

# Volunteer Handbook



JOHN AUSTIN  
CHELEY FOUNDATION

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## Welcome Letter from the Executive Director

Dear ATS Volunteer:

We are honored to welcome you as a volunteer of A Thousand Summers (ATS). You join a committed group of supporters who are passionate about camp and who have dedicated their time to providing the camp experience to change lives.

By volunteering your time and your talents, you have the opportunity to make a dramatic difference in the lives of children. You serve as a vital resource for ATS, as we could not carry out our mission without the commitment of high caliber community members like yourself. We take great pride in the service of volunteers and view service as a Mentor, Trustee or Committee member as a privilege to be a part of our work with high potential youth. We hope you feel a sense of giving to others and thoroughly enjoy the impact you have made on someone else's life.

As an organization founded on volunteer efforts, we appreciate your willingness to lend time and energy to our longstanding tradition. With approximately 100 volunteers nationwide, ATS depends on the work of volunteers to support children in realizing the camp experience. As a volunteer, you represent ATS at all times regardless of your affiliations with other organizations. The guidelines included in this Handbook have been developed to maintain high standards for ATS and to assist you in your volunteer duties and in working closely with children.

Please read through this Volunteer Handbook and consider downloading it for your easy reference. It will prove to be a valuable introduction to you if you are a new volunteer and a handy resource during your time as a volunteer detailing the high standard set of guidelines that volunteers must follow in the pursuit of ATS's mission. Should you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact either one of us.

Again, thank you for serving as an ATS volunteer.

Sincerely,



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## Mission

To change kids' lives through transformative summer camp experiences.

## History

A Thousand Summers is a 501(c)(3) organization that was established in 1989 by a group of Cheley Camps alumni to honor the memory of John Austin (Jack) Cheley and help fulfill his dream of making a camping experience available to deserving youth who could not otherwise afford it. Over its 36 year history, A Thousand Summers has grown from awarding its first campership in 1990 for a child to attend Cheley Camps to funding over 1,600 camperships for children to attend thirteen accredited associate camps around the United States. These camps include Cheley Colorado Camps, Colvig Silver Camps, and Sanborn Western Camps in Colorado; Clearwater Camp in Wisconsin; Kawanhee, Kieve, Wavus, and Wohelo in Maine; Kooch-i-ching, Ogichi Daa Kwe, and Thunderbird in Minnesota; Nor'wester in Washington; and Songadeewin of Keewaydin in Vermont. Over its history, A Thousand Summers has touched the lives of over 1,600 high potential youth around the country whose families are unable to afford the cost of camp tuition, travel, and equipment expenses.

## Role of Volunteers

Volunteers continue to play a vital role in the activities of A Thousand Summers. Volunteers serve at all levels of A Thousand Summers, from governance, to direct services, to support services and in advisory capacities.

## Volunteer Expectations

### Volunteers of ATS can expect...

1. An assignment based upon interests, skills, and availability consistent with A Thousand Summers' needs
2. Orientation and training to help perform the job
3. The opportunity to work as part of a team, to contribute to the welfare of the community and A Thousand Summers, and to be recognized for volunteer contribution
4. The opportunity to give formal feedback about the ATS volunteer experience
5. Insurance for Volunteers. ATS liability insurance covers volunteers while they are acting as agents for ATS for:
  - liabilities that might incur while performing ATS duties.
  - liabilities incurred as a result of accidents while driving in the performance of the ATS volunteer assignment.
  - wrongful acts such as any breach of duty, error, misstatement, or misleading statement by any volunteer which is committed while performing official duties on behalf of ATS.

## ATS Expects Volunteers to...

1. Be realistic and candid in accepting an assignment, taking into consideration interests, skills, and availability
2. Learn the volunteer assignment by completing all required training, asking questions and staying in touch with the supervisor
3. Be professional, reliable, and above reproach in performing duties and working with colleagues and representatives of ATS
4. Follow all guidelines of ATS, observe confidentiality, and engage in appropriate public behavior at all times
5. Participate in the feedback process by letting ATS know about the volunteer experience and by giving constructive suggestions for improvement in any area
6. Develop skills as a volunteer by participating in training and professional development opportunities as they become available

## Volunteer Qualifications

ATS seeks volunteers to serve as mentors, trustees and committee members. We have a strong interest in working with others who believe in the power of the summer camp experience and want to help children gain access to it. We encourage people from all cultures and professions, and of all ethnic and educational backgrounds. Volunteering to serve on the Board of Trustees requires basic knowledge of governance and in some cases special skills like finance, fundraising, and legal, depending on the needs of the Board.

Basic requirements include:

- Must be at least 21 years of age
- Be willing to complete an application, all necessary background checks, and provide one reference
- Complete any pre-service training as required for the volunteer assignment
- Be available for required meetings
- Be willing to commit to the full term of the volunteer assignment

## Code of Conduct

Every volunteer represents ATS to the public, therefore we expect all volunteers to demonstrate behavior consistent with A Thousand Summers' values, mission/principles. Personal and professional contacts, telephone conversations, and written communications require thoughtfulness and professionalism. Respect for all, regardless of religion, national origin, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation, gender, and beliefs, is expected in all interactions. The continued success of ATS is dependent upon the community's trust and confidence in its practices, assurance of its assertive compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, and careful attention to financial controls and accountability. To that end, volunteers are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, modeling honest and legal behavior. Any illegal, dishonest or unethical conduct will

not be tolerated.

## Unacceptable Behavior

A number of behaviors are regarded as incompatible with ATS values, and therefore are considered unacceptable and prohibited while volunteers are engaged in mentoring activities:

- Unwelcome physical contact, such as inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, punching, and physical assault
- Grooming behaviors
- Conduct that exploits, denigrates, shows hostility, or aversion toward any individual
- Display of demeaning, suggestive, or pornographic material
- Known sexual abuse or neglect of a child
- Intentional violation of any local, state, or federal law
- Driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Possession of illegal substances

Any unacceptable behavior, as specified but not limited to the above, will be taken seriously by management and responded to appropriately.

All volunteer contact with the Camper (email, phone, video calls, text, in person) will be conducted with at least one parent/guardian and/or ATS staff person present. Volunteers should never be one on one with a Camper, even in virtual settings.

## Confidentiality

A Thousand Summers deals with sensitive and confidential family, camper, and donor information. All interactions with families, campers, and donors must be held in the strictest of confidence. All information, including camper applications and references, financial and data reports, Board and Committee reports, and all other non-public documents and materials, are the property of ATS and must be treated in the strictest confidence. Volunteers must follow established security policies and procedures to protect unauthorized modifications, destruction or disclosures.

To maintain appropriate confidentiality:

1. Be careful not to do or say anything that reveals a family or camper's identity
2. Do not leave visible information about the family or camper written on paper or on a computer screen or phone where others can see it
3. Do not discuss the family or camper with friends or family and take care that identifying characteristics and/or facts are not revealed
4. Do not under any circumstances share or post any information about campers
5. Do not take photos or videos of the camper
6. Do not under any circumstances discuss families, campers or donors with anyone not associated with ATS including but not limited to those associated with media

## Non-Discrimination

ATS does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and administration of its campership awards, application policies, or in connection with any other ATS-administered or sponsored activities or programs. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for our staff, campers, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients.

## Harassment

ATS is committed to a volunteer environment free from unlawful harassment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity while working on ATS business or representing A Thousand Summers within the community.

Unlawful harassment is defined as harassment based on any characteristic including race, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age 40 or over, veteran or disability status, genetic information, marital status or on any basis which would be in violation of any other ordinance or law applicable to our organization.

Volunteers are responsible for reporting any concerns regarding unlawful harassment directly to the Executive Director of ATS.

Violations of this policy will be dealt with appropriately.

Anti-Violence: ATS promotes a safe work environment for all volunteers and does not tolerate any type of violent behavior committed by or against its volunteers. Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Threatening or violent behavior committed by anyone against volunteers during volunteer hours will not be tolerated. Such behavior may include but is not limited to the following:

1. Physical injury to another person
2. Threats
3. Behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury in another person
4. Intentionally causing damage to ATS property or property of another volunteer or employee
5. Possession of weapons (for example, guns, knives, clubs, explosive devices, etc.) on ATS property or while performing ATS sponsored-activities
6. Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or domestic violence

Statements or gestures, which in any way suggest that a volunteer may engage in violent conduct, will be taken seriously by management and responded to appropriately.

Reports of statements or behavior which may violate this policy will be investigated and in as

confidential a manner as practical.

## Drugs and Alcohol

While engaged in ATS duties and in the presence of campers or their families, the use of drugs and alcohol is expressly prohibited by A Thousand Summers. It is the practice of ATS not to permit individuals who use or traffic illegal drugs, or who abuse prescription drugs or alcohol, to volunteer for A Thousand Summers.

## Smoking

Smoking, including cigarettes and vaping, of any type is prohibited when in direct contact with an ATS family and camper.

## Crisis Management

Emergencies involving an ATS camper, family or volunteer must be handled with great sensitivity, confidentiality, appropriate communications and step by step process in order to support the needs of campers, their families, volunteers, and A Thousand Summers.

In the event of an emergency or crisis, the Executive Director serves as the first contact for any situation and the director for all crisis management plans. Situations that fall into the category of an emergency include, but are not limited to, an automobile accident, suspected child abuse, a lost child in transport to or from camp, major injury or death of camper while at camp, violence perpetrated on an ATS volunteer or camper sent home for inappropriate behavior.

If volunteers become aware of or are a party to an emergency, they are required to contact 911 first if warranted, then immediately notify the Executive Director or designee to report the situation. It is not the job of volunteers to contact parents, the camp, another volunteer, or the media to explain the situation or to manage it, as facts and information become known.

## Media Inquiries

The Executive Director of A Thousand Summers, or designee, serves as the principal contact with the news media and the spokesperson for the organization. Volunteers will not participate in public interviews or release information related to ATS without the written permission of the Executive Director. In the absence of the Executive Director, or designee, or as part of a planned strategy, the Board Chair may serve as the principal contact and spokesperson with the media.

ATS, donor, and budget planning information as well as Board, staff, and volunteer information related to any activities of A Thousand Summers will not be disclosed or released to any person or public media unless it has been previously published or otherwise made public. Questions

concerning protocols for specific situations should be directed to the Executive Director.

## Volunteer Resignation

On occasion, it becomes necessary for a volunteer to resign their position with A Thousand Summers. Since ATS is highly dependent on volunteers for carrying out our activities, we ask that volunteers give us as much notice as possible so a qualified replacement can be found.

## Problem Solving

A Thousand Summers follows an “open door” guideline in order for volunteers to feel comfortable in discussing any problems, questions or concerns that may arise in the volunteer experience. ATS offers all volunteers the freedom to discuss anything they wish with the Executive Director or the Programs Director. Whenever a problem arises, it can usually be resolved by following these steps:

1. Any concern should first be discussed with the immediate supervisor who is often in a position to handle problems satisfactorily.
2. In the event a problem relates directly to the immediate supervisor, the volunteer should contact the Executive Director.

## Conflicts of Interest

Volunteers are asked to disclose any personal, business, or financial interest with any organization or individual that conflicts or appears to conflict with the best interests of ATS. At any time during the term of volunteer status with ATS, should an actual or potential conflict of interest arise between the volunteer’s personal, business, or financial interests and the interests of A Thousand Summers, volunteers will:

1. Disclose promptly the actual or potential conflict to the Executive Director.
2. Until ATS approves actions to mitigate or otherwise resolve the conflict, volunteers refrain from participating in any discussions, deliberations, decisions or voting related to the conflict of interest.

As part of the volunteer application process, volunteers may be asked to sign A Thousand Summers’ “Conflict of Interest Policy”.

## Gifts

The giving and receiving of small tokens of respect, friendship and appreciation of reasonable value (e.g., a card, flower or snack) is a natural part of many volunteer relationships established through ATS and thus is considered an acceptable and supported practice.

ATS does not condone giving or receiving gifts from or to a camper or camper’s family in excess of

\$25. This includes the purchase of equipment by a mentor for a camper. A Thousand Summers has a process in place to provide required equipment for camp either through rentals or pre-approved reimbursements for purchases. Gifts of property and receiving or giving monetary loans are also inappropriate.

Please notify the Executive Director immediately if a client offers you a gift in excess of \$25.

Volunteers who drive clients may not accept reimbursement from the camper family for mileage, gas or any other car-related expense.

## Reporting Child Abuse and Harmful Behavior

Although ATS is not a mandated reporter, ATS, consistent with its work directly with children, will report suspected cases of abuse, suicidal ideation and ideation of, or actual harm to self or others that are disclosed to volunteers. In the event a camper or camper's family member discloses child abuse or suicidal ideation or the volunteer has reason to believe that a camper is subjected to abuse or has expressed suicidal ideation, contact the Executive Director. It is not up to the volunteer to determine if abuse is taking place, but rather to alert immediately the Executive Director about the concerns so that ATS can investigate the circumstances and, if deemed reportable, report the suspected concerns to the appropriate authorities.

## Transporting ATS Campers and Families

Because transportation is problematic for some ATS families, volunteers are permitted to drive clients to assist with shopping for camp equipment or to travel to and from camp, **in very limited circumstances**. In many cases, campers and their families would not be able to participate in the camp experience without this support. Approved drivers may only drive the camper and the camper's parent (s)/legal guardian (s) in the performance of volunteer service.

In order to serve as an approved driver for A Thousand Summers, the following requirements must be completed in advance before driving an ATS camper.

1. Drivers must be approved in advance by ATS through the standard volunteer application process. This also includes completing a criminal background check and check of driving record.
2. Drivers who wish to use their private vehicles to transport ATS campers must meet all requirements outlined on the Personal Automobile Use Form and submit the form to ATS in advance of transporting ATS campers.
3. Drivers will provide a copy of their current driver's license and proof of insurance that will become part of the volunteer's confidential file maintained by the ATS Office. Drivers will have usual and customary automobile insurance coverage of at least \$100,000 per person and \$300,000 per incident, will keep this insurance in force and notify ATS of any change in coverage or in insurance companies. Drivers will provide ATS with photocopies of insurance renewal cards.
4. Drivers will complete and sign a "Driver Record Information Request" (provided by ATS) to

release the information to ATS.

ATS reserves the right to decline the services of the volunteer as a driver for traffic convictions, a record of driving accidents, insufficient insurance, an inappropriate or unsafe vehicle, or for any other reason A Thousand Summers deems appropriate. ATS may also deny driver permission if new information comes to the attention of ATS that would call into question the driver's ability to safely transport ATS campers.

ATS will maintain driving records in the volunteer's confidential file.

Approved drivers must carry proof of insurance while driving for ATS at all times. Drivers must have a working seatbelt when driving for ATS. All campers, ages 12 and under, must sit in the backseat. Drivers must follow booster seat requirements in the state in which they transport ATS campers.

In the event of a motor vehicle accident or if stopped by a law enforcement officer, while driving an ATS camper, the volunteer will fill out an Incident Report form as soon as possible and submit it to the ATS Office.