

Saint Andrew's Camp

Orthodox Charitable Educational Foundation (OCEF)
A ministry resource of the OCA Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Providing a pan-Orthodox sleep-away camp program for over 60 years



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Executive Director's Report for the Year 2023 of St. Andrew's Camp March 30 2024 Annual Meeting

Thanks to the support of many new parishes and volunteers we have had a very good year.

Camping Program:

First with our successful six weeks of youth camper programming we are reaching more of the youth in the diocese. With more new campers, a total of 97 different campers spending 1-4 weeks at camp had a total of 141 (up from 129 in 2022) camper weeks enjoyed. We expected, with the expansion to 6 weeks, to have the total number of camper weeks increase, but what is encouraging is that we had a 50% increase in the number of different campers having the opportunity to experience the program. We received extraordinary support of our Hierarchy, Archbishop Michael. His attendance EVERY week, his interaction with both staff and campers and his continued advocating of the camping program in all his travels has clearly made a huge witness in the diocese. (The increased number of different parishes represented amongst our campers speaks to this concretely) Our staff was excellent and not only did the campers enjoy camp but our staff were also nourished and worked very well together.

Matushka Tamara Cowan and Kristy Zaitseva planned and executed a diverse, interesting, exciting and enriching program each week. Activities included daily liturgical worship, religious discussions, arts and crafts, horseback riding and kayaking, swimming, fishing, games, archery, dancing, singing and overall joyful fellowship. The clergy who led our liturgical and Christian education life were amazing and they were the rocks on which the remaining elements of our programming were built. Thank you to Fr. David Cowan, Fr. Joel Brady, Fr. Jason Vansuch, Fr. Paul Federoff, Fr. Ambrose Inlow, Fr. Ignatius Gauvain, Fr. Martin Kraus Fr. Gregory Fedorchak and Fr. John Morris.

Equally important was the increase in volunteers, including some board members, as maintenance crews, bedmakers and cleaners, speakers, nurses, cooks, drivers, painters, floor layers, and repair and update enablers. Help has come from SS. Peter and Paul Church in South River, in Syracuse, in Endicott and Herkimer, Holy Trinity Church in Yonkers and Elmira Heights and St. Michael's Church in Binghamton. Their time, talents and treasures were incredibly appreciated and saves us much funds. The in-kind donations of Food, Picnic Tables, sports equipment, and kitchen items are all helping us and offer the programs we do at minimum costs.

"With us everything should be secondary compared to our concern with children, and their upbringing in the instruction and teaching of the Lord." - St. John Chrysostom

Our active and involved Board have committed to a strategic plan, have been working on revised bylaws and the updating of our address lists and have met monthly to deal with the ongoing growth of this ministry and its facilities. Our setbacks have been an unscrupulous kitchen equipment vendor, a tax accountant's downsizing, and weather related outages. Fortunately these are being remedied, slowly, with new service contractors.

Extra-camper season events included Women's retreats during Lent, Young men's Retreat, New Year's Eve Staff party, Oneida Lake Blessing of Waters.

Fund Raisers: Barbeque at South River, Pork Chop Dinner in Auburn; Spaghetti and Song by Endicott and Elmira Heights and Binghamton. Dinner in East Meadow, Bike Ride and Baba's Attic (Rummage Sale) Also Superbowl fundraiser in St. John the Theologian in Shirley NY. Board members also lead the Pascha Card fundraiser. These brought in over \$19,000. Our rentals continue. The income is steadily increasing and we try by word of mouth for our major buildings as well as the AIR BNB postings to expand the use of the cabin. All of our facilities and programs require funds and we hope to increase our rentals as well as expand our fund raisers among different areas of the diocese.

Improvements in our facilities- Continued new kitchen and dining hall details, renovated boy's dorm floor and furniture, painting of interior boy's dorm, improvements of boys bathroom facilities, new roof on the new work and tool buildings, clearing of more of the waterfront- have each improved the experiences that we are able to offer campers. We continue to look at ways to maintain our facilities and develop plans for new changes as well.

Parish Visitations Lonn Bologna and I visited a few parishes which does bring staff, campers and donations. These continue to be planned but could use more presenters to expand our reach.

We know that many kinds of extended experiences for youth- retreats, mission trips, camps- strengthens their relationship with Christ and their commitment to the Church. St. Andrew's Camp is this diocese's offering to support parents and parishes in their formation of Orthodox Christians. We are grateful for the increasing support of the camping program and the expanded use of the facilities to serve not only youth but those who mentor them year round- young adults, parents, grandparents, clergy and youth workers.

With all of this success of course comes more work and higher levels of skills needed to maintain the property and facilitate preparations for rental, to increase our communication with our supporters, with the community and with the diocese in general. We have started, thanks to the efforts of Marilyn Brady, our Newsletter. And our Facebook page with the efforts of Kristy Z and Matushka Denise, web page thru the volunteering of Dennis Holovatch, and the continued announcements and reports of camp activities on the diocesan Web Page with the help of Fr. Zablotsky, increase the awareness of what is happening here.

Work weeks are planned both in the spring and Fall and the needs for maintenance of buildings- cleaning, painting, repairing, planting, wood and fallen tree management, organizing and remodeling. To enhance our use of these facilities also needs improved parking and walkways, improved waterfront access and ongoing

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cleaning and maintenance. Landscaping and general brush and fallen tree management are ongoing needs. The key is making known our needs via project lists and wishlists and communicating about our programs to inspire the sharing of time talents and treasure. We are improving in communicating via our various platforms.

The ongoing strategic Plan has addressed the many needs over the next five years. Need for staff at least part time year round, and the needs for gathering funds and/ or volunteers and /or materials to accomplish all the ongoing physical and communication needs of this camp. We do not expect all to be done at once, but we share the plans so that those with connections, time, resources can use their networking to address some of these while the board continues to prioritize and move forward to accomplish our goals. We encourage anyone interested in getting more information to visit the plethora of photos on the website, to visit our Facebook page and to join us at our open platform meetings twice a year in October and March. We hope all of our clergy and church councils will visit the camp, will encourage their youth to spend a week or more at camp, will encourage parishioners to serve as counselors or to volunteer as pre/post season helpers or summer staff. This ministry to youth needs, and welcomes, everyone's help!