



NATURAL LINKS

MENNONITE CAMPING ASSOCIATION

JOB OPENINGS

Fraser Lake Camp, Stouffville/Bancroft, ON. Fraser Lake Camp is looking for a visionary Director (1.0 FTE) to lead the overnight camp program during changing times. The ideal candidate will have experience working with youth and children, practiced leadership and communication skills, and a commitment to Mennonite values and faith. Learn more at www.willowgrove.ca/work-with-us. For questions or to apply, please email Johnny Wideman, Executive Director at johnny@willowgrove.ca.

Williamsburg Christian Retreat Center, Toano, VA, is seeking a full-time Maintenance Director. The position involves the oversight of a beautiful 300 acre facility. See a job description and apply at www.wcrc.info/about/employment/.

RECRUITING

2021 FALL RECRUITING

Wed., November 3--EMU
Thurs., November 4--Bluffton
Fri., November 5--Goshen

Mon. November 8--Hesston
Tue., November 9--Tabor
Wed., November 10--Bethel

Please let me know which Camp Days you plan to attend. In the past, campus pastors have often sent out information; knowing which days you plan to attend will help make sure you get the information you need.
Thanks,
Olivia Bartel
Email: olivia.bartel@campmennoscah.org

CAMP UPDATES

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

Summer, 2021, was the 10th year of Day Camp at Spruce Lake. "We had a fantastic staff and a very solid summer," said Brian Espenshade, Day Camp Director. "Campers learned memory verses every week, and counselors had a blast bringing Bible stories to life."

2021 was also the first summer of Day Camp at Pinebrook, Spruce Lake's second location near Stroudsburg/East Stroudsburg, PA. "We didn't know how many campers to expect," said Brian. "But praise God, we were blown away by the response!"

At Pinebrook, 68 families registered, with 40-45 campers per day. "The community's response has been very positive," Brian said, "so we anticipate that many more campers will come in 2022."

Spruce Lake Wilderness Camp also far exceeded the expectation that, with the staff available, camp could run at only a 60% capacity. "But we served close to 80% of our 2019 pre-Covid numbers!" said Josh Reichart, Wilderness Camp Director. "We were still hiring well into the summer to have enough staff for so many campers ... the biggest thing was God providing people to help when we needed it most!"

MCA BOARD

On Wednesday, October 27, the Executive Board of the Mennonite Camping Association met via ZOOM for their annual fall meeting. In attendance were Chris Pot of Hidden Acres as President, Jennette Lahm from Laurelville as President-Elect, Keith Zehr from the Maple Ridge Center as Past President, Shana Peachey Boshart representing Mennonite Church USA, Josh Brown from Williamsburg Retreat Center as secretary/treasurer, and Olivia Bartel from Camp Mennoscah as membership coordinator. Erin Ramer, a Board member at Crooked Creek Christian Camp, joined as staff person and editor of the MCA newsletter. It was a productive day and snacks were even enjoyed, courtesy of Olivia Bartel and the U.S. and Canada mail system. MCA members will be updated at the bi-national gathering (March 21-24, 2022 at Spruce Lake!) as to a few recommended by-law and policy changes to more accurately reflect what we do. MCA is on solid financial ground and we are grateful for all our members!



The MCA board happily displaying their international snacks.

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CAMP UPDATES

Amigo Centre, Sturgis, MI, www.amigocentre.org

Amigo Centre and Amigo Park, north of Sturgis, MI sustained significant damage from 73 mph straight-line winds in the pre-dawn hours of August 12th. Fourteen structures were damaged by falling trees, two of which were demolished. There are hundreds of trees that were damaged or completely uprooted.

Since the storm we have been blessed by the generosity of 171 volunteers, some have given only an hour or two of time and others have invested multiple days, yet every one of the 919 hours and every task completed has been a humbling gift in this season of being short-staffed and without an Executive Director.



These experiences stand out from the past two months:

1) Nine days after the storm a group of 34 folks through MDS, most of whom were Amish and had little to no connection to Amigo, came with their chainsaws, skid steers, Sky Trak telehandlers, and log skidder and spent a day opening up main camp and some of our trails.

2) Bill Minter, who has managed our forests since 1978, spent many hours scrambling over downed trees, assessing the damage and marking trees to be salvaged. We are so fortunate that he was willing to invest all that time and broker a deal with a logger, who is now in the midst of harvesting the downed and damaged trees.

3) Blessed and energized to have 13 staff and volunteers from our sister camp – Camp Friedenswald, come spend a day helping with clean-up. From raking to chainsaw work to tractors with grapple hooks, they helped main camp return to some semblance of normalcy. *(Photo below)*



4) September 4th - 25 volunteers from 11 congregations, joined together to tackle 17 tasks, including the demolition of 2 cabins. The buzz of conversation, from the mix of volunteers, as they enjoyed a snack together in the pavilion at the end of their work day, was a reminder that the storm has created an opportunity for people to connect and reconnect at Amigo.

5) Gracious gift from Waterford Mennonite families, who while camping at Amigo Park, came and volunteered for an hour and a half on a Saturday afternoon. Witnessing young children who have attended Summer Camp, giving back to “their camp”, is powerful.

6) Hard working volunteers who have shared their expertise and their equipment with us. Images of demolition, rebuilding, installing roofing and tree clean-up fill our minds.

We covet your prayers as we continue to move forward with the clean-up and rebuilding. There are times when the work seems overwhelming, yet we are trying to focus on this storm being an opportunity on so many levels. An opportunity...

- ...to assess facility needs and rebuild accordingly.
- ...to strengthen relationships with constituents through working side by side.
- ...to build relationships in our local community.
- ...to position Amigo to better serve our guests in the future.

by Cheryl Mast, Amigo Centre staff member