

CCA/ACC National Research Committee
Report for December 31, 2011
Stephen Fine, Chair

Canadian Summer Camp Research Project

We now have documented proof of a belief that camp directors have held since organized camping started in Canada over a hundred years ago – camp does have a positive influence in the growth and development of young people. The twenty-page scientific study, *The Canadian Summer Camp Research Project*, was released this fall by Dr. Troy Glover and his research team from the University of Waterloo in Ontario. The five-year study identified five areas of camper development: social integration/citizenship, environmental awareness, attitude for physical activity, emotional intelligence, and self-confidence/personal development. Statistically significant positive growth was observed in all five areas. We now have documented proof to support our conversations with parents about the benefits of camp experience. We can educate our staff about the significant influence they have on the campers in their care. We can provide justification to our boards about the importance of the work we do. We can appeal to our funders with proof of the importance of making the camp experience available to as many young people as possible. The CCA/ACC has provided funding for a further year of study during 2012 to survey parents in order to determine the longer term effects of camp on campers. The comprehensive five year report is available from the CCA/ACC online at: www.ccamping.org in the English language site under “Camping Research.” A summary of the significant findings are available on the French language site in the new “Research” section as well as the “For Parents” section. A summary of the significant findings are also posted on the English language site in the “For Parents” section.

ACA CCA/ACC Healthy Camps Study

The Healthy Camps Study was an endeavour of the American Camp Association sponsored by Markel Insurance. It spanned a five year period and was also open to Canadian camps. For 2010, the final year of the study, the research committee through Constant Contact, promotion at PCA conferences, and direct communication with the PCAs encouraged greater participation of Canadian camps. Findings indicated that camps are safe places with fewer injuries recorded for high energy activities than related organized sports settings. Study paper is available online at: www.ccamping.org on the English language site under “Camping Research.” A summary of the significant findings are posted on both the English and French language sites in the “For Parents” section.

ICC Hong Kong 2011 Research Forums: Summary Findings

The Research Forums of the International Camping Congress were again co-chaired by Drs. Deb Bialeschki and Stephen Fine for 2011. The forums included camp research from Canada, the USA, Australia, Turkey, Russia, Hong Kong, Mongolia, and Columbia. Study topics included: injury prevention; citizenship; collaboration between schools and camps; benefits of outdoor curriculum; youth development; and camp industry trends. Summary findings from these international forums are available at: www.ccamping.org and are posted on both the English and French language sites in the “For Parents” and “Camping Research” sections.

ICF International Study: Summer Camp and the Advancement of Global Citizenship

In November, 2011, Drs. Deb Bialeschki and Stephen Fine presented the preliminary findings of *Summer Camp and the Advancement of Global Citizenship*, at the ICC in Hong Kong. Using modules developed by the ACA, the project explored how camp experience impacts on skill sets such as: problem solving, exploration and teamwork. These capacities have been identified by many educators as the “new basic skills” for work, learning and citizenship in the 21st century. Eleven camps from six countries, Russia, Canada, the U.S., Mongolia, Turkey and Colombia participated in the project. Approximately 1500 campers were surveyed. Early findings suggest that global citizenship skills transcend national boundaries as they were learned and retained at all participating camps. The study will be undertaken again in 2012. Additional instruments will add to the domains of global citizenship, examine cultural differences within camp experience, along with an increase in participating countries.

ACQ UQTR Quebec Ministry of Sport: Fiscal Health Camp Study

Dr. Andre Thibault of the University of Quebec Trois-Rivieres, Francois Cloutier, Secretariat to leisure and sport for the Quebec government, along with Tanya Desrochers and Eric Beauchemin of the ACQ are collaborating on a province-wide camp study in 2012. Dr. Thibault has developed a measurement instrument for determining the overall "health" of not-for-profit camps. The instrument evaluates an individual camp's "health" in the areas of program, infrastructure, staff training, staffing in general, administration, etc. on a scale of green, yellow and red like a traffic light. The data set is drawn from a comprehensive audit of each participating camp and the resulting scale determines a camp's specific needs as to government assistance in an effort to stem the wave of camps closing down and the sale of camp properties. Dr. Thibault, who is Director General of the Quebec Observatory of Leisure and also Vice-Chair of the Board of World Leisure, is interested in research collaborations with the CCA/ACC and potentially the ICF. A meeting is scheduled early in the New Year to discuss a variety of initiatives at provincial, national and international levels.

CCA/ACC National Business Survey

The results of the 2011 national business survey (data from the 2010 season) should prove to be of great interest and value to camps across the country. Results of the 2011 study are posted in the members section of the CCA/ACC website on both the English and French language sites. The 2012 National Business Survey will commence in January 2012. PCAs are encouraged to remind members to take this short, anonymous and very important survey so that we may identify and track industry trends. Constant Contact messages will be forthcoming.

Canadian Camp Counsellor Study - Griffith University, Australia

Mandi Baker is now working through transcribing, coding and analysis of her Canadian data. She celebrated the birth of her daughter in the spring of 2011 and now hopes to complete her dissertation by early 2013. She is totally engaged in her research, and says "each new finding presents another twist or turn in the road to better understanding what it's like to work at summer camp. Each story opens up another way to consider how to manage, get and give the best to the enthusiastic young people who come to work in these unique recreational settings."