LOM Board Organizes Strategic Planning Task Force

At its meeting on July 18, the LOM Board of Directors, in addition to transacting many other items of business, appointed a Strategic Planning Task Force. This is perfect timing. The current Strategic Plan for LOM has been in place since November 2016, and many of the initiatives identified in that plan have been accomplished or are now embedded into the life and culture of LOM.

In addition, the LOM Board is committed to observing the 100th Anniversary of Lutheran outdoor ministries by looking ahead to the next century as much as celebrating the accomplishments of the first century. What a great way to get the next 100 years started on an ambitious and future-visioning footing.

This is the list of those who have been appointed to serve on the Task Force:

- Rev. Darryl Thompson Powell, LOM Board president (IL)
- Jake Sorenson, LOM Board secretary (WI)
- Sarah Lefler, executive director, Mar-Lu-Ridge (MD)
- Dave Holtz, executive director, Luther Crest (MN)
- Lauri Egertson, co-executive director, Lutheran Retreats, Camps and Conferences (CA)
- Gretchen Bachman, associate director, Voyageur Lutheran Ministry (MN)
- Rev. Jon Halvorson, executive director, Metigoshe Ministries (ND)
- Deanna Christensen, executive director, Cross Trails, (TX)
- Don Johnson, executive director, LOM (Staff)

For more on the 100th Anniversary, make sure to read the article later in this newsletter from Ralph Yernberg, a longtime colleague and LOM friend!
Great Gathering Registration Continues

An event that’s been over three years in the making is finally coming this fall! It’s the Outdoor Ministry Connection’s Great Gathering. The Great Gathering will bring together innovative outdoor ministry partners of mainline denominations – United Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA), Presbyterian (PCUSA), United Church of Canada, United Church of Christ, and others. Through the theme, "RelationSHIFT," we will celebrate our variety of gifts, find common ground, explore the changing landscape, and prepare to journey together to meet the vital needs of God’s people.

Because we are partnering with other denominations, we can bring keynotes and worship leaders who would be hard to afford as a single organization. We’ll hear from nonprofit guru Joan Garry, inspirational activist Shane Claiborne, and uplifting preachers Barbara Brown Taylor and Luke Powery. Music will be led by the talented Ken Medema. (Do you know the song “Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying?” He wrote it!) Camping community-builder Jim Cain will lead us in large group activities as well as present several workshops, and the incredibly creative Lisle Gwynn Garrity will serve as resident artist.

PLUS, there will be over 40 workshops to choose from AND over 60 vendors on-site. Childcare is available. We’ll have a 5K race and several field trip opportunities. And we’ll be able to network with ecumenical partners from other camps and conference centers –maybe some of them will be your neighbors. The possibilities with this event are so exciting!

56 LOM folks have already registered for this historic event. Are you one of them? We’re hoping for up to 150 LOM participants, especially because we’ll be celebrating the 100th anniversary at LOM Day at the Great Gathering. There are a limited number of single and premium location rooms, so registering now would be your best option.

Find details for the event and register now at omcgreatgathering.org. Sign up as soon as you can and before October 1 for the best pricing.

Costs: Program registration for The Great Gathering is $250 for the first person from your site. Each additional person is $225. Meal plan is $151. Lodging ranges from $113 (dorm style) to $499 (single hotel style).

Applications are now being accepted for internships at the Great Gathering. Find our more here: https://tinyurl.com/OMCintern2019
Leadership Training Event Set for November

Learning Events give Lutheran Outdoor Ministry professionals the opportunity to learn new skills, enhance their understanding of administration and programming of camps, and network with others across the country in similar job positions.

2019 Leadership Training Event (LTE) Administrative Track will take place at Lake Junaluska Conference and Retreat Center, Lake Junaluska, NC, from Wednesday November 6, to Sunday, November 10, 2019

Cost is $600 for double occupancy, $700 for single occupancy with a late fee of $100 in effect after midnight EDT October 10. Shuttle service of $25 to and from the Asheville Airport is also available. Get more information, including about financial assistance, and to register, go to https://www.lomnetwork.org/lte/

Exhibitors Needed for the OMC Great Gathering

Has your favorite company or organization registered for the exhibit hall at the OMC Great Gathering in November? The current list of registered exhibitors is at https://omcgreatgathering.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RegisteredExhibitors8-19.pdf.

If a company or organization is not on the list, please send them to the exhibitor/sponsor information (https://omcgreatgathering.org/exhibitors-sponsors/) as soon as possible.

Curriculum Index

Are you working on planning a camp event and need some ideas for games and worship? Do you remember doing something one year at camp and want to repeat it but forget which curriculum it was located? Well, now there is a resource for you. Chad Hershberger, Camp Mount Luther (PA) Executive Director and LOM Webmaster, wanted to find some ideas for worship this summer and knew a few of this year’s curriculum stories were done in the past. So, he indexed the main scripture for all the LOM (and previously ELCA) curricula back to 1990. If you think it is something you could use, it is available on the LOM website on the curriculum page under resources or via this link: https://www.lomnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Curriculum-Index.xlsx
**2019 LOM Auction is Coming!!**

Continue thinking about a great donation your organization can make for this year’s LOM Auction! It could be a small item you could bring for the silent auction that showcases your camp or it could be a bigger item you bring for the live auction. Or, how about a trip or excursion package at your location that everyone will be talking about for years to come? I already know there will be two Colorado ski packages available this year! So, start thinking about who you know and what resources they may have to donate cool, new items and excursions to the 2019 LOM Auction! If you have any questions, contact Dave Jarvis at auction@lomnetwork.org.

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**2020 Compass Points Classes**

Four certificate courses have been scheduled for 2020. Two will be offered at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center (Little Rock, AR) in March and two will be hosted by Pilgrim Center (Ripon, WI) in September and October. You can learn more about these classes (and the whole certificate program) by going to www.compasspointsprogram.org.

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**Manlove-Howells Leadership Award Deadline Extended**

The LOM Recognitions Committee has extended the deadline for nominations to September 15. Follow this link to get details on the process for nominating – https://www.lomnetwork.org/awards/manlove-howells-leadership-award/

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**Innovative Program Award Deadline October 1**

The LOM Recognitions Committee is accepting applications for the 2019 Innovative Program Award. Here’s the link to apply online: https://www.lomnetwork.org/awards/innovative-program-award/

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**Diversity Grant Application Deadline October 1**

The Lutheran Outdoor Ministry Network will award a $2,000 grant for an outdoor ministry organization to initiate a new project or a new element of an existing program that promotes diversity within the ministry and community. Applications will be reviewed by the Recognitions Committee. A selection will be made, and the grant will be awarded at LOM Day at the Great Gathering in November.

https://www.lomnetwork.org/diversity-grant/

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**PRAYER REQUESTS**

For Sherm Toufar, who is going through another 6 months of chemo as a result of a recurrence of cancer.

Healing for Burke Hancer, director of camping ministries, Spirit in the Pines (MN), battling a ruptured disc and nerve pain that has forced him to miss being on site for summer camp for the first time in 40 years.

Continued healing and recovery for Pastor Charlie Hershberger, father of Chad Hershberger, executive director of Camp Mount Luther (PA), who suffered a heart attack in July.

Continued healing for Jeff Bluhm, executive director of Lutherdale (WI), who has now completed his course of chemotherapy for lymphoma, and we join with him in hoping there will need to be no need for anymore.

Continued healing and gratitude for Jon Hoyme, recuperating from major surgery related to his treatment for cancer. Surgery went well and he’s in the midst of a 6-week recuperation.

Gratitude for Jeff Barrow, who has been serving as the interim executive director of Sugar Creek (WI). His time at Sugar Creek ends August 31.

Support for Jesse Klosterboer, who begins serving as the executive director of Sugar Creek on Sept. 1.

Congratulations to Jacob Spilker, recently appointed as executive director of Tomah Shinga (KS). For the last several years, Jacob was associate director.

Congratulations for Chris Andreason who was recently appointed executive director of Pathways (MN) – Camps Emmaus and Minne-Wa-Kan. Chris had been serving as the acting executive director at the time of his appointment.

Strength for the staff and everyone for whom the ministries of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio (LOMO) are treasured. One of their camps, Mowana, is transitioning to a conservation easement. The closing celebration of ministry service was held on August 11.
100th Anniversary Message

“Internal Combustion”
By Ralph Yernberg

Ralph Yernberg is now retired but still active in his support of and engagement in the life of LOM. One of LOM’s most legendary figures, Ralph served as the executive director of Good Earth Village (MN), Crossways (WI), and Sky Ranch (CO), and was LOM’s second president. Most recently, he serves on the LOM 100th Anniversary Task Force.

“Light a campfire and everyone’s a storyteller.” --John J. Geddes

I have hung around many camping professionals and lay leaders who have served on camp staffs and organizational boards. I have also known many outdoor ministry volunteers and donors. It finally dawned on me that together we are an eclectic bunch of storytellers! And since most of us love a good campfire, this is a year we can all tell stories!

Celebrating the 100th Anniversary Year is an opportunity to share your story as an essential chapter of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries. David Brooks in his book The Second Mountain (Random House, 2019) writes about the four parts of the “community story,” sometimes referred to as the village story.

- The story is framed by the context from which it emerged
- The story includes a narrative of where we came from and where we are going
- The story speaks of our identity
- The story describes our behaviors as the actions that define us

So, what’s your story? Do you know why your organization was created or the purpose it has served? Can you easily remember the major figures, the movements in time, the storyline? Can you articulate how has it shaped your identity?

The LOM 100th Anniversary Task Force encourages you to share your story in a way that lights up your history with wonder and deep appreciation. You can add a few flying sparks, too, and tell what Brooks calls a “combustion story.” We who are active with LOM have long stirred the embers of the campfire and have become artful in sharing the flavor of our unique relationship to Lutheran outdoor ministries.

Back in the eighteenth century, Edmund Burke said, “If you never look backward to your ancestors you will never look forward to the future.” He was on to something. An anniversary is an opportunity to look forward but to do so with a clear understanding of our past journey.

Throughout our history, our stories have been blessed with the fullness of God’s grace. Our stories are sometimes complicated or expose vulnerable times. Yet they are all worth sharing! They help to strengthen, support and lift up the body of Christ by bearing witness to the contribution our organizations have made in the life of our Church and community.
The Impact of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM)

Gretchen Bachman is currently serving as the director of operations at Voyageurs Lutheran Ministries in Minnesota (Camp Hiawatha and Camp Vermilion). She is well known throughout the LOM network and contributes in many ways to the life and vitality of LOM, currently serving as the chairperson of the LOM LTE Committee and as a member of the LTE Education Committee. We’ve asked her to share why LOM has been so important to her in her many years as an outdoor ministry professional. Here’s her response.

I’ve been pondering this question, “what LOM means to me” for two months now, and while there is so much I could say, I think it all comes down to two things: people and relationships.

Long before I even considered a career in camping ministry, I was introduced to the relationships that form because of this work that we share. Like so many college graduates, I didn’t know what was next, so I spent a year doing retreat hosting at Green Lake Lutheran Ministries (then it was Green Lake Bible Camp). Over the course of that year I met Executive and Program Directors from all around Minnesota. At the time, I didn’t think much of it; of course, they knew the people at Green Lake because they were all from the same state. But as my Outdoor Ministry world expanded, I realized that these people I met were known by people all across the country! It was my first exposure to that small Lutheran camping world in which we all live.

I remember going to a program gathering at Luther Crest and talking with Program Directors about the upcoming summer. Again, I wasn’t even thinking of a long-term camping gig, but boy did I have the best ideas about games and activities and training! I’m sure they thought “that’s not a new idea, we’ve been doing it for years” or “did that last year and it will not work”, but those program staff still listened to and encouraged me. Many of the people I met that year I still see yearly at conferences or recruiting, and I value those 25-plus years of friendship and support.

When I started as the Program Director at Lutherdale in Wisconsin, I suddenly found myself in a new region with people I didn’t know. I missed the people from Minnesota but was blessed by so many more wonderful Program Directors who continued to encourage and support me in this new endeavor. I attended my first national conference and saw familiar faces but also met so many more people from across the country. I had no idea at the time how important some of those new relationships would be to me in the coming years.

When the first “school” happened (it’s now called the Leadership Training Event; you should attend one!), I was able to participate and was overwhelmed by the amount of information I didn’t know! In addition to all that knowledge, I rubbed elbows with Executive Directors I knew only by name. Suddenly the number of people I could reach out to with questions tripled! And conferences became a whole lot more fun because of the relationships that had formed with so many different people.

I truly feel that I have been blessed during my time in Outdoor Ministry because of the people I met so early on in my career – people who helped me figure out my philosophy and how to be intentional with my planning and programming, who supported me through challenging moments in my career, who passed on their knowledge so willingly and graciously. And there are so many who continue to make me a better director by giving advice or by challenging my thinking or by simply being there when I need them. This is what LOM is all about to me. It’s the people and the relationships that allow each of us to do and be better at our own sites and organizations. It’s people who raise up prayers for each other during times of crisis and celebration. It’s the many people across the country who understand what you do in the “off season” and who know the craziness that a summer can bring. And LOM is about continuing to invite people into those relationships and to pass on our knowledge to the next generation of camping professionals.

For all of you who have walked the last 25 years with me, Thank You! And for those just getting into this whole camping thing, welcome! I can’t wait to meet you and introduce you to some camp people I know.

Gretchen Bachman
A note from Don Johnson, Executive Director of LOM, to follow up on this powerful statement from Gretchen:

“Thank you, Gretchen, for the many ways you continue to contribute to what LOM is all about – all of us working together to ensure that outdoor ministry is as strong and relevant as we all know it can be. And congratulations on your milestone of 25 years as an outdoor ministry professional! And thank you for all who have been contributing to the success of LOM through your prayers, your active participation, your volunteerism on behalf of LOM, and your financial contributions. In order to sustain the growing capacity of LOM, please consider contributing, now, to the 2019 LOM Annual Fund. And, one additional request in this 100\(^{th}\) Anniversary year of outdoor ministry for Lutherans and their friends and neighbors – please consider adding $100 for the 100\(^{th}\) to your last contribution to LOM. Thank you.”

Your contribution to LOM can be made by writing a check payable to Lutheran Outdoor Ministries and sending it to: Jon Skogen, LOM Administrator, 1218 W. Addison St., Chicago, IL, 60613. Or, online at https://www.lomnetwork.org/donate/. Making your contribution online will make it possible to set up an automatic monthly contribution if you would like to use this option.

**Become a LOM Sustaining Member or Organization**

Every outdoor ministry organization affiliated with the ELCA is, by definition, a member of LOM. LOM Sustaining Organizations are those which make annual financial contributions in excess of $500. We encourage you individually and your organization to consider such a contribution to assure the growing effectiveness and the delivery of services of LOM. Discern a contribution that reflects you or your organization’s ability to support LOM to the fullest. Below is a list of suggested levels of giving for the sustainable operation of LOM. You can make a contribution online at https://www.lomnetwork.org/donate/. Thank you for your support!

**Organization Giving Levels:**
- $25 – $499: Encouraging Circle
- $500 – $999: Educating Circle
- $1,000 – $1,999: Equipping Circle
- $2,000 – $3,499: Empowering Circle
- $3,500 – $4,999: Sustaining Circle
- $5,000 +: Onward and Upward Circle

**Individual Giving Levels:**
- $25 – $99: LOM Advocates Group
- $100 – $299: Forward Progress Group
- $300 – $499: Capacity Builders Group
- $500 – $999: Visionary Group
- $1,000 +: Bold and Faithful Leaders Group

**Another prayer request:** For peace and safe travels for Jessica Pina, outreach director at Cross Trails (TX), who will soon be enjoying the first half of a sabbatical. She leaves in September to go to Europe where she will be doing worship based spiritual rejuvenation. Then off to Iona, Scotland for a week, Taize, France for a week, and will be walking for about 2 weeks on the Camino de Santiago. The second part of her sabbatical will be in January and she will be going to Puerto Rico for immersion focusing in language, culture, and exploration of the island.
The summer of 2019 is now history. The 100th summer of outdoor ministry for Lutherans in the USA!

As I connect around the LOM network, the busy summer camp season was generally a good one. Enrollment numbers held their own for many of our traditional summer children's camp programs. Many of our LOM organizations continued to find new collaboration partners for the use of their beautiful sites. There were few reports of serious accidents or health issues. The LOM Curriculum, *Transformed Community*, was well received and has had a good impact on the wonderful programs that take place throughout LOM.

The summer was not without some challenging circumstances. Finding enough summer staff to safely and effectively implement the exciting plans for program was a big challenge for many of our organizations. There were more than a few who had some serious weather events to contend with. For one of our LOM camps, it was the ultimate challenge - the last summer to be in operation.

What's especially gratifying about LOM, and something that I saw lots of evidence of, whether celebrating the good times or struggling with the challenges, LOMers are there for each other.

So, as you enter into your next busy fall season of outdoor ministry, and all of us in LOM enter into our next century of working together so that outdoor ministry everywhere can be as robust and impactful as it can be, we have much to look forward to. LOM will be entering into a new strategic planning process. We have a new partnership with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) that is taking shape. There is continuing exploration with the Youth Ministry Network and Youth Gathering. Three of our five LOM Territories will be having gatherings this fall. We have our first ever Great Gathering coming up with many of our ecumenical partners. And our own grand celebration of our 100th Anniversary when we have LOM Day at the Great Gathering.

I'm looking forward to our ministry together as we see how this next century unfolds!

--Don Johnson, Executive Director

*And some more reflections from Don on an impending collaboration:*

A short while ago, Ron Letnes contacted me with the idea of LOM sites offering the possibility of providing shelter, meals, and supervision for refugee and migrant families and/or unaccompanied minors. I recently followed up on this suggestion with a telephone meeting with Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, CEO, and other officials at LIRS. This will be a continuing conversation and I'm hoping we can pull together deeper exploration with these Baltimore based officials when the LOM East Territory meets in early December at Mar-Lu-Ridge (MD).

One of those present at the phone meeting was Sue Ellen Spotts, Manager of congregation Relations at LIRS. She recently served as the adult Bible study leader at the family camp week at Nawakwa (PA) and used the adult section of this year's LOM curriculum - *Transformed Community*. She was extremely impressed with the curriculum and feels that with some tweaks (LIRS staff is willing to work on this) to the adult section, LOM and LIRS will have a solid resource to offer as a gift to the whole ELCA as congregations, synods, and institutions of the ELCA discuss, pray, and study the Bible as we explore what it means to live into the reality of being a sanctuary denomination. LOM and LIRS can lead the way into the ELCA’s deeper understanding of this aspect of our life together without ELCA or LIRS having the need to "reinvent the wheel"!
All of this is now in progress, and when we begin announcing this new resource for the ELCA in a couple of weeks, I want you to be in the position of saying that you were among the first to know of this new initiative.

Thank you, Ron Letnes, for your continuing connections with LOM long after you stepped down from serving as executive director at Sky Ranch (CO). It really is true - once a member of the LOM family always a member of the LOM family. Thank you, Marianne Brock and Mike Youse, for your commitment to outdoor ministry programming that is meaningful and relevant. Thank you, Andrea Lee and our LOM Curriculum Committee for making sure that the annual development of the curriculum (no small task) continues to be one of the brightest shining stars of LOM. Thank you, Pamela Shellberg, for one powerful piece off writing as the author of the Adult Bible Study section of Transformed Community. What you say and do and witness DOES indeed make a difference.

Can you tell I'm excited?  --Don

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**Letter of Thanks from Lutherwood (OR)**

This letter was sent to us this Spring after the last newsletter

Dear Members of LOM,

Words cannot adequately express our gratitude for your partnership and generosity over the past month. As you know on Friday, April 12, a fire that has been ruled accidental electrical, destroyed the historic lodge at Camp Lutherwood, Oregon. In the days following, we reached out and asked you to help meet a $100,000 matching challenge to get us on the road to recovery. Because of you and many others, we have received more than $200,000 to date and have successfully exceeded the challenge, bringing the total response to more than $30,000! Thank you!!

Without a kitchen, dining, and gathering space we had to turn away Outdoor School students and retreat guests for three full weeks. The gifts made to camp were critical to get the fire debris cleaned up for temporary plans to be made. Because of you we are now open again! In less than one month, with your help, we were able to get a 40 foot by 85-foot walled tent and a portable kitchen in place. We have already replaced plates and silverware, some ropes course equipment, cleaning supplies, and much more. Camp is again full of Outdoor School students, retreats have resumed, and we are ready to welcome summer campers in just a few weeks. We could not have done it without you! Thank you!

In the days just before the fire, we took the first steps in launching a capital campaign for facilities expansion. In fact, we received $350,000 in pledges the day before the fire. The Bridge to the Future Campaign, approved by the Camp Lutherwood Association in January 2019, included plans for a new retreat center to be placed adjacent the Lodge, a covered pavilion, and a new bath house. These expansions were estimated at $2.5 million dollars.

We have now redesigned the retreat center so that it will include an additional space to permanently replace the lodge lost in the fire. In the coming weeks, we will finalize these designs, update the costs, and know more certainly what is expected to be received from our insurance. We will then re-launch the Bridge to the Future Campaign.

Your gift has already made an incredible difference to camp. Your generosity will allow the insurance funds and unused recovery money to kick off the Bridge to the Future Campaign ensuring that this fire will be the launching point for our next 60 years of ministry at Camp Lutherwood Oregon.

We will keep you informed of our progress and needs along the way, but for now, we just want to say thank you.

With deepest gratitude,

Andrea Scofield, Executive Director
Innovative Program:
Outlaw Ranch Connecting Cultures at Camp

This is one of the programs nominated for LOM’s Innovative Program Award last year. You can read another article at this program in Living Lutheran, August 2019.

Connecting Cultures at Camp brings together English and Spanish-speaking families for a week of intentional community in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Families from Pueblo de Dios, a congregation based in Sioux Falls, and a mix of other families are welcomed into a week of prayers, worship, and camp activities experienced in both languages. With the effort and excitement of bilingual-focused counseling staff, musicians, and resource leaders, this family camp is one expression of our varied and vibrant Lutheran faith. Last year was the fourth summer partnering with Pueblo de Dios, and the camp has seen this program develop from a budding community into an authentic exchange and appreciation of what everyone can bring to the table.

At Outlaw Ranch, Connecting Cultures at Camp broadens and reaffirms the understanding of what it looks like to be a South Dakotan, a Lutheran, and a member of the camping community. There are approximately 147 ELCA Latino ministries in the United States. While these ministries continue to grow through the work of faithful leaders, most English speakers are inexperienced in engaging with prayer, worship, and life in another language. With this week, Outlaw Ranch hopes to build connective bridges that foster relationships and a sense of community with those outside our immediate circle.

The idea for the program began when Director Matt Rusch was visiting with Pueblo’s pastor at the time, Jeanette Clark, who was at Outlaw Ranch for Youth Camp. At the time, it was identified that while youth campers attended a Lutherans Outdoors camp, there was not something set up for families to attend camp together. In partnership with Pueblo de Dios, this program was born.

The foundation of this program is Spanish-speaking counselors. They shine during the week as they translate and ensure that everyone is on the same page. The camp is blessed to have a staff that includes both international and domestic speakers who lead the way toward inclusion with their ideas and consistency. Without these staff, camp would have still happened but with many missed opportunities to make adjustments and deconstruct language barriers.

Every morning during Family Camp, the adults have a session to learn and share together. This session has grown from a time where Spanish-speakers were sidelined by language barriers to a fully-inclusive and translated discussion. In the past, adults had separate groupings based on their native-language during break-out times. This morning block also includes time for kids to be kids together—going on canoe pack-out, talking over the Bible Study, riding horses, and exploring camp. Another key component of Connecting Cultures at Camp is our musicians who run song-writing sessions with the kids’ groups, give a concert mid-week, and assist with worship and other music-making opportunities.

It’s true that this week is distinct in a few ways including the night that folks from Pueblo prepare homemade tamales. The heart of this week, however, is the common rhythms of camp life—eating together, singing together, and getting outside together. Together, families sit around the campfire for a s’mores bar, try paddle boarding for the first time, or otherwise affirm that Outlaw Ranch belongs to them.

Along with onsite activities, there are different experiences facilitated for the Pueblo families including possible trips to Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse, Rush Mountain Adventure Park, Sylvan Lake, and Custer High School for fireworks. All campers are invited to come along for these adventures.

The hope for this program is to continue facilitating communication and relationships between families across South Dakota and beyond. When we spend time listening and learning from one another, we build relationships that strengthen the Lutheran Church and give new life to outdoor ministry. When we remember that we belong to one another, we glimpse the Kingdom of God.
We spend a great deal of energy in outdoor ministry on the experiences of summer campers, summer staff, and year-round retreat participants. We work diligently to provide opportunities for them to encounter God and strengthen their faith in life-changing ways. The outcomes support these efforts: research data directly links outdoor ministry as a major driver of future church involvement and leadership, and even indicate that many young people are inspired with a future call to ministry during their camp experience.

However, there is another community we often overlook in extending the offer of life-changing ministry: our donors.

For years nonprofits and churches have treated fundraising as a necessary evil—needing money to operate, we reluctantly appeal for financial support. Camp directors and pastors have long considered asking for gifts the absolute antithesis of their “real job” to develop people’s faith. While that mindset is softening, it remains prevalent among many outdoor ministry professionals.

In his book *The Spirituality of Fundraising*, Henri Nouwen says, "Fundraising is a very rich and beautiful activity. It is a confident, joyful and hope-filled expression of ministry. In ministering to each other, each from the riches that he or she possesses, we work together for the full coming of God's Kingdom."

When you invite a donor to make a difference with a gift to your ministry, you are welcoming them into a community of generous donors who are changing lives for the better.

When you host a donor gratitude gathering, you are celebrating together—as a community of faith—a life-impact ministry far greater than building the newest and greatest stadium at their alma mater.

You get to celebrate nurturing an excitement around faith in young people within the most loving community they might ever experience. Together you are ensuring the future lay leadership of our church. Together you are preparing the garden from which the next generation of our pastors will grow.

From this viewpoint, we are not begging people for money, rather we are inviting them to be a part of something far greater than themselves. Nouwen goes on to write, "We do not need to worry about the money. Rather, we need to worry about whether, through the invitation we offer the donor and the relationship we develop with them, they will come closer to God." Might we consider fundraising for God’s work as part of our role in nurturing the faith of God’s people?

*A Spirituality of Fundraising* is an easy read but a wonderful opportunity to change the way you and your board approach fundraising. My suggestion is this: order enough books for all of your board members, ask them to read it and then set aside 10 minutes to discuss at your next board meeting. You might be surprised how reshaping the conversation around fundraising refreshes your work together.

Paul Marsh, CFRE, has been a consultant with Gronlund Sayther Brunkow since 2009. He began his work in outdoor ministry in 1989 at Lutherhill and served at Rainbow Trail from 1997-99. His daughter Kelly spent two summers on staff at RTLC as a camp hand. If you’re seeking to grow a robust fundraising effort for your outdoor ministry, contact Paul at *marsh@gsbfr.com*.
In Conclusion

Parting Thoughts from the LOM Webmaster/Communications Coordinator

Evaluation

This month, I’d like to tell a story about shepherds and sheep. In scripture, Jesus reminds us that he is the good shepherd. He calls, the sheep recognize his voice and they follow him. One time, when looking at that story in light of leadership, someone said to me that leadership is not always about being the shepherd. Sometimes, you have to be the sheep dog. There are times when you must lead from the front and have people listen, watch, and follow you. But sometimes, you need to be the sheep dog, herding your followers and giving them the nudges that they need. Often when herding, you can be more supportive in helping people get where they need to go.

As a leader, it’s important to constantly evaluate what you are doing. Evaluate programs, facilities, operations, and your employees. The best advice I have received is that you must do that by practicing “Management by Walking Around.” You can’t evaluate how things are going if you are just sitting behind a desk in an ivory tower. You must get out and listen to others so that you have an idea of the pulse of the constituency and how things are going. Taking a step back from day-to-day involvement details and assessing your organization is an important task which should be done regularly. Some questions you can ask include:

- What is the overall condition of this organization and its components?
- Do we have ample resources to fuel a proposed project or venture?
- If not, how can they be gathered and garnered in order to propel us to the destination.
- Are there some broken and fragile parts that need attention or replacement?
- Are things in good balance and do you have the right mix of talents?

In addition, leaders are accountable to the future. Not only should we have faith in the future, but we also need to plan. Visioning and succession planning are important. We can all be replaced! How will you lead so that when you leave the organization is at a better place than when you started, and you have laid the groundwork for a smooth transition? In addition, you also can set an example for future leaders as you shape how things are running today. You can be the role model that inspires them to carry the torch.

An important part of leadership for me is also continuing education. I feel that my commitment to continually updating my knowledge and skills has prevented ministry burnout for me. Working on improving through educating oneself reaps big benefits! It also helps you evaluate what you are doing against new information.

I found some notes I had written years ago about something called “Rock, Paper, Scissors” Management. A former colleague of mine and I used to make decisions on who would tackle a task by playing that childhood game. I thought about it once and decided that there are some lessons you can learn from the game. First:

- ROCK- Keep fast to your principles. Stand firm! You can’t please everyone and if you do, you let everyone down. Sometimes you have to do it a certain way and be uncompromising. Sometimes a leader knows what is best even if those being led don’t.
- SCISSORS- Delegate! Leaders can’t do it all- need to have competent people under you. “Cut off” dead weight by looking at a bigger picture that should be neat and tidy and free of clutter. Stuff that drags you down needs to be cleaned up so either delegate it or be prepared to let go if something is not working.
- PAPER- Documentation is important in leadership as is evaluation; so, use paper and do both!

Maybe evaluating how you lead looking at rock, scissors, and paper will help you make some important changes. What are your best practices for leadership? Drop me a note (webmaster@lomnetwork.org) and share how you lead in an effective manner. –Chad Hershberger