

FEATURED SPEAKERS



Opening Keynote with John Beitner

A Pirate's Guide to Optimism

Tuesday, April 11, 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

This engaging, interactive, and fun presentation will kick off the conference with long-time ACA volunteer and now ACA Staff Member, John Beitner. Drawing on over thirty years in camping, John will share his insights about where we are and where we are headed. Working with young people is always an adventure and having the perspective of optimistic pirates can help us sail these sometimes treacherous waters.

John Beitner is the Professional Development Specialist for ACA's Eastern region. He spent his first summer at camp in Bruin Woods as the arts and crafts teacher. The following summer, his sophomore year at UCLA, he made the move to Tumbleweed Day Camp, where he worked for the next thirty years. John started as the drama specialist at Tumbleweed and rose through the ranks to be the executive director. While at Tumbleweed John volunteered with ACA as a visitor, standards chair and instructor, education chair and was the co-chair of the Spring Leadership Conference. He has presented at ACA conferences at both the regional and national level and is delighted to return to Palm Springs and be a part of the inspiration, energy, and enthusiasm that are hallmarks of the Spring Leadership Conference.



Thursday Keynote with Lance Ozier, EdD

Lessons on Learning: The Education Spectrum from Camps to Classroom

Thursday, April 13, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Learning is fun — and camps make great classrooms! In this lively and engaging keynote workshop, Dr. Lance Ozier will share insights and experiences from his fifteen years at Morry's Camp, a national leader in nonprofit youth development for under-served kids in the New York City metro area. By experiencing how the brain learns, Lance will demonstrate why camps are ideal locations for young people to learn the necessary skills leading to high academic achievement, especially since these are often the skills lacking in most schools' standards and curriculum. Come prepared to participate and play as you learn ready-to-use activities for engaging all the brains at camp! Lance has also been a classroom teacher of elementary, middle and high school students, and for nearly the past decade has taught teachers at The City College of New York in Harlem, where he emphasizes the value of being a camp counselor as an important ingredient to becoming a high quality teacher.

Lance Ozier, EdD, spent fifteen summers in the Catskill Mountains of New York as a counselor and education coordinator at Morry's Camp. From 2010 to 2016, he volunteered on ACA's Committee for the Advancement of Research and Evaluation (CARE), and was recognized with a Hedley S. Dimock Award from ACA in 2015. Lance is also a founding instructor in the Bank Street College of Education's Summer Camp and Afterschool Leadership online certificate program. He is considered an expert on the ways in which schools and summer camps shape the learning lives of students by increasing non-cognitive factors and 21st-century learning skills.

When not working with camps, Dr. Ozier is the Senior Literacy Specialist at the Institute for Student Achievement, a division of the Educational Testing Service. His work at ISA includes supporting schools with the implementation of curricula that develops students' academic and non-cognitive skills. Lance's work has been widely published and referenced in several national publications, including *Camping Magazine*, *The Journal of Democracy and Education*, *English Journal*, and the *Journal of Experiential Education*.

FEATURED SPEAKERS



Closing Keynote with Aisha Lowe, PhD

Informed Approaches for Effectively Serving Youth

Friday, April 14, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

The work of serving youth is exhilarating, fulfilling, and challenging. Today's youth come with a vast diversity of backgrounds, personalities, learning styles and needs, and identities. They also too often bring with them experiences of trauma and other histories that leave them "at risk" for failure. Despite these odds, we know that the presence of caring adults can transform a young person's life. Camps serve as a nesting ground for healing and transformation. The work of people-building you do is invaluable. In this interactive discussion, we'll uncover strategies for meeting the diverse needs of your campers and creating environments of safety and restoration for all youth.

Dr. Aisha Lowe is a passionate educator who has dedicated her life to improving education for youth and communities. Dr. Lowe serves as associate professor of education at William Jessup University in Rocklin, CA, as well as the associate dean of the Office of Academic Research. A native of San Francisco, Aisha made the Sacramento region her home in 2011 when she became the executive director of STAND UP, a Sacramento education nonprofit. Prior to joining STAND UP, Aisha was the director of research and evaluation for the California Charter Schools Association where she authored landmark charter school accountability approaches and a seminal report about the performance of African American students in California. She is a former K-12 teacher and previously served as a director of the East Palo Alto Stanford Academy, the East Palo Alto Tennis and Tutoring Program, the Educational Program for Gifted Youth in Korea, and Partners for Academic Excellence at Stanford. She served as the co-chair of the Board of Directors of Fellowship Academy and on the Board of Trustees and as president of the Alumni Association at The Urban School of San Francisco, both her alma maters. Aisha is also a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and The Links, Inc. Dr. Lowe received her bachelor's degree in psychology and her master's in sociology from Stanford University where she also received her PhD in Education.



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BREAKOUT SPEAKERS



Bob Ditter, MEd, LCSW

Wednesday, April 12 & Thursday, April 13

Bob is back at SLC to share his wisdom and enthusiasm with us! Look for breakout sessions from Bob on Wednesday and Thursday at the conference.

Bob Ditter is a well-regarded child, adolescent, and family therapist from Boston, Massachusetts. He is a nationally recognized trainer and consultant and works with organizations that work with young people. His clients have included Sea World, the Disney Channel, the Salvation Army, Girls Scouts of America, YMCA, American Camp Association, Jewish Community Centers, Camp Fire USA, Children's Oncology Camps of America, the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America, private and public schools, and others. He has appeared on the *ABC Evening News with Peter Jennings*, *Good Morning America* and twice on NBC's *The Today Show*. He has been quoted in *The New York Times*, *Parent Magazine*, the *Ladies Home Journal*, *Money Magazine* and *USA Today*. *Sports Illustrated* called him "...camping's most articulate spokesman" because of his work with children's summer camps since 1982. He has visited over 600 summer camps in the United States and has authored four books for camp professionals and fourteen brand new training DVDs. He is best known in camp circles as the author of the popular column, "In the Trenches," which has appeared regularly in *Camping Magazine* since 1987.



Chris Thurber, PhD

Wednesday, April 12

We are thrilled to share that Chris Thurber is joining us again at SLC this year. He will be presenting breakout sessions on Wednesday at the conference — don't miss these opportunities for high-energy sessions with immediate take-home ideas for your camp program!

Dr. Christopher Thurber is a board-certified clinical psychologist, educator, author, and father. A dedicated teacher from a young age, Chris has more than thirty years of experience working with camps and independent schools. Chris is also an award-winning contributor to *Camping Magazine* and *Camp Business* and has shared his youth development expertise on national radio, television, print media, podcasts and webinars. In 2007, Chris co-founded *ExpertOnlineTraining.com*, which quickly became the internet's most popular and respected educational resource for youth development professionals. Chris also co-authored the critically acclaimed *Summer Camp Handbook* and designed the ACA's homesickness prevention program, a DVD/CD set for new camper families entitled "The Secret Ingredients of Summer Camp Success." Chris and his wife Simonida live in Exeter, New Hampshire with their sons Danilo and Sava.



Laurie Browne, PhD

Wednesday, April 12 & Thursday, April 13

We are very excited to welcome Laurie Browne, ACA Research Director, to SLC this year. She will be presenting at our SLCTalks Wednesday night and breakout sessions on Thursday.

Laurie Browne, PhD, is the director of research for the American Camp Association, where her goals are to improve and expand access to camp experiences through evaluation and camp research. Prior to joining ACA, Laurie was a faculty member at California State University, Chico in the Department of Recreation, Hospitality, and Parks Management. She earned her doctorate at the University of Utah, where she studied youth development and research methods. Laurie and her family live in Salt Lake City.