

Becoming an OCA Preferred Vendor 2020-2021



**ONTARIO CAMPS
ASSOCIATION**



A Message from our President

Thank you for your interest in the Ontario Camps Association (OCA), the leading organization in the camps and outdoor education industry in Ontario. Over 1,000 OCA Members are committed to the safety and well-being of participants at camps and outdoor education centres.

Camp has the power to be a transformative experience for every camper, staff, and parent.

It's that special thing that so many children and youth look forward to. Counting down the days, weeks and months until it's time to run back to the place where they see old friends and make new ones, build skills and relationships, take risks and learn more about themselves and the world around them.

OCA Accredited camps and outdoor education centres are invested in the health and safety of their participants, and operate at the highest standard.

Thank you for starting your OCA journey - we're so excited to meet you.

Heather Davidson
OCA President

**Find OCA on
Social Media**





About OCA

OCA has always been here to support our Members. In response to COVID-19, we established a COVID-19 Task Force to, at first, monitor COVID-19 reports and start mapping out plans for potential outcomes, and then growing to work with the government to create health and safety protocols for all camps in Ontario, and now to lobby the government for financial support.

Here are some of the ways OCA supported our Members:

- We sent out the OCA Weekly every week with news, guidance, updates on policy, and resources to support Members.
- We added a COVID-19 resource section to our website to support membership and the community at large.
- OCA leadership led the way in government relations and advocacy in a joint effort with the CCA.
- We connected OCA Members with members of the press.
- We advocated for media coverage for our Sustainability Fund proposal for camps, outdoor education centres and our Preferred Vendors, and to highlight the amazing work camps were doing to keep kids and staff safe. This resulted in more than 50 news stories and interviews.
- We supported our community around the clock with our After Hours Support Hotline and Task Force support.
- We hosted more than 60 Town Halls, Webinars, Think Tanks, and Coffee Hours to support and update our membership.
- We released official statements on issues affecting membership, such as Backyard Camps, Accreditation Disclaimer, the Closure of Overnight Camps and more.
- We met with officials from all branches of government, including the Prime Minister’s Office; the Office of the Premier; the Chief Medical Officer of Health; Ministry of Labour; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services; and, many caucuses. We advocated for

both financial support and policy change.

The OCA will continue to be here to support our Members and our industry at large. We look forward to having you with us, and are working hard for the future of camp and outdoor education in Ontario.

About OCA

Since 1965, the OCA Accreditation Program has helped camps create a safe and healthy experience for children and staff. Today, our more than 600 Standards have expanded to include outdoor education, and are aligned with ministry regulations and industry best practices, making OCA camps and outdoor education providers a great place for kids to learn new skills, make friends and most importantly, have FUN!



Membership Benefits

Our Members know that our Preferred Vendors are vetted.

That means our Members and non-member camps and outdoor education providers know they can trust your product/service and will look to you first to fill their needs for their camp and/or outdoor education programs!

Marketing

Preferred Vendors are sent an OCA brand kit which includes our OCA Preferred Vendor logo for use on your website (for the duration of your membership).

Preferred Vendors are sent and permitted use of the Camp and Outdoor Education Centre Contact List (we have 450+ camps and outdoor education centres) as well as the Preferred Vendor Contact List, for the duration of their membership. This list provides annually updated information about potential customers - the OCA is growing, and so is the customer base!

Preferred Vendors are publicly listed on our website and in our Camps Guide. Our website has a vendor-specific search tool accessible to any camp, outdoor education provider, or member of the public looking for quality products/services. Preferred Vendors are also listed by category, making it even easier for a potential customer to find you!

Preferred Vendors have the exclusive opportunity to advertise with OCA - this year, advertise with us with an OCA Weekly Banner Ad - reaching more than 800 Members with an average open rate of 60%! Have questions about advertising with us? Contact alex@ontariocamps.ca.

Preferred Vendors have access to Early Bird and discounted Member Rates for the Exhibit Hall at our annual conference, OCA Connects! This is the BIGGEST Camp Industry Trade Show in Canada, with more than 600 qualified delegates with purchasing power and/or influence. Due to COVID-19, our traditional format for our conference is on hold.

Government Lobbying

The OCA is here to support our Members. Our Preferred Vendors and the products and services they provide are instrumental to the success of the camps industry - we know that COVID-19 has adversely impacted your business.

Currently, our Government Relations Committee and Board of Directors are working on behalf of the Canadian camps industry for the financial security of our camps, outdoor education providers, and Preferred Vendors. Through a proposed Sustainability Fund and amendments to current non-applicable financial support programs, they are working to #savecanadiancamps.

Our past successes include:

- Establishing a minimum wage exemption for full-time students working at camp
- Camp Marine Module
- Working with Service Canada to assist foreign workers and campers in coming to Canadian camps and outdoor education centres



Support

The Preferred Vendors Committee meets a few times each year to discuss current industry trends, how to be successful in marketing to camps and outdoor education providers, Exhibit Hall tips from the pros, and to take your feedback so Preferred Vendors get the most out of their membership!

Last year, for the very first time, we released the Understanding Camps document. We spoke with successful Preferred Vendors and Camp Directors at different stages of their careers about their experiences to help you Understand Camp. This document is only available to our Preferred Vendors - Join Now!

Your membership will give you exclusive access to the OCA Weekly, our weekly newsletter with industry news, resources, and updates. Up to 15 of your staff can subscribe to our emails, so your whole team can stay up-to-date with industry news!

Mentoring

The camps industry is unique - we are a community of like-minded people who want to ensure that the Canadian tradition of camp and outdoor education is available, accessible, and safe for everyone. In this spirit, the OCA provides mentorship connections for Preferred Vendors.

OCA Events

The OCA team wants to make sure all our Members and our community are safe during the pandemic, and as such, we will be taking a measured and practical approach to OCA events. Please save the dates – more detail to come!

Tuesday, November 24, 2020 – Campfire of Inclusion

Thursday, February 25, 2021 – Event TBA

OCA delivers a variety of educational workshops to provide professional development and networking opportunities to our Members. These events are delivered as either part of your membership, or at a discounted members-only rate, and have included events such as:

- OCA Connects, our annual conference
- Health Conference
- Campfire of Inclusion
- Staff Summit
- Sessions on topics as needed, such as Mental Health First Aid Training, the Equity and Diversity Ambassador Program, and health hot topics
- OCA Meet-Ups, Holiday Parties, and other networking events

We are continuing to support our Members through Town Halls, Webinars, Think Tanks, Coffee Hours, and other virtual sessions on a variety of topics which have included:

- Mental Health
- Online Safety
- Virtual Programming

OCA also connects its Members with relevant external professional development opportunities in the OCA Weekly.

Research

The OCA provides Members with access to research, completed by the Canadian Camping Association and the American Camp Association, providing data and trends that are important to the camps industry. The COVID-19 Task Force and OCA Board of Directors will be researching successful programs that ran in Summer 2020 to provide insight and direction for the 2021 season and beyond. We also connect researchers to camps and outdoor education providers.

“ My time with the OCA has been a wonderful experience and has helped my business grow. I’ve built great relationships and friendships with many camps and other vendors.” - Bruce Phillips, Dialcom Communications Ltd.



We were blown away with the recent level of interest our Members had in getting involved with OCA's initiatives and committees. We are so excited to work with everyone, and grow our community of volunteers. We will be sharing ongoing opportunities in the OCA Weekly.

If you see a need, or have a special skill you would like to share, please reach out to our Executive Director, Joy, at joy@ontariocamps.ca.

Here is a brief description of all our committees!

Current Committees

Archives - A hard-working and fun-loving group of OCA Members who are dedicated to preserving our organization's and our Member Camps' history. Volunteers on this committee road-trip to Trent University to visit the Fonds - our archival library.

Awards - We'd like to thank the Academy... This committee reviews awards submissions and selects recipients to recognize our outstanding camp, outdoor education centre, and vendor community!

Community Engagement - We love our volunteers, and the Community Engagement committee helps the OCA make sure our membership knows how to get involved!

Educational Events - School is in session! This committee plans and executes educational programming for events such as OCA Connects, Campfire of Inclusion, Staff Summit and the Health Conference.

Environment - It's not easy being green - this committee develops educational workshops that help our membership be stewards of the environment.

Equity & Diversity - Safe-Space makers extraordinaire; this committee works to gather and develop resources for the full spectrum of equity and diversity, and create educational programs like our Ambassador Program.

Finance - From crunching on GORP to crunching the numbers, this committee reviews the budget and financial statements with the Executive Director, and provides expertise for grants, fundraising, and financial issues.

Government Relations - This committee goes to bat on behalf of the OCA and the camp/outdoor education centre industry at all levels of government.

Health Care - This committee boosts an injection of fun into Health Care and promotes and develops the highest standards of camp health care. See the whole team out at our Health Conference!

Media - Do you think the news needs more camp? So do we! Working at the direction of the Board and in collaboration with other OCA Committees, you'll help OCA celebrate and espouse the value of the camp experience to a wide audience.

Membership - Do you love America's Got Talent? This committee is kind of like the judges, but instead of watching magicians they read through new camp and outdoor education centre applications. They make recommendations for who gets to move on to the finals – aka work towards accreditation.

Mentorship - Do you find yourself giving camp advice to people in the supermarket? It's time to be an OCA Mentor! Help camps and outdoor education centres through the ups and downs of camp life and make new friends along the way.

Nominations and Governance - If you're the long-time running champion of Where's Waldo, you've got what it takes to recruit candidates for our Board of Directors. The committee finds qualified and interested candidates for upcoming vacancies on the OCA Board.

OCA General Support - Looking for a way to volunteer with a shorter time commitment? We often need an extra set of hands around the office or at our events, and the perks are great - you get to hang out with the OCA team!

Outdoor Education - We're bringing outdoor education inside of the OCA! This committee is working to ensure stellar outdoor education centres get recognition for their commitment to health, safety, and quality programming through our Accreditation process.

Preferred Vendors - Our Preferred Vendors are Takin' Care of Business – everyday. Two to three times a year, these pros come together and start workin' overtime to brainstorm and share ideas for success at the OCA Connects Exhibit Hall and throughout the year.

Special Needs Resource - This committee advocates for inclusion, and is dedicated to educating camps and outdoor education centres about providing support for people with special needs.

Standards - Since 1965, the Accreditation Program has been making camps safer, healthier, and more FUN. This committee makes it all happen from matching to training to visits to recommendations to getting your very own (and maintaining) your ability to use the OCA Accredited Camp Logo.

Standards Review - We could shout our love of Ontario Regulation 503/17 from the rooftops! This committee reviews OCA Member feedback, monitors best practices and legislation, and provides proposed amendments to the membership each year.

Standards Visitor - If you're a fan of field trips (and excursions), this is the volunteer role for you. As a visitor, you represent the OCA, and are our in-the-field correspondents. It's thanks to our visitors that our Accreditation Program is so effective. It's a great opportunity to share ideas and resources, meet camp peers, and be involved in our OCA community.

All OCA Committees are working within COVID-19 guidelines going forward.

