



Kathy Jonas
Halsey Gulick Award Recipient 2025

The Maine Summer Camps Halsey Gulick Award is presented annually to persons who have distinguished themselves by giving unselfishly of their time, energy, and resources to improve organized youth camping in Maine. This year's recipient is a thoughtful camp leader, mentor, innovator, and collaborator who has supported Maine youth camping for more than two decades.

She "is a leader that others naturally look up to," says a colleague. "She has helped hundreds of campers and staff learn, grow, and thrive. She really cares deeply in general about the success of camping and the benefits of growth that happen in these young people's lives."

Her commitment to promoting and nurturing the positive impact of camp experiences is a core value, a fellow camp director says. This year's awardee has dedicated her career to living that core value – fostering all campers' personal growth individually and in community.

As one nominator wrote, the awardee's leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic epitomized her strength, creativity, and commitment. She prioritized the health and safety of campers and staff, finding novel solutions that allowed [camp] to continue delivering joyful, meaningful summers when they were most needed." The awardee is also praised for her continual dedication to fostering growth. "She balances high expectations with encouragement, helping young staff develop as professionals and role models. Her warmth, humor, and that distinctive throaty laugh create an atmosphere where everyone feels both supported and challenged to do their best."

Her work, both at camp and at the MSC committee and board level, is characterized by thoughtful listening and responding along with a quiet presence that is "often so unnoticed in our culture," another colleague says. Team efforts rely on "people that do so much under the radar, without fanfare," she says.

Another Maine camp professional says that this year's recipient "contributes in a huge way but one would not necessarily know that. She does not need to be front and center." She is also an extraordinary listener, says a fellow MSC board and education committee member. "She is listening to hear rather than listening to respond. She does that beautifully – listens and hears different viewpoints and different opinions and eventually chimes in with really thoughtful reflection or mirroring back of what she has heard. She speaks with real substance."

As a result, the awardee can "shape the conversation and move it in a productive direction. Her presence is powerful in a committee or group because she is so thoughtful and not reactive," this colleague says. That ability enables her to contribute to committee and board work at the deepest levels, colleagues say. Her leadership and collaborative style are tremendously beneficial to whatever work is at hand.

Her many contributions to Maine Summer Camps are marked by a consistent willingness to take on extra tasks. As a colleague on the education committee reports, "I can't think of a time when she wasn't one of the people doing additional side work." Her efforts are also exemplified by her dedication to her family. "It starts at home and trickles into other areas of her life," a colleague says.

Cited for her "unwavering dedication to organized youth camping, wise leadership, and a joyful spirit that inspires all who know her," the 2025 Halsey Gulick Award winner – a quiet presence, continual contributor, and a true believer in giving back – is Kathy Jonas.