



**ONTARIO CAMPS
ASSOCIATION**

Becoming an OCA Member

2021-2022



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President's Letter

Let me be the first to thank you for your interest in the Ontario Camps Association, the leading organization in the camp 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. Today we stand on the cusp of what may be a true new beginning for many of us (as well as the camp industry as a whole).

To say that 2021 has been a monumental year for our industry would be an understatement. Since March 2020 the camp industry has been one of the hardest hit by this global pandemic and through it all, the OCA has been proud not only to support our Members but also advocate for the importance of camp in the lives of all those who are touched by it.

Whether it was providing a virtual touchpoint in the early days while we felt as though we were all clinging to the same buoy in a rough storm, or helping to navigate the ever-changing world of government guidance, grants and regulations, we strove to provide a sense of calm, hope and pragmatic optimism as we advocated for our industry.

While the pandemic isn't over yet and many of our Members and friends are still struggling, there has been some light at the end of the proverbial tunnel, and we have never wavered in our commitment to providing whatever support we could. For me, the only real silver lining of the pandemic was the sense of community and belonging that I felt within our membership.

"I truly believe that if we can sustain this level of engagement and community around our industry that we are poised to not only turn the page but begin to write a new chapter about what camp can be in Ontario."

That can start today, with your membership application. This inquiry package has all of the information that you'll need to be a part of this new chapter and we are excited to have you join the OCA community and journey with us. Take a read through the benefits that apply to your membership, and join today to start receiving your benefits right away!



Heather Davidson
OCA President



About OCA

Since 1965, OCA Accreditation 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 centres, and are aligned with ministry regulations and industry best practices, making OCA camps and outdoor education centres a great place for kids to learn new skills, make friends and most importantly, have FUN!

OUR MISSION

The Ontario Camps Association supports, advances, promotes and accredits camps throughout Ontario.

Since 1933, the Ontario Camps Association (OCA) has played an important leadership role in promoting and encouraging children and youth camping in Ontario. The OCA is a voluntary, non-profit organization that draws its membership from camps, individuals and like-minded organizations and agencies, all devoted to maintaining high standards for organized camping, and to sharing information and ideas that maintain these standards.

The OCA takes pride in our history while positively looking forward to our future.

OUR VISION

Enriching the lives of children, youth and families one camp at a time.

OUR VALUES

- **INTEGRITY:** Demonstrating honesty and fairness at all times.
- **RESPECT:** Recognizing and protecting the inherent worth of every person, including oneself.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** Being dependable and accountable for choices, actions and commitments.
- **INCLUSIVENESS:** Fostering a sense of belonging for all.
- **CARING:** Building relationships and demonstrating concern for the needs of others.
- **OPENNESS:** Ability and willingness to embrace new and different ideas and to be open to change.

OUR CODE OF CONDUCT

New this year is OCA's Code of Conduct. Different than the OCA Code of Professional Ethics camps and outdoor education centres follow as part of the OCA Standards, the Code of Conduct applies to all OCA Members, Staff, and Volunteers.

You'll find the Code of Conduct on OCA's website, Members Portal, and every time you register for OCA events.

Click here to view the Code of Conduct!

OUR CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR MEMBER CAMPS AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRES

- **COMMUNICATION:** We shall be professional and accurate in all communication to staff, campers and families/guardians, to maintain confidentiality, to eliminate misunderstanding, and to prevent recruitment of another camp's staff. Camps must also refrain from using another camp's name in their literature and marketing materials without written consent.
- **ADVERTISING:** We shall ensure that all programmes, facilities and services are accurately advertised.
 - All Accredited Member Camps agree to use either the approved Association logo or the statement "Accredited Member of the Ontario Camps Association" in all advertising.
- **MONEY:** We shall conduct all financial dealings according to legal and fair business practices.
- **PRIVACY:** We shall protect the confidentiality of campers, parents and staff.
- **EMPLOYMENT:** We shall ask all applicants if they have been employed by another camp. If so, the director will, after obtaining consent, contact the previous director for reference and good character.
- **REQUESTS:** We shall request approval of the camp owner and/or director for the use of files, lists, equipment and supplies of another camp, whether it is in operation or not.

OUR STANDARDS

OCA requires Accredited Members to follow and maintain standards for operational excellence.

More than 600 OCA Standards keep Members accountable and operating at a level of excellence. For parents and guardians, it means peace of mind that the facilities they send their children to are safe, accessible, and professionally operated.

We also offer our Members on-going educational workshops, conferences, and other professional development opportunities.

WHY WE DO IT

We're a community of passionate people from all walks of life with one thing in common: our love for camp and outdoor education. Working together as a community, we make Ontario the very best place for people to go to camp.

OCA APPROVED

OCA Accredited Camp and Outdoor Education Centre Members have worked incredibly hard to obtain and maintain their accreditation status. Adhering to over 600 health and safety standards, these Members are OCA Approved and proudly display the OCA Accredited Member logo! Formerly known as The Stamp of a Great Camp, OCA Approved camps and outdoor education centres adhere to requirements related to wellness, qualifications, diversity, safety, opportunities, programming, inclusivity, and education. When parents and guardians see the OCA Accredited Member logo, they can trust you to provide a safe camp and/or outdoor education centre experience for their campers.

[Click here to read about OCA Approved.](#)



OCA Standards Process

TO OBTAIN ACCREDITATION

FIRST VISIT

Once a Provisional 1 (P1) application has been approved, the camp/outdoor centre will have a Standards Visit in the upcoming summer. In the fall, the Standards Committee will review the answer sheets from the visit and make a recommendation to the Board. Then, the camp/outdoor centre will be informed of the Board's decision as to whether they will advance to P2 or remain at P1 status.

SECOND VISIT

The next summer, a second visit will take place. If both the first and second visits are successful, the camp/outdoor centre will become accredited for either one or four years and will be informed of their status in the fall.

UNSUCCESSFUL VISITS

If a Provisional Applicant is unable to become accredited after three summers of visits, the applicant will lose the opportunity to become accredited. However, after a one-year lapse, they may re-apply to restart the process as a Provisional Applicant.

TO MAINTAIN ACCREDITATION

Once a camp/outdoor centre becomes accredited, they are revisited either the next year or in four years. The Board will re-accredit the camp/outdoor centre if they meet 100% of the applicable Mandatory Standards and 90% of the applicable Recommended Standards in each section. If a camp/outdoor centre does not meet these requirements, the Standards Committee will conduct a review. Once completed, the committee will make a recommendation to the Board.

POSSIBLE VISIT RECOMMENDATIONS

- The camp/outdoor centre is accredited for four years.
- The Board requires a letter of response or undertaking from the camp/outdoor centre to comply with the Standards before a four year accreditation is given.
- The Board requires the camp/outdoor centre to be re-visited the following year and requires a letter of response from the camp/outdoor centre to comply with the Standards before a one year accreditation is given.
- The camp/outdoor centre is not accredited and remains a Provisional

STANDARDS TIMELINE AT-A- GLANCE

MARCH

- Visitors and camps/outdoor centres matched
- Mentors and camps/outdoor centres matched

APRIL/MAY

- Standards Visit packages emailed
- Mandatory online standards training
- Standards Visit date due to OCA office last Friday in April

JUNE

- Step 1 submission of online answer sheets due June 15

JULY/AUGUST

- Camp Standards Visits

FALL

- Outdoor centre Standards Visits
- Standards Committee review of answer sheets and recommendations to OCA Board of Directors
- Visit outcome letters emailed

Applicant.

- The Board may revoke the membership of any camp/outdoor centre if, in their opinion, the camp/outdoor centre does not adhere to the objectives, goals or standards of the OCA.

The Board's decision may be appealed. For more information, see the **Introduction section in the OCA Standards.**

OCA Events

The OCA team wants to make sure all our Members and our community are safe as the pandemic continues. We will be announcing event dates throughout the year — here's a tentative overview of what to expect*:

FALL 2021 (SEPT. TO DEC.)

- Reflecting on Summer 2021
- Social Events
- Hiring Fairs and Webinars
- Professional Development Event(s)

WINTER 2022 (JAN., FEB.)

- Annual General Meeting
- OCA's 90th Anniversary
- OCA Connects
- Awards Evening

SPRING 2022 (MAR., APR., MAY, JUN.)

- Staff Summit
- Skills Training Event
- New Directors Professional Development
- Hiring Fairs
- Campfire of Inclusion

*Events are subject to change relative to the current status of COVID-19.



Membership Benefits

Benefit Category	Accredited Camps/ OECs	Provisional Camps/ OECs	Affiliates	Honorary Life Members	Individuals	Preferred Vendors
OCA Logos	✓		✓			✓
Support	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Government Lobbying	✓	✓			✓	✓
Mentoring	✓	✓			✓	✓
Marketing: OCA Website Listing	✓		✓ (coming soon)			✓
Marketing: Member Communications and Resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marketing: Social Media	✓		✓			✓
Marketing: Contact Lists						✓
Members Portal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Annual Conference and Educational Workshops	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Research	✓	✓			✓	✓
Savings	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Voting Information	✓			✓	✓	

OCA LOGOS

The following OCA Members are permitted use of the OCA logo for the duration of their membership.

ACCREDITED CAMPS AND OECS	AFFILIATES	PREFERRED VENDORS
 <p>The OCA Accredited Member logo identifies to families, potential staff, and campers/ participants that a camp/OEC meets the highest standards — only Accredited Camps and OECs are permitted to use the OCA Accredited Member logo.</p>	 <p>Affiliates are provided the OCA Affiliate Member logo to use on their marketing materials.</p>	 <p>Preferred Vendors are provided the OCA Preferred Vendor logo to use on their marketing materials.</p>

SUPPORT

The OCA is here to support our Members. Collectively, our Board of Directors and wide network of camp industry professionals work with professional consultants including lobbyists, health experts, lawyers, policy advisors, social workers and more to provide OCA Members with up-to-date and accurate resources and support.

In this past year, this support enabled OCA to guide our Members through the reopening of camps, and will enable us to continue to support camps who were unable to open, or who pivoted to alternative programs as they return to their usual format in summer 2022.

CAMPS, OECS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

The OCA Support Line provides assistance to Members outside of regular business hours.

We help you navigate both government and OCA Standards, and support you every step of the way — we want all camps and outdoor education centres to succeed and be safe and fun environments for everyone!

PREFERRED VENDORS

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!

GOVERNMENT LOBBYING

In a non-pandemic year, when changes to regulations that have a potential negative impact on the camp industry are proposed by the government, the OCA lobbies the government on behalf of all its membership camps, outdoor education providers and preferred vendors. As the OCA represents more than 400 camps, it's had a powerful voice with government officials over the last number of years, and has had a number of successes, including:

- 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

Over the past year (2020-21), OCA worked harder than ever to advocate for the camp industry. Our Board of Directors, Government Relations Committee, and the COVID-19 Task Force lobbied the federal and provincial government for the ability for camps to reopen, for financial supports, and for guidance from the Ministry of Health to operate camps as responsibly and safely as possible in summer 2021.

MENTORING

MENTOR PROGRAM

The OCA is built on connections and relationships, with one of our biggest strengths coming from sharing our knowledge with each other. The Mentor Program is a great vehicle for sharing resources and information. It's also a wonderful way to be involved!

The OCA provides Generalist and Specialist mentorship connections for new directors, camps and outdoor education centres; camps/OECs in need of support; preferred vendors; and individual members who, in writing, commit to starting the Provisional One Application process at the next available opportunity.

RESOURCES

OCA's Mentorship Committee also has a mandate to create and share resources with OCA Members. The committee's most recently published resource is a Director's Resource E-book and they're currently work on a Director Onboarding E-book for anyone new to the OCA.



MARKETING

OCA WEBSITE LISTING

OCA Accredited Camps, Outdoor Education Providers, and Preferred Vendors have their information posted on our newly redesigned website. Camps and OECs, as well as Preferred Vendors, have their own search bars ("Search for a Camp" and "Search for a Vendor"), and are listed in our Camp and Outdoor Education Centre and categorized Preferred Vendors Directories. Coming soon is a directory of OCA Affiliates!

Our Find a Camp or Outdoor Centre tool is an interactive search feature that helps campers and their families find the camp or outdoor centre that is best for their needs!

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS AND RESOURCES

The OCA sends out a weekly e-newsletter, the OCA Weekly, to all OCA Members. Inside, it provides updates from the OCA, relevant news and resources, health updates, policy updates from the government, upcoming events, what's happening on social media, and other information relevant to the camps industry.

We launched the OCA Members' Slack Channel this year to help OCA Members connect as a community to share solutions and updates to challenges we were all facing. It has been extremely successful and helpful as we navigated summer 2021.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Our OCA social media promotes and brings awareness of the benefits of camp, celebrates and supports OCA Members, and shares and cheers on the successes of our membership.

CONTACT LISTS

Preferred Vendors are sent and permitted use of the annually updated Camp and Outdoor Education Centre and Preferred Vendor Contact Lists, for the duration of their membership.

MEMBERS PORTAL

JOB BOARD

Each accredited camp and OEC can submit jobs to the OCA Job Board. Coming soon, Preferred Vendors will also have the ability to post jobs for any non-program camp industry-related postings for IT, admin, customer service, etc.

OCA'S SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

In addition to the OCA Weekly, many of our updates are posted to our social media account. Follow us to stay informed! Click the platform names below to be taken to OCA's channels.

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

Please be sure that your organization/business has liked/followed us!

RESOURCES

You'll find public and OCA Members'-only resources in the following categories:

- Boating
- COVID-19
- Equity & Diversity
- Health Care
- Legal
- OCA Standards, Guides, E-books, and more
- Special Needs
- Swimming
- Virtual Programming

COMMUNICATIONS

You'll find back issues of our OCA Weekly (up to 3 weeks) and important statements the OCA Board and office team have shared.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

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 membership, or at a discounted Members'-only rate. A brief overview of this membership season's upcoming events can be found on **page 6**.

We also connect our Members with relevant external professional development opportunities in the OCA Weekly.

AFFILIATES

Affiliates are welcomed to participate (in a typical year) in our Affiliate Showcase, a great opportunity for visibility and engagement with our Members!

PREFERRED VENDORS

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.

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. We also connect researchers to camps and outdoor education providers.

SAVINGS

Accredited and Provisional Camps and OECs, Affiliates and Individuals all have access to various savings with the Canadian Camping Association, OCA Preferred Vendors and American Camp Association.

PROVISIONAL MEMBERS

Those who are working towards accreditation have *most* of the same benefits as Accredited Members. The differences lie in the public perspective: Provisional Members are NOT permitted to use OCA's Accredited Member logo, and are not listed on OCA's website or social media channels. They also do not have use of OCA's Job Board.

When asked, they can say they are working towards accreditation.

Savings	Accredited Camps/ OECs	Provisional Camps/ OECs	Affiliates	Individuals
Membership in the Canadian Camping Association	✓	✓		✓
Access to a thoroughly vetted insurance program created for camps and outdoor centres.	✓			
Through our Preferred Vendors program, OCA membership includes discounts for quality equipment and services.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Discounts for American Camp Association conferences.	✓	✓	✓	✓

VOTING INFORMATION

ACCREDITED CAMPS AND OECs

Have three (3) votes at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and any other Special Meeting called by the OCA Board.

HONORARY LIFE AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Have one (1) vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and any other Special Meeting called by the OCA Board.



Volunteer with OCA

Volunteers are the heart of OCA and throughout the pandemic, our Members have stepped-up to support the OCA community. As we move into a reopened Ontario, we look forward to all of the wonderful outcomes our engaged volunteers can create for our Association!

Here is a brief description of all our current committees!

Committee

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.

ELECTIONS

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.

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.

GRIEVANCE

Camp and outdoor education isn't always fun and games - when the OCA or a Member needs support in handling a grievance, this committee is here to help.

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

Be prepared isn't just a motto for Scouts. Working in tandem with the Government Relations Committee, you'll help identify topics to be addressed in the media, and prepare OCA spokespeople to give great interviews, keeping OCA in the news cycle!

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.

MENTOR PROGRAM

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

MENTORSHIP

♪ Matchmaking, matchmaking, make me a match... Work as a team to find suitable pairings of Generalist and Specialist Mentors and mentees. Brainstorm and create much-needed resources to continue OCA's efforts in supporting our membership!

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.

OCA Committees are currently working within COVID-19 guidelines.



PHOTOS GENEROUSLY SHARED BY:

C.Y.O. Camp Brébeuf, Camp Can-Aqua, Lambton Centre: United Church, McGovern, Camp Tawingo, YMCA of Greater Toronto

Many of the photos used in this guide were taken before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.