



The Newsletter of Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake

2006 Summer Staff Reflections



"This summer was the summer to end all summers. It changed me in so many good ways... Higgins Lake and the Camp is kept in my heart everyday and I look at my pictures of the lake and friends I made every day. The kids were the coolest part of the summer and with each one came a new adventure! I know we were the ones helping the kids during the summer but it was from them that I learned so much! Thanks again for the opportunity that you gave me!" *David Clarke traveled from Ireland to serve as a counselor this past summer. He taught many campers everything he knows about his passion: football- that included saying it correctly (it is not soccer!). David is studying International Relations at Dublin City University.*



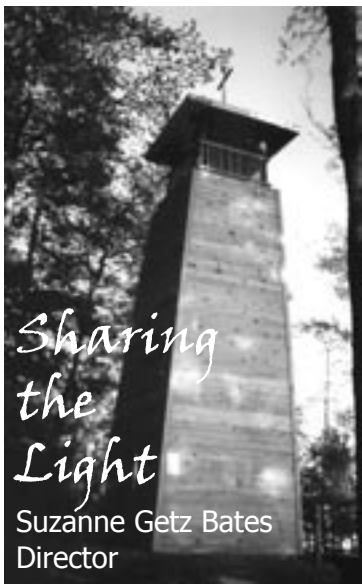
Top: "Football" players work on their skills during a ChooseIt! activity this summer.

Bottom: Counselor Lizzy Humphreys and a happy camper have just been painted at the carnival.

"This summer was laughter and tears, love, accomplishments, and learning. Yet, I've never grown so much in so little time. From the slightly awkward stilted conversations of that first day to the tears and hugs of the last night, camp takes you over. You meet a kid at the beginning of the week that won't participate and is upset to be at camp at all and by the end of the week they're clinging to you begging not to go. You dress up in the most outrageous costumes and sing crazy songs. You handle tears and fights. But more than anything...at camp you see God. You see God in the smile of a child learning to swim for the first time. You see God in the faces of a group doing initiatives or the high ropes. You hear God in the laughter of the campers during an evening activity. You hear God in the noise of free swim. You feel God in the hug of a child and the squeeze of a hand. You come across kids and staff from all different walks of life yet they are all brought together by this place." *Diana Cross, currently a senior studying music education at Michigan State University, was a counselor this year. She shared her beautiful voice and her interest in drama!*

"Returning to camp this year was a daunting prospect for me. After many staff changes, I felt I would have to find my feet all over again. As soon as I stepped off the infamous white camp bus, I instantly knew nothing was different. The lake still sparkled in the sun, singing could be heard in a constant stream from the dining hall, every child had a smile upon their face at the opening campfires, and, most importantly to me, every staff member was there to fulfill the same purpose. We were there to serve God by giving a whole host of children

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*Sharing
the
Light*

Suzanne Getz Bates
Director

Give the Gift of Camp

The newest toy? The latest electronic gadget? Each Christmas, parents and grandparents are faced with a wide choice of gifts to give their children. This year, as part of your Christmas gift list, consider the “Gift of Camp Westminster.”

At www.campwestminster.com parents and grandparents can print out a Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake Gift Certificate and tuck it in a CW sweatshirt, roll it in a new sleeping bag, or wrap it around a new flashlight. Or call the camp office at 313-341-8969 and we’ll mail one to you.

Last year, more than 650 children and youth benefited from being at Camp Westminster. According to Dr. Christopher Thurber, a board-certified clinical psychologist, “Camp is a wonderful change of pace, environment, and context. At camp, young people can shed their old reputations and feel free to be the person they know they are. At camp, young people can relax and learn life skills — such as making friends and playing fair — that will serve them and the people whose lives they touch.”



The tents and table (with covering!) of Wildwood 1965.

Wake-Up Wakeya Work Weekend = Success

Sweeping, masking, priming, and painting! The mission of alumni and friends during the Wake-Up Wakeya Work Weekend was to transform a wakeya from dark and dreary to bright, cheerful and welcoming. The mission was accomplished.

To date, wakeyas 3, 4 and 5 have received the makeover. Watch for future invitations to help give other wakeyas this much-needed tender loving care!



*Alumna
Charlyss Ray
Brandon primes
wakeya 4.*

From the Archives... 1965

contributed by Daryl Barton

The first week passed quickly. Wildwood was beginning to shape up. Our project was to design a dining table. So far we had been sitting on tarps for our meals. When it rained it was necessary to eat quickly to avoid soggy food. Designing a table sounds like a fairly easy job, but its not! Not only must one consider all the mechanical difficulties involved, but eight girls have to agree on the final design. After great deliberation, we decided to tackle the impossible: a six-sided table large enough to seat twelve. Also, we had tentative plans for an overhead covering to protect us from the frequent rain storms.

...Everything we had learned during our work the first week was extremely helpful in the construction of the table.

"A Community With the Power to Change..."

From a sermon by Jennifer Lorimer Kondak, Westminster-by-the-Lake 08.06.06

We were here for worship and I took my daughter Eleni on a little tour. One of the first things we did was walk back to the Kiva (Papoose Lodge) and I showed her my name on the beam. "PATCHES" was my nickname back then and there it was in all its green glory! Unfortunately she was not nearly as impressed as I'd hoped- and I have to confess that my name is in many wakeyas up here. That same day, Jim and Suzanne told me that they are struggling with the issue of painting the wakeyas- that means painting over some of those names, including mine. This place is doing some amazing things these days – kids are coming from Alaska and South Korea just to come here to camp – new things and new chances to make memories.

Coming back always brings back a raft of memories for me – beyond spiders in the greenies: people I have known, experiences I had, getting a real sense of myself as an adolescent who grew into a young woman. This place gave me my first Christian Education job- helping to form what became a 20-year career in Christian Education.

An idea began to form in me– separate really from the painting issue. What I got from being a camper here was far more than I realized. It went beyond basic things like caring for myself and my stuff, learning how to pitch a tent and paddle a canoe, testing my abilities on numerous high adventure trips – what I got was a real impression of what I could do and who I could be. And it had far more to do with the people I encountered here than the stuff I did – the staff, my friends, my co-workers – the community created here changed me.

Now I don't have a deep message here really...I simply am pointing out that this is a community with the power to change, founded in faith and driven toward the goals of enriching young people. It is illustrative of our scripture passages today [Jeremiah 31:31-34]. The prophet Jeremiah was referring to God's claim on us, "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

This place for me is filled with reminders of what it means to belong: Some are of hot weeks like last week, swimming in the ever cold Higgins Lake, paddling the Pine River in an aluminum canoe; taking turns keeping the fire going all night in the rain so we could cook in the morning out at the rustic Wildwood site; worshipping here- with my friends, and simply the sounds, sights and smells that fill me and changed me.

In the epistle today, Paul reminded the readers in Corinth that, "You yourselves are the letter from Christ (to others) and read by all, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." So, let me ask you – what letter do you bring home with you from here today? I think we take with us what's most important, our experiences and a feeling of belonging to a wonderful community – written on our hearts.

Suzanne and Jim, whatever you and the camp committee decide about the painting is really fine with me – it's bittersweet -- I'll miss knowing that some kid might look up some night and say to him or herself "Who's Patches?" but I know the memories and the shaping of me are written on my heart and as Jeremiah and Paul both remind us, we are God's people, we belong. God IS doing a new thing here, in this place, in this community, through God's people. That's the irony of a place like this that's creeping up on 82 years at doing camp – it keeps doing it but continually something new is being created – not just here but inside each of us, written on your hearts and minds. So in closing, it's sorta funny...because it wasn't until two days ago, that I started thinking about the camp hymn, *Rich in Lore*, and realized that the song says what I am feebly trying to convey.

*Rich in lore, tradition deep,
Memories of camp we'll keep
Graven on our hearts and minds, as through life our
journey winds.
Time and change shall not prevail, 'gainst our love which
ne'er shall fail.
God, our captain, on we sail!
Camp Westminster, all hail, all hail!*

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the opportunity to experience the delights of Higgins Lake and the community we share at Camp Westminister. The best feeling in the world is when a camper—the one who refused to participate last summer and the one who did not want to sing at teatime (dinner!)-runs to you in a frenzied first-day-at-camp excitement begging you to once again be their counselor. It was hard to imagine a year ago that this child would look forward to nature hikes, football coaching (the British version!) and getting their hands dirty in the craft cabin! Then it becomes clear: travelling via car, three aeroplanes and one white camp bus to make the 3,551-mile journey from the land of Harry Potter and afternoon tea to Camp Westminister? I've made a difference in a camper's life, and that's worth the journey all over again." *Lizzy Humphreys served her third summer as a devoted counselor and the arts & crafts authority at CW. Lizzy is studying education in Manchester, England, her hometown.*



Campers painted the tipi liner during Artists @ Work this summer. The project showed the spirit of cooperation and creativity of the CW community and it allowed the campers a medium in which to express themselves and explore what camp means to them.

DON'T FORGET: CHECK OFTEN!!
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