



## Why every kid at Chateaugay feels known

Every day, Rosie (a mini aussie doodle) and I make our rounds through camp. We stop at the waterfront, arts and crafts, tennis courts, theater, everywhere. Kids light up when they see her coming.

"Hi Charlotte!"

"What's up Alex?"

"Morning Harvey!"

"Yo Blake, what's happening?"

We're greeting everyone, all day long. Asking how it's going. Checking in on the small stuff that's happening in their camp world.

And sure, these are casual Rosie visits (who the kids absolutely love), but it's more about how belonging gets built into everything at Chateaugay.

## Belonging As Infrastructure



Most camps say kids will belong. At Chateaugay, belonging is operationalized into daily practice. It's not a feeling we hope happens. It's built into how camp runs.

Leadership knows every camper by name. Not because of memory tricks or extraordinary effort, but because the entire structure of camp is designed around kids being known.

When a system is built around belonging, certain behaviors become inevitable. Name recognition isn't the goal.

It's evidence the system works.

## **What Being Known Creates For Kids**

Kids act differently when they feel seen and known.

They're more relaxed. More willing to try new things and definitely, more likely to ask for help when they need it.

Less likely to act out for attention because attention is already built in.

And with that, safety improves naturally.

When kids are known, unfamiliar behavior stands out immediately.

Changes in mood or energy get noticed early. Small issues surface before they grow so that no child can get lost in the shuffle socially or emotionally.

The culture becomes self-reinforcing when kids see that adults pay attention. Leadership isn't sitting in some office somewhere and help-seeking becomes normal, not intimidating.

These seem like rather obvious traits in a camp, but it's not always the case.

When belonging is embedded, negative behavior loses its foothold. This aligns with research-backed bullying prevention strategies (Olweus anyone?), which we'll dig into more in a future newsletter.

The peer effect matters too. When kids feel they belong, they're more likely to make others feel that way.

Seasoned campers will go way out of their way to welcome new kids because that's the culture they've come to know simply as camp.

Belonging, in the best kind of way, becomes contagious.

## **What This Looks Like In Practice**



I love walking around camp with Rosie. But these daily rounds aren't just about visibility. They're also about accessibility.

Meals, evening programs, activities, you name it, leadership is present and engaged. Quick conversations, high-fives, check-ins that feel natural. Kids know they can find help when they need it.

But it's not just leadership. Counselors know their campers deeply, starting with front-loading information before camp even begins.

Unit leaders track patterns and notice changes. Peer culture reinforces that everyone matters. The entire staff structure is designed around knowing kids, not just supervising them.

Belonging doesn't happen by accident. It happens because every piece of camp operations is designed to make kids feel known.

## **This Summer**

Many camps talk about community and belonging as aspirations. Many get it right, but not all of them.

At Chateaugay, it's how operations work. It's in the training, the structure, the daily rhythms.

When you build belonging into the foundation, everything else follows. Safety, culture, trust, growth. They all emerge from kids knowing they matter.

Rosie will be making her rounds again this summer. Your child will see what belonging looks like in action.

This is what we're creating for seven weeks every June, July & August.

**See you this summer.**

Mitch

**PS - Want to meet Rosie? Want to see what belonging looks like at camp? Let's talk about making that happen.**

**Grab a time on my calendar to talk all about Camp Chateaugay.**

[Schedule a time here](#)

