



SPARKS

The Newsletter for Camps Kahdalea & Chosatonga
In the Beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina



Real Kids ♦ Real Adventure ♦ Real Growth ♦ Real Value ♦ Real Fun

Spring Newsletter

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HOME FRONT

The sound of the creek is so good this year. We have received good rain and spring is beginning to burst forth!!! It is so amazing every year! The good news is that summer is right behind with the fullness of nature's offerings here in our majestic mountains!



As you know, or will come to experience in the summer,

as we walk around here, we take so many pauses

to simply absorb all of our amazing wondrous surroundings. At night, remember the cool air and the millions of stars, or perhaps, those nights when the full moon is out and we awaken wondering why the light is on. And it is one thing to remember the river we are hiking by, but it is still like a new experience to actually stand beside the clear water slipping over the rocks and to simply watch and draw in the sound and the smell.

You likely have already come to know that this experience of camp has set you apart. The challenges, living in close quarters with others, the friends, the adventures that you might have thought that you couldn't do... and yet you did, taking time to be "un-plugged," standing in front of a giant waterfall or sleeping on a high mountain top have begun to change you. You also have seen the benefits and have gained the wisdom to know that this is a very special gift. Yes, a gift that you will see will remain with you for the rest of your life and will help you make your way. It is a deep blessing. Set apart in a very good way. You are part of the group we know as "Camp People." It's great... and how much fun is that, too!! Remember to say your prayers always and we can't wait to see you soon! God bless you!

David & Anne

PS Oh, yes. Deeply enjoy the video.

Welcome PROGRAM DIRECTORS!

Jen Pommerenke and Austin Ashcraft are returning to head our summer management team along with Adam Trufant who will join us as the Assistant Director!

What can we say? These two have been here perhaps a million years! Actually, Austin has been here since he was a pre-camp small child and has been a camper, JC, counselor, teacher, assistant program director and now he is in his second year as Chosatonga PD. Jen has a similar history here. She's



done everything, including editing the video scrapbook you are about to watch. She's passionate in whatever she pursues, incredibly creative and a tremendous gift to our program.



Adam is here for his umpteenth year. He's attended NOLS, traveled extensively, is an excellent paddler, has worked at various other summer camps and outdoor programs and has been PD here for two summers. We are so glad to have him with us. These three know the campers, the programs and the camp family. Our staff is full and we are *thrilled* and *DELIGHTED* to have this great and experienced leadership!

Kahdalea & Chosatonga Sessions are Working Great!

The goal is to build community... family. It takes *time* to do that. It's not a short process for campers to really settle in, feel comfortable and at home and to be fully involved in life changing challenging activities and, more importantly, friendships and connections... unplugged. The June Session is as short as we can make it and still build that community that lasts. We're glad to see our introductory sessions work so well but the real value grows with the session length. Lifetime friendships take some time to develop. We recommend our June or Main Sessions for the maximum experience. Parents thank us often about the developments they see in their children. Alum thank us just as much.



Hey Parents! ...for you.

Kids Today NEED Hope as They Grow Up

I know a bit about the pressures that kids have nowadays but it is hard for us adults from a previous generation to have real insight into today's challenges facing our precious young ones. They not only live with radically different social pressures than those their parents had to deal with, but they have the added stress and unknown



pressures from the "virtual," on-line and "plugged-in," "TMI" lifestyle. The pressures from the ubiquitous media are driving them away

from life in general. They (and perhaps, we) have become withdrawn because of the constant presence and bombardment of information. Massive amounts of emails, texts, links, screen advertisements have driven us all to want to escape. That affects our children's desire to participate and it has the added effect of potentially reducing the amount of time that we parents have to spend in close and constructive time with our children who need a lifeline to a wholesome community.

Some time around high school, our kids face so many destructive messages coming at them that many of them look up and say something like "Wow, what's going on here? Am I the only one not doing all of these things? I've been left behind." They frequently give in. And I ask "What *are* those 'things'?" They are some very destructive pressures.

What is missing? HOPE. The hope that comes from seeing so many young people (our staff) making good



decisions in this world and making it work. The hope that helps our campers to "know better." The hope that helps to provide with the strength to say "I don't have to give into 'that' behavior because I have seen better options in action!"

That is one thing we are blessed with at camp. We have the "unusual" culture here. We are blessed to attract staff who show us and our young people *the way*. These committed counselors are an antidote. They help make this community a place where our youth can learn to live it out a better way. Here, we spend significant time in real life with real challenges and real connections that give real meaning and hope. We are told over and over again by parents, former campers, and staff that this camp is life-changing. Thank God.

This column is a repeat due to its importance.



Lots Going On!

We are so busy! We continue to prepare and improve. We put a new roof on the Kahdalea dining lodge. We are expecting to have two more cabins replaced by the time you get here. We did some repair work up at the barn to prepare for the horses' arrival. Pat has a great team at the barn this summer. They are excited to work with you. Tyler Pommerenke has been exploring new caves for us to add to our caving program. He will be both camps' caving guru. There are millions of leaves on the grounds that we are in the process of picking up as spring begins to burst forth. Camp will begin soon!



Bundles of shingles ready to go!

Staff Notes - Who's coming? See!

First a little staff business. **FUN SCHOOL GROUP!** We are hearing from staff who want to help with the **LAKE HIGHLAND PREP GROUP** from Orlando, May 15-17. All high school seniors here to have fun together before going to college. Get out into the high mountains in early spring. Please join us! • We have some staff already booking Family Camp in Aug. Join us for that, too • Don't forget to book your "them" **clinics**. Please keep spreading the word. God bless your exams. Now... the staff! Here are some names you should remember.



We can't wait to see our old-timers! **KAHDALEA:** Christie Peaslee, Caroline Carmichael, Caroline Velasquez, Claire Gautier, Katelyn Hardin, Maddy Longenecker, Montana Newell, Sophia Forget, Camilla Turner, Mary Elliott Hester, Katie Pate, Annie Smith, Anja Roy, Bella Arbelaez, Gabbe Sehon, Molly Coccia, Brigid Wilson, Bit Thompson, Marie Peaslee, Sarah Beth Bernard, Pat Pyrwood, Sarah Ault, Sophia Alvarez, Hannah Bernard, Maggie DiLeo, Maggie Ellender, Mary Campbell Kitchens, Irina LoPresti, Brooke Rickman, Brenna Ryan, Maggie Thompson, Abby Lallande, Sylvia Blee, Emma Guillot, Shayna Eyrych, Kaley Schaefer, Elizabeth Coyte, Michaela McQuaig, Annabelle Laville, Elise Barbin, Emma Talbot, Jen Pommerenke, Jennie Burkett, Mary Catherine Pankus, Corinne Newbern, Raime Cooper, Sicily Wafer, Kalyn Cooper, Michelle Pitten, Maria Burns, Maura McCarrick, Sarah Miller, Catherine Velasquez, Alexis Robin, Rebecca Sigler, Eliza Williams, Hanna Draddy

CHOSATONGA: Austin Ashcraft, Joseph St. Cyr, Justin Bennett, Drew Davis, Gabe Salamida, Adam Trufant, Matthew Rigmaiden, Tyler Pommerenke, James Kergosien, Phillip Gordy, Colin Curtis, William Heintz, Daniel Ellender, Harris Moriarty, Evan Glynn, Theo Longenecker, Cain Menard, Nick Otranto, Miles Murphy, Connor Carmichael



This is another really solid group of young adults that we really respect so very much. Quality summer ahead! FUN FUN FUN!



Keep your EMAIL address up to date for fun scoop & info!

