

IMPACT



REPORT
2021

COCA
CHILDREN'S ONCOLOGY CAMPING ASSOCIATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Letter from Our President
- 4 About COCA, We've Come So Far!
- 5 *The Camp Community is Strong and Enduring*, by Sally Hale
- 6 2021 Goals Realized
- 7 COCA Membership Pays
- 8 2021 Smiles
- 9 2022 Strategy
- 10 Thank You's and Acknowledgements

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

In a year where the only certainty was uncertainty, COCA and our members once again stepped up to the challenge and provided wonderful experiences for our campers and families! Camp and program events are so important to our campers and we have heard from so many how much they missed being with other people going through the same challenges they face.

This year over 60% of members were able to safely provide in person events, helping to bring smiles to faces as you can see in the wonderful pictures in this report. Other camps expanded their virtual camps, not only to offer hybrid experiences for those that couldn't attend in person, but also to offer new hospital programs and serve families throughout the year.

COCA continues to provide professional education and resources to our members through webinars. Infectious Disease experts and camp professionals have shared knowledge on staff training and many town hall sessions where solutions to challenges were discussed. In the future, COCA will be working to create and expand our professional development center to offer a clearinghouse of information for our members.

COCA had plans for an in person conference this year, however as I said, uncertainty about COVID variants on the rise made us change to a virtual event again this year. Once again COCA members stepped up and participated in our conference in record numbers – with the most ever attendees at a conference this year. We were able to provide over 40 hours of professional education and networking. We were again privileged to award Northwestern Mutual Excellence in Camping awards to deserving volunteers and staff who embody the COCA mission. We were also thrilled to award the Spirit of COCA Award to Sally Hale. Sally has been a part of COCA since the beginning and is an amazing example of the great people who make up the COCA family. Despite being able to provide Accreditation visits, COCA was able to maintain our Gold Ribbon Best Practice program, helping to provide guidance for camps. Several camps were provided mentorship as they worked toward their first Gold Ribbon Accreditation application and we look forward to resuming in person accreditation visits this upcoming summer.

COCA is also continuing to develop as an organization. We are actively involved in strategic planning to move us onward and upward. We went through a rebranding process that resulted in a new logo you will see throughout this report. Many thanks to the individuals who have worked on both of these task forces to help lead our organization.

COCA is an organization of member camps, but there are many wonderful individuals who make this work happen. I would like to say thank you to the COCA Board of Directors for your leadership and advice as we have navigated an uncertain year. Thank you also to our staff, Don Golden and Jennifer Amundsen, as well as the partners we have in CARE Camps, Northwestern Mutual, and AFLAC for your support. I would also thank the COCA members for their support of COCA and the board of directors as well as for all that you do for the kids and their families.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't take this time to say a special thank you both on behalf of COCA and myself, to COCA Executive Director Don Golden. Don's leadership over his tenure with COCA has been instrumental in the many things that COCA has accomplished to date and his influence will continue to guide us as we strive to reach our goals in the future. We wish you some time to relax and enjoy retirement Don, but we will miss working with you!

In a year where the only certainty has been uncertainty, one other certainty remains true – COCA is an organization of amazing camps and people who go above and beyond every day to make great things happen. It has been my honor and privilege to serve as your President this year, I look forward to another year filled with lots of fun, special people and many more accomplishments!

Dr. Kaye Wagner, MD MME
2021 COCA Board of Directors President



COCA-I SO FAR STORY

OUR MISSION

To strengthen the international community of camps for children with cancer and their families through networking, advocacy, and education.

139
MEMBERS

**NETWORKING
ADVOCACY
EDUCATION**

OUR VISION

To be the leader in serving camps for children with cancer and their families.

HISTORY OF COCA-I

In 1982, C.O.C.A., Children's Oncology Camps of America was founded by a dozen pioneer oncology camps. The personnel from these twelve camps found the lives of children with cancer were immeasurably enhanced by camping. Noting their similar experiences, these visionary souls believed a forum should be created to share their ideas and experiences. That forum known as C.O.C.A. currently consists of over 130 member camps from within the United States and Canada. In 1996, C.O.C.A. officially changed its name to Children's Oncology Camping Association, International, to incorporate the camps outside of the United States.

The Camp Community is Strong and Enduring

July 14, 2021

I am approaching 34 years as the Executive Director of Camp Sunshine. When I agreed to take this position in 1987, I said, "I will do this for one-year, but I am a nurse so just for one year." Little did I know that once a nurse, always a nurse, and that my education and previous career made me uniquely suited to lead Camp Sunshine - that caring for kids with cancer did not have to be at the bedside!

What I also could not have imagined was a summer where camp would happen over a computer screen! That instead of greeting campers with a hug and a bracelet at camp, we would be shipping boxes with t-shirts and activities to their homes; we would be watching our song leaders singing our favorite camp songs as we danced in our living rooms; or we would be honoring our senior campers as they watched from their homes far from their best friends.

Camp Sunshine was not alone as we navigated for a second year the oddity of virtual summer camp. Many camps across North America were doing the same with the help of our colleagues in the camping industry and specifically members of Children's Oncology Camping Association, International (COCA-I).

I am one of only a few people who attended the first COCA Conference in January 1984 and who remain active in the association today. COCA was founded by a dozen pioneer camps on the belief that camps for children with cancer are immensely valuable and that it is important to share information and mentor new camps. Founder Dorothy Jordan utilized many of the resources readily shared by Camp One Step when establishing Camp Sunshine. Dr. Ed Baum was a cherished mentor and to this day we share the history of our camp friendship bracelet that was passed on to us from Camp One Step!

The world pivoted in March 2020, and our association, COCA-I, led the way for our membership. By hosting town hall meetings, webinars, virtual conference, resources, surveys, and reaching out to members individually, the leadership of COCA-I exceeded the expectations of what our founding members could have imagined. By focusing on the association's mission to strengthen the international community of camps for children with cancer and their families through networking, advocacy, and education, our camps not only survived the past two summers but truly found new ways to thrive. Individual members may have addressed the needs of our campers and families differently, but they planned with shared and accurate information, collaboration, and community. As the leader of one of those founding camps, I am grateful to the association board and staff for the extraordinary resource they have been for our membership. And I am proud of our member camps for the resilience and strength of community that has been so evident throughout this pandemic.

Written By: Sally Hale, Executive Director
Camp Sunshine, GA
COCA-I Member Camp Since 1984



ACCOLADES: We are proud to announce Sally is the recipient of the 2021 Spirit of COCA-I Award.

COCA
CHILDREN'S ONCOLOGY CAMPING ASSOCIATION

2021 GOALS REALIZED

Many of COCA's planned goals and more were realized this year. Connection, networking, education and access to resources were important in helping members succeed.

1

Re-Branding Project

Why Re-brand?

- Reinforce Mission and Core Values
- Expand Services & Professional Development
- Evolving Target Market(s)
- Reposition
- Capitalize on Opportune Change

3

New Partnerships

We were thrilled to partner with these amazing organizations who provided education and resources to COCA members:

- Beads of Courage
- Headbands of Hope
- Project Sunshine

"COCA's partnership has been critical in helping Aflac achieve our goal of donating My Special Aflac Ducks to all children with cancer above the age of three, providing comfort and joy as they navigate the difficult cancer journey."

~ Buffy Swinehart, Senior Manager, Corporate Social Social Responsibility, Aflac

2

Professional Education

- 20 Hours of Educational Webinars:
 - The Future of Camp-Summer 2021
 - Two Medical Town Halls
 - Program/Activity Ideas-games, crafts
 - Disaster Planning
 - Virtual Programs
 - Virtual Staff Training
 - Best Practices in Virtual Facilitation
 - Summer 2021 Plans-Facilitated Discussion with Camps
 - Networking Social Hour
 - Celebrating COVID Free Camp!

4

Annual COCAcon

We proudly accomplished our second virtual conference:

- 291 People in Attendance- the most ever!
- 15 COCAcademy Hours
- 40 Hours of Professional Education and Networking

COCA

In 2021, COCA Camps received over \$1.7 million in grants, goods and awards through partnerships.

MEMBERSHIP



PAYS



Care Camps granted 131 Operating Grants and 72 Capital Grants to support member camps and Care Camps continues to support COCA for Best Practices and Professional Development.

88 My Special Aflac Ducks were donated to campers. My Special Aflac Duck is a robotic companion used as a diversionary tool for kids with cancer.



Awarded 9 Northwestern Mutual "Excellence in Camping" Awards. These awards spotlight special volunteers and staff who go above and beyond to create a memorable camp experience for kids with cancer.



Beads of Courage provided an educational webinar, presentation/experiential at COCAcon 2021, donated 1000 DREAM Shuttle activities for campers and 400 siblings benefited from *Beads of Courage Celebrating Sibling Kits*.

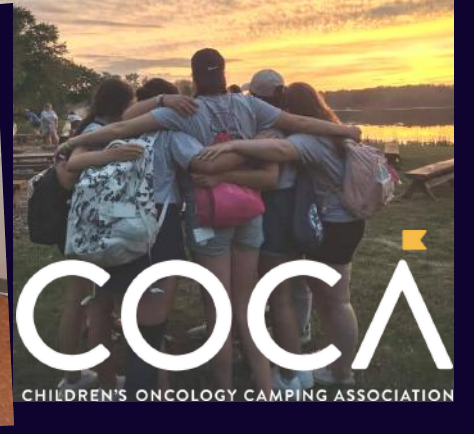
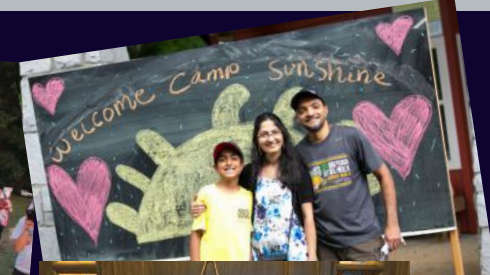


60%

Of COCA Members
Hosted In Person Camps
& Programs in 2021



HAPPY CAMPERS



COCA

CHILDREN'S ONCOLOGY CAMPING ASSOCIATION

2022

STRATEGY

To be successful, a planned strategy is necessary!

COCA Will:

Complete the Re-branding Project

Develop New Strategic Plan:

1. Inward
2. Outward
3. Governance

Provide Professional Education & Connection for Members

Create & Implement Professional Development Learning Center

Cultivate Existing Partner Relationships & Develop New Ones

Design and Build New COCA Website

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

COCA's 2021 success is due in part to these generous and caring organizations who support us. Their kindness allows us to empower our members to bring the magic of Camp to kids with cancer and their families.

Our partners include:



Support COCA:

COCA is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization relying on membership dues and generous donations from individuals and businesses.

261 Magnolia Crest, Dadeville, AL 36853

205.410.7154 www.cocai.org





COCA-I Staff and Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

DON GOLDEN, M.B.A.

ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

JENNIFER AMUNDSEN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT:

DR. KAYE WAGNER, M.D., M.M.E.

PRESIDENT ELECT:

DR. BRANDON BRIERY, PH.D.

TREASURER:

TINI GRAFF, C.P.A.

SECRETARY:

JENNIFER BENTON

PAST PRESIDENT:

MATT RUTTLER, MA.ED.S.

RYAN CAMPBELL

BRIAN CRATER

REBECCA KIRCH

GRETCHEN LOOSE

MARY ELLEN MCKNIGHT, D.N.P. , R.N.

KELSEY MERRITT

BRIAN MOORE

TYLER OLSEN

BRANDON PADGETT

IAIN RIDDLE

TARA VANDERPOEL

MICHAEL VASQUEZ

MICHELE VERNON

COCA

CHILDREN'S ONCOLOGY CAMPING ASSOCIATION



CHILDREN'S ONCOLOGY CAMPING ASSOCIATION

261 Magnolia Crest, Dadeville, AL 36853

205.410.7154 www.cocai.org