



THE
OCONTO

ECHO

Fall 2017

The View from the Bung

Registration for 2018 has opened and we already have lots of campers signing up. Staff are starting to apply for specific positions, the wheels are turning!

Camp Awakening continues to thrive at Oconto. As you know, this is a small camp that runs within Oconto for a group of girls with physical disabilities. During 2017, we had a total of 28 girls, 7 at a time over four different sessions, for varying lengths of time depending on their age and what they want to get out of camp. For more information visit www.campawakening.com Fundraisers for Camp Awakening happen year round. We will send you notice of these events, but if you would ever like to check for yourself, go to www.campawakening.com.

Oconto in 2017

“Everything old is new again”

“The faster life gets the more sense camp makes”

These are common feelings around Oconto, and I know at other camps as well.

Kids love to play games like “fairies in the grass”. I find the simple things are the most popular; Games for no tangible reward, but simply to have fun, always seem to be the most popular.

Oconto is very refreshing, kids really let down their guard, they play hard, work hard on awards at activities like drama, where they put on fabulous productions! At Oconto campers and staff learn to get along with different personalities, gain confidence, become leaders, question what they perceive as wrong, and truly grow as individuals.

I would like to draw your attention to the policy on social media letter at Oconto. Interesting times!

Thanks to Camp campaign! Please check out the website www.thankstocamp.ca

This is an initiative of the Canadian Camping Association to gather why people enjoyed their experience at camp, and how it influenced them to develop. Please add your own thoughts! Pretty cool reading.

I hope you enjoy the photos that have been sent in of alumnae friendships that have lasted over the years and continue to thrive today!

Finally, a special thank you to Christy Hood, who works at the Camp Oconto office year round, and among many different responsibilities, produces the Oconto Echo!

Ronnie's Speech from the Amici Camp Heroes Breakfast

I would first like to start off by saying what an honour it is to be a part of such an amazing organization that I think so highly of. Looking back into 2004, my first summer at camp Oconto, I was an extremely shy and nervous kid. I took the bus that year up to camp, and remember putting my hamster in my pocket to bring with me. I thought camp was like the Harry Potter movies in the way that each student can bring one animal. Luckily the chaperones shot down that idea before the bus took off and the comfort I thought I had was gone. Flash forward 2 weeks and my family came to pick up an outgoing and rambunctious 9 year old. It was undeniable how the benefits of camp had impacted me so greatly. Since that summer, I continued to attend camp as a monther. It's hard to believe that pivotal moment in my life was thirteen summers ago. Thirteen summers of friendships, growing up,



and becoming independent. It's inspiring to look at young camp girls and see the positive impact that camp is creating for them. There are 7 and 8 year olds walking down the path for 6 activity periods of the day with only their independence and responsibility to guide them to each activity on time, not such a typical day in the city. Camp is such a vital part of a child's youth as they are growing up. Everyone has struggles at home, a changing home life whether they would like to believe it or not, but camp is a constant. It's the one place you know is going to remain the safe and secluded space that you crave during the year. It's the place that feels like home, it's the place where you can be yourself. Being a counsellor for 5 summers I've seen the way children are at camp, and it is the closest thing to magic



I have ever experienced. It's unbelievable the interaction and the kindness that is displayed at camp, as we are one big family. Unexpected friendships are made and the purest form of one's self is always encouraged. Camp has easily been the most important part of my life growing up It's where I met my best friends, made my favourite memories, and grew into the person that I am today. Without camp, I would not of had the confidence to pursue a career in Advertising and Marketing or

better yet work at a marketing agency in Spain last year. This upcoming summer will be my fourteenth at Oconto and I cannot wait to be the Head of Quarter Counsellors. I never thought I could be looked at as a role model or a

leader, but camp has shown me being strong isn't being bossy, being happy isn't overrated, and being independent doesn't mean you can't ask for help. Camp is an invaluable experience that every child should have the opportunity to attend. It baffles me when I tell my city friends about camp and they do not understand. A few examples: The other day I was showing all my friends my warm fuzzies (cards counsellors and friends write to you for fun) since I was 9 years old. I store them in a huge rubber maid container and they asked why do you keep all of those? Don't you read them once and just throw them out? These are little pick-me-ups that can get you through a hard day at work, or just a reminder of how important you are to others. I then started to explain the benefits of levels at camp and how they contribute to teamwork and another spoke I would hate to be partnered with someone to get a canoe level. At first, I was somewhat frustrated with my friends not understanding their negative thoughts towards camp, but then I started to feel bad for them for not experiencing all camp must offer. To them getting your basic C in Canoeing sounds hard, annoying, unnecessary, but to me it's teamwork, it's waking up early to have the satisfaction of getting your straight course with your best friend, it's reward for your persistence and hard work. Just talking about camp and my feelings towards it makes me so happy and I cannot thank Amici enough for the opportunity they have given me as a shy 9 year old and continued to support my love of camp until I became a counsellor. By supporting Amici, we can create the magic that I know we all crave every summer for thousands of children. If we can positively impact youth and create a safe and happy place for self-growth, then we are doing ourselves justice. I would also like to thank Lisa Wilson the Camp Director for Camp Oconto. Since I was nine years old I have looked up to you like no other. You have watched me grow, guided me to the right path, and have become a second mother to me. You are inspiring and encouraging, you push me towards my dreams and goals, and you selflessly sacrifice your time to help hundreds of young girls become courageous, well rounded, and happy human beings. I want to close by thanking each one of you in this room today. Because of you, the generous donors and supporters of Amici, I was able to go to Camp Oconto. Because of you, my life is changed forever. I am eternally grateful for all you have done and continue to do to help more kids like me experience the transformative power of camp. Thank you.





Our Social Media Policy During the Summer

We would like to let you know our policy on social media at Oconto. More and more, campers and staff are expressing frustration with the demands of social media. They look forward to a break from life being so immediate, and the pressures of having a certain amount of 'likes' or 'views' on their online profiles. We believe camp creates a well-needed break from the online world we live in today.

We have had requests from some parents to post photos of campers doing things at camp immediately. The fact that we have not done this is a very conscious decision. We want our campers to feel like they are free to be themselves at all times and if they feel like they are being watched we feel like this could potentially hinder their experience at camp. Camp is about being independent, self confident, and growing in all ways. It is our very strong belief that we must give our campers the space they need to grow and gain confidence within themselves to be themselves.

It is for these reasons that we will be posting limited photos through our social media platforms during each session and will instead post an album of photos at the end of each session to our website photo gallery. This will allow parents and their children to go through the photos together and will add that much more excitement for parents to hear the stories that go along with the photos.

Alumnae Updates

Julie (Farr) Sakamoto and her husband Andrew are so happy to announce the arrival of the newest member of their family :)

Bodhi Jeremy Mikio Sakamoto was born on September 15th, 2017.

Though he won't be able to attend Camp Oconto, he'll definitely know all the words to the songs. Bananas Unite!



Bowen Brown and husband Josh welcomed daughter Brin on July 29th, 2017. Hopefully Brin will be a fourth generation Oconto girl following in the footsteps of mother Bowen, Aunt Kelsea, grandmother Paddy Hardman, late Great Aunt Avalee Brown, late Great Grandmother Anne Perry, and late Great Aunt June Perry.

Peg Goodes' adorable grandchildren. Jackson is two years old and Saya just turned one. Jackson's mom Nicole is dues any day now with a little girl and Peg hopes to send Saya and her to Oconto in a few years! Saya's mom Samantha also went to Oconto for one season.





Domonique Soubry and Caileigh Kyle



Caileigh Kyle, Monica Beckett, Carolyn Silver, Ronnie Trask, Camille Horton-Poole, Kaleigh Egan, Élisabeth Soubry, and Madeleine Soubry

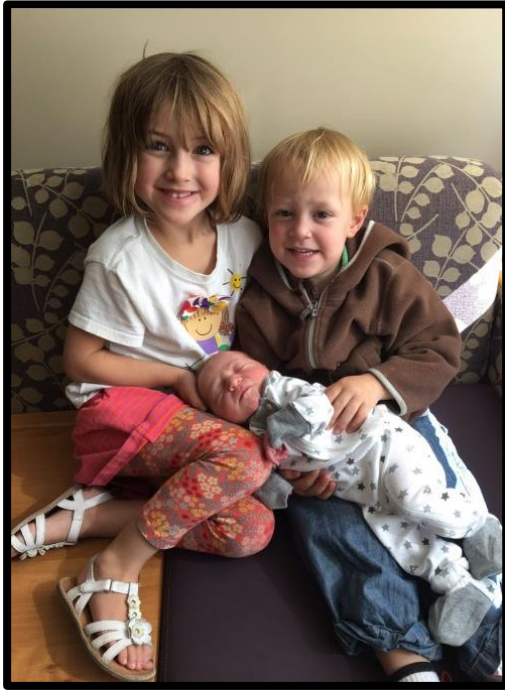


Camille Horton-Poole, Kaleigh Egan, Liz Soubry, and Caileigh Kyle



Sarah Langford and Michele Nadeau
(Mother of the Bride)

Dominique Soubry wed Steven Ponari on September 23rd, 2017 in Montreal.
Lots of Oconto alum were there to help celebrate!



Melissa
(Thacker)
Colonno and
her husband
Dan's three
children.
Newest
member of the
family, Zoe
Linden, was
born on
October 13th,
2017.



Ruth Burns with her husband Shane
Laptiste and their baby Samuel. They
recently moved from Edmonton to
Toronto and Ruth is now the Executive
Director at Ontario Culture Days.



Beth (Cruikshank) Hanson, and her husband
Ronnie, welcomed Molly Grace Hanson on
March 17th, 2017. She was born in Toronto
and weighed 6lbs 2oz. She has big brothers,
twins Henry and Charlie.



Mary Gay Mills McNeil, Sally Young Theysmeyer,
Vicki Taylor Bedford, and Peggy Keyes Kelly



Lynn Wilson and Katherine Stewart Rein
40 Years of Friendship!



In June Daphne King, Sarah Macrae-Blakeley, Natalie (Mills) Aris, Julie Kinnear, and some friends rode together on their "Proud Mary's" bike team in the Enbridge Ride To Conquer Cancer - 200km + from Toronto to Niagara Falls - raising money for the Princess Margaret Hospital

Susie Cruess and Steph (Cruess) Goodall stopped by Oconto for a visit on Thanksgiving weekend. Their children had lots of fun exploring camp!



Cousins Lizzie Goodall and Agnes Ammerman sitting on the porch of the KaravAnne (where the Head of QCs lives)



Otis Ammerman playing in the Tad playground



Agnes on Main Beach, wishing it was warm enough to jump into Eagle Lake!

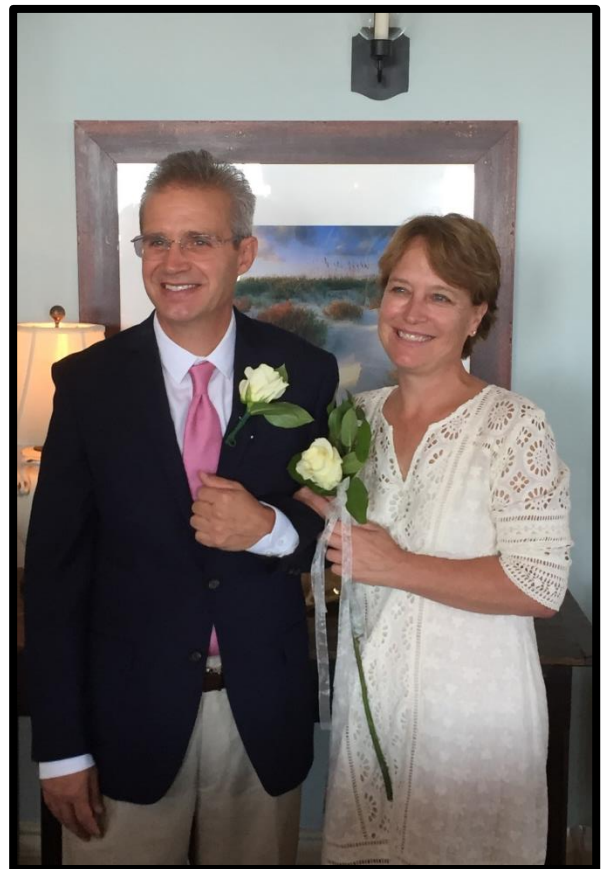


Michelle (Lawley) Tucker, her husband Jeff and their children, Claire (10 years old) and Jack (7 years), live in London, Ontario. For the past 14 years, Michelle has worked as an Occupational Therapist with infants and toddlers who have developmental delays. Next to working as a counsellor at Oconto, it is the best job that she can imagine! In 2017, Claire attended camp for her third summer, as a third generation Oconto girl
- Susan (Vila) Lawley
Michelle (Lawley) Tucker
Claire Tucker.



Jen Palacios, Miranda Clarke, Allison Billings Gilbert, Mike & Peggy, and Leslie Maunder

Peggy Gentles and Mike Pisciotta were married on October 14th, 2017 in South Carolina. Longtime friends from their Oconto years, the 'Weather Girls' were all in attendance.





Devonshire Initiative

Carolyn Burns is new Executive Director of the Devonshire Initiative. Based in Toronto, the Devonshire Initiative is a forum for international development NGOs and mining companies to come together in response to the social agenda in mining and community development.

devonshireinitiative.org



Sarah Jane MacDonald has launched Knead To Know, a cooking school program for youth that explores world food cultures, cuisines and with a focus on sustainability in Fernie, British Columbia.

www.sarahjanemac.com



Katie Crysdale recently started Lakeview Aquatic Consultants. They provide consulting, writing and teaching services, including Certified Pool Operator (CPO) certification, to those working in aquatics and recreation.

www.lakeviewaquaticconsultants.com



Oconto Campership Fund (OCF)

I would like you to know that the "alumnae only supported fund" sent five campers to Oconto in 2017, that otherwise would not have been able to attend! Thank you to everyone who contributed. They all benefitted immensely from their Oconto experience!!

Sometimes we are in a position to donate, sometimes we are not, contributions this year ranged from \$20.00 up to \$1,000.00 We thank all of you for your generosity contributing towards these young ladies going to Oconto this past summer!!

I would like to give a special thank you to Lori Thompson and Andrew Chisholm through Toronto Foundation which made a generous grant of \$2500. We really appreciate the support of Toronto Foundation. Thank you.

In addition, RBC Royal Bank donated \$500.00 grant toward community involvement with children. This is greatly appreciated.

As a reminder, Oconto Campership Fund was set up in 1996, for the following purpose:

The Oconto Campership Fund is for girls who have been at Oconto but for unforeseen reasons, finances prohibit their return to Oconto. Or the child of an alumna, who cannot afford to send her daughter to Oconto, but desperately wants her to have the Oconto experience!

Oconto Paraphernalia

We have some leftover paraphernalia from this summer and it's always fun to show off your Oconto pride in the city!

If you are interested in purchasing anything, either for yourself or as a gift, please contact Christy in the camp office to discuss pricing and availability!

