

## Winter Educational Workshop to Provide Information and Hope as Camps Consider Climate Change Impacts

January 29 program to be followed by annual Business Networking Extravaganza

When MSC members come together for this January's Winter Workshop they will have the unique opportunity to learn about the impact of climate change on summer camps from three experts' perspectives. **Karen Malm**, MSC's Education Committee chair, says this focus on the "multi-faceted impact of climate change" is intended to offer a broad range of information, the opportunity for smaller group conversations about topics of interest, and practical solutions for camps to consider in planning for summer 2025 and ahead. It will also include a message of hope, Malm says.

"We don't want people to come away with doom and gloom," Malm said.

"I hope to convey that this winter workshop is innovative in its format and approach," Malm said in an email summarizing the event. "I would like potential attendees to be excited about the workshop topic, the variety of modalities for learning and transferring that learning into clear action plans, and the opportunities to connect and collaborate with colleagues."

Each speaker comes to the workshop with a different area of expertise related to the effects of climate change. **Dr. Casey Ivanovich** is a post-doctoral fellow and climate scientist at the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and has previously presented a camp-centered climate change workshop.

The other two presenters are Maine-based. **Shane Duigan** is a district forester for the Maine Forest Service. His role includes providing technical assistance and educational services to a variety of stakeholders, including landowners, loggers, educational institutions, and municipalities. The third presenter is **Colin Holme**, executive director of the Lakes Environmental Association, whose mission is "to preserve and restore the exceptional water quality of Maine's lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, and wetlands and the integrity of their watersheds."

Malm said the workshop's broad range of offerings will include opportunities to:

- ▶ learn from climate change experts from a global and local perspective

- ▶ listen/share/brainstorm (and connect) with other camp professionals
- ▶ pose questions to the experts about your camps' specific challenges caused by climate change
- ▶ formulate practical takeaways that can be applied to your facilities and programs in the near term and in future planning
- ▶ be reminded that camp professionals are problem-solvers with the opportunity to educate campers and staff who can share that knowledge within their communities around the country and the world

"I think the set-up [of the Winter Workshop] will be exciting for folks," Malm said. Each presenter will speak to the gathering and

**Winter Educational Workshop** continues on page 5

### Get Ready for the Business Networking Extravaganza!

Dozens of vendors, plus prizes and raffle on January 29, 12:45-2:45p.m.



*Katherine Henderson Fritts and Louise Fritts Johnson (Camp Arcadia) chat with Nick Teich (Fairwinds Camp Consulting, LLC) at the 2024 Business Networking Extravaganza.*

**For details, see story on page 5**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MSC PRESIDENT

### JANUARY 2025

### Happy 2025!

*Here's hoping for a...less interesting... year for once.*



*While we collectively try to figure out where the months since last summer went, I know we are all neck deep in ongoing prep for summer 2025. I wish I had a crystal ball to predict what this year will bring, or at least some wisdom to share, but lacking in both, here are three pep talks for the new year.*

*Above all, please know that the work you do for kids and young people is profoundly important. Camps are preserves of the last device-free, playful, in-person experiences available to kids in 2025. Such experiences are the most beneficial for social, physical and mental health.*

*Similarly, remember that the staff you're training are the next generation of teachers, caregivers and leaders for our communities and country. Summer camps provide the best career training for the widest range of careers. Regardless of whether they are destined for engineering or education, accounting or acting, banking or cardiology, your staff are gaining skills that will advance their careers and make them better leaders in every sector and community.*

*Finally, keep in mind that we're all in this together. Being a camp professional is not exactly common in the wider world, and it can often feel like friends and neighbors have no idea what you do. Remember that you have an incredible community of peers in Maine Summer Camps who "get it." Time spent engaging with them is always well spent. Reach out early and often to share your concerns, triumphs, and everything in between.*

### 2025. Bring it on!

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

# MYCA UPDATE

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**2024** was filled with A LOT of newly implemented laws and regulations. In the past 12 months MYCA, along with our attorneys at Curtis Thaxter and government relations attorney at Pierce Atwood, Newell Augur, have published memos in the Hall Monitor and outsourced webinar information for the following:



- ▶ **MERIT** - Maine's retirement savings law
- ▶ **Beneficial Ownership** – new Federal filing requirement (injunction may halt need to comply)
- ▶ **Increased Salary Threshold for Exempt Workers** (law blocked by Federal court)
- ▶ **Maine's new Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) payroll tax/“contribution”**

Additionally, the MYCA Board has spent the past year on MSC members' behalf engaged with our licensing department - Health Inspection Program "HIP" & Maine CDC. In late December, MYCA completed the final of three stakeholder meetings (and many, many drafts exchanged) of the proposed Youth Camps' licensing "Chapter 208 rule" (the first substantial update of our licensing rules since 2007). Overall, this was beneficial and Maine camps will have much safer and workable licensing rule due to the time MYCA and HIP/CDC representatives invested in this process.

The proposed final draft of the Chapter 208 rule will be published in January with a public hearing to follow shortly thereafter. **Promulgation of the rule will not be completed until late spring, but HIP/CDC's intent is clear: Maine youth camps will be required to comply with this new rule for operating season 2025.** There are some significant changes to the rule, so once MYCA has the final draft in hand, we will be hosting a webinar to help MSC membership get ready for summer. Stay tuned.

Every fall and spring, the MYCA Board president and MSC Executive Director meet with HIP representatives to review the past summer of health inspections. At the November 19th meeting, HIP stated they were pleased with camps' compliance with submitting abuse prevention policies, and they hope to have this process as part of (not separate from) online licensing renewal for 2025. MYCA expressed concerns regarding the Children's Licensing Referrals process, explaining camps have no recourse with accusations, which could be false or inaccurate. In another agenda item, HIP stated that some camps do not understand when they need to have a Eating & Lodging license (for operations outside of a camp's 'youth camp' dates). MYCA requested a summary memo from HIP regarding this issue, as it seems to be clear to our regulators but less clear for camp owners.

At the end of February, MYCA will be hosting a reception for legislators at the Maine State House. This is an every-other-year event where MYCA invites a handful of member camps to represent all camps at the Hall of Flags by speaking about the benefits of youth summer camping in Maine. "The best time to make friends is when you don't need them."

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. If applicable, any LDs and laws in rulemaking outlined above have been more thoroughly explained in a Legislative Report which is sent to MSC members prior to the annual and semi-annual membership meetings, or in the MYCA Moment section of The Hall Monitor.*

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## Maine Camp History

# Camp Zakelo & Long Lake Lodge

By Henry Paul Johnson, Maine Summer Camp Historian

**Camp Zakelo** was founded in 1928, and by all accounts, operated continuously for 43 years on Long Lake. The camp was founded by Isadore Zarakov and was a boutique camp for boys between the ages of 6 and 15.

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Camp Zakelo was located, at least in part, on Zakelo island which is on the Northern end of Long Lake. Zarakov, with the assistance of his wife Lillian, created a “strong healthy environment” for their campers and offered some unusual land and water camping activities. There, unlike many camps, boys could spend their time playing in an orchestra, working on a newspaper, producing and performing plays in a theater, learning astronomy, racing in four-man and eight-man sculls and learning foreign languages (including Spanish and French).

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Zakelo did not forget its commitment to land sports. Zakelo, during its operation, was a frequent participant in the Camp Powhatan for Boys invitational Tennis Tournament, as well as an occasional participant in the Camp Cedar Invitational Basketball Tournament. Isadore Zarakov was known for having a most distinguished and divergent undergraduate athletic career at Harvard.

**Long Lake Lodge** was established in 1902 on the shores of Long Lake in Bridgton. Records show that Long Lake Lodge remained in existence until at least the summer of 1985. Long Lake Lodge was a coeducational summer school that according to one of its publications existed to “serve the student”. The Lodge attempted to provide the opportunity for its students to acquire certain knowledge and ideas that would help them meet the challenges of the future. There, the students/campers attended small classes and study periods from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Extra help was provided on an as needed basis from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. Afternoons were used as free time to participate in a variety of camp activities including swimming and field sports. There was a compulsory evening study hall from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

**Long Lake Lodge was established in 1902 on the shores of Long Lake in Bridgton. The Lodge philosophy was to provide the students/campers the opportunity to make new acquaintances and get to know, understand and explore uncommon things together with other students.**

Students/Campers had the opportunity during the weekends to engage in canoe trips and mountain climbing trips. The Lodge philosophy was to provide the students/campers the opportunity to make new acquaintances and get to know, understand and explore uncommon things together with other students. There was also an athletic director at the Lodge who organized team sports in baseball, basketball, tennis and soccer. The teams competed with neighboring summer camps on an average of twice a week. Students/campers at the Lodge also engaged in such activities as table tennis, outdoor tennis, horseshoes, golf and horseback riding, as well as excursions out of the camp for rock concerts, summer stock theater, movies and visiting historical sites. ■

*This article was first published in the Winter 2019 MSC Newsletter.*



*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).*

## Business Networking Extravaganza Coming Soon!

The annual **Business Networking Extravaganza** will once again take place following the January 29 Winter Workshop, complete with lunch, “show specials” and the “MSC Mega Raffle.” The Extravaganza will run 12:45 - 2:45 p.m.

MSC members, following the Winter Workshop, will have the opportunity to visit and have face-to-face conversations with each vendor. The Mega Raffle will take place at 2:45 p.m. MSC camp members must be present to win any prize!

### Thank you to our Business Networking Extravaganza Sponsors

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## Winter Educational Workshop *continued from page 1*



*Scott Malm (Migis Hotel Group), Rich Deering (Birch Rock Camp) and Karen Malm (Camp Agawam and MSC Education Committee chair) had a chance to catch up at the 2024 Winter Workshop.*

then serve together on a panel for Q & A time. Following that time, Malm said, the workshop participants will be able to move into smaller breakout rooms.

“Camp professionals can see how [climate change] impacts their own camps and can put together some practical takeaways,” Malm said. The workshop will conclude with a wrap-up from Dr. Ivanovich, who will offer hopeful words about the issues of climate change and camps.

### **The Education Committee also wants to broaden attendance at the workshop, including representatives of camp facilities staff, programming, and trip programs.**

Malm said the Education Committee hopes that with the information participants gather from the workshop they can “take back to camps practical solutions,” on issues such as strategic planning, facilities management, and programming, all “with health and wellness on the forefront.”

The planning for the workshop has gone well, Malm said. “I can’t say enough good things about the folks on the Education Committee. I’m impressed with their willingness to jump in, take the reins, and run with something.”

The Education Committee also wants to broaden attendance at the workshop, including representatives of camp facilities staff, programming, and trip programs. Younger camp professionals from these areas are also encouraged to be there, Malm said.

“Everyone’s very excited about this,” she said. ■



[Click here to register for the Winter Workshop](#)

# EPIC, MSC Collaborate for “Hot Topics Live” Gathering in December

## Topics included the role of AI and Social Media at camp



*Em Bruce (Camp North Star), Ajay Henry-Hill (Maine Teen Camp) and Raine Kerhin (MSC)*

From staffing to podcasting to artificial intelligence, the topics discussed at the December 6 EPIC/MS Community Connections gathering were top-of-mind for the participants, who represented a half dozen Maine camps, plus one located in the Adirondacks.

“Success. It was the epitome of ‘Hot Topics,’” said **Bud Copeland**, director of membership and engagement at ACA, New England. “Staffing is always a perennial hot topic,” said Copeland, “but what jumped out at me was the role of AI.”

***“Whether it be in content creation, programming and scheduling, [AI] is emerging just like any other technology.”***

“Whether it be in content creation, programming, and scheduling, [AI] is emerging just like any other technology,” he said. Copeland calls AI a tool that’s “changing the way we operate,” but not one that has a significant impact on a camper’s experience.

The group also discussed the role of podcasting as a communication tool with Maine families. Copeland said ACA, New England is already planning follow-up conversations around the topic.

**Rory O’Connor** of Kamp Kohut co-chairs the MSC Community Connections group with **Carissa Chipman** of Chalmers Insurance Group. O’Connor said the gathering “allowed for nice, thoughtful discussion.”

The event, which included about 15 camp professionals, offered the opportunity to speak and ask questions in a setting that served as a “great outlet,” O’Connor said. Some of those questions focused on camps’ use of social media for marketing and advertising.

O’Connor called that topic “fascinating,” in part because campers are disconnected from technology while many camp professionals rely on it for promotional purposes. “We are always thinking about how our camp should be advertising and marketing itself,” he said.

Pairing with ACA, New England’s EPIC (Emerging Professionals In Camping) program is also a helpful collaboration, O’Connor said. Camp professionals may tend to “gravitate” toward EPIC, he said, “so that we did something together is really great.”

The Community Connections group is also looking ahead to volunteering opportunities this winter, O’Connor said, including working with WinterKids and the Center for Grieving Children’s annual gala.



*Luke Joines (Fernwood Cove), Rory O’Connor (Kamp Kohut and Community Connections co-chair) and Bud Copeland (ACA, New England)*

“The goal of the event was to bring together two like-minded groups,” said **Carissa Chipman**, co-chair of the Community Connections group. “The Queen’s Head (in Bridgton) was a great location. We saw some new faces that we haven’t seen in either EPIC meetups or MSC meetups.” ■

**The Community Connections group is always looking for new participants! For more information contact Rory O’Connor ([rory@kampkohut.com](mailto:rory@kampkohut.com)) or Carissa Chipman ([cchipman@chalmersinsurancegroup.com](mailto:cchipman@chalmersinsurancegroup.com))**

# DEI Committee Hosts “Share-Out,” Makes Podcast Club Plans

When the DEI Committee began planning its fall webinar, committee co-chair **Katie Goodman** says members realized that rather than presenting a panel describing specific DEI initiatives, like a year ago, they wanted to simply “connect with people” around DEI topics.

“Our goal was to give folks an opportunity to connect over and around DEI topics, and to have the opportunity to learn from one another and share,” Goodman said.

“It was consistent with feedback from the past couple of years,” she said, with the plan of “sharing small ways that integrated DEI into camps.”

The Nov. 14 discussion, sponsored by Chalmers Insurance Group, was wide-ranging and included 24 participants. One advantage of the conversation, Goodman said, was that it allowed camp professionals to debrief “specific things that came up at camp.”

The webinar was facilitated by Goodman, **Kate Kaplan**, director of Wavus, and **Kara LaRochelle**, director of Camp Ketcha. **Ajay Henry-Hill** of Maine Teen Camp provided tech support for the event.

The Share-Out began with participants offering some reasons for attending the webinar. One camp professional said she was interested in practices for helping children feel part of the camp community, “to feel like they belong.” Part of that is to learn more about how staff from other camps communicate with their larger camp organizations, she said.

**Participants were asked to consider examples of something they noticed at camp, and how they would address it going forward. In addition, the facilitators suggested participants consider something they tried at camp, how it went, and what they learned.**

Participants were asked to consider examples of something they noticed at camp, and how they would address it going forward. In addition, the facilitators suggested participants consider something they tried at camp, how it went, and what they learned.

One breakout room conversation addressed the ways of accommodating campers who are neurodivergent, and the benefits of pre-camp conversations with parents to help ensure their children thrive at camp. Communicating what a day looks like at camp can be particularly helpful, one participant said. Another camp director also pointed out that sometimes it is necessary to have “tough conversations” with families when the camp might not be a good fit for the child.

There was also discussion regarding hateful language at camp, and the occurrence of retaliation on the part of the harmed children. Holding the parties responsible and seeking a resolution that

“everyone wants” requires the opportunity for children to express themselves. It also helps to “give grace” around the issue, one camp director suggested, so that the children reach a place of growth and learning.

The webinar concluded with the facilitators suggesting that each participant make a “closing commitment” to identify one take-away to advance DEI planning at their camp.

“Attendance was great,” said Goodman. There were “new faces” to DEI gatherings, as well as new MSC members, she said.

## Looking Ahead: Podcast Club

Once again, the DEI committee will host its “Podcast Club” in the coming months. Tentative dates are Wednesday, February 12 from 12 - 1 p.m. and Wednesday, April 16 from 12 - 1 p.m.

Stay tuned for more information from the committee about the podcasts MSC members are urged to listen to prior to these Zoom gatherings. Remember, too, that camp professionals are NOT required to listen to the podcasts in order to attend the Podcast Club sessions! ■



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## 2025 Upcoming Events

### Wednesday, January 8

MYCA Virtual Board Meeting, 10am-12pm

### Thursday, January 16

Virtual Nonprofit Circle for Small, Short-Session camps, 10-11am

### Thursday, January 23

1st MSC Virtual UMaine Discussion: Dawnland: 12-1pm

### Wednesday, January 29

Winter Workshop, 9:30am-12:30pm, Business Networking Extravaganza, 12:30-3pm, DoubleTree by Hilton, Portland

### Thursday, January 30

MSC Board Meeting, 10am-12pm, DoubleTree by Hilton, Portland

### Wednesday, February 12

MYCA Board Virtual Work Session, 10am-12pm

### Wednesday, February 12

Virtual DEI Podcast Club, 12-1pm

### Tuesday – Friday, February 18-21

2025 ACA National Conference, Dallas, TX

### Thursday, February 20

Virtual Nonprofit Circle for Small, Short-Session camps, 10-11am

### Wednesday, February 26

Hall of Flags, Augusta

### Thursday, February 27

2nd MSC Virtual UMaine Discussion: Dawnland: 12-1pm

### Monday – Tuesday, March 3-4

Staffing Spectacular: Farmington, Orono & Husson Universities

### Tuesday – Thursday, March 11-13

Tri-State Camp Conference, Atlantic City, NJ

### Wednesday, March 12

Virtual MYCA Board Meeting, 10am-12pm

### Wednesday, March 19

Virtual DEI Podcast Club, 12-1pm

### Thursday, March 20

Virtual Nonprofit Circle for Small, Short-Session camps, 10-11am

### Thursday – Saturday, March 27-29

New England Camp Conference, Manchester, NH

### Friday, March 28

Semi-Annual Meeting, Manchester, NH, details TBA

### Wednesday, April 9

MYCA Board Virtual Work Session, 10am-12pm

### Wednesday, April 9

Virtual MSC Board Meeting, 2-4pm

### Thursday, April 17

Virtual Nonprofit Circle for Small, Short-Session camps, 10-11am



Click here to access the full MSC Google calendar



# MSC “Staffing Spectacular” Slated for March 3 and 4

## Three camp hiring events in 30 hours!

**M**SC camps will have the chance to recruit staff at three universities in a timeframe of 30 hours in early March. The “Staffing Spectacular” will be held at the University of Maine, Farmington, UMaine Orono, and Husson University on March 3 and 4 and will reach students both in a traditional fair format, in classrooms, and panel discussions.

The “Spectacular” will begin on March 3 at UMF. The following day, camps will be able to recruit at UMO in the morning and Husson University in Bangor in the afternoon.

Dave Schiff, of Camp Manitou, who chairs the MSC Ad Hoc Staffing Committee, says the committee seeks to be “more aggressive and collaborative in building opportunities for [camp] directors to get into classrooms.” Similarly, the committee hopes to offer social situations with potential staff members.

“Word has gotten back to the universities, and they are really excited about the prospects,” he said. “They can see that the skills that you can learn at camp are very transferable into other careers.”

### Details of Events

The events begin at UMF on March 3 with a traditional hiring fair from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Food voucher incentives will be offered for student participation. Both before and after this event, camp professionals will have the chance to make classroom visits to describe working at camp and exploring ways to strengthen pathways to internships for students from specific majors.

On Tuesday, March 4, camp representatives will once again host tables from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. to greet potential staff, with dining hall vouchers for student participation. As in Farmington, the staffing committee is coordinating classroom visits prior to and following the “fair” event.

Following the event in Orono, at Husson University in Bangor, MSC will have the opportunity to bring small panels of camp professionals into several classrooms to discuss internship possibilities at camp. Camps are encouraged to be approved as official Husson internship sites prior to this event. A limited number of camp professionals can participate in these classroom panels. Targeted majors are marketing, sports management, nursing, and elementary education classes.

After the panels, students will attend a “Camp Internship Career Café.” These cafes are offered by the Husson career office and generally include a variety of employers (and food offerings). This café will include ONLY MSC camp employers.



[Click here for more information and registration materials](#)

Schiff says that connecting with faculty and staff by “coming to them as an organization with ideas and stories of our success might motivate them to push their students to seek work at camp.” Investing that time in making connections at universities “will hopefully pay off down the road,” he said.

Developing relationships with universities also helps foster support for creating academic internships through summer camp employment. Schiff says “there are a lot of different ways” to approach internships and that camps can be a “great place” to perform internships for university outdoor education and recreation programs.

There are also opportunities to appeal to marketing students for potential internships, Schiff says. “One of the easier ways to do that is by having participation in a camp’s social media platform.”

*“Staffing Spectacular” continues on page 10*



## Maine Tourism Association Offers Paid Internship Opportunities

The hospitality industry isn’t just about hotels and restaurants. It’s also about camps. Thanks to an internship program, camps can have paid interns for up to three weeks paid by the Maine Tourism Association. The intent is to “change the perception of tourism and the hospitality industry,” says Maine Tourism Association Workforce Development Specialist **Caroline Ridout**. The program is funded by a \$500k grant that supports several Maine Tourism Association initiatives.

“We are trying to start from the ground up, reaching young people while they are still learning,” Ridout said. For example, she said, young people may not realize they could be a nurse in a ski resort, a cruise ship, or a camp, she said.

The grant will be in place through 2025, Ridout said, meaning internships will be possible for the summer 2025 camp season. Rideout will attend the Business Networking Extravaganza —stop by to learn more!

**For more information, contact Caroline Ridout, M.Ed, Workforce Development Specialist at [www.tourismforME.com](http://www.tourismforME.com)**

**“Staffing Spectacular”** continued from page 9

Internships credit may also exist for students in healthcare professions, he said.

“I think universities have been very receptive to our outreach,” Schiff said.

**Taking Advantage of the MSC Job Board**

Schiff also reminds camps to post available positions on the free MSC Job Board, sponsored by A.M. Skier. Those positions – which are not limited to camp counselor jobs – get “more and more visibility,” he said, particularly because they are linked to the Maine Tourism job board. “We are encouraging everyone to post.”

**Post your Jobs on the MSC Job Board to Receive These Benefits:**

- ▶ All the jobs on the Maine Summer Camps Job board are pulled onto the Maine Tourism Board.
- ▶ A QR code to the job board is passed out at hiring fairs and on rack cards all over Maine.
- ▶ MSC is going to do a weekly social media staffing campaign and highlight the camps that posted jobs that week. Your camp can reshare these stories to help promote your jobs.
- ▶ Maine Summer Camps is making job listings that direct to our job board for the Maine universities' job boards Linked In, Handshake and more. ■

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# Level Ground Initiative to Expand Access to Camp Opportunities

## More than 80 Level Ground campers attended camps in 2024

“I think excitement is a word that comes to mind,” says Level Ground Initiative committee chair **Mike Douglass** in describing the Initiative’s 2024 season and its future plans. “I’m just thankful for the opportunities that Level Ground campers get. And also us.”

During summer 2024 at least 80 children attended camp thanks to the Initiative—which, since its inception in 2018, has offered camp experiences, free of charge, to children from Maine’s immigrant and refugee communities who otherwise would be unable to attend. During this past camp season, camps generously provided 150 weeks of camp at no cost to campers and families, amounting to almost \$200,000 in financial support. **Generous funding from L.L. Bean makes it possible for MSC to have a Level Ground Initiative Coordinator on staff.** “We are tremendously fortunate to have received funding earmarked for this role,” said Executive Director Lucy Norvell.

Campers attended eight camps and were referred by more than a dozen different community partners from area schools, social service agencies and other nonprofit organizations.

And come next summer, a broader pool of children will be able to attend camps thanks to the Initiative. While the Level Ground committee has decided that the Initiative will still be “guided by a commitment to racial and economic diversity,” any children in underserved populations, from Maine schools, will be eligible as Level Ground campers.

“Describing it to people, knowing that we are expanding the definition of a Level Ground camper, is going to make it easier

for community partners and MSC as they are lining up campers to come to camp.” Douglass said. Extending camp opportunities to more children in “is wonderful and expands the mission of getting kids to camp.”

Level Ground Initiative Coordinator **Raine Kerhin** agrees. “We are excited about the opportunity to send new populations of kids to camp that wouldn’t otherwise have the opportunity to attend while continuing the efforts we have made for immigrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children,” she said.

Douglass said that while the scope of the definition of a Level Ground camper is expanding, “we are not looking to also radically change the size of what we are doing.”

“Wouldn’t it be awesome to get to 100 campers and over the \$200,000 mark (in financial aid)?” Douglass asked. “I’d also like to see more camps involved,” he said. “I think with being strategic with MSC and community partners,” that goal is possible.

Douglass has high praise for Kerhin’s efforts. “Raine’s passion and commitment to get these campers to camp is clear and evident,” he said. “We’re really lucky to have someone like Raine working on this.”

“I also want to emphasize the support that Lucy and Kris give,” he said. Douglass also extended his gratitude to the Level Ground Initiative Committee. “The whole committee is on many MSC ACA NE boards and initiatives and work so hard and give so much to all these great causes.”

A post-summer survey of community partners and camps, conducted by Kerhin, demonstrated the broad success of Level Ground 2024. “We had an amazing time with these campers!” one camp responded. “They were so fun to have around and seemed to fit right in within any issues.” Community partners also praised the initiative, particularly in connection with Kerhin’s close involvement, including her visits to schools.

And while some community partners expressed that the registration process can sometimes create stumbling blocks, particularly with respect to health forms, they applauded the efforts of Kerhin. “Level Ground and camp staff were very helpful with filling out forms. That went really well.” Another community member expressed appreciation for the diversity of participating camps.

“We are always looking for new community partners to help register campers and for camps that would like offer a free summer camp opportunities through our initiative,” Kerhin said. If [camps are] interested or know of a community member that might be, email Raine Kerhin at [office@mainecamps.org](mailto:office@mainecamps.org) ■

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# MSC Members Participate in Wabanaki REACH Training

When Wabanaki REACH offered its training on interacting with Wabanaki-Maine history several years ago, it reached only MSC board members. On December 5, Wabanaki REACH presented the training to 30 MSC participants, including members who have joined the board since the first presentation. Catriona Sangster, who chairs MSC's Indigenous Neighbors' Working Group (INWG) and participated in the training for a second time, called it "incredibly impactful."

"I think that it was great to have another group of MSC professionals expanding that [original] group," Sangster said. "There's going to be room to offer it again in the future and I'd love to say that every camp in Maine has done this training."

**...the training may give camps "more confidence" to approach the INWG's Indigenous Appropriation Assessment (IAA) tool, first introduced to the MSC membership in 2023.**

Sangster also says that the training may give camps "more confidence" to approach the INWG's Indigenous Appropriation Assessment (IAA) tool, first introduced to the MSC membership in 2023. That tool provides camps with the experience of

reflecting on its symbols and practices from other perspectives, serving "not as a 'checklist,' but as an opportunity to thoughtfully observe, discuss, consider and take action."

## UMaine Offering Micro-Badge Course

In addition to the Wabanaki REACH training, as well as exploration and consideration of the IAA, camps can learn even more about Maine's Indian history this winter. Thanks to a University of Maine "micro-badge" course, MSC members have the opportunity to take their education even further. For a \$25 fee, the University of Maine Orono offers an asynchronous **micro-badge course entitled Dawnland: Maine Indian History**, and the INWG will host two Zoom discussions about the course in early 2025. MSC will offer two zoom calls to provide opportunities for reflection and discussion on the learnings.

- ▶ January 23, 12 - 1 p.m. – Participants should have begun the course. They will meet on zoom to discuss initial reflections/questions.
- ▶ February 27, 12 - 1 p.m. – Participants should aim to complete the course by this date. They will meet on zoom to discuss our learnings and consider next steps.

"I'm curious to see how many people are going to take another step," Sangster said following the Dec. 5 Wabanaki REACH training, whether that may be using resources that the INWG has shared or participating in the UMO course.

"I have a feeling we are getting people excited by what we are offering," she said. "Maybe not a huge percentage, but there are definitely camps committed and excited to be given resources."



**Click here to register for the UMaine Dawnland: Maine Indian History and the MSC Zoom follow-up discussion.**

## INWG Future Plans

Sangster says that while the INWG has discussed the idea of creating curriculum for camps, its current focus will be "to continue the learning and offer the learning opportunities first before delving into that path."

The INWG has, however, learned about the Portland Public Schools K-5 Wabanaki curriculum. Sangster says the group recently hosted Katie West, the school district's experiential learning and environmental literacy coordinator, to learn about the curriculum development process.

Sangster said a colleague called the Dec. 5 training "eye-opening" and "now feels energized to learn more."

"It's just a good reminder that we have to keep at it," Sangster said. "It's not a check-the-box process. Different people are exposed at different times, so it's important we keep offering opportunities for people when they are ready to come to the table and learn and experience." ■

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### New Logo for Business Members

Maine Summer Camps recently created a new logo for our business members. We strongly encourage camp members to do business with our MSC business members. This new logo will make business members easier to identify! Please display the logo proudly where possible.

Contact Lucy for the file, which is available in pdf, png, and jpg formats and with and without a transparent background.



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Agassiz Village campers, including Level Ground campers, line up before a meal during summer 2024.