



# NEWSLETTER



Summer 2020  
Volume 12, Issue 3

## Inside this Issue

- 1 Summer 2020
- 2 Day Camp 2020
- 3 DEI, MAC Board, Camp Questions
- 4 Camp Activities At Home
- 5 Ragers Creed, New Members
- 6 Spotlight on Alumni Andy Gehl
- 7 Nature Notes "Spiders"
- 9 Give 20 Program, Uncommon Phobias
- 10 MAC Foundation

Thanks To: Rachel Kornetsky, Haley Adams, Andy Gehl, and Chris Fink

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Wear a mask, socially distance, and wash your hands. We're in the thick of it now, and that's what they keep telling us to do. These are tough times for all of us. Give yourself a break. We've had to postpone weddings, funerals, parties, vacations, sporting events, celebrations, even resident camp.

If you're like me, you have to dig deep to find anything positive. Hopefully this edition of the Newsletter will help. Kids have been having a great time at Minikani's Day Camp, and you can

read it here. You'll also find some camp activities anyone can do. We have new MAC Board members to welcome aboard, and an alumnus to 'spotlight'. This also might be a good time for us to remember the challenges of the ragger's program.

Thanks for reading this Newsletter and thanks for being a Minikani alumnus. There's an old saying "A smooth sea never made a skillful mariner." Let's hope your passage through this pandemic is a safe and rewarding one.



# Day Camp 2020

It sounded like a perfect Leadership Training weekend activity - imagine these directions: "You and your team are given the following scenario – A worldwide pandemic has just quarantined everyone at home. A very contagious killer virus has kept everyone inside and afraid to have contact with others.

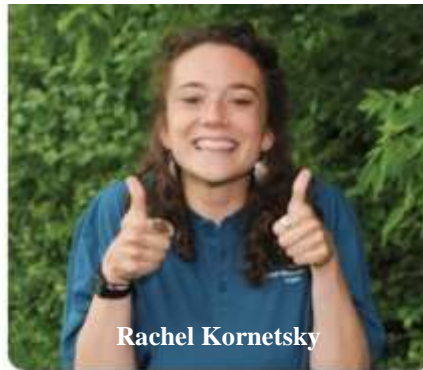
Later, things begin to loosen up. You and your team need to come up with the following challenge – How to develop a Day Camp that will be safe for both campers and staff while following the rules given by the CDC. Develop a structure, rules, training procedures and activities that will accomplish this new kind of Day Camp." Quite a training project.

Lucky, Minikani had just the right people to do this. Eli Fyksen, Senior Director Operations is leading the program. He has been involved with Day Camp since it started at Minikani in 2005.



Eli Fyksen

Summer Camp Director Rachel Kornetsky, with 10 years of camp experience, has previously served as the assistant summer camp director.



Rachel Kornetsky

In addition, there's 30 camp counselors working with the kids.

Following guidelines from the American Camp Association, the CDC and others, Minikani is confident they can maintain a safe environment. There are a few things that the 2020 Day Camp does not have. No bus transportation, no sleep overs, no swimming pool. But there's plenty of hand washing and physical (social) distancing between campers and groups. Campers and staff wear masks when indoors and in close confined locations. When outside and able to correctly social distance, masks are not required. There's a morning Password, Steel Wolf, and unit days.

There are plenty of Day Camp activities for the kids. (See photos) Archery, climbing wall, horseback riding, hiking, games, crafts, swimming, and lots of hand washing and sanitizing. And don't forget the best thing of all - just being at Minikani is a great activity!

There are still some openings for the Day Camp (ages 7-12) later this summer. Weekly sessions run through August 21<sup>st</sup>. Here's a link: [www.minikani.org](http://www.minikani.org)



## The MAC & DEI

*Editor's Note: Haley Adams and Gwenn Chamberlin are new MAC Board members. They have been listening to discussions alumni have been having about promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion at camp and in our communities, and have shared their thoughts with our Facebook group. Below is an open letter to all Minikani alumni.*

Hi Camp!

Following up on the Zoom call we had a few weeks ago, we're excited to announce a new MAC initiative to engage with fellow alumni interested in diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism work. On the heels of the recent demonstrations in defense of Black lives, we believe this work is more important than ever, and are excited to harness the energy of our community to make a positive impact.

If you're interested in learning more, we encourage you to check out the [summary](#) of our initiative, and send an email to [minikanialumniengagement@gmail.com](mailto:minikanialumniengagement@gmail.com) to be added to the listserv.

We'll be sharing future communications and ways to get involved via email, not Facebook. (If you already sent your email to McKenna after the first Zoom call, you're already on the list!)

In solidarity and in the spirit,

Haley and Gwenn



## The MAC Board of Directors

The MAC Board of Directors is happy to welcome eight new members (those with \*'s) to their ranks.

- \*Haley Adams
- Joe Alioto
- \*Gwen Chamberlin
- \*Austin Cox
- \*David Demet
- Sean Demet
- Ryan Derus
- Kendall Divito
- Chris Fink
- Julia Goebel
- \*Matt Kolb
- \*Perry LaRoque
- \*Hillary Lobenstein
- Jen Peterson
- Bruce Rasmussen
- \*David Van Sicklen

Some of the work the voluntary board does is to plan events like the Holiday Party, Dinner Around the World, and Alumni weekends at Minikani. They also oversee campership support, fundraising for staff need, summer staff recognition, and more.

The Board meets via a conference phone call every other month. Feel free to contact any board member through our email address: [minikanistafflodge@gmail.com](mailto:minikanistafflodge@gmail.com)



## Camp Questions?

### If there is a Day Camp, why isn't there a Resident Camp this summer?

Running an overnight camp following social distancing protocols is very different from running a day camp. The number of people involved is one important factor. The capacity on the property for the day camp is 150 people a day.

For overnight camping the capacity number jumps to a whopping 540 people. (There are additional staff, LTs, food service, maintenance, office, etc.) Other factors in addition to capacity reduction include sleeping arrangements, meal preparation, bathhouses, and group dining, all of which creates a much more challenging environment.

### What is happening with the Leadership Training program?

The LT program will be on pause this summer. They will resume with the selected 2020 LT team in 2021. If someone were registered to be a LT1 this year, they are automatically enrolled to be an LT1 in 2021. If they were registered to be an LT2 this summer, they are automatically enrolled to be an LT2 next summer. The same for LT3's. Parents have been notified that Minikani will continue to be in contact over this next year with them regarding any important events and deadlines.



# Summer Camp Activities You Can Do At Home

COVID-19 has created uncertainty around everything we do, and it certainly has had an effect on kids and adults alike. While you've probably seen lists like "100 things to do at home", here's a shorter list that was adapted from one created by Sarah Braker at campminder.com especially with camp kids and families in mind. (That's you!) These activities are suitable for all ages! *(Please note: Although none of the activities require the internet, you might want to use it to google more information about a particular activity.)*

**1. Letter Writing:** Few things bring a smile to campers' faces more than getting a letter in the mail, and this is one of the easiest camp experiences to recreate. Maybe it's to a friend from camp, a relative or neighbor. Grab paper and pens or markers and get to work writing letters. Don't forget the stickers. In this digital age, there's still something special about receiving a handwritten letter in the mail. Who knows, you might even get a letter in return!

**2. Art Projects:** Let's bring out some of your crafty creativity. Remember making things out of Popsicle sticks?



How about gluing different seeds you've collected and even spices to a piece of cardboard to make a seed picture? And there's lots of ways to

make leaf pictures or rubbings using crayons or paints. Lots more ideas on the internet. It's all art, suitable for the finest refrigerator.

**3. Nature Walks:** Come on, certainly you've been doing these during the pandemic. You could maybe bring a sketch book or



notebook on your walk to keep track of what you see. Or you could make a digital photo

collection of all the neat things you see, then research them when you get back home. Your backyard, a park, or a hiking trail is perfect for this activity. It's as easy as falling off a log!

**4. Special Days:** How about creating a Special Day for you and your family? Take a lead from Minikani and have your own Western Day, Hobo Day, Star Wars Day, Pool Party Day, Olympics, 50's Party, etc. You'll probably need some costuming to set the theme. Include fun activities – races, hunts, games, cheers – you name it, you can do it. You can even put the kids to work with planning things to do. Don't forget to include a special snack!

**5. Campfires:** Certainly as a former camp staff you know what makes a good campfire - songs, music, skits, stories, stunts and more.



Can't tell a story – then read one. Can't carry a tune – then use Pandora. Can't think of a skit – then play charades. Can't build a fire – then 'watch' a fire on TV – most streaming platforms will have one for you.

**6. Foil Dinners:** What is more traditionally 'camp' than making foil dinners? The recipe is simple:

Grab a potato, add frozen or fresh veggies, wrap in foil, and toss into the oven. Add some meat if you like. A



pat or two of butter never seems to hurt. When fully cooked, cut the packet open and add some favorite seasonings. No plate required! Maybe while everything's cooking you can reminisce about the best and worst camp food you've ever eaten. Don't forget dessert – s'mores?

**7. Backyard or Bedroom Tents:**

If you're planning special camp activities, don't forget the tents! Maybe you've got your own tent you can set up in the backyard. If not, string a rope between two trees or poles and drape a blanket over it. Inside the house you can make a pillow fort or use sheets to get that cozy feeling. What do you do in a tent? Make up stories, tell secrets, play games, or just chill.



**Raggers' Creed**

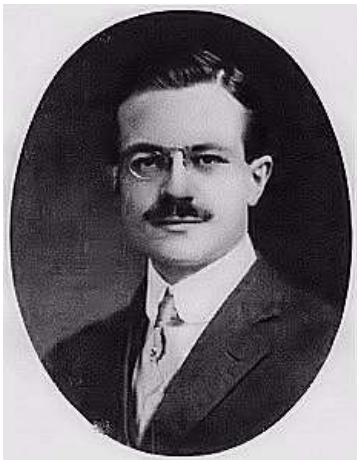
*I would be true, for there are those who trust me;  
 I would be pure for there are those who care;  
 I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;  
 I would be brave, for there is much to dare.  
 I would be friend, to all – the foe, the friendless;  
 I would be giving and forget the gift;  
 I would be humble for I know my weakness;  
 I would look up and laugh and love and lift.*

**Raggers Creed**

On January 1, 1907, Howard Walter sent a poem he had written to his mother as a holiday greeting. She treasured it so much she shared it with others, and it was published that May in the popular magazine Harper's Bazaar.

Titled "My Creed", it was eventually set to music and became the traditional Christian hymn "I Would Be True".

Several years later Howard Walter left to teach and minister in India. In 1918 a world-wide flu pandemic (Spanish Flu) caused the death of this devoted young man at just 35 years of age.



**Howard A. Walter**

**Here's an Idea...**

Want a daily reminder of your rags? Here's what one Ragger does to put the Creed into action for himself: Each morning he will choose one line from the poem – "I would be brave" or "I would be giving". Sometimes he looks them over and picks one, other times he goes in the order they are written. He even has the single lines written on 8 post-it notes and randomly picks one out of a jar.

Then he spends the rest of his day working to live up to just that one line. To be a "friend", he goes out of his way to talk to strangers or co-workers he doesn't know well. To be "Brave", he puts himself out there when he would normally hold back. His favorite line? The last one. On those days he tries to put a maximum 'positive' spin on everything he does, all the people he encounters, and all of his thoughts.



**New Members?**



We're trying to get **everyone** who has ever worked at Minikani to join our

**"Minikani Alumni Community".**

Why should a former staff member join the MAC? Here are a couple of good reasons:

- 1) Membership doesn't cost anything – it's free.
- 2) Previous friends from camp can reconnect with each other.
- 3) It helps us stay connected to Minikani with emails, a website, quarterly Newsletters, camp activities and more.
- 4) Anyone can 'unsubscribe' at any time (but we don't like to think about that!).

*To Sign-Up, [Click Here to Join the Minikani Alumni Community](#)*

Members can also use this link to update their own profile (name, email address, snail mail address, etc.). Have you moved in the last couple of years? Changes your old email address to gmail? Then it is time for you to update your profile.

Just think – if every person brought just **one** person into our community, our numbers would **double**. Wouldn't that be great?

# SpotLight

On Alumni

By Andy Gehl

*(Editor's Note: Andy was at camp for 13 years. He gave these answers to my questions about his experiences.)*

◆ **What is your history at camp?**

I started going to camp at age 7 in 1986. 5 years in the BU as a camper, 2 epic Explorer years, the LT program and then 6 years on staff. I was a 1<sup>st</sup> year counselor in 1997 (along with 15 totally new counselors in our first year together.) I also spent a year as a full-time Explorer Counselor and then 3 years on Ad Staff as Adventure Challenge Director, LT Director and then Explorer Unit Director.

◆ **How did you happen to come to Minikani?**

I'm not entirely sure how I ended up at Minikani but I didn't show up with any "friends from home" so I think my parents just stumbled on it, which was an amazing accident as Minikani was one of the greatest things to happen in my life.

◆ **Did you have a favorite job?**

My first reaction to this was LT Director because you have the all-star team of "campers" and future Minikani leaders and you get to help shape their leadership journey but the most fun job I had at Minikani was definitely Explorer Counselor. By your third year on staff you have "elder statesman" status so to speak but you are not officially in charge



**Kevin Casper, Camper Andy, Pete Kindem**

of anything. Plus, you get to spend 4 weeks up north with some amazing older campers doing awesome stuff. I would go back to that summer in a heartbeat if I could.

◆ **Favorite camp food?**

Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup Lunch! So good after a hard morning in the corral.

◆ **If you could go back and re-live just one day at camp (Groundhog Movie style), which would it be?**

I think I was 11 or 12 in the Boy's Unit during one of the classic all-camp day water balloon capture the flag extravaganzas. I think it might have been Hobbit day. Somehow, I got my hands on the last flag and ran it back to Council Bluff with a team of protectors tossing water balloons at my attackers. I made it and won the game for our team. I felt like such a hero. From then on, those all-camp capture the flag days were always my favorites and I really got into creating my own versions of them once on Ad-

Staff. I was also a huge fan of the nights like Kangaroo Court or the Pickle Party where the creativity of the Minikani Staff was out in full force. I would love to relive any of those nights again.

◆ **Favorite rainy day activity?**

Mud sliding all the way! I do not think it's allowed anymore after a kid broke his leg in our unit but maybe it found its way back. To this day, I love going out in the rain and playing with my kids because Camp taught me to take rainy days and turn them into adventures.

◆ **Which did you like best – Opening Day or Closing Day?**

I loved Opening Day. That nervousness and anticipation from all the kids and the butterflies in your stomach as you drive into camp. It was always a little awkward at first as everyone starts to get to know each other and get comfortable but I loved starting a new cabin and getting excited for the week ahead. Was there any better feeling than that first dinner when the program director welcomes everyone to camp and the staff goes nuts for like 10 minutes of cheering, hanging on rafters, etc.? I really hope they still do that!





◆ **What song always makes you think of camp?**

This is an odd one and it really doesn't pop up on the radio that often but Ice Ice Baby, since my great friend and fellow counselor Nick Creten taught me all the lyrics to it one night in our tent on the Explorer Trip when we were campers. It was after a taco night food fight that left a sour milk smell in our hair from the sour cream and no showers for a week. I can still smell it when I hear that song. LOL.

◆ **Any skills you learned at camp that you still use today?**

There were so many soft skills but when it comes to hard skills, fire building has probably come in the handiest. Just last weekend I was

teaching my kids and their cousins about tinder, kindling and fuel, blowing on the A-Frame, etc. and I felt like a camp counselor at Cabin Campfire again.

◆ **Any advice for our younger alumni who are just starting their careers?**

Find something that you are passionate about and do not settle if you are not happy in your job. Minikani people are passionate people and we know how to pour our hearts into something we really care about. Find that thing but also be patient as it may take time.

I remember leaving camp feeling like I could go conquer the world. You can do great things and the skills you honed at camp will take you a long way, but you can't necessary just flip a switch and get where you want to be in life.

◆ **Anything else to share?**

I love seeing the growth of the Minikani Alumni Community and I hope we can take it even further together to build greater connections across various generations of camp people. There are Minikani people all over the country (and globe) doing great things and I would love to see us find ways to support one another even more and to rally this community around great causes that we care about – whether it be youth development programs generally or securing the future existence of our summer homeland more specifically. We can do great things together. 🏕️

## Nature Notes

By Bruce

Little miss Muffet sat on her tuffet, eating her curds and whey. Along came a spider who sat down beside her and frightened Miss Muffet away...

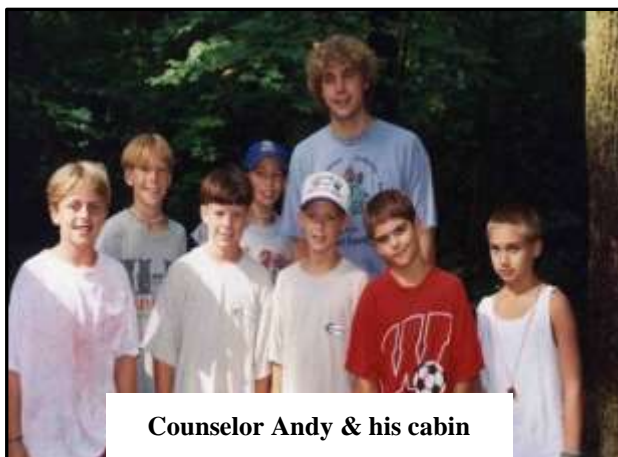
What was it that scared Ms. Muffet away? Was she afraid the spider would eat her food? Probably it was arachnophobia, one of the most common phobias in North America and Europe.

Spiders are not very popular creatures, even though they are vital to a healthy ecosystem. They eat harmful insects (more insects than birds and bats combined), pollinate plants, and recycle dead animal and plants back into the earth. On the other hand, they are also a valuable food source for many small mammals, birds, and fish.

But some people just don't like spiders. They say something like "I don't like any bugs." Most of us know that spiders aren't truly bugs or insects. They are arachnids, with only 2 body parts and 8 legs. Other arachnids include daddy longlegs, scorpions, mites and ticks – a group that doesn't rank high in the 'likeability' category. →



Photo by Sandi Nitka, Waukesha



Counselor Andy & his cabin



OK – spiders can be “creepy” when they creep around. Maybe it’s the way they walk. When a spider travels, it always has four legs touching the ground and four legs off the ground at any given moment. Some can fly through the air on a silken thread. Others can swim through the water. Like most things in nature, if you leave them alone they are perfectly happy to leave you alone.

All spiders can make silk. Spiders have between two and six spinnerets at the back of their abdomen. Each one is like a tiny showerhead that has hundreds of holes, all producing liquid silk. The silk that comes out of the spider’s spinneret is liquid, but it hardens as soon as it comes in contact with air.

Not all spiders use their silk to make a web. The ones that do often build a new one every day. One of the most common silk uses is as a dragline. As some spiders move from place to place, they lay out a thin, dry thread behind them. Just like a mountain climber, the spider uses the thread as a safety line. If it gets in trouble, it can quickly backtrack on the line to get to safety.

Another common use for silk is in nursery building. In most species, female spiders will spin a thick, protective cocoon for their developing eggs and sometimes the spiderlings once they’ve hatched.

Some species will leave the cocoon unattended while the young spiders develop, and others, such as wolf spiders, will carry the cocoons around with them.

Some spiders will form a small web between their legs and quickly wrap up any insect that gets caught. But the best-known web is the orb web, the intricate design spun by most garden spiders. These webs serve one primary function – to catch food. Once they’ve successfully captured their prey, spiders spit digestive enzymes onto their food and wait until it is liquid enough to be sucked up like a smoothie.



All spiders have piercing fangs with venom that they use on their prey. Luckily for humans, very few spiders have strong enough fangs to pierce our skin. Also lucky for Wisconsinites is that the poisonous Black Widow and Brown Recluse are secretive, non-aggressive spiders that are rarely found in the state. (Only 5 brown recluses have been recorded in WI in the past 30 years).

One of my favorite times of the year to hunt for those large orb spider webs at Minikani was late summer. Walking through the knee to waist high grasses and plants found in the fields, the edge of the corral, or Hueniker Hill were some of my favorite spider hunting areas.



## Spiders

- ◆ A strand of silk long enough to circle the world would weigh just over a pound.
- ◆ Jumping spiders can leap up to 40 times their own body length. If humans could jump this far, they would be able to jump over 230 feet.
- ◆ Some spiders are adapted to live in a house, others outside. Seldom does an inside spider survive when they are outside.
- ◆ Scientist estimate that 1 million spiders can live on one acre of land. The number might be closer to 3 million in the tropics.
- ◆ With 35,000 species of spiders in the world today, only 25 are harmful to people.
- ◆ Spiders are not aggressive and will either try to run away from people, or defend themselves.
- ◆ Spiders are the only group of animals that build webs.
- ◆ You’ve probably heard something like this: People eat an average of seven to eight spiders per year while sleeping. This is not true. “For a sleeping person to swallow even one live spider would involve so many highly unlikely circumstances that for practical purposes we can rule out the possibility. No such case is on formal record anywhere in scientific or medical literature.”



## Give 20 Program

By Andy Gehl

*Editor's Note: Andy Gehl and Kevin Wright, who met years ago at Minikani, founded Third Space Brewing in Milwaukee. Once a month they partner with various nonprofits for a Give20 Night at their taproom. I asked Andy to tell us all about the program.*

Kevin and I have adopted so many of the values we learned at Minikani as we have developed our business, often times hiring a large slate of Minikani alumni in part because we know they will have great personalities and be hard workers who need little direction. A major value we have adopted from camp is the desire to “give back”. We want Third Space Brewing to be leaders in our community and to do that, we need to play a part in lifting up our fellow community members.

We started our Give 20 program to do just that, but we are always looking for other ways to “give back”. The Give 20 program specifically is focused on giving organizations a mouthpiece to share their story through Third Space. We dedicate an evening to the organization so they can help gather their own supporters and seek out new supporters to learn about the organization while also raising some funds for their efforts. We donate 20% of our beer sales from these evenings back to the organization.



We have chosen to focus our giving on areas that are important to our team. We chose Youth Development and Homelessness initiatives. Youth Development was a clear choice given Kevin and my history at camp. We have supported organizations like Minikani itself, Camp Kindred, and art programs for city youth, etc.

Our staff chose Homelessness because our brand is based on the idea that “you have your home, you have your work but everyone needs a Third Space,” and you can’t have that third space if you don’t have a first space, a home. In the future I see us building even further on that theme of helping people enjoy their “third space” by making sure they are secure in both housing and employment.



We have also recently launched a partnership with Black Leaders Organizing for Communities (BLOC) to assist in the Black Lives Matter Movement. Stay tuned for more information on where that partnership is going once we are able to start gathering again in larger groups to have meaningful conversations about important issues. For now we have pledged to donate to BLOC over \$3,000 in sales from the Black is Beautiful collaboration beer we recently launched.

We are always looking for great organizational partners and we know that Minikani alumni are out there working for great causes. Please reach out to us if you have an organization that could be a good fit. You can learn more about the Give 20 program at [www.thirdspacebrewing.com/donations](http://www.thirdspacebrewing.com/donations)



## Uncommon Phobias

Have you experienced more fear and anxiety lately? It’s only natural to have some fears, like being afraid of venomous snakes and poisonous spiders. Phobias, on the other hand, are defined as excessive fears which are out of proportion to the actual danger they present. Here are some uncommon phobias:

- ◆ **Arachibutyrophobia** – fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of your mouth.
- ◆ **Dinophobia** – fear of dizziness or whirlpools.
- ◆ **Deiphophobia** – fear of dining and dinner conversation.
- ◆ **Hypengyophobia** – fear of responsibility.
- ◆ **Porphyrophobia**, - fear of the color purple.
- ◆ **Bromidrosiphobia** – fear of having an unpleasant body odor.
- ◆ **Blennophobia** – a fear of slime.
- ◆ **Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia** is (ironically) a fear of long words.



# MAC Foundation

By Chris Fink

To clearly articulate what the MAC aims to accomplish and how it does so, the MAC Board created the MAC Foundation graphic below. Based on previous survey data and board discussion, the MAC Foundation graphic is not necessarily new information, but instead orients the alumni community toward a shared direction and purpose.

Read clockwise, the diagram answers the question: "Why do we do this activity?" Read counterclockwise, it answers, "How do we achieve our mission?" This document will serve as a beacon for our work moving forward as we engage Minikani alumni in fellowship and service opportunities.



**MISSION:** Through acts of fellowship and service, the Minikani Alumni Community strives to honor our past experiences, support current summer programming, and preserve Minikani traditions for the future.

**WHY WE EXIST**

The Minikani Alumni Community exists

- to create and strengthen connections among Camp alumni of all ages and
- to facilitate a partnership between Camp and its alumni.

Therefore, we primarily focus on Minikani alumni, but also serve current staff and seek to enrich the experience of campers.

**EXISTING ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES**

- Campership support
- Fundraising for staff needs & requests
- Summer staff recognition
- Newsletter
- Website
- Holiday Party
- Dinner Around the World
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) engagement

**WHAT NEEDS TO BE IN PLACE FOR US TO BE SUCCESSFUL**

- Clear two-way communication with Camp.
- Camp investment / involvement in alumni engagement activities.
- Access to Camp alumni.
- Alumni are aware of and value an alumni community.
- Programming that meets the needs of diverse alumni groups.

**PRIORITIES**

- Alumni Community Building Events
- Member Recruitment
- Summer Staff Engagement
- Fundraising