

Natural: ☹️: Links

PRAYER

We pray for people in the U.S and around the world impacted by coronavirus.

We pray for comfort for those who have lost loved ones, and for those who have been quarantined and are feeling alone.

We pray for healing for those who are sick.

We pray for safety, strength and compassion for medical workers who may be overwhelmed caring for those who are battling various illnesses, and workers who are exposed to greater risks.

We pray that our public officials act with compassion and wisdom as they work to contain the virus.

We pray for those without access to health care, and for those who don't know how they will make it if they get sick and can't go to work.

We pray that your peace will guard our hearts and minds so that we are not overcome by anxiety and fear.

God, inspire in us ways to show your love to one another and to ourselves.

Guide our hearts and our actions to greater care, kindness and generosity in the midst of these fears and uncertainties.

-by Mennonite Church USA Staff

MCA BOARD

Communication will be sent out soon explaining updated membership information and introducing the new MCA officers. Stay tuned!

DOVE'S NEST WEBINAR

Healthy Boundaries and Prevention Steps at Camp & Virtual Camp

This Dove's Nest live Zoom training will address protective and risk factors in both in-person and virtual camp settings, what kids are bringing to camp in terms of abuse history, experiences with COVID-10 and other vulnerabilities, and strategies on how camp directors can establish healthy boundaries for all at their camps. The webinar will include an interactive exercise utilizing the *SafeZone: Promoting Healthy Boundaries in Christian Camps* booklet. Speaker Anna Groff is executive director of Dove's Nest: Faith Communities Keeping Children and Youth Safe.

Friday, May 1, 2020 at 2PM EST

To register for the training, email mennonitecamping@gmail.com with your name and camp name, you will then be sent the Zoom link and password. Please email by Friday, 10AM EST. Space is limited.

This training is free for all MCA member camp staff and board.

STAY CONNECTED

The following Zoom meetings are being held for any MCA member staff who are interested in joining:

Canadian Camps Meeting: Thursday, April 30 at 11:30am EST
Contact: Chris Pot at chrispot@hiddenacres.ca for login information

West/Mid Regional Executive Director Meeting: Wednesday, May 6 at 3pm EST
Contact: Matt Ropp at execdir@amigocentre.org for login information

Eastern Regional Executive Director Meeting: Thursday, May 7 at 2pm EST
Contact: Jeanette Lahm at jlahm@laurelville.org for login information

Program Director/Staff Meeting: Thursday, May 14 at 2pm CST
Contact: Olivia Bartel at olivia.bartel@campmennoscah.org for login information



CAMP UPDATES

Camp Keola, Huntington Beach, CA, www.campkeola.org

As a summer-only camp, Camp Keola normally has two weeks of summer camp, and six weeks of rental groups. As of currently, the two weeks of summer camps have been canceled, and one of the rental groups has canceled. Whether or not the camp can open this season at all is up in the air. The Sierra National Forest, in which Keola is located, has closed all its developed facilities and there is a tentative reopening date of April 30.

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Natural Links

CAMP UPDATES

Camp Deerpark, Westbrookville, NY, www.campdeerpark.org

by Ken Bontrager, executive director

Camp Deerpark, of course, is 85 miles from the epicenter of the Coronavirus in the United States. It means that our campers, guests groups, donors, owner churches, etc. are all in the middle of the stress of the virus. Here at Camp Deerpark, the Bontrager family has all tested positive for the virus and our construction supervisor, Ben Cheek has also tested positive (Interestingly enough, no one else in his family tested positive.) As our staff have reached out to campers, parents, and former summer staff all are eager to be back at camp this summer. Of course, we have no idea at this point if we will be allowed to run camp or if we can do it in a responsible way. As we have reached out to pastors and group leaders we have heard stories of discouragement, sadness, emotional and physical fatigue. But we have also heard stories of inspirational faith and courage. One owner church is holding a Zoom hang out with members every evening. Another church took the pastors and elders to a park to play soccer for an afternoon.

The most encouraging truth that I have been holding onto over the past month came from my brother, Hugo Monroy:

...we are now in the desert! We just came out of Egypt, and we have not a clue where the promise land is. We do not want to go back to Egypt, it is so scary the Lord did not let his people know how things were back in Egypt, after the 10 plagues. The purpose for the desert is communion with God and with each other. Exodus 19:3-6. Fellowship with the Lord is the only salvation trekking the desert, only HE knows the way; no gps, and no maps for that. The desert is scary in many ways: no known resources, no water, no crops, heat during the day, cold during the night, etc. But we are ok if the presence of the Lord is with us. We only have to make sure that a 40 day journey does not turn into a 40 year endeavor. All transitions have those three parts, Egypt, desert, promise land. The first part also has 3 parts: 1. What do i need to end? What do I (we) need to stop doing? 2. What do we need to do, start doing? 3. Dealing with the emotional issues of loss. What are the loses? What do I (we) miss the most? Talk freely, grief the loses, let people express their feelings, validate those feelings. Because we are in the hands of the living God we will be OK. We will get to the promise land. Even this time is part of God's grace.

Blessings,

Hugo

Being creative and thinking outside of the box

Many camps have used their creativity to continue to bring joy and activities unique to their camp to campers and constituents. Here are a few examples:

Hidden Acres, New Hamburg, ON: A calendar of activities for the month of April for families was created. It contains a variety of online, video or paper activities. It can be found on their website <https://hiddenacres.ca/updates-and-activities>.

Amigo Centre, Sturgis, MI: At Amigo, Cheryl Mast, Outdoor Education Coordinator has compiled and created a number of activities to encourage individuals to get outside during this time: www.amigocentre.org/camp-at-home.html

Crooked Creek Christian Camp, Washington, IA: Sharing some resources with Amigo, Crooked Creek has also created several ways for campers to get outdoors and engage both on their website and on Facebook.

Pine Lake Fellowship Camp, Meridian, MS: Pine Lake has been creatively engaging campers on Facebook with regular "Today's Camp Corner" postings and held a "Camp Song Madness" bracket.

What has your camp been doing to stay connected with campers during this time? What are you plans for the summer? Email mennonitecamping@gmail.com and share your creativity!

See if you can find Felix in each of the pictures below!



Amigo Centre
Camp Amigo
AT HOME
GEOLOGY SCAVENGER HUNT

Rocks are so unique. See if you can find the following:

- Shaped like an animal or animal head
- Contains a letter of the alphabet
- Shaped like an arrowhead
- A stone that is a fossil or contains fossils
- Heart-shaped
- Granite (igneous rock made up of multiple minerals)
- Shaped like a state, providence or country
- "Pudding stone" (conglomerate)