

# VALKAZON

## KAREN'S CORNER

### Hello from Nakanawa!

The 106th summer of Nakanawa was fantastic! Joy, laughter, hugs, and enthusiasm filled every corner of camp - I don't think I've ever received so many warm, thoughtful hugs in just six weeks.

The Two-Week session sparkled with new and returning campers diving into Amazon-Valkyrie competitions, outdoor adventures, and overnights with s'mores. From Double Trouble to the Hoedown, and musicals like *Road Trip USA (Jr)* and *We Are the World (Int)*, every day brimmed with energy and creativity. We were inspired by Pepe's chapel talk, "*Things I Learned from a Bird*," and delighted by new menu items like chocolate chip pancakes and pineapple chicken. I'll always remember the campers' wide-eyed excitement joining their teams or linking arms for the Goodnight Song—small moments that are as powerful as the big events.

The Four-Week session was full of spirit, from Tent Row's energy to campers enjoying the Playhouse's *Hairspray*, Junior Camp's Operetta *Mary Poppins*, and Sr. Drama's *Peter Pan*. Tent Row had us laughing with their camp version of *Harry Potter*, and counselors shared inspiration from *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?*, *Strictly No Elephants*, and *Balcony People*, reminding us to be kind, inclusive, and encouraging. With new trips and an outstanding staff, the session was adventure-filled from start to finish.

Our new food service added fresh variety—campers especially loved the fruit and warm cookies! We'll be adjusting quantities and reintroducing some favorite traditions next summer.

This summer was also marked by a heavy heart due to the devastating Texas Hill Country floods—many campers and counselors were directly affected. Even as we carried this grief, our focus remained on providing a safe, joyful, and nurturing place where campers could still experience the laughter, friendship, and love that make Nakanawa so special.



I was especially moved by the dedication of the Operetta—it was both meaningful and poignant, especially since my very first Operetta as a camper was *Mary Poppins*.

Campers, counselors, and staff made this summer unforgettable. The laughter, friendships, adventures, and inspiration we shared will carry us forward, and the spirit of Nakanawa shines in every hug, smile, and cheer.

Registration for 2026 is now open for returning campers! Spaces are limited, so sign up early to secure your spot. This year, we're opening Two-Week Junior Session 1 earlier, as enrollment was just a bit short last summer.

Here's to the memories we made, the traditions we cherished, and the joy that fills every corner of camp — and we can't wait to share it all again in Summer 2026!

S'Mores Truly,  
Karen



### **Tiny McPhillips Dedication of Mary Poppins to Karen Hale**

Available on Camp's YouTube channel, watch Tiny's beautiful dedication to Karen from this year's Operetta, *Mary Poppins*. With an added history of photos from the years, marvel at Karen's journey and her everlasting impact on Camp Nakanawa.

[watch the video here](#)



## HATS OFF TO KAREN!



### Hats Off to the Wearer of Many Hats!

Director Karen Hale has a vast collection of hats – her favorite Houston Astros cap, Nakanawa caps from across the decades, equestrian event caps and one or two favorites promoting Jeep or the Lady Vols. These hats cannot compare to the many she has worn at Camp Nakanawa through the years:

- **Head Counselor**, Junior and Senior Camps
- **Head of Horseback Riding**, Junior and Senior Camps
- **Head of Sailing**, Senior Camp
- **Trip coordinator** and leader for rafting trips, cave overnights, countless hikes, Tent Row canoe trips
- **Tent Row Mama**
- **Cabin Counselor**
- **Amazon Captain**
- **Camp Photographer**
- **Swimming lane rope and war canoe race buoy placement expert**
- **Cook, dishwasher, plumbing repairwoman, wedding worker, Egypt Queen**
- **Horse wrangler, veterinary assistant, pond ice-breaker**
- **T-shirt designer and sign painter**
- **On-site 24/7 technology rescuer and consultant**
- **Loving listener, warm hugger, source of smiles and humor**
- **We could go on and on!**

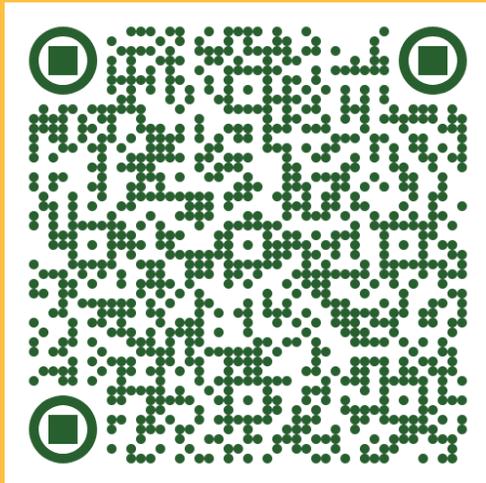
Karen's heart lives at Nakanawa, and she has unselfishly given us **37 years** of every kind of work one can imagine. Now, as she returns to Texas this October for a different life chapter, let's all tip our camp caps to Karen to say thank you, loving friend and loyal leader!

We would love for you to join in the



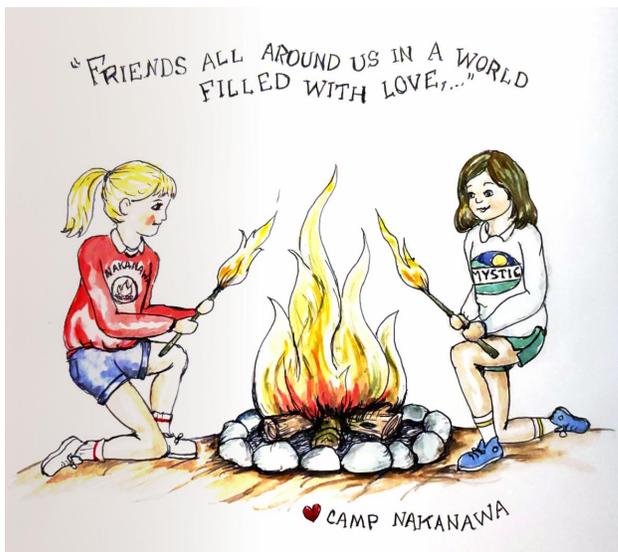
"Hats Off to Karen" Campaign, a community-wide project gathering short videos from campers, counselors, alumnae, staff, and families. All it takes is a quick clip of **you tipping off a hat and offering a message of appreciation or well wishes**. These videos will be collected and shared throughout September as part of a special celebration of Karen's years of leadership.

Sharing is easy: simply post your video on **Instagram** or **Facebook** using the hashtag **#HatsOffToKarenHale** and tag **@camp\_nakanawa** so we can find it, or send your video directly by email to [ashley@campnakanawa.org](mailto:ashley@campnakanawa.org). If you prefer, you may also ask a family member or friend to help record and submit on your behalf. Every voice counts, and we hope to see many hats tipped in Karen's honor!



All gifts made in Karen's honor by **October 31, 2025** will go to where her heart is, program enrichment for **Junior and Senior campers**: from the climbing walls to arts and crafts, on sailboats and in saddles, Nakanawa Amazons and Valkyries will joyfully enjoy your tribute. Thank you!

contribute to the Nakanawa  
Fund in honor of Karen



## Nakanawa Support for the Hill Country

We are heartbroken by the tragedy that has touched our friends at Camp Mystic, Camp Heart of the Hills, other Hunt, TX area camps and the Kerr County community. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and camps grieving the loss of beloved campers, counselors, and longtime directors, Jane Ragsdale and Dick Eastland. Their lives and

leadership shaped generations of campers, and their legacy of love and character will remain.

Since hearing this news, my first goal has been to support our own campers with compassion and care. I could hardly look at our little side campers this summer without shedding a tear, so grateful to spend July loving them and all our girls. In times like these, the loss of even one life touches every camp, because our camp community is and has always been deeply interconnected.

Through our church offering, our campers and staff contributed to the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country Camp Recovery Fund supporting camps affected. It was moving to see their generosity, and a reminder that even in grief, community and kindness bring healing.

Thank you for believing in Nakanawa. We grieve with our camp family and hold fast to our legacy of nurturing and caring for each camper. [Illustration by Margaret Matens]

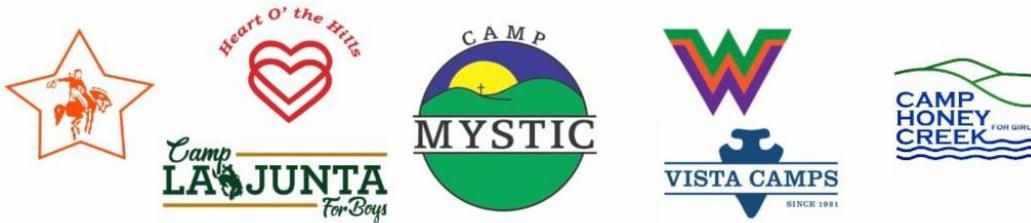
**If you would like to contribute to the recovery of these camps, we recommend the following funds:**

[Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country](#)



[Camp Recovery Fund](#)

[Friends of Camp Mystic Fund at the San Antonio Area Foundation](#)



## Thank you, Counselors - and an opportunity

Our 2025 counselor staff was fantastic! Their energy and compassion made camp come alive for our campers. We are excited that many are already making plans to join the 2026 Nakanawa Counselor Staff! The application will go live this Fall and we look forward to hearing from YOU!

**Don't want to wait until next summer to be a counselor?!?** Contact Blair Rissing to assist with Mother Daughter Weekend,



September 12-14, 2025. This is a great way for older campers and recent TRs to get a glimpse into what it is like to be a counselor. It is also a great way to get service hours for high school requirements. Contact Blair to hear about ways to help at [blair@campnakanawa.org](mailto:blair@campnakanawa.org).



### Alumnae Spotlight: Elizabeth Lewis Sankovitch (TR '77)

All of us have at least one Nakanawa touchstone. For Elizabeth Lewis Sankovitch (TR 77), Camp provided her the opportunity to commune with and appreciate the nature around her: the lake, the woods, the sound of the frogs at night. "Connecting with nature has always provided me with a deep sense of peace." Elizabeth "loved being at camp for ...

[Read More](#)



**Join Us for Mother Daughter Weekend**

There are a few spots left!

*September 12-14*

### [Register now for Mother Daughter Weekend](#)

There is still time to join us **September 12-14, 2025!** Girls aged 5-11 are invited to experience the magic of Camp alongside their mother, grandmother, or another cherished adult friend.

[details and registration](#)

Strategic Plan



2025-2027

## Strategic Plan 2025-2027 Now Available!

The Strategic Plan outlines the initiatives for Camp Nakanawa during the years 2025-2027, focusing on **enhancing programs, property stewardship, and financial growth.**

[click here to read the plan](#)



## Registration for the 2026 Session is Open

**ANNOUNCING**  
TWO 2-Week Sessions  
for Junior Camp!

**2-Week Session 1**  
(Jr. Camp only)  
May 31-June 12 2026

**2-Week Session 2**  
June 14-26, 2026

**4-Week Session**  
June 29-July 25, 2026

[Sign up for Summer 2026](#)

## 2025 Summer Reunions



TR '24



TR '90



TR '24



TR '05



TR '85

TR '20



TR '75 with gold crosses

TR '55



Receiving the gold cross for 50th year.

## Executive Director Search Update

The search committee is grateful for the many members of our Nakanawa family who have reached out, whether with interest in the ED position or to share feedback around the role and the future of Nakanawa. We've had a strong pool of candidates and appreciate their willingness to serve Nakanawa in this important capacity. We're excited to see where this search leads us and look forward to sharing future updates with all of you.

### ALUMNAE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Day Lilies and Sunshine



**Paige Landau TR10 and Bobby Kennedy** wed August 16, 2025 in Estes Park, CO.



**Laura Cummins Gleason TR14** wed Jack Crosby in Cookeville, TN On Aug 23, 2025. Seen here with Carlen Little TR14 and Madison Read TR14.



**Rachel Groves TR14** married Cole Terlip in Canmore, Alberta, Canada on Aug 23. Pictured with Virginia Dodenhoff TR14 and Caroline Perlis TR14.

## Setting Suns



### Charlotte Fox

Nakanawa alumna Charlotte Frances Fox passed away April 17, 2025. She attended Nakanawa in the summers of 1955-1958, loving all sports and excelling in tennis. She had a remarkable career in investment and securities trading and was voted an Outstanding Young Woman of America. Follow these links to read more about [her life](#) and [generosity](#).



### Alumnae Giving

Consider a monthly gift to the Nakanawa Fund.

### Nakanawa in the Know

Mother/Daughter Weekend:  
September 12-14, 2025

Service Weekend: May 15-17, 2026

2-Week Session 1 (Jr. Camp only):  
May 31-June 12 2026

2-Week Session 2:  
June 14-26, 2026

4-Week Session: June 29-July 25, 2026

Reunion Weekend: July 17-19, 2026

July and August donations were  
made  
in memory of  
Pat Prince

and in honor of  
Emily Mattern TR 05  
Carolyn Thomas Rogers  
Mary Grace Kelley

give now



**Camp Nakanawa's business hours are Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Central Time.  
Messages received outside of those hours will be answered within twenty-four hours.**

Camp Nakanawa | 1084 Camp Nakanawa Rd | Crossville, TN 38571 US

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