



Camp Thorpe ANNUAL REPORT 2024



www.campthorpe.org

802-247-6611

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Ivan Wemple

Camp Thorpe is excited to welcome a new member to the board this year!



IVAN WEMPLE

Ivan joined the Camp Thorpe team in 2024 after retiring from a long career with IBM. Witnessing the magic of the summer-camp experience in his own son's life opened his eyes to the immeasurable value of organizations dedicated to promoting camaraderie, togetherness and inclusivity for people of all ages and abilities. Ivan views participating on Camp Thorpe's board as a privilege and a terrific opportunity to "give back" in a truly meaningful way.



Director's Letter

SHELLY HUDSON *Executive Director*

Our Summer 2024 season has been a resounding success, and we couldn't have done it without the support of our staff, community, and donors! The four sessions of our 'Blockbuster' summer hosted campers ages 13-80. Each session was uniquely themed after a film genre, such as Sci-fi and Fantasy, offering a one-of-a-kind experience. These themed sessions were not just popular; they were a hit! Programs like Jedi Training, Dino Dig, and The Magic Academy offered unique and exciting experiences for our campers, keeping them engaged and excited throughout the summer!

This year's overwhelming response underscores the continued need for Camp Thorpe's mission-driven work. Our mission, to provide a joyful and inclusive summer camp experience for teens and adults with developmental disabilities in the beautiful Green Mountains of Vermont, is more important than ever. The impact of our work is clear, and we are committed to continuing to make a difference. We are incredibly proud of the impact we're making together, and we hope you share in this pride.

In 2024, 199 campers stayed with us over our seven-week season. We had 27 counselors, 22 of whom were international. This year, we hosted two miniature donkeys, two goats, and an emu. Our nature program cultivated a grant-funded garden-to-table experience again this year and introduced a new activity that had the campers designing their own potted flower arrangements outside the dining hall for everyone's enjoyment.

As we wrap up this successful year, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of our campers, supporters, and new friends. Your unwavering support and belief in our mission have been instrumental in our success. We look forward to seeing you at Camp Thorpe during our 98th season, and we can't wait to continue this journey with you.

The following pages contain stories about our campers, staff, and the Camp Thorpe organization. We hope you enjoy our 2024 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



What a wonderful summer of 2024 at Camp Thorpe! First, as always, thank you, thank you, thank you for allowing me to be a part of this amazing camp!

The biggest focus for the Health Center this year was the transition to getting ALL camper meds coming to camp in Dose packaging. We moved into 2024 with a full compliance expectation, but also knowing realistically, we would face some challenges. This was a necessary change for camper safety and staff retention. I am so excited to report that the change was for the most part successful! We had a small number of campers that came without dose packaging or incorrect packaging, and we worked with those families to correct the issues and to educate them as to proper dose packaging going forward. We have a plan in place for next year to eliminate this issue. The result of all of this was intake days ran much smoother and nurses were on their way home by 6:00 pm.

Our second biggest challenge coming into this year was staffing. Again I am pleased to report this year was such an improvement.

Some stats/fun facts to consider when when you think about the health center:

- This summer, we had a staff of three regular nurses: myself, Eva, and Nicole. We had 2 PRN nurses, Gina and Bethany, and two LNAs who worked intake days with us, Brandie and Olivia.
- Over the 7 weeks of camp, the nurses distributed 11,412 prescription medications. This number does not reflect the counselor meds or OTC meds distributed.
- We had 453 visits to the health center that required either an OTC medication or treatment. This, again, does not include counselor visits or visits that did not require medication or treatment. My guess is that number would almost equal the recorded visits.
- We treated things like insect bites, cold symptoms, stomach complaints, minor injuries (cuts scrapes etc.), falls, eye redness, and light-headedness in addition to mental health complaints such as homesickness, anxiety, depression, and panic attacks.
- OTC meds were a frequent ask such as band aids, Tylenol, Tums, Advil, daytime cold medicine, Visine, Milk of Magnesia, and ice packs as well as multiple tubes of hydrocortisone cream and triple antibiotic ointment. The list is mind-boggling! Yes it was a busy summer at the Health Center, but a WONDERFUL summer!

Shelly asked me how I thought the summer had gone. I didn't hesitate to say I thought things went really well! Yes of course we had some challenges, I can't imagine that won't always be a thing. But regardless of the challenges, we all pulled together and supported each other. Campers had a great summer, Camp was FULL, and smiles and laughter and amazing memories were created! What more could we ask for?

Thank you again for allowing me to continue my journey as part of this amazing family we call Camp Thorpe!

Heidi Gillespie BSN RN

Medical Director | Camp Thorpe

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Camper Success Stories

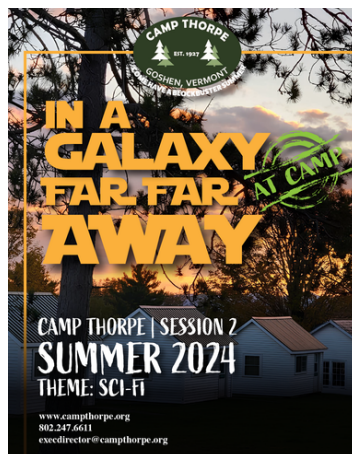
Sometimes, our success stories develop over time. We might see slight changes over their first session at camp, but we see the actual changes a few years in. L is one of these stories. Their first year was in 2022, when they were 16. They were timid and homesick the whole session, crying multiple times a day. However, it was the nurturing environment and the support of our dedicated staff that laid the foundation for their transformation. By the end of the session, we had seen more smiles, but they were still reluctant to participate. They had come with a friend from outside of camp and would mostly interact with just them. Fast forward to 2024: their infectious laughter filled Mountain Reach throughout the day. It took mere hours to get comfortable with their new counselor and cabinmates at the start of the session compared to the days or weeks it took that first summer. It did not take any convincing for them to get up on stage, dressed as Shakira with their cabinmates, laughing the whole time. They no longer needed the safety of the familiar friend from home, having made several new camp friends, which is a testament to the strong bonds that our camp fosters. On several occasions, leadership staff would hear a roar of laughter coming from the other side of the dining hall at mealtime, only to discover that L was the source. L's transformative journey from a timid and homesick camper to a confident and outgoing individual is a profound testament to our camp's life-changing potential. It's a reminder of the profound impact our camp has on our campers' lives.



M is a new camper to us this year. Their parents were very anxious about sending them to camp for the first time. They are new to our country, and their English is limited. The team worked with the family and case manager throughout the off-season to find the best way to support this camper. They came for a tour once camp was in session and were still hesitant. On drop-off day, the family was still very anxious. When I talked to them, they expressed that M had never been away from family before and that the only camps in their home country were family camps. They were worried about the language barrier, his limited communication skills, and being away from them. However, their worries were soon put to rest. Immediately, M adjusted to the schedule and joined in with the activities. Using a translator on their phone and gestures, the counselors could ask M questions about their interests and communicate camp routines. One week in, M woke up every morning, popped out of the cabin, and greeted the counselors and campers, asking them how they were and if they slept. They bonded with several campers and could be heard giggling with them, especially at night when they all were supposed to be sleeping! They participated in everything with a smile and laughter. They chased their friends around the pool, splashing and communicating in their own way. This heartwarming story of M's successful adjustment despite language barriers is a testament to the importance of support and community in our camp's environment.

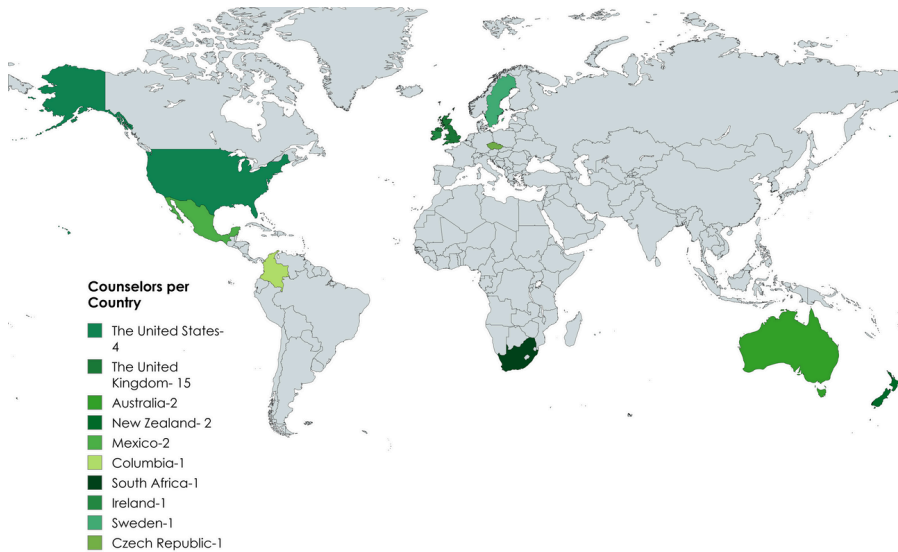
Programming

This year, our summer programming was themed around the Blockbuster movies we love. Each session we hosted was based around a specific genre of movies - Adventure, Sci-Fi, Fantasy, and Animated. Each session introduced new activities as well as a mix of Camp Thorpe Classics that our campers know and love.



Counselors

COUNSELORS AROUND THE GLOBE



This summer our counselors came from far and wide! We had counselors from the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Colombia to name a few. While at camp, our staff supported our campers at a 1 counselor to 3 camper ratio. We are so grateful to our staff for all their hard work to make the summer go off without a hitch. To show our staff how much we appreciate them, we organized trips to Burlington, VT, the Ben and Jerry's Factory, and Six Flags Great Escape on weekends off.



2024 Counselor's Testimonials/Quotes.

"I came into it not knowing what to expect. It was my first time ever doing anything like that, let alone states away from my home. It was challenging at first, but I left feeling humbled. I had help when I needed it, and bonding with my campers was so much fun." - Kenzie

"I've never worked harder or been more exhausted in my life, but I've also never experienced something as rewarding and heartwarming." - Mia

"Camp Thorpe has been an incredible experience. Its a place like no other and a place I like to call home. Its where special memories are made, where you build confidence, skills, strengths and connections. A big part of Camp Thorpe is family. No matter who you are we welcome everyone". - Kyran



An Ode To Amy

THIS IS A FOND FAREWELL FOR NOW!

Amy-Louise Hill's journey at Camp Thorpe has been nothing short of inspiring. She joined us in 2013 as a general counselor, then took on the role of head counselor, and eventually became one of the dynamic duo that formed our Assistant Directors' team. Her journey and the way she has touched the lives of over a thousand campers and mentored or worked with close to 200 counselors while at Camp Thorpe is truly remarkable.

Now, that's what we call impact!

While we are sad to see her go, Amy is now off on her next big adventure, and we want her to know from the Camp Thorpe Family that we are here to support her every step of the way.

We believe in her and her future endeavors, and we know this isn't forever; it's just a temporary farewell!



From prepping for counselor and camper arrival to the daily running of camp and all the mischief that happens in between, Amy has been the best partner in crime and will be greatly missed. ❤️ - Jess

For me, Camp Thorpe and Amy Hill are synonymous! I've never known one without the other! I will miss you Amy, more than words can express! I love you girl! Come Home anytime!! ❤️ - Heidi

I had the pleasure of meeting Amy in March 2023. She has been invaluable to me as I transitioned into the Camp Thorpe family. She will be deeply missed. Thank you for everything! ❤️ - Shelly

Camp By The Numbers

THIS SUMMER:

More than 5 gallons of
Jell-O were eaten,
mostly, competitively.



20 hours of joyous
dancing!



0 campers and staff
taller than this guy!

Kyran

2024 Head Counselor



8 campfires and over 600
smores!



Multiple visits to the
costume closet per
session!



Animals Everywhere!!

3 Deer visited,

2 Donkeys stayed,

2 Goats hung out,

2 Dogs brought smiles,

& 1 Emu ran around.

100 Jedi trained!



1000's of magical moments!

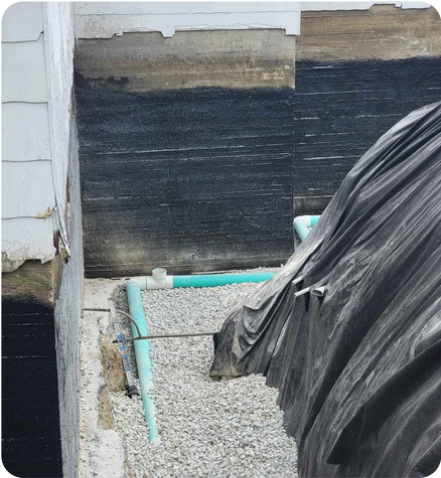


Facilities

Camp Thorpe has been making strides in updating and improving our facilities in order to better serve our campers, counselors, and community.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

This spring, Camp was able to complete an overhaul of the drainage pipework surrounding the dining hall! This project was a precautionary measure to ensure that we will not need to worry about flooding if Camp sees heavy rain. Thank you to Fabian Earth Moving for their time and work completing this project!



UPCOMING PROJECTS

In 2025, Camp Thorpe has multiple facilities projects on the horizon that will make our beautiful campus safer and more accessible for our campers and staff. We plan to complete repairs to our connecting bridge on the playground, as well as make some repairs to our dining hall and pavilion.

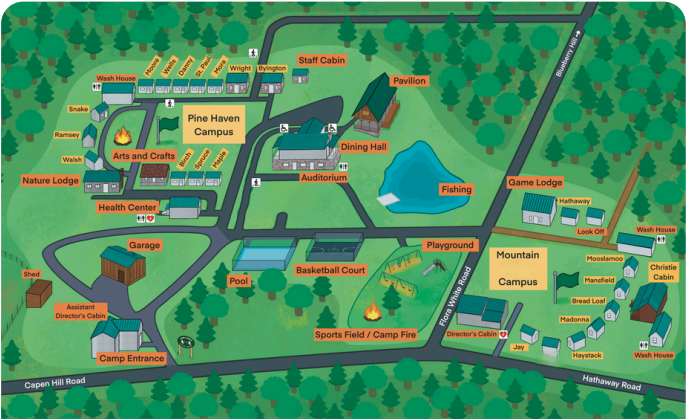


NEW CAMPUS MAP

This year we updated our Campus Map to better showcase our beautiful campus to campers and visitors. We have multiple versions of the map available on our website to increase accessibility for individuals living with vision impairments and color blindness.

NEW CARETAKER

In 2024, Camp welcomed our new Caretaker, James Zieger of JGS Merch LLC. Jim can be seen around campus helping with maintenance issues during the camp season and helping our team plan for future improvements. Welcome Jim!



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Community

RENTALS

Rentals at Camp Thorpe are a significant part of our income, and we make the most of our short window (mid-August to the start of October). This fall, over 600 guests attended events at Camp Thorpe. Whether it was another camp renting the campus, a retreat with the New England Epilepsy Foundation, the BMW motorcycle rally, or multiple weddings, Camp Thorpe was bustling. We introduced a one-day rental option this year, not just to encourage local couples to spend time with us, but also to involve our community in our operations, and the response was immediate and encouraging, with instant results.

This year, we saw a remarkable 39% increase in rental income compared to last year. This growth, coupled with the addition of the new spring 2025 one-day pavilion rentals, reaffirms our belief in rentals as a vital development area to support our annual budget. This significant increase in rental income is a testament to the camp's work toward financial stability and the confidence our stakeholders can have in our future.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTING CAMP



In 2024, Camp Thorpe was grateful to be the recipient of Lawson's Finest Liquid's Sunshine Fund, which raised \$11,128.89 for Camp. We were also the recipient of Bar Harbor's Casual for a Cause program, which raised \$2,074 for Camp, and Hannaford's Community Bag Program which raised \$208 for Camp.

VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTING CAMP

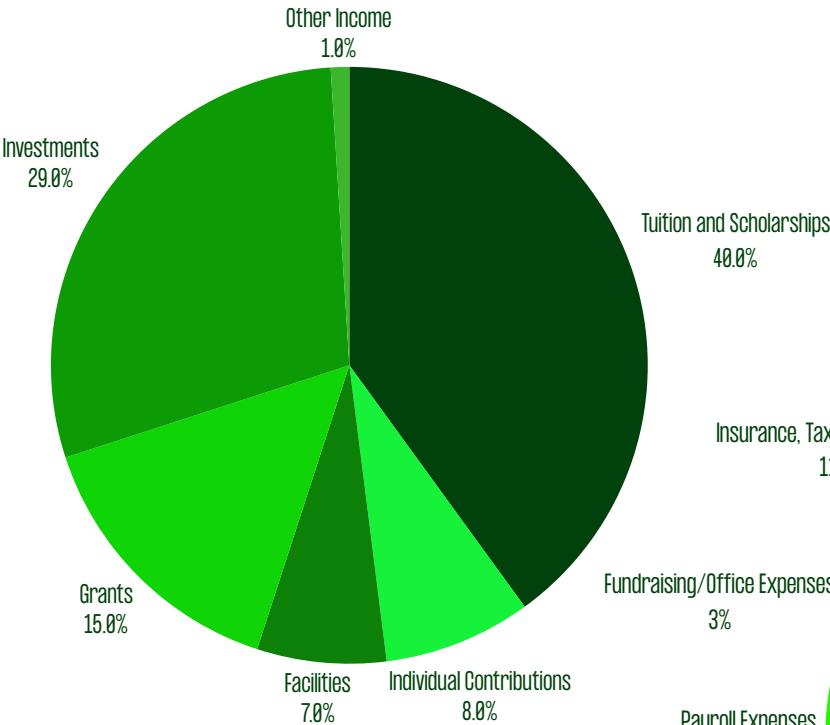


In 2024, Camp Thorpe was grateful to all of the volunteers who came to help us get ready for the summer. We once again saw Dick Giard & family and the BMW Club visit. They completed some small projects. We also had our new friends at Otter Valley Middle School help clean up Camp.

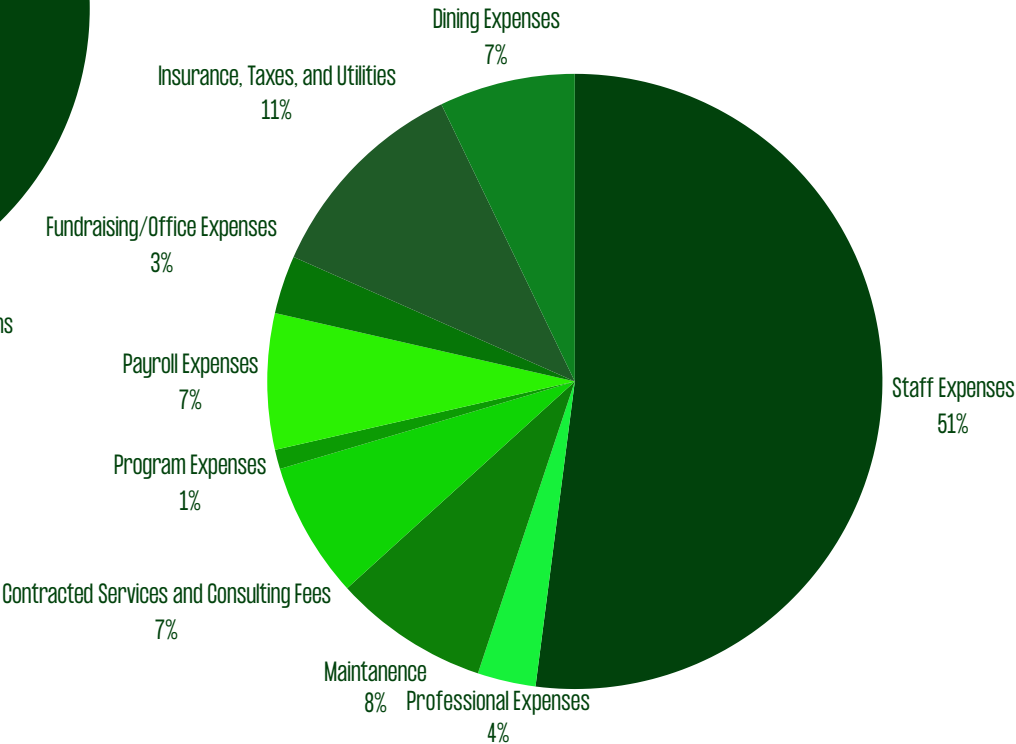
Financials

Below is a snapshot of Camp Thorpe's 2023/24 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



Planning for the Future

Our Strategic Planning Session, held on September 28th at the Brandon Inn in Brandon, Vermont, was a collaborative effort involving Camp Thorpe's Executive Director, the Operations and Development Manager, and all 11 members of the Board of Directors. The session was expertly facilitated by Maeve McBride from CPG Enterprises, whose professional guidance was instrumental in our discussions. This in-person time was invaluable for the Board and staff. The ED shared an organizational update with highlights from the staff and camper surveys, and time was spent brainstorming the organization's mission and vision statements. In small break-out groups, board members worked with critical questions regarding programming, finances, and facilities. Finally, the group considered a draft sketch of a proposed capital campaign with specific components and fundraising goals.

This is the second step in our long-range planning. We are now preparing for the next stage, an external feasibility study, which is of utmost importance in our journey towards our major fundraising work and our capital campaign, to launch in 2025. This work is not just vital, but it is also a testament to the significance of our continued success and the ability to continue using our campus to its total capacity to fulfill our mission. In the coming months, we will contact critical stakeholders, donors, and community members to discuss our long-range goals and fundraising needs. Your involvement in this study will be crucial to our future success.



A Dedication To Our Past

This summer, we said goodbye to Joyce Heath, a long-time director, board member, and inspiration to many.

A framed sketch of our dining hall with a plaque acknowledging her dedication to Camp Thorpe is mounted in the dining hall. Make sure to check it out the next time you visit.



Thank You

To all our Donors and Friends for making summer 2024 a success!

THANK YOU TO THESE FOUNDATIONS

Woodbury Foundation
Alma G. Gibbs Donchian Foundation
Hoehl Family Foundation
The Lawrence Foundation
Vermont Community Foundation
The Spout Foundation
Mt. Lery
Harris and Frances Block Foundation

GIFTS GIVEN IN THE MEMORY OF

Joyce Health
John & Mary Eaton
Jean Walsh
David Reid
Ashley Whipple
Dena Hamel



Mission:

Camp Thorpe provides a joyful and inclusive summer camp experience for teens and adults with developmental disabilities in the beautiful Green Mountains of Vermont.

Vision:

Our vision is to create an intergenerational environment where people with developmental disabilities can experience the joy of summer camp and the security of a loving and supportive home away from home. Camp Thorpe will preserve its unique history, steward its lands, and continue to improve its campus, in order to foster inspirational and transformational experiences for the whole community – campers, their families, caregivers, and staff.

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