

Fact Sheet

Kanakuk Kamps

History & Overview

- Founded in 1926, Kanakuk Ministries (DBA “Kanakuk Kamps”) is the largest Christian sports camp in the world, headquartered in Branson, Missouri.¹
- Kanakuk’s overnight summer camps have hosted over **500,000 campers** and employed over **50,000 staff**.²
- Kanakuk Kamps holds over \$40MM in assets and regularly grosses over \$30MM annually.³
- In July 2015, the IRS granted Kanakuk Ministries church status, thereby exempting it from filing annual tax returns.³
- Kanakuk’s evangelical programming centers around doctrine like “I’m Third” and the promotion of teen purity.⁴
- Kanakuk divides campers into four Native American “tribes” who compete during camp terms. Campers appointed “Chiefs” and “Princesses” in “tribal ceremonies” sign a “Commitment to Purity” without parental consent.⁵

Leadership & Governance

- Joe White has served as the CEO of Kanakuk Kamps since 1976 and has maintained the role of Board Chair since the camp became a non-profit.⁶ It previously existed as for-profit Kanakuk Heritage, Inc.
- Joe White is the author of more than 20 books, a purity and “teen sex expert,” and travels across the nation on private jets to speak at conferences to thousands. He holds a Biology degree, two honorary doctorates and an honorary ordination within the Southern Baptist Church (SBC).⁷
- Kanakuk’s Board of Directors is not independent: the majority of Officers are White family members, employees who report to the White family, or board members who have received reportable compensation such as Pattye Moore.³
- The White family owns the land on which Kanakuk Kamps is located and charges rent: \$2.6MM from 2014-2017.⁸

National & International Reach

- Kanakuk’s ministries and affiliated entities spread the Kanakuk experience and doctrine to communities across the country and into more than **50 international locations**.⁹
- Kanakuk has incorporated over 30 entities and currently maintains several active (8+) for-profit and (11+) non-profit entities that target children and teens. Examples include:
 - [KampOUT!](#) (Traveling Day Camp for Churches)
 - Kanakuk International ([Kanakuk Haiti](#), [Kanakuk Lebanon](#), China mission trips, etc.)
 - [Kids Across America](#) (Segregated Camp for “Urban Youth”)
 - [KLIFE](#) (Chapter-Based Youth Groups in over 20 U.S. Cities)
 - [Urban KLIFE](#) (Chapter-Based Youth Groups for “Urban Youth”)
 - [Link Year](#) (Gap Year Program for High School Graduates);
 - [Link Hoops/Link Academy](#) (Preparatory Basketball Program; 1 High School Team and 2 Post-Grad Teams)
 - [Afterdark](#) (Event-Based Program with Musical Entertainment in College Arenas across the U.S.)
 - [Kanakuk Institute](#) (Graduate Program Based at the Hawaiian-themed Kanakuk K-Kauai Family Camp)
 - [Heart of a Mom](#) (Event-Based Program for Moms in Various Cities)
- Kanakuk has been supported and endorsed by a wide range of celebrities, including Amy Grant, Bill Cosby, Tony Romo, Peyton Manning, Michael W. Smith, Jennie Allen, Steven Curtis Chapman, James Dobson and Lecrae.

History of Abuse

- In 2010, camp director Pete Newman received two consecutive life terms in prison plus 30 years for sexually abusing boys while employed by Kanakuk from 1995-2009. Newman was caught nude with boys as early as 1999.¹⁰
- Newman is just one of 10 former Kanakuk affiliates *convicted* of child sexual abuse since the White family assumed ownership of the camp and many Kanakuk affiliates are *alleged* to have abused youth from the 1950s-today.¹¹
- Kanakuk has used NDAs to prevent survivors from publicly disclosing their abuse experiences and lawsuit findings.
- In March of 2021, a group of Kanakuk abuse survivors and their family members launched [Facts About Kanakuk](#), a website and platform dedicated to awareness, serving survivors and bringing more truth to light.
- In 2022, Kanakuk continues to claim that it is the “safest place to be,”² due to its longstanding history of hosting children and the [Kanakuk Child Protection Plan](#) that they developed in-house.

¹USA Today. Survivors, ex-employees say Kanakuk Christian camp 'ministered' to its sexual predators. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/kfact1>

² Kanakuk.com. Our Response. Retrieved from <https://kanakuk.com/our-response/>

³ Pro Publica. Kanakuk Ministries 990 data. Retrieved from <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/431815310>

⁴ I’m Third. Retrieved from <https://imthird.com/>

⁵ Vanessa Jordan Holt. Facebook Post. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/kfact2>

⁶ Kanakuk Ministries 2001 990. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/kfact3>

⁷ Joe White Kanakuk. Retrieved from <https://joewhitekanakuk.com/>

⁸ Ministry Watch. Kanakuk Financial Statements Reveal “Suspicious” Pattern of Self-Dealing. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/kfact4>

⁹ From Kanakuk’s self-reported metrics provided to [Excellence in Giving](#).

¹⁰ Ministry Watch. Lawsuit Says Kanakuk Knew of Abuser’s Behavior At Least 6 Years Before Finally Firing Him. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/kfact5>

¹¹ Springfield News-Leader. Survivors, ex-employees say unreported abuse at Kanakuk camps in Branson spans decades. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/kfact6>