

Xenia News

the newsletter of UPPER NEW YORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE
CAMP & RETREAT MINISTRIES • The United Methodist Church

Xenia: Xenia is the Greek concept of hospitality - or generosity - and courtesy shown to those who are away from home. It is often translated as "guest-friendship" because the rituals of hospitality create and express a reciprocal relationship between guest and host.



ISSUE VIII

SPRING 2015

A Note From the Director of Camp & Retreat Ministries

Dictionary.com defines mentor as 'an experienced and trusted adviser.' As I reflect on the number of meaningful mentors in my life I am overcome with gratitude to God for the people I have learned from and been blessed by throughout the years. I have had many mentors, but now and then there is a person that is more than that - a Spiritual Guide, or a Wise Counsel. There is one such person that I miss a lot. Although Sharon Fulmer served as the Director of Communications for the former North Central NY Conference and did a tremendous amount of marketing for camp and retreat ministries - as well as actively donating time, worms for fishing, Oreos for the office and financial resources to camp - she was much more a mentor, guide, spiritual counselor and friend to me. She has gone to be with God - taken too soon from us - but home among the heavenly realm. Sharon was an advocate and faithful donor. Although camp was important to Sharon, her family was most important to her. Each year prior to her granddaughter being old enough to come to sleep away camp, she would ask me how old a child needed to be to go to camp. She was so excited the year Morgen turned old enough to go to camp on her own. Morgen has come every year since, and is now a senior in high school applying to work on staff! Morgen has been a participant for 12 years and now, much like her grandmother, serves as an advocate, friend, donor and leader (and possibly a mentor) of her peers: a life transformed that is now transforming others as a Disciple of Christ.

There are tens of thousands of people like Sharon and Morgen that have experienced one of our six centers and found or strengthened a relationship with Christ and an appreciation for the Creator God. This is a relationship that affects all other relationships. For this issue of Xenia News, Morgen Fulmer agreed to offer a Story of Transformation from our Holy Grounds.

Find out how you may get involved and/or support Camp and Retreat Ministries at www.campsandretreats.org or by calling 315-424-7878 Ext. 309

Story of Transformation on these Holy Grounds

"If someone were to ask me where my favorite place is, I would easily say Casowasco. But, it is more than just the buildings or the land, it is the amazing people that you meet there and the friends that you take away after a week at summer camp or time spent at a retreat. When I was five, my grandma convinced my parents to sign me up for camp. She had been volunteering there for many years so she knew that I would love it. I don't remember much from Summer Jams, except that I slipped in mud after archery and was covered from head to toe.

Apparently that didn't matter though, because I without a doubt wanted to go back the following year. For twelve years I would count down the days to camp. And each of those years, I still felt the same overwhelming excitement when I got there on Sunday afternoon. It never failed that I instantly became friends with the girls in my cabin and the kids in my program. Although I had never met most of them before, camp bonds form faster than any other. It is not often that one can go to a place and feel completely welcome and completely accepted but, that is just the norm at camp. Some of the girls that I met over the years have become my best friends. Without camp, I would have never met them or been able to see them every summer. I've always said that camp friends are the best friends you can have and I whole heartedly believe that. Not only do we bond over common interests but its normal to talk about our faith. Ultimately, I have camp to thank for my strong sense of faith. If it were not for the encouragement from staff or the support of other campers, I would not be in the same spot I am today.

It is one thing to learn about God from church and by reading the Bible. But, it is such an experience to actively learn about it through activities with other people who are at the same point in their life. Full immersion through chapel, grace at meals, or even buddy checks is just part of it. It is the constant reminder that Jesus is there in everything you do that really strengthens faith for the entire year. No matter what happens throughout the year, camp is always a place to turn to. The 'bubble' as it is often called, is never fully closed. Camp continues to transform your life even after you've said goodbye." Morgen Fulmer



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Moravia, NY
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SKY LAKE
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"Transforming Lives"

Shari Mudge named Seasonal Site Manager for Aldersgate Camp and Retreat Center

Mike Huber, Upper NY Conference Director of Camp and Retreat Ministries, has named Shari Mudge Seasonal Site Manager for Aldersgate Camp and Retreat Center. Shari will serve as the site host for guest groups and be the primary contact for public relations and volunteer recruitment. "I am very excited about Shari joining our seasonal team of staff," Huber said. "She has been an advocate and critical member of the extended camp and retreat community so it's fitting that she moves into this role as a primary contact for guest relations. Her love of Jesus and passion for Aldersgate will be real blessings." Although her role will primarily be to serve guest camp groups, Mudge will also assist Huber the week of July 12-17, 2015 for the week of UNYAC summer camp. Huber will serve as the camp director for the week.



Over the last 30+ years Shari has served as a Camp Counselor, as a local church camping agent and as a member of the leadership team for the Family Life Weekend and seasonal office work. Shari recently served as a member of the Strategic Planning Committee looking at all six of our beautiful camp and retreat centers.

Over the past 30 years God has expanded Shari's love for camp from Aldersgate to all of our 6 Camp and Retreat Ministry sites. Recently Shari attended the National Gathering of Camp and Retreat Leaders at Epworth by the Sea on St. Simon's Island in Georgia. Shari said, "It was awesome to be around all of the people serving so faithfully all around our United Methodist Camp and Retreat Ministry connection! It was like meeting new family. I learned so much and I am excited to learn more. People come to all of our Camp and Retreat centers to find a safe place where they can be accepted and be themselves, we meet Christ here!"

*You can be the reason
someone's life is changed.*

Upper New York Celebrates Ministry of Jim Krager with Expansion of the Lakeside Nature Trail

It was a full house in Founder's Lodge on Saturday, April 11, 2015, as friends, family and co-workers wished retiring director, Jim Krager, well and thanked him for his 45 years of ministry at Sky Lake.

Rev. Nancy Adams, Mountain View District Superintendent, spoke as a former (and returning!) Sky Lake summer volunteer dean; Rev. Bill Gottschalk-Fielding, Director of Connectional Ministries, offered a prayer for Jim and his wife, Cindy, as they begin their retirement journey; and Bishop Mark Webb offered words of appreciation



and presented Jim with a beautiful engraved plaque cut from a tree round.



Jim's colleagues on the staff of Camp & Retreat Ministries took great pleasure in presenting him with gifts interspersed with ideas of how to enjoy retirement and humorous stories about their working relationships.

One of the highlights of the afternoon occurred after all the gifts had been presented and the CRM staff asked Jim to unveil the last "gift" and offer it back to the crowd gathered in his honor. Learning shortly before the event that Jim had a unique talent of playing the anvil, the staff conspired to move Jim's anvil from the Sky Lake office to the stage of Founder's Lodge (no easy feat because of the weight of the anvil & stand) and ask him to play it accompanied by Giuseppe Verdi's Anvil Chorus from the production of "Il Trovatore." Jim was surprised, to say the least, as he took each layer off the "gift" and found his anvil on center stage. Good sport that he is, he performed unrehearsed to a very pleased and appreciative crowd of over 100 people.



Good food, great entertainment, words of appreciation, and precious memories made this an "over the top" event for all.

The afternoon ended with all present singing the "Good Night song" ... a tradition that happens each evening as Sky Lake campers are sent off to bed.

In honor of Jim's love of nature and his 45 years of ministry, CRM is raising funds to expand the Lakeside Nature Trail at Sky Lake, adding wildlife viewing stations, interpretive signs, benches, bridges, a refurbished accessible walking trail and landscaping. A trailhead sign will honor Jim's ministry at Sky Lake. Interested parties may donate to the Lakeside Nature Trail Project by writing a check to "UNYAC-Sky Lake Trail Expansion" and sending it to UNYAC, 324 University Ave. 3rd fl., Syracuse New York OR donating online at www.skylakecenter.org.

Lakeside Nature Trail - Sky Lake Camp & Retreat Center
Help us reach our goal of \$25,000!



Gifts received..... \$5,050

Dear Friends and Supporters...

Throughout this newsletter we have given you several opportunities to partner with Camp & Retreat Ministries to make a financial gift that will increase capacity at our wonderful centers and provide opportunities for individuals to have their lives changed by the transforming power of God's love.

Your past support has been so appreciated and has been instrumental in helping us offer a premier summer camp program as well as a wide variety of adult retreats. We are here to serve you – to provide a place of respite when you feel the need to be renewed, and a place to grow in your relationship with God.

In this uncertain economic time, Camp & Retreat Ministries counts on your support – now more than ever. Your gift is extremely important because it provides resources that make an immediate impact on the services we are able to provide.

Your tax-deductible contribution of \$100, \$500, \$1,000, \$5,000, or more can make a world of difference. You might even consider adopting and funding one of the projects highlighted in the centerfold of this newsletter.

Please consider making as generous a gift as you can – and thank you in advance for your help. Gifts may be sent to Camp & Retreat Ministries 324 University Ave. Syracuse, NY 13210 or give online at www.campsandretreats.org.

Upper New York Confirmation Retreat

Confirmation in The United Methodist Church is a time of intentional preparation; it gives youth the opportunity to reflect on the most basic tenets of our faith and gives them a safe environment to ask questions and grapple with the divine truths and mysteries proclaimed by the church of Jesus Christ. Confirmation helps youth investigate the depths of faith and helps them begin to understand what it means to become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ, and to make their first public profession of faith.

It has been the vision of Executive Director of Camp & Retreat Ministries, Michael Huber, Resident Bishop, Mark Webb and the Order of Deacons of the Upper New York Annual Conference to be actively involved in spiritual leadership development and partnering with local churches to host a conference- wide Confirmation Retreat - and we did it.

More than 190 youth throughout the Upper New York Annual Conference joined for a two day Confirmation retreat at Asbury, Casowasco and Sky Lake participating in small group discussions, games, learning the United Methodist connection and worship.

Bishop Mark Webb greeted the youth in attendance and shared that, "Confirmation is now a time for you to individually respond to that amazing gift from God, to then become a part of a community, the body of Christ that helps us to live our faith."

The feedback from the retreat was overwhelmingly positive and planning has already begun for next year. Save March 11-12, 2016 for next year's retreat!





CAMP & RETREAT MINISTRIES SCHOLARSHIP FUND

\$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$150 \$75 \$50 \$25 Other \$ _____

I'd like to sponsor a child for a week of camp (\$425)

Please use my gift for Aldersgate Asbury Casowasco
 Findley Sky Lake Skye Farm Where Needed Most

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____ email _____

Method of Payment _____ Check Number _____ Visa _____ MasterCard _____ Exp Date _____ Security code _____

Card Number _____ Cardholder's name (print) _____

Cardholder's Signature _____

Please make checks payable to "UNYAC - CRM" and mail to 324 University Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210
*gifts to Asbury will be used for the General Fund

In addition to helping fund children from local United Methodist Churches, CRM is offering an increased number of scholarships to partner agencies such as Warren County Cooperative Extension; Binghamton, Auburn & Syracuse Rescue Mission & Syracuse Housing Authority. Your gift will enable us to extend a helping hand to families who would not otherwise be able to send their children to summer camp.

Fit4Life

Eight participants in the first ever Fit4Life program are on track to live a healthier lifestyle after attending a weekend retreat May 1-3 at Findley Camp & Retreat Center.

The weather cooperated beautifully as Shawn Blakeslee, owner of Fit4Life Ministry, led the group through a variety of activities including early morning aerobic workouts, nutritional counseling, motivational speakers, team-building activities, Bible studies, worship, cooking classes and recreational challenges.



Participants encouraged each other as they canoed across Findley Lake, took a mile-long hike up hills and through the woods, and engaged in a boot-camp style training exercise.

The goal ... to give participants the tools needed to make lifelong changes and attain vibrant health in their body, soul, spirit and relationships allowing them to enjoy life to its fullest and as God intended ... was certainly met and even exceeded as participants have shared a commitment to healthy nutrition, exercise and connecting with God on a daily basis.

Interested in making a healthy change in lifestyle? Jump start your commitment with a week-long Fit4Life program to be held at Findley August 2-7, 2015. Log on to www.campfindley.org for additional information or to register online.

ALDERSGATE

A big THANK YOU goes out to Aldersgate's Family Life Weekend (FLW) participants who have adopted the little Chapel in the Pines and raised funds to make renovations and upgrades which will provide continued program and worship space and prolong the life of this iconic building which once served as the Methodist Protestant Church at Brantingham's Four Corners.



We are excited about the renovation of the first cabin in Aldersgate's Section "C" area which has laid the groundwork for upgrading that cabin area into a year-round family-friendly retreat space. What was once a very rustic facility has been transformed into a beautiful retreat cabin featuring two bedrooms, a full bathroom with shower, living area and kitchenette. It has been fully furnished and is available for rental now. Five additional cabins await renovation in order to open Section "C" for year-round use. Would YOU consider adopting a cabin for \$25,000? **We're looking for churches and/or individuals who will make a gift to help us reach our goal of having all six (6) cabins fully upgraded.**

CASOWASCO

Many thanks to Robert Cockram of Lansing for donating the necessary funds for a new roof on the Lakeview Chapel at Casowasco, completed in mid-October 2014. The former roof was put on by summer staff members in the 1980's (one of whom was Robert's son!), but was beginning to show signs of leaking. After the previous donor-funded upgrades to the Lakeview Chapel in 2014, the roof was one more significant step for the building's preservation. Robert's cousin, Alice Sherman of Elbridge, is also a longtime supporter of Casowasco. Alice volunteers throughout the summer to help each week with Check-In on Sundays, and donated the funds to construct the upper walk bridge and has given towards repairs to the lower driving path that crosses the creek from Galilee to Emmaus. Heavy rains in recent years have swelled the creek, increasing erosion on the eastern bank of the existing culvert, resulting in sagging pavement. Roughly \$15,000 are needed towards this repair.

We are also working to raise funds for a new roof on the kitchen (\$40,000) as well as a replacement of the Pier (\$50,000) which has sustained major ice damage. The Pier is being repaired for this season but is at the end of its 25 year life expectancy. **Through your donation, you can help keep Casowasco a place where lives are transformed for many generations to come.**



SKY LAKE

CRM bids farewell to Jim Krager, director of Sky Lake, on June 30th, and welcomes Matthew Williams, current program director, on board as the new interim director of the site. Jim served an unprecedented 45 years at Sky Lake; and you will read about his retirement celebration and the expansion of the Lakeside Nature Trail in his honor elsewhere in this newsletter.



We're excited about the possibility of offering summer campers and retreat guests two new program experiences this year; and with your help, will put in place an archery range and low initiatives challenge course. The archery range will be located between the West shore and East shore of Sky Lake, and will be incorporated into the range of programming that summer campers experience. The low initiatives challenge course will consist of elements like Wild Woozy, All Aboard, Nitro Crossing, Acid River, Spider's Web. A good portion of the challenge course will be built in-house, with other portions outsourced to Project Adventure, a premier builder of challenge courses throughout the country. **We welcome your financial gifts which will enable us put the archery range in place at a cost of \$2,500; and to construct the low initiatives challenge course at a cost of \$5,000.**

ASBURY

Thanks to the generosity of the Norb Sylor family, Asbury's lakefront area has begun a transformation into a garden and park-like setting. Norb was manager of Asbury from 1970 to 1988, and because of a generous financial gift made last year from the Sylor family and friends in memory of Norb's wife, Wilma (who served as the Kitchen Manager throughout their time at Asbury), we have been able to purchase a beautiful gazebo beginning the beautification and repurposing of the area where the Old Manor once stood. The total cost of Phase 1 of the planned lakefront project will be \$23,500 and will include:

- Grading, reseeding, and draining of the Old Manor lawn area - \$10,000
- Restoration of the Stone Archway \$6,000 / Repairing the stone wall \$2,000
- Addition of a Labyrinth - \$2,500
- General Landscaping - \$3,000



YOU can help us transform this area into a beautiful park-like garden with your financial gift.

FINDLEY

A BIG shout-out goes to Don and Elizabeth Blakeslee for their generous gift that allowed us to repair the broken and uneven pavement between Showers Hall and Weaver Dining Hall. We've scraped up the pavement, done some leveling of the area, packed in gravel and built steps down from the Showers porch, repaving the entire area between the buildings. Their gift allowed us to repair the pavement on the path to Gregory Lodge as well.



A dream for this summer is to upgrade our waterfront area providing new equipment for summer campers.

You can make our dream come true by making a financial gift to help us purchase two pair of water skis (\$200/pair); 1 knee board (\$200); 1 wakeboard (\$400); 2 stand up paddleboards (\$800 - \$1200 each); and 1 water trampoline (\$3,000). From the waterfront to the woods ... two suspended tents (\$700 each) would allow campers to experience camping out under the stars.

Would you consider a financial gift which will help us make our dream come true?

SKYE FARM

A generous gift from Rev. Steve and Joan Butler has provided the resources necessary to fix a long standing issue with the double-sided fireplace in the Luther Brown dining hall. Families on retreat during the Memorial Day Family Camp were able to gather and sing by the warmth of the fire thanks to this gift.

Thanks to the generosity of Lauri Nair, we are in the process of renovating Junior Washhouse with upgrades including new floor drains, resurfaced concrete floors, new sinks and showers, enhanced accessibility features, and high efficiency utility equipment. Lauri, who began as a counselor in 1975, joined the staff of music camp from 1976 to 1999, and has volunteered a total of 27 years at Skye Farm. She has committed a major gift in three phases - some of which is in the form of stock transfers; and has chosen to fund the Junior Washhouse project with the intentional effort of making the building accessible for individuals with mobility issues. Central Washhouse is next on our wish list with a price tag of approximately \$20,000. **Please consider a gift that will upgrade this facility in the heart of main camp.**





CAMP & RETREAT MINISTRIES
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**UPPER NEW YORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE
 CAMP & RETREAT MINISTRIES**

JOIN US FOR ONE OF OUR 2015 EVENTS!

Transforming lives

Jun 5-6	Faith, Paper, Scissors	Asbury
Jun 15-17	Primetime at the Lake	Asbury
Jul 13-15	Together Time: A Family Retreat	Asbury
Jul 16-18	Sharing Hope	Asbury
Jul 17-19	Family Life Weekend	Aldersgate
Jul 19-23	Reach Out: Community Mission Experience	Asbury
Jul 26-29	Asbury Express I & II: Power Up!	Asbury
Jul 26-Aug 1	Family Bible Camp	Findley
Aug 2-5	Asbury Express III: You Are Never Alone	Asbury
Aug 2-7	Fit4Life	Findley
Aug 13-16	The Silver Lake Experience	Asbury
Aug 15-18	Intergenerational Camp	Sky Lake
Aug 16-19	Family Camp	Casowasco
Aug 16-19	Father-Son Adventure	Casowasco
Aug 16-19	Mother-Daughter Adventure	Casowasco
Aug 23-25	Lakeside Escape: Women's Retreat "Finding Balance"	Asbury
Sept 4-7	AdironDog Retreat	Aldersgate
Sept 4-7	Labor Day Weekend	Sky Lake
Sept 11-13	Adult Canoe Camp	Skye Farm
Sept 12	Fellows of the Forest: A Day Apart for Men	Sky Lake
Sept 18-20	Beside Still Waters	Asbury
Sept 19	Out of the 'Gate 5K	Aldersgate
Sept 24-27	Quilt by Faith	Casowasco
Oct 2-4	Fall Adirondack Get-Away	Aldersgate
Oct 2-4	Craft & Quilt Retreat	Asbury
Oct 4	Sky Lake 5K Trail Run & Walk	Sky Lake
Oct 9-11	Ladies of the Lake	Sky Lake
Nov 20-22	Taste and See: Just Desserts	Casowasco
Nov 12-15	Generations Scrapbooking Retreat	Findley
Dec 11-12	Be Still: A Silent Retreat	Casowasco
Dec 30-Jan 1	Camp Echo	Casowasco