

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



Fostering Stewards

People who care for each other and the earth we share



About Camp Kawartha

Camp Kawartha is a non-profit leader in environmental education and sustainable living, dedicated to building a deeper, lifelong connection between people and the Earth. Through year-round camps, outdoor education programs and workshops, we welcome children, youth, and adults to learn with purpose, exploring ecosystems, building outdoor skills, practicing sustainable living, and fostering environmental awareness. By nurturing empathy, curiosity, and a sense of responsibility for nature, Camp Kawartha empowers individuals to become stewards, confident and caring leaders committed to protecting the natural world for generations to come.

Our Mission

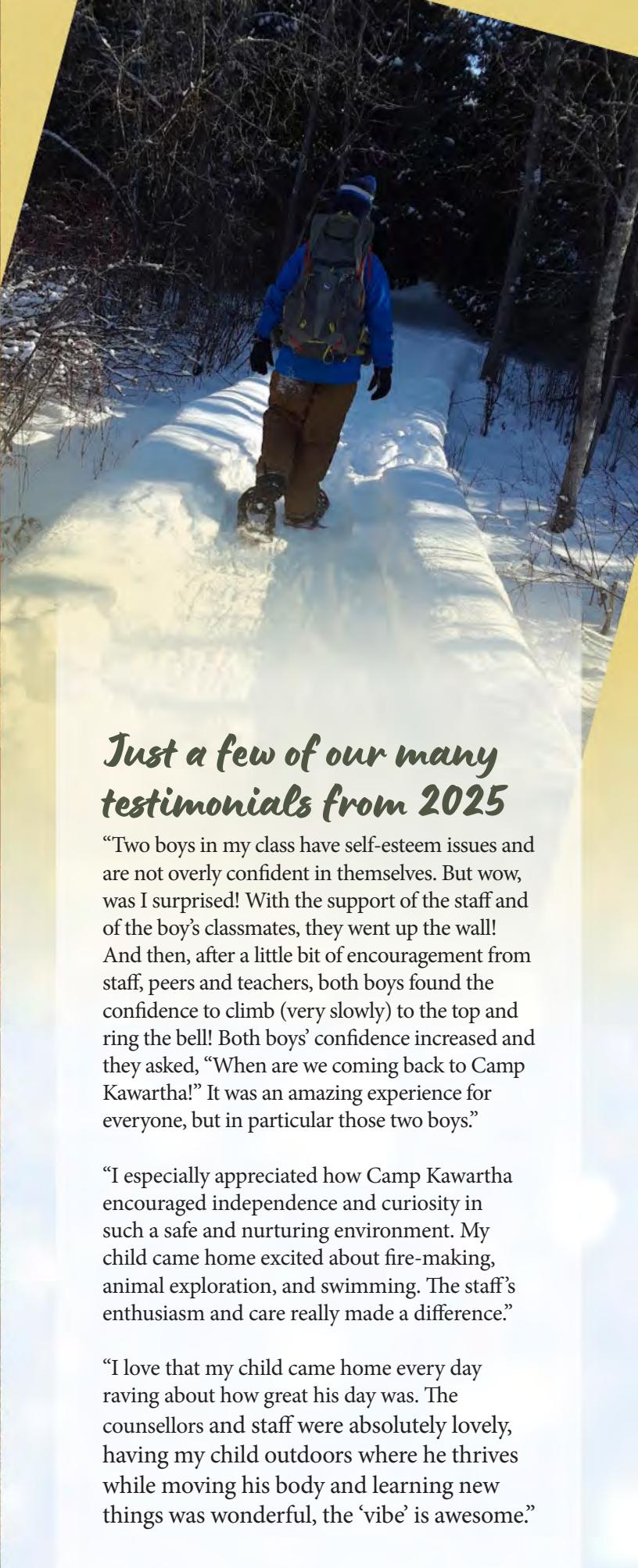
Camp Kawartha inspires environmental leaders and stewards of all ages through dynamic, accessible, year-round outdoor programming and powerful partnership to create meaningful change.

Our Vision

That Camp Kawartha will be recognized as a national leader in the delivery of high quality and inspirational outdoor and environmental programming; practicing, teaching and promoting sustainable living practices to children and adults of all ages and abilities.



“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you”
— Jane Goodall.



Just a few of our many testimonials from 2025

“Two boys in my class have self-esteem issues and are not overly confident in themselves. But wow, was I surprised! With the support of the staff and of the boy’s classmates, they went up the wall! And then, after a little bit of encouragement from staff, peers and teachers, both boys found the confidence to climb (very slowly) to the top and ring the bell! Both boys’ confidence increased and they asked, “When are we coming back to Camp Kawartha?” It was an amazing experience for everyone, but in particular those two boys.”

“I especially appreciated how Camp Kawartha encouraged independence and curiosity in such a safe and nurturing environment. My child came home excited about fire-making, animal exploration, and swimming. The staff’s enthusiasm and care really made a difference.”

“I love that my child came home every day raving about how great his day was. The counsellors and staff were absolutely lovely, having my child outdoors where he thrives while moving his body and learning new things was wonderful, the ‘vibe’ is awesome.”

Camp Kawartha's 2024-25 Impact in Numbers

1,384 summer campers immersed themselves in the outdoors, building confidence, friendship, and a lifelong sense of stewardship.



4,791 Through Outdoor Education, **4,791 students from 50 schools** experienced hands-on, curriculum-linked learning that deepened their appreciation for the natural world.



212 In partnership with the PVNC Catholic District School Board, GreenUP, and Otonabee Conservation, **212 youth leaders** participated in an Environmental Symposium.



19,263 This year, Camp Kawartha logged **19,263 visits** with nature, community, and sustainable living through our programs and initiatives.

107 Our Nature School supported **107 young learners**, nurturing curiosity and ecological understanding through daily outdoor exploration.

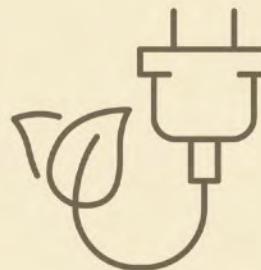
2,976 Our Outreach Program brought nature directly to schools, engaging **111 classes** and **2,976 students** in activities that helped naturalize schoolyards and inspire everyday environmental action.

3,133 Thanks to donor support, **3,133 children** gained access to camp and outdoor education, ensuring that stewardship learning is available to all.



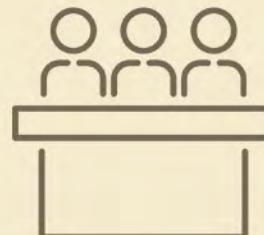
Our facilities continued to serve as vibrant community hubs:

1,440 visitors from **30 organizations** experienced programs at our main site.

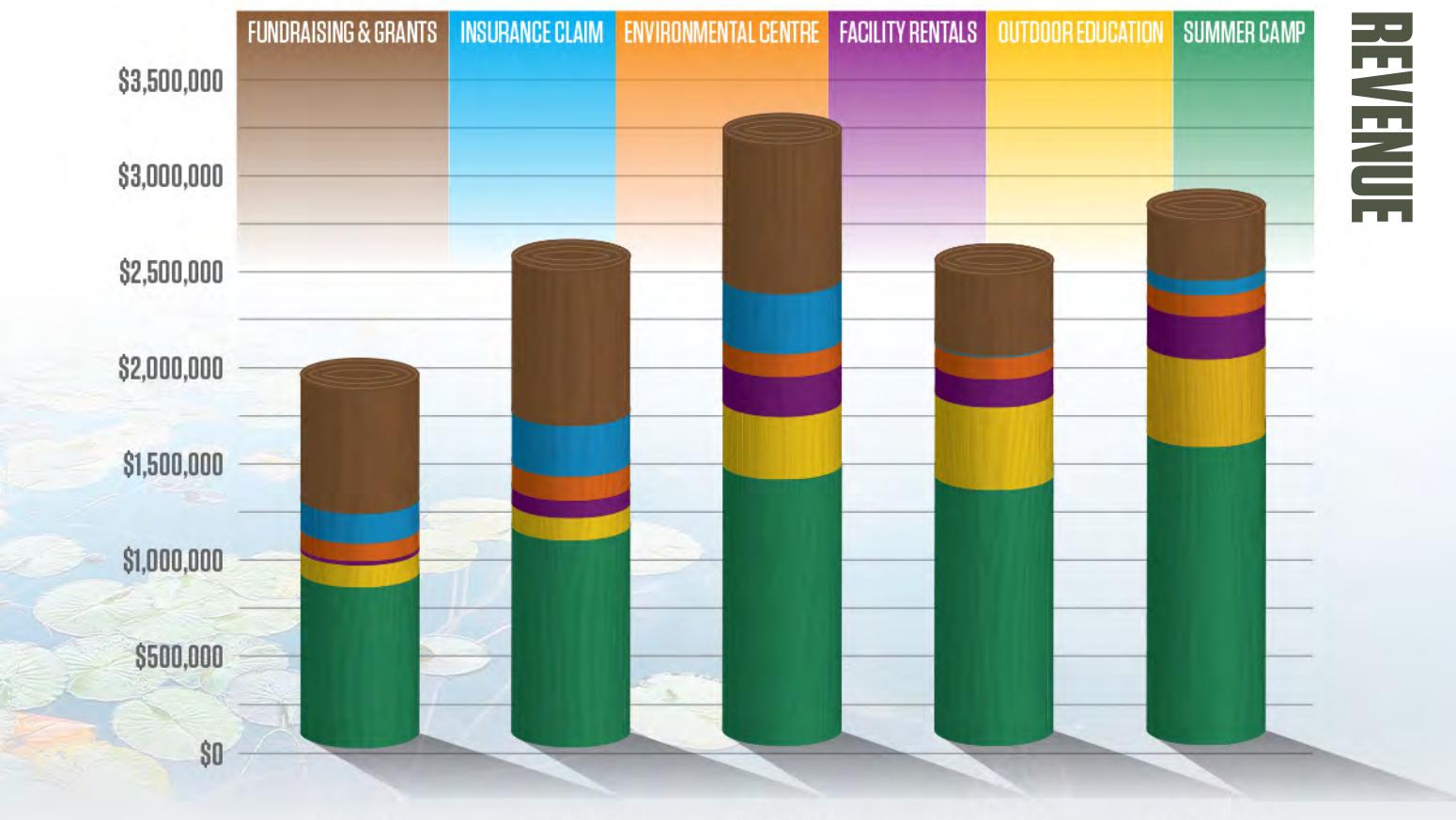


7,287 At the Environment Centre, **7,287 visitors, 156 rental groups, and 372 partner bookings** engaged with sustainable building features and nature-based learning.

1,768 The Environment Centre also hosted **1,768 elementary and high school students** and **145 post-secondary learners**, offering hands-on education in a living sustainability showcase.



401,500 Our message of stewardship reached even further online, with **401,500 social media views** helping to amplify hope, action, and nature connection.



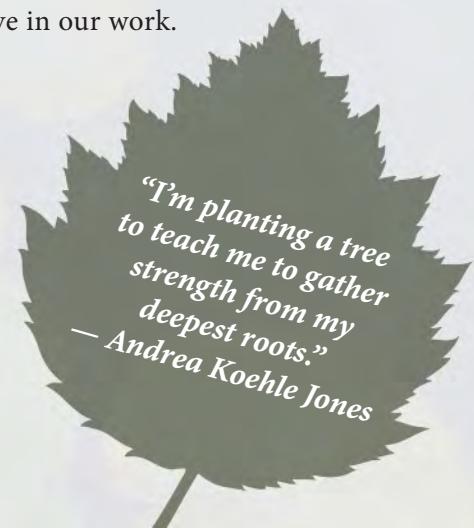
Please note: the 2022-23 Fiscal Year included an insurance claim and major grant which ended in 2023-24.
 For a copy of our complete Audited Statements please visit: www.campkawartha.ca

With Gratitude...

Camp Kawartha continues to grow because of the many people who believe in our mission and lend their time, skills, and heart to this place. Every season, we see how much our work depends on a community that cares about helping children develop confidence, curiosity, and a lasting connection with nature. We remain grateful to the Rotary Club of Peterborough for planting the roots of this camp more than a century ago. Since then, counsellors, educators, volunteers, and support staff, those teaching on the land and those working quietly behind the scenes, have made it possible for young people to learn and thrive here. Our board members also play an essential role, offering steady guidance as we navigate new opportunities and challenges. To everyone who has contributed in ways large and small, thank you. Your support keeps Camp Kawartha strong and helps nurture the next generation of environmental stewards.

In Memory

We honour the memory of Dr. Betsy McGregor, a long-time board member, mentor, and great friend to Camp Kawartha. Betsy was a passionate ambassador for our mission, strengthening our community through her warmth, leadership, and belief in the power of environmental education. A veterinarian, scholar, and advocate for women in science and public life, she inspired countless future leaders. Her legacy continues to guide us, like the tree we planted in her name - rooted, generous, and alive in our work.



From the Executive Director

At Camp Kawartha, we believe that healing our planet begins with healing our relationship with the natural world. Climate change, biodiversity loss, and rising anxiety among young people all point to the same truth: many children are growing up without a meaningful connection to the Earth we share. When nature isn't part of our daily lives, it becomes harder for us and for our children to feel connected, hopeful, and empowered. Our work is focused on changing that.

Through our summer camps, outdoor education programs, and the Pathway to Stewardship and Kinship program, we help children rediscover their inborn love for the living world. They explore forests and wetlands, return to familiar places through the seasons, meet animals, plant gardens, and grow in confidence with each hands-on experience. These moments help them understand that nature is part of their community, their "neighbourwood."

Just as importantly, we model what sustainable living can look like. Our strawbale buildings, living roofs, renewable materials, and low-impact design turn our campus into a living classroom, showing children how humans can create spaces where both people and nature can thrive.

In this Annual Report, you'll see how we are bringing these values to life: nurturing connection, demonstrating sustainability, and inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards.

From our New Summer Camp Director

My name is Gemma Romano, and I am honoured to return to my home away from home as Camp Kawartha's new Summer Camp Director! My journey here began in 1997, when I arrived with my mom, Cathy Romano, and stayed in the Health Centre because I was still too young for a cabin. Since then, I have grown up in this community as a camper, counsellor, tripper, Wilderness Skills Director, Outdoor Educator, and Environment Centre staff member. Camp Kawartha has shaped who I am, and it feels incredibly meaningful to step into this new role.

I bring more than 18 years of professional experiential education experience, along with a Master of Education in Environmental and Sustainability Education, and an Ontario Teacher Certification. My career has taken me across Ontario and beyond, working in leadership, program development, and community partnerships through Relay Education, Evergreen Canada, and the Rare Charitable Research Reserve. I am deeply committed to safety, inclusion, and creating environments where every young person feels they belong. In this role, I hope to nurture the same spark of hope that Jane Goodall inspired in me. I want campers and staff alike to feel that their time here can make a real difference, for themselves, for their community, and for the Earth we share.

I am grateful to be back, and I look forward to an inspiring summer ahead.



2024-25 Accomplishments

Award: This year, Camp Kawartha's Pathway to Stewardship and Kinship received an **Outstanding Flagship Project Award** from the United Nations University. This honour recognizes our **Pathway program as one of the world's leading examples of Education for Sustainable Development**. Selected from projects across the more than **200 global Regional Centers of Education (RCE) for Sustainable Development**, the award highlights the strength of our community-based approach, our partnerships with educators and Indigenous Knowledge Holders, and the impact of our 30 age-linked Landmarks on children's learning. For Camp Kawartha, this recognition affirms our leadership in stewardship education and strengthens our ability to share the Pathway with communities locally and beyond.

This makes for **25 awards** in total, that Camp Kawartha has earned for its work in promoting outdoor learning and environmental stewardship

"Children grow up hearing how broken the environment is, how broken beyond repair. Plant strawberries together, make wild medicines, paint the sunrise. Show them proof that for every act of destruction, they can sow a seed, however small, of beauty." – Nicolette Sowder (creator of Wilder Child)

Upgrades

Birch Cabin: Thanks to grants from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Echo Foundation and the Peterborough Foundation and constructed by Strawworks, Camp Kawartha is pleased to announce the completion of Birch Cabin. With strawbale walls, a Nexcem and rubble-trench foundation, recycled-glass Glavel insulation, a demonstration living roof, natural lime plaster, pine and cork flooring, and non-toxic finishes, the cabin stores carbon, reduces emissions, and demonstrates regenerative, sustainable design in action.

Day Camp Hub: We expanded our day camp program by creating two new tent platforms and gathering spaces tucked into the forest. This dedicated hub offers children deeper nature immersion, room for imaginative play, and a welcoming outdoor space to explore, create, and connect with the woods.

Regenerating: Camp Kawartha continues its work to restore the forest damaged by the 2022 Derecho. This year, we planted more than 500 native trees, including serviceberry, black walnut, red oak, sugar maple, and others, helping to regenerate habitat and strengthening the long-term health of our woodlands.



Summer Camp

This summer marked a remarkable **104th season** at Camp Kawartha. Under the steady guidance of Emma Robert and her team, more than **1,300 campers** spent their days exploring the outdoors, forming friendships, and gaining confidence through meaningful time in nature. In recognition of her outstanding contributions since 2021, Emma received Camp Kawartha's **Exceptional Leadership Award** from our Board of Directors. We also extend our gratitude as we bid her a fond farewell.

A standout feature of the year was the involvement of **54 youth** in our leadership programs, including Leaders in Training, Counsellor Skills Development, and Wilderness Skills Development. These programs help young people grow as mentors and team members while learning how to share outdoor skills with others. The season reflected what Camp Kawartha does best: nurturing resilience, stewardship, and a sense of belonging. It was a summer filled with growth, discovery, and community.

Outdoor Education

Reconnecting Students with Nature

This year, we welcomed over **4,700 students** from **50 schools** across Southern Ontario, marking a steady recovery from the challenges of the pandemic. Students participated in more than 60 curriculum-linked programs, with highlights including team building, Wetland Wonders, traditional skills, and animal adaptations.

For schools unable to visit our facilities, we brought the learning to them—reaching over **2,976 students** through

engaging on-site programming. We also provided teacher training on how to transform school grounds into vibrant, hands-on extensions of the classroom, helping to inspire meaningful connections to nature close to home.

Environment Centre

A Living Classroom for Sustainability

The Camp Kawartha Environment Centre continues to demonstrate what sustainable living looks like in practice, offering students and visitors a place to learn, explore, and reconnect with the natural world. More than **1,700 students** took part in hands-on outdoor and environmental programs this year, nurturing curiosity and a growing sense of stewardship.

Our Nature School thrived, with **107 children** immersed in programs like Forest Explorers, Root Wood, and Woodsy Wednesday, where learning unfolds through play, exploration, and direct contact with the land.

We also strengthened our role as an educator of educators. Through the Eco Mentor Program, we supported Teacher Candidates from Trent University and Early Childhood Educators from Fleming College as they developed skills in nature-based teaching.

3,324 community group participants representing 156 bookings, a record number, used our facility this year, reinforcing the Environment Centre's place as a local hub for sustainability, environmental learning, and community engagement.





Opening Doors: Sponsoring Children

This year marked a milestone for Camp Kawartha. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our donors and partner foundations, we provided **\$105,682** in subsidies and sponsorships – the highest amount in our history. These gifts helped more than 3,100 children access our award-winning programs.

Because of this support, young people who might otherwise have faced financial barriers were able to discover nature, build friendships, and experience the kind of joyful outdoor learning that nurtures confidence, connection, and a deep sense of belonging.

Schoolyards as an Act of Reconciliation

With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and in partnership with the PVNCC Catholic School Board, GreenUP, Monarch Ultra, and First Nations educators, Camp Kawartha helped three schools including Curve Lake First Nation School reintroduce naturalized spaces to their schoolyards. Fruit trees, pocket forests, berry patches, and living willow structures now offer places of shade, beauty, and ecological learning.

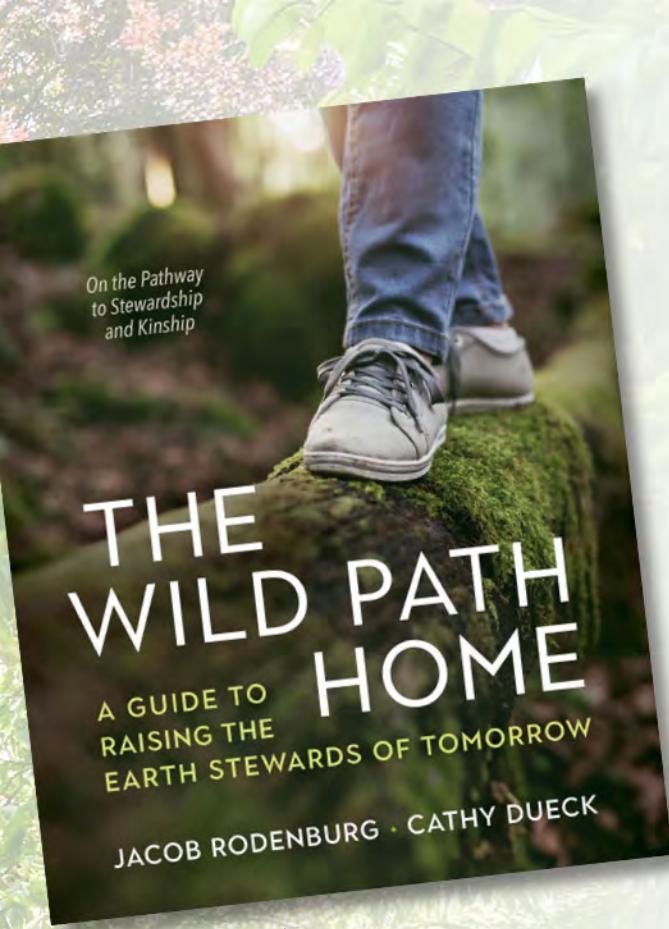
This project also created pathways for students to engage with Anishinaabemowin, the original language of this land within Williams Treaty 20, territory of the Michi Saagiig people. Through hands-on restoration and shared learning, students experienced reconciliation not as an abstract concept, but as a living practice rooted in respect, relationship, and care for the land they call home. We are looking to expand this program in 2026.

Monarch Ultra

In 2025, the Monarch Ultra generously **contributed more than \$6,000 to Camp Kawartha** to help establish pollinator gardens at schools in Peterborough and Curve Lake. Through their unique blend of long-distance running, community festivals, and conservation outreach, the Monarch Ultra raises awareness about the decline of monarch butterflies and other pollinators while inspiring local action.

New SHSM Developed

Drawing on the many sustainable design features of Camp Kawartha's main site, we developed an interactive Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program that introduces students to emerging opportunities in the green careers sector. This hands-on learning experience allows high school students to explore sustainable building, renewable energy, ecological restoration, and other pathways that will shape the future of environmentally responsible work.



Adventure in Understanding

Now in its tenth year, Adventure in Understanding is a program led by the Rotary Club of Peterborough Kawartha, in partnership with Camp Kawartha, Curve Lake First Nation and the Canadian Canoe Museum. Guided by educator Glen Caradus, twenty youth paddled from Peterborough to Curve Lake First Nation on a six-day journey along the Trent Severn Waterway. Participants learned from Indigenous Knowledge Holders, explored local ecology, and built meaningful relationships across cultures. The canoe became a shared place for reflection, dialogue, and growth. More than 200 youth have taken part in this experience of reconciliation.

New Book

Executive Director Jacob Rodenburg and Cathy Dueck proudly released their new book, **The Wild Path Home: A Guide to Raising the Earth Stewards of Tomorrow**, published by New Society. Inspired by the Pathway to Stewardship and Kinship Program, the book provides practical tools and inspiration for communities across North America seeking to nurture environmental connection and responsibility in children. Following a successful book launch, The Wild Path Home is already becoming a valued resource for those committed to raising the next generation of Earth stewards.

Sharing Knowledge and Inspiring Educators

This year, Executive Director Jacob Rodenburg shared Camp Kawartha's vision and expertise at conferences and workshops across North and South America. His presentations reached diverse audiences at gatherings such as the North American Association for Environmental Education, RCE Americas, the Outdoor Learning Conference, the Outdoor Leadership Conference, Make Peace with Winter, the Ontario Camps Association, the Ontario Society of Environmental Education, Trent University, the Ottawa Catholic School Board, the District School Board of Niagara, the PVNC Catholic District School Board, and the Early Childhood Community Development Centre.

Jacob is also expanding his reach through a new online course, Nature Activities Through All Seasons, created for the Outdoor Learning School. This course is connecting educators and leaders across North America with practical, engaging ways to bring nature-based learning into every season.

Camp Kawartha's Board of Directors

Current as of September 30, 2025

Executive

Board Chair: Myke Healy, Assistant Head - Teaching & Learning, Trinity College School

Treasurer: Brandie Davis, CPA, CA, Pepsico Foods Canada, Internal Controls Manager

Directors

Liam Churchill, Partner, Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP

Andrea Gilders, Strategic Buyer, Trench Group Siemens Energy

Marie Hynes, Lawyer, LLF Lawyers LLP

Jason Huffman, Principal, Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board

David Kubica, Retired Secondary School Teacher

Andrew Marshall,
Development | Watersheds | Sustainability

Sheila Potter, Elementary Teacher, Edmison Heights Public School (Joined Board on Jun 10, 2025)

Mike Richardson,
Manager of Recreation Services, Township of Selwyn

Nicole Van Stone, Sales Representative
Chestnut Park Real Estate; President, BEL Rotary Club

Adrienne Ross, Associate Director of Admissions, Trinity College School

Wendy Beesley, Director of Administrative Services, Four Counties Addiction Services Team

Honorary Non-Voting Director

John Cockburn, Retired Field Service Manager, Ontario Ministry Agriculture Food & Rural Affairs



“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”
— Jane Goodall



Our Gratitude To Those Who Gave:

Community Partners:

Armstrong Property Maintenance
Birchcliff Property Owners Association
Christian Camping International / Canada
City of Peterborough
Durham District School Board
Government of Canada
Government of Ontario
Kawartha Credit Union Limited
Mark Landon Electric Ltd
Part Time CFO Services LLP
Spoon Carving Guild
St. Peter's on-the-Rock

Foundations & Charities:

AMICI Camping Charity
Canada Post Foundation
Children's Foundation of Muskoka
Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough
Echo Foundation
Gift Funds Canada
Greenwood United Church
Kawartha-Haliburton CAS
Link Charity Canada Inc.
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Otto & Marie Pick Foundation
Peterborough Field Naturalists
The ChariTree Foundation
The Douglas Utting Foundation
The PepsiCo Canada Foundation
The Peterborough Foundation
Toronto Star Children's Charities
United Way East Ontario
Williams Wilson Sherport Foundation

Individuals:

Adams, Jodie/Turtle, David
Adams, Paul
Adams, Peter
Agar, Chloe
Agar, Madeline
Allan, Beverley
Allan, Sarah
Attridge, Ian/Sauve, Susan
Bailey, Loretta

Individuals:



Barrett, Ann
Batten, Doug & Helen
Bavrlic, Kata/Strasberg, Adam
Bell, Kimberly
Benn, Stephanie
Binda, John & Katie
Bird, Wendy
Bishop, Anthony & Holly
Bissessar, Navin
Blight, Dave & Kim
Blossom, Kellyn
Blyth, Graham
Bondar, Roberta
Boyles, Evan
Boyles, Megan
Brant, Craig/Charlton, Kathleen
Brewer, Bryan
Broadfoot, Margaret
Brown, Ken
Bull, Donald
Burgis, Bob & Donna
Burke, Andrew
Burns, Anne
Burton, Joseph
Cahill, Margaret
Cairns, Krystal
Calow, Dan
Camilar, Alexandra
Canas, Sandra
Carleton, Teresa
Carveth, Elizabeth
Cashmore, Sylvia/Schartinger, Amber
Chiusolo, Lorraine
Chiusolo, Scott
Churchill, Liam
Cockburn, John & Eileen
Commerford, Dave/Eldridge, Karen-Lee
Connolly, Laura
Cowan, Bradley
Hill, Wendy
Coyle, Jim
Craft, Warren & Lori Curry, Barbara
Dericks, Margaretha
Desjardins, Chris
Dibben, Catherine
Diceman, Barry
Dobbin, Karin
Dobbin, Kelly
Donovan, Jane
Donovan, Scott
Drover, Lindsay
Earl, Kimberley



Individuals:

Ellwood, Alison/Jutzi, Jason
Fellion, Mark
Fellion, Mike
Fellion, Ryan
Finlay, Theresa
Forrester, Stephanie
Fortin, Christine & Michel
Frame, Kate & Merv
Fraser, George
French, Bob
Frossard, Andrea
Frost, Paul/Xenopoulos, Marguerite
Gallant, Michael
Gamble, Cheryl
Gibbs, Hayley
Gillespie, Ann & George
Gilpin, Donna
Goodfellow, Daniel
Green, Roanna
Griffin, Helen
Grindrod, Melissa
Grindrod, P
Grindrod, Tyler
Gucciardi, Jonathan
Hadden, Heather
Hamm, Etta
Hansford, Steph & Duane
Harp, Dylan
Hart, Johanna/Donnery, Sheamus
Harvey, Marcus
Hayward-Haines, Jo
Healy, Myke/Hyslop, Carolyn
Heitlinger, Alena
Hergert, Deanna
Hill, Patrick
Hirdes, Lilian
Hoit, Julie
Holt, Julie & Evan
Hoskins-Landry, Lucas
Howard, Bruce
Huband, Kathryn/Barr, Todd
Hyland, Judy
Ingleton, Carol
Ingram, Alan & Jenny
Jarrett, Kate
Jobes, Andrew
Joslin, Judi
Keillor-Faulkner, Lawrie
Kennedy, Elana
King-Fisher, Katherine & Paul
Kives, Kelly
Kranias, Kathy/Mal, Don

Individuals:

Lalani, Yasmin/Todd, Nick
Lalonde, Ron & Vivian
Lassila, Wendy
Leany, Alicia
Leany, Cory
Legacy, Paul & Roberta
Lewis, David
Lie, Kari
Lockington, Bill
Long, Adrianna
Love, Sean
MacAdam, Colin
MacDonald, Alexander
MacLoghlin, Peter & Marilyn
Mandell, Caroline & Ben
Marinigh, Daniel
Martin, Joanne
Mason, Marla
Mason, Mitchell
Mason, Teresa
McCully, Adeline
McDonald, Bourgeois
McGauley, Erin
McGregor, Barbara
McKinsey & Company
McLaren, Gail
McMillan, Julie
Mcmillan, Katie
Mewett, B. Josephine
Miller, Andrew
Monaghan, Suzanne
Moore, Karl
Morgan, Kennett
Morton, David & Patricia
Nash, Debra & Larry
Nemethy, Elizabeth
Nemethy, Jaclyn
Nemethy, Paul
Nesvadba, Marek/Bouchard, Johanne
Oakes, G. Peter & Lizbeth M.
O'Neill, Ryan
Onno, Mary Ellen
Paige, Erik
Patterson, Bonnie
Payne, Annette
Pearson, Deborah
Pepper, Patricia
Petrosoniak, Peter
Pezoulas, Katie & Mike
Phillips, Eleanor
Philpott, Yvonne
Pickersgill, Andrew



"A vibrant, fair, and regenerative future is possible - not when thousands of people do climate justice activism perfectly but when millions of people do the best they can."
— Xiye Bastida





Individuals:

Piggott, Thomas/Jewell, Laura
Pontin, Timothy
Porter, Jane
Pound, Margaret
Ramey, Susan
Ratcliff, Bill & Kate
Robert, Blair
Rodenburg, Jacob/Lindeman, Jessica
Roffey, Amanda
Rolko, Edith & Michael
Ross, Jenny
Rowan, Brooke & Jason
Sauve, Sue
Seeley, Larry & Joan
Seng Yue, Emily
Shadwick, Laura
Shanoff, Haley
Sheena Howard Nursing Prof Co.
Sibold, William & Cynthia
Siddle, Avril
Skilton, Linda
Slavin, Alan & Linda
Smith, Lucas G. & Anne
Soligo, Jovanna
Steinhubl, Erika
Stroud, Lindsay
Summers, Sylvia & Terry
Sutton, Eric
Szechy, Dennis & Kathy
Tim J. F. Nicholls CPA
Tosky, Laura
Trachsler, Mackenzie
Vanderkamp, Nick
Vann, Emily
Wang, Zijian
Warren, Emily
Warren, Tina
Watt, Heather
Waye, Susan
White, Marylyn
Williams, Marla
Wilson, Fraser
Zakula, Mary Anna/Skilton, William



Camp Kawartha

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Gift Store: shop.campkawartha.ca

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