



## **Camp Tecumseh**

As educators, our counselors strive to instill in each camper a sense of responsibility to our community. By the time summer ends our boys are stronger not only physically, but morally and socially as well. It is our aim to send a boy home understanding the values of good sportsmanship and self-discipline. For us, Camp Tecumseh is more than a camp – it's an ideal where our founding mission and sustaining values demand an environment where the character and personal development of Campers can flourish, where respect for others, good sportsmanship, and encouragement are established expectations and longstanding traditions. At our core, we are a brotherhood, bound by the shared ideals that helped us grow to be better boys and, ultimately, the men we are today.

Camp Tecumseh, a residential camp for boys ages 8-16, was founded in 1903 by three Olympic athletes. Our mission now, as it was then, is “to make good boys better” through a program which centers around healthy athletic competition, an exposure to drama and mountain hiking of all kinds. Camp is a non-profit, independent Camp certified by the American Camping Association. It is led by a Camp Director, under the oversight of a dedicated Board of Trustees, a number of whom are Camp alumni and/or parents of campers. The Camp Director is supported by a senior leadership team, who assists in daily camp operations, supervises campers and counselors, and helps to foster a healthy camp culture and safe and secure community environment. Campers are grouped in cabins by age. As educators, our counselors strive to instill in each camper a sense of responsibility to our community, and help boys be stronger physically, morally and socially. It is our aim to send a camper home understanding the values of good sportsmanship and self-discipline.

Camp has more than a century long commitment to teaching, coaching and developing the character of our campers. Those values – character, integrity, sportsmanship, accountability – and our overarching concern for the safety and wellbeing of our campers informed our response to Matt Scavitto's 2015 arrest. As Camp leaders, we committed to our community to respond to this incident openly, consistent with the values of character and integrity we have taught our campers since 1903.

### **2015 Arrest**

Just prior to the start of Camp in June 2015, Camp leadership learned that Matthew Scavitto, a camper from 1994 – 2000 and a Camp counselor from 2001 to 2014, had been arrested for abuse of a high school student in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Camp learned from Pennsylvania law enforcement authorities that the student was also a former Tecumseh camper and that the abuse also occurred at camp. We acted immediately to respond to this heartbreaking and disturbing news, to support the camper, and to understand how this conduct occurred undetected. Camp terminated its association with Scavitto and reported the suspected abuse to child protective services and law enforcement in New Hampshire. Within days of learning about Scavitto's arrest, Camp notified all parents of incoming campers prior to the start of camp to enable parents to ask questions and make informed decisions about their child's safety.

### **2015 Internal Review**

To guide our response and ensure that we evaluated what occurred through the most experienced lens, we hired child protection professionals to conduct an internal investigation to assess whether Scavitto impacted others in our Camp community. All information gathered in the internal investigation, which was collected through interviews with Camp staff, counselors, former counselors, and former campers, was shared with local law enforcement. We also notified parents of incoming campers, as well as families whose campers may have intersected with Scavitto during his time as a

counselor, to share the contact information for NH and PA law enforcement and encourage anyone with information about Scavitto or abuse to come forward.

During the review, we learned that Scavitto demonstrated favoritism to and engaged in boundary violations, including with the camper who came forward in October 2020 to disclose that he had been abused by Scavitto in the early 2000s. We also learned that a camp counselor and his father, also a member of camp staff, shared during the review that they raised a concern to the Camp Director about Scavitto's interaction with this camper in the early 2000s. In 2015 the concern was characterized by the camp counselor as a concern about boundaries, rather than about abuse. The Camp Director at the time has shared with us that he has no recollection of a concern being shared with him as described. As soon as we learned about it, the information about the interaction was shared with New Hampshire law enforcement, along with the names of the camper, counselor, and his father.

After first deferring to the timing and integrity of external law enforcement processes, Camp subsequently spoke with the camper who came forward in October 2020 through Camp's attorney. During that discussion in early 2016, the camper denied any abuse by Scavitto. We recognize that many children do not report sexual abuse immediately after it occurs – and sometimes do not report for years, if at all.

### **2020 Report and Resolution**

In October 2020, the former camper contacted Camp through his attorney to report that Scavitto sexually abused him at Camp from 2001 to 2003 when Scavitto was a junior and senior counselor. Scavitto was a camper from the age of 10 and became a junior counselor in 2001 at the age of 17. As Camp leaders, we sought to respond in the same informed and values-based manner – to be open to hearing and understanding the former camper's experiences and to seeking a resolution that would be supportive of the former camper. To preserve the civil statute of limitations, the camper filed a civil complaint in New Hampshire in November 2020. Between November 2020 and February 2021, we worked together with the camper and his counsel to find a positive resolution that was consistent with our care and concern for the camper and provided remedies to begin to ameliorate the harm suffered. While the specifics of mediation discussions are confidential by state law, we can share that our approach was non-adversarial, that we shared candid information with the camper and his counsel, and that we listened carefully to understand his experience and incorporate his recommendations for helping to prevent future abuse of any camper.

In addition to information contained in the Camp's four letters from June 2015, October 2015, and November 19 and 25, 2020, the below bullet lists share additional details about the Camp's response in 2015 and 2020:

### **Additional Detail about Actions Taken in 2015**

In 2015, after learning from Pennsylvania law enforcement that the reported sexual abuse of the student occurred at both the school and at Camp, we took immediate action:

- Reported the conduct to New Hampshire law enforcement and child protective services agencies
- Reached out to the camper who reported his abuse to offer support
- Engaged child protection professionals to assist the Camp in determining whether other campers may have been impacted by Scavitto
- Facilitated multiple meetings with 2015 counselors and staff with our child protection professionals and a Camp psychologist to provide information about how best to support campers and families in light of Scavitto's arrest, how to consistently set and reinforce professional boundaries, and how to be vigilant about child protection
- In June 2015, within days of learning about Scavitto's arrest, notified all parents of incoming campers prior to the start of camp to enable parents to ask questions and make informed decisions about their child's safety
- In October 2015, notified families whose campers may have intersected with Scavitto during his time as a counselor (between 2001 and 2014) and encouraged them to contact law enforcement or our child protection professionals if they had information about Scavitto or concerns about potential abuse at Camp or elsewhere
- Worked closely with the Moultonborough Police Department to provide access to records, current and former staff, and former campers, and sharing information gathered in our internal review, including the names of

campers who had most directly interacted with Scavitto, or about whom we identified concerns based on boundary violations or favoritism

- Re-evaluated our policies and procedures and enhancing existing practices based on recommendations from our child protection professionals
  - Expanded the scope of our background checks
  - Increased the depth and breadth of trainings regarding professional boundaries, grooming, and reporting
  - Invited external experts, including law enforcement, to provide training, and engaged in online training through Expert Online and Darkness to Light
  - Expanded staffing ratios in the cabins to ensure better coverage and supervision
- Under the leadership of the Camp Director renewed our efforts to foster a Camp culture that prioritizes the protection of minors and incorporates lessons learned from the internal review including rigorous practices for hiring, supervising, training and monitoring staff and employees, and strict adherence to “the rule of three” which prohibits a counselor from being alone with an individual camper

### **Additional Detail about Actions Taken in 2020**

In 2020, after the second camper’s report of abuse by Scavitto, Camp Tecumseh:

- Continued our engagement with external child protection professionals to assist in the review of new information and offer additional recommendations for Camp practices
- Contacted the Moultonborough Police Department to share new information gathered as a result of the recent report
- Met with Camp’s senior leadership and counselors to share information and ensure they were prepared to support families and campers
- On November 19, 2020, notified our entire Camp community, including current and former families, staff and alumni about the new report and civil filing, and again, encouraged individuals to come forward with any information
- On November 25, 2020, sent a second notice to our Camp community after the former camper requested that we identify him by name in Camp communications in the hopes that doing so may encourage other former campers to come forward to share their own experiences and observations
- Renewed our efforts to identify current contact information and notify alumni who may have intersected with Scavitto to ensure that our 2020 communications reach as many alumni and families as possible
- Added doors to fully enclose bathroom stalls and added shower curtains around each shower head for additional privacy.

### **Camp Culture**

As educators, our counselors strive to instill in each camper a sense of responsibility to our community. By the time summer ends our boys are stronger not only physically, but morally and socially as well. It is our aim to send a boy home understanding the values of good sportsmanship and self-discipline. For us, Camp Tecumseh is more than a camp – it’s an ideal where our founding mission and sustaining values demand an environment where the character and personal development of Campers can flourish, where respect for others, good sportsmanship, and encouragement are established expectations and longstanding traditions. At our core, we are a brotherhood, bound by the shared ideals that helped us grow to be better boys and, ultimately, the men we are today.

Efforts to protect children from sexual abuse have evolved significantly in the past 20 years, and like most institutions, Camp Tecumseh has worked to create, maintain, and enhance robust and vigilant child protection procedures and guidelines. This includes evaluating Camp practices, games and activities to ensure appropriate boundaries are established, respected, and monitored.

As we have learned through our own experience as well as that of other institutions, what may have been widely accepted behavior or standard practice in camp or school environments 20, 30, or 40 years ago is anything but today – and rightly so. For example, nude swimming at Camp Tecumseh, which was not historically atypical of some all-male institutions, ended in the early 1990s. Similarly, the Camp recognized that what once may have been considered adolescent humor or physical pranks of innocent intent have no place at Camp. While bullying and hazing have never been permitted or tolerated, we have recognized that even well-intended or seemingly innocent jokes and pranks were no longer appropriate or supportive of Camp’s values and mission. These changes were part of our concerted effort to create an environment where minors feel safe and are protected by clear boundaries, guidelines, and expectations and multiple levels of oversight.

### **Camp Today**

There is often a perception that media coverage of issues like these are negative. Our hope is that articles like this one continue to bring attention to these national and global issues and concerns in a way that prevents abuse and helps institutions everywhere to improve how we serve minors. At Camp Tecumseh, we are committed to ongoing learning and vigilance. We are mindful that Camp must continue to incorporate new and promising practices to identify and prevent child abuse. We will continue to seek guidance from our child protection professionals and implement recommendations as best practices evolve.

We are committed to an environment where minors and adults feel empowered to report incidents and have a clear understanding of what to look for and how to prevent and stop abuse. To support that commitment, we are putting in place an experienced and trained senior-level employee with specific oversight of all matters related to the protection of minors and youth programming. This person will be the Director of Camper Safety and Wellness. This function will advocate, train, mentor and administer procedures and protocols to enhance existing safeguards and ensure the safety and welfare of campers. They will also work closely with our child protection professionals to continue to assure Camp responds with integrity and high fidelity to promote child protection and welfare above all. Recognizing that camper safety is shared responsibility, our new director will coordinate and lead Camp’s efforts.

Nothing that we do now can undo the harm caused to our former campers, both those who were directly impacted, as well as the many other campers, counselors, and senior leaders whose sense of safety and security were shaken by these events. We are deeply sorry to the former campers who were abused by Scavitto, and so very grateful for their courage in speaking up and standing strong. Those are the very values we hope to instill in the boys who attend Camp. Their courage has provided the catalyst to confront these issues head on, and to set an example for all of us moving forward. While we wish that the two campers who reported abuse by Scavitto had not had to go through what they did, we welcome the opportunity to talk about this issue to help protect other minors.