Table of Contents

Letter from the Director ..................................... 3
Camper Highlight ............................................ 4
Staff Highlight ............................................... 6
Volunteer Highlight ......................................... 8
Donor Highlight ............................................. 10
Summer Camp Staff & Volunteers ....................... 14
Camp Royall Wish List ..................................... 16
Year-Round Camp Opportunities ....................... 17
You Can Help ................................................. 18
Scholarship Donors ......................................... 19

CAMP CHRONICLE

The Camp Chronicle is published by the Autism Society of North Carolina for campers, parents, supporters, and the counselors and professionals who work with Camp Royall.

Content & Photos: Sara Gage, Kristian Page & MaKia Aikens
Editor: Molly Edmonds | Graphic Designer: Erika Chapman

For more information, contact:
Camp Royall
250 Bill Ash Road, Moncure, NC 27559
P 919-542-1033 | F 919-542-6343
camproyall@autismsociety-nc.org
www.camproyall.org

5121 Kingdom Way, Suite 100 • Raleigh, NC 27607
919-743-0204 • 800-442-2762
www.autismsociety-nc.org
Greetings, Campers, Families, and Friends of Camp Royall,

It is always my pleasure to write to you after completing another successful summer at Camp Royall. These last two summers have brought us challenges we never knew we would have to face but have also brought us such joy and celebration at a time when we needed it more than can be imagined. While we have been living through an historic pandemic, I am proud that at Camp Royall, we have been able to provide a calm place of refuge during this particular storm. Summer 2021 was our 25th summer here at Camp Royall and ASNC’s 50th time running a summer camp program. I feel so very grateful to have been a part of 25 summers at Camp Royall and am in awe of the amazing folks who started our camp 50 summers ago. What is more exciting than how we have grown over the years is the great potential ahead of us as we look toward the future.

This summer we operated at a reduced capacity again and had many challenges facing us along the way, but we headed into summer with the same energy and enthusiasm as always and knew we were fortunate to run summer camp again this year. During our 10 weeks of summer camp, we served 224 campers, ages 5-73, from 44 counties across the state of NC.

Throughout the summer, campers had fun while learning new skills and trying activities for the first time. To make camp happen this summer it took 80+ staff members and volunteers, including 3 former campers. One of our former campers, Grant Clark, worked at camp this summer as a residential counselor and he talks about helping campers have their “best week ever” on page 6. Nithi Vechalapu has volunteered with us for years, which is hard to believe given she is only 14; check out the story about this phenomenal young person on page 8. We often have siblings attend camp together and this summer we had several sets of twins attend the same week! It was super fun to be able to serve them and their families, and you’ll find a story about Bryan and Ryan on page 4.

We are so fortunate to have so many generous donors who make camp a reality for many of our campers every summer. NC Solar Now (page 10) has become a valued contributor to Camp Royall with their recent donation of solar panels and their ongoing partnership with the Autism Society of North Carolina. We owe a debt of gratitude to all of our supporters for making campers’ dreams come true; see page 19 for a list of these amazing people.

Please be sure you take notice of the great opportunities for you to get involved at camp all year long. Check out page 17 for more info on our year-round programs, and we hope to see you at camp soon!

With much camp love and “Enthuuuuusiasm,”

Sara Gage, Camp Royall Director
For first-time campers Bryan and Ryan, their week at Camp Royall deserved a gold medal!

The 17-year-old twins’ time at Camp Royall coincided with the Tokyo Olympics, and Bryan said he pretended that everything he did at camp was part of the Summer Games. When he was on the hayride, he pretended he was following racing cyclists. When he was in the pool, he was competing in water polo and water volleyball events. When he was playing basketball, he was playing for the U.S. team. And when he answered a few questions about his time at camp, he was talking to a news reporter!

Bryan said his counselor Megan was perfect for his week at Camp Royall, because she was “nice, smart, and athletic,” which meant she was able to keep up with his Olympic performances, but he loved all the people he had met. “They make me feel interesting,” he said. “I wish I could stay here forever.”

While Bryan pursued athletic events, Ryan deserved a medal in creativity, according to Activities Director Bri Harris. “He’s very good at anything artistic,” she said. “He likes Creative Connection and coloring. He also really, really loves the swing in the gym. Yesterday, I was pushing him and he just had a big smile on his face the whole time.”

For Bryan and Ryan’s mother, Shari, those smiles meant everything. “Ryan is very quiet and shy, and he’s not a big smiler,” she said. “In the pictures from the week, we saw some genuine smiles on this kid’s face. I know he had a great time.”

Bryan and Ryan are very different, according to Shari, and she said Camp Royall was able to provide an amazing week for both, with opportunities to make friends, increase independence, and have fun. “Their expectation was to be like their other siblings, who have had a chance to go to camps,” she said. “They’ve heard about exciting things like ziplining and hikes and playing with friends. That’s exactly the experience they got, and it was wonderful to see that.”

Bryan and Ryan are both gold medalists at Camp Royall, and we hope to see them again!
Camp Royall is by far the best experience my son has had when it comes to camps. No other place has the expertise to make it an enjoyable activity.

Camp Royall is my home away from home. It has been a wonderful experience and I have met such wonderful people.

[counselor]
Grant Clark first attended Camp Royall in 2012 as a camper. That summer, he made a decision that he would return one day as a counselor. This year, he fulfilled that promise.

“It’s been really special seeing the other side of things, to see how much effort goes into making sure that these campers have an amazing week,” he said. “I had an incredible counselor who made that week really special for me, and now I’m doing activities with the campers that I remember my counselor doing with me.”

Grant’s favorite activity when he was a camper was boating. He made friendships that summer that have lasted to this day.

“I met so many amazing guys that summer, and now I’m meeting incredible campers,” Grant said. “I’ve had a really special bond with every single one of my campers. Maybe it’s because I’m on the spectrum like they are, but we’re able to bond over shared interests and form a friendship.”

Camp Director Sara Gage agreed that Grant has created special bonds with his campers. “Grant made very meaningful connections with his campers. He’s always willing to go above and beyond to ensure his campers have a great week.”

While Grant worked hard to ensure that campers had their “best week ever,” he also had fun. “This job is awesome;” he said. “Getting to spend time outdoors is always nice, but then you get to make connections, not just with campers, but with the directors and your fellow counselors. It’s really something I’ve never experienced before.”

Grant is a student at Queens University of Charlotte, where he’s majoring in archeology and minoring in Latin. He hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in archeology and work in Rome, Italy one day. Still, he’s willing to make the flight from Rome to Camp Royall.

“If I could have my way, I’d be working here every summer for the rest of my life,” he said.

We hope to welcome you back for many more years, Grant!
My son always enjoys going to camp and participating in all the activities and meeting new friends. Camp Royall allows him to feel independent and get a much needed break from being home.
At the age of 14, Nithi Vechelapu is already a veteran Camp Royall volunteer. She’s volunteered at camp since she was in the fourth grade!

Nithi was introduced to Camp Royall by a teacher at her school who ran Project Unify, a club which brings together students with and without intellectual disabilities. Nithi participated in the club, accompanied athletes to the Special Olympics, and was invited to help out at camp.

Her duties over the years have included working in the office, setting up activities, preparing for arts and crafts, and taking photos. This year, Nithi was especially excited to help go through the pictures and prepare scrapbooks.

“I like volunteering because I get to try new things and have new experiences,” Nithi said. “It’s been great to take the pictures and see the campers having fun.”

Nithi is also helping to educate her community through her volunteer work. “I want others to know what people with autism are like so they understand. I tell people that Camp Royall is a super friendly environment where everyone is so supportive.”

Nithi credits Camp Royall with helping her develop better communication skills.

“When I started, I was very shy,” Nithi said. “It was hard for me to talk to other people. In arts and crafts, the campers and the counselors would talk to me. Everyone was so nice, and now I can talk to all sorts of different people. Camp Royall gave me that courage to talk to more people.”

Nithi believes that helping out with a variety of tasks will help her academically, as well: “I used to be shy about asking questions in class, but now I have to ask questions about my work. I’ve learned how to ask good questions, and I think it will help me ask questions more confidently in high school.”

In addition to her volunteer work, Nithi loves sports, dance, and painting. Her current favorite subject is science.

We are so grateful to Nithi for all of her help this summer, and we know she has a bright future ahead!
Our daughter LOVED LOVED LOVED camp. We could tell she felt really proud of herself! She came home with lots of communication about what she did and her friends.

“Camp is a place of growth for us as staff as well as the campers.”

[Counselor]
“Autism affects our community, and we’re all in this together. Our support of the Autism Society of North Carolina supports the entire community.”

NC Solar Now’s mission is to help North Carolinians save money on their power bills while helping the environment, and that’s exactly how they’re helping Camp Royall. NC Solar Now donated solar panels and installation to Camp Royall, and the money saved by the system goes directly back to supporting camp.

In addition to donating the solar panels and the installation, NC Solar Now will make a donation to the Autism Society of North Carolina for every sale made. They are also a sponsor of many of our events, including the Camp Royall Classic golf tournament and the Triangle Run/Walk for Autism. At the Triangle Run/Walk for Autism, more than 20 NC Solar Now staff served as course marshals to keep the event safe.

This summer, representatives from NC Solar Now hosted a ribbon-cutting for the solar panel system at camp. Participants had a chance to learn about renewable energy and then enjoy ice cream served by NC Solar Now!

“We’re proud and happy to be a sponsor of the Autism Society of North Carolina,” said Director of Operations Karl Stupka at the event. “Autism affects our community, and we’re all in this together. Our support of the Autism Society of North Carolina supports the entire community.”

NC Solar Now is excited to be our long-term partner, and we are excited for all we can do together! Thank you to NC Solar Now for your support and for helping Camp Royall go green!
We love Camp Royall. The training that you require of your staff allows parents to relax and actually take a break physically and mentally.
Camp Royall is a gift to our son and to our family! This was his first time attending, and we are so grateful for the incredible experiences he had. The staff is top-notch, led by stellar leadership. Our son made life-long friends and memories. Camp Royall is a truly special place.

Between meeting incredible campers, gaining new skills, and enjoying all the camp activities, being at Camp Royall has been a life-changing experience!

[counselor]
Very well organized and phenomenal staff! It provided a much needed respite and our son was able to do things with camp that I, myself would be hesitant having him try. (Roasting marshmallows, boat rides, and hayrides)

"I have learned and grown so much because of camp. I’m so thankful for the opportunity to work in a place where everyone is celebrated for who they are."  
[counselor]
2021 Summer Staff

Camp Director: Sara Gage [25]
Assistant Director: Kristian Page [9]
Program Coordinator: MaKia Aikens [4]
ASNC Property Manager: David Yell [30]
Property Management Executive: Ann Kastner [2]

Facility Staff:
Ricky Sampson [16]
Ed Wolfram [12]
Tristan Wolfram [6]
Tessa Yell [3]
Malachi Levy [3]
Ned Weeks [3]
Mike Carter [2]
Bailey Jones [2]
Caroline Murrell [2]
Jadelyn Robles [2]
Treasure Aikens
Mason Bae
Alex Blackburn
Isabelle Blackburn
Leland Carson
James Cotton
Alanna Davis
Julia Jett
Landon Johnson
Amanda Miller
Erik Peterson
Frank Wagoner

Activity Directors:
Amaris Smith [6]
Maddy Webber [4]
Pieter Westerbeek [4]
Bri Harris
Cassidy Montgomery
Natalie Womble

Counselors:
Rico Thorpe [9]
Rachel Galbraith [4]
Gabby Lardizabal [2]
Rebekah Williams [2]
Zachary Briggs [2]
Claudia Bare
Hali Bernstein
Carly Bierer
Megan Blade
AJ Bonetti
Kristen Branigan
Hannah Cameron
Grant Clark
Jazmin David
Amber Deveaugh
Gargi Dixit
Shereeda English
Zahra Goins
Derek Hernendaz-Martinez
Kelsey Hiscock
Savannah Johnson
Kayla Keegan
Zoey Lloyd
Grace McGuire
Tyler Osborne
Isabella Russo
Emily Siddoway
Kellum Thomson
Ori Wilson

Camp Royall Facility Manager: Tyler Jenkins
ASNC Senior Director of Operations: Kate Hall [11]
ASNC Operations Accounting Coordinator: Angela Mattison [6]
[] indicates how many summers spent working or volunteering

Expert Admin Assistants:
Cassie Fraser-Ball
Liliann Vigil

Jack of all trades:
Delaney Burns [5]
Isabelle Dewitt [7]
Marian Easler [5]
Nikeeta Giddings [5]
Sybil Sue Strivelli [3]
Jen Wildes
Sierra Wyse

Nurses:
Tina Harris [10]
Katie Zimmerman [4]
Danielle Spivey [2]
Alison Payne
Extraordinary Volunteers:
We want to recognize those who so generously gave their time to support us through many tireless hours of volunteer work. Your dedication and support was inspirational and very much appreciated!

Julian Ballen
Ella Boeke
Katie Kinkade
Maggie Powell
Ryan Steinberg
Nithi Vechalapu
Ethan Wildes

Trainers and Consultants:
We are extremely grateful to friends of Camp Royall from various parts of the autism community who gave their time and expertise to educate us and guide us throughout the summer so that we might serve our campers with the highest level of care possible.

Erica Brown
Stephanie Burke
Michelle Christopher
Isabelle Dewitt
Denise Dixon
Marian Easler
Lesley Fraser-Ball
Wykia Macon
Dylan Matthews
Anna Morgan
Michelle Scatamacchia
Liliann Vigil
Camp Royall Wish List

If you want to support Camp Royall through material donations, we would be grateful to receive the items below. For your convenience, we have also created an Amazon list: [https://a.co/6nqcAge](https://a.co/6nqcAge)

**Arts & Crafts Wishes:**
- Glue/glue sticks
- Scissors (of all sizes)
- Paint (fabric paint, tempera paint, face paint, watercolors, finger paint)
- Painting supplies (brushes, small paint containers, watercolor paper, canvas)
- Pipe cleaners
- Glitter
- Beads (not too small) and plastic string for beading
- Noise-canceling headphone
- Sensory toys
- Chewie tubes
- Construction paper
- Googly eyes
- Plain white T-shirts of all sizes (youth small- adult 4XL)
- Tie-dye Supplies
- Dry-erase markers (thin)
- Sharpie markers
- Markers
- Blue painter’s tape
- Cardstock (any size or color)

**General Program Wishes:**
- Musical instruments
- Pool toys
- Gym equipment (yoga balls, tumbling mats, balls)
- Board games (new or like-new)
- Books (new or like-new)
- Coloring books (new or like-new)
- DVDs (new or like-new)
- Ziploc baggies (sandwich-size and gallon-size)
- Bubble solution
- Toilet paper
- Liquid hand soap
- Shaving foam
- Hand sanitizer
- Baby wipes
- Clorox wipes
- Laundry detergent
- Power strips
- Digital timers
- Charging cords (old Apple chargers, lightning chargers, Android, USB plugins)
- Velcro dots
- Flashlights
- Night lights (and bulbs)
- Batteries (AA and AAA and D)
- Puzzles (new or like new)
- Digital timers
- Laminating sheets (to be used in a hot laminator)
- Fishing gear (cane poles, rod and reel, bobbers, hooks etc.)
- Paddle boats
- Golf carts
- Four-wheel drive pickup truck
Camp Royall never stops! We offer programs for campers of all ages across the whole spectrum year-round. Check out our upcoming programs below – we hope to see you soon!

**Mini Camps** provide campers the chance to spend the weekend at camp, from 5 p.m. Friday to 12 noon Sunday. Campers enjoy a miniature version of our summer camp program while families benefit from respite; preference is given to campers living at home. Supervision at a ratio of 1:1 or 1:2 is provided during these weekends.

**Residential Camps** will be offered in December and January for campers of all ages. The overnight program includes a 1:1 or 1:2 counselor-to-camper ratio, based on each camper’s level of need.

**Adult Retreats** give independent adults, 18 years and older, a chance to enjoy time with friends at Camp Royall. There are 1-2 staff in cabins at night, and any new participants will be screened by camp staff to make sure they are a good fit. Participants enjoy recreational activities at camp as well as outings in the community.

**Teen Retreats** offer independent teens (ages 13-22) a chance to enjoy time with friends at Camp Royall! There are 1-2 staff in cabins at night, and any new participants will be screened by camp staff to make sure they are a good fit. Participants enjoy recreational activities at camp, as well as outings in the community.

**Teen Tuesday** offers independent teens (ages 13-22) the opportunity to learn life skills in a welcoming group setting. The group meets one Tuesday a month from 5 until 7:30 p.m.

**Adult Skills Program** is being piloted in the fall. This new program will take place two days per week in the spring and focus on recreation, leisure, and basic life skills development. 1:1 or 1:2 support will be provided for participants.

**Registration for 2022 Programs**

Online registration for the Camp Royall Summer Camp lottery will run from November 1 to January 15. Registration for all other 2022 spring programs will also open on November 1, but that registration closes on December 15, so that families can be notified in early January. After the registration period, you can apply for waitlists.

For more information or to register for any of our programs, please visit www.camproyall.org. Questions? Contact us at 919-542-1033 or camproyall@autismsociety-nc.org
How Does ASNC’s Camp Royall Change Lives?
Camp Royall is the oldest and largest camp program for individuals of all ages with autism in the world, serving more than 3,000 individuals with autism and their families a year. Camp experiences provide an opportunity for exploration, for making friends, for trying new and exciting activities, and a time for personal growth in independence and confidence. As a result, campers return home with skills once thought unattainable by their families and the ability to make a friend and be a friend.

What Are Camp Royall’s Needs?
Camp Scholarships: Providing summer camp scholarships to campers each summer is the most critical need. Due to the additional financial demands of caring for a child with autism, most families are unable to afford the $1,850 cost per week for their child to attend camp and receive the benefits of a week with specialized staff. Fundraising for camp scholarships is a year-round focus. Each year we raise close to $300,000, but it is not enough to help each family in need.

Program/Facility Donations: Providing program supplies and maintaining a 133-acre facility is expensive. In-kind and financial donations help offset these costs. Current needs include: arts and crafts supplies, sensory toys, technology items, and a pickup truck.

Planning for Our Future: As we look to the future and the growing number of children and families who depend on our services, we must expand the number of campers we are able to serve each week by providing additional sleeping facilities. We are currently assessing the costs and looking at fundraising opportunities for the future.

How Can You Help?
More than 88 cents of every dollar we raise is used for services that directly affect people with autism, and every dollar raised stays within North Carolina, helping people who live and work in our local communities. Contact Kristy White to discuss partnership opportunities that include individual gifts, named scholarships, planned giving, connections to corporations or foundations, and other opportunities to get involved.

“Camp Royall has increased my son’s confidence, independence, and willingness to try new things.”

“Camp Royall has increased my son’s confidence, independence, and willingness to try new things. I can tell that he feels valued for his contribution,” one mom said. “Camp Royall has created happy memories that will stay with him throughout his life. It gave me peace of mind, knowing that he was in a safe, loving, and supervised environment.”

We are excited about what is happening today as a result of our efforts. We’re even more excited about what can happen with your help.

Contact Information
Kristy White
Chief Development Officer
5121 Kingdom Way, Suite 100
Raleigh, NC 27607
919-865-5086
kwhite@autismsociety-nc.org
Many thanks to our Camp Royall donors.
The support of the following individuals, businesses, and foundations helped the Autism Society of North Carolina provide camp scholarships during 2021.

$50,000 & Above
Estate of Mary V. Balliet

$25,000-$49,999
Teresa and John Sears

$10,000-$24,999
BB&T Charitable Giving
Citibank Trust South Dakota
Costanzo Family Charitable Trust
Mosaic Pediatric Therapy
Premiere Communications & Consulting
Truist
Maria Costanzo
Carol and Douglas Fink
Donald Hadley
Kristen and Ron Howrigon
Lori and Gregg Ireland
Torrie and John Kline
Lorraine and Dale Reynolds
Karen Schaefer
Jill and Doug Terry
Kim and Jeff Woodlief

$5,000-$9,999
ASNC New Hanover County Chapter
ASNC Surry County Chapter
Credit Suisse
Galloway Ridge Charitable Fund
The Cooper Royall Foundation
Rebecca and Cory Bean
Meg and Gary Jack

$2,500-$4,999
ASNC Mecklenburg County Chapter
ASNC Montgomery/Stanly County Chapter
ASNC Orange/Chatham County Chapter
Raleigh Diamond
The Summer Camp Fund
Women of Fearrington
Lindsay and James Bedford
Amy and John Brien
Patrick Falvey
Heather Moore and Steven Jones
Louise and Michael Southern

Leigh and Jeff Vittert
JoAnn and Mark Wainwright

Denise and Steve Vanderwoude
Joanne Westcott and William Buccheri
Kristy and Andrew White
Susan Whitlow

$1,000-$2,499
Acorn Alcinda Foundation
Ammons Chiropractic Clinic
ASNC Buncombe County Chapter
ASNC Cleveland County Chapter
ASNC Craven County Chapter
ASNC Crystal Coast Chapter
ASNC Lincoln County Chapter
ASNC Sampson County Chapter
ASNC Wake County Chapter
Bank of America
CADCOC Construction Company
Johnston County Community Foundation
Kamm McKenzie OBGYN
North Carolina Community Foundation
The Raify Charitable Foundation
Wake Electric Membership Corporation
Womble Bond Dickinson
Stephanie Alger and Colin Woodlock
Roger Cheek
Janet and James Cozart
Karen and Michael Crow
Kimberly and Robert Cummings
Sandy Daston
Pamela Dilavore
Laura and Marc Fraioli
Leeann and Mark Garms
Heather Hankinson
Ruth Hurst and Tom Wiebe
Sharon Jeffries-Jones and Steve Jones
Laurie and Kyle Kennedy
Keryn and Kevin Maionchi
Rose Morgan
Maureen Morrell
Elizabeth and Chris Norton
Timothy O’Hara
Jim Phillips
Dawn Rohlik
Linda and Kevin Routh
Kristin and Scotty Selby
Katie and Tracey Sheriff
Nancy and Michael Smith
James Trotter

Most generous donors

Karen Schaefer
Patrick Falvey
Lorraine and Dale Reynolds
Amy and John Brien
Torrie and John Kline
Lindsay and James Bedford
Lori and Gregg Ireland

$250-$499
ASNC Alamance County Chapter
ASNC Jackson/Swain/Qualla Boundary Chapter
ASNC Pender County Chapter
ASNC Polk Autism Support Group
Knights of Columbus Operation LAMB
UNC SPARK
Jeff Alpi
Michael Azrak
Rhonda Bishop-Hazlewood
Amy Brande
Mark Ciamarra
Renee and Len Clark
John Coleman
Latorya Croney
Memory Dossenbach
Kathleen DuVal and Marty Smith
Kerri and Jeremy Erb
Christina Flake
Hal Garrison
Hollin and John Goodwin
Elizabeth and Vito Guarnaccia
Keri and Judd Hartman
Cathy Heitman
Kelly Johnson
Rachel Mallory
Ann and Jerry Moser
Sealy and Brian Nash
Trista and Eric Nelson
Nancy and Joe Nestor
Cindy and Scott Nyberg
Roxanne and James Thompson
Kim and Mark Tizzard
Becky and Tom Webb
Judy and Paul Wendler
Rex Wilson

www.camroyall.org • 19