Second Email Blast of the Summer

At whatever point you are in your summer camp schedule - starting staff orientation, in the middle of staff orientation, finishing up with staff orientation, diving into your summer camp program - know that you have a family of colleagues throughout LOM who are immersed in the same kinds of things you're immersed in, and praying for one another that your campers and staff experience God's love, grow in faith, learn about living in Christian community, and that all their adventures are safe and sound!

100 Years of Outdoor Ministry for Lutherans in the USA!!!

https://www.lomnetwork.org/lom-100-2/

There’s still a few weeks for you to get your plans together for the kickoff of the 100th Anniversary year – July 5 will be exactly 100 years since the first documented Lutheran camping session in 1919. (Editor’s note: as much as he’s trying, Don Johnson can only remember bits and pieces of that first Lutheran camp!!!) Camps and retreat centers throughout the ELCA will celebrate the 100th Anniversary on July 5, 2019, and for the succeeding 365 days to a culmination on July 5, 2020. Here are some IDEAS for your celebrations:

- Share a meaningful impact story, have a camper or staff member get up and share how camp has helped them individually connect to faith and grow as a person.
- Photos … 100 photo wall, create a wall show-casing 100 different photos of your camp, photos from various years of your ministry.
- Collect 100 stories from your camp … ask different groups of people related to your ministry; donors, campers, parents, staff members, alumni, Pastor’s, etc. Gather these in a book to be shared and used as you feel called.
- Connecting to the nature connection to outdoor ministry and care of creation, plant a tree, or several, at your site to celebrate the anniversary and the future growth of the ministry in the next 100 years. Can we plant 100 or more trees across LOM!!
- Encourage campers to donate 100 pennies, $1 at the end of the week to be donated to LOM or for scholarships at your site to ensure the future of outdoor ministry for all.
- Video campers of all ages at your site this summer, having them answer the question, “What is your dream for the next century of LOM?”
- Equip campers at camp to go home and share the impact of camp at their congregation. Encourage Pastor’s to create space to share during summer services. Have camper video record their story if possible!
- 100 years ago night … can you serve a popular meal potentially enjoyed at camp 100 years ago, how about an all-camp game highlighting games popular 100 years ago!
- Honor important former staff members … collect stories of a favorite memory of camp and share monthly via social media or in a newsletter.
The Impact of LOM

For the past few months, we have been bringing you first-hand accounts on why LOM is so important to so many people, especially those who work year-round in outdoor ministry, and those who serve on the Board of Directors of the member organizations of LOM (all the camps and retreat centers affiliated with the ELCA). In this email blast, we bring you the lifelong call story of Janis Sloka, executive director of Camp of the Cross Ministries (ND). Janis’s story begins before the formation of LOM, but since its official organizing in 2005, LOM has been the network for outdoor ministry organizations to work together so that Janis and thousands of others can be impacted in the ways Janis describes. Thank you, Janis, for sharing your story!

What LOM means to me? I have been a part of outdoor ministry my entire life. Camps have made a huge impact on who I am today. I couldn’t even imagine not having camp in my life and what life would look like. It has been important to me and my family. My children have been campers and have also worked at camp.

When I was in junior high and high school my home church went to Camp Kirchenwald in PA. I remember how fun it was and how beautiful it was to hike the trails and play in the crick. Yes, I said “crick”. It wasn’t big enough to be a creek. I remember our Bible stories being shared with us in a field or even by the pool.

When I was in college, I worked at Mount Luther. Those three summers were the most influential in my faith life and who I am today. When I was at Mount Luther, I felt the call to rostered ministry. It was empowering to have pastors around each week to visit about that call. I enjoyed working with children and youth campers. I believe the responsibility given to me each week was a foundation in my leadership today.

After graduating seminary, during both of my calls to parish ministry I spent a week each summer as a chaplain at camp. It was good to be there with our children and youth from the church I was serving. Camp was a great place set apart from the church building to grow in faith along with the kids from my churches.

It was during those calls that I truly discovered that there was more than one season at camp. How exciting to use such beautiful places more than just in the summer. I began to put together weekend retreats during the fall, winter and spring for the youth groups I served. I also had retreats for Penn State students during those seasons.

I have served on the Board of Directors for the Central PA Camping Corporation.

After serving in the parish for 15 years, I felt a call beyond the parish. Currently, I am serving as the Executive Director at Camp of the Cross Ministries in Garrison, ND.

What does LOM mean to me? Restating from above, I can't imagine not having outdoor ministry in my life. I am so blessed to be a part of such a large family for a long time. Here's to many more years!

New Podcast

Joan Garry is a nonprofit consultant with a practice focusing on crisis management, executive coaching, and building strong board and staff leadership teams. She is also a professor at the Annenberg School for Communications at UPenn. She is well known throughout the LOM network and she will be one of the featured keynoters at the Great Gathering this November. Our most recent LOM Podcast is an interview with Joan. The theme, “Cultivating Healthy Board Relationships,” focuses on relationships of Board members with each other, Board members with the executive director, and the executive director cultivating good relationships with the Board. This podcast is on the LOM website and you can download it here: http://traffic.libsyn.com/lutheranoutdoorministry/LOM_2019_Joan_Gerry.mp3
This is the 10th podcast since we started doing them. There have been almost 1,000 downloads in all.
Great Gathering Update

Registration for the OMC Great Gathering opened at the beginning of May. With conference leaders like Ken Medema, Jim Cain, and Lisle Gwynn Garrety, you won’t want to miss out on this ecumenical event bringing together camp and conference professionals, board members, and volunteers. Join us at Lake Junaluska this November 10-14 under the theme “RelationSHIFT.” Get in on early registration by going to omcgreatgathering.org to guarantee your housing preferences.

Intern Positions for the OMC Great Gathering

RelationSHIFT, the Great Gathering of the Outdoor Ministries Connection, is seeking four interns for the conference. These individuals will assist the planning team in the everyday logistics of the event at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center (Lake Junaluska, NC). The commitment for interns is from Sunday, November 10 through Thursday, November 14.

Duties and Responsibilities: The intern’s responsibilities will be varied, but will mostly include working with conference registration, on-site shuttles, the exhibit hall, and other forms of program support. The days will be long with duties starting before breakfast and wrapping up late at night. Since the exhibit hall is scheduled for Wednesday, the interns will be working on the set-up during the conference’s free evening on Tuesday.

Accountability: The interns will answer to the members of the conference planning team.

Compensation: The interns will receive conference registration and the round-trip shuttle from the Asheville Airport (if needed). They will also receive lodging in a double-occupancy room, all of the conference meals, the conference t-shirt, and up to $450.00 towards their travel to the event. During the event, the interns will attend most of the conference plenary gatherings and some, but not all, of the workshop sessions.

Qualifications: The OMC Great Gathering is seeking interns who each represent the camp and retreat ministries of a different denomination that supports the conference. These denominations include the Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Canada, United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church. Preference will be given to applicants who have experience with conference logistics and exhibit halls.

Questions?: If you should have any questions about the intern positions, please contact Joel Winchip (joel@pccca.net), Elise Bates Russell (elise@campjburg.org), or Nathan Pile (nathan@sequanaota.com). You can learn more about the conference by going to www.omcgreatgathering.org.

For Your Calendar Planning

- September 30-October 2, 2019: LOM South Central Territory Gathering - Briarwood (TX)
- October 7-9, 2019: LOM West Midwest Territory Gathering - Joy Ranch (SD)
- November 6-9, 2019: Leadership Training Event administrative track (LTE) – Lake Junaluska, NC https://www.lomnetwork.org/lte/
- November 12, 2019: LOM Day at the Great Gathering including the Annual LOM Auction – Lutheridge (NC). Transportation, 100th Anniversary Banquet and all program and activities free for all who are enrolled in the Great Gathering.
• December 2-4, 2019: LOM East Midwest Territory Gathering - hosted by eastern Iowa camps, Shalom and Ewalu
• December 9-10, 2019: LOM East Territory Gathering – Mar-Lu-Ridge (MD)
• February 11-14, 2020: American Camp Association (ACA) National Convention - San Diego, CA https://www.acacamps.org/conference
• March 1-7, 2020: Compass Points certificate continuing education - Ferncliff Camp & Conference Center, Little Rock, AR (Personnel & Leadership, March 1-4; Development (March 4-7) http://www.compasspointsprogram.org/upcoming-courses-2020/
• March 23-26, 2020: LOM Executive Directors Gathering - Coastal Retreat Center (SC)
• September 27–October 3, 2020: Compass Points certificate continuing education – Pilgrim Center, Ripon, WI (Nonprofit Business Management September 27-30; Articulating our Mission, Role and Values September 30-October 3) http://www.compasspointsprogram.org/upcoming-courses-2020/

The Biggest Challenge in 2019

The challenge that’s been most commonly confronted by many of our outdoor ministries this year has been the recruitment and hiring of persons to serve on staff for our summer camp programs. In this booming economy, young adults who are the ones we traditionally seek to commit a summer to the joy and gratification of summer camp staff experience, are finding more lucrative pay, more jobs that to them seem better connected to their career goals, and more jobs that they feel look better on their resume. This is to not even mention that we are experiencing historically low rates of unemployment. For so many of our camps, it’s been tough to compete in such an environment.

Casey Fuerst is the former director of marketing and communications for Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries. She will complete her term at the end of this year on the LOM Board of Directors, part of which she served as the President. She recently embarked, with much success, on her current professional endeavor as the founder and owner of TicTacToe Marketing. I asked her if she has any suggestions, from her perspective as a marketing professional, for those who are having difficulty recruiting a sufficient number of summer camp staff. Almost immediately, she responded with these suggestions:

• Just as the endeavor of donor relations has moved from seeking all unrestricted giving to looking at how we can target pockets of giving for scholarships, summer craft supplies, staff support, etc… it would be interesting to look at summer positions and instead of calling them all "counselors," create unique categories that highlight their specific skills. Contrast "Looking for Summer Camp Counselors" with "Looking for Female Empowerment Specialists, Lifeguards, Outdoor Adventure Teachers, Male Coaches, etc..."

• Invest in online promotion, reaching prospective staff members where they are at - Instagram ads, Google ads, etc.

• Tell stories - from the staff perspective (experience, friendships, challenge) AND from a camper's perspective (I loved Joe, he made me feel good about myself, etc...)

• Create awards for summer staff - most improved, strongest leader, the so-and-so award - given at the end of the summer - again gives them something to promote and resume builders

• Give hired staff a set of social media graphics to announce their summer employment

• Have a job fair at the end of summer camp, where employers come to camp and set up tables for staff to talk to them
• If you can’t afford to pay well, promote the "extra" perks - FREE room and board, weekend lodging and entertainment with your new best friends, the best reference letter for grad school or job applications that you can imagine, swag, etc... (Editor’s note – ACA has a great one page resource for this: https://www.lomnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Flyer-Working-At-Camp-Is-A-Real-Job.pdf)

Thank you, Casey, for these great suggestions!

**Enter the 2019 Project Real Job Video Contest**

**Video Content Requirements**

Upload no more than 60 seconds of video — your submission could be four 15-second videos, two 30-second videos, or one 60-second video. Videos should demonstrate why staff members work at summer camp, why they return to camp, the impact that working at camp has, or the difference that they are making by working at camp.

**Accepted video file formats:** .mp4, .mov, .m4v

**Resolution:** 1080p or 4k

Project Real Job, a program of the American Camp Association® (ACA), welcomes and appreciates video contributions from the camp field to help others understand the benefits and value of working at camp.

ACA is dedicated to ensuring that those represented in any contributed video have granted ACA permission to use uploaded content in its publications, promotional materials, and outside media.

By submitting this form, you are actively affirming that you are uploading content that you have created, that you own or hold the necessary rights to, or that you’re authorized to use, therefore granting full global distribution rights for the uploaded content to the American Camp Association.

Before submitting content to ACA, please take an opportunity to review your camp’s photo and video release statement. Did your organization address the use of photos and video by ACA or media organizations working with ACA? Videos without releases will not be considered for use by the American Camp Association.

**How to Submit:** Enter by filling out and uploading your content to the form before August 10, 2019. Deadline: August 10, 2019. Five winners will be announced and contacted by October 1, 2019.

Winners must respond by email acknowledging that they have won and accepting their prize by October 14, 2019. In the event a winner does not respond by October 14, alternate winners will be chosen until five winners acknowledge and accept their prizes.

Camps may submit multiple videos from multiple individuals, but please make sure to clearly designate the individual entering.


--From Don Johnson, LOM Executive Director