Spruce Lake, Canadensis, PA, is looking for a full-time, year-round Recruiting Coordinator. This person will participate in the hiring process from beginning to end, attracting candidates, evaluating resumes, scheduling and conducting interviews and managing the hiring paperwork. Qualifications include proven experience as a recruiting coordinator or recruiter, solid knowledge of HR policies and practices, the ability to conduct different types of interviews, hands-on experience with selection processes, excellent communication skills, and familiarity with HR/candidate systems and databases. Apply online at sprucelake.org or email: recruit19@sprucelake.org

Spruce Lake, Canadensis, PA, is looking for a full-time, year-round Director to join the team at Spruce Lake. The Director will serve in maintaining the spiritual emphasis according to the mission statement of Spruce Lake. He/She will direct all phases of daily operation of the Retreat Center in promoting the core purpose and goals of Spruce Lake. This individual will develop and maintain good guest relations, both internally and externally, support programming and the guest group hosting team. They will also provide leadership in systematizing and automating the process of Spruce Lake. Apply online at sprucelake.org.


by Ken Bontrager, Executive Director

On September 7, 2019 Camp Deerpark celebrated our 50th Anniversary. First, praise God we met our fund raising goal of $50,000 for 50 years. At about 4:30 PM our board chair, Krista LaRuffa announced that we had raised $31,697, which meant the entire $25,000 challenge was met and surpassed making the total raised $56,697. The highlight of our auction was a shoofly pie that sold for $400 and the twenty plus people who paid $5 to snap a photo of the former directors.

The weekend started with all of the former camp directors gathering at the Bontrager home for dinner on Friday night. We laughed and we cried. We shared our highlights and our disappointments. Gratefulness was a common theme.


Saturday activities included an historic slide show in the chapel Sun Room, a display of T-shirts and artifacts in the chapel, a counselor hunt for children, the water relay race, and tours of the Promise Woods Program Center under construction. Of course, we had all of the regular Homecoming activities: auction, hayrides, 3-on-3 basketball tournament, face painting, swimming, and great food. On Saturday afternoon Lanny Millette and Daniel Angustia organized the former summer staff into decade clusters. Then at 3:30 under the tent each decade shared a story and a song that represented their time at camp.

For those who had called well in advance to reserve a room the weekend ended on Sunday morning with worship in the chapel. Jim Baer led our singing, Miriam Cruz invited us to share our stories of how camp is our spiritual home, and Dale Stoltzfus shared a Biblical reflection from Psalm 100. Dale ended his reflection with the lyrics from a 150-year-old Sunday School song:

I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin;  
I see the blue above it;  
And day by day this pathway smooths,  
Since first I learned to love it,  
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,  
A fountain ever springing;  
All things are mine since I am His—  
How can I keep from singing?

I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin;  
I see the blue above it;  
And day by day this pathway smooths,  
Since first I learned to love it,  
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,  
A fountain ever springing;  
All things are mine since I am His—  
How can I keep from singing?

Recruiting (or Camp) days are coming up quickly! Contact Olivia at olivia.bartel@campmennoscah.org for further information or to join Camp Days.

Catch up with news and views from Camper Central by following Mennonite Camping Association on Facebook and Instagram. Check out their camp reviews, photos, and camp stories.

Facebook: Join the conversation! “Like” us on Facebook and be part of the community online: “Mennonite Camping Association - MCA” group.

Recruiting: 2019 Camp Days

EMU - November 6, Wednesday
Bluffton - November 7, Thursday
Goshen - November 8, Friday
Hesston - November 11, Monday
Tabor - November 12, Tuesday
Bethel - November 13, Wednesday
McPherson - November 14, Thursday
After 28 years of service, Executive Director Cliff Martin is stepping aside from the position of Executive Director at Woodcrest Retreat, Ephrata, PA. Bill Klees has been hired as the new Executive Director effective September 25. Cliff will fill the new Operations Director position in an interim role.

Emily Hunsberger has joined the staff at Amigo Centre, Sturgis, MI, as the new Guest Services Coordinator. Emily served on summer staff at Amigo for seven years, three of which were spent as the Summer Camp Assistant Director. She has taught Outdoor Education classes and led activities for children during programs and retreats. Emily is excited to be entering into this new role at Amigo.

FROM VIBRANTFAITH.ORG

Does camp make a difference?
by Dr. Jake Sorenson

Another year of summer camp is in the books! Somewhere around 10 million American children went to camp this summer, and roughly 2 million of them attended a Christian camp. The numbers seem impressive, but many of us continue to ask the question, does any of it make a difference? We have all heard stories from young people who had significant or even life-changing experiences at camp. But we have also heard horror stories or theology in the camp setting that make us uncomfortable.

There are so many other options for young people these days. Do we really need camping ministries, or have they outlived their usefulness? Do we really need camping ministries, or have they outlived their usefulness? Are we, as one Lutheran pastor from Pennsylvania bluntly put it, begging for money to save the dinosaurs?

An exciting new research project has set out to address these questions. For the first time, we have data about the effects of the Christian summer camp experience that go beyond anecdotal evidence. We are discovering how and why camp is effective for faith formation, leadership development, boosting self-esteem, strengthening congregations, and much more.

Camp is not obsolete, and it is far from extinct.

Effective Camp Research Project Findings
The Effective Camp Research Project set out to answer: What is the impact of the one-week summer camp experience on the lives of the primary participants and their supporting networks? The project began in summer 2015 at 3 camps in Wisconsin, using the methodology of grounded theory in order to deeply listen to campers, parents, directors, summer staff members, and area church professionals. It was from this deeply-embedded research that we uncovered what we call the 5 fundamental characteristics of Christian summer camp: safe, participatory, relational, away from home, and faith-centered.

Following the initial research, we began surveying summer campers on the first day, last day, and 2 months following camp to determine growth and lasting impact. We have now surveyed more than 2000 campers at 11 camps in 5 states. It turns out that some effects of the camp experience tend to wear off in the weeks following camp, but there is compelling evidence for lasting change in several camp outcomes. Knowing how your camp is doing when it comes to these lasting outcomes can help you improve your programs, motivate your constituency, and strengthen your partnerships with congregations and families.

Positive Impact of Camp
The Christian summer camp experience directly impacted the participants in empirically recognizable ways, and these impacts extended to their supporting networks.

This is the major finding of Phase one of this project. This finding was clear across all data sources and all three camps. Participants experienced real and identifiable changes that were interpreted in overwhelmingly positive terms. Parents were generally content if their children had fun and were kept safe at camp, though many expressed surprise and joy at camp’s positive impacts. There is evidence that these changes continued after the camp experience. These findings justify a follow-up study to assess the degree and duration of these impacts. The positive impacts varied in degree and type among the participants, indicating that camp does not have a single determinative outcome but rather a set of potential impacts. It is misleading and erroneous to say that the camp experience causes change. Camp is not a magic formula. The data shows, rather, that the camp model, when faithfully practiced, opens the possibility for change in individuals and their supporting networks. The degree and duration of the impacts are unique to the individual participants and are largely dependent on their specific life circumstances. The potential impacts are directly related to the five fundamental characteristics of the camp experience.

To learn more, visit: https://vibrantfaith.org/project/ecrp/