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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 28, 2022**

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## **SLEEPAWAY CAMP RE-BOOTS WITH PARTNERSHIP OF CAMP FRIENDS**

PARADOX, NY – For 25 years, Camp Southwoods built a reputation as one of the finest resident camp programs in the country. Then suddenly, their fearless leader fell terminally ill, and the pandemic hit-cancelling a season. Enter seven colleagues/friends who have banded together to restore Camp Southwoods to prominence, with shorter session options and a renewed energy.

Scott Ralls built Camp Southwoods 25 years ago on the side of a beautiful mountain in the Adirondacks. Recently bestowed the “Legend of Camping” honor posthumously by his peers, Scott was an influential leader with the American Camp Association, both regionally and nationally, as well as with Project Morry, a non-profit created in honor of his mentor, who also passed away tragically at a young age. Ralls’ big heart and larger than life personality were important factors as to why seven like-minded camp professionals have joined together to honor their friend’s legacy.

“Camp Southwoods is a beautiful facility, with an epic waterfront. And while they may have lost their fearless leader, his spirit remains, and we’re honored to be able to bring it back to glory,” says new partner Andy Pritikin, owner/director of Liberty Lake Day Camp, in NJ- who was convinced by Ralls to follow him as the President of the American Camp Association, NY & NJ. Pritikin points out that Southwoods partner Sam Borek, owner/director of Woodmont Day Camp, in New City, NY- then followed Andy as the Association President.

“We’ve put together a dream team of camp operators, some who’ve started their own camps, and some who have revitalized their camps,” says new partner Mark Transport, owner/director of Crestwood Day Camp in Melville (Long Island), NY, the “turnaround artist” of the new ownership team, who brought in Crestwood partner Mark Hemmerdinger as well. On-site director/partner Steve Bluth, who co-helmed the camp in 2021 is giddy with excitement, “With the brain trust of our new partnership, we’re invigorating Camp Southwoods with an awesome new energy to take it to new heights- The enrolled families and alumni are just as psyched as we are!”

The announcement of the regime change included a change of sessions to 2, 4, or 6 week enrollment options. “Shorter sessions at resident camp have become the new flavor of choice, especially for first time camp families,” says partner Jeff Gould, owner/director of Independent Lake Camp, in Wayne County, PA, whose camp specializes in short season campers. Since the recent announcement, dozens of new campers have signed on, from the Philadelphia to Boston corridor, and as far away as Europe.

“Scott was a larger than life figure, and a mentor to us all. It’s a privilege to carry the Southwood torch for him and his family,” says Gregg Licht, owner/director of Elmwood Day Camp, in Ardsley, NY. “and the timing couldn’t be more perfect,” adds Borek, “with families coming out of the pandemic seeking summer camps for their kids like we’ve never seen before!”

For these seven seasoned camp operators, taking over the beautiful Adirondack camp on Paradox Lake in honor of their longtime friend is an opportunity that they embrace with vigor and purpose. Pritikin ads, “We are all friends with a common belief that summer camp is the ultimate environment to teach kids important life skills, in a beautiful, outdoor, technology-free environment. After 2 years of compromised life, young people need summer camp more than ever, and we’ve got a perfect place for them at Southwoods!”

For more information, go to [www.CampSouthwoods.com](http://www.CampSouthwoods.com)

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