



envision the future



american *CAMP* association®

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Tisha Bolger
Board Chair

As I reflect on the past year and the many accomplishments of ACA, I am inspired by the theme we are celebrating, "Envision the Future." The transition of the Association, the roll-up of our regional offices and the new faces on our staff represent endless possibilities for our future. Yet, at the same time, I am reminded of the solid foundation on which this future is being built. This past year has already shown us glimpses of all the good things to come.

ACA had a smooth leadership transition this year, ensuring that the great work that ACA staff and their volunteer partners were engaged in continued and our momentum in youth and professional development increased. Progress is compelling, we know that; it's tangible and we feel engaged and focused as we move forward.

All of us know that it is essential to maintain and build upon our proud and deep-rooted legacy. We understand the strength of ACA to enrich the lives of children, youth and adults through the camp experience. We understand that relationships are at the core and our focus must be on these relations and the people who compel us to strive for excellence.

This report pays tribute to those who have helped build ACA in ways large and small. In reflecting on the past year and the potential we have to continue the important work we do, I am inspired by the words of Isaac Newton who said, "If I have seen further than others, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants."

With a nod to our past, I ask you to join with me not only to envision the future for ACA but to embrace the changes, challenges, and choices that will help ensure that the future of ACA and all we serve is a bright one.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tisha Bolger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Tom Holland
Chief Executive Officer

Envision.

The camp experience is one that is built on tradition. Each year, the successes that we have in our programs, with our staff, and with our campers come from a variety of sources. As I consider this annual report and our programs throughout the country, two things stick out in my mind. The first is the work that goes into building a program and the second is the values that guide those efforts.

The hard work that goes into developing a successful camp experience begins long before campers arrive. This effort is found in our training sessions, through our recruitment activities, and with the immense level of time we pour in to our preparations. The second source of success stems from the leadership, the legacies, and the traditions of those who came before us, laying the foundation for our efforts. For some, this is a parent or grandparent who founded a program that has been passed down from generation to generation. For others, this is the influential member of a staff team who fostered and grew the leadership skills that now guide our decisions at camp.

As we envision the future, we must recognize that it can only be bright with diligent preparation coupled with the legacy of values that have set the stage for our success. This annual report is a reflection of both of these sources of success. Within this document, we celebrate the hard work of so many to advance our Association and we also get to take the time to recognize those who came before us and guided our journey.

For me, and I am sure for many of you, special recognition needs to be paid to the leadership of Peg Smith, our former CEO. Peg did so many extraordinary things to advance our Association and raise the voice of the camp experience in America. These achievements are too numerous to even attempt to mention. Still, it is important to recognize the role that Peg has always played in the growth of so many camp professionals. Peg encouraged me to expand my voice and become more involved in the Association. Her inspiration led me to become more involved in the national conversation and assume a more significant role with the Association.

She is an example of all those who have guided us to where we are today. Because of their past leadership, we are able to strive for more, and envision a future that continues to be bright for all those who love the experience of camp.

Thank you to those individuals and to all that made this past year a fantastic one at ACA.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Holland". The signature is fluid and cursive.



HONORING PEG SMITH

When she was interviewed for the CEO position at the American Camp Association, Peg Smith told us she was a **CHANGE AGENT**. We were very impressed with Peg's experience and her **DEDICATION TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**, but I don't think any of us in that room realized exactly how much of a change agent she would be for this association. **OVER HER SIXTEEN YEARS AT THE HELM**, Peg shepherded ACA to new heights, as we became an association well-known for not only our traditional camp and accreditation programs, but also for leadership in the youth development world and excellence in the boardroom.


Those who know Peg have described her as a **"RESTLESS LEADER,"** never satisfied, always reaching for better things for ACA. Under Peg's leadership, ACA experienced a sea of change, moving from an organization of 25 disparate parts to a unified national association with three affiliates. It was Peg's "Call to Action" that **INSPIRED US** to become a more relevant entity, better known in child and youth development, and respected for our shared expertise.

She was the **GUIDING FORCE** behind significant governance changes, which we realized had to be made if we were to reach our lofty goals of the 20/20 Vision. If you worked with Peg on this project, you had to be **COMFORTABLE WITH AMBIGUITY** — but because of that ambiguity, we made better decisions in the end, as Peg forced us to think. We now see the fruits of our collective labors, including a respected board made up of not only camp professionals, but a diverse group of professionals in other fields who are committed to the camp experience, resulting in a robust, more connected board.


Those of us who had the opportunity to be one of "Peg's Presidents" were given a gift of working side by side with Peg on everything from big audacious goals like the 20/20 Vision to the mundane decisions that the chief executive and chief volunteer officers encounter. But **NOTHING WAS REALLY MUNDANE WITH PEG**. Her modus operandi was to think in threes — three points, three reasons, three whatever — and her thought process always made an impact with the Board and volunteers.

Peg Smith retired at the end of 2014, but she left us with quite a legacy at the American Camp Association. We could list hundreds of things, but in the **SPIRIT OF THREE**, thank you, Peg, for your leadership, your vision, and for pushing us to be a much better association. Peg's work has made a huge impact on the camping movement and on the children and youth who get to experience the magic of camp. **HOW LUCKY WE ARE TO HAVE HAD PEG SMITH AS OUR LEADER!** Enjoy your retirement, Peg — you've earned it.

Ann Sheets
ACA National President, 2005 - 2008



**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR LEADERSHIP,
YOUR VISION,
AND FOR
PUSHING US
TO BE A
MUCH BETTER
ASSOCIATION**



ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF ACA

As ACA research has shown time and again, the camp experience and ACA have a profound effect on children, youth, and adults. While we often focus on the immediate impact of the benefits of camp, the long-term benefits are, in a sense, immeasurable. When campers and staff return to their homes, schools, and places of employment, they use their newly-cultivated talents to positively influence those communities in countless ways both large and small. It is this long-term impact of camp that inspires us to envision a bright future for the world around us.

As ACA embraces this view, we are poised to play an even stronger role within the camp community, and to share our knowledge and expertise with professionals working in youth development. Energized by our new CEO Tom Holland, and bolstered by a new, responsive, distributed organizational structure, ACA is ready to move forward with initiatives that will not only build better camp experiences, but will inform and elevate the national dialogue on such issues such as out-of-school time, youth on college campuses, and so many others.

Doors are opening. Conversations are happening. Momentum is shifting. The possibilities are endless and the future for camps, ACA, and beyond is bright. If we can envision it, we can realize it!



CAMP SPOTLIGHT

GREEN RIVER PRESERVE

Missy Schenck – Executive Director

Alex Schenck and his wife Laurie purchased the 3,400 acres now called Green River Preserve (GRP) in the early 1950's as a place to spend weekends and summers fishing, hiking, and exploring. As a child, their son Sandy was fortunate to learn the lore of the Green River Valley not only from his parents, but also from the people who had lived in the valley for generations. These kind and gentle mountain folks were Sandy's counselors, and he was their camper.

Sandy dreamed of one day sharing the magic of the Green River Valley with children through an innovative, natural science-oriented summer camp. This would be a camp unlike any other, in that it would offer a community of bright, curious, and creative children a chance to learn about land stewardship and to grow as young conservation leaders.

In 1988, Green River Preserve, a non-competitive, co-ed summer camp connecting children with nature was founded. Located on a 3,400 acre private wildlife preserve in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina, Green River Preserve inspires campers to have a greater understanding of themselves, their environment, and their fellow man.

The signature activity of GRP is the mentor hike. Each morning, campers explore forest, streams, and hidden valleys of the Preserve with mentor naturalists. Filled with adventure, discovery, and a heightened appreciation of the natural world, campers learn to use all of their senses as they play under waterfalls, crawl into caves, explore archeological sites, track wildlife, and taste edible plants.

Since its founding, sustainability has been woven into the very fabric of Green River Preserve.

In 2006, Missy and Sandy Schenck put 2,600 acres of the Preserve in a conservation easement with Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy and the Clean Water Management Trust. This action safeguards

the future of the Preserve's land, the Green River headwaters and watershed, and many endangered plants and wildlife for perpetuity and generations of GRP campers.



PUBLIC POLICY & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The American Camp Association is committed to advancing our public policy agenda:

- To protect the safety of children, youth and adults participating in camp experiences; and,
- To achieve recognition that camp is an expanded learning opportunity.

In 2015, we made significant progress toward those goals. Highlights included:

- Our partnership with other out-of-school time organizations to insert language into both the Senate and House of Representatives bills to reauthorize the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act** — language that recognizes summer and after school programs as important to the year-round education of children.
- We helped shepherd the reintroduction of the **Child Protection Improvements Act** into both houses of Congress. This bill will close the gaping hole in federal law that prevents camps and other organizations that work with children from gaining access to federal criminal background checks on employees and volunteers.
- The Association was successful in getting Congress to require that the Department of Transportation not arbitrarily enforce commercial transportation regulations upon camps without a formal notice and comment opportunity to the public. **ACA fully supports all safety regulations.** The regulations in question would treat camps as commercial transportation companies such as Greyhound®.
- The **Secretary of Health and Human Services** invited ACA to participate in ongoing discussions regarding how camps promote health and wellness in children and youth.
- As an important part of **Great Outdoors America Week**, ACA partnered with the Outdoor Alliance for Kids to sponsor the Kids, Youth, and the Great Outdoors Festival to draw attention to the importance of increasing access and opportunities for kids and youth to get outdoors.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ACA's Professional Development Center (PDC) continues to offer professional development opportunities for owners, directors, and all levels of camp staff and volunteers. This commitment to quality educational offerings follows cutting edge educational techniques that include "borderless," available 24/7 experiences accessed through online courses, live and recorded webinars, customized staff training as well as more traditional local, regional, and national face-to-face conferences and events. These powerful learning experiences are built around 13 core competencies that research has shown to be instrumental for professionals who work with youth and adult programs. Last year,



8,385 individuals enrolled in invaluable learning experiences that contributed to quality experiences for campers and staff. Some of these ACA courses included:

- Camp Is for the Camper
- Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect
- Critical Things Staff Need to Know about Risk Management
- Critical Things Staff Need to Know about Bullying Prevention
- Creating a Sense of Community in Camp

461 of these learners also engaged in intensive, competency-driven staff training courses that resulted in Staff Certificates of Added Qualifications for program staff, middle managers, camp and day camp directors! Additionally, 776 individuals participated in more than 20 live webinars with subject matter experts from ACA partnerships such as:

- NASA
- Association of Camp Nurses
- Expert Online Training
- Certified Horsemanship Association
- Child Trends

ACA Awarded Over 47,000 CECs Last Year

We believe in giving credit where credit is due. Successful completion of a qualified ACA learning opportunity earns a learner continuing education credits (CECs) with 1 CEC equaling one hour of directed learning. ACA awarded 47,247 CECs in 2015!

ACA Is a Leader in Professional Development!

New and Trending This Year

- Day Camp Directors have access to a new **Day Camp Director's Certificate of Added Qualification (CAQ)**. This comprehensive online course is built around the skills and knowledge needed specifically by day camp directors in 13 core competencies.
- Camps can customize their own online learning experiences! Directors can tailor learning opportunities and outcomes for their staff by choosing from **ACA's extensive catalog of online courses and recorded webinars**.
- ACA awards **digital badges** for completion of any Staff Certificate of Added Qualification course. Digital badges are a powerful new online tool in professional development arenas that identify, document, and validate a person's skills, knowledge, accomplishments, and competencies.
- **ACA's Professional Development Center** is accessed by learners from around the world. Last year we enrolled 103 learners from more than 21 countries who applied new skills and knowledge learned from ACA courses to the improvement of their camp experiences for children throughout the world.



Former Secretary of State Hilary Rodham Clinton Talks Camp at Tri-State

The American Camp Association, New York and New Jersey had a tremendous year that culminated in former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton as the keynote speaker at the Tri-State Camp Conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Secretary Clinton spoke about the power of camp and the importance of incorporating camp into youth development everywhere. After her speech, she had an intimate Question and Answer period with camp owner and director Jay Jacobs. The Tri-State Camp Conference had its largest attendance yet due to Secretary Clinton's presence and we were honored to host her. The American Camp Association, New York and New Jersey, garnered endless media attention due to Secretary Clinton's speech and we were able to harness this media to focus on the importance of camp for every child.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Changing the lives of children, youth, and families requires cooperative effort. Our partner's support is critical, as ACA could not effectively serve 5 million campers without their involvement. By supporting ACA, our partners are helping us achieve our goal of providing a high quality camp experience.

An ACA partner understands that camp is important for healthy child development, and their involvement in one or all of the five major outcomes contributes to a successful camp experience:



Health and Wellness: Promoting physical activity, reducing childhood obesity, and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

Environmental Stewardship: Equipping young people with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills they need to be stewards of the environment today and green leaders of tomorrow.

Team Building and Leadership: Helping children learn to overcome obstacles and to believe in their own prospects for success.

Workforce Development: Helping young people set goals, learn responsibility, develop interpersonal skills, and develop an entrepreneurial spirit.

Academic Enrichment: Reducing summer learning loss by preparing children for learning, engaging them experientially, and encouraging them to think critically.

Send a Child to Camp

ACA partners — Late July, Rocky Mountain Sunscreen, and Chaco, Inc. — have supported ACA's Send a Child to Camp scholarship fund by donating a portion of their sales to send more than 400 kids to camp, giving underprivileged children the chance to have a camp experience.

Member Savings

ACA has formed 20 corporate partnerships like Trinity/HPSI, Chaco, Big Agnes and many others that have saved our members over \$9 million a year, collectively. ACA works with almost 300 businesses that supply camps and members with products and services.

ACCREDITATION

- **Camps visited** in the 2015 visit season (late May to mid-September): 815
- The visits involved more than **1,100 volunteer** visitors.
- As ACA continues to address concerns of child safety, **two new standards** specific to staff screening, were implemented for 2015:
 - Requires **all year-round staff** based on camp property to have a criminal background check at least every 5 years.
 - Requires all seasonal staff based on camp property to have an annual criminal background check.
- The standards specific to archery and rifle safety were revised and are now **mandatory standards**.
- The National Standards Commission continued steps specific to the requirement for submission of an **Annual Accreditation Report** in non-visit years (being implemented with approximately 1/3 of ACA camps in 2016).
- **ACA staff and volunteers** continue to strive for a greater level of communication with camps and volunteers through this program.



RESEARCH

Research helps ACA...

Document and improve the quality of the camp experience by translating knowledge into practice!

Tell the story about the impact of the camp experience with the facts to support it!

Research Efforts in the Past Year:

- Established new national norming benchmarks for the **ACA Youth Outcomes Battery**.
- Initiated **Phase 1** to make the ACA Youth Outcomes Battery available in a web-based format.
- Offered a cutting-edge **national research forum** focused on practical applications of research findings to enhance programs, improve staff training and performance, increase the quality of the camp experience, and articulate the value of the camp experience for positive youth and workforce development.
- Established **industry-level benchmarks** for business operations, as well as trend data related to enrollment and staff recruitment.
- Conducted the **ACA Emerging Issues survey** to identify trends and issues important to the camp industry.
- Continued support for the national **Raise the Bar** initiative for camps interested in collecting, interpreting, and disseminating innovative practices based on research and evaluation efforts within their camps that address twenty-first century skill development and creating healthy lifestyles.
- Produced the **ACA National Research Forum Book of Abstracts, ACA Research Briefing Papers, and scholarly articles** focused on the contributions of the camp experience to youth development and challenging societal issues.



ACA'S 2015 NATIONAL CONFERENCE



Eighteen years had passed since ACA hosted its last National Conference in historic New Orleans, Louisiana. In 2015, ACA returned with more than 1100 camp and youth development professionals to one of the nation's oldest cities to devote four days to professional development, networking, commerce, and experiencing NOLA. The conference took place along the Mississippi River, just a few blocks from the French Quarter and the route of many parades that are such an important part of Festival and Mardi Gras.

More than 150 educational opportunities were offered in the form of breakout sessions, discussion groups, panels and keynote addresses. The event kicked off with a special opening featuring educator, writer, and speaker, Jessica Lahey. Her recent release, *The Gift of Failure*, provided the back drop for an important conversation about the value of allowing campers and counselors to learn by doing, which often means learning through mistakes. Professor Emeritus of Tulane University, Scott Cowen, shared the incredibly compelling story of experiences he and others had in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. While the impact can still be felt, the story of rebuilding and revitalizing was truly inspiring. Debi Gilboa, M.D., family physician and parenting expert, shared some incredible insight into the value of raising a respectful generation who will be prepared for the challenges that await them in an increasingly turbulent world. Lastly, Tom Holland, who now serves as the Association's CEO, offered an inspiring closing address that provided the audience with inspiration about how they themselves can help share the exceptional impact of camp with campers and counselors.

A key component to the National Conference is the professional tradeshow exhibition. ACA exhibitors, most of whom are Affiliate Members, provide important education, information, and access to the latest products and services necessarily for well-equipped and prepared camps.

Critical to the success of any in-person meeting is the opportunity for meaningful connections with others. The 2015 National Conference delivered ample social networking — the perfect complement to the professional development offered. Attendees departed feeling as though they could imagine a future with even greater impact on children, youth, and teens through the camp experience.



CAMP SPOTLIGHT

HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS SUMMER CAMPS

Homes for the Homeless Summer Camps (HFH Camps) were established in 1989 to give New York City children living in homeless shelters or experiencing housing instability an enriching summer experience — at no cost to their families. HFH Camps Lanowa and Wakonda welcome approximately 540 children to Harriman State Park in Upstate New York each year. The need was acute in Summer 2015 as the numbers of homeless children in shelters surpassed 22,000.

Children take part in rich programming that incorporates summer learning opportunities in creative ways, utilizing arts, music, and physical activities to engage all. Campers receive a level of support, routine, safety, and nutrition that is of particular importance given the instability present in their lives. For some campers, who are eager to return year after year, HFH Camps offer a familiar space where they are comfortable thinking about their future.

To nurture young talent and invest in their futures, HFH Camps started the Teen Leader program in 2012, and expanded it substantially in 2015. Most of these young leaders “graduated” from campers. Some become counselors, but all serve as mentors to campers and participate in year-round activities that promote teamwork, communication, service, trust, leadership, self-esteem, diversity, and problem solving, which they can pay forward not only to future campers but years after their camp experience has ended.



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River Edge Farm, LLC	Agassiz Village	Carol Clarke	Andrea Groves
Robert Lester	Angela Ambrosini	Christopher Cloudman	Linda Gruber
Mary Rogers	Robert Anderson	Terry Coffman	Tony Gunter
Andy and Catriona Sangster	Douglas Armstrong	Patrick Connelly	Georgia Hall
Jane Schenck	Carinne Atkerson	Jane Cooper Fall	Patricia Hammond
Sandy and Missy Schenck	Ange Atkinson	Jamie Cosson	Margaret Hansen-Kaplan
The Seaward Family	Michelle Balfe Keefer	Leslie Cully	Peggy Hartson
Jean Seaward	Danita Ballantyne	Brent Cummins	John Hedbavny
Serious Fun Children's Network	Barrie School	M. Ameen Dada	Steve Heiny
Laura Seymour	Anthony Bates	Jim Dahlquist	Dave Hennessey
Douglas Siden	Les Beassie	Darby Dame	Mark Hennessy
Jason Silberman	Elisa Becker	Lori Daniel	Pam Heuberger
	Sierra Beckman	Alexis Dascoulias	Abby Hollander

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Alice Horning	David Long	Jacqui Raill	Dustin Tester
Greggory Houck	Maria Luther	Jacob Reardon-McSoley	Betsy Thamert
Diana Huff	Scott Mailen	David Reed	Ryan Thamert
Sara Huffman	Marquita Manley	Libby Rehm	Daniel Tobin
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Erica Jameson	Andrew Miller	Tom Rosebrook	Lisa Warden
Tom Jenkins	Katie Milne	Ryan Rosen	Joanna Warren Smith
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Michael Johnson	Brynn Morey	Whit and Fran Ryan	Conrad Welch
Stuart Jones	Fumio Morooka	Renee Sack	Susan Welch
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Linda Kotowski	Deborah O'Donnell	Becky Seybert	Andrea Yanacheck
Janet Kramschuster	Renee O'Neil	Brian Shelley	YMCA Camp Ralph S. Mason, Inc.
Sandra Kronitis-Sipols	Claire Opel	Anne Shingler	YMCA Greensboro
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Althea Ballentine
Nancy Bauer
Ralston Bauer
Allen Beavers, Jr.
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Marion Caldwell
Reynold Carlson
Ruth Carlson
Ann Chamberlain
Betty Cobb
Judy Cote
R. F. "Brownie" Cote
Dorothy Curtin
Tom Curtin
Elizabeth Danforth
Louise Davis
S. Cooper Dawson
Karl Dowd
Jack Ellena
Jacqueline Ellena
Jesse Farrow
Abbott Fenn
Paul Frisbie
Betty Frisbie
Grant Gerson
Howard Gibbs
Len Gordon
June Gray
Libby Halpern
Ted Halpern
Catherine "Kit" Hammett
Helen Haskell
Marie Karen Hawkinson
Dan Hemphill
John L. Holden
James "Pop" Hollandsworth
Marjorie Hollandsworth
Ruth T. Howe
Ruth Isserman
Dorothy Jean Kerr
Edie Klein
Millie Kriebel
Wilbur Kriebel
Frances Kruger
Joseph Kruger
Charles Kujawa
James LeMonn
John MacBean
Roderick MacRae
Robin Manison
Tom Manison
Beverly Miller
Judy Miller
Stanford Miller
Judith Myers
Edna Newman
Irving Newman
Howard Patton
Jack Pearse
Charles Poolos
Herman Popkin
Rosalie Popkin
Glenn Poulter
Rusty Poulter
Barbara Rankin
Joy Rick
Robert Rick
Fred Rogers
Marlys Rogers
Martha Lou Schove
Allen Sigoloff
Sonya Staff
Karen Stager
Morry Stein
George Sudduth
Betty van der Smissen
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Nelson Wieters
Barbara Winslow

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We are grateful to each member who believes in the purposes of organized camp and those who want to ensure that camp continues as a growing, educational opportunity for all who follow. The Acorn Society is a program recognizing those who have included the American Camp Association and/or the American Camping Foundation in their estate planning, or have made outright gifts to the Endowment Fund. To qualify for the Acorn Society by way of cash contributions requires a minimum contribution of \$25,000 payable over a period of not more than five years.*

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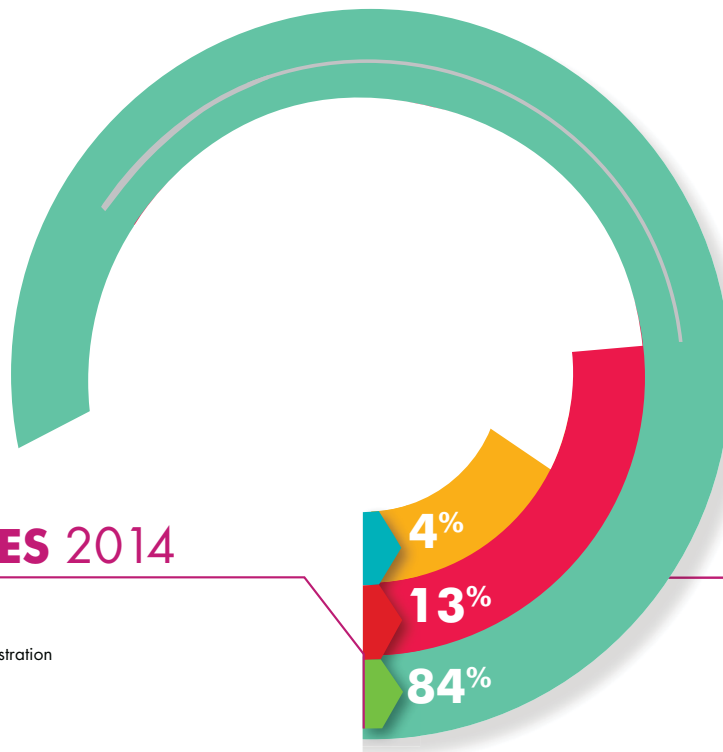
*MEMBERS AS OF JULY 28, 2015

2014 EXPENSES, REVENUES AND FINANCIAL POSITION ANALYSIS



EXPENSES 2014

- Program Services
- General and Administration
- Fund Raising



FINANCIAL POSITION ANALYSIS

Assets	10,567,960
Liabilities	2,656,291
Net Assets	7,911,669

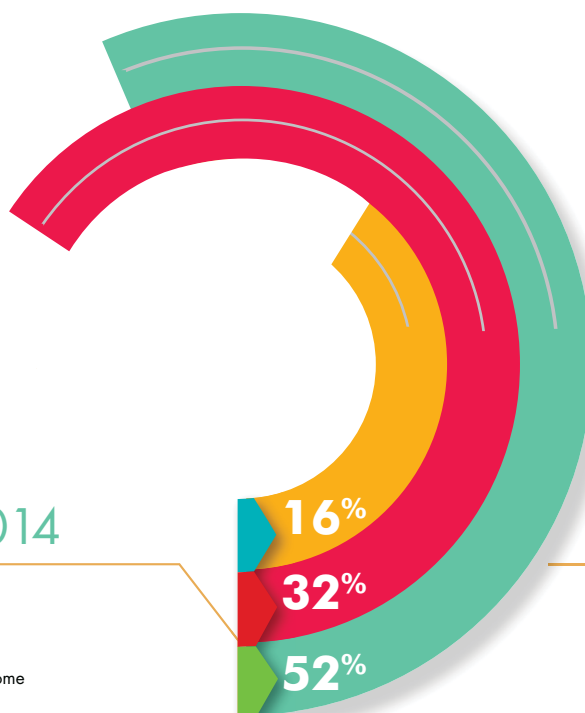
NET ASSET ANALYSIS

Unrestricted	3,137,668
Temporarily Restricted	2,192,817
Permanently Restricted	2,581,184



REVENUES 2014

- Dues and Fees
- Contributions and Grants
- Program Services and Investment Income

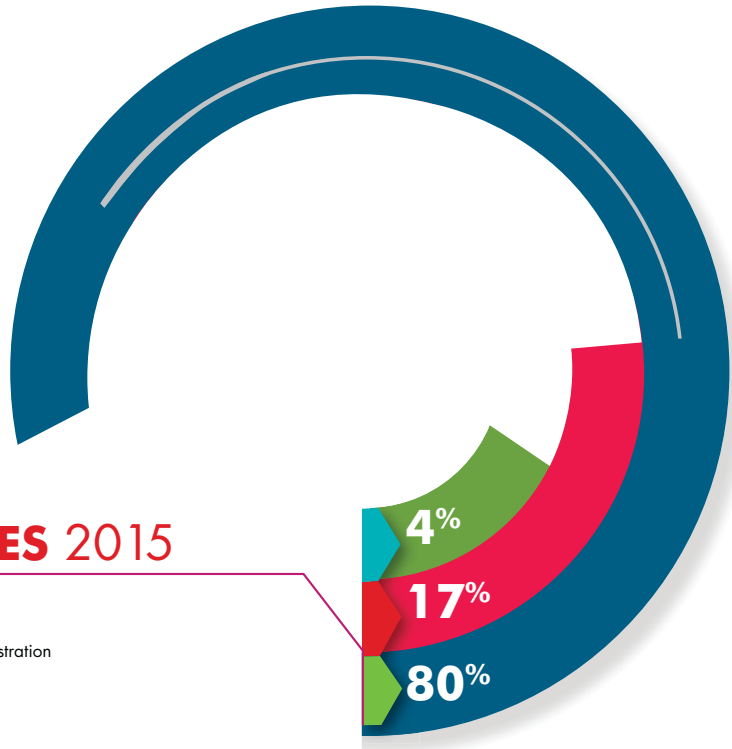


2015 EXPENSES, REVENUES AND FINANCIAL POSITION ANALYSIS



EXPENSES 2015

- Program Services
- General and Administration
- Fund Raising

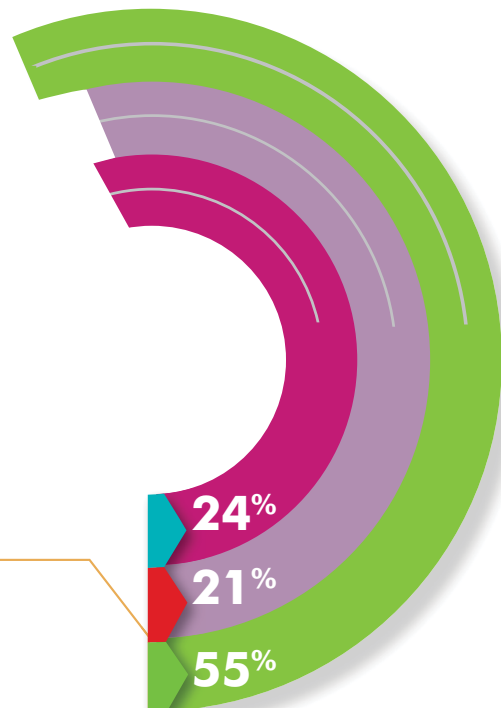


FINANCIAL POSITION ANALYSIS	
Assets	10,423,661
Liabilities	2,724,110
Net Assets	7,699,551
NET ASSET ANALYSIS	
Unrestricted	3,098,983
Temporarily Restricted	1,915,200
Permanently Restricted	2,685,368



REVENUES 2015

- Dues and Fees
- Contributions and Grants
- Program Services and Investment Income





ACA MISSION

Enrich the lives of children, youth, and adults through the camp experience.

ACA IS A GROWING NATIONAL ASSOCIATION REPRESENTING

10,000 individual members

•
2,700 camps

•
2,400 ACA-accredited camps

FIND A CAMP

In 2015, ACA's Find A Camp database received over 1.2 million page views from parents and families looking for the perfect camp experience for their child.

Find A Camp allows families to search for camps based on session length, price range, location, programs offered, and more!

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