

LOVING WAHANOWIN

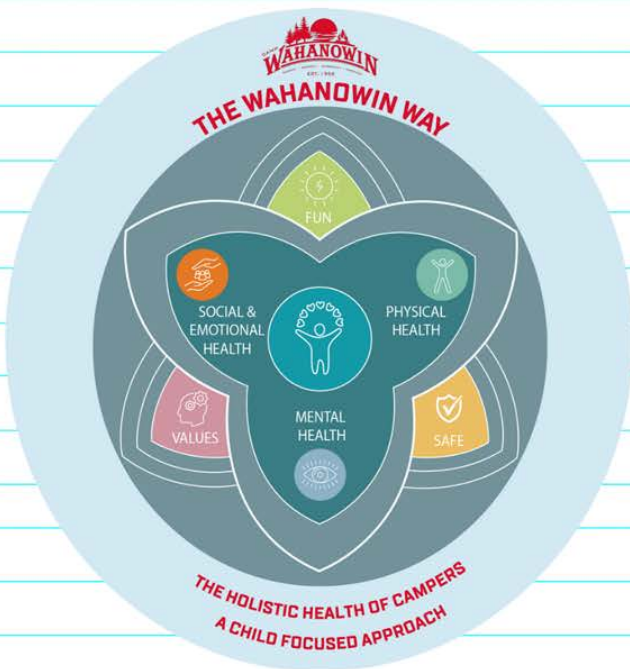
Our Child-Focused Approach

There is no greater love than a parent's love for their child. We know this as parents ourselves. Our two families are blessed with four children who we live and breathe each and every day. We have this internal instinct to do everything we can to ensure they are healthy, safe, and are given every opportunity to become the most amazing people.



One of the most emotional days for us as Directors is Arrival Day. One by one the campers arrive with the biggest smiles on their faces. We are overwhelmed by the trust that families place in us to care for their child as if they were our own while they are at camp.

Each child is unique. It's our job to provide a positive environment for all campers to develop freely and discover who they are. That is the beauty of camp, and we get the honour and opportunity to support each child in their discovery in a very intentional and meaningful way. We call it the 'The Wahanowin Way.'



Our Vision at Wahanowin is to create a camp community that inspires our campers to become competent, confident and compassionate leaders, and to contribute to the world in a positive way. We live this through our Mission and our Values and use our child-focused approach that looks at the holistic health of our campers. So, what does it mean?

To build a solid cabin, you need a good foundation. Our foundation at Wahanowin is three-fold. It consists of our Vision, Mission, and Values, as well as Safety and, most importantly, FUN! Once that foundation has been laid, through things like camp policy and procedures, staff training, evaluation and programming, we are able to focus on each child's physical, mental and social/emotional wellbeing.

As the old adage says, if you don't have your physical health, you don't have anything! The physical wellbeing of our campers is paramount and means having exceptional physicians and nurses at our Health Centre to care for our kids. It means teaching our campers how to paddle, climb, and swim, so they gain the fundamental movement skills to allow them to be active for life. It means aiming to serve our campers nutritious, well-balanced meals with a stocked salad bar and 2 soups provided at lunch and dinner. We all know, we are what we eat, which is why we are also exploring the future creation of a sustainable farm to table program at camp! And let's not forget hygiene! Ensuring our campers are changing their dirty socks and brushing their teeth is no easy task! But it's important we all do this at camp.



According to the Canadian Mental Health Association approximately 1 in 5 children and youth in Ontario suffer from mental health challenges. We support our campers Mental Health at camp. Through our Mental Health Support Team, we provide additional pre-camp training for our staff and have recently developed an enhanced system where our campers check in to let us know how they are doing. We are also very mindful of the incredible highs of camp and know the importance of embracing the quiet times for kids (and staff!) to decompress at Rest Hour and offer opportunities to engage in activities such as yoga, nature walks, gardening etc.

Finally, there is the social/emotional wellbeing of our campers. If you've never done it before, living with 10-14 friends under the same roof is the best part of camp but can certainly be the most challenging at times. It's also where kids have the opportunity to learn and grow the



most! From cabin circles to pre-camp training for staff on bullying and social dynamics, knowing what is happening in every cabin and with every child from a social/emotional perspective is our job!

A summer at camp comes and goes in the blink of an eye. On the last day of camp, we are able to reflect on every camper's journey as they hop onto the bus teary eyed – thinking about the summer that has come and gone. We reflect on what they have achieved, what they have learned, how they have grown, and the smiles we have shared. Of course, we reflect on the highs and lows each and every summer. However, for us as Directors, what is most important is that we are able to say that we have loved every child as if they were our own.



We truly love our jobs and we have so much love for Wahanowin and our campers. How could you not?

Until next time,

Elijah and Tia

