

August 2012

Gary's Camping Newsletter

Continuous Improvement for Great Camp Leaders

"It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end." — *Ernest Hemingway*

Passing the Torch -- Scott Brosman has been selected as Camp Tecumseh YMCA's next CEO. (Scott and I both started our camping careers at Tecumseh in the late 70's!) He follows camping legend Dave Wright who is retiring after 23 years in that role, and a total of 40 years at Tecumseh! I was privileged to speak at Dave's retirement party last week. His board chair gave such a moving farewell, that I asked if I could share it here. (See the last entry, below).

Better Video – This video for the Scouts of Europe shows details of camp life in a way that can take parents back to the best times of their *own* youth... and inspire them to want the same for their own kids. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lYw6yL5Ed4&feature=player_embedded. Maybe share it with your own video guy? -- (Thanks to Matt Ralph at <http://www.summertimecampculture.com/> for this).

The Great Zucchini Race – In the next month or so you may have an opportunity to be the “fun camp person” at an upcoming meeting. Take it. Give the opening devotion; share a PowerPoint; or lead a “teambuilding” activity. Here's a really different one. Every gardener has way too many huge zucukes this time of year. Get a bunch. Slice some up to make “wheels”. Have teams make “Zukemobiles” using round toothpicks and whole zucukes for the “cars!” Race them down a table propped up on one end. http://www.mycentraljersey.com/article/20120802/NJNEWS/308020063/Rahway-YMCA-hosts-Great-Zucchini-Race?odyssey=nav%7Chead&nclink_check=1 (Bottles of Hidden Valley Ranch for prizes?!)

It's Not Grub, It's Cuisine – Nice NY Times article on camps that have gotten more creative with food: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/11/dining/at-summer-camp-young-foodies-raise-the-bar.html?emc=eta1>

How Often Do You Stay In Touch? – According to her 2012 Nonprofit Communications Trends Report, where she asked how often nonprofits planned to communicate in 2012 with supporters, 77% said they would email at least monthly (16% weekly or more often, 19% every other week, 43% monthly). In addition, 51% snail-mail at least 4 times a year. (From [Kivi's Nonprofit Communications Blog](#)).

A Board Chair's "Thanks" to Dave Wright – (in front of 450 guests) – “I first crossed paths with Dave Wright 27 years ago when I arrived at Camp Tecumseh for the first time. As a little “Buck” camper, I had no idea the impact that Dave or his family would have on me, but Camp T had an immediate impact. Over the years, I've learned that so much of it was directly attributable to Dave. Through the years, I was on summer resident staff, I'm a regular quilt camper (thanks

to Beth!), I've served on the board for the last 8 years, and I'm a camper parent. I have had the honor of working both for and with Dave in a myriad of settings. Reflecting on all those times, there are two things that shine through about Dave.



“First, he sincerely cares about everyone, all the time. I believe this is because he is a man of deep faith. He is the epitome of the I’m Third motto always putting Jesus first, others second, and himself third. Whether it’s driving buses in torrential downpours to bring campers to safety, the motivation and enthusiasm he breathes into staff and summer camp, or the soft and encouraging words in an email he sent to me just before my first child was born. Dave can go from Bo the Hobo at chapel, to a business meeting looking out for the future of camp; the Indian Chief reading the Sagamore Creed at campfire, to a concerned parent phone call; the undertaker in Tecumseh Counselor, to a thoughtful conversation over lunch with a camp friend or donor. He is genuine, kind, and sincere all the time.

“Second, he is brilliant. Dave knows so much, and if he encounters something he doesn’t know...check back in about 48 hours, he’ll know all about it by then. This is something I’ve witnessed from the “business” side of camp since being on the board. Did you know that a big reason he is a successful CEO is that he knows a lot about non-camp stuff? Sure he knows about leading a team, providing premier camping experiences, maintaining our property, building campfires, and canoeing. We expect that. However, when we have encountered situations related to utilities, policies, pests, land acquisition, or agriculture, he learns as much as he can as fast as he can and becomes very educated on whatever topic he encounters. When he comes to me or the board with a question or proposal, he never ceases to amaze me with the depth of knowledge he has acquired and the background information he presents.

“It is that caring and brilliant man, Dave Wright, which we celebrate and recognize today after an amazing 40 year career at Camp Tecumseh.” -- *Lindsey Schiesser*
(Reach Dave at dwright@camptecumseh.org until Oct. 1st).

“There shall be eternal summer in the grateful heart.”

-- *Celia Thaxter*

"Experience: that most brutal of teachers. But you learn. My God do you learn."-- C.S. Lewis

"Everyone has a plan... until they get punched in the face." -
- Mike Tyson

Best wishes,

Gary

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