

# Camp Deerpark

SUMMER 2020

## A MINISTRY OF THE NEW YORK CITY MENNONITE CHURCHES

### CAMP DEERPARK OWNER CHURCHES

Believers Mennonite Garifuna Ministries  
Pastor Andrew Nuñez

Evangelical Garifuna Church  
Pastor Celso Jaime

Evangelical Garifuna Church of Brooklyn  
Pastor Martin Alvarez

Evangelical Garifuna Church of Manhattan  
Pastor Edson Omar Guzman

First Mennonite Church of Brooklyn

Friendship Community Church  
Pastor Kenneth L. Thompson

Iglesia Evangelical Menonita Eben-Ezer  
Pastors Julio and Ana Damaso

Immanuel Community Church  
Pastor Mark Perri

Infinity Mennonite Church  
Pastor Albert Taylor

King of Glory Tabernacle  
Pastors Ben & Hyacinth Stevens

Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship  
Pastor Jason Storbakken

Mennonite Bible Fellowship, CT  
Pastor Cedric Smith

Mennonite Evangelistic Tabernacle  
Pastor Nestalis DeLeon

North Bronx Mennonite Church  
Pastor Ruth Wenger

United Revival Mennonite Church  
Bishop Nicolas Angustia

Valley of Jesus Mennonite Church  
Pastors Bernardo & Linda Rodriguez

The newsletter is published four times a year and is distributed without charge to members and friends.

Editor: Ken Bontrager

### CAMP DEERPARK DURING A PANDIMIC BY KEN BONTRAGER

#### We are grateful

*Grateful that we were able to open this summer for families*

*Grateful for the summer crew (there is more in this issue about the five young adults and their experience)*

*Grateful that the pool was able to open*

*Grateful for payroll protection*

*Grateful for generous donations which were higher than the same period a year before in spite of the fact that we canceled the PA banquet*

*Grateful for health*

*Grateful for a board of directors who take prayer very seriously*

*Grateful for committed and talented staff*



Throughout the past six months Paul Holderbaum, our volunteer dishwasher, organized staff campfires at the top of the hill. This campfire was a farewell celebration for Jesse Yoder who had spent six weeks finishing drywall in the Promise Center. This was also the first gathering of the resident staff and families.

A year ago we celebrated 50 years of ministry and then on our 51st year we canceled summer children's camp. Not being allowed to have summer camp was a huge emotional blow for: our staff, the young adults who were committed to being staff, the children, the parents, and perhaps for you.

We considered shutting everything down and preserving resources. Other camps made that decision.

Camp Deerpark and all camps are unique in that there are very little options for remote or on-line programing. Camp is about eating together, singing together, being together; the most dangerous activities during COVID.

There were many risks to pivoting from church retreat groups and children's camp to families. However, we were driven by a desire to stay on mission. We took the risk that our owner churches and support community would agree with our decision. We took the risk that families would leave the safety of their homes and come to camp.

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In June we re-opened and it appeared as though folks would not come.

We gave nearly \$7,800 in family scholarships and discounts to make sure a three day stay at camp was accessible to all. The second part of that story is that \$5,100 of gifts were given specifically for scholarships.

By July and August the word was out and we ended up with a very busy summer.

Every weekend was like watching butterflies come out of a cocoon. It was beautiful to watch families eating on their porch, riding bikes, building a wooden bench, swimming, hiking, eating s'mores together. It was beautiful. Camp happened.

As the weather gets colder we will transition to small group retreats. We are allowed to have 25 people at a time in each chapel room and up to 50 guests inside the dining room. We are committed to staying safe and staying on mission.

## PLEASE JOIN US: FALL GATHERING

OCTOBER 20TH AT 7:00 PM on Zoom  
www.zoom.us :: Meeting ID: 989 3283 1428

OCTOBER 22 AT 7:00 PM on Facebook Live

With no banquet or homecoming we have opted for two video gatherings.  
You won't want to miss the short film about life at Camp Deerpark during the summer of 2020.

## FINANCES DURING A PANDEMIC

### NUMBERS TO CONSIDER

- \$78,860 – Gifts received from April to August, which is more than the previous year in spite of the PA banquet being canceled. Thank you, because of your generosity we are still here.
- \$134,000 - Lost retreat revenue from April to August.
- 2 – Churches that asked for their deposit to be returned. All others rescheduled.
- \$71,300 - Payroll protection loan.
- \$10,000 - Invested in the five young adult participants on Summer Crew over eight weeks.
- 156 - Families served over the summer.
- 8 - Small church groups served.
- 5 - Baptismal services in the pool.
- 75% - With limitations on dining room and meeting room space we are projecting our retreat ministry to be at 75% capacity from September to April.
- \$80,000 increased financial need over the next 8 months.

### COST CUTTING MEASURES

- Summer camp cancelled – While it was emotionally painful to cancel summer children's camp, the cost savings was significant. We budget to invest approximately \$40,000 in the summer camp ministry every summer.
- Bare necessities on building and equipment maintenance.
- Almost no travel.
- Four full time staff have been reduced to two days and three days per week.
- Two more staff are projected to be furloughed for months of December and January.

### MOVING FORWARD WE NEED YOUR HELP

- Pray – We are still in the wilderness of this COVID pandemic. We will continue to look to God for direction.
- Volunteer
  - Organize a retreat at camp this fall or winter.
  - Bring your family to rake leaves or stack wood this fall. Sean has a long list of projects.
  - Skilled carpenters are needed to complete the Promise Center by spring of 2021.
  - Tell your friends about Camp Deerpark.
- Donate
  - We project an increased financial need of \$80,000 for the eight month period of September 2020 to April 2021.
  - Increase your giving by 24%. If everyone who gave during the same time last year simply increases their giving by 24% we will be ready to move into the summer of 2021.
  - Consider becoming a monthly donor. During the crisis, monthly gifts provide important stability to the ministry of Camp Deerpark.
  - Go to [www.campdeerpark.org](http://www.campdeerpark.org) Click "Get Involved" and "Donate."
  - To increase your monthly gift simply email [deerparkdevelopment@gmail.com](mailto:deerparkdevelopment@gmail.com) and Nancy will take care of the details.
  - An envelope is included in this newsletter.

Now more than ever the children, youth, families, and pastors of NYC need an emotional and physical place in the country to call home. Please consider a gift that will bring you joy.



## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DURING A PANDEMIC

With COVID we were not able to operate summer children's camp, but we could not imagine a summer without youth discipleship. The 2020 Summer Crew agreed to spend eight weeks as volunteers here at camp. They helped Kevin and Ken with hosting responsibilities and took on physical tasks during the week. Below are several quotes from the summer crew.

Cedric: I was most proud of the fact that we were able to still keep camp open; that we were able to help the fulltime year round staff and make their jobs easier. I am happy that people were able to experience camp and what a great place it is.

DJ: The life lesson I will take from this summer is looking at the bigger picture. I remember the first couple tasks, I was like, I should have stayed in the city. Then I realized that this is not for me, this is not for Ken, this is not for Kevin: this is for camp and camp is like holy ground. So basically everything you are doing is for God.

Austin: The first thing I will tell my family when I get home is that I missed them a lot. I miss my little sister. I miss her voice bothering me. I will tell them that coming here to Camp Deepark for the summer was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I have grown more in the past two months than I had in the past two years.

Arielle: I feel like a life lesson would be God is always waiting for me. Back home I would say I don't have the energy to spend time with God. Here at Camp if I had fifteen minutes I would spend time with God and it would literally turn into a half hour to an hour.

Yeremi: My favorite task was taking care of the llamas. I love animals and I want to be a vet. When I fed and put out Bernice and Nadora I did it with love and care. I feel like they knew that and respected me. They run up to the barn when I come to feed them. They

know who I am. I feel like I have earned their respect. I have yet to be spit on.

Cedric Smith, Jr. was an intern through our partnership with Menonite Central Committee. Following are Cedric's thoughts on the other young adults and his supervisor, Kevin Smith.

DJ was willing to step up to the plate and be a leader at every task. Whatever we had to do he was always willing to get to it and never back down.

Arielle was always ready to work past the point of exhaustion. She never wanted to take a break. She just wanted to get the job done. We encouraged Arielle to take more breaks, but she wouldn't.

I feel like Austin was always working on himself. He has made big improvements that he has acknowledged and others have acknowledged. He wants to keep working on himself and he knows it is a neverending process. For everyone, not just for him.

For Yeremi it is his eagerness and non-stop ideas for how to do things and get things done. It is always a plus to have such a creative mind and have so much energy and passion. Yeremi, don't let anyone take that passion away from you.

Kevin empowered me to be a better leader. Even though this summer was different than we expected, Kevin did not take the leadership aspect out of my experience. He put me in a position where I was forced to be a leader. He gave me the responsibility of delegating the tasks to the rest of the crew. I was forced to work on my leadership skills.

*The 2020 Summer Crew experience was made possible through the Albert S. and Maggie Miller Leadership Development Fund.*



*The 2020 Summer Crew from left to right: DJ Angustia, Arielle Reyes, Austin Martinez, Yeremi Sisero, Cedric Smith Jr., and Program Director Kevin Smith.*



## PROMISE CENTER CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Progress on the Promise Center continued during the pandemic in spite of less volunteer and staff time. Jesse Yoder volunteered for six weeks in March and April finishing drywall. A crew from Evangelical Garifuna Manhattan did all of the painting at the end of May. Ben and Leonard continued to make progress over the summer with reduced hours. A crew of young adults from Forest Hills Mennonite Church installed trim and wainscoting in September. A crew of carpenters from Valley of Jesus Mennonite Church in Brooklyn and Evangelical Garifuna in Manhattan are scheduled for October.

Major projects still remaining include: landscaping, concrete side-walks, installing stone fireplace, polyurethane, kitchen equipment, furniture.

We still need approximately \$80,000 to complete the Promise Center. Our goal is to have the building ready for the 2021 summer camp season.



### Food Service During a Pandemic

In June when Camp Deerpark re-opened, New York State was in Phase II which meant no inside dining. Our food service director, Rick Weaver, made a plan to serve all of our guests outdoors. We purchased three small tents and outfitted the cabin porches with coffee makers, ice chests, and water jugs. At meal time each family gathered at their designated location and the meals were delivered in a box. Some extended families who were already in a bubble chose to extend the table and eat together. Sharing family time around a table was a highlight throughout the summer.



### Worship During a Pandemic

The COVID restrictions mandated that large groups meet outside so the chapel was closed for most of the summer. Several weekends consisted of families from the same church. The Evangelical Garifuna Manhattan group has traditionally been at Camp Deerpark over the July Fourth weekend. This year it was a much smaller group and their worship was on the basketball court.



### Relaxing During a Pandemic

Above: Nothing beats sitting in a hammock at Camp Deerpark with your twin sister.

Below: The Danny and Karen Angustia family, representing the Yankees, are ready to take on their cousins, representing the Mets, in the Angustia family softball game.





## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S HEART BY KEN BONTRAGER

*And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: 4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." Exodus 19:3-6*

On March 27th I wrote the following:

"Since Sunday evening, March 22, camp has been closed. All of our guest groups are canceled indefinitely."

Later that day I received an email from our dear friend Hugo Monroy. He shared the Exodus 19 scripture with me and encouraged me to think about Moses leading God's people out of Egypt and into the wilderness. He wrote, "We are now in the desert! We just came out of Egypt, and we have not a clue where the Promised Land is. The purpose for the desert is communion with God and each other. Fellowship with the Lord is the only salvation while in the desert. Only God knows the way. There is no GPS, no maps. The desert is a scary place in many ways. There are no known resources, no water and no crops. The days are hot and the nights are cold. But we are OK if the presence of the Lord is with us."

I knew I was getting sick, but tried to convince myself it was no big deal. I had no idea that by the next afternoon I would go to bed and stay there for two and a half weeks. As I moved miserably from the bed to the couch, I held onto the idea that we were in the wilderness and I simply needed to stay focused on God. Moses had a pillar of cloud in the daytime and a pillar of fire at night. When the cloud moved, God's people moved. When the cloud stayed, God's people stayed.

In March and April we had no idea what was going on. We did not produce a spring newsletter in part because we had nothing to report. We didn't ask for financial support because we had no idea what to ask for. We didn't know what we would know or when we would know. We just kept praying and asking God to lead us.

On behalf of the Camp Deerpark board, staff, and owner churches in New York City thank you so much for your prayers and gifts. This pandemic is far from over, but we are committed to following wherever God leads us. We are honored that you have joined us in this adventure.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### PA BANQUET

FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2021

SHADY MAPLE RESTAURANT - EAST EARL, PA

### HOMECOMING

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2021

CAMP DEERPARK

## DO YOU USE AN EVERENCE CREDIT CARD

MyNeighbor is an easy way to support Camp Deerpark through your normal shopping routines. For every grocery, gas or other purchase you make, Everence will donate 1.50 percent of the transaction total to Camp Deerpark.

For more information email:

[myneighbor@everence.com](mailto:myneighbor@everence.com) or call: 800-451-5719

## AMAZON SMILE

AmazonSmile is very simple to use—all you need is an Amazon account. On your first visit to the site, you will be asked to log in to your Amazon account with existing username and password (you do not need a separate account for AmazonSmile). You will then be prompted to choose a charity to support. May we suggest Camp Deerpark.

## QCD

A special opportunity to be generous exists for people over the age of 70½ who have a traditional IRA. People who fit this description can make charitable distributions from their traditional IRAs directly to Camp Deerpark.

This is considered a qualified charitable distribution, otherwise known as a QCD. By making a QCD from your traditional IRA, you can avoid reporting the distribution as income on your taxes. This lowers your overall income to be taxed. For more information contact

Everence at 800-348-7468.

# WISH LIST

- ☐ Stuffed chair and roll out ottoman for six (6) Promise Woods motels (\$360 each)
- ☐ Golf Cart with Bed (Used \$4,000)
- ☐ Canon EOS Rebel SL2 Camera and Canon Accessories for Summer Camp (\$599)
- ☐ 6 Gallon, 150 PSI Portable Electric Pancake Air Compressor (\$125)
- ☐ 1 to 3 Disc Golf Basket Targets (\$250 each) and 5 Discs (\$10 each)

# STAY CONNECTED!



Facebook: Camp Deerpark  
Twitter: #CampDeerpark  
Instagram: campdeerpark

# SAVE A TREE!

Would you like to receive your newsletter by email? Printing and mailing newsletters can become costly. It is cheaper, greener and easier to receive newsletters via email. If you're interested, send your email address to [guests@campdeerpark.org](mailto:guests@campdeerpark.org) or call 845-754-8669.



Camp Deerpark is owned by the Mennonite Churches of New York City.

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# 2021 SUMMER CAMP SCHEDULE

## SESSIONS

Children's Camp Session 1  
Children's Camp Session 2 & Teen Discipleship #1  
Children's Camp Session 3 & Teen Discipleship #2  
Children's Camp Session 4 & Teen Discipleship #3  
Children's Camp Session 5  
Teen Camp/ L.E.A.D  
Family Camp Session 1  
Family Camp Session 2  
Family Camp Session 3

## DATES

June 27-July 2  
July 4-9  
July 11-16  
July 18-23  
July 25-30  
August 1-6  
August 9-12  
August 16-19  
August 23-26

