



**Camperships
For
Nebagamon**

Making Camps A Place of Welcome For All

The Newsletter of Camperships for Nebagamon • Winter 2013–2014

NebagaNotes

CHALLENGES OF CFN RECRUITING

By Adam Braude

At first blush, one might assume it would be a fairly easy sales pitch. Take a product the market values at many thousands of dollars and discount it down to a fraction of that amount. Seemingly, buyers would knock down the doors to take advantage of such an opportunity.

In this case, however, the product is summer camp and instead of carting home a large item from a big-box store, parents must agree to send the most important things in their lives, i.e., their children, off into the care of total strangers for an entire month. Of course, this same hurdle is one faced by many prospective first-time camp parents, although clearly it's a different challenge when the very concept of overnight camp is a completely foreign one. In fact, according to Nebagamon Director Adam Kaplan, "an interesting thing that I have noticed about most CFN families is that they tend to be even more hesitant to send their kids to camp" than other families.



Campers enjoy a lively game of beach soccer on the shores of Lake Nebagamon.

Here lies a challenge inherent in the CFN operation. On the one hand, the program's very success hinges on the ability of the directors of its partner camps to identify the right families to facilitate positive alliances; on the other hand, in Adam's words, "in my experience many of these folks are more suspicious and cautious than any other group with whom I deal."

Given this reality, a successful recruiting protocol for campership kids is of the utmost importance. Fortunately, both Kaplan and Stephanie Hanson at Nebagamon and Maggie and Bob Braun at WeHaKee possess extensive experience, and each camp has developed its own channels to effectively identify potential recipients of CFN grants.

In addition to word of mouth from regular paying families, or more often from CFN families who have had good experiences of their own, Nebagamon has fostered relationships with several schools across the country. Here, Kaplan and Hanson work with either principals or social workers who then make specific referrals. Adam explains, "While the noble temptation is to choose the kids in the most desperate situations because they stand to gain so much, we have learned this is a flawed approach. The most successful partners are those who listen to us, trust our feedback, and try to select kids that will succeed. I would like to believe that I am better at making this judgment than I used to be."

Meanwhile, according to Maggie Braun, "WeHaKee has utilized the Catholic Dominican Sisters and the connections (Continued on p. 3)

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

By John Wasserman

Recently I had the pleasure of speaking with Sister Arturo Cranston, the director of Camp WeHaKee for Girls from 1984 to 2004. It was Sister Arturo who was at the helm of WeHaKee when Camperships for Nebagamom first supported girls attending the Winter, Wisconsin camp.

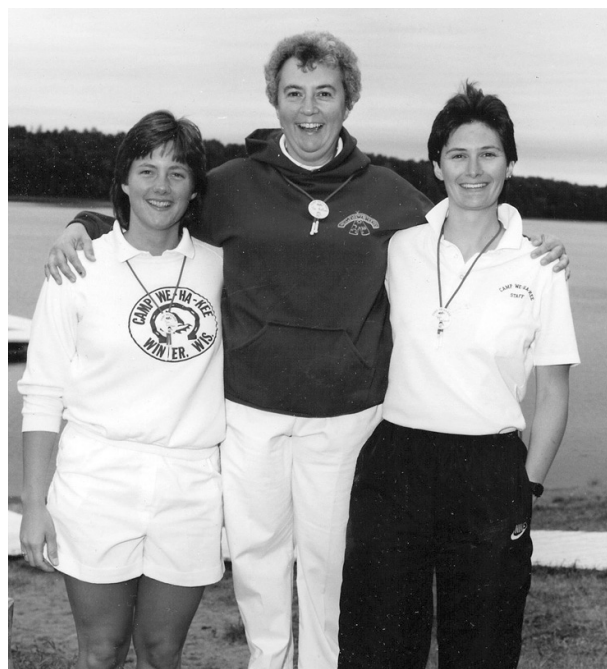
She explained to me that when WeHaKee opened in 1923, the campers were white upper-class Catholic girls from the North Shore of Chicago (sound familiar?). The Sisters were committed to the idea that summer camp and education were equally important for girls from different racial, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. The Sisters' belief was that by mixing girls from different backgrounds everyone would benefit. To this end campers were recruited from Venezuela, Columbia, and Mexico followed by African American and Hispanic girls from across the United States.

According to Sister Arturo, this was a natural course for the Sisters who had taught in numerous schools in impoverished and underserved areas throughout the United States since the founding of the Order in the 1840's.

Many know that Nebagamom is Chippewa for "hunting deer by fire from water." Sister Arturo related to me a beautiful tradition at WeHaKee about the namesake of her camp.

Each summer during a full moon a young Indian girl—whom the Sisters took in and educated around 1880 at their school Faribault, Minnesota—returns to camp at midnight. While the girls remain in their cabins, they hear WeHaKee riding through camp on horseback to the sound of Indian drums. When she arrives at the river, she embarks in a torch-lit canoe, paddling down the river while singing an ancient Indian song. According to Sister Arturo, WeHaKee's return to camp continues to inspire and thrill the campers.

CFN's role for WeHaKee was brought home to me again last summer when I received a thank-you note from the aunt of three girls who at the last moment were introduced to Camp



Sister Arturo (center) with two staff members, on WeHaKee's waterfront.

WeHaKee by Luca Bacci, a Nebagamom camper and counselor (2006–12).

This all came about due to a chance encounter with Luca who had just returned from a Fourth of July visit to Nebagamom. While Luca was explaining his love and enthusiasm for camp, the girls' aunt wondered aloud, "Is there a girls' camp for my nieces and, if so, how could their parents ever afford it?"

Luca told her about WeHaKee and the possibility of scholarships for the girls. One thing led to another and in short order Bob and Maggie Braun, WeHaKee's current directors, rearranged a few things, found some extra bunks, and made certain that all three girls could attend camp. Without the confluence of all of these seemingly random events and CFN, these girls would not have experienced a summer in the Northwoods.

On behalf of the CFN board, I am proud to acknowledge our great partners at WeHaKee and Nebagamom and salute their efforts to bring the magic of summer camp to children of diverse backgrounds.

RECRUITING

(Continued from cover)

that they have through their schools or other ministries. We also have a relationship with Camp for Kids, which is a consortium in Milwaukee with funds in the Milwaukee Foundation. We feel strongly that all girls can have a positive experience as long as they have a clear understanding of what to expect—with program, friendships, and behavior.”

By and large, once prospect families are identified, the presentation of camp follows the standard protocol (phone call, packet, face-to-face meeting, etc.), with one notable exception. Unlike the typical camp calls that occur in

response to inquiries from interested families, part of the pitch for CFN families might require the directors to help convince reluctant parents of the benefits of summer camp. In Adam’s words, “I spend extra time with them. I call them afterwards to reassure them. I talk to them often in the summers...and we get there.”

Without question, it takes a little more effort to bring CFN grant recipients into the camp family, but the beauty of the program lies in the fact that when a bus rolls into camp on the first day of the season, the butterflies in a new camper’s stomach know nothing of their economic status; that child is like any other setting off on a brand new adventure.

A NEW WEBSITE IN THE WORKS

By Danny Cohen

This is good news. There is going to be a new look at the cncharities.org website, the shared home for the Camp Nebagamom Scholarship Fund and Camperships for Nebagamom, in early 2014. It is going to be a better website to help these charities send kids to camps.

But, of course, there is also some bad news. Originally my hope was that it could be a weekend fix. Yet, looking around the site and trying to do even some minor changes proved difficult. This isn’t just moving-around-the-furniture job. And it isn’t a new-paint job or a rip-up-the-floorboards kind of thing. This is

a wrecking-ball-to-the-foundation situation.

We’re starting over. There will be a whole new site and design that is focused on learning about and supporting the twin funds. We’re getting rid of sending visitors away to PayPal to do donations, and will now integrate donation payments right on the site for a better experience. News and site updates will be more frequent. It will have a responsive design that fits screens from desktops to mobile devices.

Plus there is a great team comprised of board members and camp family who will be looking over every photograph and word that

goes up on the site. Because what is most important here isn’t if it uses buzzwordy acronyms like SSL, HTML5, or CSS3. (I mean, it will, don’t worry.) What’s important is providing a new online home for CNSF and CFN to help send kids to camps. This is good news.

Got questions? I love answering questions at dcoi@dcoi.com.



A preview of the new homepage.



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INSIDE...

- Campership recruiting.
- CFN's WeHaKee partnership.
- Update on new website.

"This Shall Be a Place of Welcome for All."

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