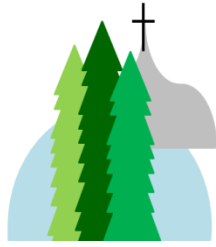


Saint Andrew's Camp



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Orthodox Charitable Educational Foundation (OCEF)
A ministry resource of the OCA Diocese of New York and New Jersey
Providing a pan-Orthodox sleep-away camp program for over 60 years

Diocesan Assembly report 2023 of St. Andrew's Camp

We have had a very good summer with our successful six weeks of programming. We had more new campers, with a total of 97 different campers spending 1-4 weeks at camp with a total of 141 (up from 129 in 2022) camper weeks enjoyed. We expected, with the expansion to 6 weeks, to have the total number of camper weeks increase, but what is encouraging is that we had a 50% increase in the number of different campers having the opportunity to experience the program. We received incredible support of our Hierarchy, Archbishop Michael. His attendance EVERY week, his interaction with both staff and campers and his continued advocating of the camping program in all his travels has clearly made a huge witness in the diocese. (The increased number of different parishes represented amongst our campers speaks to this concretely) Our staff was excellent and not only did the campers enjoy camp but our staff were also nourished and worked very well together.

Matushka Tamara Cowan and Kristy Zaitseva planned and executed a diverse, interesting, exciting and enriching program each week. Activities included daily liturgical worship, religious discussions, arts and crafts, horseback riding and kayaking, swimming, fishing, games, dancing, singing and overall joyful fellowship. The Clergy who led our liturgical and Christian education life were amazing and they were the rocks on which the remaining elements of our programming were built. Thank you to Fr. David Cowan, Fr. Joel Brady, Fr. Jason Vansuch, Fr. Paul Federoff, Fr. Ambrose Inlow, Fr. Ignatius Gauvain, Fr. Martin Kraus and Fr. Deacon Gregory Fedorchak. Our regular staff was often supplemented by weekend or even weeklong reinforcements. This further deepens and improves the quality of our programs, our mentoring and our experiences at St. Andrew's Camp. A few nurses volunteered -some for a day, some for a week - and several weeks brought wonderful cooks to reinforce our kitchen staff. Hopefully many of these return for even more time in the years to come. Anyone with skills or goodwill and energy can contribute to the program and are welcome!

Equally important was the increase in volunteers, including some board members, as maintenance crews, speakers, drivers, and repair and update enablers. Their time, talents and treasures were incredibly appreciated and saved us much funds. Our thanks to the South River parish of SS. Peter and Paul for hosting an amazingly successful barbeque which raised thousands of dollars for our scholarship fund. Several parishes raised funds to offer their own parishioners camp scholarships. Two more fund raisers to help the scholarship fund will be held in St. Nicholas Church in Auburn and SS Per and Paul in Endicott. (The latter event is an effort by several parishes in Binghamton, Elmira Heights and Endicott.). Holy Trinity Church in East Meadow also sponsored a fund raiser for these purposes. The donations received, the time

"With us everything should be secondary compared to our concern with children,
and their upbringing in the instruction and teaching of the Lord." - St. John Chrysostom

volunteered and the support of parishes allowed us to provide scholarships for all those campers in need. Our goal is that no young person be unable to attend camp.

The improvements in our facilities- new kitchen and dining hall, new dock, renovated boy's dorm - have each improved the experiences that we are able to offer campers. The board continues to look at ways to maintain our facilities and develop plans for new changes as well.

We know that many kinds of extended experiences for youth- retreats, mission trips, camps- strengthens their relationship with Christ and their commitment to the Church. St. Andrew's Camp is this diocese's offering to support parents and parishes in their formation of Orthodox Christians. We are grateful for the increasing support of the camping program and the expanded use of the facilities to serve not only youth but those who mentor them year round- young adults, parents, grandparents, clergy and youth workers.

With all of this success of course comes more work and higher levels of skills needed to maintain the property and facilitate preparations for rental, to increase our communication with our supporters, with the community and with the diocese in general. The ongoing strategic planning sessions will address the need for staff at least part time year round, the needs for gathering funds and/ or volunteers and /or materials to accomplish all the ongoing physical and communication needs of this camp. We encourage anyone interested in getting more information to visit the plethora of photos on the website, to visit our Facebook page and to join us at our open platform meetings twice a year in October and March. We hope all of our clergy and church councils will visit the camp, will encourage their youth to spend a week or more at camp, will encourage parishioners to serve as counselors or to volunteer as pre/post season helpers or summer staff. This ministry to youth needs, and welcomes, everyone's help!