**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](mailto: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).