**Camp Defines and Develops Character**

Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary defines character as one of the attributes or features that make up and distinguish an individual. Character development is tricky. It isn’t something that can be learned from a textbook or in a lecture — it is learned through teachable moments and experiences. So where can families turn to help provide the right environment for character development? Families can go to camp.

*“Camp provides opportunities for youth to learn new skills and gain new experiences, including teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, problem solving, resilience, and self-esteem. Campers will grow and carry these qualities for the rest of their lives.”*
**— Tom Rosenberg, President/CEO of the American Camp Association**

For over a century, millions of families have been benefiting from the positive, supportive environment provided by the camp experience. Camp develops character when:

• Children and youth feel safe and nurtured, allowing them to take healthy risks and develop character organically;
• Supporting mentors model positive character traits and lead by example; and
• Camp provides teachable moments — for example, a disagreement about the rules of a field game becomes a lesson on integrity, honesty, and fair play.

In a study of youth development outcomes conducted by Philliber Research Associates and ACA, campers said the following:

• Abigail, age nine, said, “I learned how to be honest about stuff.”
• “I learned a lot about respect and my real values in life, what they really should be,” said Louise, age fourteen.
• Sam, age twelve, said, “At camp I learned how to be part of a team . . . sometimes you have to rely on someone to do a task or goal. You have to trust each other.”

Contact Public Relations at 765.346.3391 or pr@ACAcamps.org to interview an ACA spokesperson or for more information about camp’s answer to the character development question. For customizable public service announcements or article reprints, visit our Media Center at [www.ACAcamps.org/press-room](http://www.acacamps.org/press-room).