



Council of Advocates
Camp and Retreat Ministry
gocamping.org

Joining Life, Land, and Spirit

Friend of Camp Ministries
1234 Mountains to Beach Rd
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Council of Advocates

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Dear Friend,

Why do hundreds of young people across Oregon and Idaho look forward to going back to church camp each year? And why do thousands of adults look back on those years with such positive memories? Eighth grader, Maddy Hauenstein, wrote a school paper this fall sharing her personal camp testimony:

No cliques, no geeks, preps, pops, emos, goths, druggies or any other stereotype. No one judges you on who you hang out with, what you looked like in sixth grade, or what you said in seventh. Sound like heaven? Well it is for me. I've gone to camp every summer since first grade. I love it there more than I can ever put in words.

Bringing young people or adults together from diverse cultures and racial/ethnic backgrounds, rural and urban settings, and varying life experiences helps build a community of acceptance. Most camps and retreat programs help participants forget whatever burdens they have been carrying as they discover others face similar issues and all can find hope in God's love.

The people at camp are super-cool and dorky at the same time. It's a perfect fit for me. The friends I meet at camp are like family when I leave. Though we have to wait a year to see each other again, we keep in touch via Facebook, text and email. We make plans to see each other again. No other place gives you that type of friendship. There is no negative energy at camp. Everyone loves to be there. I'm already looking forward to next summer.

Building new disciples is a major focus of a camp or retreat experience. Leadership development opportunities continue to equip spiritual leaders for local congregations. In addition to spiritual food, each of our sites is also giving nutrition a new look for healthy minds and bodies. Fresh local produce is on every menu fixed in creative ways by food service staff who continually strive to meet today's dietary demands. Campers confront an expansive view of stewardship and care for the earth through their participation in camp life.

Camp is where I find God again. I've noticed that is easy to lose sight of God in the real world and school world. But in the camp world God is all around me. Camp helps me prepare for the insanity and crazy drama of school. It's my saving grace.

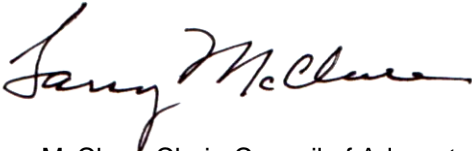
Maddy believes it's not just during camp worship or study times where encounters with God occur, but throughout the camp experience on forest hikes, beach walks, swimming and boating; at campfires and during talent shows; when cleaning cabins or doing KP; playing cooperative games or planting trees as a group service project.

Year-round camp and retreat programs sponsored by local churches and faith-based organizations put a high priority on faith development for all ages. But even the many secular groups we host at our site facilities cannot escape the spiritual atmosphere they enter and the visible symbols of our Christian mission. One of our sites greets every group with this welcome: "It is the practice of our staff to hold every group in prayer as we anticipate your arrival. We will also hold you in prayer while you are here." What an impact that makes on guests!

I only find one bad thing about camp: leaving and coming home. Camp is nothing short of magical. It is the place I want to be...the place I belong...the place I love.

It's testimonies like Maddy's that inspire folks like you and me to keep digging deeper each year to support these amazing programs. Our shared goal is to help more young people and adults alike enjoy similar experiences on their journeys of faith. Ellie and I take advantage of the monthly electronic transfer option to make sure support is received all year long. We designate our gifts to be used as needed, but you always have the option to direct your gift to a favorite site or purpose.

Thank you for making this your priority too!



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P.S.

At this time of year, your Council of Advocates asks for help with dozens of **immediate** 2010 operating needs that fees don't cover, such as equipment updating, emergency repairs, camperships and special ministries such as Bibles for campers, Creation Vacation for low-income families, Camp Hope for adults with disabilities, Strength for the Journey (adults living with HIV/AIDS), and day camps in local churches.

This annual appeal to camp and retreat supporters is different from the Time to Grow capital campaign. Time to Grow is aimed at donors who believe it's time to build and upgrade major site facilities to prepare for future generations.

For information on the Time to Grow campaign, contact:

Chair, Helen Ober at hobo6@verizon.net or (971) 241-5985

Campaign Manager, Rev. Bill Hays at revhays@gmail.com or (541) 974-7207.

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