



ONTARIO CAMPS
ASSOCIATION

Annual Report 2024-2025



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Camp Couchiching

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Photographs shared in this Annual Report were generously shared by the following camps: Camp Couchiching, Camp Kandalore, Camp Pathfinder, Camp Robin Hood, Camp Scugog, Camp Tawingo, Camp Wabun, Camp Walden, Camp Wanapitei, Camp Wenonah, CNIB Lake Joe, Taylor Statten Camps, Moorelands Camp, and Muskoka Woods.
At OCA, we strive for accuracy, but errors can occur. If there is an error or omission, please let the OCA office team know. We apologize in advance.

Message from the President



Hello OCA Friends,

Thanks for making 2025 another lively year for our Association! Your enthusiasm and commitment really keep the OCA humming.

This year, the Board focused on setting up the OCA for ongoing success—always with the future and creation of a sturdy foundation in mind. Committees led the way on new projects and we kicked off a big job: beginning to streamline all Committee Terms of Reference as one of our endeavours as outlined in the goal of “Modernize & Strengthen the OCA” theme from the New Horizons strategic plan.

Wait until you read all the Committee reports in this publication. It’s really impressive what was moved forward on behalf of the Association! Thank you!

In addition to the work with the Committees, the Board has been revising, evaluating and doing some gap analysis on our existing set of policies, statements and processes. We look forward to obtaining the Canadian Camping Association’s census materials to help drive data-based decision making.

For 2026, our eyes are on the Strategic Plan theme of “Build Industry Capacity & Resilience.” That means more work on our Standards, more learning opportunities, and lots of ways to keep our camp and outdoor education communities strong and inclusive. We’d love your feedback on how this is approached. Please watch for chances to share your ideas in the Weekly newsletter early in the new year.

Thanks to everyone — Board of Directors, committees, volunteers, OCA Office Team, and especially Joy Levy, our Executive Director — for making adventures (and memories) possible.

With gratitude and a smile,
Jen Dundas (she/her)
OCA President 2025-2026

Message from the Executive Director



As I put pen to paper, I am overwhelmed by how remarkable this past year has been and overjoyed by the progress our community has made together. I am grateful to work alongside our dedicated team, Board of Directors, and countless volunteers, and especially thankful for the guiding leadership of OCA President Jen Dundas, whose support has helped OCA thrive.

This is a small snapshot of some of our achievements this year. Years ago, we identified major issues with our database. While these problems existed for some time, this was the year we had the time and resources to take action. Rolling out OCA re:Members was a long journey and far from simple. Our team is made up of hardworking nonprofit professionals, but none of us were technology specialists (until now!). Throughout the journey we learned, adapted, and asked questions every step of the way. The path wasn't always linear, but our commitment to doing this right never wavered. We shared updates with the Board, collaborated with a small group of Beta Testers, and developed a clear communications plan and timeline for the full launch. Years from now, we will finally have readily accessible data at our fingertips.

This year also gave me the chance to recognize the incredible work within our own team. Rose Attard, Membership Director, stepped up as Project Manager for OCA re:Members, carrying the project with steady leadership, patience, and unwavering commitment. Lea Randall, Marketing and Events Associate, led our transition to Constant Contact with skill and creativity, ensuring communications and events remained clear and consistent throughout every change. Jenna Purther, Special Events Associate, who is key player in navigating systems, and guiding our day-to-day work and events with calm and confidence. And Elana Davis, OCA Bookkeeper, whose diligent bookkeeping has kept us organized and running smoothly. We also welcomed Stephanie Masson as our new Standards Accreditation Associate. Her energy, professionalism, and care for standards and our members have already strengthened our accreditation work in meaningful ways.

Another highlight was our 2025 OCA Camp Tour, where we visited thirteen day and overnight camps and Preferred Vendors. Seeing members in action and touring grounds, sharing concerns, and highlighting emerging trends inspires how we shape relevant, informed support. This energy carries through the year, as the OCA team supports members with practical guidance and hands-on help every step of the way.

If this year showed us anything, it's that the strength of the OCA community lies in camp professionals, volunteers, and teams who show up every day for children, youth, and families across Ontario.

Thank you all for everything you do!

Yours in camping,
Joy Levy
OCA Executive Director

Supporting our camp community through strong operations



**Over 195
Inquiries**

From June to August 2025, OCA supported over **195** calls and emails from members and the general public related to summer camp questions.
10% growth from 2023-2024



**775+
members**

OCA's **free** professional development webinars, Town Halls and public committee meetings were attended by more than **775** members!
20% growth from 2023-2024



**40 free
resources**

OCA shared over **40** free external professional development webinars and funding opportunities with our members through the OCA Weekly.



**8 news
articles**

OCA was quoted or featured in **EIGHT** news articles this year. OCA Members were featured in over **65** news articles!



**70k views
a day**

Working with our local BIA, OCA ran a billboard campaign promoting working at summer camp that average **70,000 views a day!**



**8% growth in
subscribers**

Our Weekly mailing list grew by **8%** after we switched our provider to **NEW** Constant Contact.



Treasurer and Finance Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Gord Dunlop, Treasurer, YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

Rob Carmichael, HLM

Jesse Kronick, Camp White Pine

Brandon McClounie, YMCA Greater Toronto

Leon Muszynski, HLM, Camp Arowhon

This year, the Finance Committee has collaborated to advise the OCA on its financial decision making. The OCA finances remain stable and are in a good financial position. Over the past year, a significant investment has been made in the new membership system, re:Members. While there are costs associated with the transition to this new system, prudent financial management has left the OCA in a good spot.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Work has included proposing revisions to the committee's terms of reference, revenue opportunities and structuring membership fees to incentivise payments on time. We've updated the OCA investment policy to ensure it guides and stewards responsible investment decisions.

GOALS

Continue to guide the OCA's long term finances considering investments, annual budget, and financial policies. The transition to re:Members will provide a better data set on membership makeup in order to better understand our membership and fee structures. Committee members possess a wealth of knowledge and are always keen to help.

2024-25 Financial Update

Our audited financial statements were distributed to membership prior to the AGM. For anyone interested in learning more or reading them, please reach out to the OCA office. It has been a strong financial year, and there is much to be proud of. In reviewing the audited statements, you will note the following highlights:

A stronger-than-expected financial position: Our 2024-25 budget anticipated a planned deficit related to the one-time implementation fee for our new membership system, re:Members. I'm pleased to share that a successful annual conference and growth in membership resulted in revenues exceeding projections. Combined with careful expense management by the OCA staff team, this has reduced our budgeted loss to just \$2,123.

One-time transition costs: As part of the shift to the new membership system, the OCA incurred a one-time software implementation fee, as well as additional technology and communication expenses. During the transition, some temporary overlap occurred between the old and new membership and event registration systems. This project is in line with the terms envisioned by the OCA's Legacy Fund, and in October 2024, the Board of Directors approved the withdrawal of \$30,563.51 to cover a portion of implementation costs.

Updated financial categorization and timing changes: You may notice that the OCA's investments previously categorized as cash equivalents have now been reclassified as term deposits, as their terms exceed 90 days. Additionally, the change in membership systems has adjusted the timing of when membership fees are received from our payment processor prior to fiscal year-end (September 30). While this results in lower deferred membership fees compared to previous years, we remain on track for strong membership retention.

Thank you to the committee members! Thank you as well to the team at Kraft Berger LLP for their continued support and for conducting this year's financial audit.

Sincerely,
Gord Dunlop
OCA Treasurer

Annual Conference Committee



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jordanna Grossinger, Co-Chair, Camp Robin Hood

Rachel Kent, Co-Chair, Individual Member

John Hannant-Minchel, Camp Tamarack

Kevin Linder, University of Guelph

Whitney Pratt, Camp Wenonah

Megan Snape, Branksome Hall Day Camps

Erin Sunstrum, Individual Member

Nathan Whan, Camp Quality Canada

Matt Wilfred, Canadian Camping Association

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The OCA Connects 2025 Conference returned to the Hilton Markham Suites Conference Centre for two inspiring days of learning, connection and celebration. Building on the incredible energy from the previous year, the conference theme *"Rooted in Leadership, Growing for Tomorrow"*, brought together camp professionals from across North America to explore new ideas and challenge traditional ways of thinking.

The conference kicked off with a powerful keynote from Michael Brandwein who reminded us of the importance of our foundational leadership skills - the greeting of a new friend by name, the gathering of a group's attention while continuously striving for the next level of excellence. These messages resonated throughout the conference as delegates gained tools and insights that will help carry the camping movement forward for years to come.

The conference committee's commitment to equity remained a core focus, ensuring all speakers were financially compensated and that financial assistance was available to delegates. The success of OCA Connects was truly a collective effort across the association. A special highlight was the reimagined Hub hosted by the Archives committee, which celebrated our shared history and reminded us of the value of learning from the past as we grow towards the future.

GOALS

We are deeply honoured by the trust that you, the OCA community, have placed in us over the last two years. Co-Chairing the conference has been a highlight of our careers, made possible only through the unwavering support and enthusiasm of so many. From the exceptional OCA team who were always ready to answer any question and tackle any challenge, to our dedicated committee members, who poured countless hours into perfecting every detail - our heartfelt thanks to you all.

As we pass the torch on to next year's Co-Chairs Kevin Linder and Evan Roth, we do so with excitement and confidence. We are cheering you on as you begin this exciting journey as co-chairs and can't wait to see how you'll continue to grow OCA Connects conferences and inspire the next generation of camp leaders.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jordanna Grossinger, Rachel Kent

Archives Committee



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Diane Blair, Chair, HLM

Margaret Bernardo, HLM

Marilee MacFarlane, HLM

Catherine Ross, HLM

Patti Thom, HLM, Camp Tanamakoon

GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Once again, I wish to start by thanking our past OCA members and camping leaders for their foresight in creating the OCA Archives and to safekeeping our rich history. I would also like to thank the Archives Committee, our current OCA members, and Trent University for their on-going support and contributions, ensuring the OCA Archives continue to be a valuable resource for today and for future generations.

In 2025, the Archives Committee remained focused on its four priorities: **celebrating, creating, accessing** and **donating to** OCA Archives, with the common goals of showcasing the importance of our history to camping today and enhancing awareness of the valuable resources available in the archives collection at Trent.

Our current initiatives and 2026 plans:

1. **Celebrating and discovering our history** at the OCA Connects 2025 Conference – **The Archives HUB**, in collaboration with Community Engagement Committee, offered OCA conference delegates a place to explore and connect with our history through displays from our archives at Trent and opportunities to meet and chat directly with OCA's own HLMs and our Trent Archivist. The 2025 HUB highlighted OCA's founders and 'firsts', including stories about ground breaking OCA leaders and camp achievements, and some of the many accomplished leaders in Canada who got their start as campers and staff at OCA camps. Also, over 40 OCA camps were showcased in the HUB for achieving a special milestone. Lastly, a special thanks to all the HLMs and Trent Archivist, Karen Suurtamm, for volunteering your time and sharing your wisdom and insight in the HUB, to help connect the dots between our past, present and future.

The HUB will be back at OCA Connects 2026 Conference with more opportunities to discover how our history matters!

2. **Donating to Archives** – Our today is tomorrow's history! We invite you to make a gift to the future with your camp pictures and stories! Whether celebrating a milestone or not, we encourage all OCA members to donate both old and recent camp memorabilia to archives! The HUB is also a great way to share your stories with colleagues and then donate digital and paper-based items to the archives after the conference, or contact Trent to arrange a donation at any time. Need help capturing your history? The Archives Committee and Trent will continue to offer learning opportunities in the HUB and some "Quick Guides" with tips on camp archiving, how to donate items or digital records to Trent, and how to access and use of the archive collection. For current guides, visit the Archives page on the OCA portal or search guide-camp-collections on www.trentu.ca.

3. **Creating Archives** – In the words of Mary Northway (OCA Archives founder and HLM), "...history informs the present and, like a flashlight, discover paths to the future". To help shine a light on that history, the Archives Committee will continue with its Legacies & Lessons articles, which explore current concerns of OCA members and offer insight from relevant history available in the OCA Archives.

We will also continue to capture insight into the people and important moments in our history through on-going HLM audio archive interviews. Over 400 hrs of wisdom from 35+ years of interviews are now available in the OCA Archives at Trent. If you'd like to be interviewed, please contact Diane or visit The HUB at the OCA Connects 2026 Conference.

4. **Archive Access** – In addition to showcasing OCA Archives in The HUB, work continues with Trent to make more of the camping collection publicly available through Trent's Digital Repository. Our priority for 2026 is on OCA camp and community pictures, records and resources that are already in digital form. We invite you to share digital data from your camp or OCA activities by contacting the Trent University Archivist, karensuurtamm@trentu.ca.

Respectfully submitted by:
Diane Blair

Awards Committee



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jennifer "JJ" Jupp, Chair, HLM, Camp Wenonah

Liz Greenway, HLM, Tapawingo: YWCA

Patti Thom, HLM, Camp Tanamakoon

Bev Unger, HLM, Camp Robin Hood

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The past year has been one of growth for the Awards Committee. Two committee members were added and a new chairperson. The committee updated the descriptions and clarified the criteria for several of the OCA Awards. A two-stage nomination process was introduced in October 2024 to encourage more nominations. Nomination numbers were high thus leading to difficulties in selecting recipients to receive certain awards. This is the kind of challenge we want in the association! OCA Awards were presented at the OCA Connects Conference in Toronto in February 2025 at various times throughout the two-day event. Most recipients were present to receive their awards in person.

GOALS

1. Further define and clarify OCA Award descriptions and criteria as needed.
2. Highlight awards and clarify criteria at the OCA Connects Conference in 2026.
3. Evaluate the nomination process and if advantageous, make changes to it.
4. Research awards from other camp associations.
5. Consider new OCA Awards.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jennifer Jupp

The OCA Awards Committee is proud to present the 2024 Award Winners:

Brian Blackstock OCA Archives Award

YMCA Camp Wangoma Alumni/Cedar Ridge Camp

Dorothy Walter Award of Excellence

Jennifer Dundas
Camp Couchiching

Honorary Life Member Award

Don Bocking
Camp Ponacka

Anne Morawetz
Camp Ponacka

Eoin "Woody" Wood
Camp Wenonah

John "Jorgi" Jorgenson International Development Award

Matthew Wilfrid
Go Camp Pro

Preferred Vendors Recognition Award

Camp Connection Store

Camp Safety Network

J & J Crafts

Talk to Wax

Ron and Mickey Johnstone Youth Leadership Award

Noah Egli
Camp Otterdale

Volunteer Recognition Award

Trudi Axtmann
Camp Kitchikewana

Margaret Bernardo
HLM, Camp Wabikon

Rob Carmichael
HLM

Michelle Colomvakos
Camp Robin Hood

Brian Hay
Variety Village

Chanie Mandelbaum
Camp Ramah in Canada

Rankin Middlebrook
Appleby College Camps

Kyle Nicholson
Office of the Minister – Immigration

Matthew Wilfrid
Go Camp Pro



CARS Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sari Grossinger, Co-Chair, Camp Robin Hood & Camp Walden

Tracy Morley, Co-Chair, Kilcoo Camp

Kayley Core, Vice-Chair, Bayview Glen Camp

Rob Deman, Honourary Co-Chair, Camp Kennebec

Julie Gallie, CampTO

Dana McDade, Camp Otterdale

Ilana Stoch, Camp Kodiak

April Young, Camp Maple Leaf

Brian Hayes, Past Chair, Variety Village

The CARS (Camp Accessibility, Resource & Support) committee meetings are not just for camps who already are specialized for those with varying abilities and medical needs. The meetings are open to all camp professionals who want to share resources, discuss hot topics, improve their inclusion programs, and are looking for ways to connect with other camp directors.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The committee continued to meet regularly, welcoming both new and returning OCA camp professionals to network and share resources on a wide range of issues related to inclusion, accessibility, AODA, programming, staffing, funding, training, and many other camp related hot topics!

The committee continued to use the Basecamp platform as an important touchpoint between meetings with postings and discussions about current events and resources, such as:

- Staff and camper funding opportunities/grants
- Staff and camper recruitment opportunities
- The sharing of programs/surveys/studies that may be of interest to OCA member camps and their communities
- Promoting upcoming meetings and the ability to network between the almost 70 members on this platform

We had lively discussions at the 2025 OCA Connects Conference during the CARS round table session, as well as several other sessions that helped educate delegates around the topic of improving inclusion and accessibility for staff and campers with special needs.

Our Core Team was also a valuable resource and support to the OCA office and Board assisting in answering questions or concerns that arose throughout the year from the membership related to AODA policies and inclusive practices and programming; reviewing and recommending changes regarding Standards; and updates to the OCA website.

GOALS

Our committee will have new and emerging camp leaders step into the role of Chair and Vice-Chair in 2026. Continuing to promote and meet monthly as a committee with our meetings open to all OCA members. We will expand our roster of guest speakers invited to share their expertise and network at our meetings.

Once again, the CARS committee is excited to be an active part of the OCA Connects 2026 Conference where we will host a coffee chat session and have encouraged speaker proposals related to our committee's work.

Plans are underway to revive and refresh *The Campfire of Inclusion*, a continuing education and professional development workshop in Spring 2026.

We also plan to host more CARS Lunch and Learns to help educate those who work with, and often refer potential campers with a variety of needs, to camps so that these professionals are aware of the continuum of OCA camps to choose from.

We are in the process of looking into how our member camps can best meet the needs of campers who receive funding through the Ontario Autism Program. Our committee is developing “quick reference” staff training resources about inclusion for summer 2026 and beyond!

Respectfully submitted:

Sari Grossinger, Tracy Morely, and Rob Deman



Community Engagement Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Patti Thom, Chair, HLM, Camp Tanamakoon

Michael Bakker, Kids in Camp

Jessica Green Bakker, Tanamakoon

Matthew Bernardo, Camp Wabikon

Margaret Bernardo, HLM, Camp Wabikon

Ashley Couture, Glen Bernard Camp

Jocelyn Palm, HLM, Glen Bernard Camp

Catherine Ross, HLM

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & GOALS

Championing and Connecting with Honorary Life Members (HLMs): A core priority of the Community Engagement Committee is cultivating meaningful connections with our Honorary Life Members. Through regular, thoughtful communication—whether by phone, email, or traditional mail—we ensure they remain a valued and informed part of the OCA community. Their wisdom and significant contributions continue to guide and enrich us, and we are committed to honouring their legacy.

This past year marked a milestone for HLM participation at OCA events. Forty-three HLMs attended an OCA-hosted luncheon—the largest gathering in our history—followed by a reception where they connected with delegates. The overwhelming response expressed how deeply this recognition is appreciated, and plans are already underway to repeat this successful gathering in 2026.

Encouraging Engagement at OCA Events: The committee continues to play an active and welcoming role during OCA events, especially at the OCA Connects conferences. At OCA Connects 2025 Conference, we placed strong emphasis on creating space for connection, conversation, and support among delegates—ensuring they felt included and empowered. Our presence helped foster community and offer delegates access to resources and encouragement.

Supporting the Preservation of Camping Heritage: While distinct from the Archives Committee, we actively encourage and champion their important work in preserving the history of camping in Ontario. By helping raise awareness of the Archives' efforts and spotlighting the legacy of the OCA within our own initiatives, we contribute to ensuring that the story of camping is not only protected but also passed forward to future leaders.

This commitment to heritage is extended through personal connections as well. Committee members have engaged in one-on-one and group conversations with long-time members, capturing and sharing their stories. These interactions are vital, helping preserve the history of camping through lived experiences and inspiring a deeper sense of belonging within the community.

Meaningful Gatherings and Tradition-Building: This past spring, a group of HLMs and former Society of Camp Directors members enjoyed a very special luncheon at the home of Jocelyn Palm. Between the incredible food, shared stories, and a performance by the gifted singer Henri Audet, the event rekindled longstanding friendships and celebrated decades of connection. This cherished gathering has become an annual tradition, with eager anticipation for its continuation in 2026.

Respectfully submitted:
Patti Thom

Educational Research Committee



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Victoria Povilaitis, Chair, PhD, Tim Hortons Foundation Camps

Stephen Fine, Past Chair, PhD, The Hollows Camp

Dr. Catherine Laing, Ex Officio, RN, PhD, University of Calgary

Mandi Baker, PhD, University of Manitoba

Julia Lawrence, BScN RN C PedN (C), IWK Children's Health Program & Brigadoon Village & CANSPEI President

Mandisa Lau, Brock University

Maya Saltzman, University of Guelph

The Terms of Reference for the CCA Research Committee, facilitated by CCA Executive Director, Matt Wilfrid, were finalized in mid-September 2025. Along with the Committee mandates for 2026 - 2027, a new Committee Chair along with new additions to the group were signed on. Past Chair Stephen Fine has stepped down after many years of service to welcome the new Chair, Victoria Povilaitis, PhD to move into that position.

The mandate of the Research Committee has been divided into specific areas, each of which will be administered by individual members of the committee. These areas are as follows:

Knowledge Translation – Put into plain language and disseminate existing camp research for practitioner use, parental trust and government support.

Research Community and Knowledge Management – Create and manage a centralized spreadsheet of ongoing research and coordinate a Journal Club to discuss recent research.

Camp Research Award – Continue the success and relevance of the award to promote the benefits of research to the organized camping movement in Canada.

Research Partnership and Funding – Promote collaboration with kindred organizations (i.e. ACA, ICF), support external research forums, liaise with Trent University Archive, and identify funding/scholarship opportunities.

Camp related research for 2025: PhD dissertation by Jonah D'Angelo at Laurentian University entitled, *Exploring the Lifelong Impact of Significant Outdoor Life Experiences: Retrospective Methods, Theoretical Frameworks, and Professional Trajectories in Outdoor Learning*, and undergraduate thesis by Maya Saltzman of Camp Tamakwa, at the University of Guelph, entitled *Navigating Cultural Boundaries: Indigenous and Jewish Traditions at Summer Camp*.

Respectfully submitted by:
Dr. Stephen Fine



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Michael B. Waxman, Chair, Talk to Wax

Jodie Adams, Amici Children's Camp Charity

Jon Fredrick, Sparrow Lake Camp: United Church

John Hannant-Minchel, Camp Tamarack

Mercede Rogers, Camp Wanapitei

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over the past year, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee has transitioned from rebuilding to action, focusing on tangible initiatives that support camps and outdoor education centres in creating safer, more welcoming environments for everyone.

Education and Training: The Committee delivered several EDI-focused sessions and discussions designed to build confidence and competence among camp professionals.

Support and Affinity: We have launched the 2SLGBTQ+ Affinity Group - a monthly meeting space for camp professionals to meet, share and build community.

Collaboration and Communication: Continued to partner with OCA staff and other committees to ensure that equity and inclusion remain embedded across the Association's broader initiatives. Supported communications that highlight diverse voices and stories from within the camp community.

GOALS

Looking ahead, the EDI Committee will continue to strengthen its foundation and expand its impact by:

- Expanding learning opportunities, including advanced training sessions and peer-learning circles for camp directors and leadership teams.
- Building connections with external experts and partner organizations to bring new perspectives and practices to the OCA community.
- Developing mechanisms for feedback and accountability, allowing camps to share progress, identify challenges, and celebrate growth.
- Promoting a culture of continuous learning, where EDI is understood as integral to camp operations, not as a one-time initiative.

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee remains dedicated to ensuring that every camper, staff member, and leader experiences a sense of belonging at camp. Through collaboration, reflection, and intentional action, we continue to build a community that lives its values of equity, diversity, and inclusion every day.

Respectfully submitted by:
Michael B. Waxman

Governance and Nominations Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jen Dundas, Chair, OCA President, HLM, Camp Couchiching

Heather Davidson, OCA Past President, City of Hamilton

Mark Diamond, HLM

Joy Levy, OCA Executive Director

Dave Newnham, OCA Past President, HLM, YMCA of Southwestern Ontario

Jonathan Nyquist, Camp Canada

2025 was a BIG year for our committee with the adoption of the Association's new bylaws. Thanks to all the members for the support! We continue to meet connected to the updates for the Terms of Reference and to clarify that the Board President will be the Chair of the Committee. Most recently, we've created a draft document to outline the Critical Path for the committee. A big thanks to the committee for the support, time and knowledge.

President: Jen Dundas (2025/2026)
Honorary Life Member, Camp Couchiching

Vice President: Julie Gallie (2025/2026)
Camp TO

Treasurer: Gord Dunlop (2025/2026)
YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

Secretary: Sarah MacPherson (2025)
Camp Wenonah

Directors:

Davin Allan (2023/2024)
R.K.Y Camp

Matthew Bernardo (2025/2026)
Camp Wabikon

Rob Crew (2025/2026)
Honorary Life Member

Scotia Hutton (2025)
Rotary YMCA Camp Presqu'île

Paresa Jensen (2025/2026)
Campfire Circle

Rankin Middlebrook (2025/2026)
Appleby Camps

Evan Roth (2025)
Crestwood Valley Day Camp

Michael Waxman (2025/2026)
OCA Preferred Vendor - Talk to Wax

Their term in began January 2025.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jen Dundas



Government Advocacy Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mark Diamond, Co-Chair, HLM,

Jonathan Nyquist, Co-Chair, Camp Canada

Sol Birenbaum, Camp Walden

Don Bocking, Camp Ponacka

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Government Advocacy Committee was thankfully a little less active this year. Our main accomplishment was working with the government to make important changes to the new criminal background check requirements for international staff. We also considered supporting religious camps with exemptions to certain taxes, but it was determined that this should be managed directly by camps with their local government authorities.

GOALS

In the upcoming year, we will be working with the CCA advocacy committee to help achieve collective goals, such as looking for funding opportunities for camps and families who want to send their children to camp and closely watching the immigration file to make sure we are involved in any conversations related to proposed immigration policy changes that impact summer camps. We are also working with local school boards to ensure they understand the power of the camp experience so that they will continue to fund and support outdoor education trips for students to OCA member camps.

Respectfully submitted by:
Mark Diamond and Jonathan Nyquist



Health Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Michelle Colomvakos, Chair, Camp Robin Hood

Heather Chambers, Easter Seals Canada

Autumn Elzinga, Camp Pathfinder

Cassidy Gilmore, Camp Walden

Joshua Legault, Camp Walden

Chanie Mandelbaum, Camp Ramah

Christine McCubbing, Camp Mini-Yo-We

Suzanne Piche, Camp Arowhon

Ken Piercy, Camp Huronda

Emily Smith, Camp Kawartha & Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario

Nancy Vandenberg, Camp Wenonah

The OCA Health Committee made significant progress this year in strengthening collaboration, education, and preparedness across Ontario camps. Guided by the theme “Stronger Together: Working Together Today for a Safer Tomorrow,” the Committee expanded its initiatives to support camp health care providers year-round through professional learning, partnerships, and resource development.

Key accomplishments included hosting a highly successful 44th Annual Health Conference, delivering multiple professional webinars, and initiating new projects to enhance health standards, communication, and knowledge sharing within the OCA community.

The Committee continued its commitment to professional development by offering several educational webinars throughout the year. In partnership with Food Allergy Canada, the Committee hosted “Skip the Benadryl: Mastering Anaphylaxis Prevention and Response in Camp Settings” with Dr. Moshe Ben-Shoshan, which provided evidence-based guidance on managing food allergies and treating anaphylaxis in camp environments.

A partnership with Springboard Clinic brought forward an ADHD and Neurodivergence Webinar Series, which explored executive functioning, ADHD medication management, and strategies for supporting undiagnosed campers. In May, the Committee hosted a Measles Preparedness at Camp Lunch and Learn featuring Dr. Daniel Warshafsky, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, and Jack Goodman, director of Camp New Moon and former OCA COVID-19 Task Force, which addressed infectious disease readiness, immunization protocols, and outbreak communication strategies for summer 2025.

The Committee also organized and facilitated the 44th Annual OCA Health Conference, held at Trafalgar Castle School in April 2025. The conference brought together health professionals, camp directors, and industry partners for a full day of learning and collaboration. Topics included emergency preparedness, mental wellness, injury prevention, allergy management, and leadership in health care settings. The event successfully achieved the Committee’s goals of offering diverse and relevant programming, promoting networking opportunities, and fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for OCA members.

Throughout the 2024/2025 year, the Committee advanced several projects and initiatives to strengthen health and safety across the camp sector. Collaboration with Food Allergy Canada began with the creation of a Camp Anaphylaxis Guideline Document, a comprehensive resource designed to standardize allergy management practices across Ontario camps.

Following the Fall 2024 Coffee Chat, the Committee began developing a Camp Health Orientation Checklist to improve onboarding, documentation, and continuity of care for camp health teams. Mental health and resilience training remained a central focus, with continued promotion of Mental Health First Aid and ASIST certification opportunities for camp staff.



Plans were also initiated for the launch of a monthly OCA Health Bulletin, a digital platform on the OCA website featuring health resources, updates, and best practices for OCA members. To complement this initiative, an online forum was created on Basecamp titled “OCA Health Camp Chat”—a private online community where camp health care providers can share knowledge, ask questions, and engage in open, judgment-free discussions year-round.

The Committee also enhanced networking and professional support through Camp Health Connections Coffee Chats, providing informal opportunities for camp health professionals to discuss seasonal challenges, incident management, documentation practices, and evolving health care standards.

Looking ahead to 2025/2026, the OCA Health Committee will continue to advance its mission by finalizing the Camp Anaphylaxis Guideline Document, completing the Camp Health Orientation Toolkit, and continuing the OCA Health Bulletin for ongoing education and collaboration. The Committee will also host the 45th Annual OCA Health Conference, marking 45 years of leadership in camp health and safety.

Respectfully submitted by:
Michelle Colomvakos



Membership Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Eugene Chong**, Chair, CNIB Lake Joe
- Rose Attard**, OCA Staff Liaison
- Ellen Nash**, HLM
- Evan Roth**, Crestwood Valley Day Camp
- Jenny Wyatt**, Appleby College Camps

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

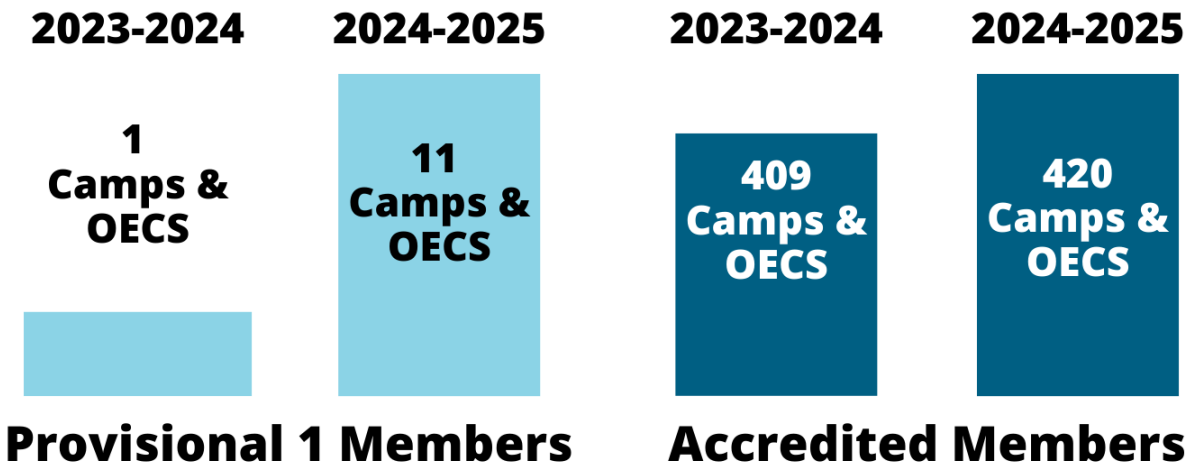
In 2024-2025, the Committee reviewed Provisional 1 (P1) membership applications for 11 camps/OECs. Of these, all 11 were recommended to the OCA Board to become P1 members and begin their accreditation process in 2025. Standards visits were conducted for all P1 camps in 2025.

GOALS

In 2025-2026, we will:

- Strengthen awareness of the professionalism of the camp and outdoor education sector and the value of OCA membership among industry providers and supporters.
- Collaborate with the OCA office team to streamline the application and onboarding process to reduce barriers for prospective camps/OECs.
- Work closely with the OCA office team to welcome new P1 members and support their integration into the Association.
- Review and update application materials and guidance documents for camps and OECs in collaboration with the OCA Office.
- Equip new members and prospective applicants with information and guidance to understand the Standards Program and prepare for successful accreditation visits.
- Partner with other OCA committees to address membership-related issues identified through application or accreditation processes and make recommendations to the Board as needed.
- Engage current member camps/OECs to identify prospective leads, cultivate relationships, and encourage referrals that support membership growth.
- Recruit new committee members to join the Membership Committee for the 2025-2026 season.

Respectfully submitted by:
Eugene Chong





COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Craig McPhail, Co-Chair,
Just Direct Promotions

Bruce Phillips, Co-Chair, Dialcom
Communications Limited

This year was a good year to be a Preferred Vendor of the OCA. Camps were back to “normal” and we were operating at or near capacity. At the Preferred Vendor Committee, we were actively participating in this year's OCA Connects 2025 Conference in Toronto. We helped and advised some vendors and participants on booth setup and strategies as well as sharing some views on how to market to the camping industry. The OCA Connects 2026 Conference is a two day event, and the Committee is looking forward to being part of and helping participants once again this year.

Respectfully submitted by:
Craig McPhail and Bruce Phillips



Standards Accreditation Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Heather Davidson, Chair, City of Hamilton

Matthew Bernardo, Camp Wabikon

Christina Bossart, York Professional Care and Education

Lauren Burke, Camp Quality Canada

Rob Crew, HLM

Hannah Dabrowski, Brock University Camps

Jen Dundas, Camp Couchiching

Julie Gallie, CampTO

Stephanie Masson, OCA Staff Liaison

Rankin Middlebrook, Appleby College Camps

Katie Moncrieffe, C.Y.O. Camp Brebeuf

Michelle Roberts, Cairn Family of Camps

Evan Roth, Crestwood Valley Day Camp

Lian Senior, Pickering College

Mike Sladden, Camp Pathfinder

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This year was one of thoughtful growth and steady momentum for the Standards Accreditation Committee. We welcomed several new committee members, strengthening both our capacity and our collective perspective. We also rolled out an updated version of our training, building on what works while introducing clearer pathways and refreshed content to support visitors at every stage of their development.

A major focus this year was improving and modernizing our tools for placing visitors. These updates helped us stay nimble and efficient as we coordinated a busy season of Accreditation activity. In total, our dedicated volunteers completed 95 visits, an enormous accomplishment that speaks to the commitment of our Senior, Junior, and Introductory Visitors across the province.

My sincere appreciation goes to the OCA office team, the committee, our volunteer visitors, and our member camps. The strength of this process, year after year, truly comes from the passion and professionalism of the people involved.

GOALS

Looking ahead, the committee will be undertaking a comprehensive review of the visitor program, including how we train, support, and engage visitors throughout their lifecycle. We will continue refining our training tools and delivery, streamlining processes, and evaluating timelines to ensure we are supporting the full breadth of our membership and the wider camp community.

Our ongoing goal remains the same: to strengthen a responsive, accessible, and sustainable Accreditation system that meets the needs of camps today while preparing for the future.

Respectfully submitted by:
Heather Davidson



Standards Review Committee

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Rankin Middlebrook, Chair, Appleby College
Camps

Steve Archibald, Medeba Summer Camp

Graham Bocking, Camp Ponacka

David Borsook, Moorelands Camp

Janet Cottreau, Red Pine Camp

Rob Crew, HLM

Amanda Grassick, Individual Member

Heather Davidson, City of Hamilton

Jen Dundas, Camp Couchiching

John Hissink, Camp Outlook

Stephanie Masson, OCA Staff Liaison

Mike Sladden, Camp Pathfinder

The 2024–2025 Standards Review cycle continued to refine both the process and focus of committee work. The modified Critical Path introduced in 2023 has proven effective in managing timelines and maintaining transparency, while Town Halls remain an essential tool for membership engagement and feedback.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 2024–2025 review cycle emphasized member clarity, legal compliance, and holistic safety measures. Key outcomes include:

- Child Protection Standards (New Section) – Comprehensive mandatory standards developed to ensure safe environments for campers and staff under 18. These address behavioural expectations, reporting procedures, supervision, and staff training requirements, aligning with the Child, Youth and Family Services Act.
- Archery Tag (L.P.10) – Introduction of a new mandatory standard covering games involving participants as targets (e.g., paintball, dodgeball). This clarifies supervision, PPE, and risk management expectations.
- Swim Assessment (S.W.2.5) – Revised wording now specifies that swim assessments must be witnessed and practically demonstrated to eliminate misinterpretation of the requirement.
- Emergency and Evacuation Plans (M.A.4.4) – Consolidated and elevated to mandatory status, ensuring written plans address severe weather, lockdowns, shelter-in-place, and evacuation procedures.
- Family Camp Review – Initial framework drafted to separate Family Camp standards from general camp operations. This mirrors the Outdoor Education model and will undergo a longer consultation and legal review process for 2026 implementation.
- Recreational Water Quality and Anaphylaxis Standards – Reviewed; no amendments required at this time due to adequate existing public health coverage.

GOALS

- Complete Family Camp Standards Development, including a working group consultation and sector-wide review.
- Transition of Committee Leadership to occur at the end of the current review cycle, ensuring continuity and renewal of committee engagement.

Respectfully submitted by:
Rankin Middlebrook



Thank you to Our 2025 Standards Visitors

**This summer our
incredible Standards
Visitors visited**

95

**camps and outdoor
educations centres!**

Jodie Adams, Amici Children's Camp Charity
David Allen, R.K.Y. Camp
Rowan Anderson, Camp Wenonah
George Andrews, Canadian Adventure Camp
Steve Archibald, Medeba Summer Camp
Ashley Aubin, Diabetes Canada - Camp Huronda
Joanna Barrington, UniCamp of Ontario
Jennifer Bell, Camp Kintail
David Borsook, Moorelands Camp
Christina Bossart, York Professional Care and Education
Melissa Bruce, Camp Manitou
Lauren Burke, Camp Quality Canada
Grayson Burke, Cedar Ridge Camp
Natalia Cecillon, Appleby College Camps
Eugene Chong, CNIB Lake Joe
Janet Cottreau, Red Pine Camp
Rob Crew, HLM
Gillian Crouse, Tim Hortons Memorial Camp
Hannah Dabrowski, Brock University Camps
Heather Davidson, City of Hamilton
Joe Douglas, Stevenson Childrens Camp
Gord Dunlop, YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka
Ian Fraser, C.Y.O. Camp Marydale
Julie Gallie, CampTO
Darlee Gerrard, Individual Member

Zack Goodman, Camp New Moon
Kristina Graham, Hockey Opportunity Camp
Amanda Grassick, Individual Member
Liz Greenway, HLM
David Grundman, Camp White Pine
John Hannant-Minchel, Camp Tamarack
Brittany Higgins, Harbourfront Centre Camps
Ellen Howard, Camp Tamarack
Gavin Hull, Onondaga Camp
Mark Johnson, Tim Hortons Foundation Camps
Katie Jowett, YMCA of Three Rivers
Jeff Kahn, Camp Tamarack
Sarah Kokkinen, Camp Wenonah
Dan Konior, City of Hamilton
Sarah Leitch, Individual Member
Joy Levy, OCA Staff
Graham MacLellan, Onondaga Camp
Carter Mahoney, Camp Kee-Mo-Kee
Stephanie Masson, OCA Staff
Jacob Mazer, Camp Shomria
Steve McCready, Camp Mini-Yo-We
Theresa McDonald-Lee, Camp Kintail
Kevin McLaughlin, Hockey Opportunity Camp
Molly Mclean, Camp Kawartha
Rankin Middlebrook, Appleby College Camps
Katie Moncrieffe, C.Y.O. Camp Brebeuf
Tracy Morley, Camp Kilcoo
D'Arcy Munn, R.K.Y. Camp
Keith Murray, Hockey Opportunity Camp
Ellen Nash, HLM
Mike Naumoff, Humber Arboretum and Centre for Urban Ecology
Colleen Pakkidis, York Professional Care and Education
Mike Pearce, Camp Tawingo
AJ Phillips, YMCA Hamilton Burlington Brandford
Chris Pot, Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp & Retreat Centre
Whitney Pratt, Camp Wenonah
Becca Prewitt, Camp Northway and Camp Wendigo
Aldrin Primaylon, Kilcoo Camp
AJ Reid, Tim Hortons Memorial Camp
Joe Richards, Pearce Williams: United Church

Steve Richardson, Intervarsity Circle Square Ranch
Big Clear Lake
Michelle Roberts, Cairn Family of Camps
Lauren Rolph, City of Hamilton
Evan Roth, Crestwood Valley Day Camp
Lian Senior, Pickering College
Mike Sladden, Camp Pathfinder
Megan Snape, Branksome Hall
David Spencer, Individual Member
Robin Squires, BLG LPP
Samantha St. Aubin, City of Hamilton
Spencer Tamming, Camp Mini-Yo-We
Ryan Terpstra, Camp Kahquah
Michael Waxman, Talk to Wax
Jennifer White, Camp Canada
Matt Wilfrid, Canadian Camping Association
Tammy Wilks, Tim Hortons Memorial Camps
Simon Wolle, Camp Northland B'nai Brith
Jazz Zahra, R.K.Y. Camp
Jodie Zehr, U-Turn Ranch

Young(ish) & Emerging Camp Professionals



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jordanna Grossinger, Co-Chair, Camp Robin Hood

Nathan Whan, Co-Chair, Camp Quality

Starting in Spring 2023, a group of young professionals started to meet by Zoom. Together we formed an ‘emerging camp pro’ network that we affectionately call the Young(ish) & Emerging Camp Professionals Group. Our hope was and still is to create opportunities to meet other people who can relate to the joys and challenges many up-and-coming camp professionals experience in our day-to-day lives.

What do we mean by “Young(ish)”? Well, Many new and emerging camp directors will fall in the (loosely) 25-35 year old age range. So, if you are “young” or “young at heart”, consider yourself very welcome to attend our monthly meetings.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Young-ish and Emerging Camp Professionals group has had an incredible year with monthly virtual gatherings continuing to draw a strong turnout, with consistently having 20–35 participants joining each session. Some members attend regularly, while others drop in when their schedule allows. Each meeting brought valuable conversation and shared learning.

Specific monthly sessions included guest speakers, offering new perspectives and practical takeaways that keep members thinking fresh about the industry, inspired, and full of ambition for their own camps.

Sessions allowed emerging camp leaders to explore current industry topics, share challenges or successes, and exchange ideas that strengthen the Ontario camping community. Beyond the content of the calls, members have built meaningful relationships which foster collaboration and allow for ongoing support. This was evident in-person at the OCA conference where roughly 20 young and emerging camp leaders attended the YEP roundtable, with a focus on multi generational camp teams.

GOALS

These meetings have served as a wonderful casual, professional networking space for emerging camp professionals and we hope to continue to engage with this group on a regular basis through the continuation of virtual meetings. Furthermore, we would like to continue to evolve the committee to include affinity groups which provide more detailed networking and support groups. There has been strong interest from members to be more involved with the committee. By creating these affinity groups, this keeps members involved and gives additional mentorship opportunities.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jordanna Grossinger & Nathan Whan

In Memoriam



Ted Tiemessen

Jane has dedicated over 45 years to the camping industry, progressing from camper to staff member to co-owner at Camp Tawingo on Lake Vernon in Huntsville, ON. A graduate of Western University (B.Sc.) and the Ivey School of Business (M.B.A.), Jane is an accomplished camping professional and co-author of ten books on camping and outdoor recreation. Her leadership has influenced the field globally, including chairing KUMBAYAH 1994, the third International Camping Congress, and contributing to conferences on five continents.

An Honorary Life Member of the Ontario Camps Association (OCA), Jane has received numerous accolades, including the Dorothy Walter Award of Excellence, the OCA International Development Award, and the Canadian Camping Association's Ron Johnstone Lifetime Achievement Award. She was also named Ernst & Young's Socially Responsible Entrepreneur of the Year in 1997.

After retiring from camping in 2002, Jane married Ted Tiemessen and co-founded Think Muskoka Inc. She continues to share her expertise as a consultant, supporting entrepreneurial ventures and the camping industry across Ontario, building on her remarkable legacy in both sectors.

OCA would like to express our heartfelt condolences to Jane and her family for the passing of her husband, Ted, on December 9. May he rest in peace, and we will keep Jane in our hearts.

Bill Embury

Bill Embury passed away on Dec 25, 2024.

Bill was a major part of the OCA's archery program. Multiple camps relied on Bill for their equipment and staff training needs. In accordance with Bill's wishes, arrangements will be made for someone to take over Saugeen Shafts.

Real Bourbeau

Real Bourbeau, from G.B. Catering, passed away in the late spring, surrounded by the love of his family. Real was the youngest of seven siblings born to George and Gertrude Bourbeau.

His love of life along with his outgoing personality and wonderful sense of humour will be long remembered. He lived a beautiful life enjoying his time entertaining and hosting family and friends. Real loved to travel and adventure, playing various sports, boating, golf, cooking, and of course eating, but his greatest love has always been his family and friends. Real made everyone feel welcome and included with his warm smile, infectious laugh, and silly antics. He was truly happiest when he could bring joy to those around him.

He will be missed by all those who knew and loved him.



Year in Photos

The OCA office team loved visiting and seeing some our OCA Member camps, outdoor education centres and Preferred Vendors operations in full swing!



Toronto Zoo - Zoo Camps



J&J Crafts



Kayla's Children's Centre



Richmond Hill Country Club Day Camp



Rouge Camps - Richmond Hill



Camp Couchiching



YMCA GTA - Pine Crest



Arrowhead Camp



CNIB Lake Joe



Muskoka Woods



Winning Techniques



Camp Tawingo



Camp Wenonah



Year in Photos

A snapshot of our 95+ Standards Visits and OCA Standards Visitors!



Royal Canadian Riding Academy



Medeba Summer Camp



Harbourfront Centre Camps



Camp Moshava Ba'ir Toronto



Silver Lake Mennonite Camp - Overnight



YMCA Simcoe/Muskoka - Kitchikewana

Congratulations to our 2024 Award Recipients!



Brian Blackstock OCA Archives Award



Dorothy Walter Award of Excellence



Honorary Life Member Award



Preferred Vendors Recognition Award



John "Jorgi" Jorgenson International Development Award



Ron & Mickey Johnstone Youth Leadership Award



Volunteer Recognition Award



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