

# Camp Deerpark

SUMMER/FALL 2021

## A MINISTRY OF THE NEW YORK CITY MENNONITE CHURCHES

### CAMP DEERPARK OWNER CHURCHES

Believers Mennonite Garifuna Ministries

Pastor Andrew Nuñez

Centro Misionero Cristiano

Pastor Aristidez Shee

Evangelical Garifuna Church

Pastor Celso Jaime

Evangelical Garifuna Church of Brooklyn

Pastor Martin Alvarez

Evangelical Garifuna Church of Manhattan

Pastor Margarito Martinez

Friendship Community Church

Pastor Kenneth L. Thompson

Grace and Peace Mennonite Church

Pastor Anita Castle

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

Pastor William Daniel III

Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship

Pastor Jason Storbakken

Mennonite Bible Fellowship, CT

Pastor Cedric Smith

Mennonite Evangelistic Tabernacle

Pastor Nestalis DeLeon

Muros de Fuegos

Pastor Maria Teresa Flores

North Bronx Mennonite Church

Pastor Ruth Wenger

United Revival Mennonite Church

Bishop Nicolas Angustia

Valley of Jesus Mennonite Church

Pastors Bernardo & Linda Rodriguez

### THE CHILDREN ARE BACK

In 2019 Camp Deerpark celebrated fifty years of ministry. The first few pages of the book *Forever God is Faithful* chronicle the struggle to open children's camp on a shoe-string budget. Then in our fifty-first year of ministry the playground was quiet. While we were able to host 150 families, the children's summer camp ministry did not happen. We were hopeful when in February of 2021 our New York State governor told us that summer children's camp would happen and guidelines would be coming soon. Nearly two months passed with no word on guidelines. Kevin didn't know if he should hire 10 staff or 20. We didn't know if we could have 10 campers in a cabin or 5. In the end we were allowed 36 campers per session, but with so much uncertainty around protocol we never reached that number.

What was always certain was the fact that we would do everything in our power to operate summer children's camp to the very best of our ability. We knew the guidelines for bussing, supervision, sleeping distance, etc. would mean our costs would go up. We were also confident that you would help.

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In 2019 we hosted 1420 camper days, 870 staff days for a total of 2290. In 2021 we hosted 685 camper days, 354 staff days for a total of 1039. Less than half. With less campers and staff most of our expenses were down slightly, but our registration income was also significantly less. Our cost per camper/staff day nearly doubled, from \$33 per day in 2019, up to \$61 per day in 2021. We always budget to lose (invest) money in our summer children's camp ministry. In 2021 that investment was \$10,305 more than previous years. We served less children and our cost was higher.



We are not discouraged. Looking forward to the summer of 2022, the center of camp activity will move to the Promise Center and cabin groups will again return to full capacity. Our theme for 2022 will be "Paid in Full" taken from Ephesians 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.* We are also making plans to increase our summer staff training and compensation. During one of the lowest points of the pandemic in 2020 I received a phone call from Bill Wang of Immanuel Community Church in Flushing. He told me his prayer was that we would come out of the pandemic stronger in every way. Stronger financially, stronger emotionally, stronger spiritually, and with stronger programs. These past two years have been a challenge for summer children's camp. By the grace of God and with your prayers and support we will come out on the other side stronger than ever.



PROMISE CENTER DEDICATION



## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S HEART BY KEN BONTRAGER

A few months after we placed the first four cabins at Promise Woods in service, I found myself sitting on the motel porch with my dear friend Edgar Stoesz. The list of folks who have spoken wisdom into my life here at Camp Deerpark is far too long to attempt now, but Edgar has been one of them. He said, "You might want to take a break in construction now and see how these new cabins fit into your ministry. Make sure your change doesn't happen so fast that it changes who you are." I remember thinking at the time that it was highly unlikely that change could ever happen too fast at Camp Deerpark, but I also heard what he was saying. Over the past six months transitions have been moving at a pace that I have found difficult to manage.

Summer camp is back. After a year without counselors, children, snack shop, rafting, trips to Freedom Farm, and campfire worship; the front lawn was once again filled with life. Everything went smoothly with no incidents of COVID-19. However, the intense emotional interaction seemed a difficult transition for the counselors.

On August 27th the extended Angustia family were the first to use the Promise Center. This summer and fall we have been adjusting to the new space. When there are more than 85 guests at camp, we are serving meals in both the Spruce Lodge dining room and the Promise Hall. Thanks to Rick's detailed planning the transition has gone very smooth. When the Promise Center is not being used as a dining hall it is being used as a meeting room. The guests very much enjoy the spacious room for worship and fellowship. Sometimes it has been used for both meetings and dining, which is a bit more tricky.

After thirty-two years of service, Barb Freeman has retired from her position of bookkeeper and office manager here at Camp Deerpark. This transition has come with the most emotion for me personally. Barb has been a trusted partner in this ministry. We have had many intense conversations about life, the New York City Mennonite churches, and our work here at Camp Deerpark. We have prayed together that God would provide, and cried together when God provided again and again. Rarely early, but always on time. This summer God again provided with two wonderful women to replace Barb.

This has been a season of transitions, none of them easy, but all of them good. Thanks for your prayers and support for all of us here at camp.



On September 30 Barb Freeman ended her 32 year tenure of service at Camp Deerpark. Barb Kauffman grew up in rural Pennsylvania and came to NYC as a volunteer in the mid 1970s. In 1982 Barb and Frank Freeman were married and a few years later moved to the Camp Deerpark area.

We asked you to offer words that describe Barb. The heart-shaped "wordle" contains those words.

One day a mother called the office and told Barb, "My son's life was changed here at summer camp." The camp experience possibly kept him alive. She wanted to thank camp, he was able to attend because of a sponsorship. We are grateful for Frank and Barb and their service to this ministry. A children's camp scholarship fund has been established in honor of Barb Freeman.



Camp Deerpark welcomes Ashley Marin and Robin Farr (both standing) to the office staff team. You can reach Ashley at [deerparkofficestaff@gmail.com](mailto:deerparkofficestaff@gmail.com) and Robin will be taking Barb's email of [deerparkbookkeeping@gmail.com](mailto:deerparkbookkeeping@gmail.com). As always, to make a retreat reservation Janice will be happy to help you at [deerparkguests@gmail.com](mailto:deerparkguests@gmail.com).



## PROMISE CIRCLE

Praise God we have reached our goal of adding 33 new members to the Promise Circle in 2021. Thanks to the Norman & Elizabeth Hahn Family Foundation for their challenge match gift of \$10,000.

On September 11, 2021 approximately 300 people gathered to dedicate the Promise Center building. This project was made possible by the gifts of 515 individuals, 14 churches, 7 foundations, and 5 businesses. The physical construction included 187 volunteers from 18 different work teams. Philip Mendez, with the help of his counselor Jeremy Sisnero, cut the ribbon as the congregation outside sang *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow*.



Editor: Ken Bontrager

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



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

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**Camp Deepark**

## WISH LIST

- ☐ We would like to add a minivan here at Camp Deepark. More than a year ago we removed the large 15 passenger van due to New York State CDL requirements. We have one minivan, but feel a growing need for a second. If you are downsizing and would love for your minivan to go to a good home please let us know.
- ☐ A leadership gift has been received toward the sound system at the Promise Center. We still need approximately \$1000 to purchase all of the equipment needed.

[WWW.CAMPDEERPARK.ORG](http://WWW.CAMPDEERPARK.ORG)

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