

The Happy Camper



MANITOBA CAMPING ASSOCIATION
& SUNSHINE FUND

YEAR-END GIVING CAMPAIGN
**helping MANITOBA
KIDS shine**

PHOTO PROVIDED BY MANITOBA PIONEER CAMP

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT THROUGH GENEROUS MATCHING DONATIONS



We are excited to partner with Concord Projects Foundation and Bob Williams, who have committed to match every donation, dollar for dollar, up to a remarkable total of \$25,000. This means your contribution will make twice the difference, empowering even more children to experience the transformative joy of summer camp. Together, we aim to raise \$50,000 by the end of the year, and with your support, we can make this vision a reality.

We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to experience the joy and growth that comes from attending camp. Your generous gift will be instrumental in ensuring that all children in Manitoba have access to this transformative experience. Every penny raised here goes directly towards sending Manitoba children to summer camp, making memories that will shine for a lifetime.

OUR YEAR-END PARTNERS



**BOB
WILLIAMS**

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

KIM SCHERGER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"I never liked jazz music because jazz music doesn't resolve. But I was outside the Bagdad Theater in Portland one night when I saw a man playing the saxophone. I stood there for fifteen minutes, and he never opened his eyes. After that, I liked jazz music. Sometimes you have to watch somebody love something before you can love it yourself. It is as if they are showing you the way."

-Donald Miller from his book, *Blue Like Jazz*

There are many people who love summer camp, whether they are past or current campers or staff and as a former camp director myself, for 25 years I got to see thousands of campers and staff love camp.

Some campers arrived feeling scared and uncertain about being there. Yet as those young people watched others around them, I witnessed how these campers began to fully embrace the experience themselves. Seeing the love for camp expressed in others helped them see the transformative power of camp. They discovered that they wanted to feel that same joy and connection. It is true: "Sometimes you have to watch somebody love something before you can love it yourself. It is as if they are showing you the way."

At the MCA and Sunshine Fund, we may not be a camp, but we love camp. This means we work year-round to help camps be the best and safest they can be in order to create powerful camp experiences that can change lives. With that, there are often challenges that impede the work that camps put in.

In May, several camps in the Whiteshell area were evacuated for a few weeks, and there was a genuine fear of losing them. Simonhouse Bible Camp, located in northern Manitoba, was evacuated for four weeks, during which time the staff had to temporarily return home. Despite this challenge, they remained committed and continued planning for the summer. Just before their programming was to start, they were able to get back in and make summer happen. However, midway through summer, they again had to prepare for a possible evacuation due to a nearby fire. Fortunately, they did not need to evacuate.

While not all challenges appear so drastic, each camp has its own unique journey. Some camps struggle to find directors, and even when they do find someone, retaining a director for more than a year or two can be difficult. Running a camp is complex and requires a unique set of skills, where knowing how to "do it all" often feels like a daunting ask.

Thankfully, every summer also comes with a long list of successes at camps, and this year is no different.

Some camps were able to meet and even surpass pre-pandemic camper numbers. It was another summer of campers and staff being connected with nature, making lifelong friendships, building social skills, and developing resilience and independence. It is these young people who, year after year, go on to become leaders in their families and communities. When I think back on my former camp director days, I have seen it time and time again: the love people have for camps creates an opportunity for them to be a place of positive development like no other.

For us, we are always wanting to look forward. We continue working with our camps to help them be able to offer powerful summer programs that help young people grow and thrive. Additionally, we are continuing advocacy with both the Provincial and Federal Governments for camps. This advocacy led the Province of Manitoba to prioritize accredited summer camps for Urban Hometown/Green Team funding for staffing positions during the summer.

One of my favourite things about my job is still being able to spend time at camps. This summer, I saw the staff as leaders, and I know camp played a huge role in developing those skills. I see campers, some quiet and shy, and others who are boisterous, who will take the hand of those shy campers, including them in whatever is next. When visiting camps now, I see who I was and who I became because of going to camp as a child: I fell in love with camp and became the leader I didn't know I was because others showed me the way. These moments remind me why our work here at the MCA and Sunshine Fund is so important.

I ask you to consider making a financial gift to the MCA and Sunshine Fund in support of our year-end campaign. Your support will help us reach our goal and unlock the matching gifts we have received this year. Those who have donated know just how impactful camp has been for them, and your generosity can help ensure that others have the same experience.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY RED ROCK BIBLE CAMP

SUNSHINE FUND UPDATE

DANA MOROZ

SUNSHINE FUND MANAGER



PHOTO PROVIDED BY VARIETY'S CAMP BRERETON

This summer, the Sunshine Fund achieved something remarkable: we sent 681 children to summer camp, our highest number in six years. This means we were able to provide \$357,000 of funding to allow Manitoba children to attend summer camp!

For many families, summer is a season filled with worry. Without school, structure, or access to safe spaces, many children face long, lonely days, often without supervision or opportunities to play, connect, or grow. Camp changes that, as it offers security, mentorship, community, and a chance to build essential life skills. And let's not forget that it's a fun place where kids can just be kids. At camp, children learn how to work together,

DID YOU KNOW...
AN AVERAGE WEEK OF SUMMER CAMP COSTS A MANITOBA FAMILY \$525 PER CHILD.

communicate, and make friends. They develop independence, confidence, and resilience. Many try new things for the first time, swimming in a lake, sleeping in a cabin, canoeing, or just being away from home. These experiences may seem small, but for a child who has faced instability or hardship, they can be transformational.

When speaking with parents throughout the summer as they apply for Sunshine Fund subsidy, I am always grateful when they share their child's journey. Hearing about their experiences deepens my understanding of the impact we are making together.

"Camp gave my son the chance to be a kid again. He came home happier, not just from the fun he had, but because he felt like he mattered."

This simple and heartfelt take captures the essence of our work. We're thankful for every donor who makes moments like this possible. We could not do this work without our donor community. Every gift, whether large or small, helped send a child to camp this summer. You gave them joy, safety, friendship, and a space to grow. You made room in their lives for laughter, nature, and belonging. Thank you for your continued support.



GIVING OPTIONS



Online Donation
W | MANITOBACAMPING.CA

e-Transfer Donation
E | DONATE@MANITOBACAMPING.CA

Donation by Phone, or Mail
P | 204.784.1130

SHOP SUNSHINE

Email communications@manitobacamping.ca or visit, manitobacamping.ca to buy a bag of coffee or a coffee mug.

Orders placed by December 5 will be available for pickup at our Henderson office before Christmas. Orders placed after that date will be available in the new year.



\$22.00/BAG

\$20.00

A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE AWAITS

NANCY PASCHKE

STANDARDS & ACCREDITATION
COORDINATOR

Over my years working in the camp industry, I have often heard the phrase “camp is camp”. At its heart, it rings true: the experiences, traditions, and friendships are what make camp beautiful. Now, as the Standards and Accreditation Coordinator with the MCA, I have a new perspective.

My job has me traveling across Manitoba and into Northwestern Ontario to complete camp visits and accreditations during the summer months. These travels have shown me that camps are as vast as the landscape they span. From rolling fields and grass lands to rugged outcroppings and rocky terrain. From lush, dense forests, to the shores and beaches of freshwater lakes. Each offering its own unique, breathtaking views and enchanting encounters with nature. When driving onto a camp site I am entering a new world with its own adventures that no other camp can offer. Some are more rustic adventures that may include log style cabins, leisurely horseback rides, time in the “outback” shooting bows and arrows or learning riflery. A hop, skip and jump away we find campers conquering fears as they fly through the air on a zip line or stepping up to new challenges climbing walls and ropes courses. Other adventures will find

you tubing behind a boat, learning how to get up on water-skis or exploring the lake on paddle boards or kayaks. For others the lake calls them to journey out in canoes navigating water ways, challenging rapids or exploring waterfalls, reaching islands less explored and places where the nights are darker and the stars shine brighter. And just as the currents change, so do the experiences - spanning from a brisk swim in a lake, to splashing in the pool, and yet another taking a running leap onto the slip and slide that sweeps campers across the field.

Through the vast landscape of experiences and across the vast landscapes of this beautiful land, there are camp staff cheering the campers on, speaking life into them and creating the most incredible lifechanging experiences for a lifetime of memories. Whether it be under a setting sun, around the campfire or playing a wild soccer game in the rain, “camp wouldn’t be camp” without the campers. But also, “camp wouldn’t be camp” without you our donors supporting the MCA and member camps to create spaces for campers to explore the outdoors. Thank you for being a part of this lifegiving experience called camp.



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