What’s Inside

Don’t have time to read the whole issue right now? Here’s a quick summary from our Executive Director Don Johnson:

November 2020. What a month for LOM!

The first-ever Run4Camp 5K on All Saints Day, Sunday, November 1. The participating camps have raised over $133,000 and still counting.

We greeted a whole bunch of camp leaders new to LOM on November 5. Welcome! We look forward to seeing you often in the days and years to come.

I told a story of my own and had a blast on the “This One Time @ Summer Camp” podcast - https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/this-one-time-at-summer-camp/id1513823942?i=1000492948339

November 8 – November 15 would have been the week of our LOM 2020 Conference. We couldn’t do it in person, but we sure did have an uplifting, inspiring week of educational opportunities thanks to the LOM LTE Committee.

We also had our LOM Annual Meetings with board elections and our annual Awards Ceremony. Yours truly led off the Monday-Friday devotional times – some time for quiet reflection during the busy week – followed by devotional leaders Jenny Frantz, Darryl Thompson Powell, Rebecca Kjelland, and Sarah Erickson. Thank you so much, one and all, for sharing in this way.

The LOM Auction week was in progress all week and then it culminated with the live portion on Saturday evening. So much fun and many camps had a chance to share about their camp programs by offering up experiences at their sites. It was everything we hoped it would be for fun and a sense of community, and on top of it all, $20,082 was raised for LOM. Thank you everyone!!!

The worship that ended an extraordinary couple of weeks was so good and so fitting to the year that lies ahead of us as we look forward to our IN-PERSON! Conference in 2021 with the theme of Total Inclusion! You can still participate in the worship experience: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfVNFr1LzrE

So, we go into our next year together, committed to expanding on the strategic priorities during this time of pandemic as identified by the LOM Board: continued networking and sharing, marketing and media relationships, resourcing member organizations during these challenging times, advocating for diversity and inclusion, and the sustainability of LOM. Thank you, everyone! See you around the network. ~Don Johnson
Virtual LTE Successful

Like most things in 2020, the Leadership Training Event went VIRTUAL during the week of Nov. 9. Sessions were held to offer conversation, insight, learning, and connecting with others. Some had a presenter with time for questions, others were facilitated conversations by the LTE Committee. We even got it all started with an LOM Social hour complete with get-to-know-you activities and ice breakers. Below are the topics covered. Handouts, PowerPoints, audio and video recordings are at https://www.lomnetwork.org/event/lte-online/

- **What did camps learn this summer?** What worked, what didn’t, and what can we start putting in place for 2021?

- **Planning for Crisis:** Why it is important to have a plan when facing a crisis? The crisis might vary but having a plan is key to facing all of them.

- **Mental and Spiritual Health:** When every decision is something new how do we do self-care and feed ourselves spiritually?

- **Staffing:** It was already a bit of a challenge, but what might it look like moving forward? What does being on the cutting edge look like as we respond to change brought by COVID-19? Does your current structure make sense? And how do you budget for staff when you don’t know what next month will bring, let alone next summer?

- **Camper Recruiting:** What is your message after a different type of summer? How do you build/work with trust of campers, parents, congregations, etc.?

- **Communication:** You are putting your 2021 plans together, but what is the best way to keep your congregations, parents, campers, and donors informed?

- **How Do We Do Program Planning in 2021?** What will camp look like in 2021? - How do we program within COVID restrictions and parameters?

- **What is Next in LOM?** We have a rich history and strong foundation of ministry. How does this sustain us as we lean into whatever comes next for Lutheran camping?

Here is what Virtual LTE looks like during a pandemic! Most sessions during the week had about 50-60 participants. Thanks to the LTE Committee for all your hard work and planning on this event.

Our Virtual Sponsors

A big thank you to our major sponsors of the virtual events during the week of November 9:

[Mission Investment Fund](https://www.missioninvestmentfund.org)

[Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](https://www.elca.org)

[gse](https://www.gse.org)
Fourth Leadership Award Presented

The fourth Manlove-Howells Leadership Award was presented at a special virtual ceremony online on November 11, 2020. Margie Fiedler, executive director at Flathead (MT) was the recipient of this year’s award. Videos were shown with remarks by both Ralph Yernberg and Bob Kehner, longtime LOM colleagues of Margie’s. Another video was shown that gave support to this award from Kyle Lefler, who served as Margie’s assistant director at Flathead for six years.

During the awards ceremony, participants on Zoom wore funny hats. Margie is pictured here with her “moose hat” on Zoom, accepting the award. She said, “I am so honored to receive this award. (Since it has only been received by retired people, I was hoping this was not a hint to me!) There are so many well deserving people...people who I have learned and grown from and who I continue to learn from. Jerry Manlove is my forever mentor, so to be given an award with his name, is very humbling. Thank you all so very much.”

New Research for LOM with OMC

We are partnering with our friends in Outdoor Ministries Connection (OMC) to conduct the fourth bi-annual survey of camp and retreat center directors. Research is one of the key ways we work with our ecumenical partners to map the landscape of outdoor ministries and tell the story of what we contribute to the church and society. This is a critical year to participate, as the survey will help us tell the stories of success in the year of COVID-19, as well as the incredible challenges this pandemic has brought to our industry and individual ministries. As in previous years, we are asking for one survey per ministry organization. Here is the link to participate:  https://www.research.net/r/OMCDirectorSurvey2020

Additional Research Opportunity from ALLLM

Association of Leaders of Lifelong Learning for Ministry (http://alllm.org/Membership.html) has asked for participation of LOM member organizations in a project focused on continuing education and lifelong learning. This is a great way to ensure that outdoor ministries are on the radar of leaders throughout the church as valuable places of lifelong education. All of our outdoor ministry professionals are invited to participate in this. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ALLLMSurvey2020
LOM presented the 2020 Innovative Program Award to Cross Roads (NJ) and Luther Crest (MN) who shared in the Innovative Program Award for their collaborative program – “Crest Roads” as part of the Bold Transformational Faith Initiative (BTF). The two sites teamed up to create a year-round program that takes the tools that they learned from virtual summer camp in 2020 to congregations in Minnesota, New Jersey, and beyond. BTF provides congregations with faith formation resources and support from trained camp professionals. Churches have the option of inviting families to Sunday School hour live with youth from around the country, on-demand using pre-recorded videos, or using our unique Sunday School curriculum on their own. The BTF team also creates children’s messages for churches to incorporate in their virtual services and at-home faith formation newsletters for families.

The BTF program is not only designed to provide faith formation programming, but also leadership trainings for youth leaders and other congregational leaders. Facilitated trainings, led by the BTF team, include discussions of the Sunday School curriculum and best practices for engagement and carrying out the programming; introductory trainings on virtual tools like Remind, Zoom, Facebook Live, & more; and sessions for congregational leaders on topics such as small-group process, conflict assessment, & youth well-being.

LOM presented the third Diversity Grant at the LOM Awards (virtual) Ceremony. The winner this year was Camp Ma-He-Tu (NY). Since 1937, Camp Ma-He-Tu has focused on empowering young women to become the best that they can be. They provide them freedom from the daily pressures of life so they may grow together in a supportive and fun camping community to develop and embrace their spirituality, appreciation of others, and their value as individuals. They provide a safe and fun outdoor camping experience in a supportive environment that fosters mental, spiritual, physical, and social growth.

Seeking to expand and improve its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices, the Camp Ma-He-Tu Board of Directors is investing in DEI organizational analysis and training through a professional consultant to evaluate, acknowledge, and dismantle inequities, invisible culture, and implicit bias that exist within the organization. The consultant will first provide training to all Board members, providing them with increased knowledge and common language to engage with diversity and equity issues and how they can foster increased inclusion across the Camp Ma-He-Tu community. Staff members will then undergo similar training, leading them to foster a safer, more inclusive, and positive environment for all campers. This training will provide them with the tools to better understand and manage sensitive issues that may arise among our diverse body of campers, many of whom will be attending camp in the wake of extended social unrest across the nation.

The funding from the LOM Grant will help with the costs associated with this training. Congratulations!
Auction Raises Over $20K

LOM held an auction during our week of virtual programming in 2020. Items donated by LOM organizations raised $20,082. A gift of $2,008 will go to the LOM Scholarship Fund for future events. Sharon and Jack Wineman of Florence, AZ, again offered a challenge match gift for the auction tithe. They originally agreed to a match of up to $4,000 of the 10 percent of auction proceeds, but they have now agreed to contribute the full $4,000. So, the total amount going to the Scholarship Fund will be $6,008. The auction has become an annual highlight and continues to raise needed funds. This year, a silent auction was held for the whole week and the live auction featured guest auctioneers, including Betsy and Kyle Debertin, who served as the first LOM auctioneers. They are pictured here with the first item that was up for bid. The Saturday evening event included trivia and Penny Christensen of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries of Ohio won the drawing for a free upgrade room at next year’s conference.

Board Leadership Videos Now Available

At the request of LOM, Keith Johnson, “The Board Coach,” volunteered to develop seven 10-minute sessions to help grow the effectiveness, capacity, and capability of Boards of Directors. The COVID 19 pandemic has shown the importance of a strong board to help camps navigate through the crisis. Each video in the series of seven can easily be included as part of a regularly scheduled Board meeting with opportunity for discussion before moving on to the business at hand. The videos are available at https://www.lomnetwork.org/boardvideos/. Here’s how the videos develop from one theme to the next:

1. Activating the Board Engine
2. Good Governance Basics
3. Recruiting Great Board Members
4. Leading Through a Strategic Vision and Plan
5. Four Keys to a Strong Board & Executive Relationship
6. How a Governance Committee Can Transform the Board
7. Vital Role of the Board in Raising Funds

On behalf of all of the outdoor ministry organizations of LOM – THANK YOU, Keith Johnson.
LOM Board Elections

Elections were one of the things on the agenda for the LOM Annual Meeting, held virtually. We learned that Rod Boriack has been reelected to the LOM Board by the Boards of LOM member organizations. At the meeting itself, we reelected Darryl Thompson Powell to a second term on the LOM Board; Dallas Shealy was elected to her first full term (she had already been on the board filling an unexpired term). Deanna Christensen and Jacob Kvale were elected to the Nominating Committee. Thank you to all who were on the ballot for your involvement in LOM and your willingness to make yourself available to serve in leadership.

At the LOM Board Meeting (virtual) on Friday, November 13, Karen Muse of Raleigh, NC, and a Board member of Agape-Kure Beach Ministries (NC) was appointed to fill an unexpired term for a Board member of an LOM organization member created by the resignation of Meredith Massey Beall. There are two positions on the LOM Board that are elected by the Board itself. One of these positions had been vacant and the Board elected Nick Johnson, executive director of Upper Missouri Ministries (ND), to a 3-year term in this capacity.
Advent Series From our friends at ELCA Young Adult Ministries

During the Advent season we often talk a lot about the Holy Land of the past without talking much about the Holy Land of the present. What is going on in Bethlehem today? How are we called to accompany our Palestinian siblings in love, joy, hope, peace, and justice? What does this mean for our own advent journey? Join ELCA Young Adults and ELCA Peace Not Walls starting November 30 for an Advent Pilgrimage in Palestine. Over the course of the 4 weeks of Advent young adults from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land will lead us on this pilgrimage through story, education, and theological reflection. Every Monday of Advent we will share a video reflection and every Wednesday of Advent we will share a written blog post, accompanied by discussion questions and actionable items you can use with small groups. Register here to receive Advent Pilgrimage in Palestine resources by email. Follow at #AdventInPalestine!

Goodwill from The Youth Ministry Network (YMN)

YMN will be having its annual YM Extravaganza virtually, February 4-6. https://www.elcaymnet.org/ext21 When the Extravaganza is held in person, LOM camps can have exhibit space and privileges free if they are Outdoor Ministry Partners of the YMN. A partnership at the outdoor ministry level usually costs $800 (a value of $1,800), but this year, because of COVID, the YMN is extending partnership to LOM organization members for whatever price you feel you can afford. Todd Buegler, executive director of YMN, says, "If you can afford $800, great. If the situation of your camp will only allow $25, that's OK too." This will give your camp the opportunity to get your outdoor ministry in front of literally thousands of youth directors - a great opportunity and a big gesture of goodwill from YMN to LOM.

- To get registered for the virtual Extravaganza, first sign up to be a partner of YMN at the outdoor ministry level: https://www.elcaymnet.org/LOMPartners
- Then sign up to be an exhibitor at the Extravaganza: https://www.elcaymnet.org/ExhibitorInfo

THANK YOU, Todd Buegler and the Youth Ministry Network!

Prayer Requests:
- For Healing for Wayne Harrison, first administrator of LOM, former executive director of Cross Ways (WI), and most recently interim executive director at Agape (PA). Wayne is scheduled for back surgery on October 9.
- Of welcome and congratulations for Kathleen Ruen who was recently named the new Executive Director of Koinonia (NY).
Congratulations and Gratitude

Mark Burkhardt is retiring on February 1, 2021. His career of ministry in the ELCA and its predecessor body, the Lutheran Church in America, has encompassed more than 41 years. Mark was recognized last year for 40 years of service at LOM Day during The Great Gathering in North Carolina. His church career has always involved outdoor ministry.

He has served as the camp director of Camp Beisler (NJ) prior to it becoming Cross Roads Camp and Retreat Center. Even before that, as a kid growing up in the LCA, Mark went to camp at the camp that was known as Jolly Acres, then he had experiences at Nawakwa (PA) and MarLu-Ridge (MD).

As a college and grad school student he worked on summer staff at Mount Luther (PA) and summer camp director at Fortune Lake (MI) before going to Beisler as the full-time director. He served as the Assistant Director and then Director of Outdoor Ministries for the ELCA.

Most recently he has been serving as the Director of the Congregational Centers for Mission of the ELCA. Since the formation of LOM, Mark has been serving as the person appointed to represent the ELCA on the LOM Board of Directors. So, LOM will be losing a Board member almost concurrently with Mark's retirement.

All of us in LOM extend to Mark our thanks for the huge contributions made to the world of outdoor ministry throughout his career, and we pray for your happiness in the next chapter of your ministry. And Mark, keep in mind that once a member of the LOM family, always a member of the LOM family.
Rewinding and Fast Forwarding

We’ll resume our look at leadership through the lens of Nehemiah in the new year, but I thought it would be appropriate to remind all you leaders of an important part of your life this time of year. I’m talking about reflection and preparation. One of the things I usually do is to plan for the coming year. Some of that involves looking at our calendar and planning the dates for upcoming events. It involves planning for the programs ahead and getting promotional material drafted. But it also involves looking back and evaluating the year that is close to ending so that we can tweak what is not working or eliminate those items that don’t fit into our mission anymore.

If you are of a certain age, you’ll remember cassette tapes. One of the first tapes that I owned was “The Chipmunks Go Hollywood.” Alvin, Simon, and Theodore sang some of the current 80s hits from Tinsel Town- like Eye of the Tiger! They are also famous for their Christmas hit, “The Christmas Song (Christmas Don’t Be Late)” that features a hula hoop.

As we get set to celebrate the holidays, you might hear the Chipmunks. Let that be a reminder to you to do what you can only do with a cassette or video tape. Rewind and fast forward! Look back and see what is working, what is not, and what needs to be tweak. Take time in these final days of the year to evaluate what you’ve been doing. And look ahead and plan for 2021. Don’t forget those big audacious goals, too, that might time extra time (or years) to fulfill.

This year has been one for the record books. When the clock struck midnight on December 31, 2019, I bet none of us figured we live through a global pandemic this year. But, with these challenges brought opportunities. Those who were prepared and creative thrived this year. Preparation and being attentive to rewinding and dreaming a bit served leaders well in this most difficult year.

What did you learn this year that can help you be better in 2021?  –Chad Hershberger

LOM News will not be published in January due to the Christmas Holiday. The next edition, our Annual Report, will be published in early February.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

From the LOM Board and Staff

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