

Bishopswood Report to Convention 2024

At Bishopswood, everyone is welcome. We welcome, affirm, and support young people and adults of all abilities, experiences, races, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, religions and non-religion, citizenship and immigration status, and all individuals committed to respecting themselves and others. Additionally, Bishopswood admits transgender and gender nonconforming children.

How do we grow at camp? By being who we want to be, taking care of ourselves, taking care of others, taking care of the environment, and spiritually.

We live out our baptismal promises: By living out our mission and living, working, and playing in community together we honor Christ in ourselves and one another. At camp, we place special emphasis on coming to know one another deeply and we practice, through norms, examples and mentors, how to express love in all the diverse ways that God shows love to us.

Camp Bishopswood practices radical welcome and hospitality. We welcome and support all youth who come from Episcopal parishes, and also Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Muslim and other places of worship, and people who have never been to a house of worship. By offering gender-inclusive housing and proactive policies, we include and welcome all LGBTQ+ campers. We also work diligently to invite and welcome Immigrant and Refugee campers into camp, working with Maine Summer Camps and the Level Ground committee to identify youth who would benefit from a camp experience. Of the 383 campers at Bishopswood this year, 77 of them self-reported being connected to an Episcopal parish.

Everyone is welcome at camp, because all children are beloved of God. We had 383 total campers experience Bishopswood this summer and they stayed for a total of 645 weeks. We had 68 total staff and volunteers from the ages of 16 to 71.

This summer, Camp Bishopswood awarded close to \$94,000 in total scholarships, which honors the Bishopswood commitment to caring for all of God's children, regardless of ability to pay. Of the 383 total campers served at Bishopswood this summer, 94 campers received some type of tuition assistance. Of those 94 campers they came to camp for a total of 194 weeks, and 28 of them were first or second generation immigrant and refugee campers, who stayed for 57 camper weeks.

In addition to offering scholarships, Camp Bishopswood works with organizations across the state to help youth have access to a Maine summer camp experience. A few organizations we work with include Portland Community Squash (a local community wellness organization), MANA (Maine Association for New Americans), many local ESL programs within King Middle School, Scarborough Middle school and others.

Leadership development is important at camp. In addition to the leadership team at Bishopswood, which is comprised almost entirely of young adults who were once counselors or

campers in the Bishopswood community, the CIT (Counselor in Training Program) is a successful way to encourage youth who have been campers, and some who have not, to step into leadership roles at camp. There are clear ways that interested youth can move from camper to CIT, to counselor roles and then into senior leadership roles at camp.

Camp Bishopswood contributes to the health and vitality of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine, and the reverse is also true! Most donations to support camp come from Episcopals who see the need for a place of affirmation, love and play in a world too often full of business and anxiety. In return, Camp helps to offer programs like Summer Finale, a camp experience for all Maine Episcopals, and other opportunities for connection to Creation.

It's a privilege to serve within the Episcopal Diocese of Maine, and to steward the beautiful 80 acre campus that comprises Camp Bishopswood. Even as we bring this year to a close, we are looking forward to next season, and all those that will follow.















