MR. MOON SHINES ON ...

MARTY’S FRIENDS OF FERGUSON FUND

In the last issue, it was reported that Marty Pliske contacted the Y just as the 2015 Annual Campaign was kicking off last fall. He wanted to start an Alumni Facebook campaign to help raise funds for children from his old neighborhood of Ferguson to come to Camp Lakewood this past summer.

Since last report, Marty has raised even more, reaching $2,600. Twenty alums responded to his from the heart appeal to help children living in a neighborhood ravaged by adult animosity and misunderstandings. The warm memories of camp never die. Thank you all for wanting to share the positive impact of camp with another child who may not have a strong role model in his or her life today. What a lasting gift you have given.

Marty’s selfless gesture prompted the Y to look for other resources. A gift was received from Emerson, also located in Ferguson. Because of these two initiatives, the Ozarks Y was able to apply to the Y-USA for a matching grant. Marty’s spark of philanthropy developed into a spectacular opportunity for many more campers than Marty initially hoped to reach. Every gift, no matter the size, grew to the size of a mustard tree. You all can accomplish great things. Thank you from the campers you will never know – but you changed their lives this summer.

“How know, one week of camp isn’t really enough to make a lasting change on these kids. They need two, three or four summers to truly change the direction of their lives. That’s why I think we need to renew our efforts for summer 2016. These kids need to come back to Camp Lakewood several times.”

- Marty Pliske

If you would like to help continue Marty’s Camp Campaign, send to Renée Godinez, YMCA Trout Lodge & Camp Lakewood, 13528 Highway AA, Potosi MO 63664. Just note “Marty’s Camp Campaign” in the memo line or call to pay by credit card at 573-438-2154 ext. 220

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

REFLECTIONS OF PAST AND FUTURE

Yet another great summer has come and gone at YMCA Camp Lakewood. The leaves have begun to change, talk of Halloween is in the air, and it’s a beautiful time to be at camp. Outdoor Education Director Matt Engel has put together one of the best staffs we have ever seen, and we are looking forward to a very smooth season. It is a time of reflection, but more than anything else this year, it is a time of hope.

YMCA Camp Lakewood enjoyed a number of successes in the past year that give us great hope for the future. We saw our first year of positive growth since the recession, and all indicators show that this trend will continue in the summers to come. Our return rate is rising, and our return campers are coming for more and more years.

It is a time of hope because our staff is stronger than ever, with over a 60% return rate. Camper families and guests constantly applaud the quality of our staff, and we are truly blessed to be working with the team we have assembled.

It’s a time of hope because camp continues to strengthen its partnership with others. Our Alumni association is growing and we now have members from over six decades. Our outdoor education continue to invest in camp, improving cabins and meeting spaces.

But perhaps more than anything, it’s a time of hope at Camp Lakewood simply because there is an incredibly up-beat feeling in the air. Positive statistics are always a good thing, but camp is about so much more than numbers. Camp is about people, and friendships, and successes. Camp is about laughter, and challenges, and dreams. In short, camp is about hope, and hope is alive and well at YMCA Camp Lakewood these days. And we sincerely hope you will join us – in the very near future – around the campfire.

Matt Garcia
Camp Lakewood Director
About 25 alumni and friends of Camp Lakewood came down for the May 15-17 reunion and service weekend. A weekend is planned each spring to “spruce up” some area of Camp Lakewood before summer resident camp begins in June. This year the project was at East Camp to repaint the interior of the bath house. The bath house saw major skylight damage from the tornado/hail storm that ravaged the entire property in early April. The interior was exposed to all the natural elements for several weeks until roof repairs could be completed.

Volunteers arrived at East Camp on Friday evening to renew friendships, socialize and plan for Saturday’s work projects. For some alumni, this is a “can’t miss” weekend every year. For others, this may have been their first time back at camp in many years. Whatever their connection to camp, everyone enjoyed the Friday evening traditional campfire, storytelling and comradery.

Saturday morning came too early for some revelers, but everyone put their talents to use painting, cleaning, Dutch oven cooking or whatever else needed to be accomplished throughout the day. The bath house sparkled by the end of the weekend and was ready to greet another crop of East Campers.

Volunteers and the hours they dedicate are vital to our programs and facilities. Each year, our alumni donate at least 250 people-hours to YMCA Trout Lodge & Camp Lakewood. You are all most appreciated, and the Y couldn’t keep up with everything without your assistance. Thank You!!

Paintball made its debut in the summer of 2015 and was a big hit. Camp offered both the paintball clinic, giving campers two hours of play every day, and the Paintball Party, which gave campers a chance to try paintball once during smorgasbord. Both programs will be offered again in 2016.

Lakewood campers got to enjoy some high-end creativity in 2015, with the Trout Lodge arts & crafts staff. Campers made candles, paving stones and ceramics. Due to its huge success, this program will also be expanded in 2016.

The summer of 2015 brought us the pilot episode of Camp Lakewood News. Campers and staff worked to put out our very first news program, and it was a huge success. Next year we look to expand the program, making it available to East Campers.
YMCA Camp Lakewood is proud to announce the return of the Camp Lakewood Program Committee! This committee held its first meeting September 12th at camp. In attendance were committee Chair Bob Shelton, and committee members Colleen Brown, Mark Young, Marty Pliske, Megan Strzyzewski, Jill Engel and Matt Garcia. The group represents over five decades of alumni, and it was great to have so much camp experience around the table. In addition to some fine camp shenanigans, the group had some truly productive discussions. Highlights include:

**Camper Recruiting:** The group is committed to helping Camp Lakewood grow. After the rousing success of our Friends of Ferguson program in 2015, the committee discussed new ways to expand our outreach for the program in the community, with the hopes of bringing more kids to camp in 2016. Camp Lakewood is also looking into new online recruiting possibilities in 2016, including live chat sessions, virtual tours and online open houses.

**Alumni:** The committee discussed many possible future alumni events and the need to define the purpose of each event. Their fall work weekend is happening November 13-15. Pioneer Village will once again be prepared for the Christmas season (hopefully with a little less flame this year). The Spring work weekend will be in late April next year (still working on nailing down the specifics). The committee is also looking for a full blown reunion for all generations of alumni in September 2016. Please let camp know if you’d like to help plan any of these events at 573-438-1701 ext. 111.

In case you hadn’t heard, YMCA Trout Lodge & Camp Lakewood has a brand new website, with easier navigating and less clutter. And yes, the alumni search program is still intact and available for any alum who wishes to register. When you do so, you are then able to search for other alums.

As an added bonus, which is highly encouraged, you will also be able to place old camp pictures on the site. Talk about walking down memory lane.

If you had previously registered on the old site and are not able to get in with your old name and password, you will have to create a new registration. Once you’ve registered and return to sign in again, the username is the email address you listed when you initially registered.

Go to www.ymcaoftheozarks.org/share/register, or you can view the entire alumni section at ymcaoftheozarks.org/share/alumni/about. Take a minute and check out the new site and register to find old friends and upload pictures!

**Volunteer Work Day at East Camp**

Saturday, Oct. 10th dawned bright and crisp. And thanks to a $10,000 grant from Y-USA, the early 1950’s cabins at East Camp got a new lease on life.

Fifteen hearty souls gathered at East Camp to remove and replace old cabin shutters and remove window screens for replacement. Five of the cabins were nearly completed that day, with the remainder to be completed by year end. Many thanks to the Alumni, Board and Staff who worked on this project so far.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 24  
**CAMP LAKEWOOD PROGRAM COMMITTEE**
Committee members will meet at Camp Lakewood beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Nov. 5  
**ANNUAL SUPPORT CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF DINNER**
Our 32nd Annual Campaign will kick off in St. Louis at Sunset Country Club. Keynote speaker this year is Aeneas Williams, National Football Hall of Fame inductee. The annual campaign kicks off each November and runs through the end of March 2016. Donations help bring our special-needs camps to both Trout Lodge and Camp Lakewood, as well as campers who need financial assistance for summer resident camp. If you’d like to attend, please contact Renée Godinez at 573-438-1701 ext. 220. Why not get a group of friends and reserve a table for 10.

Dec. 27–30  
**CAMP LAKEWOOD WINTER CAMP**
Four day-three night Winter Camp is the perfect solution for kids ages 7–17 out of school, but parents still having to work. It’s the same exciting camp with some of the same fun activities (Pines Peak, Pines Zip and more), as well as activities just for Winter Camp children. Call 573-438-2154 and ask for the camp office to make your reservations. If you know of a child who would love Winter Camp, please pass along this information. It also makes a great holiday gift for your son, daughter, grandchild, niece, nephew, cousin or any other child.

If you don’t already receive this newsletter via e-mail, contact us at barbara.campbell@gwrymca.org, and we will add your name to our e-mail list. You will then get the full experience of reading this publication in color. You may also visit our website at www.ymcaoftheozarks.org, click on the Alumni tab at the top of the home page, scroll down until you find the most recent newsletter, click and enjoy.