

April 2007 Alumni Newsletter from YMCA Camp Willson!

Some News from YMCA Camp Willson and the Alumni,

What a crazy winter and spring! It was warmer in January than it was in April, and the school kids are still having a great time with outdoor education, groups are still riding the horses and taking tours of camp for summer camp and the weekends are filled with all kinds of groups! Nothing like spring time at Camp Willson!

We heard from quite a few alumni after our last newsletter and I can't tell you how great it was to hear from you. We've included some updates from folks at the end of this newsletter. When you write to us, we're going to assume it is ok to share some of your information unless you tell us not to, so hopefully the information that is shared is ok. We have edited some of the comments to save some space. We love it when you share your memories and update us on what is new with you. We hope to expand this newsletter to include pictures and other points of interest.

Please know that you are remembered for the many contributions you made while working with the kids at camp. I just talked with a mother today who was sending her 7 year old to camp this summer. Her oldest son is now 25 and she had sent him to camp for many years. She asked me if Archie the Pig was still alive (he isn't) and really appreciated the work Gareth Palmer did with her son in both bicycling camp and Frontier. She and her son had many fond memories!

Wow, when pasting this newsletter into the email, I am amazed at how many of you wrote in and got reconnected! Many thanks for your interest and enthusiasm! Keep up the good work. After summer camp, we will add more features to the website to help us communicate better with one another. Thanks!

Have a great spring and we hope you will join us sometime this year!



Anne Brienza
Executive Director

Has your address changed recently? Are you in contact with any Willson Alum that are not receiving this email? Please forward to them and have us contact us!

Upcoming Programs You Can Participate In!

Family Day: Saturday, April 28, 2007 from 1:00 – 4:00
Bring the family and a picnic lunch and enjoy an afternoon of camp activities. Registration is not required. Just the chance to enjoy camp!

[Latigo Ladies](#) is our new adult women's riding club. On Sunday Afternoons in the spring and the fall (April 22, 29, May 6, 13 and 20) you can join us for one or all sessions of horseback riding. At \$45/session or 5 sessions for \$200 (2:00 – 4:30 pm) you'll get plenty of time in the saddle.

Summer Camp is coming!

Have you checked out our website? Please visit www.ymcacampwillson.org to take a look at the 2007 summer camp brochure. We have lots of old favorites, as well as a couple of new programs. If you know of anyone with kids between the ages of 7 and 17, please send them our way! We always have room to share the Camp Willson spirit with a new generation of kids! We're also looking for **great staff**, ages 19 and older for the coming summer. Please contact Maggie Haverfield (summer@ymcacampwillson.org) for more information.

[Women's Weekend](#) April 20 – 22 and September 21-23. Ladies, come to camp and do as much or as little as you would like. Bring your mothers or adult daughters for massages, horseback riding, sports, crafts, gardening, great food and lots of laughing!

[Calling All Horselovers](#)

Boys and girls ages 10-14 can join us May 11-13 for a full week of horseback riding. Call for more information!

[Family Camp](#) – October 19 – 21, 2007

Bring the family and enjoy our brand new Fall Festival Family Camp! Each family will have their own cabin for a great weekend of activities and fun!

[Men's Camp](#) – August 24 – 31, 2007

Come for the day, the weekend or the week for some great relaxing, lots of sports, swimming, fishing and more!

Volunteers Opportunities

Join us Saturday **May 5th** for our annual **Spring Work Day**. With 455 acres of land and over 30 buildings to care for, we are seeking both skilled and unskilled adult and school age volunteers of all ages to help us with some spring cleaning and maintenance projects.

When registering for the work day (contact Anne at director@ymcacampwillson.org or 800-423-0427, please let us know what your areas of expertise are and we'll assign you projects that meet your skills. Our day will begin around 10:00 am and continue until around 3:00. Please join us for the entire time or any portion of the day that you are able. Lunch and snacks will be provided for all volunteers. If you are a middle/high school student in need of volunteer hours, please bring any paperwork that needs to be signed so you can get credit for your volunteer time.

Invasive Plants Abound at Camp. We need your help!

In order to keep camp looking great, we are in need of help to rid the lake and forests of plants that are taking over. If you have a couple hours that you could come to camp and remove some plants, we would love it! The plants of concern are:

- Honeysuckle:* This bush-like small tree has taken over the undergrowth of camp forested areas. In order to allow the native trees come through, these small trees need cut off and treated to prevent their return.
- Garlic Mustard:* This small plant is located throughout the woods. It is crowding out our other wildflowers and is taking over. These plants need to be pulled, and removed in plastic bags to prevent the spreading of their seeds.
- Purple Loosestrife:* This one is the really scary one! This is a plant that grows along the edge of our beautiful Lake Mac-O-Chee. Purple loosestrife has not spread enough that it is taking over the perimeter of the lake yet! We need to catch it before it grows out of control!

Do you have some extra time on Sunday afternoons this summer? We could use some volunteers to help with summer camp check-in. Primary responsibilities will be to help get people to their cabins and the waterfront and generally help kids and parents feel comfortable and welcome. (No bathroom cleaning for volunteers). If interested, please give Anne a call at 800-423-0427. Sundays between June 17 and August 5.

Our Wish List

Chest of Drawers (for staff housing)
Microscope Slides
Old Camp Tee shirts
Buckets
Shop Vac
Heat Laminate machine (fit a poster)
Sand
Trencher
Skid Loader
Lap top computer, flat screen computer monitors
Sports equipment (Outdoor basketballs, Volleyball, tennis racquets, softball bats, mitts etc)
Aluminum Row Boats
Canoes
Gardening skills

Kids To Camp Campaign

This coming summer, approximately one child in 10 will attend camp through our financial assistance program. These kids come from all walks of life: single parent families, kids being raised by grandparents, parents who have recently lost their job or on disability, low income working families and foster children. You can provide a week of camp for a child at an investment of \$420. \$70 will provide a day of camp for a child and \$35 will provide a ½ day experience. Please consider giving generously to help a child this summer.

During our summer camp staff training, the staff participate in the “Kids to Camp” Staff Auction. Last summer, the 50 staff raised \$3,393.00 for the kids. It would be great if our alumni could double that amount for the kids this summer. Please send your tax deductible donation c/o Anne Brienza at the address listed at the end of this newsletter. If you have a service or item that a staff member would consider purchasing at the staff auction let us know. Last year, popular items were a one hour massage, cabin coverage for an evening or rest hour, transportation and entertainment in Columbus or Bellefontaine (zoo, movies, dinner) or other items. It’s a great evening of entertainment and the kids are the ones who really benefit!

Facility News

This is a year of infrastructure improvements. It’s a little hard to top the construction of 13 new summer cabins over the past 5 years!

- We’re replacing the telephone lines from Bob Slemmer & Brad Kunze’s handiwork from the 1950’s through the 1990’s. The old lines are finally wearing out.
- Burying the above ground electric lines that serve the sewage treatment plant. We don’t want a repeat the 3 days of no electricity to the sewage treatment plant that we suffered through last summer!
- Purchasing new rowboats and replacing the “floating dock”.
- Building an addition onto the 1930’s farmhouse (Guy & Dottie Rostofer’s place to the old timers and the Properties Director’s home more recently and currently the home of Maggie Haverfield, Kori Keck, and Heather Wood. We’re finally going to add a second restroom and additional living space!
- Hopefully, we’ll have some additional good news in our next newsletter. We’re not ready for an announcement at the current time!

Margaret Wilcox Passes Away

In early February, we heard from Frank Wilcox (Camp Director from 1970-79) that his wonderful wife of 57 years, Margaret passed away on February 3 after a 12 year battle with Breast Cancer. While my memories do not go back to when Frank & Margaret worked at camp (around 1970-'79 while Frank was the camp director and Margaret was cook, nurse and chief supporter of Frank, I arrived a couple years after they left and had always heard such wonderful stories about them. They began visiting every couple of years on their tour to Ohio and we always had such wonderful visits. I was always drawn to Frank & Margaret’s interest and love of the happenings of Camp Willson. It was always a joy to get to visit with both she and Frank. Our thoughts and prayers are with to Frank, their children Dean, Ann, Beth, Cate and their families.

I am including excerpts from a letter he had sent:

Dear Anne,

Several weeks ago Aniya, Cate's 4 yr old little girl, had found a decal 4 inches square with a large purple butterfly on it. Margaret told her that that would be her ticket to heaven. It was kept on Margaret's bedside stand and they would often talk about it-Grandma's ticket to heaven. Shortly before 1:00 on Feb 3, Aniya put the butterfly between

Margaret's motionless fingers and it stayed there even while she was taken from the house. Aniya doesn't seem to feel lonely or miss her Grandma because "Grandma is in heaven". We all went to church Sun morning and Aniya went up front for the children's time. The minister, knowing about the ticket to heaven, asked Aniya about Grandma's butterfly. Aniya told the whole story. The minister then gave all the children purple butterfly stickers to take home. I thought you would like to hear a 4 year old's way of dealing with a sad situation.

We are planning to have a memorial service Sun afternoon Feb 18th at our church here. This service has all been planned by Margaret. All of our children and grandchildren will participate. Included will be several of her favorite hymns. I know you would like to be here and you will be in spirit.

Margaret's body will be, as she requested, donated to the teaching hospital where she had so many treatments after we moved to Portland and then be cremated. A memorial service and burial is planned in Ohio later in the year.

She was a great lady doing great works and influencing untold numbers of boys, girls and adults over the years. Her example of courage during the last 12 years with her illness is often remarked about by many.

I of course could go on and on about Margaret and you could too. She would say though that she was only doing her part, and hoped that others would too, to make the world a better place and she did. Please pass this along to our Camp Willson friends and acquaintances. Thanks.

The family has designated Camp Willson as a suggested recipient for donations honoring Margaret. A special use of these funds would be appreciated.

Love Frank
4614 SE Steele St, Portland, OR 97206

Frank & Margaret's son-in-law wrote the following poem for Margaret's Celebration of Life Service:

For Margaret

By Eric Weiss (son-in-law)

I'm sitting here and I'm wondering why
That life goes by in the blink of an eye
In spite of the heartache, trouble and pain
I'd gladly feel it all over again.

Lord, please give me one more ticket to ride
On the wings of a purple butterfly
Carry me up in your arms of love
To watch over my children from above

Such a blessing to be here on this ride
With all my family by my side
I know I'll be with you all again
Just have to wait to see where and when

Lord, please give me one more ticket to ride
On the wings of a purple butterfly
Carry me up in your arms of love
To watch over my children from above.

Staff Snippets

- Our thoughts and prayers go out to *Crystal Adkins* ('97-'00) with the recent passing of her father.
- *Amy Amari* will be graduating from the University of TN (go Volunteers!) this May with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science.
- *Nikki Armstrong* (2003 Summer Counselor) daughter of 70's counselor Jamie Wagner Armstrong) is finishing her last semester at Dowling College in NY where she played 4 years of volleyball and these past two years her team had made it to the elite 8 national tournament.
- Equestrian Director Beth Powers ran into *Rachel Bartling* (Ass't Equestrian Director, 1999 – 2001) at Equine Affaire in Columbus. Rachel is engaged to be married, has purchased a home in Wayne Michigan and is still "horsing" around!
- *New Zealander Matthew Blatherwick* (summer 2006) is currently working at a dairy farm in New Zealand and hopes to return to another camp this summer.
- Former Camp Director *Bruce Boyer and his wife Kathy* (1979-84) will be joining us at Willson for the weekend of May 11-13, 2007. Remember all those banners in the dining hall? They are from our 25 years of hosting the Christian Leadership Conference. This conference was initiated by Bruce & Kathy in 1982 and has been going strong ever since. They are joining as representatives from the Foundation and in celebration of our 25th anniversary.
- *Candice Black Casto* (long time camper and summer staff 1998, 2000) tells us: I got married in October 2006. My new name is Candice Casto. My husband and I live in Columbus. He is working on his PhD in physics at OSU.
- *Sean & Christine (Freshcorn)* Galvin's oldest son Cass attended Outdoor Education with his school class in early April.
- *Jazz Hamilton* (1994-95) is the Senior Program Director of Marketing and Membership at the Northshore YMCA in Seattle Washington. He is the proud father of two year old Nykolas (Nyko), who happens to have big blue eyes and is cute as a button (and hopefully as ornery as Jazz ever was!)
- *Chris Heim* (1975) reconnected after hearing about Bellefontaine in the news (hopefully one of our positive stories...) and googled us! He was one of 8-10 Jr/Assistant Counselors in 1975 and was recruited to work at camp by Jeff Harriman and fondly remembers Thom Peters. He graduated from Columbus Eastmoor High School, as well as BGSU. He is currently a sales manager for an importer of kitchen tools and gadgets that are sold through national retail chains such as Target, Wal-Mart, Kroger etc.
- *Tish Hill* ('05-'06, OE & Summer) has moved from NY to YMCA Storer Camps in Jackson MI, working as part of their program staff.
- *Dawn Kramer* (2000) is living in Dayton and will soon be volunteering with Big Brothers/Big Sisters in Dayton. In her work life, she does assessments for people 60 years of age and older for home care options.

- From *Kathy Speelman Kramer* (1977-79): Dan was the first person I met when I arrived in June 1977 for staff training week, and I'm oh so glad I met him! December 22, 2006 marks our 27th wedding anniversary. We were married in the old dining hall prior to its demise. We are so very grateful that Guy Rostofer saved the stones from the old fireplace and that they were reused in the construction of the new building, as we took our vows in front of that fireplace. The weather that day was almost a carbon copy Ohio Decembers: rainy and gray. But how much warmth and cheer there was in the dining hall!!
- *Gary Kwolek* (OE Naturalist 1985-86), sends greetings and memories from the '85-'86 OE season, including staff Diane Little Norris, tall & short kim, Dave & Brenda, as well as the horses and many other memories! Gary now lives in Culpeper VA
- *Kiah Lotus* (long time camper and 2004 summer staffer) is currently the personal chef for Tami Longaberger, CEO of the Longaberger Co.
- Long time day and resident camper *Cassie Moon* (1994-98) just got engaged and is working as a graphic designer for Suburban News Publications in Columbus.
- *David Martin* (Equipment Transportation Director and kitchen staff (1992, 93) is still living in Bellefontaine, and celebrates 10 years of working with Consolidated Care in Logan County. He and former wife, Brandy have an 8 year old daughter, Violet. In 2006, Dave brought some of his summer youth program kids to camp each week, doing a variety of landscaping projects, making camp a better place to be!
- Congratulations to *Morgan Daniels Martino* (long time camper through the 90's & staff: 02, 03) on her January 27th Wedding to Jim. Brother Elijah and his 9 year old son Conner were also present. (for those on staff in the 90's, don't we all fee older! With both Elijah & Morgan being all summer long campers and volunteers, it's fun seeing them all grown up!
- *Marta Monroy* from Spain (from Spain summer 2000) writes in, remembering her summer with Dane Bumgartner and Celeste Anders Battig in Frontier, as well as her time in Arts & Crafts. She is living in Spain, working at the Reanult Car factory.
- *M.T. Fore Palmer* is living in Raleigh NC and is the Coordinator of Student Outreach and Distance Learning for the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. In the fall of 2007, she will be starting graduate school, working on a Masters of Social Work. She and Australian Gareth have divorced and they have a daughter named Drew.
- *Jeff Paquin* (long time camper & 2004 fishing counselor) is currently in Oklahoma attending Air Traffic Control training. In May, he will be heading to Indianapolis to begin work! Hopefully, he will have time to make it back for Men's Camp weekend this year!
- *Adam Parker* from Australia wrote in. Adam, send us a note of what you are up to!
- *Mike Pettry* (1979-82 summer staff, 1970's camper) writes that he will be moving to WV and will be working with the FBI's fingerprint/data facility in Clarsburg WV. He has been working for the FBI since 1997 and was an assistant prosecuting attorney in Clermont County OH prior to that.

- *Jami Pickard* will be returning to Willson some time this summer to get her white rag!
- *Jim Ramey*, son of long time staffer and Men's Camper *Ralph* and brother of *John* got reconnected. He was on staff from 1972-76, working maintenance, with the bicycling program. He and brother John built the first fiberglass kayaks camp owned. Those kayaks were around camp for many, many years! Jim is currently a sales representative for paddlesports related products.
- Congratulations to *Ralph Ramey* (1940's camper and staff and current Men's Camper) on having an article about him in one of the winter editions of Ohio Magazine!
- *Jon Ruthenburg* (Facilities/Site Director in the early 80's) sends hellos to all.
- *Christoph Roemer* from Germany (2003) is busy taking exams in Timber Construction, Statistics, Measuring, and Differential Calculus. It was great that he wrote in, as we did not have an email address on him! Good luck on all those tests
- From *Phil & Shannon Russell* last December: Thank you so much for the update – Phil and I had a blast reading about the changes and accomplishments that have happened recently at camp. ☺ Please pass along our greetings and best wishes to Maggie, Anne, Beth, Elaine & Jay!
Our little family is doing well. Our “baby”, Owen, just turned two years old last week and Natalie will be four in early January. Phil owns his own web development/e-marketing company (<http://www.viewsource.com>) and I stay home and take care of the kids and have a part-time, work from home job with my old employer. It's really a great arrangement for all of us. ☺ It's hard to believe it has been over TEN YEARS since we met at Willson! I've attached our Christmas picture of the kids and one of all of us from the summer. Do they look like Phil, or what! We're living just outside Cincinnati, about two miles from Kings Island. ☺ This house was a bit of a “fixer upper” so a lot of our free time the last year and a half since we moved here has been spent getting everything updated. Our latest project was finishing the basement. If you're ever down this way, please drop us a line!
- *Beckie (Fullenkamp) Schretter* (1990-94), wrote in, sharing pictures of her adorable redheaded kids, 3 year old Jayden and 2 year old Tori. She married in 2000 and is currently the Talent Program Manager for WellPoint, Inc (Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield) where she is redesigning the HR-talent strategies for about 30% of the 40,000 person workforce. If we could find Todd McSwan's name tag, Beckie is hoping we can find her Bellefontaine High School 1989 class ring!
- *Jennifer Palmer Shearer* (OE 1998-99) had a baby girl on August 29, 2006 named Riley Mabel. Jen, husband Bob and Riley are living in Baton Rouge LA and Jen works at Tickfaw State Park.
- *Bryan Suddith* (1996) is living in Kettering OH and works for the Board of Elections. In his spare time he consults and works on political campaigns. He and his wife have 2 sons, the oldest is now 6 and ready for summer camp in 2008! Bryan tells us that *Karon Hanekom* is a vet nurse in South Africa.

- Congratulations to *Aaron Ward* (1986-93) and his wife on the birth of Adam Rhea Ward on February 9, 2007. Aaron was our long time fishing camp assistant and honors Tracy Rhea with the birth of his first child! Aaron can't wait to take Adam fishing in Lake Mac-O-Chee for some bluegill fishing!
- *Sarah Ward* (6th child of 1980's office manager *Teresa Ward*) will have son Austin at camp this summer for his 4th summer. Sara is getting married this summer.
- *Mary Ward* (another of Teresa's children) has completed her second tour of duty in Iraq and will spend the rest of her Army career as a drill sargent
- *Mallory Wengatz* is completing her freshman year at Bowling Green and is a Phi Mu. She won't be able to return to camp this summer... her first to not be at Willson since 2000.
- *Jess Yarnell* (Summer 2003) finished her BS in Biblical Studies in May of 2006 and is working on her BS in Biology. She will then head to grad school for a Master's in Genetic Counseling. She is living in Cincinnati and is working as an assistant to the Worship Leader at her church.
- *Dave & Cheryl (King) Young* (OE staff & Director, 1993-95), are living in Norwalk OH and have two children (Jennifer age 10 and Lance (age 4). Dave works for the City of Norwalk at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Cheryl is an orthodontic clinical assistant.

Birthdays!

April

Name	Birthday
GANSL, Molly	April 16
Pohl, Lizemarie	April 19
VENTER, Rauen	April 20
WATSON, Amanda	April 20
DEIBLER, Brandy	April 21
HARVEY, Daniel	April 22
DAY, Stephen	April 23
RARDON, Clint	April 25
HAVERFIELD, Christina	April 26
SESSLEY, Tyler	April 27
CASTO, Candice	April 28
CHAVEZ, Rafael	April 29
DANIELS, Jerry	April 30
COLLINS, Natasha	May 2
GAFFEY, Brian	May 3
HINDERER, Rob	May 3
KUYKENDALL, Shawwna	May 3
SPEELMAN, Amanda	May 3
AGIN, Andrea	May 4
CALTURY, Rachel	May 4
FITZSIMMONS, Matthew	May 5
GRIFFIN, Sean	May 5
CHOW, Abby	May 6
FLOETKER, Nikki	May 7
THOMSEN, Kim	May 8

Name	Birthday
BEACH-REHNER, Erik	May 9
HADLEY - HOOK, Anji	May 10
ZYHOWSKI, Alaina	May 10
HAUMAN, Andrew	May 11
KECK, Kori	May 13
POWERS, Beth	May 13
RICHARDS, Jayme	May 13
CATALANO, Gina	May 15
SPECK, Carrie	May 15
ROEMER, Christoph	May 16
GLENN, Zach	May 19
OBAD, Ivana	May 19
SMITH, Marjorie (MJ)	May 20
BURGESS, Katey	May 21
WILKIN, Cassie	May 22
SCHLEICH, Katiy	May 25
GRIFFITHS, "Becks"	May 27
LING, Doh Kin	May 28
BAUMGARTNER, Dane	May 29
BEACHY, Caroline	May 29

**Did we miss your birthday? Please
send us an email so we can add you to
the monthly list.**

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