

Camp Director's report to the Outdoor Ministries Committee

Thursday, August 26, 2016: revised 8/25/2016



I. Summer Camps:

- A. Our 90th consecutive summer camp season ended on July 29 after 7 weeks of excellent, authentic and Spirit-filled programs with the theme *"Not Afraid, Not Alone: Courage in Community."* We registered **1,149 campers** in 83 program choices (1,209 campers in 72 programs in 2015), with 270 participants in our 6 Traveling Day Camps (229 in 2015) and 66 participants in our Family Fun nights (65 in 2015). We were blessed by excellent staff, helpful partner organizations, and dedicated volunteers who served as Chaplains, counselors and general helpers. Other data:
- We hosted 5,542 individual camper days in summer 2016, (5,811 in 2015 and 5,490 in 2014).
 - 208 children received Good-As-Gold funding from Virginia congregations totaling \$49,934, (222 campers totaling \$49,127 in 2015).
 - 72 children received "Camperships" totaling \$19,410, which exceeds funds by \$4,057, (118 in 2015 = \$29,370; 143 in 2014 = \$39,876).
 - 603 campers registered on-line, (622 in 2015).
 - 63 campers pre-registered in 2016 for 2017 camps (60 campers in 2015 for 2016; 49 campers in 2014 for 2015).
 - 593 campers either registered before the May 1 "Subsidized" discount ended or chose a program "on sale," (633 in 2015).
 - Of the 545 who answered the question, 270 identified as Church of the Brethren (49% who answered), 275 as other denomination (51%), (in 2015 395 identified as Church of the Brethren (52% of who answered), 370 as other (48% of who answered)).
 - 56 campers attended our partner Carilion's Camp Too Sweet (48 in 2015), and 47 attended Kevin Jones Performing Arts Camps (78 in 2015).
 - Camper families gave summer offering of \$2,256.80 (50% for scholarships & 50% for Back-to-School Kits), (\$3,913.17 in 2015).
 - From May 24-August 13, Brigitte's kitchen team served a total of 22,822 individual meals during 176 meal times, not including over 1,000 out lunches and Home-in-the-Woods cookouts, (23,700 meals in 165 times in 2015). EVERY meal was on time and plentiful.
 - *Announcing our exciting 2017 Summer Camp theme: "Branching Out: Connect Through Christ."* Registration opens January 8!
- B. I attribute our small drop in numbers (60 fewer campers) to four factors:
- (1) The Kevin Jones Performing Arts camp reduced from 3 to 2 weeks, raised price another \$50 to \$600 base fee, and dropped in attendance from 78 in 2015 to 48 in 2016 (-30).
 - (2) Despite "guaranteeing" up to 36 camperships to Roanoke City Social Services, they only sent us about 12 campers, and total campership campers declined by 46 from 2015.
 - (3) Beginning in September 2015, it took me MUCH longer than anticipated to completely rebuild our entire web site, including on-line summer camp registration, payments, etc, and this is reflected in 19 fewer campers registering on line in 2016 than 2015 and 40 fewer registering before May 1.
 - (4) In 2015 we mailed our brochure/promotional packets to congregations in the Presbytery of the Peaks and the Episcopal Diocese of SWVa, but not in 2016. We WILL in 2017, and we'll add "other" area churches.
- C. If you haven't seen all our videos and Social Media posts from this summer, I encourage you to check our Facebook pages and our YouTube Channel, "CampBethelVirginia."
- D. We will continue to analyze our summer camp data to see if our marketing efforts (including printing of the Botetourt County Parks & Recreation "Camps and Clinics" brochures, and offering "free" Traveling Day Camps) had measurable results.

II. Events and Programs:

- A. Final figures are in from Sounds of the Mountains 2016, and funding raised (net profit) for camp is \$29,824! Big THANKS to our dedicated SOTM Committee and to DTS Reprographics (Nelson Hylton and Debbie Brubaker) for donated design work and thousands of dollars of donated printing. Dates for 2017 are April 28-29 with Donald Davis, Kim Wietkamp, Ed Stivender, and Dolores Hydock; www.SoundsoftheMountains.org.
- B. The 22nd annual Camp Bethel Benefit Golf Tournament and Banquet was held Wednesday, August 24. 94 golfers and dozens of sponsors and donors raised \$14,125 for the camp's ministries! (Net income estimated \$10,387.) Big THANKS to OMC members and friends who helped serve at the banquet!
- C. Heritage Day is October 1. We need dozens of Parking Volunteers to work 2 hour shifts on October 1 from 6:00am-12:00noon. Please encourage all congregations to participate as vendors, shoppers or volunteers. Heritage Day Packets were included in our February 13 Camp Rep Packets and will be mailed again to all congregations and Camp Reps on August 30.
- D. See Upcoming Events at the end of my report. Please help at Fall Volunteer Workday on **November 5**.

III. Finances:

- A. See the document "Camp Bethel 2017 Proposed Budget and July 31 Income & Expense Comparisons..." for our current financial position and my proposed 2017 budget.
- B. Big invoices arriving soon: Carilion Camp Too Sweet July 18-22 = \$19,851 (due Sept 10); Lord Botetourt High School Band July 24-29 = \$14,900 (*paid! Aug 20*); PMCC August 3-7 = \$12,760 (due Aug 31), and William Byrd High School Band August 7-13 = \$11,220 (due Sept 17).

IV. Personnel:

- A. The proposed 2017 budget includes full-time funding for Jenna Stacy to be hired as our Program Coordinator (no longer interim) with full benefits. This needs to be a recommendation from OMC to the Virlina District Board (see agenda). We are lucky to have Jenna here!
- B. Written reports from **Brigitte Burton, Beth Heaton, and Jenna Stacy** are attached to this report; **Mickey Nichols** gets a "bye" this time. I commend our full-time and part-time staff team for working so hard and so diligently. Each has gone above and beyond expectation to make our ministry possible.
- C. Personally, due to unforeseen circumstances, my family and I were unable to have a family vacation this summer. We'll try to get away some weekends this fall and winter... hopefully.
- D. August 19, 2016 was the first day of my **15th** year as Camp Bethel Director!

V. Property and Facilities:

- A. All 4 Adventure Village platform huts now have metal roofing (completed over the summer).
- B. The "plug" to the Ark Pond was pulled (*video available!*), and the pond drained (mostly), and now we await equipment timing to come and dredge prior to repair.
- C. Construction has begun on a covered entryway and new stoop on the side doors of the Deer Field Gym.
- D. We are planning a year-long push to "fix all the little things" in each of our guest facilities. We will pair this effort with re-reaching out to congregations that have, or might, Adopt-a-facility.
- E. Christiansburg CoB and Laurel Branch CoB are awaiting quotes for adding new screen and ceiling-mounted LCD projector in the Ark Dining Room for use during Summer Camps for singing, announcements, etc.
- F. Continued priorities: Ark Pond & dam repairs; new cottage (David James Homes); tree "replacement" throughout main campus; changing doors at the Ark for handicapped accessibility; replacement windows at 564 Graybill House and Forest Lodge; completion of Willoro Cabin (Cedar Bluff CoB). Continued goals: installing chimney liners at Shelter-by-the-Spring, Front Residence, and Heritage; construction of one or two basic Solar Kilns for lumber; construction of a wood-shop addition to the back of the Maintenance Shop; fire-proof floor in front of hearth in Ark Conference Room; repairs & renewal of 568 Crowder House (plumbing, floors, exterior, roof, rain gutters, basement).

Respectfully submitted,

BARRY

Barry LeNoir, camp director
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Upcoming Camp Bethel Events:

September 2-5, 2016: Labor Day Family Weekend, RSVP meals.
 September 3, 2016 (Sat) 6:45pm: Colonial Style Barn Dance.
 October 1, 2016 (Sat): 32nd Brethren Heritage Day Festival.
 October 8-12, 2016 (Sat-Wed): ACA Canoe Instructor Course.
 October 14-16, 2016: Camp Bethel at Roanoke Go Outside Festival.
 November 5, 2016 (Sat), 7:30am: Fall Workday, RSVP meals.
 December 3, 2016 (Sat): Virlina District Board & OMC Retreat.
 December 4-21, 2016: Schedule your Christmas Banquet at Camp Bethel.

December 8, 2016 (Thurs): Christmas TOGETHER Banquet.
 December 30, 2016 (Fri): Summer Staff & CIT Reunion.
 Dec 31, 2016-Jan 1, 2017 (Sat-Sun): Winter Camp & New Year Party.
 January 9, 2017: Summer Camp Registration opens!
 February 11, 2017 (Sat), 12:00noon: Camp Supporter Lunch, RSVP.
 March 2, 2017 (Thurs), 6:30pm: Sow the Seed Banquet, RSVP.
 April 1, 7:30am Spring Workday & 1:00pm Vol Appreciation Luncheon.
 April 28-29, 2017 (Fri-Sat): 16th Sounds of the Mountains Festival.

Camp Bethel campers and fees comparison 2000-2017:

year	# weeks	Camper Days	Total campers	Total +/-	CoB campers	CoB +/-	% CoB to Tot	Subsidized fee available until May 1	cost +/-
2000	8		588		429		72.9%	\$183.00	
2001	8		586	-2	432	+3	73.7%	\$193.00	+\$10.00
2002	7		580	-6	417 (NYC)	-15	71.9%	\$203.00	+\$10.00
2003	7		624	+44	437	+20	70.0%	\$205.00	+\$2.00
2004	8		650	+26	413	-24	63.5%	\$205.00	\$0.00
2005	8		751	+101	436	+23	58.0%	\$210.00	+\$5.00
2006	8		807	+56	413 (NYC)	-23	51.2%	\$210.00	\$0.00
2007	8		859	+52	425	+12	49.5%	\$215.00	+\$5.00
2008	8		876	+17	416	-9	47.5%	\$215.00	\$0.00
2009	8		887	+11	425	+9	47.9%	\$240.00	+\$25.00
2010	8		861	-26	398 (NYC)	-27	46.2%	\$250.00	+\$10.00
2011	8		826	-35	377	-21	45.6%	\$250.00	\$0.00
2012	8		933	+107	423	+46	45.3%	\$260.00	+\$10.00
2013	8		986	+53	368*	-	48% who answered	\$270.00	+\$10.00
2014	8	5,490	979	-7	310* (NYC)	-	45% who answered	\$280.00	+\$10.00
2015	7	5,811	1,209	+230	395*	-	52% who answered	\$290.00	+\$10.00
2016	7	5,542	1,149	-60	270*		49% who answered	\$300.00	+\$10.00
2017	7		Goal 1,250	+101				\$310.00	+\$10.00

Guest Services Coordinator's Report to the OMC, August 26, 2016:

Since March 21, 2016, there have been 1328 guest nights, 961 guest days, and 2139 guest meals. Combined with the figures from Jan. 1 to March 21, that makes a total of 2002 guest nights, 967 guest days, and 2139 guest meals for the year thus far. These figures do NOT count our own winter and summer campers, Sounds of the Mountains day guests, Memorial Day weekend guests, band camps, or fundraisers such as Sow the Seed. (What is a "guest night"? If a group of 10 people spent two nights here, that would mean 20 guest-nights. If a guest was here only for a day event, that counts as a "guest day"). These numbers will mean more to us next year, when we can compare 2016 to 2017.

My own account of guest services income (which DOES include band camps, and lodging for Sounds of the Mountains) totals \$97,993 for the year so far.

Most weekends have found Shelter by the Spring booked by families and churches. The Mennonites moved their retreat to May, leaving more room in August for other guests. This weekend (August 26-29) we have four overnight church retreats, plus Troutville Church of the Brethren here for the day on Sunday.

We all had a challenging week August 1-7. The Pentecostal Missionary Church of Christ (PMCC) group proved to be very high maintenance guests. I think the single most difficult factor was their late arrival to all meals and activities: they would trickle in over a period of 1.5 -2 hours at each meal. This was despite numerous communications over the week to leaders and participants that this practice does not work for Camp Bethel. The Ark is neither a cafeteria nor a restaurant. These folks were very pleasant people, but did not respond to our explanations and needed changes. Despite the high profit for this retreat (once final payment is in, the total income will reach \$22,860), I think the demands of this group are too great for our size of operation here.

The encouraging positive aspect of this PMCC week was our staff. I had a team of counselors to help me clean all the buildings between the end of summer camp and the arrival of the PMCC church group on that Tuesday. I had another team of 6 counselors who worked this week as our adventure staff. When they were not leading climbing, archery, or the swimming pool, they completed many end of summer tasks, as well as set tables and did dishes and helped solve numerous problems. They rallied to help in many ways with the PMCC guests. Brigitte and her team did a fantastic job with the meals.

Busy, busy times at camp since March. I find this to be a job which has more tasks than there is time available. Prioritization is essential. This summer, I had to limit the time I spent on leading nature activities and participating in camper events due to the need to keep up with the guest services work load. I ate lunch in the office rather than the dining hall because that lunch hour was precious productive time with an empty office. I am always looking for time-saving measures in the paperwork and organization of my tasks. If there is an EXCEL expert among the OMC contacts, I could use some help re-organizing my reservation programs. Jenny [Steinbach] set these up during her tenure and her system has been great. Now, four years later, some repairs and tweaking from another expert would be very helpful.

There will be no empty weekends from August to November 13. There are a few weekends with room for one additional guest group.

Again, this summer, I enjoyed leading nature activities. During staff training, our counselors got good exposure to more of our 480 acres. Leading the Adventure Hike Overland to Shale Wall was a high point for me. I think more of our campers and counselors did hiking this summer. One hike, named Kimball's Walk*, saw much increased use: it's shady, flat, short, with many interesting features, a nice relaxing hike for any age. Pond Day and the Nature Corner and Surprise Trail continue to be popular with younger campers.

*Thank you to Kimball Egge, for showing this hike to Gary and me several years ago.

---Beth Heaton

Program Coordinator's Report to the OMC, August 26, 2016

Camp Bethel's Summer of 2016 served 1,149 campers and 43 paid staff members. We held a total of seven weeks of Resident Camp and six Traveling Day Camps. The Traveling Day Camps were located at Peter's Creek Church of the Brethren, Roanoke First Church of the Brethren, Spruce Run Church of the Brethren, Eden First Church of the Brethren, Antioch Church of the Brethren, and Mt. Hermon Church of the Brethren. Camp Bethel's Resident Camp and Traveling Day Camp programming ended on Friday, July 29. We were still able to have programming staff around throughout the next week, August 2-7, with a guest group that was interested in High Ropes, Archery, and the pool. We also had help throughout the week of August 7-13 with the William Byrd Band Camp. The week of August 14 was the first week when Camp Bethel was just occupied by the full time staff.

Throughout the summer weeks my primary job is to manage the summer staff, address any issues that parents have, complete all camper paperwork, and prepare the paperwork for the following week. The 2016 Leadership Team was extremely helpful with keeping up with their programming jobs and helping other staff tackle any issues at hand. Our Leadership Team was a well oiled machine and very reliable. The counseling staff this summer was some of the best I have ever worked with.

Since the summer has ended I have been tying loose ends. I created invoices for all of our churches that participate in Good As Gold and mailed them out. I have been receiving Good As Gold checks throughout the past week. We send out Birthday Cards to our campers throughout the year and I have been working to make sure that all of the Birthday Cards are addressed and filed accordingly. Our campers have the opportunity to purchase Photo DVDs of their week at camp. I have been working diligently to burn these DVDs and get them mailed out to the correct campers. Camp Bethel's offering this summer was 50% to camperships and 50% to school supplies. Campers could donate money or actual school supplies. During one of their Bible Studies they had the opportunity to build a school kit consisting of loose leaf paper, 1" and/or 2" 3-ring binders, spiral notebooks, pocket folders, pens, pencils, pencil pouch, erasers, colored pencils, crayons, Crayola markers, glue sticks, and safety scissors all packed into a book bag. At the end of the summer, a member of our summer staff was able to deliver 11 book bags complete with school supplies and a box of miscellaneous supplies to Eagle Rock Elementary, Breckinridge Elementary, Buchanan Elementary, Greenfield Elementary, and Colonial Elementary and I was able to deliver to Troutville Elementary. The schools were very grateful for the donations.

The rest of my time has been full of cleaning out sections of the office and transforming the office back into the working environment that we had before the summer started. I have also been working in our camper data to try to look at figures to compare them to past years. Since the summer is my focus for so many months I did get behind on sending out "Thank You Letters" for the donations that we have received. I am currently working to complete all of these letters and get them mailed to our donors.

The summer was very rewarding and I am eager to plan for the summer of 2017 when I get back from a week of vacation.

Jenna Stacy
Program Coordinator

Food Services Coordinator's Report to the OMC, August 26, 2016

Between the beginning of leadership staff training on May 24 and the end of the William Byrd High School band camp on August 13, including the PMCC retreat August on August 3-7, we served:

- 176 meals in the dining hall
- Over 1,000 out meals and Home in the Woods meals.
- Between 1,570 (week 4) and 3,600 (week 6/Camp Too Sweet) individual meals in the dining hall each week
- A total of 22,822 individual meals in the Ark (we served 23,700 in 2015)
- Between 200 and 500 people each week at the Friday night closing picnic.

This summer we spent approximately:

- \$37,137 with US Foods for food
 - \$1,900 with US Food for non-food supplies such a paper products and chemicals
 - \$420 for dishwasher rental fees
 - \$1,300 on food purchased retail
 - \$85 on non-food supplies purchased retail
 - \$11,135 on summer staff salaries
 - \$9,340 on my salary and benefits
- \$62,090 total**

Dividing this total by the number of hot meals we served this summer gives us a cost of \$1.73 per meal for the cost of food (both US Foods and retail), \$0.09 for supplies (both US Foods and retail), \$0.92 for salaries (my own and summer staff's), and about \$0.02 to cover dishwasher rental, giving us a total per-meal cost of \$2.75. Actual per-meal cost is slightly lower as the meal total does not include meals eaten outside the Ark, i.e. out meals and Home in the Woods. This is compared to \$2.74 per meal in 2015. Compared to 2015 we spent less on food (\$1.73 per meal vs \$1.79) but more on summer staff wages (\$0.50 per meal vs \$0.44), and the difference more-or-less balanced out. The increase in staff wages resulted from adding a position to the second shift, though that didn't work out quite as we planned.

As is often the case, staffing was the biggest challenge in the kitchen this summer. This summer I added a supervisor position to the second shift, intending for that person to take my place, enabling me to be out of the kitchen or not directly involved in food preparation for the second half of each day. However, one of our resident kitchen staff members quit at the end of staff training and the other quit at the end of week 1, leaving us with two vacant positions on the second shift. We filled one of the positions for weeks 5-7 but never found a permanent person to fill the other. As a result I returned to working both shifts and Jacob Franklin, the other first-shift staff member worked double shifts to cover the other empty position where needed. We did, however, keep the new 5-person model on the second shift where possible, resulting in an overall increase in staff wages on weeks when we actually had five people working that shift.

The staff members who worked the whole summer, Angie LeNoir, Jacob Franklin, and Harrison Porter, and Debbie McAllister, who filled in weeks 5-7 were all excellent workers and did a great job handling our less-than-ideal staffing situation. Angie was a very welcome addition to staff with her commitment, maturity and cooking abilities. Her unflagging encouragement and enthusiasm made her a fast favorite among kitchen staff and counselors alike, and her ability to take on more complicated cooking tasks than is typical for summer staff relieved me of a good deal of stress. Jacob, returning for his fourth summer, was, as always, an exceptionally hard worker willing to step up and cover whatever work needed to be done. His familiarity with the operation and ability to do his job without much oversight helped preserve my sanity during a summer when it seemed I had to train someone on something almost every day, and his sense of humor and willingness to have fun with the job made spending 12 hours a day in the kitchen much more enjoyable than it would have been otherwise. Harrison Porter (our first second-generation kitchen staff ☺) worked as a counselor for the past few summers and decided to try kitchen staff this year. He was a joyful presence, a hard worker, committed to quality, and the best dishwasher we have had on staff in my time here. He also kept us entertained with updates on his personal life (are he and Logan dating? The world may never know...) Debbie McAllister, who filled one of the empty positions for weeks 5-7 and during the PMCC retreat, has had a longstanding relationship with camp through the Luv Buzzards. Her daughter Hannah also worked on staff as a counselor this summer, and when Debbie heard through Hannah that we were desperately looking for someone to fill kitchen staff positions, she stepped up and worked the last four weeks of the summer. She did very well, despite my not being able to devote as much time to training her as I would have liked, became fast friends with Angie and Harrison, and strove to heal us of all that ailed us through liberal application of essential oils. ☺

This was the fourth summer in a row at least one person has quit summer kitchen staff and I am wondering what changes I could make to increase the chances of people sticking around. While each person has expressed a different reason for leaving and I cannot identify an obvious problem, staff retention has nonetheless become an issue I need to address. The resident kitchen staff position I created in 2014 to expand the potential applicant pool to people living outside commuting distance may not be working out as well as I'd hoped. It seems we are having difficulty helping these people feel like a truly integrated part of the staff and, so far, it seems no person in that position has enjoyed both the kitchen and the non-kitchen parts of the job. Some have preferred being in the kitchen and other preferred being out with the program staff, but no one has liked both. This summer both of our resident kitchen staff who quit expressed feelings of confusion about where they fit in outside the kitchen and even anger and not having a clearer role in the organization. On the other side, Jenna was limited in the number of things she could have them do outside the kitchen because they were still relatively unfamiliar with the program and how we "do camp." Eliminating the resident position and returning to an all-local staff model would eliminate this problem-- non-resident staff have a well-defined role: They come and work their shift in the kitchen and are not expected to be involved in anything else-- but reintroduce the one of having to pull a quality kitchen staff from only local applicants, something that has proven difficult in the past. I have not decided how to proceed in the future. I have considered leaving the resident kitchen staff position open only to those with a prior relationship with camp, by invitation only, so to speak. This would make integration into the program much easier than it is with entirely new people since those with a prior relationship with camp will be familiar with the program and already know some of the staff. This would still leave us with a limited applicant pool though. It also seems I could hone my skills at discerning whether applicants really are a good fit for the job. Something to mull over for next year...

Brigitte Burton
22 Aug 2015