

# Message from the Board Chair and President/CEO

Friends and Colleagues:

This was a year to reconfirm that camp as a socially enriching, experiential environment plays a significant role in helping today's youth and future leaders thrive — and a great time to focus on expanding quality communities of belonging and social connectedness at camp.

We continued working with our colleagues at the National Summer Learning Association — and with generous support from the New York Life Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and the Pinkerton Foundation — on our three-year Camp-School Partnership Demonstration Project. Through this important project, we provide underresourced middle-schoolers with a week of summer camp to help address their emotional well-being and educational gaps caused by the pandemic. We also seek to demonstrate the positive and lasting effects and sustainability of such camp-school collaborations.

In August of this year, ACA and the University of Michigan's Economic Growth Institute (EGI) launched the first National Economic Impact Study. The outcomes of this study will be used to show how much camp matters in providing robust economic contributions to their communities and solutions to the summer care gap for families across the US.

Recruiting camp staff persisted as an industry-wide concern in 2023, and our annual Staffing Summit addressed myriad issues and best practices for staff recruitment and retention. We know that the important work of camp requires outstanding staff, and we will continue to push for opportunities to highlight our camp community and make full-time camp jobs a more sustainable profession.

The American Camp Association is so thankful to and inspired by everyone who works tirelessly to make camp a community of belonging, a safe space for children to develop their sense of self and the social-emotional skills critical to becoming happy, healthy, and helping adults. Industry challenges will come and go, but your constant determination and dedication and our collective focus on solutions ensure that our field remains relevant, at the forefront of child development, and a lifeline to the children and families you serve.



Lizabeth Fogel, EdD  
*Chair, National Board of Directors*



Tom Rosenberg  
*President and CEO*

