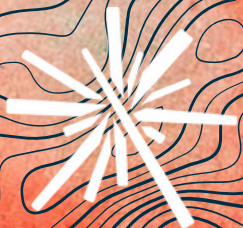


# PEOPLE *and* IMPACT

2021-2022



Camp Fire



# FROM OUR CEO



Over the past few years as we've continued to navigate COVID-19 and its challenges, we served over 100,000 young people virtually, which is incredible. But now, as we're able to operate programs in person (and we see growing waitlists for our programs), we're again able to offer the kind of unique, safe spaces and intentional time that allows for deeper connections - with the outdoors, with others, and with self. That's why these four core themes emerged as we looked at our program data from the past year across the Camp Fire network (Aug. 2021 – May 2022): relationships, belonging, professional development, and youth voice.

Each section of this report dives into these themes and why they matter. Here is a snapshot:

## *relationships*

Cultivating connection is why Camp Fire exists and one of our core values. But specifically, developmental relationships—connections that help us learn, grow, give back and become our best selves—are fundamental to a thriving life. Research shows that young people who have strong developmental relationships are more engaged at school, have higher social-emotional learning skills and are less likely to participate in high-risk activities. We know that healthy webs of developmental relationships also benefit adults, our communities, and all of society.

## *Belonging*

We all want to belong. For Camp Fire, we see belonging intertwined with wholeness. As part of our definition of thriving, we say:

**"For young people in particular, finding a place where they can simply be—where they can exist fully—can be very difficult, especially when who they are is challenged by society. That's why Camp Fire designs identity-affirming, accessible environments in which youth can experience the relationships, fun, inspiration, acceptance, safety and support they need in order to thrive."<sup>1</sup>**

## *professional development*

In order to support young people in developing strong, impactful relationships, we must invest in the adults who work with youth. Our philosophy is that to support a whole child, we must support the whole adult. We provide comprehensive learning opportunities for all staff and volunteers in the Camp Fire network. Child safety has been a big focus over the past few years and will continue to be an area of investment in the years to come.

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Kia Darling-Hammond: Darling-Hammond, K. (2021). Bridge to Thriving Framework. Wise Chipmunk.





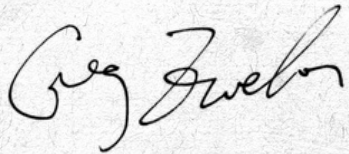
## youth voice

Camp Fire designs and implements programs that are intentionally aimed at elevating youth voice. Research tells us that by listening to youth, really listening, youth-serving organizations can promote young people's sense of agency and support them in inciting change. Honoring the power of young people is one of our [eight core values](#) and something we put into action: see examples [here](#).

In this report, you will find inspiring stories in each of the sections from a few of our 47 affiliates in 24 states, and what we're focused on in the future.

Over the past six years, we've been able to serve more than 613,000 youth and families across 4,600+ program sites. We seek to grow this number as well as make our programs more accessible and affordable, because growing up is hard and young people are hungry for connection (aren't we all?). Thank you for your support in this work and fulfilling our [vision](#): a world where all young people thrive and have equitable opportunities for self-discovery, community connection, and engagement with nature.

Looking ahead,



Greg Zweber  
President & CEO, Camp Fire National Headquarters



# RELATIONSHIPS

Building trusting relationships across learning environments is a best practice informed by the science of learning and development. Camp Fire youth build community in multiple settings -- in-school, afterschool, camp, and outdoor education programs. These are the contexts in which impactful relationships unfold and contribute to the success of youth.



# CREATING COMMUNITY: OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

**30,000**  
YOUTH WERE SERVED IN  
OUTDOOR PROGRAMS!

**11,771** youth served at day camp

**9,411** youth served at overnight camp

**6,619** youth served in environmental  
education & outdoor school

**2,733** youth served in other  
environmental programs



I had a former camper message recently about one of her camp friendships. She started camp when she was 4, and her last year was in 2019 when she was 15. She said that in her last 4 years of camp, she met one of her best friends; however, one of them lives in Indiana and the other lives in Florida. Despite the distance, they talk every single day! They are both graduating high school this year and they are going to college about an hour from each other, which they are very excited about. They plan to visit each other a lot. This is a testament to the friendships that camp helps create that defy distance and last a lifetime!

- Gabby Bittner, Camp Director, Camp Fire River Bend





# CREATING COMMUNITY: IN-SCHOOL & AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

## 20,000

### YOUTH WERE SERVED THROUGH IN- SCHOOL AND AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS!

**6,796** youth served in in-school programs

**11,125** youth served in before/after school programs

**2,143** youth served in school break programs

**1,918** youth served in club programs



Afterschool is a unique space where your grade, age, or ability doesn't matter, and you can find friendships in people that you would otherwise never talk to. We have seen students who struggle to maintain friendships learn to find things in common with others, figure out healthy ways to handle conflict, and learn to communicate their feelings.

- Liz Blakely, School Program Director, Camp Fire Heartland

# BELONGING

Camp Fire exists because growing up is hard and young people need safe spaces to be themselves and to connect to the outdoors, to others, and themselves. A big part of our work is creating spaces where young people can bring their full selves and be celebrated for who they are. We are not just focused on inclusion - we want young people to feel like they belong.



# YOU BELONG HERE

## ONLINE TRAINING SERIES

Camp Fire now has a three-part training series available focused on exploring personal identity, checking bias, resolving conflict, and creating safe and affirming spaces where LGBTQ2S+ young people can thrive.

**257** course completions were achieved across the series last year!



*why it matters*

Camp Fire professionals are equipped to meet the needs of youth in equitable and culturally relevant ways. 92% of staff and volunteers feel confident modeling the mindsets, skills, and actions we want young people to build at Camp Fire. By training staff in areas of belonging and inclusion, we see a direct impact on our young people:

**94%** of 6th-12th grade youth agree that it's important to consider/listen to other people's ideas.

**94%** of 6th-12th grade youth agree that they get along well with people of different races, cultures, and religions.

\*based on aggregate survey data from Camp Fire's 2022 Evaluation Cycle

# L.E.A.D.

## MENTAL HEALTH CERTIFICATIONS

Camp Fire prioritizes mental health and partners with Let's Empower, Advocate, and Do, Inc. (LEAD) to bolster our network's capacity to care for youth mental health. LEAD's evidence-based curriculum moves participants beyond awareness and into action to prevent mental health crises.

In the past year, **4 Camp Fire professionals became fully certified** as LEAD mental health trainers, and **13 others are in the process** of becoming certified. Those trainers **certified 67 camp staff and 53 out-of-school time staff** in LEAD mental health. Camp Fire continues to be committed to helping youth workers gain critical mental health education to better support youth!

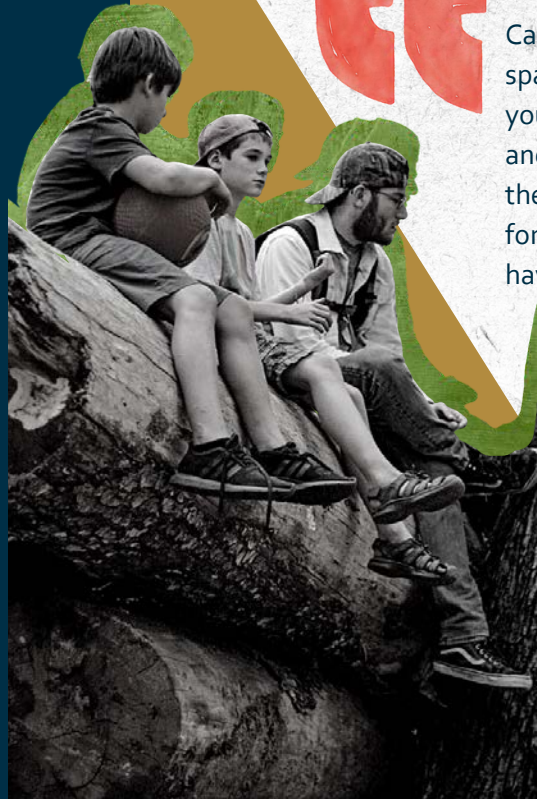


## LGBTQ2S+ CAMP SESSION

Camp Fire Green Country is dedicated to creating safe spaces at camp through our LGBTQ+ session. This is for any youth who identifies anywhere on the LGBTQ+ spectrum and siblings, allies, and anyone who wants to come. That's the focus, and it is basically providing a positive environment for young people to come be themselves and hang out and have a positive camp experience.

Since we started offering the LGBTQ+ session, it has informed and changed a little bit of how we run all our sessions in terms of accommodating youth. So all of our sessions provide space for youth to attend no matter how they identify. [Read more.](#)

-Eric Meier, Director of Camps & Outdoor Programs of Camp Fire Green Country





# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To support young people in developing strong, impactful relationships, we must invest in the adults who work with youth. Our philosophy is that to support a whole child, we must support the whole adult. With that in mind, we provide comprehensive learning opportunities for all staff and volunteers in the Camp Fire network.



In 2021-2022, we recorded

**700** CORE COURSE  
COMPLETIONS

in Camp Fire's online Learning Lab.



*why it matters*

Camp Fire staff and volunteers are receiving foundational knowledge on youth development best practices such as developing a growth mindset and growing developmental relationships, as well as an overview of our Camp Fire history, vision, and promise.

# FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Camp Fire's annual program conference, Promise to Practice, promotes collective peer-to-peer interaction and encourages sharing and learning among our network professionals.

Last year, 129 camp and out-of-school time program professionals from 26 affiliates gathered to get inspired, connect, learn, and share! Participants accumulated a total of

**606** PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT HOURS.

Camp Fire doesn't just invest in knowledge internally. We share it out!

## EXTRAORDINARY ATTENDANCE AT THE AMERICAN CAMPING ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE!!

Camp Fire had over 50 representatives at the American Camping Association conference in 2022. Multiple Camp Fire professionals presented sessions about their areas of expertise, as well as learned from others in the field on how to create the best camp and outdoor programs.

Photo: Camp Fire attending American Camping Association Conference in Feb. 2022



# FOCUSING ON CHILD SAFETY

Last year, Camp Fire National introduced National Youth Protection Standards and provided affiliates with a self-assessment tool to help them determine the degree to which they already have the Standards in place.

**33** affiliates completed a self-assessment of their current youth protection practices and made plans for improvement based on results.



I so appreciated National HQs work on the Youth Protection assessment resources. Keeping youth safe is always a top priority and National made sure with all the other competing priorities on my time that I could focus on this. The process was seamless, easy to use, and not time intensive but helped us go deeper and enhance our Youth Protection standards and practices at Camp Fire Columbia.

-Joshua Todd, President & CEO, Camp Fire Columbia



The Bring it Back training module with facilitator's guide and slide deck elevated our annual child safety training for staff. The materials were thorough and provided opportunities and easy-to-use resources to customize the training to fit our Council needs and state and local laws. Overall, the BiB materials were an incredible resource to ensure the highest quality training for our staff!

-Renee Meek, Executive Director, Camp Fire Green Country



Camp Fire National has created an online training series to provide staff and volunteers the tools they need to implement best practices in abuse prevention. In the past year, there were:

**313** NEW COURSE COMPLETIONS

Camp Fire National also offered multiple live child-safety trainings specific to program supervisors.

**28** NETWORK LEADERS RECEIVED TRAINING

on their role in responding to abuse and monitoring abuse risk within programs.

In a benchmarking analysis of 10 national youth-serving organizations conducted by Praesidium in early 2022, it was found that Camp Fire is fully meeting 63% of the best practice standards.

*why it matters*

This exceeds the average percentage of best practices used by 9 other national youth-serving organizations.



Average of all other organizations (excluding Camp Fire)

Camp Fire

# YOUTH VOICE

Camp Fire designs and implements programs to elevate youth voice. Research tells us that by listening to youth, really listening, youth-serving organizations can promote young people's sense of agency and support them in inciting change.



# NATIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY CABINET

Camp Fire has had a youth advisory cabinet for over 30 years. In 2021-22, we re-envisioned the way we approached YAC so it was relevant and accessible to youth today.

WE RECRUITED 7 YOUNG PEOPLE IN 2021,  
AND IN 2022 WE RETAINED EVERY YOUNG  
PERSON WHO WAS ELIGIBLE TO REAPPLY.

In 2021-2022, the Youth Advisory Cabinet accumulated

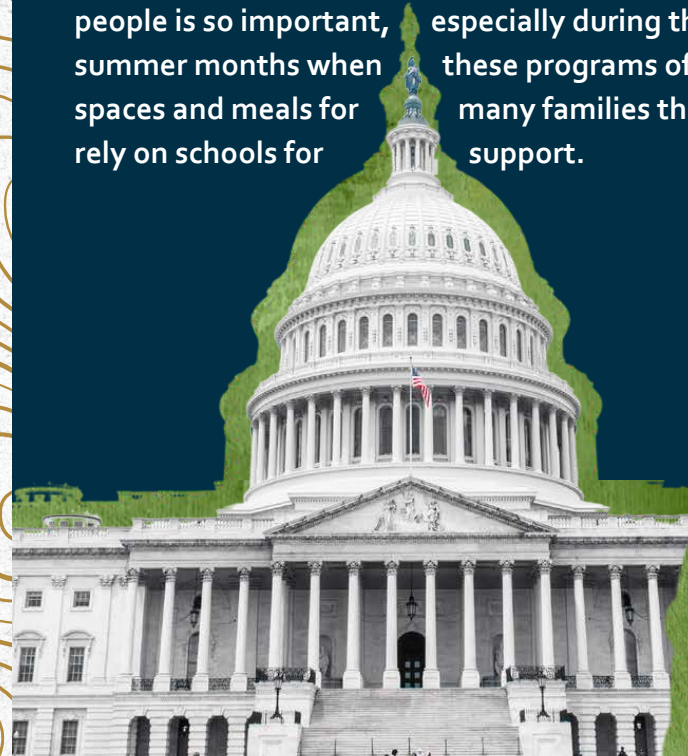
**53 HOURS ADVISING CAMP  
FIRE LEADERSHIP**

The YAC gave feedback on Camp Fire's 2023-2025 strategic plan, the new website design, youth survey questions on environmental stewardship, and new rewards and recognition item designs, among other topics.



In July 2022 a representative from our National Youth Advisory Cabinet was invited to Washington D.C. to be a part of National Summer Learning Association's inaugural Youth Leadership Institute. YAC member Joelle and one of Camp Fire's staff spent the week with other young people from across the country. Joelle participated in leadership training as well as group advocacy projects. Spending intentional time together with other young people who are passionate about helping their communities was a really powerful experience and something Joelle brought home with her to continue in Camp Fire.

One of the most powerful opportunities the week provided was for Joelle and her cohort to go to Capitol Hill and meet with state Senators and Representatives to advocate for more funding and resources for summer learning programs, like Camp Fire. Joelle got to share her experiences and why supporting programs for young people is so important, especially during the summer months when these programs offer safe spaces and meals for many families that rely on schools for support.



# CAMP FIRE YOUTH RE-ENVISION CAMP FIRE REWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROCESS

Make Your Mark brought eight young people together (from different affiliates and geographical locations) for four sessions. The group came to a consensus on their recommendations—badges that visually represent the award topic and the need for councils to create meaningful, but non-appropriative, rituals for recognition ceremonies. Their recommendations went to the Youth Advisory Council, who then voted on the design directions that led to [#EmblemDrop2022!](#)



# CAMP FIRE YOUTH INTERVIEWED ON NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL PODCAST

How are young people addressing the challenges created by the pandemic in Latinx communities? Young people from Camp Fire Patuxent joined the NYLC podcast "The Power of Young People" to talk about "Poder en Salud," a program they are a part of that shared resources and best practices with Latinx communities to stay healthy and safe from COVID-19.

Additionally, members of the National YAC appeared on the podcast to discuss the power of youth leadership and youth voice within organizations.

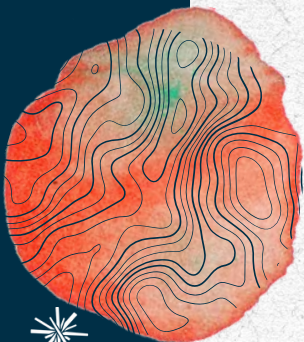
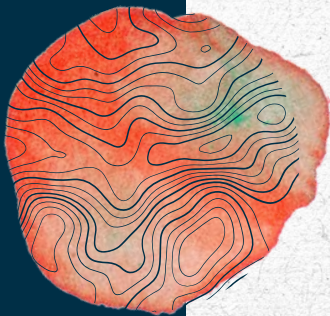
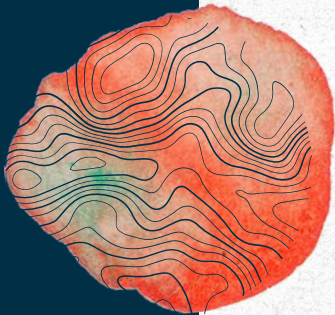
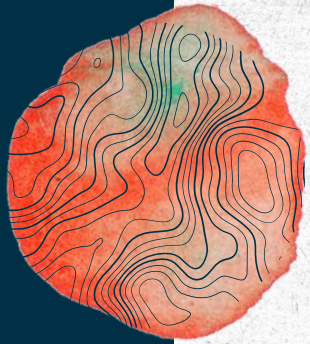


# CAMP FIRE YAC MEMBERS WROTE NATIONAL SURVEY QUESTIONS

Members of Camp Fire's national youth advisory cabinet helped write environmental stewardship questions for Camp Fire's youth outcome surveys. The questions were included in the 2022 evaluations for all affiliates. Survey questions came directly from youths' lived experience and personal insights, allowing the surveys to be more relevant to youth today.

# CAMP FIRE YOUTH SPEAK OUT: CAMP FIRE'S NATIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY CABINET STANDS WITH TRANS\* YOUTH

2021 and 2022 brought an unprecedented legislative attack on Trans\* and LGBTQ2S+ youth. Numerous states introduced anti-Trans\* and LGBTQ2S+ laws, many targeted at youth specifically. Camp Fire YAC released a statement showing their support of these young people and their families as well as resources for taking action.



# PROGRAM STATS

**84,036** YOUTH AND  
FAMILIES SERVED



# 611 PROGRAM SITES

ACROSS 24 STATES AND 103 COUNTIES

## DIRECT DELIVERY STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

**GENDER** 6% Gender Non-Binary 66% Female 28% Male

### RACE & ETHNICITY

2% American Indian/ Alaskan Native	13% Hispanic/Latinx	8% Not Listed
2% Asian	6% Multiracial	59% White
9% Black/African American	1% Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	

## YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS

### GRADE LEVEL

2% Early childhood-preK	29% Kindergarten- 2nd grade	38% 3rd-5th grade
21% 6th-8th grade	9% 9th-12th grade	

### GENDER

5% Gender Non-Binary 51% Female 44% Male

### RACE & ETHNICITY

4% American Indian/Alaskan Native  
3% Asian  
11% Black/African American  
15% Hispanic/Latinx  
8% Multiracial  
<1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander  
18% Not Listed  
41% White



### YOUTH PARTICIPANTS QUALIFIED FOR FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH

38%

### YOUTH PARTICIPANTS WITH A DISABILITY

12%

### YOUTH PARTICIPANTS WHO WERE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

11%



# OUR FUTURE

Looking beyond 2022, we are developing and sustaining many exciting initiatives (see our [new strategic plan](#)) that will continue to create space for youth to connect to nature, others, and themselves.



Young people are craving deep, real connections with people who see them for who they are. Camp Fire connects youth to the outdoors, to others, and to themselves. Donate to make connection possible and join our list of supporters today.

SUPPORT CAMP FIRE [DONATE TODAY!](#)

