ELCA Receives Million Dollar Grant on Behalf of LOM

The ELCA Mission Advancement Unit was recently notified that their request, in collaboration with LOM, for support of the initiative known as Total Inclusion! Has been accepted. Total Inclusion! Widening the Welcome at ELCA Outdoor Ministries is a collaborative effort of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) churchwide organization and the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries network (LOM). Total Inclusion! Will soon be an opportunity to inspire, educate and resource LOM organizations as they move toward a wider and more intentional inclusion of people who have been historically marginalized in the church – especially people of color, people with disabilities and people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

Phase one, Education for Cultural Competencies (2020-2021), will be a set of initiatives intended to provide a framework to help outdoor ministry leadership at both executive and implementation levels understand the barriers to full participation in camp and church life and build a fundamental and common understanding of demonstrated best practices for welcoming and including all persons, especially persons of vulnerability who are often marginalized. Continued next page...

The ELCA Total Inclusion! “Think Tank”, meeting at Churchwide in April, 2018. Left to right: Brenda Olson Bingea Executive Director, Bay Lake Camp (MN); Don Johnson, Executive Director, LOM; Casey Fuerst, at the time, LOM Board President and Founder of Tic-Tac-Toe Marketing; Rev. Yehiel Curry, at the time Executive Director of Rescue, Restore, Release and now Bishop, Metropolitan Chicago Synod; Rev. Brian Krause, Joy Ranch’s Camp-ABLE and Member, Disability Ministries Advisory Table; C. J. Clark, Executive Director, Living Water Ministries; Deacon Jessica Hacker (project director), Director for Donor Stewardship, Planning and Operations, Mission Advancement, ELCA; Carol Josefowski, Disability Ministries Coordinator, ELCA; Heather Dean, Program Coordinator, Theological Discernment / Justice for Women Program, ELCA; Deacon Ross Murray, Director, The Naming Project; and Christina Jackson-Skelton Executive Director, Mission Advancement, ELCA.
During the Education for Cultural Competencies phase, we will address the four issues described above from an awareness-building perspective, equip camp leaders to assess strengths and barriers within their own contexts and work together with them to dream of solutions. During this phase, executive leadership from LOM organizations will have the opportunity to participate in educational symposiums, and implementation leaders from the entire network of camps will be exposed to education, networking and resources to help them assess and plan to strategically address the issues present within their communities. The phase will also include a review and restructuring of the articulated core competencies of the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries network to include proactive inclusion of people from vulnerable groups.

Phase Two (2021-2022) will involve two cycles of a regranting program for local initiatives, which will provide financial resources to support organizations’ strategic inclusion plans that have been developed during Phase one. The regranting program will have two tracks: the first, Leadership Grants, is for ministries that have been leading the way in inclusive practices and want to expand their impact; the second, Widening the Welcome Grants, is for ministries that wish to take first steps toward inclusiveness and invitation.

Phase two addresses our articulated issues of leadership development, trust building, space and hospitality and finances through direct support for programs and facilities enhancement via this regranting program.

**Total Inclusion!** Widening the Welcome at ELCA Outdoor Ministries will be an innovative and collaborative initiative. There has long been widespread interest among Lutheran outdoor ministry organizations to become more responsive to the needs of their campers and more proactive about making change that promotes diversity and inclusivity among campers, staff and leadership. In many ways, LOM will now become even more of a leader for all of the ELCA in one of the ELCA’s most urgent priorities.

The ELCA churchwide organization is well-positioned to offer project coordination, supervision of grant staff and administrative and technical support to the project; and LOM staff have excellent relationships and a strong event and communications infrastructure to gather and inspire camp leadership.

Planning for this project began in April 2018, when several outdoor ministry leaders gathered with ELCA staff for a “Think Tank.” This is what got the ball rolling toward a successful grant application process.

**Volunteer at the Great Gathering**

There are a number of volunteer opportunities that need to be filled for a successful event at the Great Gathering! Please click on the link to view the online sign-up sheet:

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050B44ABA922A1FD0-volunteer
It’s Conference Time!

We are excited about The Great Gathering that’s coming up and glad about 120 from LOM will be with us. It's going to be an exhilarating program; a beautiful time to be in North Carolina; and a great opportunity to share ideas and build collaborative friendships with some of the most creative, energetic people in the world. For all the information about the gathering, visit https://omcgreatgathering.org/

LOM DAY APP: You can view pertinent LOM Day information on our “app” which can be viewed on a web browser on your phone or other mobile device. Visit http://app.lomnetwork.org. This includes exhibitors and ministry partners who will be with us at Lutheridge.

LOM 100 BANQUET: The 100 Year Anniversary Committee has been making plans for the Banquet that will celebrate this milestone when we gather for LOM Day at the Great Gathering. It’s going to be an awesome event! LOM Day at the Great Gathering will be absolutely no charge for all who are participating in the Great Gathering. And that includes the bus ride to Lutheridge for the BIG event. And even if you’re not participating in the Great Gathering but you plan to be at Lutheridge on Tuesday, November 12, for the LOM Day, make sure you let us know so we can save a place for you at the Banquet table by filling out the form at the link below...

Also, IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO please fill out this form here to give us information we need for that: https://forms.gle/fmu7DMiqCS2UGPdx5

Order the 2020 Curriculum “From Generation to Generation”

The LOM Curriculum for 2020 continues to be available on the LOM website for purchase. This curriculum explores the stories of familiar Bible characters and their responses to God’s call and promised faithfulness in the midst of life’s unpredictability and challenges. The promises of God, first made to Abraham and Sarah, include a place to live, a purpose to live out, and a posterity to carry on God’s promises to all future generations. Freed from fear, we step out, trusting that missteps will not destroy us, that God’s guidance will take us where God has called us to go, creating relationships based on care and compassion. From Generation to Generation focuses on how the enduring love instilled in the promise to Abraham and Sarah continue through Old Testament characters, to Jesus, to the early church, and on to YOU!

You can now purchase the curriculum on our website at https://www.lomnetwork.org/curriculum/. LOM Members get a discount, so be sure to click the right price when ordering. And, multi-site organizations will use a discount code, listed on the website, to get a multi-site discount. You pay full price for your first site and a discounted price for other sites.
THE LOM AUCTION:
Plan Ahead and Talk to Your Spouse!

The LOM Auction is coming soon and there are some great items available for you to bid on. We will have our traditional silent auction along with the big auction! There are some amazing trips and packages being put together by our outdoor ministry sites for this year’s auction. There are also some packages from our LOM business partners that will save you money in your camp’s budget. We have a Florida Disney adventure, the Montana experience, North Dakota hunting and fishing, Minnesota canoeing, two Packer tickets at Lambeau field in 2020, a beach retreat in South Carolina, a South Dakota pheasant hunt, Texas dancin’ and barbeque, Colorado ski trips, Christmas wines, a Texas wine country tour, a South Dakota Walleye fishing trip, and two different trips to New York. We also have GSB donating a survey and analysis package again as well as a wealth screening service that will greatly improve your ministry. In addition to the trips and special services, we will have some of the iconic auction items that have made the auction so fun: Christmas cookies for Luther Crest; pottery from Holden Village; Joel Abenth’s custom communion set made from wood from your site; a room upgrade for the 2020 conference; and the infamous custom cribbage boards from Colorado.

So, you need to talk to your spouse or significant other before you go to the conference. Tell them you are going to bid and bid high so that you get one of these great items. You can go to the auction webpage and get more details on all of the live auction items. Just click on the specific item for the details. Your purchase at the auction makes a world of difference for our organization. And, as an organization, we are going to tithe 10% of the auction proceeds to Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS). We have worked with LIRS to use this donation to establish a fund whose purpose will be for them to identify children from migrant or refugee families, or unaccompanied minors, who will benefit from a summer camp experience at an LOM organization.

There are two easy ways both you and your organization can be involved in the auction. Consider putting a trip package together that your organization can provide as part of the auction. We are still taking items and trips! This could be a week at a beach front cabin, a backpacking trip or a canoe trip, something that your organization specializes in - you get the idea. OR you could provide items for the silent auction that will take place at the same time as the live auction. These items can really reflect your camp or the area that you come from. Anything from locally crafted beers to coffee to custom pottery, and jams and jellies. Go to the auction webpage and download either the live auction form or the silent auction form, fill it out, and send it to Dave Jarvis at auction@lomnetwork.org. Let’s make this the best auction ever! See you in North Carolina!!
The Impact of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM)

Logan Gooch has spent several summers as a summer camp staff member. Then he served for several years on the year-round staff at Metigoshe (ND), serving as the program director. During those years, he was very involved with LOM, particularly as a member and then chairperson of the LOM Curriculum Committee. A couple of years ago, Logan stepped down from his position at Metigoshe, feeling called to be closer to his family in Sioux Falls, SD, and a position on the Sioux Falls Police Department. He continues to be very involved, though, with LOM and continues as the chairperson of the Curriculum Committee. Why does Logan stay this involved with LOM? This story of how LOM has had an impact on his professional career is a powerful one. His gratitude for the impact of LOM in his life is echoed by the gratitude all in this network have for your contributions of time, energy, expertise, experience and financial contributions to support all that is possible through LOM. THANK YOU for making stories like Logan’s a reality!

I remember telling myself “don’t cry” as I hugged my parents and got in the car to drive to Camp Metigoshe for my first summer on camp staff. I got in the car and put on a big fake smile to cover up the raw emotions I was truly feeling deep down. Somehow, I managed to get in the car and drive away with smiles brimming and hugs exchanged. I was off... That is until I made it to the end of the driveway. I remember getting to that point and thinking, ‘crap, I forgot my razor.’ I turned around to make what was sure to be a quick stop back at the house - just long enough to grab my razor.

When I got back to the house, I remember being overwhelmed with the true emotions I was feeling and breaking down in a pool of tears as I sobbed uncontrollably. As I hugged my parents, I remember thinking to myself - why am I doing this? After a significant delay, I was able to pull myself together enough to drive again. As such, I got back in the car and started back out of the driveway. This time, it was not with a fake smile brimming ear to ear, but rather with tears still rolling down my face. Raw emotion on display for every passerby. These tears continued to roll for at least the first two hours of my trip. I was a mess. What was I doing? Why did I decide to leave the comforts of home and the friends I grew up with for a place I hardly knew? I didn’t have a good answer, but I had committed to working at camp, so I continued to drive.

This is how my time on summer staff began. Thankfully, I received a welcome from some of the most compassionate, hospitable, and authentic people in the world - camp staff. Over that first summer, they helped transform me. I was surrounded by a community who supported me and helped me grow to new heights. Those people I served with that summer, and the many summers to follow, quickly became akin to family and will undoubtedly be some of my closest life-long friends. They helped me grow leaps and bounds spiritually and as a servant.

As I transitioned from summer staff to year-round staff at Metigoshe Ministries, I was given the opportunity to attend the Leadership Training Event (LTE) which was held at Luther Point in Grantsburg, WI. This event did two important things for me. First, it set me up with a toolbox of resources to use as I dove into the world of full-time outdoor ministry. Second, and almost more importantly, it provided me a network of other like-minded outdoor ministry professionals. Professionals from Lutherhill, Lutherwood, Mount Luther, and Lutheran Memorial Camp. There were also great folks from camps without “Luther” such as Briarwood, Badlands Ministries, Sugar Creek, Nawakwa, and Joy Ranch to name a few. These professionals became invaluable resources - and great friends too!

As I reflect of how I have been impacted by LOM, I cannot help but think of the similarities to my first summer on staff. As I started my time in full-time ministry, I was again filled with thoughts of “what am I doing”. These thoughts were sometimes the rhetorical “why am I doing this” as I left camp after a stressful 15-hour day or as a camper pukes on my shoes during nighttime snack (neither were a one time occurrence). Other times it was more of a “I really don’t know how to do this” as I fumbled my way through a tricky situation involving staff dynamics or talking with a camper as they grieve the loss of a loved one. However, I was quickly empowered and equipped to the point these thoughts were a thing of
the past. I had a network of faithful servants who were only a phone call away through the many beautiful faces I met at the LTE and LOM conference.

I am sure my first trip to camp is similar to camp staff at camps across the LOM network each and every summer. Thankfully, this first trip is not how my entire camp experience went. I took the leap of faith to dive in and trust those around me. The support I felt carried me through the bumps along the way and helped me to experience many mountaintop experiences.

It is because of the support I felt that I still support LOM in time and treasure. While I have changed careers to be close to family, I am still able to dabble in outdoor ministry as I serve on the LOM curriculum committee. (Insert shameless plug here to go get the 2020 curriculum - its really good!) I am enlivened each time we meet and work together. The LOM network continues to be a vibrant community of professionals who together build each other up, empower those to go out in faithful service, and provide a wonderful support network. I continue to be grateful for the impact it has had on me, and sincerely hope the same is true for you. May it help you to be God’s hands and feet as you share the Good News for all those seeking an adventure anchored in Christ!

A note from Don Johnson, Executive Director of LOM, to follow up on this powerful statement from Logan Gooch: “Thank you, Logan, 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. Even now after you’ve moved to a different career outside of the LOM world. And thank you to 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 100th Anniversary year of outdoor ministry for Lutherans and their friends and neighbors – please consider adding $100 for the 100th 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.

Words from Don

We are soon to have our LOM observance of the 100th Anniversary of outdoor ministries for Lutherans in the USA. We’ll be doing this when we meet at Lutheridge (NC) on November 12, in the midst of the Great Gathering that will be taking place at Lake Junaluska, NC, November 10-14. Our observance will take a look back at the outdoor ministry movement over the last 100 years, and it’s going to be lots of fun!

As we promised from the beginning of this 100th year celebration, our observance will be even more focused on the next 100 years. So, it’s fitting that we are now embarking on the next Strategic Plan for LOM, as was announced in our last newsletter. And we certainly are going to have a big boost in getting rolling into the next century with the announcement being made in this newsletter – a one-million-dollar grant from the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies. This is going to be a huge opportunity for all of the LOM network to be leading the way for the whole ELCA in becoming a church that truly embraces our call to welcome and inclusion for all!

Even the concept of a Great Gathering with multiple denominations is in itself a sign of what the next 100 years will undoubtedly become for all of us – a time of collaboration and cooperation and realization that we are all stronger together.

And that’s the essence of LOM – stronger together! From the very beginning of this network, that’s what we’ve been all about. I’m looking forward to seeing you in North Carolina. And if you can’t make it there, then I’ll be looking forward to seeing you around the network in the year ahead.

--Don Johnson, Executive Director
What do LOM and LVC have in common? For decades, LOM camp counselors and enthusiasts have participated in a year of service with a SOCIAL JUSTICE nonprofit mission partner, while exploring LVC values around living in intentional community, simply and sustainably.

Outdoor ministry and a Lutheran Volunteer Corps service year both have at their heart the immersive experience for discernment around one's calling, vocation, next phase, leadership development, and social justice in the world. This is both complicated and embellished by the living out of intentional community among those like and unlike us in multiple ways.

LVC is unique in its Journey to an Inclusive Community and Reconciling in Christ foundations that create a program welcome to all – evidenced by almost half of recent Volunteers describing themselves as non-hetero; and about 15% people of color. The emphasis at orientation around anti-racism/anti-oppression, conflict resolution, cultural humility, and openness to learning rather than saving, prepares Volunteers to enter social justice positioned to both give and gain.

LOM applicants to LVC will find something new when they apply in January 2020:

**Flex Service Semesters** -- In addition to the year-long service experience in a new city, LVC now offers Flex Semesters for people to serve where they live in one of LVC’s program cities (DC, MN, Omaha, Baltimore, Wilmington DE). Flex Semesters are from August-December, January-May, and June-August, and Volunteers provide their own housing.

**Social Justice Zoom Lunchtime Learning Series** – Monthly online lunch series featuring a new social justice topic each month facilitated by experts, practitioners, and others, discussing social justice in the world.

**Lutheran Church Nominations** – Lutheran churches can nominate one Volunteer each year for a spot in the program, if the church pledges to support the Volunteer in partnership with LVC over the semester or year experience.

From one of our LOM Business Partners

CAMPWISE has added CONTACT MANAGEMENT to track communications with donors and schedule follow up tasks. The CRM features are available for other CAMPWISE modules as well.

We understand the importance of managing your donors and keeping track of donations. Since 2016, CAMPWISE has provided a robust donor management platform that is tried and true.

With our Online Donor Management we offer the ability to:

- Track individual donor information and allows donors to update personal information and to easily view their giving/pledge history.
- Create campaigns and then associate those campaigns with gifts or pledges.
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- Gifts can be given in honor/memory of or noted for matching gift plans. Thank you letters/receipts are customizable.
- **Donor Lookup Mobile App** Access your donor information anytime!

If you need a complete Donor Management system. Call CAMPWISE today 866-297-7111 to schedule a demo or email sales@campwise.com
In Conclusion

Parting Thoughts
from the LOM Webmaster/Communications Coordinator

Team Leadership

In my working life, at one of my prior jobs, I learned of some changes that were about to be made that would greatly affect me. When I found out about them, I cornered my boss and found out that indeed changes were coming and they would impact my relationship with the employer.

What bothered me about what was coming was that my boss, the leader, did not seem to be working with us (and there were others that were affected) as a team. “The coach” was making unilateral decisions and not working with the players to get us on board nor listen to us for input on the direction of our organization.

I was reminded of this scenario when I read the second chapter of the Old Testament book of Nehemiah recently. Nehemiah was a man of compassion. He was unselfish and distressed over other people’s problems. And, when we saw those problems, he took them on as his own.

He definitely uses a “we” attitude. Despite not being involved in the destruction of the wall of Jerusalem, he takes on the rebuilding of the wall as his own. He is a leader who gets busy with his own hands and works with others to get the job done.

He meets with the king to tell of his plan. He is not sure how the king will react. Isn’t this also leadership courage? As leaders, we are not always sure how people will react to our plans. If we work for someone, we are not sure how they will respond to a new idea we have to make the workplace better. But often, those conversations go even better than we expected. Nehemiah prayed a lot before he went to the king. How often do we use prayer to help us as leaders?

That prayer may just be what enables leaders to bind together with their followers. Prayer often gives us guidance and clarity in what to do. And, prayer can bind us together as a team. It can help us have a team attitude to work together to accomplish goals. It helps us to involve the ultimate coach, God, as well.

Nehemiah spent time in prayer and contemplation to see the tasks that lied ahead. And with the help of God, he then went on to get his followers on board, working together with them to work his vision. Having a team mindset was an effect way for Nehemiah to lead, especially with making sure God was on that team!

–Chad Hershberger

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