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OCA Newsletter September 2017



Message from Your OCA President

To all of our members I congratulate you on the amazing work and time you have put into the summer of 2017 camp season. More importantly, think about all of the campers who benefit from such an amazing experience. OCA camps provide great opportunities and skill building to hundreds and thousands of children / youth across the province. I also want to thank those camps that provided experiences to those campers who are less fortunate and

otherwise couldn't afford to go to camp. Everyone should have such an opportunity and we need to continue to find ways to provide these essential experiences to as many children and youth now and into the future.

On behalf of Matthew Bernardo, Standards Chair, along with his fine committee, we'd like to thank all of those who were Year-round Standards Visitors or Visitees this summer during our Year-round Standards Visits. We had 114 visits to camps and we could not have done them without the help of all of our volunteers. We hope you found the Answer Sheets easier to complete online.

The OCA has had a very busy summer working on some key initiatives that I would like to mention.

We are moving forward to develop an Inclusion Policy to be written into our bylaws and Year-round Standards. We had productive meetings with key groups to discuss inclusion at camp in June and July. Recently, we updated the membership on our plans to develop this policy and provided a timeline on our next steps. I look forward to seeing this policy through at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). We will need everyone's support. We also engaged in productive meetings with representatives from The Canadian Red Cross, Lifesaving Society, Toronto District School Board and OPHEA (Ontario Physical and Health Education Association) to develop consistent swim testing for camps and school groups prior to going on a trip. I want to thank all those camps that sent in their swim test criteria. All of the information was very helpful, as we move ahead with plans to create effective checklists and documentation that can be used province/camp wide. We are always looking to enhance safety both on land and around water. In October I will be attending the World Drowning Prevention Conference in Vancouver and I hope to bring back as much helpful information as I can for our members. Finally, we are also going to be meeting with the Ministry of Labour to discuss the Minimum Wage issue. Many of our camps rely on the exemption that we currently have in place. We have been developing a brief to take to the Ministry of Labour in the coming weeks to ensure that our member camps are included in any exemptions that may be possible in this area. These are just a few of the initiatives we are working on. All of our committees will be meeting in the coming weeks to continue the good work of the Association. If you are interested in joining one of our committees please get in touch with the office.

Here are some IMPORTANT reminders to put in your calendar:

1. Membership renewal completed by September 29th
2. Members to complete their 2018 Camps Guide information in Wild Apricot when they renew
3. Nominations for the Board – requests for Nominations have been sent to all voting members
4. Nominations for Awards – requests for candidates sent in August to all members
5. Annual General Meeting – Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at 3:30 pm at the Hilton Hotel Markham
6. Awards Dinner – Wednesday, January 24, 2018, Reception 5:30 pm followed by Dinner at 6:00 pm
7. OCA Conference at Hilton Hotel Markham – January 24, 25 and 26, 2018 (Pre-conference program will be available on Jan 23rd – TBA; Conference registration will begin Tuesday, October 10th)

On behalf of the OCA Board, Heather Heagle and the office staff, I wish everyone a safe and enjoyable fall ahead and I look forward to speaking and working with you throughout the year to ensure that the message that OCA camps are safe, fun and memorable gets spread to as many cities and towns throughout this great province. CAMPS PARENTS TRUST!!

Have fun, play safe and enjoy every camp day!!



Eric Shendelman

The Kashechewan First Nation Youth Canoeing Project



Mike Sladden, better known as "Sladds", from Camp Pathfinder, worked with Camp Wabun, Mushkegowuk and Honouring Indigenous Peoples (HIP) with input from the Rotary Club of Toronto and the OCA, to develop a joint initiative, ***Paddling For Truth & Reconciliation Canoe Trip***. The canoe trip took place in August with six young people plus Rex Knapysweet, the Youth Coordinator from Mushkegowuk (Cree First Nations), and a group of returning campers from Pathfinder and Wabun. It is the beginning of many joint adventures with youth from First Nations and OCA Tripping Camps. To view Mike's newsletter please [click here](#) and [click here](#) to view the Mushkegowuk youth's report.

What Great Camps Are Made Of



This year, the OCA worked with Focus Media Group (FMG Publishing) to produce an article "*What Great Camps Are Made Of*". This article was part of a larger magazine distributed to thousands of people across the province. To read more and see what was produced, [click here](#).



71 CAMPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Kids in Camp so very much appreciates the contribution of the 71 OCA camps that hosted KIC-sponsored campers this past summer. Last spring, the KIC Campership Committee allocated \$131,200 to 357 deserving campers after considering 434 applications. One hundred and thirty were repeat campers.

Previous KIC campers described camp as amazing, great, awesome, safe and unforgettable. They felt welcomed, accepted and respected. "I feel good at camp." "I love camp because of the sense of community." "I can be free and not worry about my differences." They learned how to start a fire, climb thin trees, flip a kayak, paddle on white water and have fun without electronics. They also learned: "that it's OK to be yourself no matter your differences and imperfections", "to be patient and live in the moment", and "that even if you miss your parents, you can still have fun".

KIC shouts out our most sincere thanks to all the amazing OCA camping leaders who make such a significant difference in the lives of young people.

Catherine Ross on behalf of the KIC Board



September signals the end of summer and the beginning of fall, but no matter how you feel about it, fall is a time to relax and reflect on what has happened and what's to come - including the 2018 camp season and the upcoming OCA conference.

Since last year's conference, 5 camps have come to me to lower their rates, bringing the total number of camps to more than 30 across the province. Will you be next?

Don't forget, we also provide full camp management integration services. So, if you are using camp management software, you can utilize my services to collect credit card payments at a lower rate.

See you at the OCA show, January 25th, 2018!

Mayer Hyman, Senior Vice President, North American Payment Solutions

T: 416 907 0597 x 2257 E: mayer@hitechmerchants.ca w: www.hitechmerchants.ca



Please welcome the following new Preferred Vendors:

Bullfrog Power - Holly Bond
E: business@bullfrogpower.com
W: bullfrogpower.com

EcoEthic Inc. - Rob Davis
E: ecoinfo@ecoethic.ca
W: ecoethic.ca

LifeguardDepot.com - Renata Jaciw-Zurakowsky
E: renataj@lifeguarding.com
W: lifeguarddepot.com

OCA's next Newsletter will be sent to you on January 15, 2018.
Please send your articles or information by January 1st to
info@ontariocamps.ca.

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