

Camping Program Report

This report comes from Bryan Johnson, Director of Camping and Christian Formation.

Camping Programs at Okoboji and Wesley Woods United Methodist Camps share the love of Christ as the focus of our ministry by engaging youth, congregations, and individuals. The camps are committed to being places where all are welcome to make new friends, learn about Jesus Christ, and grow in faith.

As apportionment subsidies continue to change across the Iowa Annual Conference, the Board of Camps has embraced the challenge of identifying new partnerships and funding mechanisms. Our camping ministry has tackled fiscal challenges head on rather than simply fold as apportionments change. In February of 2020, the Board of Camps launched its first Annual Campaign. The campaign was supported by over one hundred volunteers and raised \$170,000 in gifts and pledges. These funds will be used to ensure that our camps continue to be a place for youth to grow in Christ. The success of the Annual Campaign, along with strategic long-term decisions, means that our camping ministry has decreased its apportionment request by 50% in just five years.

This upcoming February, nearly 125 staff and volunteers have agreed to participate in our second Annual Campaign on behalf of Okoboji and Wesley Woods United Methodist Camps. As one of the primary youth disciple-making programs in the state, youth camping ministry is a critical part of our church's future by serving over 2,000 young people each summer. In addition to the Annual Campaign, small teams of committed volunteers are currently contacting local churches across the state, seeking monetary support. These initiatives are proving to be successful and have created an even greater sense of connection between the local church and camps.

Finally, campers are registering, and camp staff are preparing for Summer 2021 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. With the hope of continued distribution of the vaccine, the leadership of our camping programs is committed to providing a safe environment onsite this upcoming summer for campers and guests. The Board of Camps is also committed to continue to enroll any young person regardless of financial status.

Thank you to all who continue to invest in the youth of The United Methodist Church. As Christ says to his disciples in Matthew 19:14, "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these".

If you have questions or comments, please email them to vision2032@iaumc.org.