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ACA Camps Call to Action

We need your help to reach our goals of getting camps access to timely, affordable, finger-print based criminal background checks!

The Child Protection Improvements Act of 2008 is a bill in both the Senate (S 2756) and the House of Representatives (HR 5606). Implementation of the bill would mean that camps would have access to fingerprint-based FBI criminal records checks of their staff and volunteers. This bill is important to the camp community because currently forty-one states do not allow you access to the FBI—and for those that do, it is prohibitively expensive and often takes weeks or months to get the results.

We are asking everyone to PHONE their legislators to ask them to sign on as co-sponsors of the bill. The more co-sponsors that are secured, the better the chances that the bills will be passed into law.

We've set up a very easy process and support information for you to make your calls. Simply [go online](#) for all the information.

<http://www.acacamps.org/publicpolicy/cbcresources.php>

Please act today!

If you have any questions about this call to action, please contact Susan Yoder at the ACA National Office, 1.800.428.2267 x302.

2008 Section Survey

Help to shape the future of your Section!

Complete survey by May 21st to be entered to receive a complimentary registration to the ACA Northern California Fall Conference

[Go to survey NOW!](#)

or visit www.acanorcal.org

WOW!



Staff Training Opportunities

CAMP IS FOR THE CAMPER

For \$39, ALL of a camp's staff can participate in *Camp is for the Camper* on-line course!

The Camp Is for the Camper Online Training, Second Edition gives staff an educational forum for considering their roles and responsibilities before arriving at camp. The program's four interactive modules address counselor responsibilities as role models, stress reduction while working at camp, and demographics of today's campers and behavior management techniques. The program content draws from the popular booklet, *Camp Is for the Camper*.

Use of this course for staff training has several advantages:

- ⇒ Staff members can complete the course PRIOR to their arrival at camp, so they are ready to move onto the next steps!
- ⇒ Having staff members participate in this course helps meet part of ACA Standard HR-11 (Pre-Camp Training). This course specifically addresses the following parts of HR-11:
 - Developmental needs of campers to be served and the resulting differences for program, structure, and behavior management; and
 - Behavior management and camper supervision techniques to create a physically and emotionally safe environment.
- ⇒ Use of this course is a great way to "jump start" your staff training, helping your staff members begin to focus on their summer job and experience.
- ⇒ Cost of the *Camp Is for the Camper Online Training* is just \$39! This allows as many of your staff members to access this course as you wish!

This course, along with others currently available, can be accessed at: www.ACAcamps.org/einstitute/. Visit this site often as more courses will be added by mid-May that will be of benefit to camps and their staff

Educational Opportunity Available to ACA Nor Cal Members and Camps

Webinar Presented by Western Association of Independent Camps (WAIC)

Redefining Leadership: What Highly Effective Leaders Do with presenter Bill Benjamin

Tuesday, May 20, 2008—10:00 AM - 11:30 AM PDT

This webinar will provide individuals with the following learning opportunities:

- ~ Increased awareness of what drives high performance and the key concepts of emotional intelligence
- ~ Understand the brain science of emotions that drive our behavior
- ~ Increase Self-Awareness through self-assessment and interactive exercises, to identify the gaps between our intention and the impact we have on others
- ~ Learn strategies to Increase self management and self control during times of adversity, conflict and change

For details go to: <http://www.acanorcal.org/>

More Staff Training!

STAFF TRAINING AT ITS BEST!

Imagine being able to have the best camp trainers and consultants available for your staff orientation.

Now you can...With the May/June issue of *Camping Magazine*!

Bob Ditter, Stephen Wallace, Christopher Thurber, Michael Shelton, and many more offer their expertise and professional strategies in this special staff training issue created exclusively for staff and for trainers.

Your premier industry resource is now available at a special low bulk rate, so affordable that you can order this issue for each member of your staff.

Special Discount for the May/June Staff Training Issue
 \$1 per copy in multiples of 10. Share *Camping Magazine* with your staff!

10 copies --	\$10
20 copies --	\$20
30 copies --	\$30
40 copies --	\$40
50 copies --	\$50

This price does not include shipping and handling.
 Reserve your copies today online at www.ACAcamps.org/campmag.

May 5-9, 2008 + May 10 Optional Certification Test Challenge Course Training

Challenge Works partnering with Girl Scouts of Northern CA
 Skylark Ranch near Santa Cruz, CA
 register online at: www.challengeworks.com

May 24, 2008

ACA NAA Level 1 Archery Certification Course

Cheviot Hills Recreation Center - Los Angeles, CA

[More Information](#)

May 25, 2008

ACA NAA Level 1 Archery Certification Course

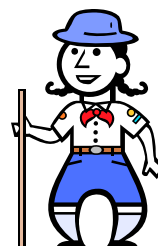
Woodley Park - Van Nuys, CA

[More Information](#)

May 31, 2008

ACA NAA Level 1 Archery Certification Course

San Diego, CA



Still Need Staff?

Intelligent Staff Recruitment-ACA's Online Employment Center

ACA's online employment center offers online resources to help you find, recruit, and retain staff.

- ⇒ Summer Jobs at Camp – Camps can post seasonal job openings and reach thousands of camp professionals.
- ⇒ Year-Round Jobs at Camp – E-mail listings of your camp's year-round job postings are distributed to job seekers twice a month.
- ⇒ Job Fairs – Comprehensive lists of job fairs and organizations that specialize in international staffing.

Visit www.ACAcamps.org/jobs for more information.



Don't Miss It!

ACA NORTHERN CALIFORNIA FALL CONFERENCE

Save the date: Monday, October 13, 2008

Enter ACA's YouTube Contest Today!

TELL IT THROUGH THE TUBE!

Your Creative Assignment: Put your videography skills to work! Choose one or more of the following topics for your YouTube video and in a three-minute or less video, tell us the story of how your camp community

- Links kids to nature, providing kids with real, authentic experiences with nature;
- Connects kids to authentic relationships that afford friendships, understanding, and appreciation for one another and the global community; and/or
- Gets kids up and moving and learning about their strengths and lifestyles that advance well-being.

For contest rules and regulations and to submit your video to Peg Smith, CEO of the American Camp Association, visit www.ACAcamps.org/youtube

Is Your Camp Being Visited in 2008?

STANDARDS ACCREDITATION TIPS!

- 1) Remember, the accreditation process is meant to be educational, NOT an inspection, so just prepare for a smooth visit.
- 2) Be sure to review the revised Standards and Interpretations (<http://www.acacamps.org/accreditation/interpretations.pdf>)
- 3) Actually READ your Accreditation Process Guide (APG).
- 4) Utilize the resources on the CD that came with your APG.
- 5) Contact one of the standards visitors if you have questions about your written documentation or applicability of any standard, BEFORE your visit.
- 6) Delegate the preparation of appropriate portions of the standards to key staff, but SET SEVERAL DATES to check in with them to be sure each person knows what to do and will finish on-time.

Customizable ACA Forms Available Online

A variety of forms for use by camps are available online at (<http://www.acacamps.org/members/healthforms/>).

These forms are made available to ACA members as a member benefit and can be downloaded from this site for no charge. Many of the forms are customizable for your camp (you can place your camp logo and address in specifically designated "boxes"). The customizable forms include *Staff Health History*, *Medical Recommendation for Camp Employees* and other useful health-related forms.

Used together for overnight camps, the *Camper Health History Form* (four-page form completed by parent/guardian) and the *Camper Health Care Recommendations* (one-page form completed by physician) replace the old "Green form," which will NOT be updated/revised. The new form more specifically addresses many concerns of the camp director including: allergies; dietary restrictions; mental, emotional, and social health of the camper; etc. Day camps can use the Camp Health History alone in order to meet the ACA Standards.



Membership

Great Values for ACA Visitors and Your Summer Staff

Discounted memberships, expanded services for students and more! That's what ACA's new individual membership offers—with incredible values available to ACA visitors and summer camp staff.

Better Value for Visitors

With ACA's new membership model going into effect July 1, professionals who are ACA camp visitors will see a substantial new discount to their membership fee. Visitors will receive a discounted rate of \$95, more than 50% off the individual membership dues of \$200. Compare this to the old Standards Visitor rate of \$150. That's a savings of \$55! To be eligible for the Visitor discount, you must be an individual trained and approved by ACA to conduct accreditation visits during the current year.

More Value for Students

For \$35, student members will now receive:

- FREE ACA national conference registration
- Full-year subscription to *Camping Magazine*
- Full-year subscription to *The CampLine*
- Access to all ACA Web resources
- Discounts on educational events, purchases at the ACA Bookstore, and more!

We encourage you to share this opportunity with your full-time student staff. Help make your staff aware of what ACA has to offer students.

Consider doing the following:

[Download a flyer](#) (PDF) to distribute to your student staff or post it in a prominent location.

Forward the flyer in an e-mail to your student staff.

Make your staff aware of ACA in whatever way might be appropriate.

You can help staff discover ACA as a professional resource — one that can expand upon their excitement and enthusiasm for changing campers' lives.

Even though the new membership model and rates don't officially take effect until July 1, you can take advantage of the new rate now by calling Rachel Williams at 765-342-8456, ext. 509, or sending her an e-mail at membership@ACAamps.org.

If you're curious about your renewal date, or have specific questions about how the change will impact your dues or services, be sure to contact Rachel at: membership@ACAamps.org.

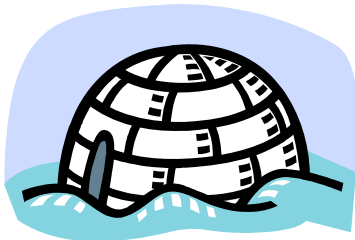
Be The Example

Submitted by: **ACA Religiously Affiliated Camps (RAC) Chair**

A small group of students, teachers, and parents arrived at camp. They were ready for the snow and cold weather and the conditions that go along with it! Their over-night stay included some cross-country skiing and building igloos.

The teacher in charge gave the students instructions on how to build an igloo using tools like a snow shovel and saw. He said to look for the firmly packed snow as it made the best snow blocks for building an igloo.

The two groups of students were excited as they began to cut out the blocks of snow and stack them row by row. It was not long before one group discovered that they had made the base circle too large and that as the igloo grew taller, they would need to have a step ladder to complete the roof!



The other group had started more modestly, about half the size of the first group. Their challenge was in having blocks that were too small which left the walls somewhat fragile.

An hour or so after they had started, I decided to check in on them. I brought my snow shovel along with me as it had been some time since I had had that kind of fun! I visited with the students and staff and then set to work putting together a small igloo that a couple of people could crawl into. As I worked on it, students would stop by to watch and ask questions. Some of the adults had to take a look as well. To everyone's amazement, in less than forty-five minutes I had completed the igloo. Students came to look at it and crawl inside. Then the head instructor called everyone over to look at it and made some good observations. At the end of a few more hours they all agreed to 'call it a day' and return the next morning to see how their igloos had fared.

With eagerness they all hurried to see what had become of their igloos! All of the igloos were now quite solid as they froze overnight! One, still without a roof, still stood firm like a rock wall. The other enclosed igloos enjoyed six more inches of powder snow covering them like a canopy. Both groups of students and adults walked away pleased with what had been a fun project.

Among other things, here's what they said they learned:

- 1) Start with the end in mind.
- 2) Be sure you know how much time it will take to finish the project.
- 3) You have to work together as a team. One or two people can't do everything.
- 4) Use the softer snow (not ice or powdered snow) for blocks. They hold better.

(Continued on page 10 - From the RAC Chair)

From Your Complaint Resolution Chair...

By Dan Gelineau, with contributions from Sharon Kosch

My annual complaint summary for the previous summer and “thank you” note to camp directors for all of your hard work in working with parents and staff on their concerns is occurring much later than usual this year. That is because our section received a significant number of complaints last summer, and a few of them took an extended period of time to resolve.



Two of the complaints included threats of extensive media exposure for the camps and ACA, which did NOT occur due in large part to the prompt, frequent and open communication by camp directors with the parents lodging the complaints, and the willingness of the directors to review policies and procedures and communicate their sincere concern to the parents. Because of the potential for media exposure, the national office was made aware and involved in the resolution process.

There was also a significant change in the nature of complaints received this year from parents. While in past years, complaints often focused on relatively minor issues such as availability of programs described in brochures, number of bathrooms available in camp, cabin assignments, etc., this year, the focus was on issues related to camper safety (both physical and emotional).

Two of the complaints involved issues related to accreditation standards, so our section standards chair was also involved in working towards resolution of the complaints. In fact, in both of the cases, the parents were as concerned about the accreditation process, the validity of accreditation and the standards for camps in the areas of supervision and safety as they were about the individual camps.

I believe it is of value to everyone to share some information as to the nature of a couple of these complaints. It is important for everyone to be aware that complaints received at the national and section level are always handled with the utmost regard for confidentiality, so there will be no reference to camp name, location or other identifying information within this article.

One complaint received dealt with parents' concern for their child's safety due to construction activity occurring at the camp site. Parents felt that camp staff did not make adequate adjustments in their normal supervision policies (allowing children to move about the site without a staff member) to take into account the hazards resulting from construction vehicles moving about the site in close proximity to program areas and camper foot traffic. Additionally, the parent felt that there was too much freedom and not enough direct supervision for campers of this particular age group in the camp's regular programming and policies.

In another complaint, parents were concerned following their child's return home after the camp session with the amount of freedom and lack of structure the camper had

experienced at camp. The camper shared stories of considerable time spent just "hanging out" with other campers (some quite a bit older), and stories of other campers' personal experiences that the parents did not feel were appropriate exposures for their child. A few instances of staff "sharing" of experiences and campers observing staff behavior that should have been private also occurred.

There are some interesting similarities with both of these complaints. The issues are almost the same - too much independence and not enough supervision. Some of that is real and some is parent and camper perception.

Interesting questions to discuss and ask ourselves...

Are camps adequately conveying their camp philosophy to perspective campers and their parents?

- Does your brochure/website indicate the degree of supervision and freedom of choice available to campers? Some camps address this with a "typical day at camp" section in their publications.

Is that philosophy and degree of freedom what most parents are seeking these days?

- Should supervision levels, activity choice, and free time to hang out be different for various age groups in camp? Parents have a greater concern in these areas for younger campers.

Does that philosophy significantly increase the liability issues for the camps?

- Are there adequate provisions for supervision of free time and campers who choose not to participate in an activity?
- Are adjustments made for situations that differ from the norm in camp routines (i.e. construction on the site)?

Is the philosophy supported in the outcomes for the camp?

- Are staff trained in observable indicators that would let them know if a camper is having trouble with this independence?
- Are staff trained in supervision procedures, i.e. what to observe, in each post to which they may be assigned?

Lessons Learned...

It is important for us to clearly articulate our camps' philosophy, culture, and program structure to both parents and campers to prevent disappointment and upset over misunderstood expectations.

It is clear that in today's world, parents have high expectation for their child's safety, both physical and emotional in all of the child's activities. We need to be proactive in articulating that this concern is shared by everyone in camp and is addressed thoroughly in camp programming, structure, and supervision.

(Continued from page 7- From the RAC Chair)

- 5) If you let the igloo stand overnight in cold weather, it gets stronger!
- 6) Make sure there are enough tools to go around before you start the project.

As I was beginning to walk back to the office, one of the adults caught me and said in a very affirming manner, "You teach by example."

And isn't that true for all of us as leaders, especially spiritual leaders? As Paul says, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12 KJV

american **CAMP** association™

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