Summer Camps: **Notes on an American Tradition**

"For some lucky American children, summer means campfires with new friends, long hikes in the woods, hot days swimming in cool lakes, magical nights under starry skies. Summer camp is a cherished experience for millions of children, an American tradition with deep roots in the country's enduring romance with the great outdoors. Every year, about 26 million children attend roughly 15,000 day and overnight summer camps across the United States.

At its best, camp can offer children a chance to learn outside the classroom, drawing them from their computer screens and helping them build stronger relationships with other children, themselves and nature. For children living in poverty especially, summer camp can be a great equalizer, giving them a chance to pick up essential life skills—like swimming—often not taught in their communities. At many camps, children from diverse backgrounds forge lifelong friendships, develop a deep connection with and respect for nature and learn to work as teams to overcome big challenges. These are values our democracy desperately needs."

-From: Gay, Mara. "The U.S. Should Help Children Go to Summer Camp: Op-Ed." *The New York Times*, 2022.

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