



THE LION'S ROAR

Fall 2023



Save the Dates

November 1 – Open Enrollment for Summer 2024 begins! Current families can register now.

November 28 – Giving Tuesday

November 29 – Green & Grey Alumni event in Boston at Trillium Brewing

November 30 – Green & Grey Alumni event in New York City at The Winslow

Message from our **LEADERSHIP STAFF**

Dear O-AT-KA Families and Friends,

What a season we had at O-AT-KA - #118! We are extremely grateful after another fantastic summer, and we are really feeling the love from our families and friends. On behalf of all the staff, we thank you for your support in helping to make this season so successful.

Thank you to our parents and guardians for giving your campers this magical and transformative experience of camp.

We are proud of our community and all that we accomplished to get us through the summer months with fun and safety as our top priorities. It was an exciting season with visitors (many from the world of media) that helped us really highlight the camp and everything that makes O-AT-KA and our community so special. Thank you to The Portland Press Herald, Channel 8 WMTW news, World of Change, Jacklyn Grad and Tail Wind Media Video Production, Adam Peirce of Stonepier; among others who came and visited us this summer! Stay tuned for more great content to come soon.



Our campers were great about jumping at every opportunity to be behind a camera or offer their excitement about camp. Families, be sure to talk with your campers about all the special events that took place and what they enjoyed most about their time at O-AT-KA. We already miss our campers and staff and the chatter and excitement around camp each day. We look forward to keeping in touch. We can't do this without the trust and support of our families, the tireless work of our staff, and the dedication from each of our campers, alumni and friends.

Enrollment for summer 2024 has begun! Current families, we hope you will take the opportunity to get your campers registered during the early enrollment period as we place high priority on our returning families. **Open enrollment will begin on November 1st for new families.** There is a lot of interest coming in for summer 2024, so it's best to secure your camper's spot early and before the open enrollment period begins. You can register today at: <https://campokatka.org/enroll-2/>

Stay tuned for a copy of the Oak Leaves yearbooks that will be sent later this fall/winter. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at any time. You can call our office at (207) 787-3401 or e-mail info@campokatka.org.

We are wishing you all a very happy, safe, and successful year. Until next summer, please know that your O-AT-KA family is always here for you!

Best Wishes,
The Leadership Staff

“On behalf of all the staff, we thank you for your support in helping to make this season so successful.”

Highlights from **SUMMER 2023**







King Sam Kumler's **CANDLELIGHT PASSWORD**

August 10, 2023

O-AT-KA Friends and Family, it's great to be here with all of you on this final night of camp.

Last year, I gave a password about moving a rock. I talked about how I rolled a large rock underwater from Greenridge to the center of the (under water) rock garden that's just out past the H-dock. I talked about how the process of diving down, flipping the rock, coming up, breathing, and repeating was a surprisingly meditative one that let my mind wander.

This year I returned to find the rock, of course, right where I'd left it, the movement process completed, in

the spot where it will likely rest for a while longer. And I was struck by how it made me feel good to know that I have left a physical mark in the rock garden that will likely outlast my time as a counselor here at O-AT-KA. I don't know if you've ever had that feeling when seeing some physical trace of your passing, I get it when I see a tree that I planted growing tall at our family farm. You might get it if you see your name on the wall of a cabin that you stayed in years ago.

But leaving a mark doesn't need to be a physical thing. You can leave a mark on camp culture by playing a song that spreads throughout camp, or by giving someone a camp nickname that sticks, like I did with a first session camper named Stooch. You can also leave a mark on people, by teaching them a card game or by introducing them to a new song that becomes one of their favorites (like Russell Wylie did for little Junior Sam Kumler when he played "The General" all summer long). And I think that this, leaving a mark on people, is the most wonderful, and rewarding way to leave a mark. And, if I can be a little philosophical for a bit, we are always leaving a mark on everyone around us, and we are always being impacted by those around us. You see, we are all the result of the collection of our experiences, of what we've been taught, of what we've seen, of what we remember.

You are who you are because of what you have experienced, because of the world around you. And this means that, as you are part of the world around them, you have an impact on everyone around you. You impact who they are, not always in a large way, or even one that you can easily notice, but you do with every single interaction.

And I think that that's why having all these good people around us at camp is so important. Every single

interaction that we have here is adding an experience and is shaping who you are. The beauty of O-AT-KA is that these people—the ones who are shaping you with every conversation, running joke, instruction, and game played together—are funny, smart, positive, and generally GOOD people. THAT is why, when people ask what the best thing about camp is, or what I'll miss most, or what makes O-AT-KA unique; I say the people. The people I've known in my nine summers at camp, from those who have been here each year like George, to my counselor role models, to those of you who first arrived on the shores of Sebago fewer than three weeks ago; each of whom have helped make me into the man that I am, standing here today. Just as all of us have, in some smaller or larger way, shaped each of you into the person that you are today.

This, the ability to shape others, might seem like a big responsibility. But I'm not trying to say that you should go out of your way to alter people's lives or that you should do wacky things so that they never forget you. I'm saying that you are always leaving your mark on people, whether you're trying to or not, and that your goal should be to make it a positive one.

So, as you go back out into the world, as you return to school, or work, or eventually back to O-AT-KA, I encourage you to ensure that your inevitable impact on those around you is positive, and that the mark that you leave is one that you can be proud of.

I hope that I have had a positive impact on some of the people that I've been around at camp over these nine summers, and I know that every single person I've spent time at camp with, including you, has left a mark on me.

The password for tonight is 'Leave Your Mark.'

2023 Friends & Family Weekend **WAS A HIT!**

We were blessed with great weather and even better company this past Labor Day Weekend as we celebrated Family & Friends Weekend here at camp with a record 130 attendees! This annual event is a casual weekend of camp activities, lounging on the beach, boating on the lake, sleeping in the cabins, and enjoying the camp community. Thank you to all who attended and helped make the weekend so special.

Save the dates for next summer -
Friday, August 30 - Sunday, September 2, 2024.





O-AT-KA Corporation & Board Leadership

The annual O-AT-KA Corporation meeting was held at camp on Saturday, July 29th. The meeting, led by Board President Chris Bond, welcomed members from all over the country to hear a camp update and discuss the future of O-AT-KA. During this time together, we expressed gratitude to outgoing board members Rev. John Van Siclen, Stephanie Governali, Rob Bennett and Bill Kumler. We thank them for their tireless work as board members and appreciate all that they have done, and continue to do, for camp.

O-AT-KA is also excited to welcome new leadership into the fold with board appointments of Matt Glendinning, Nina Frusztajer, and Matt Crowley; as well as new corporation member, Christine Cressey. For more information about our new leadership, please visit: <https://campokatka.org/board-of-directors/>.



Matt Glendinning



Nina Frusztajer



Matt Crowley



Christine Cressey with husband Brian and 8th year camper, Nolan

A special reunion for the **O-AT-KA BOYS OF SUMMER!**

One of the best parts of summer camp is making lifelong friendships! A special reunion of alumni from the 1970s/80s took place this summer at the home of Judy & Jim Gifford in Gloucester, MA. Camp friends still getting together after all these years is a true testament of the bonds formed at camp.

Do you have a camper or alumni reunion photo? We'd love to see it!

One month – **TWO SPECIAL O-AT-KA WEDDINGS!**

When camp is not in session, the grounds of O-AT-KA are transformed into a wonderful setting for events, reunions, and weddings. This September we congratulated two wonderful O-AT-KA alumni and BROTHERS! On September 9, Ben Nickerson married Rena Yang and on September 23, Andrew Nickerson married Natalie Tincknell.

Ben and Andrew both attended O-AT-KA as third generation campers, as their grandfather Rev. Canon Don Nickerson and father, Tom Nickerson, both were a part of camp; along with many other relatives. Sue (Martin) Nickerson, their grandmother and Don's wife, is the granddaughter of founder, Rev. E.J. Dennen.

The boys followed in their grandparents footsteps, as Don and Sue were married at Camp O-AT-KA in 1962. The ties to camp run deep within the Nickerson family and we were thrilled that they chose camp for their special day. Congratulations!



Ben & Rena



Andrew & Natalie



Don & Sue

Shakin' it up for **GREEN & GREY 2023!**

As we look towards November, the newly formed Alumni & Development Committee has some exciting news to share. Each year, a Green & Grey event is held to support much needed camperships for deserving boys. One of the highlights of this event is the highly anticipated auction with great prizes and all proceeds benefiting the scholarship program. This event is also a time for alumni and families to gather in the spirit of camp and enjoy the friendships of one another. Throughout the years, Green & Grey has taken many different forms including a black tie event, online vs in-person auction, location changes from hotels to country clubs, and it has been centralized in the Boston area.

This year we are trying something new to expand our reach of making events accessible to more people and bringing the camp party to you. In lieu of one in-person event we are announcing:

Green & Grey on the Road – Boston

Wednesday, November 29, 6:00 – 9:00pm
Trillium Brewing Fenway, 401 Park Drive, Boston

Green & Grey on the Road – New York

Thursday, November 30, 6:00 – 9:00pm
The Winslow, 243 E 14th Street, New York City (Union Square)

Both "On the Road" events are casual, networking events with great people, food and drinks.

Registration information can be found at <https://campokatka.org/newsevents> and will be sent out so make sure we have your e-mail to receive the latest news and tell your O-AT-KA friends to meet you there!

The Green and Grey Online Auction will take place in March. Have a good prize to share?
Let us know at info@campokatka.org.



Stay Connected

Follow & Like us on:



Facebook
@Camp O-AT-KA,
boys summer camp



Instagram
@campokatka



Camp website
campokatka.org