has provided the opportunity for girls to “learn about themselves in a non-competitive atmosphere and enjoy the beauty of friendship.”

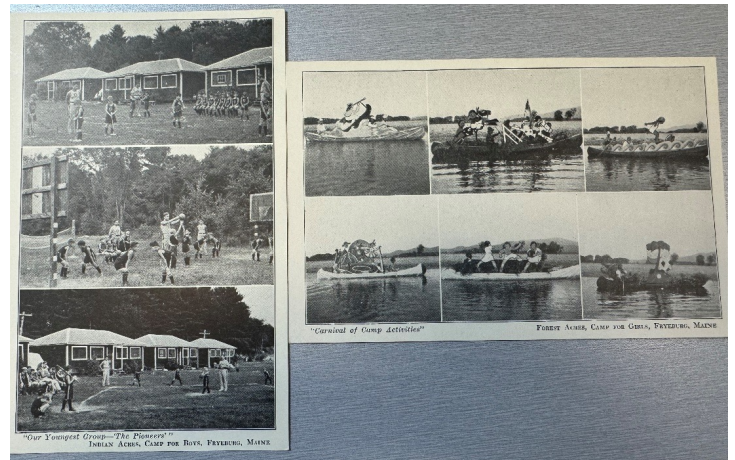
Recently, I had the pleasure of interviewing (via Zoom) the Directors of **Camp Indian Acres** and **Camp Forest Acres** (Richard Krasker, Geoff Newman, and Moe Burness) and Mark Van Winkle, Director of **Wohelo** Camps. Wohelo was initially directed by Charlotte Vetter Gulick and her husband Luther Halsey Gulick and has since been guided generationally by the children, grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren of Dr. Gulick since 1907. Indian Acres and Forest Acres have continuously operated since 1924.

Camps Indian Acres and Forest Acres were founded by Abraham and Gertrude Krasker. Upon the death of Abraham, Abraham and Gertude's son, Dick Krasker assumed directorship of the Camps. Moe Burness, a former camper at Indian Acres has served as a constant at Indian Acres since his years as a camper in the 1960s. Geoff Newman became the Director of the Camps upon Dick Krasker's retirement and has strived to maintain the traditions started by the Krasker family.

The brother-sister feature of Indian Acres and Forest Acres is somewhat unique to the Maine camp setting. The camps are located on separate sites and the boys and girls are, for the most part, separated for daytime activity periods. At night at least “two times” per week according to Moe Burness, there are “age-appropriate co-education activities” among the campers of both camps. The camps further combine each summer to put on a significant theatrical event in which a large number of campers from both camps participate. According to Moe Burness, “Campers are constantly in a single gender learning environment.”

Camp Indian Acres boasts of three waterfronts — the Saco River, a swimming pool for general swim and swim instruction, and a nearby lake for boating and waterski activities. Forest Acres has an extensive horseback riding program where as many as 30 percent of the campers come to ride horseback.

In 2023 Indian Acres hosted its 100-year reunion which was well attended by campers and staff spanning the generations. Dick Krasker reflected during our interview on how much he enjoyed seeing the many campers and staff that came back to camp for the reunion — some of which he recognized and others who had “really changed” since they were campers.



*Pictured above is a series of photographs that was shared by the directors of Indian Acres and Forest Acres, which depict activities from the 1930s and 1940s, generously presented for consideration in this article by Dick Krasker.*

Mark Van Winkle emphasized that throughout the generations, Wohelo Camps have provided a safe environment for girls to “make friends, learn, and have fun.” He explained that Wohelo came to fruition through Maine Camp Pioneer George Meylan who, prior to the founding of Wohelo, operated White Mountain Camp for Boys on property on Sebago Lake which was later sold to Camp Wohelo.

Mark explained that in the Wohelo model, the camp is divided into two camps — Little Wohelo for girls 6 to 12 and Sebago Wohelo for girls 12 to 16. He explained that generally co-educational activities today take place with Camp Timanous which he described as a “brother camp”. During the interview he echoed the spirit of Wohelo — WO (WORK) – HE (HEALTH) – LO (LOVE). “At Wohelo, girls take the cell phones out of their hands, learn independence and reset from the rigors of the outside world.”

In the summer of 2021, Camp Wohelo celebrated “Wohelobration 2021” which according to the publication, Wohelo Bird, the “Wohelobration was a success after being postponed for a year due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.” There, alums began arriving Friday, September 3rd and stayed through Monday, September 6th. Some activities offered at Wohelobration included glass beading, screen printing, nature walks, sailing, water skiing, and wake surfing.

**Camp History** continues on page 5.

## CAMPS THAT HAVE ACHIEVED THE CENTENNIAL MILESTONE

Alford Lake Camp  
Camp Agawam  
Camp Androscoggin  
Camp Arcadia (Camp Arcadia for Girls)  
Camp Caribou  
Camp Chewonki  
Camp Cobbossee  
Camp Fernwood  
Camp Kawanhee  
Camp Kingswood  
Camp Laughing Loon  
Camp Mataponi  
Camp Modin  
Camp Newfound  
Camp O-A-T-KA  
Camp Owatonna  
Camp Pinecliffe  
Camp Runoia  
Camp Tapawingo  
Camp Timanous  
Camp Walden  
Camp Wawenock  
Camp Waziyatah  
Camp Wekeela  
Camp Wigwam  
Camp Winnebago  
Forest Acres Camp for Girls  
Indian Acres Camp for Boys  
Kamp Kohut (at founding, for boys; now coed)  
Medomak Camp (now operating as a family camp)  
Pine Island Camp  
PYC Junior Sailing Program  
Tripp Lake Camp  
West End House Boys Camp  
Winona Camps (Camp Winona for Boys)  
Wohelo – The Luther Gulick Camps  
Wyonegonic Camps (Wyonegonic Camps for Girls)  
YMCA Camp of Maine

\*Camps listed are based upon the known archival history of camps that have been in continuous operation for over 100 years. If anyone reading this article has information to add to or supplement this list, feel free to contact Maine Camp Historian Henry Johnson at [hjohnson@henryjohnsonlaw.com](mailto:hjohnson@henryjohnsonlaw.com).

Camp properties that presently house camps which are different camps than what previously existed on those sites such as Camp Powhatan which is now Seeds of Peace are not included.

**Camp History** *continued from page 4.*

According to Camp Wohelo, Girls Wore Memorabilia of Camping at the Luther Gulick Camps by Charlotte Gulick: “In 1907 Wohelo began. It was founded by a wise and worthy man. He thought perfection would be designed if work, health, and love combined. He had spirit real, a quiet appeal, confidence, and a real ideal. Luther Gulick was the name that began Wohelo’s fame.”

The 1930s began the era at the Luther Gulick Camps when Halsey Gulick and his new bride Dorothy Gulick took over leadership of Big Wohelo, Little Wohelo, and Camp Timanous.” After Dr. Gulick died in 1918, the boys were moved to a new campsite for Camp Timanous. Initially, Charlotte ran the girl’s camp with the assistance of her son.



This article provides a glimpse of the rich and significant history of the many Maine summer camps that have anchored so many summers for campers and staff. Indian Acres, Forest Acres, and Wohelo represent not only the rich history of the Maine Summer Camp tradition but also point to what may be a critical thread of the Maine Summer Camp Experience. When asked by me what Mark, Dick, Geoff, and Moe thought what was the most significant aspect of the Maine camping experience, all replied that it was “the friendships” which are established in the summer camp environment and continue on through the adult lives of so many campers and staff.

It is emphasized that these Maine Summer Camps as exemplified by those featured in this article have provided in the past and presently provide a safe haven for children from not only the United States but from many parts of the world to learn and grow. Moe Burness suggested that the Maine camp experience “gets into your blood.” He could not be more truthful. ■



*This article is written by noted author and Maine Summer Camp Historian, Henry Johnson, who attended Camp Powhatan in Otisfield, Maine from 1966 through 1979 as a camper, counselor, and, ultimately, program director. Mr. Johnson is the author of numerous articles and publications relating to the history of Maine summer camps. If you wish to submit information to Mr. Johnson relating to the history of any Maine summer camp, you may do so at the following email: [hjohnson@henryjohnsonlaw.com](mailto:hjohnson@henryjohnsonlaw.com).*

## DEI Podcast Club Provides Education, Conversation, Action Steps

When staff members at Friends Camp and New England Music Camp start their camp seasons, they will have information at their fingertips designed to maximize the quality of their summer experiences: community culture maps specifying where in their camps' regions staff are likely to feel supported, and where they might feel less so.

The creation of these maps was an action step stemming from the DEI committee's new Podcast Club. The first meeting, held in February, asked participants to listen on their own time to an episode of the Summer Camp Society podcast; they then gathered over Zoom for discussion. DEI Committee member and Podcast Club co-leader Evelyn Kirby, assistant director of Friends Camp, said the episode focused on staff safety at camp, through the lens of race — "how to promote racial diversity, support diverse staff, and develop tools for creating a safe culture."

The creation of a culture map encourages returning staff to "talk about spots they enjoy spending time, feel really safe, and enjoy themselves without awkwardness," Kirby said.

Kirby says the Podcast Club's inaugural gathering brought together a dozen participants, "which allowed for fruitful conversation."

Thea Hollman, director of the New England Music Camp in Sidney, who will lead the second club meeting with Kirby, calls the initiative "a good opportunity for directors and people in the camp community to start having conversations."

"We are all doing a million different things," Hollman said. The podcast project lets the group "zero in on specific topics around DEI."

Like Kirby, Hollman chose to do a culture map following the February podcast discussion, focusing on pointing out places in the community that are LGBTQIA+ supportive. Counselors come "from all over the country" to work in rural Maine, Hollman said, and it is essential that they feel safe.

### Upcoming Discussion on April 30

On April 30 at noon the Podcast Club will discuss an episode from "Code Switch," entitled "A Taste of Freedom," Hollman said. It focuses on Juneteenth and addresses the history of the holiday "with a backdrop talking about food and how food plays a role in identity and culture."

While the episode isn't specific to camp, they said, "we obviously will be able to relate it to what happens at camp."

MSC's commitment to providing educational opportunities for its members is wide-ranging, from webinars to Zoom gatherings to in-person workshops. With the DEI Podcast Club, members have yet another opportunity to experience new resources, participate in valuable discussion, and learn even more from their colleagues. ■



[Click here to register for the DEI Podcast Club meeting](#)

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# Winter Workshop Speaker Addresses Generational Differences

## Meagan Johnson Presents “Zap the Generational Gap” in January Program

In a presentation exploring how camps can connect across generations, generational expert Meagan Johnson led an informative, enthusiastic, and interactive three-hour program at this year’s Winter Workshop and Business Networking Extravaganza on January 24, 2024.

With nearly 100 camp professionals in attendance, the workshop offered both an in-depth look at the generations — ranging from Traditionals to Generation Z — as well as an opportunity to explore how camp leaders can facilitate bridging those generations to provide the best experience for staff and campers alike. Johnson’s animated and humorous approach offered extensive information, plus a number of case studies for discussion.

Education Committee Chair Karen Malm says that camps struggle with generational differences and that Johnson’s presentation was “very specific to camps.”

“The scenarios she created for us were based on conversations with representatives from different generations working at Maine camps,” she said. “It allowed us to talk in small groups and gave the chance to socialize and to brainstorm the generational perspective,” relevant to the case studies.

“She took a lot of time with us,” Malm said. “She was definitely committed to us as an organization.”

### An Overview of Generations

Johnson began the workshop by encouraging participants to brainstorm the pros and cons of both older, more “seasoned” generations, such as Baby Boomers, and younger generations such as Gen Z, all of which are represented at Maine youth camps. Workshop attendees offered extensive examples of the qualities of Baby Boomers at camp including work initiative, resilience, calm, willingness to put in long hours and wisdom and historical knowledge. They cited resistance to change, including technological advances, as well as a “suck it up” approach to mental health issues and “non-direct” communication styles as frustrating characteristics of older camp professionals.

Praise for younger camp staff members included their energy, openness to diversity, honesty and vulnerability, technological savvy, self-advocacy, good boundaries and ability to connect with campers. Workshop participants suggested that the frustrations presented by younger members of camp staff communities included their limited practical experience, lack of commitment and inability to take initiative, lack of resilience, resistance to communication via phone call and reliance on technology.

Generations do have some stereotypes attached to them, Johnson said, such as Gen X “gold collar” workers and Millennials’ “me, me, me” reputation. But generational signposts continue to change, and members of different generations have “different expectations of how the world will communicate,” she said.



*Camp professionals enjoy a small-group discussion at the annual Winter Workshop in January.*

Johnson presented detailed descriptions of Baby Boomers through Gen Z, soliciting input from workshop participants throughout. The Baby Boomer generation, 72 million individuals born between 1946 and 1964, prioritize education, for example, but can be less technologically capable.

***But generational signposts continue to change, and members of different generations have “different expectations of how the world will communicate,” said Johnson.***

Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, is known for its independence, Johnson said. Part of what characterizes this generation is Gen Xers’ expectation of “an experience beyond money.” Raised on Sesame Street (which aired beginning in 1968), Gen X represents the “latchkey” generation. Millennials, on the other hand, born between 1981 and 1996, tended to have much more involved parents. Millennials represent 40 percent of the workforce, Johnson said, and have tended to “crush the corporate ladder,” replacing it with a “lattice.”

Johnson said it is a myth that “millennials want to be thanked for showing up.” After all, she reminded the audience, “all generations like to be thanked.” It is true, however, that millennials tend to seek more feedback than some other generations. Johnson said that while older generations often subscribe to the “no news is good news” philosophy, millennials want to “connect more” and like to know how they are doing on the job, she said.

The last generation Johnson discussed was Gen Z, those born between 1997 and 2012. This is the “digital generation,” but are “not just like millennials,” she said. One characteristic of Gen Z is their expectation of mental health support, Johnson said. This can be observed among camp staff from this generation.

*Winter Workshop continues on page 8.*

Winter Workshop continued from page 7.

## Case Studies for Small-Group Discussion

Johnson presented the tailor-made case studies so that workshop participants could better see just how generational differences can play out at camp. Ranging from counselors struggling to adjust to a romantic relationship between two counselors to the fallout of a staff training deficiency, each example gave workshop participants the chance to offer their take on how to problem-solve, bearing in mind different generational approaches.

Two scenarios described inexperienced female counselors facing adjustment challenges. In the first, a counselor has trouble making connections; she didn't attend the camp where she works, and she has never been a counselor before. Her discomfort makes her consider leaving camp. Ideas for supporting her included providing mental health resources, offering check-ins and feedback for her, and also considering the benefits of being "proactive," by front-loading in the pre-camp employment interview the challenges she was going to face. A more "reactive" response would be pairing the counselor with a peer mentor and offering her responsibility for a task. Campers would then see her in an important role, which could give her a boost.

Another scenario involved an underage counselor who acknowledges managing her significant anxiety challenges by drinking alcohol. As some workshop participants pointed out, this underage drinking could warrant immediate dismissal from camp.

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But there is also the question of what triggered the additional anxiety. The situation warrants "compassion, but boundaries," one audience member pointed out. "More and more we have to care for counselors."

What happens when two co-counselors develop a romantic relationship? This was the crux of a case study in which a third counselor feels excluded and also presents the question of whether campers are being affected by this new relationship. The fact that a young camper notices this relationship is problematic and warrants having a conversation with all the campers, one participant pointed out. Another participant recommended separating the counselors, emphasizing out the distinction between personal and professional roles. "Camp is for campers," above all, she said.

Finally, the group discussed a situation in which an inexperienced and insufficiently trained 22-year-old is hired as a unit head, a leadership error that impacts the whole unit. "Leadership needs to own its mistake," one workshop attendee said. Coaching the young staff member would be vital, as would thanking the counseling staff for their role in helping to address the situation.

As MSC members move into summer, generational differences among staff will be a reality leadership must confront. The "energetic and engaging" presentation offered practical issues, Malm said, and participants "took away the thought processes involved with addressing issues." ■

## Welcome New **CAMP** Members

### ■ Camp Tracy

At Camp Tracy, our 32-acre facility on the waterfront of McGrath Pond in Oakland provides the traditional Maine Summer Camp experience, where the spirit of adventure meets the joys of friendship in the great outdoors. Camp Tracy is also home to Maine's Fenway a 2/3 scale turfed MLB replica of Fenway Park in Boston. With a unique blend of day camps, residential sports camps, sports tournaments, team-building retreats, and special events; Camp Tracy is truly a one-of-a-kind facility. The AYCC is proud to offer multiple camp options this summer. Campers will receive unforgettable summer experiences filled with laughter, exploration, and personal growth.

[camps@clubaycc.org](mailto:camps@clubaycc.org) (207) 873-0684  
[www.clubaycc.org/programs/camp-tracy](http://www.clubaycc.org/programs/camp-tracy)

### ■ Dragon's Eye Adventures

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[www.dragonseyeadventures.com](http://www.dragonseyeadventures.com)



# Business Networking Extravaganza: “Perhaps the best event ever!”

Fifty-five vendors share their products and knowledge



**“It was perhaps the best event ever.”** And, Business and Membership Development Committee Chair Arleen Shepherd added, “a huge number” of returnees to the Business Networking Extravaganza are expected in 2025.

The Extravaganza, which brought together 55 vendors and the nearly 100 camp professionals who attended the morning Winter Workshop, was held January 24 at the Doubletree by Hilton in South Portland.

“It’s the best bang for your marketing buck,” Shepherd said. Returning vendors were able to “solidify relationships” with camp personnel, while new vendors made new connections.

***“We didn’t have a presence in New England until about eight years ago. Between [the Extravaganza] and ACA, New England, our business has just launched.”***

One of those vendors is stickersandmore.com. Company owner Toby Hancock says the business has come to Maine for the Extravaganza with great results. “We didn’t have a presence in New England until about eight years ago,” he said. “Between [the Extravaganza] and ACA, New England, our business has just launched.”

One of the event’s greatest advantages is the time it offers vendors for “face-to-face interaction with potential customers,” she said.



**Lynn O'Donnell (Junior Maine Guide leadership team member) and Bob Myron (Outdoor Leader Trainers of America) catch up at the Business Networking Extravaganza in January.**

The opportunity for camp professionals to go “table-to-table,” Shepherd added, “encourages camp directors to learn something they didn’t know and learn about what [vendors] have to offer.”



**Guitar winner Betsy Brown (West End House Girls Camp) celebrates with Toby Hancock of stickersandmore.com at the Extravaganza.**

The event’s new venue was “comfortable and convenient,” Shepherd said, particularly for those who had to travel long distances for the event.

The Business Networking Extravaganza included a 16-item raffle, culminating in the grand prize drawing for a two-night stay at The Inn at Ocean’s Edge in Lincolnville, donated by the Migis Lodge, a long-time and generous supporter of MSC. The winner of the prize was Garth Altenburg of Camp Timanous. “I am so appreciative!” he said.



**Becky Alford, Kelly Alford and Laura Jo Cunningham of Kingsley Pines enjoy lunch at the Extravaganza.**

The Extravaganza was a hit,” Shepherd said, adding that the spirit of the afternoon was “very upbeat, warm and friendly.” The value of the event is great, she said, “as proven by the same vendors who return year after year.”

The day, from the morning workshop to the afternoon networking event, brought together MSC members — both camps and businesses — for the opportunity to learn, explore purchasing options, and experience all the benefits of an in-person gathering. ■



“We have a massive opportunity to promote our jobs on the [MSC] Job Board,” said Dave Schiff, co-owner of Camp Manitou and chair of the MSC ad hoc staffing committee. “AMSkier is really generous,” in sponsoring the board, he said. “Whatever we can do to make sure all opportunities are posted there is great.”

AMSkier Insurance’s sponsorship of the board means all MSC member camps can post jobs on the job board free of charge. And the fact that the jobs auto-post to the Maine Tourism Association’s job board and are shared with MSC contacts at Sunday River and Sugarloaf means a wide range of individuals see the postings, Schiff said. “It’s something we really value.” In fact, he added, camps can even post with summer 2025 in mind, “to start to plant the seed.”

The job board sponsorship is one of several staffing initiatives that benefit MSC members. Schiff’s involvement with camp staffing issues extends to the national ACA level, where he is part of the Project Real Job initiative. Now he leads the MSC ad hoc staffing committee, which has undertaken a broad range of efforts to support both camps and the young adults seeking to work at them.

## Camp-to-Camp Referral Form

In addition to the AMSkier sponsorship, MSC camps stand to benefit from the creation of a camp-to-camp referral tool, a spreadsheet that allows camps to share information among themselves about qualified job candidates they are unable to hire. As an example, Schiff said if Camp Manitou, a boys camp, has no available position for a female candidate, he can post her information on the spreadsheet so that other interested camps can contact her.

“It was launched last year and hopefully this season it will continue to evolve,” Schiff said of the resource. “The more word we spread and the more we use it and are willing to collaborate,” the more successful the resource will be, he said. **(For information about the spreadsheet, contact Raine at the MSC office).**

## Hiring Fair Slated for April 24 at the University of Maine Farmington

Other staffing initiatives include the revamped and renamed MSC Hiring Fair, which will take place on April 24 at the University of Maine at Farmington. While the fair has been held for many years, it is evolving in hopes of drawing more interested students. Schiff said that a food truck, lawn games and music at the event will help in “building an atmosphere that camp is not a typical summer job.” The jobs don’t just include “front-line” positions such as counselors, he said, adding that every camp position offers a chance to be a member of a camp community, Schiff said.

Matt Pines, co-director of Maine Teen Camp in Porter, has been instrumental in planning the hiring fair. Scheduled for April 24 at the University of Maine Farmington, the fair will run from 12:30 - 2 pm and for the second consecutive year will be held outside to maximize exposure to students.

“When it was inside, it was hard,” Pines said. “Everyone was strung out and there was an ancillary room. One, it didn’t feel like a community event, it just felt like a bunch of random camps. Two, we are camps. If anyone is like ‘let’s brave the elements and get outside,’ it’s us. So, it feels more authentic.”

Pine said the outdoor setting feels more like a “communal space,” where camp representatives can gather and talk with one another. In addition, potential applicants can benefit from the collegial spirit of participating camps who are willing to refer applicants to camps which are the best fit for their skills and interests.

The event will include a food truck, some popular camp games like cornhole, and, according to Pines, might even offer a firepit with s’mores-making. Schiff says the atmosphere will provide a sense of how it feels to work at a camp environment. And it’s something camp leaders are perfectly suited to.

“If camp directors can’t figure out how to put on a job fair, probably no one can,” Pines said.

Pines says he hopes the fair enables participating camps to find summer staff and that it allows MSC and the University of Maine, Farmington to strengthen their ties.

“They have amazing students with lots of majors. It should be a good fit for summer camps and students to get relevant work experience to help advance their careers. And there are lots of reasons for MSC to further strengthen those bonds,” he said. “We need to keep showing up and making those connections.” ■



## Looking for Summer Staff?

Join MSC at the **University of Maine Farmington on April 24 from 12:30 to 2 pm** to connect with students who might offer just what you need this summer. Food truck, lawn games, music and a chance to share why YOUR camp might be the perfect place for students to gain experience, make new friends, and live in a true community. If you’ve filled your positions, join us with 2025 in mind!

Registration is \$145 per camp (\$110 for nonprofits).

For more information and to register, contact Raine (office@MaineCamps.org) or click on the arrow below.

We look forward to seeing you in Farmington!



[Click here to register for the April 24 Job Fair.](#)

# Welcome New **BUSINESS** Members

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## ■ SP+ TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

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Logos for Camp Matoaka, Camp Tapawingo, Somerset, and others are visible on the stickers.

## Level Ground Initiative Gearing Up for Summer 2024 with Additional Collaborators

New camps, new community partners and the same energy and enthusiasm on the part of both mark preparations for the Level Ground Initiative’s summer season.

Registrations are underway and, thanks to successful experiences, nearly every 2023 Level Ground camper will return to camp this season – in several cases with the addition of younger siblings.

The Initiative was founded in 2018 to offer tuition-free camp experiences for youngsters from Maine’s immigrant and refugee communities who otherwise would be unable to attend camp. In 2024, 16 camps have offered space for such campers and the number of community partners identifying and placing campers also continues to grow.

Mike Douglass, director of Camp Bishopswood, has welcomed Level Ground campers since the Initiative’s inaugural year. At that time, Douglass says the climate in Maine was “a bit more toxic” for immigrants and refugees. “We did it because we believe all kids should get a summer camp experience and we knew not only would a LG camper benefit from a Bishopswood experience, but we also knew there was a lot that campers would bring to our community.”

Camille Ridge Naldini, the youth development and experience director at Agassiz Village, another participating camp, wrote in an email that welcoming Level Ground campers was an “easy decision.” The children and families that Level Ground serves “have historically suffered from an opportunity gap,” Naldini wrote. Providing a camp experience “aligns with Agassiz’s mission.”

Agassiz Village is currently slated to host 14 Level Ground campers this summer, “and would love to support more,” Naldini wrote. “We believe that our participation in the Level Ground Initiative perfectly reflects the mission of Agassiz Village: provide a nurturing and supportive community that welcomes all and assists in developing each child’s personal vision so they can shape the direction of their journey.” And part of that experience means campers can “meet new friends and benefit from caring counselors who, in many cases, walked in their shoes.”

Douglass wrote in an email that the experience of Level Ground campers “is very similar to all kids who come to camp.”

“They love meeting new people, doing all the fun camp activities, and returning summer after summer catching up with their new friends,” he wrote.

When a CIT — who first attended Bishopswood as a Level Ground camper — climbed Mt. Katahdin last summer, Douglass says the individual reported that “I didn’t think I was going to enjoy this, but seeing the view from the top was life-changing.”

Whether it is climbing Katahdin, ascending a climbing wall, or simply having a secure place to play and have fun, Level Ground campers do have life-changing experiences. MSC looks forward making more and more of them possible. ■



*The American Camp Association extended a Special Recognition to Maine Summer Camps Indigenous Neighbors Working Group for Outstanding Service to Organized Camping at the national ACA Conference in New Orleans in February. Pictured left to right are working group members who accepted the award: Andy Lilienthal, Owner/Director of Camp Winnebago, Fritz Seving, Director Emeritus of Camp Fernwood, Lucy Norvell, Executive Director of Maine Summer Camps, and Mark Van Winkle, Owner/Director of Sebago Wohelo.*

## Support from Three ACAs!

One year ago at this time, MSC launched the Indigenous Awareness Assessment (IAA) tool on a new webpage built especially to hold the newly-developed assessment tool as well as related resources.

### Indigenous Peoples: Understanding and Resources – Maine Summer Camps ([mainecamps.org](http://mainecamps.org))



This part of the MSC website has continued to change as the tool is further developed and as new resources are added. Maine Summer Camps is grateful to three major supporters of Indigenous Neighbors Working Group initiatives: the national American Camp Association and two of its regional affiliates—ACA New England, and ACA New York/New Jersey.

With powerful platforms to share the IAA and related resources that are aggregated here in Maine, **ACA, Inc.**, **ACA New**

**England**, and **ACA New York/New Jersey** are creating access to very important resources designed to help camps across New England, the northeast, and around the nation take steps to stop Indigenous cultural appropriation at summer camp.

All three also offered sessions on the topic of Indigenous appropriation at their recent professional conferences in February and March in New Orleans, LA, Atlantic City, NJ, and Manchester, NH. Many thanks to all our ACA colleagues for their ongoing support! ■

# The MSC Nonprofit Circle: Offering Connection and Support on Shared Nonprofit Concerns

One of the hallmarks of Maine Summer Camps is the spirit of collegiality and connection among its members. There is an abundance of examples, from committee work to in-person gatherings to informal communication among camp professionals seeking insights on particular issues. One forum for such interaction is the Nonprofit Circle, where directors of MSC nonprofit camps can share ideas, talk about common concerns, and seek support from one another.

Norm Thombs, long-time executive director of Camp Mechuwana in Winthrop, says the group came together after long-time conversations among Terri Mulks, director of Camp Susan Curtis and Dawn Willard-Robinson, director of Pine Tree Camp.

“It’s something we talked about on and off for many years,” Thombs said. More and more young camp directors have expressed the need for support, and while camps have been “unofficially getting together for years,” he said, the organized group has come together monthly for almost two years.

Terri Mulks says the group first gathered informally prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. “A small group of us was just talking all the time because the challenges we were running into were more unique to nonprofit, short session camps and the kids we were serving,” she said.

And when COVID-19 came along, the group began to rely on each other more than ever. Mulks said the realities of the pandemic set nonprofit camps apart from longer session camps both because of the impact of regulations and protocols around the illness as well as the availability of resources required to address COVID-related challenges.

“Then Norm said as we were getting out of COVID, ‘this group has a lot of value; we need to keep going,’” Mulks said.

“It is working; it’s growing,” Thombs said. “We consistently have between 20-25 camps at meetings, sometimes more. What I’ve heard personally is that it’s become very important to them personally and professionally to know this group is out there.”

Thombs says there are problems unique to nonprofit camps, including the challenge of fundraising and a common commitment to making camp possible for children even for families who “call and say, ‘we don’t have money.’ We get you to camp,” he said.

Thombs is quick to praise MYCA President Laura Ordway and MSC Executive Director Lucy Norvell for seeking nonprofit representation in decision-making, “They go out of their way.”

MSC Nonprofit Circle continues on page 14.



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**MSC Nonprofit Circle** *continued from page 13.*

The group meets monthly on Zoom. “We just have an open agenda,” said Mulks. “We share information about training, grants, anything like that.”

The group also stays in touch between meetings, she says. For example, recent email exchanges among group members have addressed the challenges of the state’s requirement that camps submit child abuse prevention policies. They have also discussed the complexities of suicidal ideation among campers.

The Nonprofit Circle will take their efforts to the next level on April 10 when they hold an in-person gathering at Camp Mechuwana, what Thombs calls “an extension of the monthly meeting.” While last year’s planned gathering was cancelled due to snow, organizers are hoping the spring date will pose no weather challenges.

“We have had an incredible amount of sharing, and we want to keep that going,” he said. “The main objective is to get everyone together and continue the incredible sharing.”

Mulks agrees. “It came out of the fact that we are spending a lot of time on Zoom. It will be nice to see each other in person; we can dig deeper with stuff we are talking about on Zoom. We will see each other and then send each other off into a really good summer.”

Planning discussions focus on a number of topics particularly relevant to group participants, including budgeting and fundraising, self-care and issues related to burnout. In addition, the group will dedicate time to icebreakers, taking advantage of the in-person setting.

Mulks credits Thombs with much of the Nonprofit Circle’s success. “He’s so passionate about the work he does, so willing to host us and feed us and do what we need to make it happen. I’m really, really grateful.”

And it works for Thombs, too. “For me it’s helpful,” Thombs said. With a 36-year career in camping, “having the feeling that I’m helping the next generation of camp leaders is great.” ■

## Are you a Maine Nonprofit Camp?

Looking for information, guidance and connection with your fellow nonprofit camp professionals?

**Nonprofit Circle In-Person Meeting**  
Wednesday, April 10, 10am - 1:45pm  
2 - 3 pm Tour & Rentals Discussion (optional)  
Camp Mechuwana, Winthrop, ME  
No cost to attend; lunch is included

*Especially for professionals from small, short-session nonprofit camps! Topics include: Self-Care, Creative Budgeting, & Delegation/Passing on Knowledge*



Click here to register for April 10 meeting

## MSC at ACA, New England



*Lisa Tripler (Kamp Kohut) and Kathy Jonas and Marnie Cerrato (Camp Walden) at the Maine Social at the ACA, New England conference.*



*Katie Williams and Melody Larson of Wolfe’s Neck Center for Agriculture & the Environment.*



*Camp Wigwam’s Cameron McAllister, Neal Goldberg and Bobby Strauss.*



*Therapy dog Paddington and his owner, MSC President Matt Pines were a hit at ACA, New England. Pictured are Paddington and some new friends.*



# NEWS

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## Advertise in the online MSC quarterly newsletter!

MSC quarterly newsletters are published and distributed as an e-newsletter to all member camps along with their senior staff, to all business members and to any individuals who have requested to be on our mailing list.

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### AD SUBMISSION DEADLINES

June (Summer 2024 edition) – **May 20, 2024**

October (Fall 2024 edition) – **September 16, 2024**

January (Winter 2025 edition) – **December 13, 2024**

April (Spring 2025 edition) – **March 21, 2025**

June (Summer 2025 edition) – **May, 27, 2025**

### QUESTIONS?

Call the MSC office at 207-518-9557 or send an email: [camps@mainecamps.org](mailto:camps@mainecamps.org)

## CISA 101: Emergency Preparedness and Kinetic Threat

Thursday, April 25, 2024, via Zoom, 10am - 12pm

90-minute Workshop & 30-minute Q & A

Dust off your emergency plans and join us for our first workshop with presenters from the federal Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency, who specialize in protecting Maine. Learn about the extensive free resources provided by CISA, online and in-person — especially the ones most relevant to camp pros — and take the opportunity to update your emergency plans based on the most recent advice and best practices for facing a kinetic threat in the unique outdoor setting of summer camp.



Click here to register for April 25 Zoom



Mark your calendar!

## Upcoming Events

#### Wednesday, April 10

Nonprofit Circle In-Person Meeting, Camp Mechuwana, Winthrop, 10am - 1:45pm

#### Thursday, April 11

"12 Angry Camp Directors" via Zoom, 11am - 12 pm

#### Friday, April 12

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10am - 12pm

#### Wednesday, April 24

MSC Hiring Fair, UMaine Farmington, 12:30 - 2pm

#### Thursday April 25

CISA 101: Emergency Preparedness & Kinetic Threat Prevention, via Zoom, 10am - 12pm

#### Tuesday, April 30

DEI Podcast Club: Juneteenth, via Zoom, 12 - 1pm

#### Wednesday, May 1

Virtual MSC Board Meeting, 1 - 3pm

#### Tuesday, May 7

A Casual Conversation About Difficult Conversations at Camp, via Zoom, 12 - 1pm

#### Wednesday, May 15

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10am - 12pm

#### Monday – Friday, July 22-26

Junior Maine Guide Testing Camp, Stephen Phillips Memorial Preserve, Oquossoc

#### Wednesday, September 25

MSC Migis Lodge Event