CRYSTAL LAKE CAMPS

REFLECTIONS OF LOVE

2021-2026

STRATEGIC PLAN
INTRODUCTION

Crystal Lake Camps’ marked our 70th year of operations in 2019, and as at any milestone, the Trustees and staff were naturally discussing various aspects of our future and preparedness for our next organizational steps. Instead of just addressing these issues piecemeal, we began preparing ourselves for our next 70 years of programming and impact. We started this process by undergoing a strategic planning process in 2020 to gauge where our constituents would like to see us focus our efforts throughout the next five years.

Out of hundreds of responses, two areas of interest came into clear focus: a desire to continue to see our summer youth programs thrive, and a desire to see more programming that was suitable for adults and families. From that, the base-line plan contained in this document was developed as our way to guide Crystal Lake Camps’ way forward in meeting these needs, and we look forward to your continued engagement with us as we look at ambitious - but needed - steps.

There is a wealth of gratitude that the organization has for all our participants - campers, staff, alumni, Trustees, Ski & Outdoor Center guests, volunteers, and more. We hear from all of those - and more - of the value our programs bring into their lives. And as Mrs. Eddy tells us in Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (pg. 3), “Action expresses more gratitude than speech.” These plans are a very real way for us to put into action the gratitude we have for the past 70 years of bringing to life our motto, “Reflections of Love.”
MISSION
Cultivating individual and collective growth in Christian Science through living, playing, and learning in a natural setting with a global family.

VISION
Empowering campers and staff to bless the world through their understanding of Christian Science

VALUES
1. Christian Science
2. Family
3. Hospitable/hospitality
4. Teamwork
5. Responsibility/Resourcefulness
6. Philos/Agape
While we will not go into the detailed history of Crystal Lake Camps here, the organization has been in operation continually since 1949, always dedicated to serving young attendees of Christian Science Sunday Schools. Our key historical moments include:

- **1949**: CLC’s first summer, opened by Charles & Katharine Alford as a family business
- **1971-72**: The first winter with regular ski operations
- **1984**: The non-profit corporation Crystal Lake Camps Inc. was founded that assumed ownership of only the Christian Science-based programming of CLC. (No facilities, property, or operations outside of camp were included)
- **2003**: CLC took on a $1.2M mortgage in order to acquire the property & facilities from the Alford family
- **2014**: CLC purchased the Ski & Outdoor Center operations from the Alfrords, thus bringing all CLC-related operations under single ownership for the first time since 1984
- **2017**: The mortgage was repaid in full and retired.
WHERE WE ARE

The above history helps to illustrate an important point for Crystal Lake Camps in terms of where we are today: because it is not always widely understood that starting in 1984, Crystal Lake Camps and the Crystal Lake Ski Center were totally separate businesses, and the Camp did not own the property and facilities - the Alford family did. While the Alford family played a majority role in the operations of both, the reuniting of them under the non-profit corporation, and the taking on of significant debt to acquire the property in the early 2000’s was a critical step. Being able to retire that debt in the late 2010’s is really what has positioned CLC to be able to move forward.

We also need to touch on the fact that this strategic planning process took place while two major issues were underway: the Covid pandemic and the increasingly restrictive nature the USA government is treating individuals coming from outside the country. This second aspect is important because it materially affects CLC’s programs, given that we have had a 50% international presence for many years, and it is one of our programming keystones.

While these two aspects play a critical component at this moment in time, we also clearly understand that over the long-term, they will not. So our plan is intended to take these into consideration while not allowing them to dissuade us from needed improvements. Gratefully, the new ultra-high speed internet we installed in 2020 has made our outreach through Virtually CLC programming able to consistently reach all corners of the globe, and we are looking to build on its success as part of the new plan.

So here, at the start of 2021, CLC is ready to embark on our next 70 years, and with your engagement with us, we are eager to see this unfold!
Strategic Objectives:

- Maintain a strong youth program.
- Successfully engage the increasing amount of adult interest in programming.

Strategic Focuses:

Under these four broad categories, our Trustees and year-round staff are focusing on a set of strategies, tactics, and tasks in order to meet and exceed the desires expressed by our constituencies, and we are excited to undertake this process!

1. PROGRAMMING
How are we responding to improving our programs as constituents have asked?

2. PEOPLE
What staffing areas need to be addressed to ensure proper and enthusiastic year-round and seasonal staffing levels?

3. FACILITIES
How can we address the large amount of infrastructure work, given how little has been done in 60 years to the CLC site?

4. FINANCES
How can CLC afford all of this and become more financially sustainable?
PROGRAMMING

STRATEGY
Operate strong Christian Science-based programming that includes all ages, all income levels, and from all locations in the world. Programs other than summer youth camp are known to warmly include non-CS family members.

TACTICS
A. Maintain a strong summer youth-specific program; maintain a large international camper proportion.
B. Offer 5-8 non-summer programs - as a mix of in-person and virtual programming - that meet the spiritual growth needs of participants, regardless of age.
C. Create new, and broaden existing, partnerships with CS foundations and groups, churches, and non-CS organizations (for the Ski & Outdoor Center) to establish strong community ties that help to drive participation in CLC events.

FOCUS 2

PEOPLE

STRATEGY
Develop enthusiastic employees and a strong company culture so CLC is known as a great place to work.

TACTICS
A. Strengthen our year-round and seasonal staff with professional development opportunities so CLC offers the best possible programming.
B. Strengthen our company culture to foster clear communication and strong collaboration between the staff members, Trustees, and between staff and constituents (campers, parents, alumni, & donors).
C. Continue to provide above-average pay for the staff in order to attract and keep top talent.
D. Deepen alumni engagement to enthusiastically support CLC in various rental events.
FACILITIES

STRATEGY

Develop a campus master plan to guide investment in order to position CLC for long-term program achievement.

TACTICS

A. Continue with our Adirondack-like building style.
B. Establish a long-term plan for capital investment for building renovation and rebuilds.
C. Establish safe and future-proofed infrastructure (septic, electric, other utilities). Bury above-ground electric, phone, and fiber lines.
D. Maintain Laughlin Lodge and Alford Hall form-factors as our core iconic buildings, though handsomely renovated.
E. Ensure comfortable adult-focused housing that accommodates seasonal adult staff and year-round adult/family program and rental uses.
F. Establish an appropriate office space for our year-round employees that is inviting to guests and facilitates strong intra-staff collaboration.
G. Renovate or establish new, CS Nursing and Practitioner settings to appropriately support programming.

FINANCES

STRATEGY

Strengthen CLC’s finances for long-term sustainability.

TACTICS

A. Growing our development activity in both numbers of donors and large dollar donors.
B. Grow the endowment so it covers annual site maintenance costs (non-capital) and our internal financial aid offerings.
C. Partner with other organizations on programming in a way that attracts new donors.
D. Maintain modest-enough program pricing that encourages a full scope of participants and not just those of financial means.
How are we living out our organizational values?

CLC’s vision, “to empower campers and staff to bless the world through their understanding of Christian Science” could hardly have more applicability to our world today. With political and economic disparities seeming to only grow in our world, what CLC aims to put into practice with our programs is designed to bring healing and an improved understanding of each persons’ place in the world.

So this plan is needed because CLC isn’t really about the camp program. The program is a means to deliver opportunities for increased harmony. The constituent feedback in our planning process repeatedly touched on this aspect. That while CLC is fun, as it should be, it’s really the bigger interest in seeing the innate love and devotion to Christian Science in each of us, and the healing work for both individuals and collective groups through the practice of Christian Science, that drives us.

Building a strategic plan is always a balancing act. We think of it like a map for going on a road trip: it provides direction, focus, and provides measurable outcomes, but also can illuminate side-roads that may have exceptionally interesting sights but are not, at least for the moment, the intended direction to take. So in gathering our constituent feedback for this plan, we heard the two primary focuses noted earlier: maintain a strong focus on our summer youth programming, and provide for an improved campus, especially in order to be properly hospitable to adults.

Maintaining a focus on our youth program entails a two-fold need: appropriately honoring the program’s foundation and core, while anticipating future needs and crafting the way there. For both of these foci, we are deeply grateful for the bursts of capital investment in our site in the past 20 years, yet acknowledge that our aging infrastructure, particularly with utility lines and larger-scale buildings and group settings, have been largely ignored. As a result, this plan may seem heavy on site-related work, but doing so now will provide for a lasting ability for the CLC campus to maintain its ability to deliver sound programming for youth, as well as provide for better adult engagement and year-round site use for both Christian Science focused, as well as non-religious programming through our Outdoor Center.
At the completion of this plan, our vision for what Crystal Lake Camps will be essentially, an organization that continues to provide strong programming which meets the spiritual, developmental, and learning needs of our campers, staff, and guests. And is an organization that is poised and healthy to continue for another seventy years.

And all of that is accomplished with a deep and conscientious embrace of Christian Science. This means understanding, and daily practicing in the knowledge of God as Love and Principle. God as described through the Bible loves his creation, and Christian Science helps truly illustrate that what idea looks like as manifest through daily activity in people’s lives. CLC’s programming is one way that this happens and baked into the programming is this process of nurturing individuals’ spiritual growth and learning – and that is what we continue to strive to see in our company.

What is the vision we have for ourselves?

—Christian Science Hymnal, No. 218