



NATURAL LINKS

MENNONITE CAMPING ASSOCIATION

JOB OPENINGS

Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, MI, is seeking a full-time guest services director to guide and implement all aspects of guests' experience – from initial inquiry, to arrival, and post-visit evaluation. This person will also oversee housekeeping, the camp store, and general office administration, seeking to integrate our core value of hospitality into all we do. Interested candidates are invited to submit a resume and letter of intent to Jenna@Friedenswald.org. The posting will remain open until filled.

Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, MI, is seeking a full-time program director to bring visionary leadership to camp programming, expanding and developing new opportunities for campers of all ages to deepen relationships and experience renewal and reconnection through daily camp life. Interested candidates are invited to submit a resume and letter of intent to Jenna@Friedenswald.org. The posting will remain open until filled.

Amigo Centre, Sturgis, MI, is looking for their next Executive Director. This full-time position is responsible for the oversight of all programming, administration and maintenance of Amigo, offering strategic vision toward the future. This position also includes publicly representing Amigo Centre and finding various ways to strengthen support for Amigo within its diverse constituency. Qualified applicants will demonstrate strong leadership skills of leading and managing an organization. Letters of interest and resumes can be sent to amigosearch@amigocentre.org.

MCA VIRTUAL GATHERING

MCA SETS ATTENDANCE RECORD FOR REGIONAL GATHERING!

Ok, so that headline is a bit misleading since the regional gatherings for 2021 were combined into one virtual gathering. But the fact remains that approximately 80 persons from 27 different camps and organizations joined together online in March for a time of worship, fellowship, workshops, and breakout group gatherings. Bluffton graduate and Laurelville alumnus Sam Stucky sang some beautiful worship songs to get each day started. Keynote speaker Jim Loep Thiessen shared what God might possibly be saying to us during this unique season. It was wonderful to see so many friendly faces as well as some newer ones joining us.

In my 28 years of association with MCA, I appreciate more than ever our purpose and vision statement, which says in part, "The Mennonite Camping Association is committed to being a connecting place for camping ministries from across the Mennonite/Anabaptist faith tradition. We recognize the diversity in our membership and denominational affiliates and allow members to adopt their own statements of faith. We seek to connect around our common interests in sharing Christ, faith formation, creation care, and leadership development through Canada and the United States." Two parts of this jump out at me: that we are primarily a "fellowship" organization that does not attempt to set doctrinal belief paradigms for our members, and that we are one of the few denominational organizations remaining that continues a close association between Canadian and American members. This was quite evident in our time together at this virtual "regional" gathering.

Thanks to all who attended. We certainly hope you can all join us at the Bi-National MCA Convention at Spruce Lake in Canadensis, Pennsylvania, March 21-24, 2022!

~ by Keith Zehr, Past-President, MCA

MCA NEWS

Mennonite Church USA convention (MennoCon21) is a hybrid event this year. MCA camps will be represented at MennoCon21 with a virtual booth and a physical booth in Cincinnati, OH. More information and details of the exhibit(s) will be available closer to the convention time.

At the **MCA virtual gathering's director's round table** the topic of Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) came up briefly. First, thanks to the director who brought that up; here at Camp Deerpark we had misunderstood the parameters of that program. Secondly, a brief phone call with our payroll company set us up to avoid FICA payments for the rest of 2021. (With the exception of the months that we are using our PPP funds.) - Ken Bontrager, Camp Deerpark

CAMP UPDATES

Spruce Lake, Canadensis, PA, www.sprucelake.org

- June 14 marks the start of Pinebrook Day Camp's first season! Pinebrook is Spruce Lake's second location that will serve children in the communities around Stroudsburg, PA. Spruce Lake Day Camp also starts June 14, for its 10th summer.
- Spruce Lake served over 50 community children in Study Camp during the seven months, of September, 2020 through early March, 2021, when they could return to their school classrooms. Kimberly Rice and J. J. Franke supervised their online work, and patiently showed the love of Jesus for each one.
- Despite having to cancel two of six planned IGNITE Winter Youth Weekends at Spruce Lake, the remaining four were filled, providing faith-building experiences for approximately 300 youth and leaders.