

Birchwood a Buzz



Fall 2011

Number 39

Celebrating 50 Years of Camping!

Anyone who has been to Birchwood Camp knows the joy & community created during a summer season. But this was no ordinary year! This summer we rejoiced in half a century of camping here at Birchwood, which is no small feat in a state only 52 years old! Indeed we had much to celebrate during our 50th summer...



Camp enrollment was up this summer — we had excellent attendance at all of our camps and were able to serve 54 more campers than in 2010!

All of our resident camps tie-dyed their summer camp shirts this year. Our camp shirts have traditionally varied in color from year to year, and we thought the beautiful array of colors this year was a good representation of the 50th summer of camp!

At Faith Adventure camp we practiced “No Piggy Waste” at meal time— which was a fun way of measuring our food waste and learning about ways to conserve and be good stewards of all that we have.

For the first time, children entering the 1st grade attended God Seekers Camp (pictured above), which has historically been open to those entering the 2nd-4th grades. The 1st graders that attended had a fabulous time and

demonstrated that some kids are ready for camp at age 5 or 6!

Our Middle & High School campers created PET (Personal Energy Transportation) mobility cart seats as their service project for the week. Says organizer Walt Hays: “The 50 plus youth at camp... sanded, painted and

fabricated 22 seats for the Adult PET; they also cut the vinyl covering for the seats. The seats will be shipped to PET Inland-Northwest... and will become part of PET carts that will be shipped world-wide.”

MAD (Music and Drama) Campers did a great job performing “Life of the Party— the story of Mary and Martha,” the musical that they learned during their week at camp.

At our new High School adventure canoe camp this summer our campers successfully navigated part of the Swanson River Canoe system during a five day trip on the Kenai Peninsula. They had one of the rainiest weeks of the summer and still returned to camp glowing with the joy of community built and new skills gained.

It was a summer to remember, full of friendship and growing in God. Here’s to the next 50 incredible summers!

Annual Dinner & Auction Join us on October 2, 2011

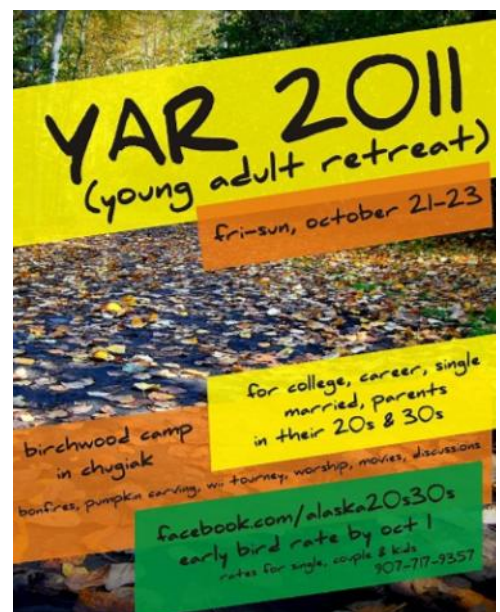
Birchwood Camp will continue the 50 Year celebration with an exciting Annual Dinner and Silent Auction in conjunction with our Annual Meeting this year. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and we hope you’ll join us for this historic event as we dream about the next 50 years of ministry! The event will begin at 5pm on Sunday, October 2 — there is no charge to attend but space is limited so please RSVP to our office!

Scholarship Funds Needed

This summer 29 campers received scholarships either from their church and/or from our scholarship fund so that they could attend camp. That means lots of scholarship funds granted! Our scholarship fund is completely funded by donations from people like you, so please consider making a special gift this Fall to replenish our scholarship fund!

Young Adult Retreat

A retreat just for young adults! Online registration is open on our website!



Pictures from Our 50th Year of Summer Camp!



Clockwise from top left: Runners at our Founders Day 5k on May 14; High School campers working on a PET seat; Gazing at beautiful Psalm lake; Music and Drama (MAD) campers performing at Anchor Park UMC; MAD campers rehearsing in Fireweed Hall; Middle and High School camps with a completed PET.





Clockwise from top: Campers & staff at Faith Adventure camp; Team building at MAD camp; Around the Campfire at Middle School camp; Adventure Canoe campers embarking on their journey through the Swanson River canoe system; Commemorative mugs displayed at Founders Day .



Founders Day In Review

Birchwood's Golden Anniversary has truly been a cause for celebration! We kicked off the summer with Founders Day, a celebration of our "roots" on May 14. The day began with more than 25 runners joining in our first ever 5k race; participants were united in their praise of the scenic course and a desire to see the race continue in years to come.

The weather cooperated well for the event, blessing us with a beautiful sunny day—visitors enjoyed an open house around the grounds before our program, which took place in the newly named "Fireweed Hall." We had several folks in attendance (pictured at top right) who were instrumental in the growth and success of Birchwood Camp during the "early years," including Dorothy Roberts, Anna Andrews, Walt Hays, Jim Hitchcock, John & Barbara Shaffer, and David & Aileen Fison. We heard entertaining stories of



Birchwood's formative years from John Shaffer, Walt Hays, and Anna Andrews. Dave Beckett, the Alaska United Methodist Conference Superintendent, blessed and commissioned the new Fireweed Hall, helping us to dream up what the next 50 years of ministry will hold!

The event concluded with s'mores & hotdogs around the fire. Well over 100 people attended the festivities.

Intern Program a Success

This summer we welcomed six energetic and talented young adults to the Birchwood staff team. Each served for at least six weeks during our United Methodist camping programs, some remaining to assist with our busy rental season after camps ended. We received great feedback about the positive impact of having consistent staff throughout our summer camps. We were impressed with their willingness and ability to do just about anything— from being a cabin counselor, to planning crazy Olympics, to leading worship, to cleaning bathrooms, washing dishes, and much more! We plan to continue the intern program next year— If you know a talented young adult that might be a great fit for this program, please direct them to our website for more info. Applications will be accepted in early 2012.



Pick. Click. Give.

ATTENTION ALASKA RESIDENTS!

Birchwood Camp is pleased to announce that we will be included in the **Pick. Click. Give.** program in 2012. This program allows you to give a portion of your dividend to the organization of your choice when you apply for your PFD. You select the amount and the organization, the **Pick. Click. Give.** program does the rest. Next year, for the first time, Birchwood Camp will be one of the organizations you can support through this great program! Please remember us when you apply for your 2012 dividend.

Supporting Birchwood Camp

For 50 years Birchwood Camp has been Building Community on Common Ground. Join us in strengthening the Camp so that the next 50 years are successful and meaningful!

Did you know: We rely on donations from churches, organizations and individuals for about **15% of our budget** each year? That means we count on receiving over \$33,000 from generous supporters each year, just so that Birchwood Camp can continue to be the important ministry that it is!

Apart from our annual budget, we have capital projects, including the new Fireweed Hall, that are **supported 100% by donations**. Please remember us in your giving, as we still have plenty of finishing work to complete on Fireweed Hall! We still have **NO debt** connected to this new space, and we plan on keeping it that way!

NEW: YOU CAN DONATE ON OUR WEBSITE VIA CREDIT CARD!

Birchwood is always seeking donations of specific **goods and/or services**. Currently we are in need of **specific craft supplies, canoe paddles, and a skilled electrician** to complete some work on the new building. Please call our camp office for more details.



You can contribute to Birchwood Camp through our United Methodist Advance Project number: **931068**. Visit our website for more info.

Consider making a **planned or estate gift** to Birchwood Camp. Contact us to find out how to create a faith-filled legacy.

Our Prayers & Praises

Praises:

- ◆ For a full and meaningful summer camping season.
- ◆ For the generosity and talent of every summer staff, intern, and volunteer that was a part of Birchwood Camp this summer. They are truly the lifeblood of this organization, and we are grateful for the time and energy they put into making camp a success.
- ◆ For the helping hands and extra grace of friends and volunteers when our program director/ camp manager broke his ankle right before camp season.
- ◆ For mission teams that came to provide much needed work on Fireweed Hall and other projects: UMC of Chugiak Youth Group, Stillwater UMC, Western North Carolina Conference VIM team & Faithworks mission team.

Prayers:

- ◆ For continuing gifts to our Bruce Roberts scholarship fund so that *all people* may be able to attend camp.
- ◆ For our upcoming Young Adult Retreat in October; that young adults in Alaska may embrace this ministry as their own and be blessed in their time of retreat.
- ◆ For all those planning and preparing for our Annual Dinner on October 2— that the continuation of our 50 year celebration may be meaningful and memorable.
- ◆ For the new board members that will be joining our Board of Directors in October.
- ◆ For those planning and preparing for our 2nd Annual Winter Youth Breakaway youth camp this December.

Thank You to our dedicated Board of Directors:

Adam Muhr, Becky Driscoll, Benee Braden, Charles Brower, Chris Huettmann, Dan Lush, Diane Shellenbaum, Fran Lynch, Joyce Hughes, John Quinley, LeeAnn Wohlgemuth, Nathan Woods, Von Cawvey.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING BIRCHWOOD CAMP

Advance Special, Group & Individual Gifts (Includes In-Kind Gifts):

APRIL 2 — AUGUST 31, 2011:

Individual Support: Al & Judy Kline, Dan & Margaret Lush, David & Carol Ann Miller, Deb Warner, Debbi & Jay Goodie, Dennis & Susie Holway, Edward & Patricia Swezey, Ernest Redfield, Fran Lynch, Hugh & Liz Ashlock, Jim May, John Braden, John & Connie Quinley, Karen Gibson, Kate Bartel, Kathryn Ozlowski, Kelli & Larry Williams, Kris Miller, Megan & Jonathan Wohlers, Nathan & Sandra Woods, Nathan Worrell, Richard Frey, Ronnie & Lisa Darnell, Rosemary & Ben Fish, Siv Johnson, Teri & Shane Inch, Terrence Alvarez, Von & Jan Cawvey.

Organizations and Churches: Alaska Conference of the United Methodist Church, Alaska Industrial Hardware, Anchor Park UMC, Christ First UMC, Conoco Phillips Alaska Inc., Conoco Phillips Matching Gifts, Soldotna UMW, Stillwater UMC, St. John UMC, St. Peter the Fisherman UMC, UMC of Chugiak, UMC of Chugiak Youth Group, Western North Carolina Conference VIM team, Willow UMC.

SUMMER VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF: THANK YOU!

Adam Muhr, Adriana Sayers, Al Kline, Alisha Lott, Ally Brawner, Anchor Park—East UMC “church is a verb” team, Bailey Brawner, Becky Driscoll, Belicia Norris, Benee Braden, Berneita Norris, Betsy McGrew, Betty Burke, Bill Floerchinger, Boy Scout Troop 214, Brad Terrell, Brittney Cummings, Carlo Rapanut, Cassie Wohlgemuth, Charlie Brower, Chris Huettmann, Courtney Darnell, Cyrus Hicks, Dan Lush, Deb Weesner, Debbi Pintsch, Diane Shellenbaum, Drew Lemish, Ellen Franklin, Emily Goodrum, Emily Ripley, Faithworks mission team, Fran Lynch, Frank Fish, Gabe Sayers, Haley Gill, Helen Anders, Isabel Mills, Jan Cawvey, Jenny Smith, Joan Stassel, Jo Ann Schaad, John Quinley, Joyce Hughes, Judy Kline, Karen Burch, Karen Seiter, Kathy Ozlowski, Kelli Williams, Kelsey Hicks, Lannis Haldemann, LeeAnn Wohlgemuth, Leif Lidin-Lamon, Margaret Floerchinger, Mark Burch, Mary Kay Thomas, Mary Mendonca, Megan Rutherford, Meghan Dau, Meghan Woods, Misty Gilland, Natasha Yefimenko, Nathan Woods, Nicole Sayers, Ola Mullikin, Rachel Myers, Robert Hicks, Ron Bates, Rosanne Sams, Shane Inch, Shawn Gilland, Stephanie Morgan, Suzanne Ishii-Regan, Taylor Smith, Teri Inch, Tori Hicks, UMC of Chugiak Youth Group, Victoria Weindel, Von Cawvey, Walt Hays, Western North Carolina conference VIM team.

**Please contact our office in case of error or omission from these sections. We will make sure to publish it correctly in the next newsletter.*

Upcoming Events:

Annual Meeting, Dinner & Auction: 5:00pm, October 2, 2011

Join us for fun and fellowship as we continue our celebration of 50 years of ministry. Dinner, Silent & Live Auction Fundraiser and Program.

YAR (Young Adult Retreat) 2011: October 21-23, 2011

A weekend getaway to make new friends, eat great food, talk about stuff unique to being in our 20s & 30s and space to connect with God. Open to all people in their 20s & 30s - single, college, career, dating, married, divorced, parents, everybody! Bring the kids too!

Winter Youth Break Away: December 27 - 30, 2011

For students in grades 7-12. Bid farewell to 2011 the best way possible... 4 days full of sledding, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, broom ball, worship, games, fellowship, food, and a day of skiing/boarding at Alyeska resort or doing other fun things in Girdwood (for our non-skiers/boarders).



Find us on Facebook!!
Like our Facebook page and
keep up with the current
Birchwood Camp happenings.

Birchwood aBuzz is
published by
BIRCHWOOD CAMP
Building Community
On Common Ground



PO BOX 670049
CHUGIAK, ALASKA 99567-0049
Phone/fax (907) 688-2734
www.birchwoodcamp.org
info@birchwoodcamp.org

Marie Swezey, *Camp Director*
Stephen Swezey, *Program Director/ Camp Manager*
Joyce Allegra del Rosario, *Office Manager*
Berneita Norris, *Food Service Manager*
Liz and Brent Hoffman, *Camp Hosts*

*If you wish to be removed from this mailing list
please contact the camp office.*