



Out here we raise spirits.

2025 SUMMER CAMP REPORT



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ABOUT US

For 20 years, Zajac Ranch has been dedicated to our belief that no child or young adult should be excluded from the transformational benefits of a summer camp experience. Our mission at the Zajac Ranch is to develop and operate an accessible, innovative, and inclusive facility for youth with complex medical conditions, who otherwise would not have the opportunity to attend camp.

OUR VISION

Provide memorable experiences that empower campers of all abilities to participate, develop life-long skills, create lasting friendships, build independence, and have fun.

In fulfilling our Mission and Vision, Zajac Ranch is guided by the following Values:

RESPECT and appreciation for the value and diversity we each represent

INCLUSIVE opportunities that welcome all participants regardless of ability

EMPOWER through opportunities

COMPASSION empathy and concern for the well-being of others

INTEGRITY and consideration for one another

EMBRACE the possibilities

EXPERIENCE the thrill of participating



2025 CAMP SUMMARY

This summer was one to remember at Zajac Ranch. Since opening our gates in 2004, we've welcomed thousands of young people from across British Columbia and beyond — each with their own story, diagnosis, and dreams — to experience the magic of camp in an environment built for them.

In 2025, that spirit of inclusion and adventure shone brighter than ever. We were thrilled to host 395 campers representing more than 40 unique medical conditions, each discovering new friendships, courage, and confidence with the support of our dedicated staff and volunteers.

We also introduced exciting improvements around the Ranch to make camp even better — including a brand-new High Ropes Course, upgraded gym flooring and indoor pickleball courts, and new medical equipment to ensure we continue meeting

the highest standards of care and safety.

Every upgrade, every laugh, and every new memory made this summer possible thanks to our incredible community of supporters. Together, we're creating life-changing experiences — one campfire at a time.

"This camp was the first time I was able to leave my child alone, feel safe, that he is well taken care of and making new friendships with other children that are experiencing the same things navigating through life. For him to be off the grid and focus being supported outdoors and more confident is such a blessing.

I thank you to all Zajac supporters."

*– Mixed Medical Camp #2
Camper Parent*



395

Total number
of campers

40+

different medical
diagnoses



TOP ACTIVITIES

Voted by our campers,
our top 5 activities
are.....

1 HORSEBACK
RIDING /
PETTING ZOO

2 SWIMMING

3 MAKING
FRIENDS

4 ZAJAC TALENT
SHOW

5 OUTDOOR
ADVENTURE
ZONE





95%

of our campers and their families felt that they benefited from being with other campers with similar medical conditions during camp.

85%

of our campers and their families reported making new friendships and felt part of a supportive community while at camp.

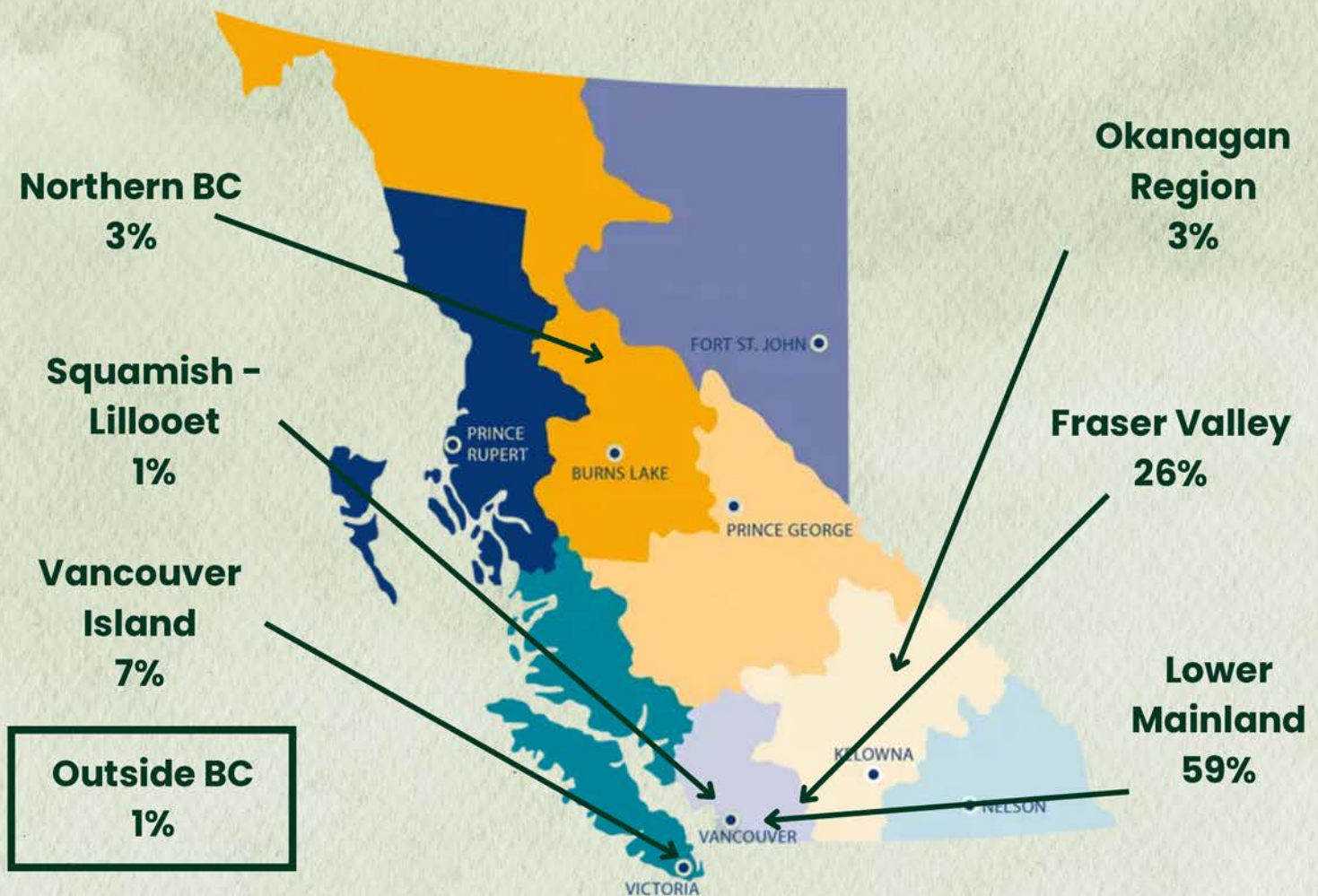
78%

of our campers and their families reported an increased willingness to try new things and challenge themselves since attending camp.

73%

of our campers and their families reported an increased confidence of their personal abilities since attending camp.

IN 2025, OUR CAMPERS CAME FROM...



Together with the following organizations, we're making camp possible for even more youth:

Arthritis Society Canada

www.arthritis.ca

Every summer, kids from across BC attend Camp BC, a fun, supportive camp for youth with arthritis and other rheumatic conditions. Campers connect with peers, learn from counsellors who share their experiences, and try new activities in a safe, inclusive environment.

Camp Choice BC

www.campchoicebc.com

Camp Choice BC empowers at-risk youth to make positive choices, build responsibility, and develop leadership skills. Through fun camp experiences, participants get the chance to "just be a kid" while gaining tools to create lasting, positive change in their lives and communities.

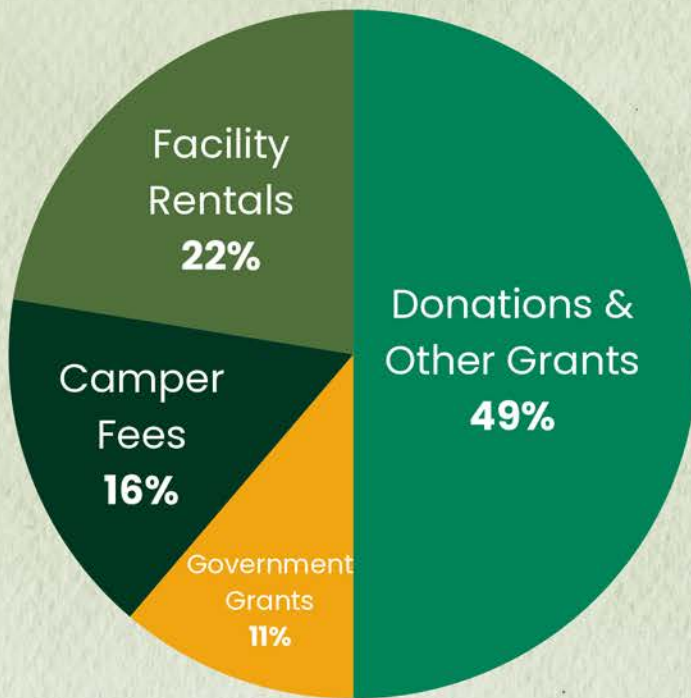
Children's Heart Network BC

www.childrensheartnetwork.org

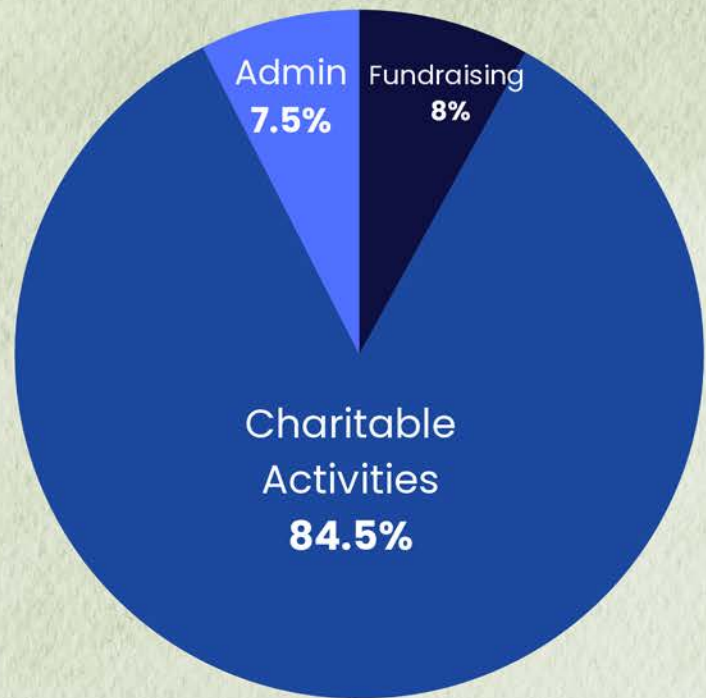
The Hearts of Gold Youth Program hosts an annual summer camp for youth ages 8-19 with heart conditions. Campers gain confidence, independence, and friendships through fun outdoor activities, all supported by 24/7 on-site medical staff for a safe and caring experience.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

REVENUE



OPERATING EXPENSES



The Ranch strives to break down financial barriers by providing subsidies through the Zajac Campership Allowance Program to help every family reduce the cost of fees by a minimum of 50% and up to 100% depending on need. Donor contributions go a long way in support of the Campership Allowance Program. None of what we do would be possible without our community support!

"Thank you to all the hard-working fundraisers and the generous donors. This camp is absolutely 'core memory' material! The staff are fantastic, and my son has an absolute blast. The variety of activities supports a "see the ability" philosophy. The kids have an opportunity to challenge themselves in a fun-filled secure supportive environment. Therapy wrapped in a beautiful bow."

– Mixed Medical Camp #1, Camper Parent

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

This year, we welcomed another outstanding team of staff to Zajac Ranch! Under the leadership of Camp Director Joshua Elliott, Assistant Camp Director Molly Symington and Nursing Director Jennifer Watt, our team brought energy, compassion, and creativity to every session — ensuring each camper experienced a summer full of laughter, adventure, and connection.

From the first day of staff training to the final closing campfire, our team went above and beyond to support one another and provide exceptional care for campers and their families. The feedback we received from parents, PSWs, and community partners was overwhelmingly positive, with many sharing that this year's staff made the camp experience truly unforgettable.

We are so proud of this incredible team for their dedication, enthusiasm, and heart — they are the reason Zajac Ranch continues to be a place where magic happens each summer.

STAFF FUN FACTS

- Our staff came from **diverse fields of study**, including **medicine, teaching, and social work**.
- **7 staff members have neurodivergency**; some were past Zajac campers themselves!
- A staff favorite activity was the **Zajac Red Carpet**, where cabins dressed up and decorated their staff member, who then performed a runway walk to showcase their new look!



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Our camp volunteers are the heart of Zajac Ranch — their time, compassion, and expertise make every camp experience possible. This summer, we were incredibly fortunate to be supported by an outstanding group of individuals who went above and beyond to ensure our campers received exceptional care and unforgettable memories.

Medical Volunteers

- **Tara Harker & Veronica Liu** – both joined us for one camp session and even brought their children to share in the camp experience.
- **Jeannette Vanderveen** – volunteered an incredible four camp sessions, offering her time and skill week after week.
- **Dr. Claire Ang Wolfe** – contributed her medical expertise for one camp session.
- **Julia Basa** – supported campers across two camp sessions.
- **Megan Dewar** – volunteered for one camp session this summer season
- **Esme Markey & Kyler Anglehart** – volunteered for one camp session to assist medical team operations

General Volunteers

- **Luke Huang** – volunteered an impressive nine individual days across various camp sessions.
- **Joe Huang** – gave a full week to Young Adult Camp #1 and returned for two more days during Young Adult Camp #2.
- **Vala Ghelichkhani** – volunteered two days during one camp session.
- **Ashley Lowrie** – as a UFV Co-op student, she completed her practicum hours and continued to volunteer an additional days – true demonstration of dedication.
- **Nicolas Mora** – in addition to his Adler University practicum, he volunteered for additional sessions contributing well beyond his required hours.

Thanks to the generous support of the **Mission Community Foundation** and the **Mission Prosperity Fund**, we were able to hire a contract nurse for a total of nine weeks during Summer Camp operations. Working in collaboration with our Nursing Director and volunteer medical staff, the nurse played an essential role in maintaining consistent, high-quality care for all campers.



OUR GOALS FOR 2026

1) Expand year-round opportunities for campers and their families through respite programs and family camps.

2) Increase the number of campers we can support in the summer, as well as expand our ability to provide 1:1 support.

3) Grow our CIT (Counselor-in-Training) programs throughout the summer, creating more leadership opportunities for campers.

"I was very anxious about sending Jack to camp. This was his first time at a sleep-away camp, let alone at an all-day camp, and I didn't know how well he would fit in. When I picked him up, he was sad to leave. He had an amazing time. He was able to make friends and developed a strong connection to his counselor which helped make him feel safe and accepted. He made me promise to send him to camp for 2 weeks next year. We are so happy with the level of support and understanding that was provided and are so grateful that he was able to have this opportunity. Also, Jack hopes to work at the ranch when he's older!"

– Autism Spectrum Disorder Camp #1, Camper Parent





CAMPER SPOTLIGHT

MEET HOLLY B.

Holly, 12, had an unforgettable experience at Zajac Ranch this summer. She attended our Autism Spectrum Camp, which is designed for kids and teens on the spectrum, where she faced her nerves and stepped into a world where she could truly be herself.

From horseback riding and climbing the rock wall to tackling the high ropes course, Holly embraced every activity with courage and excitement. She also discovered a love for swimming, enjoyed delicious meals, and even challenged herself to try things she hadn't done before. But as Holly herself said, "But the best part wasn't just the activities. For once, I felt like I could just be myself without having to 'mask' like I often do at school. Everyone was so friendly and understanding, and I felt included in everything." The inclusive, friendly, and understanding community at Zajac Ranch allowed Holly to feel fully accepted, included, and part of a supportive group.

Holly's mom shared that at pick-up, they were pleasantly surprised to learn that Holly had emerged as a leader in her cabin—something that doesn't happen at home. For the first time, Holly focused on the positive rather than dwelling on challenges or setbacks. She formed meaningful friendships and experienced genuine connection, a contrast to the isolation she sometimes feels at home. Holly found joy in simple moments, from laughing with her new friends to sharing in group activities, and she returned home with stories of camp adventures that made her parents smile.

Even with her usual separation anxiety, Holly found confidence and independence at camp, reassured by the attentive care of the staff and nurses. Her mom reflects, "It was incredible to see Holly thrive in a place where she felt safe, included, and empowered. She made friends, faced her fears, and had the time of her life." Holly's experience at Zajac Ranch helped her face challenges, build confidence, and celebrate her own achievements—lessons she will carry with her long after camp has ended.

For Holly, Zajac Ranch wasn't just a camp—it was a place of growth, joy, and belonging. She returned home with new confidence, new friendships, and memories that will last a lifetime. Holly's story is a reminder of the transformative power of a welcoming and inclusive camp community, where every camper has the opportunity to shine.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to our generous funders, dedicated staff, and external partners who worked tirelessly every year to help provide unforgettable summer camp memories. Together, we are creating space for growth, healing, and joy for youth who need it most.

ZAJAC RANCH STAFF

- Joshua Elliott, Camp Director
- Jenn Watt, Nursing Director
- Molly Symington, Assistant Camp Director
- Chris Shufelt, Head Chef
- Tim Spence, Director of Maintenance

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Arthritis Society Canada
- BC Children's Hospital (Cleft Palate, Craniofacial, & Hematology Departments)
- Camp Choice
- The Centre for Epilepsy & Seizure Education BC
- Children's Heart Network BC
- Southlands Therapeutic Riding Association (STaRS)

2025 FUNDING PARTNERS

- Andy and Barb Stashuk
- The Betty Averbach Foundation
- Bridges Family Memorial Foundation
- The Chernoff Family Foundation
- CIBC Children's Foundation
- CKNW Kids' Fund
- The Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation
- Diamond Foundation
- Face the World Foundation
- Fraser Valley Realtors Charitable Foundation
- The Grayross Foundation
- Jacqui Cohen Family Foundation
- Mission Community Foundation
- Mission Healthcare Auxiliary Society
- Mr. Lube Foundation
- The Morris and Helen Belkin Foundation
- Storrs Family Foundation
- Summer Split Foundation
- Unity for Autism
- White Spot Limited
- **We wish we could name everyone, but we're deeply grateful to all our supporters — every contribution truly makes a difference!**

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- Our **Founder & Chairman, Mr. Mel Zajac**, and our **Board of Directors** — for your vision, leadership, and unwavering commitment to Zajac Ranch.
- Our **Foundation Office Team** — for your outstanding support helping the Ranch's operations run strong.



**"EVERY CHILD DESERVES
TO GO TO CAMP.
LET'S WORK ON THAT
TOGETHER."**

**- MEL ZAJAC, FOUNDER &
CHAIRMAN**

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