

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press Contact: Jess Michaels

212.391.5208

jess@aca-nynj.org

**WHEN CHOOSING A SUMMER CAMP FOR YOUR CHILD,
MAKE SURE THE CAMP IS SAFE**

**2,400 New York day camps are unregulated by the Department of Health and
may not meet basic safety standards**

New York, NY (March 11, 2014) - New York families choosing a day camp for their child should be aware that not all summer camps are inspected by the Department of Health each year due to a loophole that exists under current New York State Law. Currently, single-purpose day camps are not required by law to follow the same rules and regulations that other summer day camps comply with in order to operate and obtain a permit from the Department of Health. This means that many of the day camps parents are choosing aren't regulated and may not meet basic safety standards.

"Many parents aren't aware that the camp they selected isn't inspected by the Department of Health and that there may be safety concerns for their child," says Ben Esposito, President of the New York State Camp Directors Association. "Families wouldn't eat at a restaurant that was exempt from a Department of Health inspection for sanitary standards. Would they knowingly send their child to a camp that doesn't meet basic safety standards?"

A single-purpose day camp refers to those camps (such as a gymnastics camp, baseball camp or basketball camp) that engage in just one non-passive recreational activity with significant risk of injury. These camps are allowed to operate without a Department of Health permit or inspection and may not meet the same strict safety standards as day camps that have two or more activities on site. The state Department of Health estimates that there are approximately 2,400 of these camps situated throughout the State of New York.

For over 30 years, outdoor day camps in New York have been licensed and inspected by the Department of Health. Shockingly, single-purpose camps remain completely unregulated. Parents should be aware that because there is no DOH permitting or inspection, there can be significant safety issues. For example, single purpose camps are not required to ascertain if their employees and volunteers are included in a sex offender registry. They are also not subjected to regular inspections by the Department of Health to ensure compliance with a wide range of safety standards including background checks of staff personnel, minimum age requirement for

counselors, proper staffing ratios, and dozens of other safeguards that protect children at other summer day camps.

“Day camps are a crucial part of our children’s development and they should be a place that is safe for children,” says Scott Ralls, President of the American Camp Association, New York and New Jersey. “Unfortunately, not all summer day camps are regulated, so parents need to do their due diligence when looking for a camp and make sure they are choosing a camp that is inspected by the Department of Health and is accredited by the American Camp Association, NY and NJ.”

For further information or to speak with a camp spokesperson, please contact Jess Michaels at the American Camp Association, NY and NJ at 212.391.5208 x1015 or jess@aca-nynj.org