

A Message from the President



Last night, I had planned on writing a message about the power of nature. However, a large spring storm attacked North Texas, leaving us without power all evening, with winds uprooting trees and rains causing flooding. Sitting in the dark, this storm made me think about the power of nature. Storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, and drought—all of these show nature's power. But there is a greater power in nature, and it comes from children seeing the majesty of nature, being among nature's creations, and as Rachel Carson said years ago, developing a "sense of wonder" so important to learning about our natural world.

As camp professionals, we have the power to share this with our campers. We have been working with Richard Louv and the Children and Nature Network (CNN) to share the urgency of children being in nature, the restorative aspects of a nature experience, and resources designed by camp professionals to address what Mr. Louv calls "nature deficit disorder." This partnership is in its infancy, but you can expect to see numerous collaborative efforts between ACA and CNN.

Earlier this year, we appointed an ACA task force to address the issue of children and nature at camps. As task force chairman Posie Taylor said, the main point is "how are we building a lifelong connection between children and nature." This task force has recently asked our members to assess what camps are doing to connect kids with nature and the results of that assessment will be shared with the membership. In addition, children and nature are a focus of our new parent e-newsletter, *CAMP e-News*, which is distributed to a million parents bimonthly. Don't miss the next issue, which will be available in mid May and which will feature an article by Richard Louv. If you haven't already signed up for your copy, [sign up today](#).

In addition, task force member Jim Parry is working with staff to create a section on our Web site, www.ACAcamps.org, exclusively for ACA members, which provides resources that can enhance each camp's nature programs. We are also pleased that former board member Gary Forster has arranged for ACA members to have access to the YMCA's iCARE activities. And the good news is that these resources are just the beginning!

Rachel Carson said it best: "If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in." Best wishes as you work to be that one adult for the thousands of children we influence this summer.

Current Research News

2007 Camp Enrollment Survey

The spring camp enrollment survey was distributed in March. [Complete the enrollment survey](#). Results will be available by end of May via a Web-based report.

Healthy Camp Project

The [Healthy Camp Project](#) is ACA's five-year study of injuries and illnesses in U.S. camps funded by Markel Insurance. ACA is currently preparing for year two data collection that will begin in June of 2007. Recruitment of new camps for the study is ongoing. [Join this study](#).

Spirituality and Camps Survey

ACA is currently involved in a project conducted in cooperation with Search Institute and the National Collaboration for Youth (NCY) to explore the youth development needs and strategies of faith-based and community-based staff. A survey was distributed to ACA members in March and 305 members responded. A preliminary report has been produced. The ACA camp dataset will be integrated into what Search and NCY have learned from their spirituality survey respondents to inform a more comprehensive strategy for serving the needs of youth development staff.

Camp Evaluation Outcomes Tools

ACA is producing three different camp outcomes tools for use in camp evaluation. These tools, which include a "Camper Learning Questionnaire" (for six- to nine-year-olds), "Basic Camper Outcomes Questionnaires" (for ten- to seventeen-year-olds) and "Detailed Camper Outcomes Questionnaires" (for ten- to seventeen-year-olds) are being finalized this month and will be available in PDF and Word formats on ACA's Research Web page.

Creating Positive Youth Outcomes

A resource pack titled, "Creating Positive Youth Outcomes" will soon be available through ACA's publisher, Healthy Learning. The pack includes a staff training workbook, facilitator's guides for directors or other leaders, and a resource CD that includes ACA's outcomes tools. The workbook, built on a logic model framework, was written using sample goals in the four supports and opportunities areas: Supportive Relationships, Safety, Youth Involvement, and Skill Building.

Checking-in on Daring Teen Behavior

Dictionary.com defines risk as "to expose oneself to the chance of injury or loss; put oneself in danger; hazard; venture." What do teens say about risk? How well does the current population of twelve- to nineteen-year-olds subscribe to this definition and apply it to everyday life. Media bombards us with sensational stories detailing rebellious teens performing crazy stunts, committing senseless crimes, and a combination of both.

The 2007 TRU spring study of teens reveals a population less comfortable with appearing on CNN or the local paper because of their nonconforming behavior. Today's teens are generally pragmatic and relatively uncomfortable with high levels of risk. They are more willing to "color inside the lines" and leave the coloring book as they found it.

Teens were asked whether or not they agreed with the following statements. The numbers in the table below show the percentage of teens that agreed with each statement.

	Total Group	Male	Female
I like to create my own style.	72%	69%	76%
I'm not really a person who likes to break the rules very much.	51%	48%	53%
I often do things that surprise or shock others.	49%	49%	48%
I like new and exciting experiences, even if I have to break the rules.	46%	49%	44%
I live for today and don't worry about tomorrow.	45%	44%	46%
I like to do things that could be considered risky or dangerous.	41%	48%	33%

Notice how 41 percent of the teens agreed that they like "things" that are risky or dangerous. You can also see that more males than females indicated they like new experiences but on total, 51 percent of teens said they don't much care for breaking rules. Females, on the other hand, were 8 percent points higher than males when it came to creating their own sense of style. And despite their claimed interest in action and adventure, less than half (41 percent) said they liked to do things that could be considered risky or dangerous.

As you consider this data, think about the impact of the camp experience. Camp provides a place where teens can engage in activities that are challenging and that can stimulate their sense of risk-taking in a safe environment (adventure/challenge, performing arts, or even leadership activities). Furthermore, camp allows teens to channel their desire for risk without having to break rules.

Learning Resources

Staff Training and Resources

Looking for some staff training resources to round out your training plans? Check out the [presenter handouts](#) from the ACA 2007 National Conference. The handouts are useful resources. Many handouts include templates you can easily incorporate, and others will spark ideas to help complement the training you have planned. Additional [staff training tip sheets](#) are also available.

We're pleased to announce the availability of many [new titles and training DVDs](#) from the online Bookstore for use this summer. The second edition of the popular [Camp is for the Camper: A Counselor's Guide to Youth Development](#), by Connie Coutellier, is now available. With the purchase of three or more copies, you'll receive unlimited access to the online course by the same name for use with your counselors. The [online course](#) provides an excellent pre-camp training tool that is further complimented by group discussion when the counselors arrive at camp.

A plethora of new [staff training resources](#) are now available, including new DVD's from well-loved author and clinical social worker, Bob Ditter. Check out the [bookstore](#) for many other exciting new titles including the By the Expert Series books featuring staff training, leadership development, staffing and retention, site and facilities, and more.

ACA 2008 National Conference—Call for Presentations Site Opens Mid May

February 12-15, 2008, more than 1200 camp professionals and 300+ exhibitor personnel will gather at the Gaylord Opryland Resort in Nashville, Tennessee, to celebrate the Strength of Many Voices at the ACA National Conference. Have you considered speaking at the ACA National Conference? Consider submitting one or more session proposals. The Program Review Team will begin accepting proposals beginning May 11, 2007. Submissions can be submitted online at that time. Check www.ACAcamps.org/conference for more details about online proposal submissions after May 11. All submitters will be notified by the end of September, if not earlier. Review the [2007 program](#) as a reference. Mark your calendars for February 2008! [Learn more](#) about the 2008 conference.

Membership: What's in it for You?

Discounts for Music and Motion Picture Licensing

ACA camps can benefit from ACA-negotiated discounts with the [Motion Picture Licensing Corporation](#) and the [American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers](#). Start saving today on motion picture and music licensing fees.

Association News

Honoring One of Our Own

Camp counselor Ryan Clark of Camp Big Heart, an ACA-Accredited camp® in Winder, Georgia, was tragically killed in the Virginia Tech shootings. For the past seven years, Clark spent two weeks during every summer at the camp, which specializes in programming for children with physical and mental impairments. He began work at the camp in high school as a volunteer counselor and later as music director. He is remembered as a dedicated young man with a "caring heart" and "contagious smile" according to camp staff.

Camp Big Heart has established a scholarship in Clark's honor. Donations are being accepted for the Ryan Clark Camp Big Heart Scholarship, 2169 Dogwood Circle, Snellville, GA, 30078. For more information, e-mail campbigheart@bellsouth.net or call 678-294-1916.

Coming Soon! Environmental Education Online Tools

On May 15, ACA's Web site will introduce a Web page accessible by ACA members only that will feature a series of useful resources that specifically focus on the connection to camp and nature. The Web page was inspired by a collaborative

effort with the Children and Nature Network. The page will provide links to all *Camping Magazine* articles/columns from the last several years that cover environmental awareness topics, a detailed list of activity ideas and teaching tools to implement environmental awareness at camp, and various other organizational resources to foster sensitivity to nature and the importance of outdoor education. This page will serve as a comprehensive resource for members who wish to promote environmental awareness at camp. The initiative will also include parent and family education and a media campaign, which coordinates with the nationwide movement "Leave No Child Inside."



The ACA National Office Welcomes New Director of Standards Program

We are pleased to announce the addition of Rhonda Mickelson as the director of standards program for the American Camp Association. Rhonda brings an exemplary breadth and depth of camp experience including a long-time commitment to ACA Standards through both volunteer and staff involvement. Rhonda will wrap up work at the ACA, Southeastern as their executive during the next month and will begin her new role May 21, 2007.

Look Who Went to Camp!

A new addition to www.CampParents.org and to the ACA media center highlights a list of famous campers from musicians and artists to notable business persons and politicians. ACA is collecting these names in preparation for the 150th anniversary of camp and the 100th anniversary of ACA. The [new Web page](#) serves as a reminder of the positive and powerful influence the camp experience can have in the formative years of children's lives, and it serves as important testimony to the media and public. If you have names to add to this list (we are not asking for testimonials), please send them to parents@ACAcamps.org. Camps will not be named nor will camp alumni be contacted. This is strictly to recognize the extraordinary impact that camp has had on so many children.

Meeting the Media's Needs

ACA has revised, reorganized, and revamped the [online national media center](#) to make information more accessible to the media. The media center features a new "In the News" section that contains archived print and broadcast stories and a new link to Public Service Announcements (videos that can be customized by local broadcast stations for camp stories). In addition to providing information on ACA, camp trends, benefits of camp, and how to choose a camp, camp articles for reprint, story ideas for reporters, and a photo gallery are also available.

Last Chance to SAVE on the Premier Summer Staff Training Tool

Limited quantities are still available for bulk orders of the [special staff training May/June issue](#) of *Camping Magazine*.

\$1 per copy in multiples of 10. Share *Camping Magazine* with your staff!

- 10 copies -- \$10
- 20 copies -- \$20
- 30 copies -- \$30
- 40 copies -- \$40
- 50 copies -- \$50

A professional resource at a discounted price—affordable training, educational reading, and motivational tips for a powerhouse summer!

Introduce your staff to the national resource for camp professionals.

Price does not include shipping and handling. **Order Today!**

Discounts available while supplies last!

May/June Issue of Camping Magazine Available Online

The latest special edition [May/June 2007 Staff Training Issue](#) features expert perspectives on the art of staff training from

staff orientation, training counselors as role models, and cyberbullying to the subtle power of language. See the new issue today!

Online Centennial Tribute for Camps

Is your camp one hundred years old? Celebrate your camp's one hundred-year anniversary with ACA's Web-based tribute to member camps. Your camp's centennial story can be shared with thousands of Web visitors every day. [Complete the Historical Profile form](#). ACA will proudly add your camp's story to the running tribute of outstanding camps that have reached the centennial milestone.

Business Resources

Save BIG Money on Camp Supplies

Not likely . . . but now you can through the new [ACA/Consorta Group Purchasing Program](#)! Our program has special contracts with FEDEX, SYSCO, GORDON FOODS, OFFICE MAX, HOME DEPOT SUPPLY, ECOLAB and over 800 other companies. Never before have camps had this buying clout. To sign up or for information about other special offers, call the ACA Business Development Team at 800-428-2267, ext. 309 or 319. It's easy to sign up . . . It's Free . . . and it will save you BIG \$\$\$\$.

ACA Purchase Power Offers You Low Prices

ACA Purchase Power has negotiated special **LOW** ACA pricing with Emotion Kayaks manufacturers of top quality kayaks and with 360 Athletics for great basketballs. Go to www.ACACamps.org/vendors to see the excellent pricing exclusively for ACA camps! Remember with ACA Purchase Power the products offered are for a limited time only . . . so buy now!

View 360 Athletics current newsletter: http://www.360athletics.com/email/intro_site3.html

Note: Orders are delivered within ninety days.

Sign Up Today for Free Products

Sign up now for ACA Connect and receive FREE products from companies that have contracted with ACA to distribute to our camps. ACA has reviewed the products and will only approve products that can be used in camps or by campers. Go to <http://www.acacamps.org/connect/> for more information and to sign up!

SpectorSoft and ACA Collaborate for Child Safety Online

ACA and SpectorSoft, creator of the award-winning SpectorSoft software that helps parents monitor the safe use of the Internet, are united in the effort to protect children from online predators.

Make It Easy for Parents:

Link to CampParents Exchange, www.CampParents.org/products/spectorsoft.php, from your camp's Web site, where parents can easily purchase this software online.

Put it in Print:

Place an ad in your camp family newsletter directing parents to CampParents Exchange. Tell them to go to www.CampParents.org and click on CampParents Exchange.

Be Proactive:

Send flyers home to your camp families promoting this important software. Contact Kim Bruno, ACA Business Development, kbruno@ACACamps.org, for free copies of the flyers.

FREE Software:

Sell 10 or more copies through your efforts and ACA will send you a free copy of the software.

For more information on positioning your camp as a "partner with parents," contact Kim Bruno, ACA Business Development, 800-428-2267, ext. 309.

Youth Development Resources

The ACA Crisis Hotline

800-573-9019

While the ACA Camp Crisis Hotline is offered year-round, the majority of calls are received in June, July, and August. Now is a good time to understand how to make the best use of this service, which is available to all ACA camps. It is important to remember the Hotline is not a medical, insurance, or legal advice hotline, but it does serve as an "ear" to help you talk through your crisis. The Hotline staff can help you think of issues and questions and identify other resources that can assist you.

New CDC.gov Web Site

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) unveiled a new Web site designed to improve the usability and performance of www.cdc.gov. The new site provides better access to health and safety topics, data and statistics, news and events, and expanded tools and resources, as well as an improved search engine.

Web Resources for Healing

www.aboutourkids.org — The site features an article from the NYU Child Study Center regarding talking to kids about school violence and coping tips. Various resources are included to help parents, teachers, child care workers, and others who support children and teens.

www.SafeYouth.org — An arm of the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, the organization offers research, fact sheets for teens, and a guide for safety in schools.

www.connectforkids.org — Offers resources to help children and adults deal with trauma.

The 3rd Annual Great American Backyard Campout

The Outdoor Industry Foundation (OIF) and National Wildlife Federation (NWF) invite all families, youth groups, and individuals to participate in the 3rd annual [Great American Backyard Campout](http://www.BackyardCampout.org) (Campout) scheduled for Saturday, June 23, 2007.

On this night, tens of thousands of Americans from across the country will celebrate and share the joy of camping with their family and friends. The "campout" is designed to remind people that opportunities for outdoor recreation are everywhere.

OIF and NWF encourage all Americans to get out and camp on June 23 and register their campsites at www.BackyardCampout.org!

Share Our Strength's Great American Bake Sale

Your camp has benefited children for years, and now you have an opportunity to take it a step further through participation in [Share Our Strength's Great American Bake Sale](http://www.ShareOurStrength.org) campaign.

Share Our Strength's Great American Bake Sale is a national campaign that mobilizes people of all ages to help end childhood hunger in America by holding bake sales in their communities. Funds raised are granted to local organizations that work to increase participation by low-income children in summer and after-school feeding programs and support nutrition education programs for low-income families.

Now is your chance to help children in need year-round! Consider hosting a bake sale for move-in and move-out days, as well as during parent day at your camp! You can also host a bake sale at camp fairs, besides, what catches interest more than treats?

Be a part of the 1 million people baking, selling, or buying goods with the Great American Bake Sale, who since 2003 have raised over \$3 million. For more information on how to get involved, visit www.greatamericanbakesale.org for more information.

Finding Inspiration in Literature and Movies

The National Collaboration for Youth and Heartland Film Festival's Truly Moving Pictures have teamed together in this collaborative project called F.I.L.M, an acronym for "Finding Inspiration in Literature & Movies." The literacy and film program encourages youth to screen the program's featured films, read the books associated with the movies, utilize the activity guides, and complete related service projects. The National Collaboration for Youth represents a coalition of the National Assembly member organizations that have a significant interest in youth development and helping young people realize their full capabilities. Heartland Film Festival, a non-profit organization, recognizes and honors filmmakers whose work explores the human journey by artistically expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life. Heartland created the Truly Moving Picture Award in 2000 as a way to honor those films that inspire and enrich lives. For more information about this program, please visit the [F.I.L.M. Web site](#).