

Panelist Bios

Dayna Hardin - Lake of the Woods & Greenwoods Camps, Decatur, Michigan



Dayna Hardin is the President of CampGroup LLC. Dayna began her camp journey at Lake of the Woods Camp in Decatur, Michigan in 1979. She worked her way up to counselor and assistant director before becoming owner/director of both Lake of the Woods and Greenwoods in 1997. Her camps in Michigan serve 1275 campers each summer. As President of CampGroup, Dayna consults, supports and guides camp directors and staff across the country. She is very involved in leadership roles within the camp industry, having previously served as President for Midwest Association of Independent Camps (MAIC) and Vice President of the American Camp Association's (ACA) National Board. Dayna is the co-founder of SCOPE Midwest (Summer Camp Opportunities Promote Education), a charity that provides scholarships to underserved children to attend non-for-profit camps. She is a speaker at camp conferences across the country on topics ranging from leadership, homesickness, youth development, difficult conversations, trends in camping and more. She is the past chair for the ACA National Conference and has received numerous awards for her dedication to youth development and leadership within the camp industry.

Dayna purchased the Lake of the Woods and Greenwoods Camps in 1997 and has been directing them for the past 23 years. The summer of 2019 was supposed to be her last as director. Then, the pandemic hit and she returned in 2020 to co-direct her camps again. This past summer was her 37th summer at Lake of the Woods and Greenwoods.

In a typical summer, these camps serve 1275 campers (about 550 at one time). In 2020, they held one session and served 438 campers and employed 211 staff.

Any unintended benefits of running camp in summer 2020?

“Some larger ones included:

- a. Healthier camp overall due to all the safety measures in place for COVID. Very few sick campers or staff this summer - this was the greatest benefit.
- b. Easiest parents I have worked with in 20+ years. They were far less demanding than in a typical summer and were beyond grateful for this experience. Not sure this will happen again, but let's hope it does 😊!”

Panelist Bios

Seth Herschthal - Camp Blue Star, Hendersonville, NC



Seth Herschthal, Owner/Director, has always been a “camp guy” and grew up at a nearby summer camp, spending over ten years there as camper, staff and leadership team member. He has been at Blue Star since 2006, serving as Camp Leader, Program Director and Owner/Director.

Seth has a wide range of camp and education experiences having worked for many years as a middle school English teacher, advisor, and director in both the Dominican Republic and in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He has also served on the American Camp Association’s Southeastern Board.

Seth graduated from Duke University with a BA in Public Policy and earned

a Master’s Degree in Education from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education’s School Leadership program. Seth has over a decade of Blue Star experience, including as a member of the summer leadership team, year-round, and Director team. He has whole-heartedly embraced the role of Camp Director/Owner and brings a wealth of knowledge, enthusiasm and heart to his work at camp.

In a typical summer, they see 700 campers per session.

In 2020, they ran one "super session" of 350 campers.

Lesson learned from 2020?

“Remember to keep things simple. Less is more. Staff will step up and can be asked to help in other areas more. And keep parents off campus...ha!”

Andy Schlensky - North Star Camp, Hayward, Wisconsin



Andy Schlensky is the owner and director of North Star Camp. He decided to pursue a career in camping and youth development as a 15-year-old Counselor-in-Training participant at North Star. After graduating from Northwestern University with a degree in Journalism and History, he became the boys camp director at a co-ed camp in Western Massachusetts before returning to North Star in 2010 to run the camp he grew up loving. Andy is incredibly passionate about youth development,

child psychology, and community building. He believes strongly in using experiential and outdoor education to endow future generations with the confidence, character, and life skills to go out and make a difference in the world. With the same mission in mind, in addition to running North Star, Andy is the co-owner of The Road Less Traveled, a teen service and adventure travel company, as well as Bubbles Academy, an early childhood arts integrated education center in Chicago. He works closely with several non-profit organizations including the Camp for All Kids Foundation, 4-Star Fellowship, Geography of Hope and Whole Child Arts. Andy also serves on the Government Relations Board for the American Camp Association and the board of the Midwest Association of Independent Camps. When not at camp or traveling, Andy lives in Chicago with his daughter Laney.

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Seth started as a camper at North Star when he was 11 and worked there through college. He was a CIT, Junior Counselor, Senior Counselor and later Village Director. He then worked as the Boys Camp Director at Camp Lenox in Western Massachusetts, before returning to North Star as the Assistant Director in 2010 before becoming the owner and director in 2011.

In a typical summer they serve about 320 boys between the 4- and 8-week sessions. In 2020, they served 173 boys for one, 7-week session.

Any unintended benefits of running camp in summer 2020?

“Many! I'm not sure where to start with this. It could be some health protocols and guidelines, it could be increased flexibility, and it could be just remembering how important the things that we do at camp are.”

Ty Simpson - Camp Kawaga, Minocqua, WI



Ty first came to the Shores as a camper in 1994. He realized he had found his second family and Kawaga soon realized they had found a favorite son. Even when Ty “graduated” from camp to pursue a successful business career, he returned to visit every summer, never wanting to leave. Now as director since 2017, Ty has made Kawaga his full-time career and his family’s second home. Appropriately, it was a Kawaga friend who introduced Ty and Lauren - Ty didn’t wait long before introducing Lauren to Kawaga where she immediately found her own connection. Lauren, who teaches math at Highland Park High School in

Illinois, brings a special passion to her role as camp mom and co-director. Ty and Lauren have three young children, Shay (6), Vaughn (4), and Dane (2) and one not-so-young Golden Retriever, Karma. All are important members of the Kawaga family. Ty and Lauren are involved in every aspect of camp, ensuring safe, meaningful, and fun-filled summers for every camper. Their enthusiasm, energy, and dedication are evident from the moment you meet them. They truly embody what it means to “Be Kawaga.”

In a typical summer they serve 265 campers. In 2020, they served 200 campers.