**This Season's Ultimate Holiday Gift: Camp**

Is this scene familiar? You are standing in the aisle at your local toy store during the holidays trying to decide what would be the best gift. The problem is that your child has just about every toy in the store. Legos? Check. Trucks? Check. Electronic gadgets? Check, check, and check. This season, give the ultimate gift — camp.

“Camp is a unique and profoundly positive experience that impacts a young person’s social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. When you give a child the gift of camp, you provide lessons and memories that last a lifetime,” said Tom Rosenberg, president/CEO of the American Camp Association® (ACA).

Here is further proof that camp is the ultimate holiday gift:

* **Unlike toys, camp doesn’t break.** According to research from The Children’s Mutual, 41 percent of toys and presents given during the December holidays are broken by March.
* **Camp boosts a child’s sense of self.** Families want their children to develop genuine confidence and an awareness of their place in the world. These are things that can’t be bought or taught — they have to grow organically. That is where camp comes in.
* **Camp develops twenty-first century life skills.** Participation in programs like camp develops essential twenty-first century life skills. Where you may see a group of campers laughing and building a small rope bridge, the youth development professional sees problem-solving and teamwork skills being enhanced.
* **Camp is critical to a child’s education.** Camp is one of the oldest and finest community-based experiential education and development models in America. The natural extension of traditional education, camp is a deliberate, expanded learning environment that provides an education like no other.
* **Camp is fun.** Camp gives children and youth the opportunity to just relax, have fun, and be kids. They will experience the joy of splashing through puddles and the wonder of sitting in a quiet meadow and looking at the stars.

By giving the special child in your life the gift of camp, you are giving them the ultimate gift — independence, self-confidence, friendships, and competencies. Camp never breaks; it never expires or gets moldy. There won’t be a newer version released mid-summer, rendering all previous versions obsolete.

The [gift of camp](http://www.campparents.org/give-gift-camp) *is* real — giving children and youth real experiences, real opportunities for genuine growth, and unlimited potential.

Contact Public Relations at 765.346.3391 or pr@ACAcamps.org to interview an ACA spokesperson or for more information about the gift of camp. For customizable public service announcements or article reprints, visit our [Press Room](http://www.acacamps.org/press-room).