MR. MOON SHINES ON...

As much as we may not want to acknowledge it – summer is gone, the leaves are falling like raindrops and winter is knocking on our doors. Soon, the hustle and bustle of the holiday season will start - the gift buying, putting up the decorations, kids out on winter break... (yikes!)

The best part is that Camp Lakewood has parents covered with 2 words: Winter Camp. From December 27-30, kids converge on Camp Lakewood for the same awesome and memorable camp experience – just in a different season!

Juggling kids out of school with parents still having to work is now an easy solution for the adults, and an amazing time for the kids. They still get to experience incredible activities (minus the swim suit), plus many activities that can’t be experienced in summer, especially if it snows.

P.S. Looking for the perfect gift for your child, grandchild, niece, nephew or cousin? How about Winter Camp. The excitement will last longer than a just unwrapped present, or for that electronic device you would have gotten them to go out of style. You can also give the gift of Summer Camp as well. Contact Camp Lakewood at 573-438-2154 for more information on giving that lasting gift they are sure to love!

AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

The quiet time at camp is upon us and our Outdoor Education department is winding down another successful season. Big round of applause goes out to Director Matt Engel and his staff for a job well done. As the temperature drops, you can feel things taking on a calmer tone on site as we all look to next summer with a building anticipation. It’s the calm before the storm, and we are hoping to really blow everyone’s hair back next summer!

Before we even get to next summer, there is a new initiative we are proud to announce to our returning camper families: Our new Camper Referral Program. Camp Lakewood is always trying to expand our camper family, and the best way to do that is to trust the families that have already make camp the amazing place it is. Every first time camper referred by a returning camp family will earn the referring family a $100 credit towards the cost of camp next summer. It’s a great way to bring the joy of camp to a new family while helping your own family at the same time. Please contact our office if you have any questions.

And don’t forget about Winter Camp! If you’ve never seen Lakewood in the winter, you’ve really missed out. Come play in the snow with your favorite camp staff for four fabulous days between Christmas and New Years. It’s a whole new look at camp that shouldn’t be missed.

So as we approach the summer of 2014, know we have you all on our minds. It’s only six months away! Six months until we all get back together to celebrate the joy that is Camp Lakewood. Only six months until we all gather to remember why everyone says Camp Lakewood is, “My Camp!” Only six more months until we get to see you all “around the campfire!”

Matt “Mufasa” Garcia
Director, Camp Lakewood

Alumni Committee Members

James Adams
80s
Dave Berger
70s-80s
Barbara Campbell
Co-Editor/Y Staff
Lawrence Criscione
80s
Melissa DiFiori
90s-00s/Y Staff
Meghan Doherty
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Matthew Garcia
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Jeff Lott
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FROM THE ALUMNI COMMITTEE

We had great participation at our recent Alumni Committee Meeting, held October 18th - 20th down at beautiful Camp Lakewood. Twelve people attended representing over FIVE decades! We’re pleased to have several newer members who worked at Camp during the 21st century! The leaves were changing colors and the lake was beautiful, as always.

As most of you know, we’ve had two very successful Work/Reunions in May of 2012, and 2013. A great deal of work was accomplished that greatly benefited Camp, and the many attendees enjoyed the weekend of service and fun.

At our recent meeting we gave careful thought and much discussion to the question, “What should/could the role of the Alumni Committee be, beyond organizing the annual Work/Reunion weekends? What more can we do for camp?” The consensus was to work on the following at this time:

- Assist Lakewood Directors with recruitment of campers and staff in a variety of ways. We would like to bring back the tradition of the ’Camp Reunion’ over Thanksgiving weekend, where campers would get together and visit with each other and the staff members they love and admire. This was a popular event for a long time and could really help to generate early sign-ups.
- Organize purely social events such as float trips, Cardinal games, holiday parties, etc. for alums.
- Develop an alumni website with news and a calendar of events.
- Take on the role of “keeper of Lakewood’s traditions and heritage”. This would include photos, archives and other memorabilia that would be collected, scanned, displayed or stored in a permanent location.

We also took the opportunity to perform some work and clean-up projects at the waterfront and pioneer village.

Our next meeting will take place January 24th - 26th. At this meeting we will move forward with the items listed above, and begin plans for the work weekend which will be held on May 16th - 18th, 2014. (Mark your calendars NOW!).

The Alumni Committee is open to suggestions and participation by all. Any suggestions for projects or fun are welcome. You can contact alumni members you know, including: Jean Rakey, Marty Pliske, Jeff Lott, Paul Pfeiffer, Eric Work, Dave Berger, Mark Young, James Adams, Larry Criscione, Brian Schultze, Anne Tucker, Meghan Doherty, Justin Howard, or Katie Marie.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
Jean Rakey
Committee Chairperson

Note from Ozarks Y: If you would like to get in touch with your alumni committee but do not know how, please let us know and we’ll be happy to help you obtain needed email addresses. Please contact bcampbell@ymcastlouis.org.
GIVING BACK
PAYING FORWARD
CHANGING LIVES

Recently, at the Y’s kick-off celebration for the annual Strong Community Campaign, I listened to a gentleman who had suffered tremendous adversity - the likes of which most of us, fortunately, will never know. At 9 years old, he was burned over 100% of his body and not expected to live. Not only did he live, but thrived and went on to become a motivational speaker, husband & father (among many other distinctions). His name is John O’Leary.

As I listened to this man who undoubtedly went through more pain as a child than most of us could ever imagine, my mind kept going back to one thought: How lucky many of us are, and how we may take for granted until someone shows us what overcoming true adversity really is. It humbles us, makes us thankful and inspires us to be better to ourselves, our family and friends, others around us and in our community. It reminds us that we can make a difference in another’s life just by opening our hearts. John always asked, of himself and of others, “what more can I do?”

John was fortunate in one respect - he had one person who he had never met before his burns who literally made a life-changing impact. John credits this person (along with his parents) with saving him by encouraging him fight for his own life.

In a world where we live hectic lives, it’s easy to think that someone else will surely help those in need. However, consider the children that are, right now, in your own community. Children with cancer, children with Crohn’s disease, children with missing limbs, who are visually impaired, living with HIV/AIDS, children who so desperately want to go to summer camp, but the family just can’t afford it, and so many more. These are the people that the Y helps when we ask for a donation, as I am asking of you right now. Be that one person for that one child.

Will you help one child overcome an obstacle like the boy below who learned how to shoot a bow & arrow here at the Y with his teeth because he didn’t have the hands you and I take for granted? What about tying a shoe or fixing hair or reaching for that glass of milk...

Please, if this letter has sparked something inside of you, I encourage only 2 things: One, go to http://youtu.be/SD_pltyfSpM. This is the link to our brand new Y video showcasing what the Ozarks Y is all about. PLEASE, take 10 minutes out of your day - it’s worth it. Two, use the envelope I’ve included to send in a donation. It can be in any amount - your donation coupled with another person’s donation quickly adds up to a child going to camp ($500), or a special needs child being able to visit us for some much needed bonding with other children just like themselves (they don’t normally get that in the “outside” world, where the people around them don’t have these issues). You can also pledge to pay it later or in payments in 2014 (email me and I’ll send you a pledge card). Be the life-changing impact in another’s life. Thank you. - Barbara Campbell, bcampbell@ymcastlouis.org, 888-FUN-YMCA ext. 219

“Everything is perfect when we attend each year. The families feel at home; not judged and feel so comfortable. It is important to them to make new friends, bonding with other who go through the same things in a safe environment.

Thank you so much! We could not pull off Camp Hope without the support of donors. This is the only time that these families get a break from the reality of living with HIV.” – Kelly Nolan, Camp Hope Director

“Camp Lakewood has allowed Julia to form new relationships – with kids and adults. There’s no parent to guide first encounters, no ‘mom filter’ when it comes to choosing friends among people from all walks of life. Julia loved the chance to redefine herself in a completely new group. She said it was “like starting over, because nobody knew anything about me.”

For a ten-year-old who is just beginning to find her identity, this experience may have been the most powerful of all. Julia found it a bit unnerving at first, but came back a more confident kid who was allowed to create a happy place for herself. The counselors and staff at Camp Lakewood know how to stand back and make this happen. They are always right there, yet stand back to let the kids figure things out on their own. A year later, we still see the pride that came with this newfound independence in our daughter.

Thank you, donors and YMCA, for making it possible for so many children to have this unforgettable experience.” – Friederike

“I learned new things at camp that help me be more confident with other kids that don’t have limb differences. The most amazing thing was learning to play tennis. Also getting to play with a little boy that has legs like me. Otherwise we live four hours apart and would never had met. Camp is awesome. It is the only place I am not different. I love camp!” – Landis, Camp No Limits (Children living with limb loss)

“I just wanted to drop a note to say THANK YOU! I picked up my daughter today from her first year at camp and she didn’t want to leave. My son went for your session 2 and he didn’t want to leave. I can’t tell you how much that means to my husband and I. Both Mikey and Millie have many medical challenges in life and we try to instill that they shouldn’t let anything stop them. The entire staff of Camp Lakewood has helped us prove that to them. I know that I can truly feel confident that my children will be in GREAT hands. Thank you again for all that you do and have done for my family.” – Tammy
YMCA TROUT LODGE & CAMP LAKEWOOD
13528 Highway AA
Potosi, MO 63664

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 27-30, 2013: THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION AT TROUT LODGE
Trout Lodge has a rich tradition with the annual Thanksgiving weekend, chocked full of amazing activities, including a festive dinner with a turkey on every table. And the best part? No cooking or clean-up!! Leave that to someone else while you have all of the fun.

That weekend also includes our guest-favorite, Pioneer Christmas Village, where the "town" comes alive with carolers; blacksmithing, apple press, fur processing and branding demonstrations; candle, yarn doll, popcorn garland and ornament-making; storytelling by Father Christmas; Dutch oven cooking and so much more! Bring your family and come for the weekend or just for the day (November 30 and December 7). Lunch starts at noon and village activities begin at 1 p.m. Call 573-438-2154 to reserve your spot or make a reservation for the entire weekend.

DECEMBER 1-8, 2013: "AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS" AT TROUT LODGE
Join us to experience that "time gone by" feeling in the air as Trout Lodge steps back in time when life was simpler and people did amazing things with what they had. In addition to the second Saturday of Pioneer Christmas Village, there are other holiday activities just waiting for you and your family. Call 573-438-2154 to make your reservation.

DECEMBER 27-30, 2013: CAMP LAKEWOOD WINTER CAMP
Winter Camp is the perfect solution for kids out of school but parents still having to work. It’s the same exciting camp, with some of the same activities (Pines Peak, Pines Zip and more), as well as new activities just for Winter Camp children. Call 573-438-2154 to make reservations.

DECEMBER 27-JANUARY 1, 2014: NEW YEAR’S CELEBRATION AT TROUT LODGE
Looking for a family-friendly New Year’s alternative? Come to Trout Lodge and ring in the New Year with awesome family activities, complete with a magician, reptile show, carnival games and more. Celebrate 2014 with a dance party, lake-side bonfire and fireworks. 573-438-2154 is the number to call to make your reservations.

JANUARY 24-26, 2014: ALUMNI COMMITTEE MEETING AT CAMP LAKEWOOD

MAY 16-18 2014: ANNUAL ALUMNI WORK WEEKEND AT CAMP LAKEWOOD (Mark your calendars!)
More information to come in the next newsletter – but make plans now to attend and have a blast (from the past)!