

St. Andrew's Camp (OCEF) Report of 2022

2022 was certainly a great season-one of our best. Our two directors, Matushka Tamara Cowan and Kristy Zaitseva worked tirelessly at a creative and enriching program. Campers had fun and Staff were terrific. Their reports on the weekly activities is attached.. Clergy from the diocese, as well as a few others, were present throughout the sessions We had an outstanding staff and in addition several volunteers who helped with the program or in the kitchen for a day or two to several weeks. Janet Allard, Olga Ptach, John Russo, Matushka Jeanne Zablotsky, Mark Sovyrda, Gabriel Cowan, Alex Drozdov, Susan Selby, Doug Selby, Jerry Tarris, Alex Zaitsev, Timothy Halligan, Michelle Scully Barbara Knighton, Jack Weisner, Nikita Zaitsev, Lana Wilson, Walter Nazarenko, Fr. Eric Tosi, Sasha Zaitseva, Deacon Alexander Anderson, and Katina Galie. Thank you to all of them!!!

There was an 18% increase in enrollment and with a total of 129 camper weeks. Of our 64 different campers, 82% OCA, 13% ROCOR and 4% other. 80% of our campers receive some scholarship from us. Two parishes paid the full cost of one week for campers from their parish- this year 10 campers!!.

We were greatly blessed by the generosity of many in the diocese. We were able to complete the new building and it was used this summer. The air conditioning (and heating) make it a very comfortable year round facility. We already have some requests for rentals. For retreats and family gatherings. Additionally the camp rents our small cabin through the winter. All of this is to provide funds for repairs and updates. Mr. David Tatich was instrumental in directing some of the Frank Kulick Estate funds to the camp and we were able to replace the very noble, but worn, DOCK and to reroof the Girl's Dorm. The generosity of others is much appreciated and benefits the campers in a direct way. .

In 2023 we plan 6 weeks of camp- July 2-8 Horse week, July 9-15 Mish Mash Week, July 16-22 horse week, July 23-30 Teen week, July 31-Aug 5 Teen week and August 6-12 Family Week.. There are a few openings for staff and we welcome nurses gardeners, kitchen workers, and cooks for a weekend, a week or whatever those interested can offer. More information will be on the web page or interested persons can call 315 675-9771.

To provide scholarships for all campers and to provide monies for maintenance and improvements, income beyond the tuition collected is clearly a priority. Our Archbishop has taken up that mantle and continues to raise funds thru his network of benefactors and his encouragement to parishes. But we must ALL work to encourage support of this ministry. Parishes could take on the scholarship role for their own campers- a few already do.. Or regions- Buffalo/Rochester, Syracuse/Auburn/Herkimer, Balston Spa/Cohoes/Watervliet, Wappingers/Yonkers NYC, Long Island, northern NJ, central Jersey. -could sponsor a benefit event for the camp at least every other year, thus providing supplementation for our budget. It is anticipated that rentals of both the cabin and the Girls dorm/new dining hall will increase and if we are able to get the needed help to clean these regularly and the additional needed power to heat both buildings, it should increase soon.

Attached are the summer program directors reports on the specifics of this year. We welcome visitors to the camp, to our annual Paschal Open House the Saturday after Pascha or to our bike ride or annual Bab's Attic Sale. In August. Volunteers are needed always before during and after camp for a myriad of activities and tasks and we welcome small groups to come together for a day or two of fun as well as needed help. The process of volunteering- in the kitchen for grounds work or other special projects

while the program is in session is more complex and we ask you check our website for the needed paperwork.

We welcome an opportunity to visit your parish, OCF groups or any other Orthodox gathering to share the work of this camp ministry. As an extension of the parish and of the family, Orthodox Camps provide additional support for spiritual growth for all. We continue to hope to expand our fall winter and spring offerings for youth as well as families, couples, seniors and other groups. Our mission is to bring youth, their parents, grandparents and extended community closer to Christ through fellowship, experiences of God's creation, liturgical worship and prayer. We welcome anyone interested in this particular ministry.

Camp Program Directors' Report

At the Diocesan Assembly of 2021, our beloved Archbishop Michael gave the directive to "re-examine our youth programs ... giving way to more personally involved methods of bringing Christ to our young people." Making memories makes a difference! Statistics show that kids who go to Christian camps, Vacation Church Schools (VCS), and similar experiential events, stay in church.

The National Study of Youth and Religion has found that those who attend religious camp as teenagers or young children are significantly more likely in their young adult years to participate in shared religious activities, like group Bible studies, college religious groups and church attendance, than those who have never attended summer church camp programs. Indeed, those who attended religious summer camp as children were over three times more likely to remain religious five years later than those who did not attend. (Sorenson, J.: "The Lasting Impact of Christian Summer Camp".

Online: <https://buildfaith.org/lasting-impact-christian-summer-camp/>).

Therefore, our work for the camp and at the camp is of utmost importance!

The key to children's programming is the excitement it brings and the memories it leaves with the youth. Within this fun and also liturgically immersed environment, children and teens form a connection with their Orthodox peers and the Church community, thus making lifelong friends and relationships.

This summer, we were given the opportunity to reflect and express this truth in a series of interviews for Ancient Faith Kids (AFK, a new division of Ancient Faith Ministries) with AFK Director, Melissa Lauro. She is compiling these interviews into a video article which will be available on the new AFK App very soon. In all of these reflections given by our camp chaplains, staff, and campers, this truth was evident and alive. As I assisted in the interview process, I was moved by every speaker's words. I very much look forward to sharing the finished video as soon as it is released!

Staff

We have grown our team of mature, committed staff members (those who are able to come back consecutive years). Not only do we have two persons trained to be a Camp Director, but we also have been blessed with many more like-minded youth workers. This enabled us to work closely with our Camp Priests to consistently maintain an environment of Christian love, repentance and forgiveness amongst our campers and staff throughout the six weeks of camp. It was a personal joy to experience this—this sentiment echoed by our priests and staff!

Camp Co-Director, Kristy Zaitseva, an invaluable team member, was as busy as a person can be this

summer – in partnering with me during Orientation Week to offer a more thorough training of our staff, assisting me during Family Week, training a new Counselor-In-Training (CIT) Director during Horse Week

1 (Krista Fedorchak), and then working as full Camp Director for Mishmash Week, Horse Week 2 and Teen Week. With our partnership, we were also able to offer improvements like Pre-Camp Zoom Orientations for Parents, a Board/Staff Zoom Social, a new Check-In process and a new Closing Program (held in our new Dining and Recreation Center), and an increased social media presence of each week of camp. Thank God for her efforts, and her positive energy, and I fully appreciate the sacrifices she makes to offer this service to our camp and our Diocese.

Family Camp

Family Camp again was a fulfilling and successful bringing together of parents and children desiring to have some retreat time together. Our Welcome Luau continues to set a special tone that continued through the visit of Vladyka Michael. Note: It is apparent that the Boys' Dorm bathroom conditions need improvements to satisfy our family experience.

Two Horse Week Programs

Two Horse Week programs were better paced and more successful, as we repeated a number of our activities (like "Ye Old St. Andrew's Faire" Theme Night) to give our staff the "breathing room" needed for these intense stable/camp scheduling weeks.

Mish-Mash Week

It was anticipated that Mish-Mash Week would be challenging, as we were missing some staff, who were at the All-American Council, and it being my (Kristy's) first time directing on my own. However, the staff that remained rallied together and were tremendously proactive and hardworking. Everyone gladly stepped up to help wherever and whenever needed and made it a truly fantastic week. True to its name, we had a real mish mash of activities during the week. Campers enjoyed Religious Education, survival skills, horseback riding, fun music classes and jam sessions, an engaging, hands-on Ecology session, with volunteer Michael Sirico, and, of course, sports, games, crafts, swimming, and kayaking. Our evening activities included a game called "Mission Impossible," a campfire, a silly carnival, Christmas in July, and Q & A with Archbishop Michael. Our field trip was to the MOST (Museum of Science and Technology), which was very much enjoyed by campers and staff alike.

Horse Week 2

This was a fun week, with activities like campfires, Q & A with Archbishop Michael, Ye Olde St. Andrew's Faire, a 50's themed game of Camp Clue, a hoe down dance, and of course lots of horse activities, at the stables. Additionally, there was Religious Education, swimming, and electives like archery, sports, kayaking, music and crafts. While this week was fun, Horse Weeks are very busy and tiring. We continue to explore ideas of how we can remedy this while still being able to include all the fun activities, that campers like to do, in the schedule.

Teen Week

This year Teen Week was beautifully bookended by the Procession of the Life-giving Cross, on Monday, and the Transfiguration of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, on Saturday. On Monday we processed to the lake and blessed it and honey there. On Saturday we celebrated the feast with a beautiful Divine Liturgy, with His Eminence Archbishop Michael presiding. During the service, fruit was blessed, which, together with the honey blessed on Monday, was used to

make a delightful fruit salad that we served during the closing program on Saturday afternoon. Another highlight of the week was the blessing of the new Dining Hall and Activity Center, led by Archbishop Michael, on Thursday morning. Many of the teens who participated were also part of the groundbreaking last year, and it was joyous for them, and all of us, to see the fruition of that. In addition to the aforementioned events, the teens participated in many other fun and uplifting activities, under the awesome leadership of Fr. Martin and Matushka Denise Kraus. On Tuesday, the teens volunteered at the Samaritan Center, helping them to reopen after years of closure, due to Covid. On Friday, as part of Religious Education, the teens learned how to make prosphora. And, of course, they enjoyed a field trip to an amusement park, a convivial dance, themed "Dancing Through the Decades," and many of the other fun activities that camp offers.

Our New Dining and Recreation Center

The highlight of the year, of course, was finally using our beautiful, well-designed, and air-conditioned Dining and Recreation Center! What a difference for both our staff and campers to leave meals energized, and continue our quality activities during hot weather! This is another personal joy, having more energy to do more for the campers and camp! It must be said that making the occupation of the new building happen was an arduous process for Daria, Jerry, Kristy, myself and many others in a very short time before camp began. Thank God for the endurance and sacrifices of all involved! Thank you, Board of Directors for all you have done to make this building a reality. And ultimately, I thank God for Archbishop Michael's appeal and all his efforts in bringing this building to fruition. As Vladyka had designed, our Teen Week Campers had a meaningful and joyful experience, in the Blessing of the new building, the fulfillment of what Vladyka and our teens began with in the groundbreaking ceremony last year.

It truly was a monumental summer of much transformation on our campus, and in our hearts and minds. We remain steadfastly committed to our Diocesan Camp of Saint Andrew's and its mission. Glory to God!

With much love in Christ,
Mat. Tamara Cowan and Kristy Zaitseva
Program Directors

