

# **“NEW TO CAMP” Professional Development Initiative**

## **Camp Directors/Managers, Camp Rangers/Maintenance, Camp Food Service**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In camp ministry, as with any profession, becoming proficient in one’s assigned duties and achieving a boss’s expectations does not happen overnight. It takes time. In almost any profession the first two to three years of employment have come to be known as ‘the school-of-hard-knocks’ or ‘experiencing the learning curve’. For some, moving into a new camp position is relatively uneventful, but for others it is filled with frustration and anxiety resulting in leaving the camp ministry profession.



### **WHY THE TURNOVER?**

It is statistically proven that most ‘new to camp’ personnel who quit camp ministry do so within the first three years for one or more reasons. Here are just a few of them:

1. Administration expects more than can be realistically delivered
2. Not feeling valued nor appreciated
3. There is not enough personal time for family
4. The hours are longer than expected
5. Lack of knowing how to make camp a thriving ministry
6. The stress that comes from trying to ‘make do’ with too little (money, equipment, staff, etc.)

### **SOLUTIONS TO SUCCESS**

Every person who accepts a call to some facet of camp ministry for the first time will face numerous and varied challenges. Often they will be unlike anything they have ever before experienced. The “New to Camp” Professional Development Initiative is designed to equip each individual with practical tools, information, resources, and one or more coaches/mentors to walk with them through their first crucial three years of camp ministry.

### **COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

- “I could not have made it without the guidance from my coach/mentor.”
- “The counsel and advice I was given proved a lifesaver!”
- “My coach/mentor was reachable by phone and email when I was facing some staff challenges during summer camp. The help given was invaluable and truly helped to make the summer a success.”

### **THE OVERALL PLAN**

NAD Camp Ministries Camp Professional Development Training is a 3-year initiative divided into three parts with each part taking place in a single year and includes attendance at the annual NAD AACP Camp Convention.

### **ASSOCIATION OF ADVENTIST CAMP PROFESSIONALS (AACP)**

AACP is the network of camp professionals throughout the NAD. The association provides continual support and networking by camp staff year-round. Membership in the AACP is paid by each camp annually and includes all year-round staff of the camp. The membership fees are used to fund the annual NAD AACP Camp Convention and other training and support activities.

### **NAD AACP CAMP CONVENTION – “NEW TO CAMP” PRESSESSION**

The annual NAD AACP Camp Convention is the highlight of the year. Camp directors and staff from throughout the North American Division meet for four days of networking, updates, professional development, breakout sessions, peer fellowship and spiritual renewal. The “New To Camp” Presession portion is an additional 1.5 days prior to the AACP Camp Convention.

## **GETTING STARTED**

1. Contact the person at your Union Office responsible for Camp Ministries. This is usually your Union Youth & Young Adult Ministries Director. Let them know that you are the New Camp Professional at your camp. Provide them with your contact info and start date.
2. Contact the North American Division Camp Ministries Office to provide your contact info. This will connect you to the NAD Adventist Camps Ministries network.
3. Discuss this Professional Development Training with your Conference Administrator whom you report to. Share this document, and how you think it will benefit you and your camp.
4. Review the available coaching options needed (Camp Directors, Camp Managers, Rangers/Maintenance, and Food Service)
5. Work with your Union and NAD Camp Directors to begin this initiative and to connect with experienced long-time camp professionals in your work area.

## **FIRST YEAR**

1. **New Camp Director book** – get from AdventSource and begin reviewing it.
2. **Coach Camp Visit** – Coach will visit the staff member on site at their camp:
  - a. NAD Camp Ministries will cover the Coach's travel expenses, meals and lodging.
    - i. Most Coaches will be coming from within that conference's union.
  - b. Tour the camp facility, especially those which are the responsibility of the staff member
  - c. Review the Camp's personnel/staff manual/handbook
  - d. Provide samples from other camps relating to the staff member's responsibilities (see *New Camp Director book*)
  - e. Orientation of ACA/CCA standards and resources applicable to the camp. NOTE: If the camp is already ACA/CCA Accredited then discuss standards for continued accreditation.
3. **Coach Quarterly Online Meeting** – touch base at least three or four times throughout the year giving counsel, encouragement, and praying with the staff member
4. **Union Youth Director Camp Visit** – during the summer camp season or when works best
5. **Attend NAD AACP Convention** – attend the NAD AACP Camp Convention and "New to Camp" Pre-session for training, networking, and support

## **SECOND YEAR**

1. **Coach Quarterly Online Meetings** – Coach/es will touch base at least three or four times throughout the year giving counsel, encouragement, and praying with the staff member
  - a. Review first year experiences of what has been learned, and what needs to be learned
  - b. Provide resources as needed/requested
  - c. Begin developing ACA/CCA standards documents and resources applicable to the camp
2. **Union Youth Director Camp Visit** – during the summer camp season or when works best
3. **Visit other nearby camps**
4. **Attend AACP Convention** – attendance at AACP Convention is crucial for training, networking, and support

## **THIRD YEAR**

1. **Coach Quarterly Online Meetings** – Coach/es will touch base at least three or four times throughout the year giving counsel, encouragement, and praying with the staff member
  - a. Review second year experiences of what has been learned, and what needs to be learned
  - b. Provide resources as needed/requested
  - c. Work towards ACA/CCA accreditation applicable to your camp
2. **Union Youth Director Camp Visit** – during the summer camp season or when works best
3. **Visit other nearby camps**
4. **Attend AACP Convention** – attendance at AACP Convention is crucial for training, networking, and support