



BYM Camps
Strategic Plan
2023-2028

Opening the Way

Toward the Next Century of BYM Camps

Campers | Community | Clarity | Sustainability



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Executive Summary



The following document details:

- The process by which the The BYM Camps Strategic Plan has been developed; and
- The outcomes and goals that will guide the work of the BYM Camping Program over the next five years.

The four outcomes of The Strategic Plan are organized into the categories of: Campers, Community, Clarity, and Sustainability.

Once The Strategic Plan has been accepted, an action plan will be developed to articulate the specific steps, measurements, and timelines needed to achieve The Strategic Plan. Each year, a specific Annual Implementation Plan will articulate what will be accomplished and by whom during that year to advance The Strategic Plan.

Respectfully submitted by:

Anna Best
Clerk, Camping Program Committee

Brian Massey
Camping Program Manager

Sarah Gillooly
General Secretary



Background



Baltimore Yearly Meeting has supported summer camp programs for young people since 1922; we have recently celebrated our 100th birthday. While the structure and purpose of the summertime experiences have shifted some over the years, at the core the mission has stayed consistent: “to help young people build community, individual self-confidence, and growth in the life of the Spirit” (from Report to the Baltimore Yearly Meeting by the Long-Range Camping Task Force; March 4, 1991).

Baltimore Yearly Meeting currently operates four vibrant, diverse, and youth-centered summer camp programs in Maryland and Virginia. With a total camper enrollment averaging 600 each summer, and staff and volunteer participation averaging 200 each summer, these four programs have a significant influence on the lives of many.

MISSION

To build a vibrant, diverse, and youth-centered community where we:

Welcome all with open arms

Nurture campers’ ability to both find themselves and be themselves

Create opportunities for campers to step into leadership, to shine their light brightly while also celebrating the light of others

Cultivate life-long connections to wild spaces, to specific places, and to each other.

Purpose



As our current world grapples with a variety of issues that impact the social-emotional, cognitive, and physical well-being of campers and staff, the BYM Camping Program continues to strive to deliver the “camp magic” that has sustained our community for 100 years. As the world changes, we must acknowledge and respond to these new realities.

We aspire to continue to provide the kind of experiences that will stretch, affirm, and nurture campers and staff to find their voice, courage, artistry, and work ethic, while we acknowledge a variety of changes in our world and society impact our ability to do so in the same manner we have in the past.

Our goal is to ensure that we are capable of fully supporting our staff, volunteers, campers, and families in a way that is in keeping with Quaker values and maintains our commitment to the Light within.

It is time for the BYM camping program to take a comprehensive look at our programming, practices, and goals to determine how best to move forward in fulfilling our mission and vision. A strategic planning process guides and focuses our efforts.



Purpose



The purpose of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camping Program's strategic planning process is to:

- Gather available data to develop a knowledge base about our community's desires and interests related to the camping program
- Develop goals (and strategies to achieve goals) that respond to our community's desires and interests related to the camping program
- Ensure that our goals reflect our values and purpose and are aligned across programs; ensure that our employees, families, and the wider BYM community are all aware of our shared goals
- Develop a plan to effectively allocate resources to achieve our goals



The Process



Strategic planning is a process organizations use to listen to and understand the wants and needs of their community members, access relevant data to inform decision-making, and articulate the desired outcomes that will enable the organization to thrive. It is a process of clearly identifying where the organization is going and how it intends to get there. By engaging in a strategic planning process that is led by Quaker spiritual process, and developing a clear, widely-shared Strategic Plan, the BYM camping program is collaboratively and intentionally prioritizing our goals and being transparent about the strategies we will use to achieve them.

In the fall of 2021, Baltimore Yearly Meeting began the process of strategic planning by hiring a consultant, Anika Taylor, to gather feedback and opinions from staff who had worked at the four camps the previous summer. A strategic planning consultant, Brooke Carroll, was also hired to facilitate the process of creating the strategic plan. Both consultants have deep connections to the Baltimore Yearly Meeting camping programs. In the winter of 2022, a strategic planning committee was formed to work with the consultants. They were chosen for their ability to think critically and strategically and to ensure that there was a connection to each of the camps.



Committee Members



Sarah Gillooly BYM General Secretary

Brian Massey BYM Camping Program Manager

Kirk Smothers Head of Delaware Valley Friends School and parent of a former Shiloh and current TA camper

Lara Holliday CEO of Tide Risers, former camper and counselor, current volunteer and parent of Shiloh campers

Don Crawford Retired businessman, parent of Shiloh campers, grandparent of Opequon campers, current member of Camping Program Committee and past member of Camping Property Management Committee, and a volunteer at Opequon for many years

Brooke Carroll Consultant to schools, former camper, counselor, and cook at Catoctin; former TA counselor, parent of current Catoctin staff member

Anika Taylor Vice President of Education Programs and Research at The Bakken Museum; former camper at Catoctin and Teen Adventure, and former counselor and staff member at Opequon.

Voices & Contributors



In-Depth Interviews

16 current staff across roles at all four camps

19 camping program stakeholders including:

- 14 former staff
- 6 caregivers of current or former campers
- 12 former campers
- 6 who indicated other roles (work grant, CPC, positions in BYM community)

Spring Survey

132 Survey Respondents from all four camps including:

- 65 current or former campers
- 55 current or former staff
- 64 caregivers of current or former campers
- 37 Work Granters
- 36 indicating “Other” relationships with the program

Strategic Plan Draft Feedback

64 current staff across the four camps

18 people from the broader community participated in online review sessions including:

- 11 caregivers of current or former campers
- 3 caregivers of current or former staff
- 6 former campers and 8 former staff
- 6 current or former Work Granters
- 2 members of the CPC
- 8 who indicated active participation in the BYM community outside of the camping program

The Strategic Plan



To guide the work of BYM Camps over the next five years, we have established the outcomes, goals, and strategies which will serve as The Strategic Plan.

OUTCOMES

Campers at the Center



A Vibrant & Diverse **Community** of Staff & Volunteers

Clear & Effective Governance and Leadership

A **Sustainable** Financial Model

DEFINITIONS

Outcomes are broad statements of what we envision for our organization at the end of the strategic plan in five years.

Goals are statements of what we aspire to achieve that are measurable.



CAMPERS at the Center



Providing a transformational experience for all campers remains the core focus and purpose of BYM Camps.

Rationale: Our camping programs have transformed the lives of campers for 100 years. With spirit-led “fire at the center” attention to the individual and group needs of young people, we have led exuberant, joyful, and affirming camping programs each summer. We aspire to continue to provide the kind of experiences that will stretch, affirm, and nurture campers to find their voice, courage, artistry, and work ethic, while we acknowledge a variety of changes in our world and society impact our ability to do so in the same manner we have in the past. We commit to addressing and responding to these outside influences from a deep sense of connection to our Quaker values. With clarity, transparency, and accountability, along with fidelity to a strong mission and vision, we will continue to foster camping programs that illuminate young people’s power and brilliance for the next 100 years.

CAMPERS at the Center



Goal #1: Continue the work of facilitating a genuinely diverse, inclusive, anti-racist, and welcoming community that promotes acceptance, belonging, love, and a celebration of the Light in everyone.

Goal #2: Clearly and consistently communicate our foundational statements across the program: mission, vision, and core values.

Goal #3: Establish and implement a regular review process to consider all aspects of the BYM Camping Program relative to its foundational statements.

Goal #4: Create Camper Outcome Program Guides that articulate the desired camper outcomes, relative to the BYM Camping program foundational statements, for each camp and age level.

Goal #5: Develop the programmatic and personnel structures that support and respond to campers' mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical health at each age and experience level, and that support the desired camper outcomes.



Vibrant & Diverse **COMMUNITY** of Staff & Volunteers



Continuous recruitment, growth, and retention of staff and volunteers are at the core of what makes BYM Camps a high-quality and impactful program.

Rationale: In addition to the life-changing experiences the BYM camping program provides for campers, it has always provided transformative experiences for staff and volunteers as well. For many, working at camp is their first employment experience. For others, it is a unique opportunity to support a mission-aligned, child-centered organization. Through a deep consideration of the current employment landscape as well as our own practices, we will better understand how to ensure that camps are facilitated by the staff and volunteers who will uphold and promote our Quaker values and mission. With a shared understanding of the structures and practices that support positive and productive work opportunities and joyous, affirming community relationships, we will assure the ongoing facilitation and leadership of our camps.

Vibrant & Diverse **COMMUNITY** of Staff & Volunteers



Goal #1: Draft and execute a multi-year staff recruitment plan to ensure sufficient and sustainable staffing levels for all BYM Camps.

Goal #2: Create a Staff Orientation Program Guide and process to orient and train new and returning administration, staff, and volunteers to the program's values, mission, vision, and practices.

Goal #3: Update the Staff Handbook to articulate the processes and practices that promote a spirit-led, values-driven, joyous, and just culture across all camps.

Goal #4: Create a Volunteer Program Guide to articulate the structures and processes to encourage volunteers to contribute to the program in appropriate, meaningful, and attainable ways.

Goal #5: Develop and implement a process to measure and cultivate staff and community satisfaction.



CLEAR & Effective Governance & Leadership



The BYM Camping Program is a large, ambitious, and complex program deeply enmeshed in the larger world. Clear responsibility, accountability, oversight, and decision-making authority are required in order for it to survive and thrive and continue fulfilling its mission long into the future.

Rationale: Baltimore Yearly Meeting is known across the region and beyond for providing an exceptional camping program. The leadership of the camping programs provided by Baltimore Yearly Meeting has resulted in the transformative experiences shared by so many over the past 100 years. Nonetheless, with the increasing complexities of overseeing a large and elaborate organization, impacted by shifting market demands, there is a need to consider how the program is governed, led, and managed, as well as how decisions are made. Clarity and consistency regarding roles, oversight, accountability, and support across the BYM camping program, informed by Quaker faith and practice, will enable Baltimore Yearly Meeting to continue effective, efficient, and productive decision-making and operation of the program.

CLEAR & Effective Governance & Leadership



Goal #1: Determine the governance and leadership model that best meets the current and future needs of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting and the BYM camping program.

Goal #2: Establish a comprehensive staffing model at the administration and programmatic levels that effectively supports the entire program and nourishes staff work/life balance.

Goal #3: Develop and implement a meaningful review process for BYM camping program leaders, managers, directors, and staff for accountability, feedback, and dynamic growth.



SUSTAINABLE Financial Model



The vitality and viability of a transformational program like BYM Camps requires a clear-eyed analysis of financial threats and opportunities, strategic thinking, and competent implementation.

Rationale: While the focus of the BYM camping program must be on the experiences of community members, these experiences are only possible if the organization is programmatically and financially sustainable. Regularly reviewing the financial model to address challenges and opportunities for long-term viability will keep the organization robust. Considering the various elements of the financial model, including tuition, non-tuition funding, physical plant needs, fundraising, etc. to explore and implement creative and values-based options will further ensure sustainability. Establishing a process to ensure that the overall financial model and each budget produced by the model reflects the values of the camping program will further support the mission of the program.

SUSTAINABLE Financial Model



Goal #1: Develop and implement a regular and transparent process to review the BYM Camping Program financial forecast and model to enable strategic decision-making.

Goal #2: Review and revise (if necessary) the tuition model to ensure that it is values-aligned and supports the financial needs of the program.

Goal #3: Review and revise (if necessary) the compensation structure for staff to ensure it is transparent and growth-oriented.

Goal #4: Design and implement a development plan that grows non-tuition revenue by cultivating alumni support and garnering institutional funding and partnerships.

Goal #5: Strengthen and expand our communication functions to build awareness of BYM Camps and our impact among a broad array of constituent groups.

Goal #6: Create and implement a Camp Master Plan to ensure mission-aligned properties that inspire and promote programmatic effectiveness.



Conclusion & Appreciation



For a century, the Baltimore Yearly Meeting Camping Program has impacted the lives of campers, staff, volunteers, parents, and friends through joyful, spirit-led summer programming. This Strategic Plan aspires to clarify the current and future needs of the program and to provide a dynamic path forward to ensure a thriving and financially successful camping program for the next century.

Thanks to all of the people who gave their time, thought, and work to making and implementing this Strategic Plan. We recognize that your involvement is a reflection of your love for the BYM Camps.





BYM Camps

Fire at the Center

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