







# THE TUMPLINE

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## **CONTENTS**

## POWER & GRACE • 6

Practice pays off in all aspects of our program

## A JOYFUL RETURN • 8

An easy re-entry made possible by our community

## ON TYPE TWO FUN • 10

The hardest days become your best memories

## TWO SIDES OF CAMP• 11

Hard work and yellow cake

## A NEW FISHING SHACK • 12

Two brothers make way for a new fishing shack

**CABIN PHOTOS • 18** 

**Cover:** Juniors Griffin Weil and Anthony Martinez take part in the annual around-the-island canoe race. (Jay Hunsche)

fter the difficulties camp experienced due to the pandemic during 2020 and 2021, and the flood of 2022, we often call this past summer at Camp Kooch-i-ching "normal." But really, it was amazing. It was amazing because things ran smoothly. It was amazing simply because we were at camp. We were on Deer Island surrounded by the pristine waters of Rainy Lake. The winds blew, we had sunshine, we had rain, and we were able to build many fires to keep us warm when we were cold. Throughout the summer of 2023, we had access to the natural elements we depend on while surrounded by an amazing group of campers and staff. We had what we needed.

As a community, it is important to take a second to appreciate all the wonderful things, at camp and in nature, we are privileged to have. This realization makes me reflect on the message that I offer to parents—"I hope your child experiences homesickness." It is not because I want any camper to be sad but more for him to recognize, during the 10 or 11 months out of the year when away from camp, the simple fact that where they come from, the home they live in, what they have, and even mom and dad are pretty great.

As we approach the 100th anniversary in 2024, I plan to offer this perspective to our campers, staff and community at large to help everyone appreciate what Camp Kooch-i-ching has to offer. Of course, I am hoping for a normal summer, knowing it will be amazing.



JR VERKAMP
Director, Camp Kooch-i-ching



**Right:** Max Roedel on the portage trail during his Eagle Rock trip. (Peter Haverland)

 $\mathbf{4}$ 



To me, dancing holds the same weight as our adventures into the wilderness. We spend years mastering our craft on the portage trail, scouting the water movement through the rapids, and cooking by fire. In the same way, we rehearse for the Grand Council, practicing by ourselves in the mirror, or with everyone joining the newest Dancing Champion in the ring. Getting to participate in our Grand Council is the equivalent feeling of getting to English Falls on the English River. Or Horse Falls and Raspberry Island on the Turtle. The moment you get to the end reflects your hard work and attention to detail over time.

Showing your power and grace in the ring is the ultimate metaphor for a Kooch-i-ching trip. Power shown in the ring reflects each paddle stroke pushing you forward. Grace is shown in the way we march through slippery trails and paddle down technical rapids. Repetition and attention to detail create skills which will stick with us for the rest of our lives. Any of you could jump right back into a canoe and the skills learned would once again be revealed. It will be the same feeling for all that have danced to step back into the ring once more and reflect on the great traditions shared in our circle of rocks.



## FINDING POWER & GRACE

#### **BY HENRY KAHN**

This year I had the honor of instructing the dancing program. One thing that is abundantly clear is how much the campers, staff and alumni love this unique program. I took six years off prior to returning for my first year on staff in 2022. Last summer, we were met with the greatest flood since I paddled right off the Trips Center steps to leave for my Big Trip in 2014. When I arrived to join everyone's favorite work crew of sandbagging, a part of me was ecstatic but I couldn't put my finger on what felt off. I knew it wasn't the flood or the staff because I have made some of my best friends from these two seasons and a good bowman always has his feet wet. Something was still missing for me toward the end of the six weeks. It was the beat of that drum echoing through the entire camp.

When campers finally arrived, the island came to life again with the sound of the drum. I was instantly flooded

with all the cherished memories that revolve around the council ring and this program. As many of you reading this know, it was just like riding a bike breaking out the double toe heel again.

Now that the program was under my direction, I knew I wanted it to feel like it was during my days as a camper. With help from my fellow staff members, we encouraged the kids to sign up to be a part of this truly unique program that they won't be able to participate in anywhere else. We were able to dance with over 86 campers and staff members in our final Grand Council this year. One thing that was obvious was the sheer passion of our dancers who chose to step into the ring. Everywhere I walked on the island there was someone practicing on the basketball courts, working on their championship routine, and even stopping to ask me advice on how to do some of our more complicated steps.

Above, from left: Brady Staves, Chance Kelly, Gus Fulton, Hank Bradley, Danny Schaub, Tim Smith, Spencer Lomax, Pascal Zeruhn, Carson Cook, Mason Mortenson, and Henry Kahn on the English River. Right, above: Henry Kahn prepares a classic lunch: pilot biscuits with peanut butter and jelly. Right, below: Grant Nicholson works with Aedan Sundermann, Trace Vollmerand Ryan Heekin in the front row and Henry Barco, Tristan Torruella, Gai Gai, in the back row. (Jay Huncshe)





## **REJOINING OUR COMMUNITY**

#### **BY WILL FORSEN**

The excitement returned quickly, but not without a bit of apprehension. After all, it had been eight years since I had been a camper, eight years of life, including high school and college, with camp only floating around as warm summer memories on Deer Island. I wondered what had changed and would I be able to truly reconnect with camp? Is my name still scrawled in Sharpie on the bunks I stayed in, is tetherball still played like a D1 sport on the island? The answers to these last two questions were easy—yes, and yes. The first two, however, were the foremost thoughts on my mind as I stepped onto the main dock this past summer to rejoin Kooch-i-ching, not as a camper any longer, but as a counselor in the Prep Camp.

Within an hour of landing on the island, I had reconnected with friends from near and far, fellow campers now fellow staff members! Collin Robinson, Will Sloane and Luke Dunning welcomed me back with a hug and a smile, and I had no trouble finding kindred spirits in new faces either, like Peter Haverland, Latham Kleckner and Ben Luebkeman. I explored the island with fresh eyes, and a

new perspective as a counselor. The drum still sounded in the council ring, it just beat for different dancers now. Classes and activities continued with the same energy as I remembered, but under new leaders—for example, tennis class under the fierce tutelage of Mick Geehan. I found that the people still made the experience, one filled with challenges, triumphs and laughter throughout.

Though the responsibilities obviously increased, the fun and the challenges remained, and that's what I am most thankful for this past summer. I was assigned to lead a Prep trip down the Eagle Rock when I hadn't been on a wilderness trip in all my years away from camp. As a staff member and triphead, I was no longer concerned with my physical abilities on the trip, but instead with making sure my group had a fun and safe time. The most important moment for me on the trip, when I felt these doubts strongest, happened on our second morning.

We broke camp later than is typical, having made good miles the first day after the drop-off. After filling up on eggs and bacon, and cleaning the pots to a reasonable

**Above:** The Eagle Rock trip Will Forsen led includes Kyan Lee, Henry Fahrenholz, Baer Bader, Luke Jenyns, Lucas Hogan, Finn Downey, and Teague Hennessey in the front row and Will Forsen, Wyatt Siess, Kip Rodes, and Chase Ehlen in the back row. **Right, from top:** Will's group hits the portage trail; quick work is made of getting across a beaver dam; and Gus Bradley and Max Roedel show off a bass. (Peter Haverland)

degree, we launched down the Trout River as it funneled into a bottleneck riddled with falls and eddy pools. I aimed our group, however, toward the other side of a peninsula to search for the portage that would break us through to our next lake, the Sakwite. Clouds amassed and a steady rain commenced as we patrolled the shore for the trail. No matter our persistence, we couldn't find it, not even when my fellow counselor, Chase Ehlen, and I got out to search on foot. Desperate, I told Chase to monitor the boats and keep looking around the shore as I foraged through to what should be the other side of the trail, clothes soaked and thick mud clinging to my squishy boots. Maybe a deer trail here, a rapidly filling creekbed there, but no trail. How would I get my trip to move our equipment through this?

After nearly an hour of trudging and trying to convince myself of possible paths, I headed back to the group, disappointed and not a small amount embarrassed. I had seen the other lake through the trees, but had not found a way to get there. The group had been sitting in the rain as I wasted time and had gone off alone—what do I do now? I thought through the possibilities as I heard a whistle and call from Kip Rodes, another trip assistant: "Hey! Will! It's around by the falls!" Kip, you big, loveable tripper, you did it—was all I could think. He had explored where I didn't think to, taking the time to find an alternate route in case I failed. The portage had been marked incorrectly on the map, in the opposite bay off the peninsula as we had approached it earlier. I rejoined my trip, hopped in my boat, and sped off to follow Kip. Sure enough, there it was, a wide trail right before the falls.

The weather cleared as we hit the Sakwite. Wyatt Siess threw out his line for some bass, Luke Jenyns, my bowman, was singing with Baer Bader, and I reflected on the morning. I had taken a misstep, but the group had succeeded. With that episode, I realized that though I was triphead, the weight wasn't all on me. I had support, great guys who can pick up where I leave off-or in this case, pick up entirely. It was smooth sailing for the rest of the trip, all the way through beloved Raspberry Island. Even when we did encounter later challenges like weather, long days or arguments, I was confident we would steer through them like we did the second morning. And we did! People stepped up and the group overcame, and I saw in those moments the culture of camp shine through. It had been eight years but it felt like I never left, truly. Returning to camp, I found, was as easy and quick as dipping your paddle for another stroke.









## TYPE TWO FUN LASTS A LIFETIME

#### **BY JAMES TAUBER**

At Camp Kooch-i-ching, we pride ourselves on adhering to all twelve laws of the Law of the Woods. While I would not dare to prioritize one law over another, the last one—be joyful—takes a unique spot in the Kooch-i-ching zeitgeist. But what is the joy we are seeking, and how does Koochi-ching facilitate being joyful in a way that does not exist elsewhere?

To me, the answer has always lain in type two fun. What is type two fun and how is it different from type one fun? We are all familiar with our basic type one fun. At Kooch-i-ching, it is fairly common to experience type one fun, whether it is during your favorite afternoon activity on Deer Island or on a trip when you bake that perfect calzone. It generally consists of the ups of life, those little experiences that blend together to make your memory of the whole summer good.

Type two fun, on the other hand, is not pleasant. It generally comprises the adversity that makes life worth living.

Whether it is the hardest day at Projects, paddling fifty klicks through the rain, or having a no-food day, type two fun requires pushing your mind and body to their limits. It is through this type two fun that the most fundamental type of joy is found.

In addition to simply being a unique category and source of joy, type two fun is also a highly effective way of making memories that last for the rest of your life. Five years later, you may not remember an individual afternoon activity too well, but you remember the most difficult or sketchy type two fun moments for the rest of your life. I personally have noticed this to be especially the case when I talk to older Kooch-i-ching guys. One of the first things they always mention is that forest fire on the Bloodvein they got lifted over in the 1970s, or the Junior biffy they built in the 1980s, or that time they got separated from the other guys on the Bay in the 1990s. Type one fun may last a summer, but type two fun lasts a lifetime.

**Above:** A long portage during the North Knife River trip. **Right:** Colton Krill takes a selfie while the two Senior trips have a floating lunch where the North Knife River meets the Hudson Bay.

## **OPPOSITES DRIVE GROWTH**

#### BY COLTON KRILL

Trip Log, Day 14 – Beginning of the North Knife River

"I saw a singular spruce tree split almost perfectly in half down the middle, one side green, and the other side rust. While passing by the tree I thought a lot about the concept of duality. It reflected the moments of the trip that have been long, hard, and painful, but also the moments of beauty, reward, and accomplishment."

The experience Camp Kooch-i-ching offers is one of a kind. It is a place like no other, and only those who experience it understand the true value it holds. It is a place I will always call home. My dad, who had come to camp as a kid, told me stories and memories he had before sending me up. My first year at camp I was 11 years old and had no idea what to expect. When I stepped on the island for the first time, I was nervous to be surrounded by faces I didn't know, but I could tell right away there was something special about this place and community. My first canoe trip was life changing, but I struggled being homesick and wasn't able to make the best of it.

What we do at camp is not always easy; it's almost never easy, but overcoming these worries and hardships opened a new part of my life, enabling me to grow. I didn't realize the effect camp and these trips had on me until I came back the following summer. Coming back to camp knowing what to expect taught me to appreciate everything that we do and really enjoy the experience. I found out why this place and these trips are so special to so many people who get the opportunity to go to camp. The balance between laughter and silence, pain and relief is the core to how you grow at camp. From working hard through the struggle of a rainy portage trail, to the reward of getting in your sleeping bag that night after having some yellow cake creates a feeling of accomplishment like no other.

The friendships and bonds you'll make at camp are like no other as well. There's something about only seeing those same friends for 2 months each year that creates a connection and unreal feeling when you see them the next time. Even though you share all your differences from back home, you share the same experiences with them at camp. There is never a day where I don't incorporate some aspect or skill that came from camp. This beautiful place shaped me into who I am, and I will forever be grateful for the opportunity I've been given every summer to be able to go back to a place I will always consider home.





# GRANDSONS PUT THEIR HOOKS IN A NEW FISHING SHACK

#### **BY GREG & JOHN SAUL**

The last time we set foot on Deer Island was in 2008 (John) and in 1989 (Greg). We returned together in early May 2023 for preseason to help tear down the Fishing Shack named after our grandfather, Stub Muhl. What an amazing experience at so many levels. Thanks to JR for insisting "I will NOT spend the night on the mainland!" Captain Tim "Ice Breaker" Downey only needed three attempts to pilot the metal watercraft through and over the remaining ice on Rainy Lake to enable us to reach the main dock. It was so exciting to be the first few people on the island! The campsite is much the same, with the lodge still standing strong, but with many new buildings to enrich the camper experience. The alumni building was a great place for us to gather after a long day's work, for hearty food and storytelling, and a good night's sleep. The call of the loon welcomed us home.

The 60+ year-old Fishing Shack was no match for the two of us, Drew Schrage and Damon Woudenberg. It seemed so small and dark inside, but the memories of Stub telling the "young bucks" how to tie on the fishing lure or how to cast using a clock face as reference will live on forever! An overabundance of nails of all sizes held the shack

together with determined strength. In stark contrast, the roof collapsed onto the ground after less than two hours and the site was cleared away by the end of the day. We then wondered, "Now what are we going to do for the rest of our preseason week?" We cleared away trees to accommodate the expanded footprint of the new shack. With less than 15 of us on the island, there was no shortage of other hard, yet satisfying, projects to complete in order to help get the place ready for another season of camp.

Wandering around the campsite, sitting on the Intermediate Camp dock in the late afternoon sun, fondly remembering all the experiences of being a camper in the 1970s was certainly a highlight. A paddle around the island showed how much the neighboring areas have changed, with vacation homes dotting the shoreline. We did still spot some snow and ice on the banks of the shady north side of the island. The preseason experience felt complete with a bonfire on the point. You can be sure that we won't let another 15 or 34 years pass before we return for more fun and memory making.

**Above:** John and Greg Saul in front of the original Fishing Shack. **Following page, top:** With the new Fishing Shack in the background, Massimo Kunath shows off a Northern Pike. **Below:** Ezekiel Sowles helps Marcello Kunath load a wannigan during Cruising School under the supervision of Drew Schrage. (Jay Hunsche)







# MORNING CLASSES OFFER GROWTH & ACCOMPLISHMENT

### **BY JR VERKAMP**

Morning classes at Camp Kooch-i-ching are more than just doing an activity. They are about learning skills. Each class is taught using standards so that every year a camper returns, he will build on the skills learned in previous summers. It is our hope that our campers will master these skills not only for personal growth, but also so when they are on staff, they will be able to share these skills with future generations. Some say that a camper's first year at camp is his first year of staff training.

In 2023, our morning program was led by Jack Hanley who was the mastermind of the complex puzzle of class rosters and teaching assignments. Jack did an amazing job getting all the campers into the classes they wanted, and ensuring that each class had a sound camper-to-staff ratio. Jack, in his first year as morning program coordinator, did an excellent job.

Other highlights from this summer include the use of the new Fishing Chalet (formerly known as the Fishing Shack). The new building provided plenty of space to work indoors when necessary and the new, much longer front porch was perfect for teaching and, in general, a great gathering spot.

Woodsmanship enjoyed its first full summer in its new home north of the baseball field. Tucked in behind the council ring, the new woodsmanship building was completed and fully outfitted with the necessary tools, including axes, knives, saws and fire-by-friction kits. Importantly, the skills learned in woodsmanship contribute to the campers' success on their wilderness trips.

**Above:** Ryan Hunsche and Ethan Lawrence use the coal burning technique to start a bowl. **Right, clockwise from top left:** Walker Fortner works out at the speed bag in boxing, Curtis Briggs takes aim in archery, Adam Gutierrez makes a move on the climbing wall, Tucker Croom prepares a loom for beading in crafts, Aiden Emami powers through one more pull-up in men's club, Rohan Pilson shares a course with Johnny Lloyd in sailing. (Jay Hunsche)













# HELP US CELEBRATE 120 YEARS OF WILDERNESS CAMPING

#### BY JR VERKAMP

As most know, 2024 marks the 100th anniversary of Camp Kooch-i-ching. There is no doubt that this coming summer will be one not to miss. The bunks are already nearly full and the Senior Camp has a waitlist. We have heard from countless alumni who plan to visit camp in order to be a part of this once-in-a-lifetime celebration. Deer Island will be as busy as it has ever been, and importantly, hotels and lodges are somewhat limited, so please act now to make reservations if you are planning on coming to International Falls next summer.

With Camp Kooch-i-ching celebrating 100 summers and Ogichi Daa Kwe celebrating 20, the Camping & Education Foundation is celebrating 120 Years of Wilderness Camping. We're kicking off this celebration this spring just outside Denver, Colorado, on April 20, 2024, at the Evergreen Lake House. We've arranged a block of reduced-rate rooms at the Denver Marriott West and booked shuttle buses to make attending this event a breeze. We'll have great food options and live music, and are expecting strong attendance from alumni from both Camp Kooch-i-ching and Ogichi Daa Kwe. This event is for those who are 21 years of age and older.



Then, just a few weeks later, we hope alumni will venture north to help us get ready for the summer. Preseason, which will begin on May 6th, is a great time for alumni to stay on the island to help out with preseason projects, reconnect with friends, share memories, and spend time on Rainy Lake.

During the celebrations at camp on July 11 to 13 and August 8 to 10, 2024, there will be a roster of activities and

ways to reconnect with old friends for those who make it to International Falls. While parents and alumni can't eat in the dining hall or stay on the island once camp starts, you'll have a chance to see the classics—the Woodcraft Roleo, Grand Council, and Friendship Dance—and enjoy the camaraderie of the class competitions.

Additionally, the most famous "big boat," the Koochi-ching II will be on Rainy Lake this summer. Alumni will have the opportunity to hop aboard and see our beautiful surroundings. We also plan a trip down to Kettle Falls—an event not to be missed.



As a reminder, there is a list of recommended hotels in the Parent Handbook located on our website. There are also a number of Airbnbs and home rentals popping up along the lake.

To learn more about our 120 Years of Wilderness Camping events visit CAMPINGEDU.ORG/120YEARS or scan the QR code:



**Above:** Evergreen Lake House and canoes being loaded on the *Kooch-i-ching II.* **Right:** Drone shot of Deer Island taken in 2019. (Cason Jones/Ben Woods)



# **First Session Cabins**

















# **First Session Cabins**

















# **Second Session Cabins**



















# **Second Session Cabins**



ront row: Henry Kahn, Connor Heide, Colten Meisner Middle row: Miles Maxfield, Vaniel Ciaglo, Tristan Torruella, Tim Smith, James Gadbois Back row: Andrew Park, Arou Arou, Ryan Heekin



Front row: Mac Redpath, Wade Wright, Henry Barco Second row: Keane Schmeltz, Townes Lomax Third row: Will Rose, Tristan Deupree, Peter Redfield Fourth row: A Brown, Henry Weil



**ront row:** Luke Wilder, Archie La Bonty, Patrick Malloy **Middle row:** John Bartle, Har angert, Thomas Patterson, Tucker Thayer **Back row**: Everett Ehlen, Luke Olmsted



**nt row:** Mason Mortenson, Chance Kelly, Will Ziegler, Ben Wolf, Alec Davies, Oliver ley, Luke Veith, Hank Bradley **Back row**: Brady Staves, Robert Lamb, Nicholas Lonc



Front row: Neil Roden, Aedan Sundermann, Henry Jay, Rhys Filoon Middle row: Carl Lassaux, Charlie Miller, Sean Peterson, Ellery Rayne Back row: Oscar Manzler, Augg Ganzenmuller



Front row: Griffin Miller Second row: Mason Sanford, Austin Metcalf, Ned Redpath Third row: Reagan Jacquemin, Noah Rogers, Tai'yon Young Back row: John Eisenbeis, Drew Schrage



**From left:** Latham Kleckner, George Cook, Mateo Braun, Henry Niehaus, Henry Sly, Tryg Siess, Will Espinosa, Oscar Manzler

# **Second Session Cabins**



ront row: Tomas Dwyer, Cody Thacher Second row: Jack Kazdal, Ethan Marin Thow: Jasper Holena, Alex Gutierrez, Peter Van Nice Back row: Tom Carlson, James



**Front row:** Aiden Emami, Danny Kerckhoff **Middle row**: Tucker Croom, Charlie Wolf, Nels Hedman **Back row:** Henry Steele, Jarett Hanson, Rohan Nessel **Standing:** Gunn Black



**m left:** Colton Krill, Ben Moulton, Gai Gai, Joaquin Castillo, Noah Schlaudecl iter MacLean. Deng Kur. Charlie Heinle. Ash Midkiff



**:ont row:** Ian Redfield, Owen McDonnell **Middle row:** William Mapes, Trevor enry Wallace, Finn Heekin **Back row:** Trace Dunning



Front row: Finn Heekin, Ben Moulton, Noah Schlaudecker, Oli Maness, Alister MacLean Middle row: Deng Kur, Grant Nicholson, Henry Wallace, Ben Roden, Charlie Heinle, Henry Vandenbark, Ed Kur, Owen McDonnell, Evan Lassaux, William Mapes, Joaquin Sastillo, Gai Gai, Trevor Kiehl, Connor Heide Back row: Ian Redfield, Ash Midkiff, Kyle siebert, Trace Dunning, Colton Krill



# **2023 Staff**



FRONT ROW

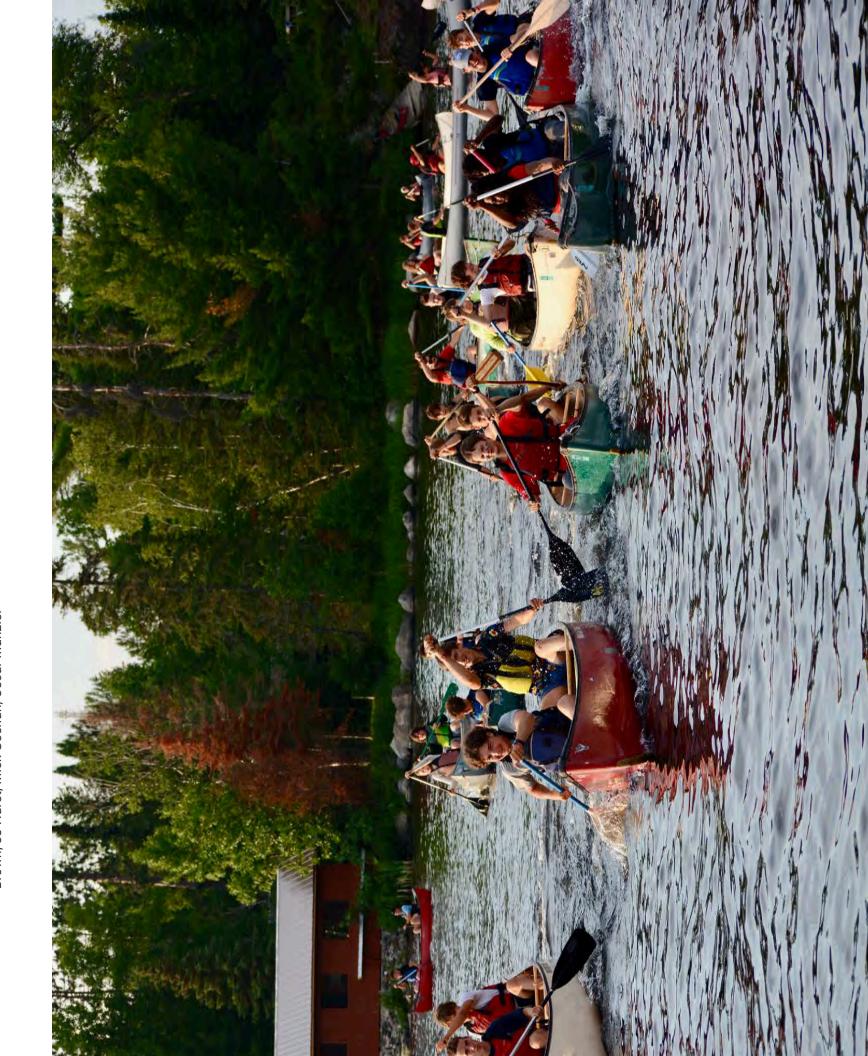
SECOND ROW

Kat Niehaus, Nathan Niehaus, Kate Downey, Patrick Downey, Tim Downey, Jay Hunsche, Mike Black, Rita Black, Bill Johnson, JR Ver-kamp, Tenney Verkamp, Sidney Verkamp, Greta Verkamp, Derek Turnbow, Alex Ernst

Karen Moulton, Wyatt Siess, Antonio Gutierrez, Kip Rodes, Will Sloane, Luke Dunning, Brady Staves, Colten Meisner, Henry Kahn, Luke Olmsted, Ben Luebkeman, Jeff Schlaudecker, Auggie Ganzenmuller, Drew Schrage

Chase Ehlen, Jonny Meeks, Tim London, Vishnu Rajkumar, Nick London, Kyle Siebert, Noah Garner, Collin Robinson, Deng Kur, Ian Redfield, Henry Weil, Colton Krill, Steve Steed, Connor Heide THIRD ROW

Grant Nicholson, John Eisenbeis, Max Marshall, Will Forsen, Noah Imm, Peter Haverland, Winton Petty, Nick Yehle, Gunnar Black, James Tauber, Ryan Boudinot, Silas Fulton, Trace Dunning, Ash Midkiff, Theo Wallace, Travis Mulford, Nathan Kleckner, Robert Lamb, Alex Brown, JJ Hurst, Mick Geehan, Oscar Manzler **BACK ROW** 

























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## **2024 DATES**

**FIRST SESSION** • June 15 — July 13

**SECOND SESSION** • July 15 — August 11

**EIGHT-WEEK SESSION** • June 15 — August 11

**FATHER-SON TRIPS** • July 11 — 18 & August 9 — 16

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