

June SECOND EDITION 2010

## Gary's Camping Newsletter

*Continuous Improvement for Great Camp Leaders*

"Patriotism is supporting  
your country all the time,  
and your government  
when it deserves it." -- *Mark Twain*

**Yeah, There's Oil in the Gulf and our Congress is Ripped in Two.** – Camp is a place to push that to the side and help kids practice the values that will *cure* this in the future. *We* can present kids with an energy-use problem we have at our *own camp*; a pollution problem (invasive species like Purple Loosestrife? Reducing packaging waste? Filthy bathrooms? – *bring in the containment booms!*) Representative government? How about a “camper council” elected by each cabin to meet with the camp director twice a session to hear what *kids* think is important to their cabin groups, and give them a chance to do something about it!) Camp as social laboratory? It always has been! Let's show parents and campers we're proud of our country on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and we cherish the responsibilities of taking care of each other.

**DesMoines Y Camp Floods (1 foot deeper than even 2008): Noah named new Camp Director — 7"** of rain in a day during the first week of camp floods the dining hall, pool, and many recreation buildings. Executive Dave Sherry will be looking for volunteers later in the week. (See photos: <http://picasaweb.google.com/lh/sredir?uname=104303275313789693331&target=ALBUM&id=5487927972296688305&authkey=Gv1sRgCKH44KqI8MKRFw&invite=CNqVgLkC&feat=email> ) No campers have been sent home; dining was moved to their major education building immediately; cabins are “high-and-dry” being rebuilt after a flood 30 years ago. But their pool and dining hall are full of mud and river water. Reach Dave at [David.Sherry@dmymca.org](mailto:David.Sherry@dmymca.org) if you could offer some clean-up help (an excellent leadership project). After the 2008 flood Dave said the problem-solving that provided the campers with an outstanding summer had brought the staff closer than any summer he could remember. Guess it's going to be another great summer! (...A concept *you* might discuss with your own leadership team. “Doing everything” for your counselors may be stealing opportunities to stretch their creativity and build deeper bonds of friendship.) You don't *need* a flood; it's just *one* opportunity to **bring out the best**.

**Canadian Camp Exec Taps PR as “The Camp Authority”** – Cat O'Connor is general manager of day camping (*seven* sites!) with the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka, ON. She has a weekly feature in the local paper where readers submit questions by e-mail about sending their children to day camp. This posting is from June 23, 2010. (If I had *any* camp spaces left, I'd put this into my own words and high-tail-it down to my local paper(s) and offer to do the same thing! – *Gary*)...

# “Day camps great way for youngsters to gain confidence”

“Q:I never had the chance to go to camp as a child but am interested in sending my kids to day camp this summer. How beneficial is the experience for children?”

“A: This is a great question; I myself did not have the opportunity to experience camp as a child either. I have, however, over the past 15 years working in the camping field, seen first hand the tremendously positive impact a day camp experience can have for a child. There is also comprehensive research that has proven the value of summer camps time and again and I am happy to say that your child will carry the benefits of camps well into adulthood.

First of all, camps teach hard and soft skills. By hard skills, I am referring to the increased ability to do such things as kicking a ball, learning to swim and arts and crafts.

But it's what happens on the inside that really counts--the soft skills. These are the benefits that will last a lifetime and what we call building skills for life.

Camp has been found to improve a child's confidence, self-reliance and independence. Being away from parents and often grouped with children he or she doesn't know, the camper is given the chance to develop the ability to relate to others, share, cooperate and have fun in a safe yet independent capacity. If problems arise and personalities collide, these same children develop conflict resolution skills and self-control strategies with the help of our qualified counselors. They learn the art of compromise and how to work as a team. Because children are placed in group settings, campers learn early how to communicate effectively and problem solve and, as a result, their self-esteem will increase.

I can say as both the general manager of day camping and a mother of two campers that there is nothing like the feeling that comes from seeing a shy camper gaining the confidence to try new things, make new friends and really realize their true potential as an individual.

Our counselors are trained to work with children of all abilities and personalities, from outgoing to shy, reserved to highly active. Their goal is to ensure that every camper has fun, makes new friends and leaves with memories that last a lifetime. Individual needs are just as important as the cohesive success of each group. They will work closely with parents and campers to make sure the summer day camp experience is a great one for everyone.

I invite you to take a look at our YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka Summer Day Camp brochure. Discuss the many choices of camps with your child(ren) and find one what interests them.

To register, visit [www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca](http://www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca)”

(See the whole article at <http://www.thebarrieexaminer.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=2634757> ) Contact Cat O'Connor at [Catherine\\_OConnor@ymca.ca](mailto:Catherine_OConnor@ymca.ca)

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"A Bird sings not because it has a Message, but because it has a Song" - *Maya Angelou*

“This is a Repeat After Me Song!” -- *Every great counselor; not one anonymous!*

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*Best Wishes for your Best Summer ever,*

Gary

Gary Forster, LLC

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