

# Camp Deerpark

SUMMER/FALL 2024

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 Lilian Flores  
Retired 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 Robert Earl

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

## FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S HEART BY JOYSE SARAVIA-SMITH



When people ask how was my first summer returning to camp as Program Director? My reply has simply been, "It was a rollercoaster." Meaning through every high or low, twist and turn moment I saw how the Lord took over each situation. Thinking of our summer theme "Meet Me at the Mountain," I was in awe of how God was with us in each astonishing moment.

As God led me back into the role of Summer Program Director, but now as a full-time wife, mom of two daughters, entrepreneur, and active member of my church, I knew my "Yes" would be an act of faith. Camp Deerpark has always been a home away from home, but I was honored to witness God being glorified through our

hard working young adult summer staff, our beautifully energetic campers and even in our most sensitive conversations with our parents. Faithfully God's Love spoke through each scenario.

When summer camp came to an end, we looked at the accomplishments of 2024 and looked towards the future. I was encouraged that not only did I grow closer to Jesus on a new and empowering level, but I also witnessed the same spark in our eager young adult staff and was inspired with the look of excitement on our campers faces. So yes, this summer was indeed a "rollercoaster," but it was a meaningful ride that I would gladly embark on again in the spirit of "Empowering our Youth to serve Christ" in the city and in their community!!

Thank you all for your prayers and support for Camp Deerpark. Having a body of prayerful hands who believe in this ministry makes the workload here so much easier!!

God Bless You.

*Photo: Joyse, Paul, Jodi, and Jade Smith. Joyse experienced her first summer as camp's Summer Program Director.*



## FROM THE OPERATIONS DIRECTOR'S HEART BY KEVIN SMITH

### CALL OF ACTION!

For such a Time like this, I am young enough to still experience new things and old enough to have gained deep wisdom from life that I've already experienced! With this, I am honored to be standing in the middle of Camp Deerpark's past and future, ready for such a time as this!!

My friends, as we stand in the present, we know time is always moving. However, one thing that is just as consistent and as it is producing new insight, is the scripture. A familiar scripture that has been on my heart as of lately and continuing to produce new insight is Jesus with the Samaritan woman (John 4: 2-26). Yes, on initial read, Jesus is sharing the Good News of who He is. But as of late I am seeing the different levels of depth to this interaction, I see the cross-cultural boundaries that He is breaking down.

I have lived long enough and been in enough diverse spaces to have learned the importance of leaning into the cross-cultural experience. I firmly believe that Christ is pleased when we do

so, at the same time I completely understand that this tension could be difficult. Being one of optimism and joy, the journey of this cross-cultural experience could be polarizing and pessimistic. However, this is where the power of Jesus's love comes in, just like this interaction with Jesus and this woman, two people from different cultures, fellowshipping. Jesus created the space for the encounter and leaned in.

As we move forward, I am encouraged and love a lot of things about Jesus. We can learn from Him to listen first. Standing in truth the whole time, but He listened with a compassionate heart. Which THEN allowed space for the cross-cultural experience to happen. Allowing her to see God in Him, "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet." John 4:19. So as we move forward into this new chapter, same mission of Camp Deerpark in this cross-cultural journey calling people to Christ, it's a simple reminder to love first, to create good common ground for truth to be shared!!

Join us on this journey! Pray for me, as I pray for you, I am motivated!!

## THANK YOU!

To all who helped raise \$46,450.00 at this year's **Homecoming** on September 7, 2024, of which \$20,000 is an anonymous challenge; \$17,075.00 in Ken Bontrager's honor, and \$9,375.00 as a challenge match.



Top left: Ken and Deborah Bontrager were honored at homecoming. Ken gave 33 years of service to Camp Deerpark.



Top right: Face painting!

Bottom left: Enjoying the auction!



Bottom right: Some of the homemade baked goods auctioned off at homecoming.



## INFAITH SERVICE AT CAMP DEERPARK BY DAVID & LUCINDA LEWIS



We first visited Camp Deerpark in 2022. Ken gave a tour and we fell in love with the vision of Camp Deerpark and the staff. When we heard Ben was the new director, we returned to meet him. Hearing of the great need in maintenance and believing God was calling us to take this load off his shoulders we committed to coming for two months.

As missionaries with InFaith, we are committed and empowered followers of Jesus Christ called by God to share the gospel throughout the United States and to invite the least, the last, and the lost into a personal relationship with Him.

Our specific ministry aims to provide support services, resources, and connections to relieve camp directors and key leaders from the tyranny of the urgent tasks, allowing them to focus on vision casting, prayer, fasting, and seeking God's direction for their camps.

With over 30 years of camp leadership, most of which were spent as a camp director, we bring the experiences of rewards and struggles of ministry to support and empathize with camp leaders. Our journey has included a transformative six-month sabbatical that profoundly changed our lives and inspired this ministry. We understand firsthand the power, purpose, and refreshment that come from taking a break. It clears your mind and opens your heart to hear God's still small voice, enabling you to return to your role with renewed vision and strength.

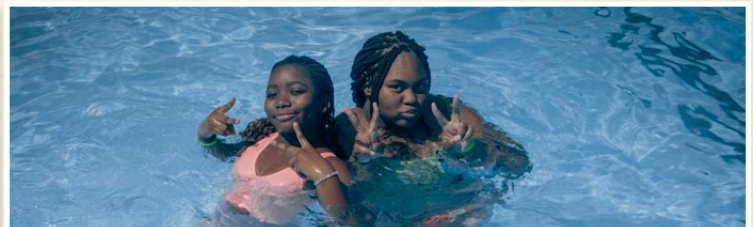
It has been a great pleasure to serve the amazing staff here at Camp Deerpark!

## SUMMER CAMP COST CORNER

At Camp Deerpark we try to make summer children's camp affordable for campers to attend. Though the 2024 summer camp cost per camper charged was \$300, Camp Deerpark's actual incurred cost is \$573.70.

Here is a breakdown of this cost:

- Summer staff 56.3% - \$323.65
- Transportation 19% - \$109.05
- Food 11.5% - \$66.50
- Programming 8.4% - \$48.65
- Administration 4.5% - \$25.80







## 2024 SUMMER CAMP

Summer 2024 was a success! Right: Wacky Wednesday. Campers working together to complete challenge trail.

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



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

P.O. Box 394  
Westbrookville, NY 12785  
(845) 754-8669  
Email: deerparkofficestaff@gmail.com  
www.campdeerpark.org

**Camp Deerpark**

## WISH LIST

- New office chair with arms for Ashley
- Computer monitor

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**PA Benefit Banquet**  
Friday, April 4, 2025  
at Shady Maple Restaurant in  
East Earl, PA.

*It will be a buffet style meal.*

**WWW.CAMPDEERPARK.ORG**

## 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 [deerparkguests@gmail.com](mailto:deerparkguests@gmail.com) or call 845-754-8669.

## STAY CONNECTED!



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## WANTED: VOLUNTEER WEEKEND HOSTS

Contact Ashley at [deerparkofficestaff@gmail.com](mailto:deerparkofficestaff@gmail.com) for more information