



Camp Thorpe ANNUAL REPORT 2023



www.campthorpe.org

802-247-6611

Board of Trustees

Roni Coleman, Board President
Lyle Jepson, Board Vice President
Martha P. Heath, Board Treasurer
Pamela Crino, Board Secretary
Ernest Miner
Molly Heath
Richard Giard
Shelley Kessler

Camp Thorpe is excited to welcome three new members to the board this year



EDWARD (TAD) WILLARD

Edward (Tad) Willard attended Camp Thorpe from 1972-1981, and has remained connected for a half of a Century. Tad is a retired disability advocate who worked for nearly four decades to support people with disabilities lead lives of their choosing,



KAREN MIKKELSEN

Karen Mikkelsen is a retired nonprofit leader and consultant. She has been an advocate for people with disabilities in a variety of personal and professional settings over the years.



SARAH LOHNES WATULAK

Sarah Lohnes Watulak is an educator and learning designer in higher education. Her experiences with the disabilities population both personally and professionally have drawn her to Camp Thorpe's mission



Director's Letter

SHELLY HUDSON

Executive Director

Thank you to the family that is Camp Thorpe, The Board of Trustees, the Leadership Team, the Counselors, the Medical staff, and the Kitchen staff, as well as our unforgettable Campers and their families and caregivers, for their support, insight, and laughter this summer, and what a summer it was!

We spent nine incredible weeks in the mountains of rural Vermont, even with all the rain! We welcomed 195 campers this summer, along with 24 Counselors, of which 20 were international. We had five returning counselors, six nurses, and seven kitchen staff along with the support of the Board of Trustees, who all contributed to the success of Camp Thorpe Summer 2023.

Throughout our 2023 Annual Report, you will find reflections, updates, moments from this summer, and plans for the future.

As we plan for our 97th summer, we are forging new relationships, celebrating traditions, and looking forward, and we want you to come along!

We are always seeking volunteers, summer help, board members, community partners, and new campers! So, if you or someone you know would be a good fit for Camp Thorpe, please have them reach out to execdirector@campthorpe.org.

Please enjoy reading our 2023 Annual Report!

Meet the Leadership Team



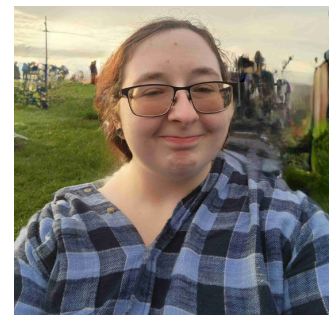
Amy Hill

Assistant Director



Jess Houck

Assistant Director



Kait Fedor

Operations Manager



Note From The Health Center

HEIDI GILLESPIE

Medical Director

Yay! Another season at Camp Thorpe is in the books! First and foremost, thank you for allowing me to be part of the Camp Thorpe family! As most of you know, I genuinely love and am invested wholeheartedly! I was thinking about one resounding thing/theme that has stuck with me throughout my years with Camp Thorpe, and as much of an oxymoron as it is, my answer is a resounding tradition and change. This year was no exception!

Camp Thorpe is steeped in traditions that we all hold fast to; these everyday things give our campers ties that bind. Traditions like camp songs, campfires, and s'mores, meeting at the flagpole, ringing of the bell, and so much more are the constants, the things that create a predictable world for our campers, and the things that form memories that last a lifetime! Because of these traditions, we can make it through the incredible changes we have navigated together and watch Camp Thorpe grow!

Speaking of changes, one area that has grown and changed so very much over the years is the Health Center. It's the same building, but wow, how we operate has changed so much since I first walked on campus back in 2014, and this year was no exception. It hasn't been without growing pains, but we are getting there! The Board has supported the changes needed over the years to ensure safer med distribution and compliance with regulations. We have a smoother registration process, a better computer system, med carts, and med safety protocols. We refine the process a little more each year; this summer was no exception! We have two lockable med carts and are transitioning to ALL camper meds coming to camp in Dose Packaging. This has been a challenging change to implement but a necessary one. We are moving forward in 2024 with full compliance expectations, and we will all work together to ensure our messaging is clear. This won't come without challenges, for which we are prepared, but the payoff in camper safety and staff retention will be worth it.

I will close by sharing this with you:
Camp Thorpe is much more than just a location on the map. It is a feeling you get when you pull into the driveway; it's palpable. My Grandson explained it best each time we pulled up the driveway this summer. He would get all excited, shake his little hands in the air, and say loudly, "Grammie, we HOME!" and my reply "Yes, Buddy, Yes we are!"

Heidi Gillespie BSN RN
Medical Director | Camp Thorpe
802.236.1616 | heidirgillespie@hotmail.com

Camper Success Stories

R, who has been coming for a few years now, can be shy. Last year, we met two new campers, G. and W. I, about R.'s age. When doing session placement this year, we thought they all might get along pretty well, so we placed them together, but we did not predict just how well a bond would form. It started by quoting lines from funny movies and grew to lengthy discussions ranking characters from Star Wars and debating the actual timeline of the Marvel movies. Their laughter and banter brought smiles to others, especially those of us who had known R. and witnessed how powerful camp friendships are for our campers.



We had several campers who attended camp for the first time this year. M. came from a small community where everybody knows everybody and cares for each other. This summer was their first time away from their large family and that community. In the beginning, there were tears, and they wouldn't eat much. We called home 3 or 4 times that first week due to home sicknesses. As each day passed, however, we saw more smiling and less tears. We saw dancing and laughing and a karaoke star! Then, the phone calls stopped. The tears stopped, and before you knew it, we had gone a whole week without checking in with Mom. M. was enjoying camp activities, participating, and making some friends.

T. was another camper who had not spent much time away from their mom or grandma. They came to camp for one week with an external 1:1. Their mom was nervous and unsure if they would make it past Wednesday. We got stuck a few times initially but brainstormed around the trouble spots and kept trying. Before we knew it, T. had made it the week and was home telling their mom about all of the new friends they had made. T.'s mom talks frequently about how life-changing this experience was. "It reassured me that as T. gets older and transitions out of high school, they have the opportunity for "happiness in life outside of our home and beyond family/caregivers."



Programming

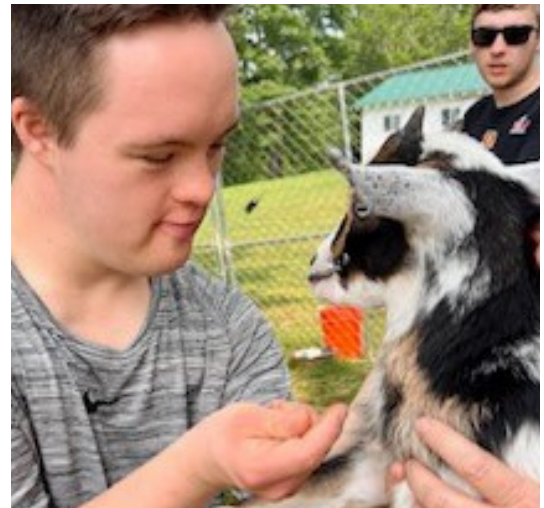
Our activities and programs are essential enrichment experiences that our campers ask for by name, whether it is an afternoon at our accessible pool, Christmas in July, or the epic Dinosaur Night and Pirate Night. These traditions mean a lot to both campers and staff.

We are always looking for ways to augment these experiences. We were excited to add two new elements this summer to Camp Thorpe.



GARDEN TO TABLE PROJECT

Our Nature Program received a grant from The Harris and Francis Block Foundation, which provided funding for a garden on campus where campers planted, maintained, and harvested herbs and salad fixings, which we used in the kitchen, providing a small "garden to table" experience for our campers.

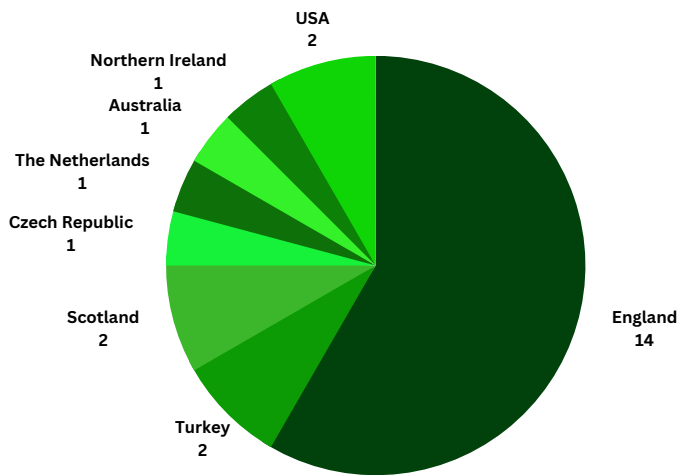


POP-UP PETTING ZOO

Another new feature this summer was the addition of small animals on the campus that campers and staff could spend time with. A Pop-up Petting Zoo! Thanks to Heidi Gillespie and her husband, we welcomed four Nigerian dwarf goats and two miniature Mediterranean Donkeys!

Counselors

COUNSELORS OF THE WORLD



This summer our counselors came from all over the world! We had counselors from the United Kingdom, Turkey and The Netherlands to name a few. While at camp, our staff were able to support our campers at a 1 counselor to 3 camper ratio. We are so grateful to our staff for all of the hard work they did to make the summer go off without a hitch. To show our staff how much we appreciate them, we organized trips to Burlington and Six Flags Great Escape on weekends off.



“My experience at Camp Thorpe this summer truly changed my life. Immediately I felt as if I had come to a place I’ve never been before. Truthfully, the campers made my experience unforgettable, seeing individuals’ love for life and for the people around them really touched me in a way I haven’t felt before. It was amazing to be in such a loving, supportive environment and creating bonds and memories within that. The support from both Amy and Jess was key for being a first time-international counsellor and the introduction week helped us understand and feel prepared for the summer ahead! I felt fully supported and cared for at Camp Thorpe therefore enabling me to provide the best support for the Campers. Overall, the experience was incredible and I will forever be grateful for having the opportunity to be a part of such a special place.”-Charlotte, 2023 Counselor

Community

RENTALS

Rentals are a large part of Camp Thorpe's annual budget. It is also an area where we see the growth potential. We had six rentals this past summer and fall. We saw several guests on campus, from weddings to a week with Victory Baptist Church - Sunshine Camp. If you know anyone looking for a wedding venue, party location, retreat, or fundraising event, please share our information with them.

We are also exploring new and creative ways to use the campus in the off season. In summer 2024, we will host our first immersive movie fan event; Ticket holders will come to camp for a weekend of movie-themed activities, parties, and a movie screening. There will be more information on this event in the coming months.



COMMUNITY

In 2023, we continued to reach out to the broader community to build solid relationships. This work is ongoing, and we are excited about our conversations with agencies, donors, families, and local community members. Keep an eye out, as we will be going on a speaking tour in 2024 to talk about what Camp Thorpe is up to and what we are dreaming up!

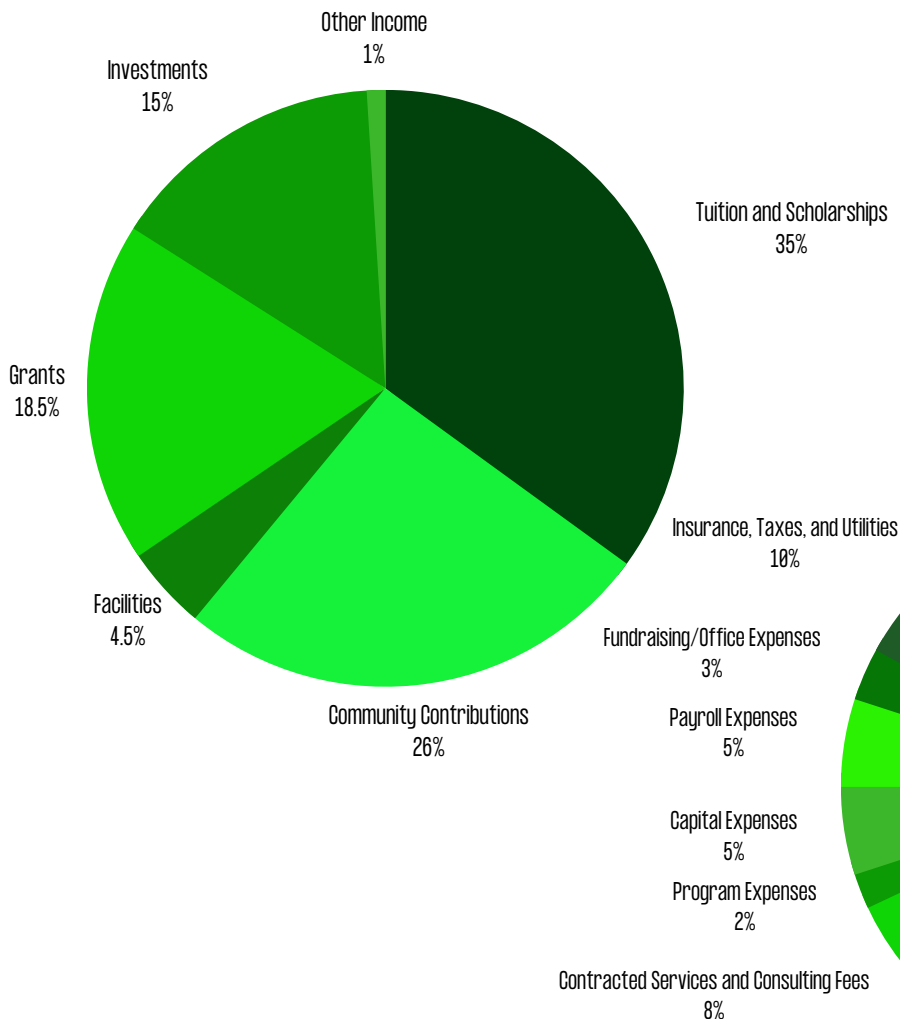
CAMP NEEDS

With this summer being what it was, WET, we are now looking at repairs on several areas of camp. We are looking to our community for support for this work and upgrades to our 96-year-old facilities. Please consider giving to our annual appeals both in the spring and winter and include us in your legacy planning. A bequest to Camp Thorpe is a gift toward our future.

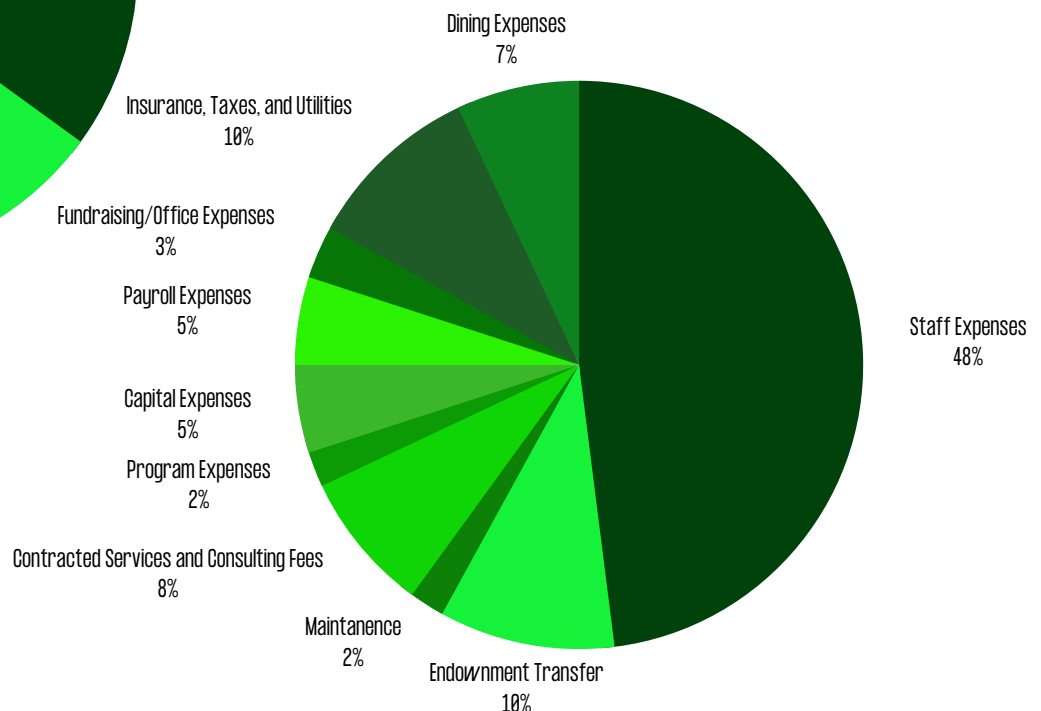
Financials

Below is a snapshot of Camp Thorpe's 2022/23 budget actuals, both income and expenses. As you can see, our donors and supporters comprise a large percentage of our yearly income, as does tuition for camp and grants. We continue to explore additional income opportunities as well as partnerships and collaborations to bring in new campers, supporters, and friends to the Camp Thorpe Family.

INCOME



EXPENSES



Camp By The Numbers

THIS SUMMER:

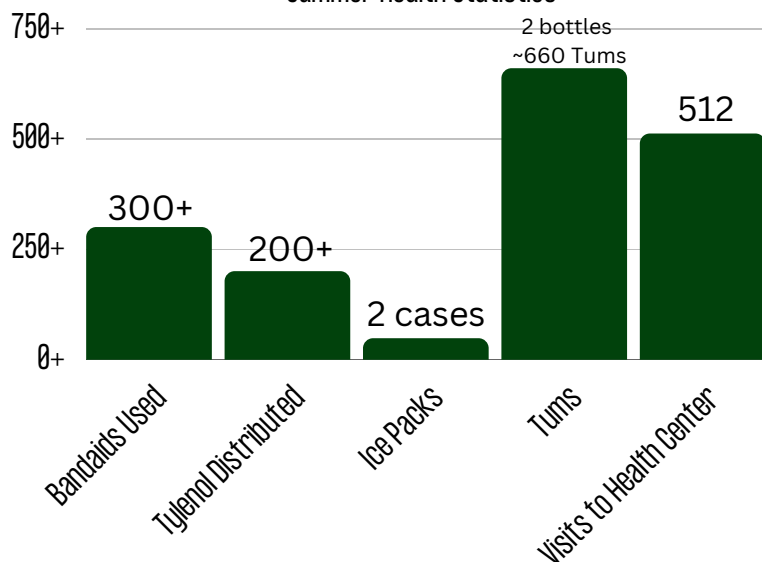
10 Pirate Boats were built and raced across the pond



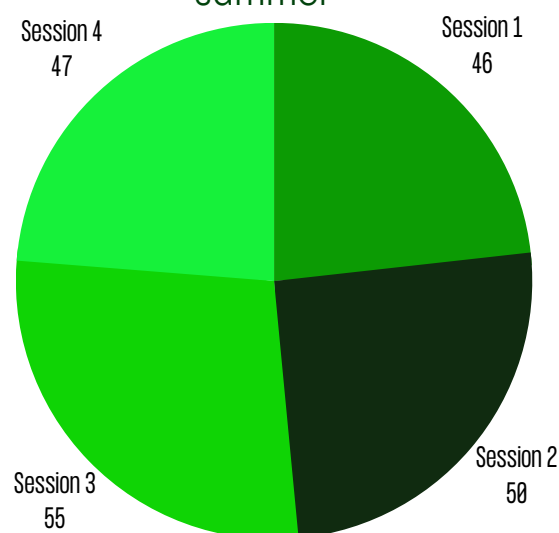
47 flags were made and over 100 Gold Medals were awarded during Olympics



■ Summer Health Statistics



Amount of Tie-Dye T-shirts and Bandanas made this summer



Over 90 Wands were made and used to cast over 90 Spells



Thank You

To all our Donors and Friends for making
summer 2023 a success!

THANK YOU TO THESE FOUNDATIONS

Woodbury Foundation
Alma G. Gibbs Donchian Foundation
Lucy Downing Nisbet Family Fund
The Lawrence Foundation
Vermont Community Foundation
The Spout Foundation
Mt. Lery
Harris and Frances Block Foundation

THANK YOU TO ANDREW COLACECCI

A special thank you to Andrew Colacecci for his generous bequest. Camp Thorpe's future depends on the continued generosity of friends like Andrew. Bequest gifts are one source of significant revenue; they help us predict our future and ensure our programs are sustainable.

*Reach out to execdirector@camphorpe.org to learn more about
Camp Thorpe's Legacy Program*



Mission:

Camp Thorpe is dedicated to providing a fun and safe camping experience to children and adults with special needs.

Vision:

Our vision is to create an intergenerational camp environment where everyone feels safe, secure and accepted.

Phone : 802-247-6611

Website : www.campthorpe.org

Email : execdirector@campthorpe.org

Address : 680 Capen Hill Rd, Goshen, VT 05733