IDAHO BASECAMP
YOUR COMPASS FOR LIFE

Growth. Purpose. Legacy

Annual Report 2025-2026





GROWTH PURPOSE LEGACY

Reflecting on 29 Years of Idaho BaseCamp

by Mat Gershater
Executive Director, Idaho BaseCamp

Dear Friends, Families, and Community Partners,

As Mountain Adventure Tours enters its 29th year as a foundational program of Idaho BaseCamp, we find ourselves at a turning point — a time to reflect on how far we've come, embrace who we've become, and imagine what's possible next.

In nearly three decades, our organization has developed systems and a clear expression of what it means to cultivate the "Inner BaseCamp" — and how that internal anchor manifests in the real world for the people we serve. The confidence that comes from outdoor adventure education is palpable. We see it in our program graduates who carry these core values into adulthood and actively give back to our community. We see it in the schools they attend, the professions they enter, and the ways they are now stepping up as spouses, parents, and leaders.

What began as a founder-run passion project is systematically maturing into a thriving nonprofit organization built on a sustainable structure — a model designed to outlast us all.

Today, we stand on the precipice of our next great horizon. With the construction of our new lodge, we are transitioning Idaho BaseCamp into having a true year-round facility, positioning us to bring this transformational outdoor education model to thousands more youth across Idaho and beyond.

To realize this vision, I invite you to step in and join us as we close our capital campaign. Together, we can finish this building and prepare Idaho BaseCamp to launch into its next level of impact.

Fall is a powerful season of transition — a time for letting go of what no longer serves us, discovering fresh fuel to move forward, and rooting deeply into the beliefs and values we hold sacred. It remains an absolute honor to serve Idaho BaseCamp, and I look forward to our continued collaboration as we build this legacy together.

INNER BASECAMP
A SEASON OUTSIDE

From first-time adventures to unforgettable nights under the stars, this summer was filled with opportunities for young people to explore, challenge themselves, and grow. Thanks to the generosity of our community, Idaho BaseCamp continues to make these transformative outdoor experiences possible for more children than ever.







It's a bird, it's a plane... it's some super M.A.T. campers! Themed camps offered plenty of opportunities for younger children to explore their creativity and imagination while spending time outdoors.

Opening doors to new adventures! Thanks to the generosity of our community, the M.A.T. Scholarship Fund gave more children the opportunity to try new things and discover new passions.

Road-tripping to the desert, exploring the red-rock canyons, and sleeping under the stars — older campers had the opportunity to experience a trip of a lifetime to Utah and Arizona, building independence, confidence, and resilience during a pivotal stage of their development.



27,000+

Hours spent outdoors by M.A.T. campers

972

M.A.T. camp enrollments

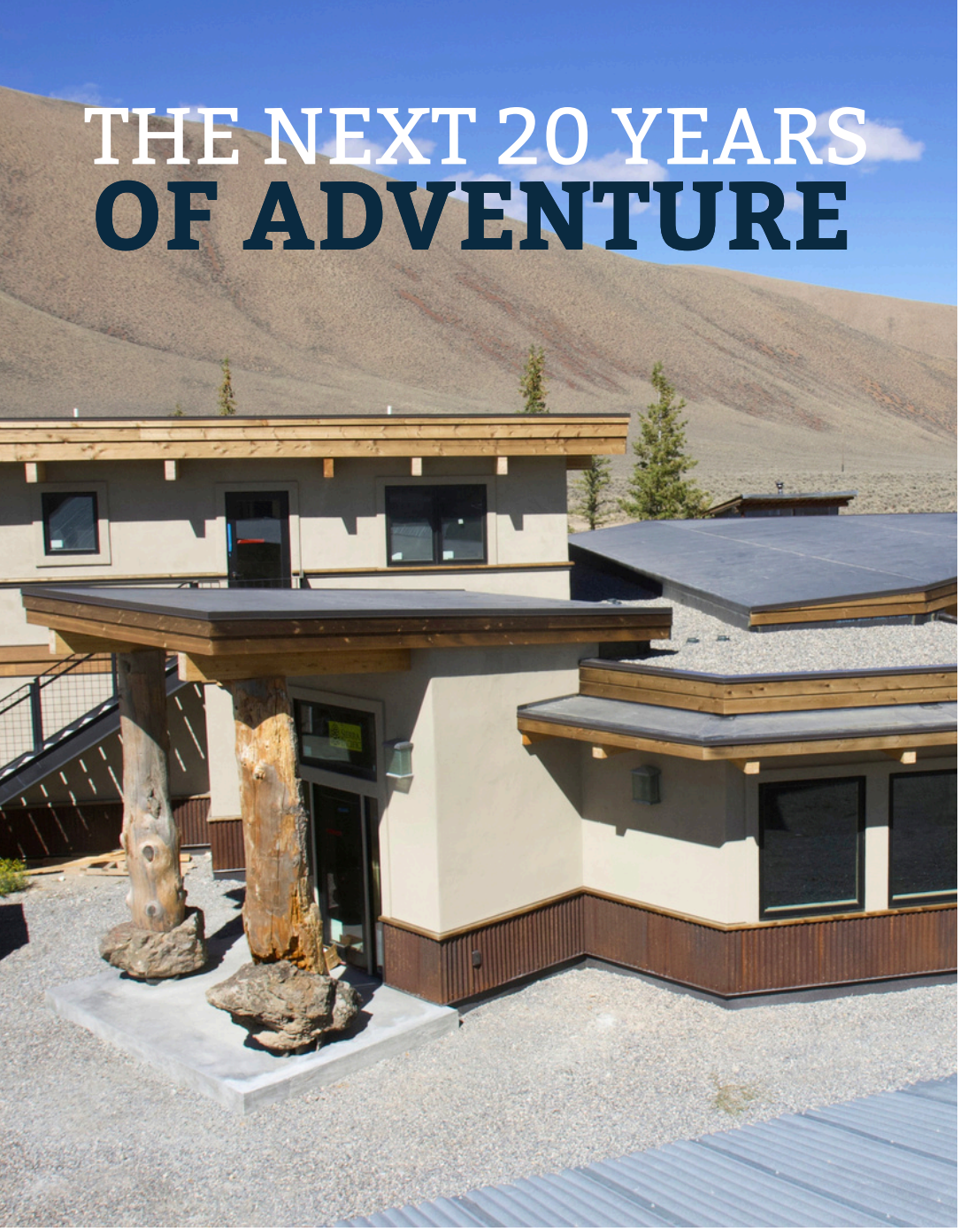
$500K

Raised in support of IBC programming

~500

S'mores devoured by M.A.T. campers

THE NEXT 20 YEARS OF ADVENTURE







In 2004, Mat Gershater purchased a piece of land along the Big Lost River, beneath the towering peaks of Idaho's Lost River Range. Accessible from the hub of Sun Valley, yet tucked away in its own remote corner of the high desert, his vision for the land was simple but ambitious: to create a place where young people could connect with nature, challenge themselves, and discover their own potential.

What began as a gathering place for Mountain Adventure Tours campers — a "Basecamp," if you will — gradually grew into something much greater. In those early summers,

Over the next 20 years

50,000

kids will experience the outdoors and build their Inner BaseCamp at the expanded Big Lost Campus!

children helped shape the landscape themselves, building forts, trails, and hideaways in the woods. Many of those creations remain today, reminders that the Big Lost Campus has always been a place built as much by kids as for them.

As Idaho BaseCamp grew, so did the community of people who believed in its mission. Volunteers, craftspeople, educators, and generous supporters helped transform a rustic summer camp outpost into a thriving outdoor education center. Sustainability became part of the campus's identity, exemplified by the Borah Basin Building, which opened in 2017 as the nation's first public-use hempcrete building. This innovative structure demonstrated that thoughtful, environmentally conscious construction could go hand in hand with creating meaningful spaces for learning and connection.

In 2018, the campus welcomed its first cohort of students for the Sahm 5th Grade Outdoor School, marking a new chapter in Idaho BaseCamp's mission: bringing the spirit of adventure, discovery, and personal growth found at summer camp into the school year, making the transformative lessons of the outdoors an integral part of a child's education.

Today, that original vision is entering its most ambitious chapter yet. With a new lodge, employee housing, workshop, and community courtyard scheduled to be completed in 2027, Idaho BaseCamp is creating a permanent, year-round home for outdoor adventure education.

What began with one person's dream has become a shared community legacy. And with the capacity to double the number of children served, the next 20 years promise even greater opportunities for young people to grow, explore, and discover their Inner BaseCamp.

SAHM
Family Foundation

The Sahm Family Foundation has been a transformational partner in Idaho BaseCamp's mission to connect children with the outdoors. Through their extraordinary support of the Sahm 5th Grade Outdoor School, they have helped make life-changing outdoor experiences possible for hundreds of students.

As early believers in the potential of the Big Lost Campus, the Foundation recognized the importance of creating a year-round destination where more children could learn, explore, and grow. With an extraordinary leadership grant, they helped turn that vision into action, providing the critical early funding needed to begin construction.



"We first supported Idaho BaseCamp because we believe every child deserves the chance to get outside and experience the natural world. What began with a fifth-grade outdoor program grew into a partnership helping the organization build the staff, resources, and space to reach more kids. Seeing Idaho BaseCamp bring its new lodge to life and open the door to year-round experiences has been incredibly rewarding and reinforced our belief in investing in nonprofits' capacity to grow."

Abigail Sahm Styles

GENERATIONAL IMPACT

THE WYNN FAMILY'S LEGACY OF WILDERNESS, YOUTH, & GIVING

For the Wynn family, the connection to Sun Valley and the wilderness of Idaho runs deep. When Kevyn Wynn and her sister Gillian were looking for transformative summer experiences for their children, they turned to Mat Gershater, Executive Director and founder of Idaho BaseCamp (IBC), and its signature Mountain Adventure Tours (M.A.T.) summer program.

What began as a summer ritual quickly grew into a foundational chapter for the entire family. Over the years, all seven of Elaine Wynn's grandchildren — Zoe, Lucas, Jonas, Harry, Asher, Andrew, and Marlowe — passed through the camp's immersive outdoor programs. From single-day trail explorations to multi-day adventure sleepaways, the children developed a profound relationship with nature, resilience, and stewardship.

> **"My boys always say M.A.T. was a huge part of their lives growing up. You get these kids at young ages and give them important tools that last their entire lives."**
>
> **Kevyn Wynn**







Kevyn fondly recalls a moment during a preschool nature walk in Los Angeles when a visiting park ranger pulled her aside, amazed that her twin boys, Lucas and Jonas, knew the answer to every question about local flora and fauna. "I told him, 'I'm cheating!'" Kevyn laughs. "They spend their summers in Idaho at Mountain Adventure Tours. That's where they learned it."

Beyond nature skills, the camp provided a trusted ecosystem of growth and safety. Recognizing how deeply M.A.T. touched her grandchildren's lives, matriarch philanthropist Elaine Wynn established a Youth Advisory Group (YAG) to introduce the young generation to philanthropy. When tasked with deciding where to allocate funding, all seven grandchildren unanimously voted to support IBC's first facility—the Borah Basin Building.

Now, as Idaho BaseCamp expands its reach to serve 18 regional schools across six counties through a new year-round facility, Kevyn and Gillian Wynn are continuing that family tradition of generosity. Together, the sisters have stepped forward with an extraordinary $500,000 matching grant to help complete Phase 2 of IBC's capital campaign.

The impact of IBC's programs echoes far beyond summer camp. IBC alumni have gone on to pursue diverse paths — from engineering at SpaceX and competing in the Olympics to serving as Army Rangers and advocating on Capitol Hill for public land conservation. Connor Higgins, a former M.A.T. camper turned congressional staffer focusing on natural resources, credits his experience with instilling a lifelong passion for protecting public lands.

A HALF-MILLION DOLLAR MATCH FOR THE FUTURE

Every dollar donated toward Phase 2 of our capital campaign between now and Thanksgiving will be matched dollar-for-dollar by Kevyn and Gillian Wynn, **up to $500,000.**

Your gift directly supports the completion of our new year-round facility, the Sahm Family Lodge, empowering thousands of youth each year.

For Kevyn and Gillian, supporting Phase 2 is about ensuring future generations — including their own eventual grandchildren — have a safe, inspiring space to learn, create, and connect with nature. The completed facility will expand outdoor adventure education, leadership development, and creative arts programming for youth across Idaho and beyond.

When you teach young people about giving and sustaining community, it has to touch their hearts. What Mat and the IBC team built is God's work. It's hard, selfless labor, but it changes lives. We want to ensure Idaho BaseCamp has the foundation to reach every child who needs it."

Kevyn Wynn

A Day at BaseCamp

What do students get up to at the Big Lost Campus?



Morning

Campers and students rise early and emerge eagerly from their tents with the ringing of a bell. Hot breakfast and "Mindfulness and Movement" — or M&M for short — in the Borah Basin Building await them

At the 5th Grade Outdoor School, activities are carefully designed to build trust and connection in classmates and in themselves, while also recognizing the power of individuality. Here, students take turns leading their peers, eyes closed, making them take "photos" of their own unique perspectives and views of nature.



Activities



River

STEAM-based lessons help students better understand the natural world. Here, all kinds of Idaho's crawly critters are discovered at the banks of the Big Lost River, carefully captured and catalogued, and then released back into the wild.

Spaghetti and meatballs with a side of garlic bread and salad, anyone? Our leaders take pride in cooking up delicious nourishment for the kids that pass through campus. It's often one of the highlights of students' time at BaseCamp!



Meals



Campfire

At BaseCamp, campfires are a space for reflection and community — whether it's sharing stories from the day, going over challenging moments, or just roasting a really good s'more.

When not participating in guided activities by our leaders, students get to relax, play, and hang out with their classmates and teachers.



Tents



Downtime

All good things come to an end — and the nightly routine of going to the bathroom, brushing your teeth, filling up your water bottle, and putting on your PJs marks the culmination of another day at BaseCamp. Lights out, voices off!

TURNING ADVENTURE INTO CONFIDENCE



SAHM 5TH GRADE OUTDOOR SCHOOL

"The most memorable moments often come down to the debriefs of our activities at the 5th Grade Outdoor School. Really listening to the children work out their experiences and discover the impact those experiences have on their relationships and their own self-awareness is super powerful. It reminds us regularly that the work we are doing out there in the field is, indeed, transformative and impactful.

Seeing kids grow and change, and being inspired by their growth, is what makes 5th Grade so memorable for me. Just last week, I worked with a homesick student who wanted to leave. I encouraged him to give it a try, and he decided to stay. By the end, he told me how happy he was that he did!"

Miles Kasten
5th Grade Outdoor School Leader

EXPLORERS

One of my most memorable moments happened during one of the last weeks before summer started. Ethan and I had brought the whole class down to the river, and had partnered with Project Big Wood to teach the kids about the different bugs in our river. Afterwards, a handful of kids decided to start playing in the water even though none of us had our swimsuits. While that wasn't out of the ordinary for us, it was for one of the 5th graders that we had been working with all year, Emily. I remember talking to her teacher at the beginning of the year and being warned about her troubles with sensory overstimulation, especially when it came to her clothes getting wet. On our first week, we went fishing and even though she was so excited to see the fish, she couldn't bring herself to get very close to the pond in fear of getting her shoes wet. Being able to watch all of them, including Emily, take that moment to just enjoy the outdoors and the river was very special."

Ella Silver
Assistant Program Director



When I ask my students to reflect on what was their favorite part about being in 5th grade, invariably, Idaho BaseCamp is right up there."

Michelle Peterson
5th Grade Teacher
Mackay Elementary School

When our son joined Sprouts at four-and-a-half, it was his fourth preschool. Despite his mid-year start, he was quickly embraced by the spirit of community that defines the program and fell right into the rhythms, festivals, and adventures that shape its days, months, and seasons.

We have seen him grow dramatically during his time at Sprouts: developing confidence, empathy, and physical capability; deepening his love for animals, making things with his hands, and connecting with others; and discovering new sparks of curiosity, contribution, and leadership. Miss Larissa holds a firm but precious space for the class to find their way in relationship with one another, engage in self-discovery, and step gently into learning, all while truly seeing the individuals who are sprouting before her.

We are grateful that our son has landed at Sprouts. We believe the roots he is establishing there will serve him beautifully when he takes his next step in education."

Sprouts Kinderschool Parent







"At Idaho BaseCamp, our students were pushed outside of their comfort zones in ways that built both resilience and connection. I hear about how they participated in a trust walk — learning to let go of that uncomfortable feeling and rely on their peers for guidance. In those moments, they not only overcame fears but also discovered the power of supporting one another. The challenges they faced at BaseCamp have already made them stronger and more confident, and the bonds they formed will carry them through the rest of this school year and beyond."

Stephanie Wallace
Principal
Hailey Elementary School



OUTDOOR HISPANIC LEADERS

One of the most memorable moments was on our spring break road trip down to Nevada. We were a couple days in and had just walked along the Hoover Dam when we decided to stop at Lake Mead to go swimming. It honestly felt like a bit of a turning point in the trip, where we saw a lot of the kids start to really open up with one another. We had a game of beach volleyball going, at the same time as another group was seeing who could swim the longest, and another group soaking in some of the sun on the beach. Even though that stop wasn't planned as some big stop on the trip, it ended up being a really nice moment of relaxation and openness between everybody as we splashed around."

Ella Silver
Assistant Program Director





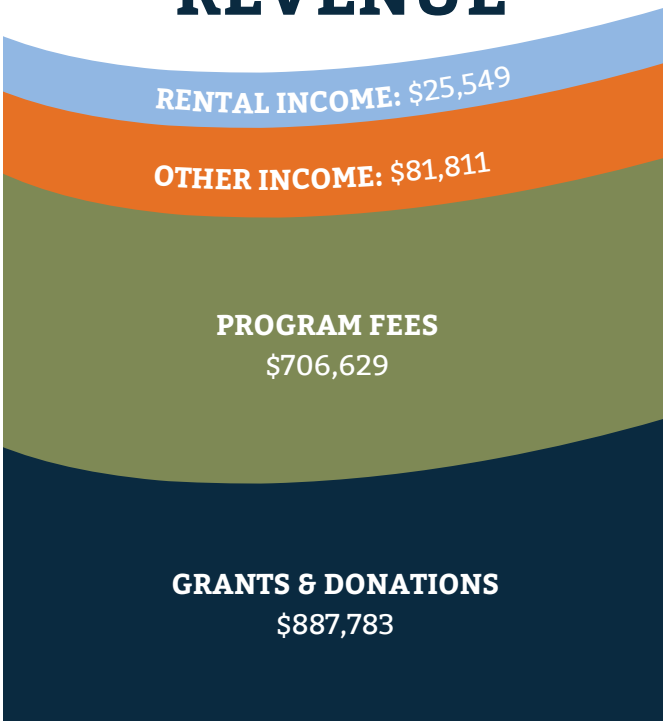
SPROUTS KINDERSCHOOL

The growth that happens in a child during one year of Sprouts Kinderschool is astounding. They come into the school year timid, unsure of what's expected of them and their peers — and end the year confident, steadfast in the rhythms that we have provided them — the older children are little leaders by the end of the year, passing that torch onto the children who will be moving up the next year. They have gained greater dexterity with their hands and bodies, they have learned problem-solving with empathy and compassion. We provide them a beautiful container for open imaginative play with steady rhythm and routine, making them feel safe and held to explore their own place in the world."

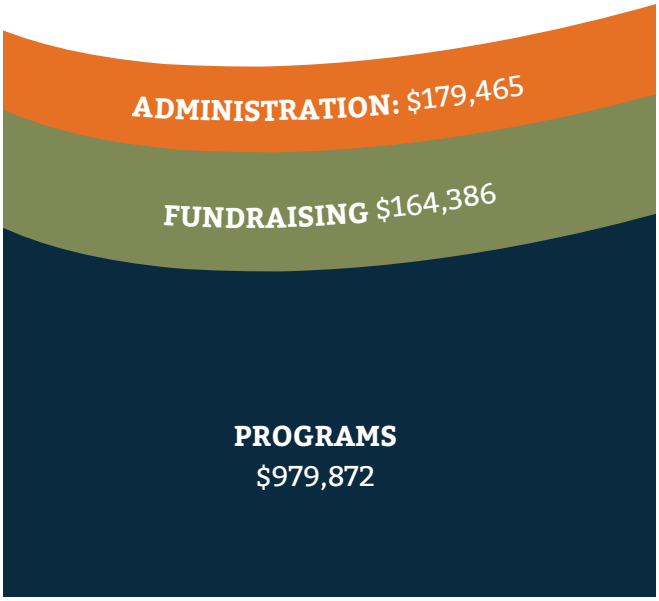
Whitney McNees
Program Director

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF BASECAMP

REVENUE



EXPENSES



Fiscal year September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026. Data excludes Capital Campaign.

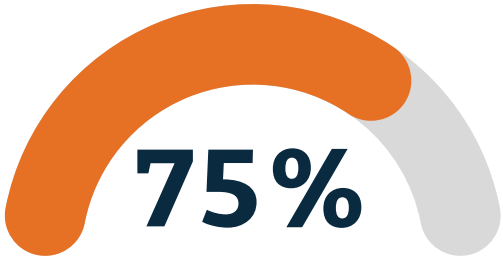
BIG LOST

CAMPUS EXPANSION

GOAL
$7.2M

RAISED
$5.4M

REMAINING
$1.8M



Thanks to extraordinary philanthropic support, the Big Lost Campus expansion is nearing completion. The remaining campaign investments will help complete the vision and fund program expansion.

UNDER THE OPEN SKY







135
Under the Open Sky attendees

$515K
raised in support of IBC's programs

50%
of attendees were new to IBC

THANK YOU!

Our work is made possible by the donors, board members, and staff who share a belief that getting kids outdoors builds confidence that lasts. We are deeply grateful for their generosity and dedication as we realize the next step in bringing this transformational outdoor education model to thousands more youth across Idaho and beyond.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James Everitt
Board President & Treasurer
Whitney McNees
Board Secretary
Jack Gilligan
Jennie Gershater Lopez
Daniella Munzig
Anne Nielsen
Brooks Preston
Jeff Rose

STAFF

Mathew Gershater
Founder & Executive Director
Whitney McNees
Program Director
Joelle O'Connor Rivetts
Office Admin & M.A.T. Director
Max Lalanne
Marketing & Comms Manager
Jessie Armstrong
M.A.T. Director
Ella Silver
Assistant Program Director
Larissa Alvarado
Sprouts Kinderschool Teacher
Ellie Burnside
Sprouts Kinderschool Assistant Teacher and Program Leader
Ethan Gerber
Program Leader
Miles Kasten
Program Leader

Thank you to all our amazing seasonal staff who join IBC to provide the best experience possible for participants in Mountain Adventure Tours, the Sahm 5th Grade Outdoor School, and more.






IDAHO
BASECAMP
IBC
Sun Valley
GUN CLUB
patagonia


NO
MOTORIZED
VEHICLES
BEYOND
THIS POINT

THIS

IS SOMETHING WORTH BEING PART OF



Idaho BaseCamp | IdahoBaseCamp.org | PO Box 183, Ketchum, ID 83340 | (208) 202-3040 | office@idahobasecamp.org