

Camping and Youth Report
Yellowstone Presbytery
November 2011

Fall Retreat

Junior High and Senior High Fall Retreat took place at Rockhaven Camp on October 20-22. Speakers included Curt Kochner, George Goodrich and Traci Ruschetti. Jody McDevitt organized publicity, registration, meals, recreation and other details for the event. The high ropes course provided the primary recreational activity. 36 young people and 8 adult leaders from six churches attended the retreat.

Westminster Spires 2011 Camp Season

Staffing

Curt Kochner served as Camp Registrar and Camp Manager.
George Goodrich led Staff Training, Elementary Camp and Senior High Camp
David Andrew assisted with Elementary Camp and led Junior High Camp
Cynthia Kessler served as counselor for Elementary and Junior High Camp

Youth staff included Kristin Kochner, Leah Wright, Eric Weins, Kyle McClain, Dani Repka, Hailey Muller

Bill Scott served for the third year as cook assisted by his wife Belinda and granddaughter Mara.

Ideally, the staffing for each camp will include at least three adult leaders. It worked very well to have Cynthia Kessler on staff for Elementary and Junior High camp. Cynthia's strong background in camping, education, crafts and her general presence was an excellent addition to the staff. Having three adults also helped in providing transportation with drivers for three vans.

Transportation

Billings 1st provided their 15 passenger van for the entire camp season. This helped keep transportation costs down. An additional 15 passenger van was rented for Senior High camp so all campers could be transported in two vans. No bus rental costs were incurred.

Program

The "Got Spirit?" curriculum provided the themes and foundation for the program and talks each day. Journals were made and distributed to all campers and these were used as a structure and foundation to guide them through the study times and talks. Elementary Camp included a full range of activities and crafts to keep the campers engaged throughout the day and evening. Special events included a trip to the Beartooth Nature Center in Red Lodge, swimming in Red Lodge and Lance Johnson was brought in to provide instruction on water color painting. Additional crafts included friendships bracelets, leather craft, tin can candle holders, journal cover decorating, bunk name tags.

Junior High camp special events included a hike, swimming in Red Lodge, water color painting with Lance Johnson and a trip up Beartooth Pass. Crafts included prayer flags, friendship bracelets, leather craft, tin can candle holders, faux stained glass windows made with tissue paper, plate painting, journal cover decorating.

Senior High camp special events included a hike to Broadwater Lake, swimming in Red Lodge, trip up Beartooth Pass and a raft trip. Crafts included Crafts included prayer flags, friendship bracelets, leather craft, plate painting, journal cover decorating.

Facilities

TOP PRIORITY: Complete the installation of the water system to the new well. At this time it appears that we will need approximately \$10,000 more to complete this project.

30 new mattresses were donated (15 are 36" wide and 15 are 30" wide). All fabric mattresses have been replaced. Six bunks were extended to accommodate 36" mattresses and to provide more comfortable seating space. Most bunks at camp are 30".

Quite a bit of brush has been gathered into several key areas, and Simon plans to burn these piles during the months when snow in on the ground. Additional work to clean up brush needs to be made to help with fire suppression efforts. Getting trees and lower branches away from buildings and removing the lower branches of trees should be a priority.

There are a number of large dead trees on the property that will need to be removed at some point. However, many of these will most likely need to be removed by professionals due to the size and placement (near buildings and/or power lines). The forest service is interested in working with the camp to address fire suppression and health of the forest.

Budget

We had 48 campers paying fees for the 2011 season.

-9 Elementary campers @ \$210	1,890
-16 Junior High campers @ \$235	3,760
-23 Senior High campers @ \$260	<u>5,980</u>
Total income from camp fees	11,630

Income from campers 6,766

Yellowstone Presbytery Scholarships 1,003

Total Church Scholarships 3,861

-Butte church scholarships 600

-Hysham church scholarships 1,441

-St. Andrew Scholarships 560

-Billings 1st scholarships 495

-Wolf Point scholarships 270

-Lewistown scholarships 235

-Deer Lodge scholarship 260

Donations

15 new 30" mattresses donated \$1,890 (30" mattresses were special order)

15 new 36" mattresses donated 1,590

Additional donations 1,565.89 (copies/postage/facilities/food/travel/supplies)

In Kind and Volunteer Donations

Billings 1st Presbyterian 15 passenger van donated for full camp season

Billings St. Andrew Use of chimes/music books/electronic piano

Curt Kochner and Susan Thomas Use of flat screen TV/printer/DVD Player/computer

George Goodrich and David Andrew Volunteer leadership for camps/ computers

Curt Kochner and Susan Thomas Used freezer donated for the kitchen

Hailey Muller Computer

Other Items and Opportunities:

Revamp the Camp in early June included 25 participants with a large contingent from Butte. Considerable work including painting was completed during Revamp the Camp, and the camp looks better than it has in a long time.

We heard interest from several campers that are interested in serving as counselors or CITs next year. This will enable us to expand and continue to develop our camp leaders for the future.

Find a church or individual to donate 6-8 picnic tables to be placed around the camp for small groups or individuals to gather.

Add at least one more week of camp next year. Possibilities:

- Brush with God- Meditation and work camp focused on personal meditation and clearing brush
- Family camp- Low cost vacation opportunity for families with children
- Walk with God- Hiking/backpacking camp with Westminster Spires as the home base
- Adult camp- Similar program to youth camp to include Study/Crafts/Hiking/Fishing/Meditation/Music/Worship/Work

Conclusion

We had a very successful season of camp and other events and activities at Westminster Spires. The foundation for future camp seasons was built upon, and there are many positive opportunities to continue to provide outdoor ministry experiences at the camp.

Westminster Spires was used approximately eight weeks of the season.

Revamp the Camp

Visiting youth group from North Dakota

Camp Training

Elementary Camp

Junior High Camp

Senior High Camp

Nathan Family Reunion

Rocky Mountain College Cross Country

Highland Holy Days

MSU Billings Freshman Leadership Academy

The program for each week of summer youth camp was well received by the campers, and it appears we will have an opportunity to increase the number of campers next year. Interest in camp leadership positions was expanded. Ideally, we will be able to retain adult leadership (George Goodrich, David Andrew, Curt Kochner, Cynthia Kessler), and add more adult leaders to the staff next year. Interest from youth leaders seems to be strong and can be expanded to include a broader range of staff members.

The camp has the capacity to add at least three more weeks of activities. The future success of programming at Westminster Spires will depend on the interest and involvement of volunteers and staff from churches who are committed to supporting outdoor ministry in Yellowstone Presbytery.