



Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center Summer Camp 2009 Special Report

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Sacred grounds...a place to shape faith & young lives

BY DR. ANDY STOKER
*Associate Director for
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Bridgeport Camp has a special place in so many hearts and minds all over the North Texas Conference. Some of us were met by Jesus Christ for the first time at Bridgeport Camp, some met their closest friends at Bridgeport and still others of us received a call to ministry at Bridgeport. At the close of camp this summer, walking toward the last evening's activities passing the cross on the hill, a counselor looked at the cross and said, "This cross has meant so much to so many for so many years. What an experience throughout

the years."

Those who planted a camp on Lake Bridgeport in 1949 could have only imagined how many young people and adults have been affected by camping ministries. We sing, we pray, we swim, we eat, we fish, we ride, we laugh and we love. Campers take from camp into the world a powerful witness of faith from the parish to the world. This summer was a summer to remember. Children and youth were introduced to the person and work of Jesus Christ through worship, small group connection and Bible study.

Families were also affected by camping ministries. Over 100 families were loved through the compassion of 150

volunteers for SEEK camp. Summer Events for Exceptional Kampers (SEEK) is a phenomenal respite ministry for children with special needs. One parent as she dropped off

her son said, "I cannot imagine a summer without SEEK; it is a week where I care for myself and recharge my battery."

What would the summer have been without our new Executive Director, Trueman Hoffmeister. Trueman is a gift to the North Texas Conference. He surrounded himself with a great staff as well: Caleb Burk, Guest Service Director, and six great college-age interns. Camping ministry is alive and well due in large part to the powerful witness of the love of God.

The power of the camping ministry is that a young person can catch a glimpse of the reign of God. Every week, campers and volunteer staff reflected a community of grace and peace where all were included and all were welcome as children of God. There is no better place to respond to God's abundant grace in Jesus Christ, to meet your best friend or even hear a still small voice from God wooing you to a life of discipleship serving neighbors of North Texas and the world. May God continue to bless the ministry of Bridgeport . for another 60 years.



Andy Stoker, left, shares a special moment with Children's Camper George Elliott, who wears his special "App" T-shirt, as part of the iPray curriculum used at all Children's Camps.



Campers sign special camp logo pillow cases as mementoes of their special week at Bridgeport.

New Director sees mission come alive

BY TRUEMAN HOFFMEISTER
*Executive Director
Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center*

This has been my first summer in North Texas at the Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center. (BCCC).

I spent the previous 18 summers directing Christian camps for the YMCA. My wife, 8 year old daughter and five year olds son moved from North Carolina last November. We have felt very welcome. I must confess, Bridgeport Camp is something special!

The mission of BCCC is: "Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center is a ministry of the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church which provides opportunities for children, youth and adults to experience God's grace in a camping and retreat environment where loving Christian community shapes discipleship in Jesus Christ, to the glory of God."

This summer I have seen our mission come alive through the campers, programs, volunteers, and staff working to serve NTC. As a parent of a Children's Camper, I hope to share this observation with many of you who have also sent your children to Bridgeport this past summer. My daughter is still talking about her experience as

a camper, and what she learned about herself and her relationship with God.

The summer of 2009 marked Bridgeport's 60th year as a place where life-long friendships are created, faith is deepened, and many young people have felt the call to ministry. The impact of the Bridgeport Camp experience has been felt



Executive Director Trueman Hoffmeister, right, with camp intern Justin Womack and volunteer Allison.

by three generations of youth in NTC, and the demand for these experiences is growing.

Unfortunately, the age of our facility requires that we spend most of our resources on maintenance rather than investing in new opportunities for growth. As we look forward to the next 60 years, BCCC needs to continue to be relevant. While it is important to maintain our traditions and heritage, it is equally important that we meet the modern needs and expectation of the families who send their children and youth to camp.

Please join me in working to provide the best environment possible to continue to implement our mission. In the near future we hope to replace the seven South Village cabins with a new Creekside Village. This will provide more beds and meeting space in an up-to-date living environment. The new Creekside Village will also be

fully accessible and provide much-anticipated opportunities for our SEEK Camps to expand their ministry. We also have vision of a new indoor multi-purpose worship area, and a new dining facility, allowing "Sally Martin" Hall to be converted into meeting/program space.

- Help is needed in:
- Receiving financial donations
 - Connecting BCCC with opportunities for grant sources
 - Helping camp attendance by sharing with friends
 - Reserving the camp for a retreat or conference during the school year
 - Donating new recreation equipment or supplies
 - Providing a scholarship for a less fortunate child to attend camp.

And, if you have not seen Bridgeport for a while, please call 940-683-2555, or e-mail trueman@bridgeportcamp.com to arrange for a tour.

Camps offer unique experiences, help fulfill focus of developing principled Christian leaders

Music Camp

Children and their youth counselors orchestrated beautiful music through voice, traditional instruments and even out-of-the-ordinary instruments. Karen Ewing and Scottie Tisdell all week prepared the children's music camp choir for a beautiful concert for parents and Bridgeport Camp staff. As the students prepared musically for the concert, they were nurtured spiritually with the iPray curriculum in family groups. Inspired by the Lord's Prayer, the choir learned and sang the Lord's Prayer as the climax of the concert. What a gift!



Youth Camp

Youth camp had the most diverse experience in our Camping ministries this summer! Students participated in prevention, justifying and sanctifying grace ministries through small group connections, worship participation, discipleship groups and leadership workshops. The volunteer staff empowered campers to lead small groups, care for one another and preach in worship sessions. The campers learned how to live as a community together, how to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and how to take back to their communities in which they live. The director's hope at the end of camp was that students return transforming youth ministry their churches.



Leslie Ann Denison

Impact Camp

With Junior High and Senior High students participating in complimentary camp experiences, each student learned the deep love of God. Messages were

delivered through multimedia and multi-faceted evening worship experiences. Students also learned not to fear through small

group study and a "Fear Factor" activity. Students grew in faith and deepened their study of the word of God.



Children's Camp



Each camper learned about prayer this summer. The curriculum, iPray, was written by a group of Children's Camp directors. Each session introduced an "App" (application) for prayer, including intercessory prayer, confession and the Lord's Prayer. Using the acronym Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield, each camper was introduced to some of the functions of a life of prayer. The campers built community through water games, giant water slides, arts & crafts, music, outdoor games and even a shaving cream fight. We were all blessed by the campers' attitude and spirit!

Seek Camp

SEEK camp is an amazing ministry serving whole families in our conference. It is a premiere respite ministry for parents, care-providers and children! In the North Texas Conference, we are blessed to have called and passionate volunteers to serve campers with special needs. Children and youth participated in great evening programs, including musicians, magicians, puppeteers (one group from Wesley UMC, McKinney), comedians and spiritual fun specialists! Local church and individual support all year long allows SEEK camp to resource such a great program. Visit www.seekcamp.org for ways you can support this ministry.



Remembering Leslie Denison, a BCCC employee

BY CALEB BURK
Guest Services Director
Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center

As I sit here, this personally has got to be the hardest thing that I have ever done. I am an only child, so I have never gotten to experience the joys and frustrations of having a sibling. Leslie, as well as the other dishwashers, have become my adopted sisters and have shown me the joys and frustrations of being a "big brother."

On Tuesday, August 25th, 2009, the town of Bridgeport as well as BCCC were shattered when we lost a daughter, sister, best friend, and co-worker, Leslie Ann Denison.

I knew Leslie professionally. For the past two summers, Leslie was a dishwasher, here at Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center. Her smiles, as well as her attitude, were "personally contagious." Every morning, she

greeted me, as well as her co-worker friends with a smile. Even if you were having a rough day, she would know exactly what to say to make your problems simply disappear.

Leslie was mature far beyond her age of seventeen. She was a member of the St. John's Catholic Church in Bridgeport. Leslie, was a senior at Bridgeport High School (BHS), she enjoyed being a BHS varsity cheerleader, running on the BHS cross country team, and spending time with her best friend, "Becca" Logan. The girls shared a special bond, they knew what the other one was thinking without even saying a word, and even finished each others sentences at times. It seemed that the only time the girls were apart was when Leslie was working at the camp. When it came to "Becca," Leslie once said, "Remember that every good friend was once a stranger."

College age intern finds Bridgeport experience filled with variety and meaning

BY CHARLES WESLEY CROUCH
First UMC, Denton

Growing up, I had never gone to summer camp. I didn't know what I was missing until I served as an intern this summer.

After my first semester in college, I was considering pursuing a career in ministry. I had lunch with Andy Stoker to discuss the ministry, and he suggested I work for either C2K, Project Transformation, or as an intern for Camp Bridgeport during the summer to see how I would enjoy working for the church. Since I had actually been to Bridgeport at least once, I decided to apply for it. I got the job, but was still very uncertain about the summer. I had no



Charles Wesley gets the camp store ready for eager customers. www.seekcamp.org idea about how camp would go. What all would I have to do? Who were the people I would

be working with?

I arrived at camp the first day and met everyone. We began by playing some games to get to know each other. After only about thirty minutes I felt like I had known these people for a long time. We moved into our cabins, learned how to run the ropes course, and repaired different parts of the camp. We were ready for campers to arrive.

The first two weeks were Children's and Youth SEEK, which are camps for special needs children. That only added to my anxiety about how the summer would go; not only had I never been to a camp, but I was beginning my camp experience with what I thought would be the most difficult group. However, each individual

camper has a counselor to go with them, so I could concentrate on learning how camp was run. My favorite moment was on the last day. I saw one child who, when seeing his mother, was so happy he began to cry. It ended up being a very good and moving experience.

After SEEK camp were the junior high, senior high, and then children's camps. These camps saw the beginning of camp Interest Groups. I, being the most athletic intern, got to run mountain biking. This was so much fun, because I really got to know the campers since biking was a smaller group. I was also given the chance to run the concession stand during these camps. This was very enjoyable, because I got to sell items and make money for the

camp.

Senior High was especially fun. The campers were there because they wanted to be, not because their parents made them. They had been going there for years and they knew about camp as well as or better than I did. Because they knew how everything worked so well, the Senior High camps ran very smoothly. The only problem with SH1 was that the air conditioner in Martin Hall gave out. For a few days in mid-July it was a little warm inside that building, especially in the kitchen. We opened all the doors in order to cool it down a little, which gave a really nice open-air dining hall feel.

At the beginning of August was Urban Camp. Project Transformation leads this camp

as a last Hoo-rah for the people they have had all summer. I had heard stories that this camp was unlike any other camp, so I decided to miss my family vacation in order to see how this camp was run. It really was different than any other camp. The campers are split for everything by gender, for each activity there is a Boys' time and a Girls' time.

The final two weeks were Children's camps. For these camps I got the chance to lead a different interest group. I am a huge Disney fan, and for the theatrical release of the Hannah Montana movie I learn the steps to the big dance number: The Hoedown Throwdown. For every talent show that wanted me, I dressed up in my best western wear and boots and danced on

stage. So for these camps, I taught the dance to many girls and few boys. It was so much fun seeing them dancing the dance I taught them where ever they went in camp.

I am so glad I got the chance to work at camp this past summer. I have gotten the chance to work with many different types of people, from all walks of life. I cannot think of any other job where I could get to do so many different jobs. I've gotten to experience working in food service, merchandising, leading biking groups, maintenance, and leading a dance troupe. It was a terrific experience and I am glad my first summer at camp was so much fun.

Urban Camp

Project Transformation, for now eleven years, has served children and youth in our conference churches for literacy ministries. Each summer the Project Transformation interns lead camp for older

students. Each camper has an opportunity to expand their experience with low and high ropes courses, mountain biking, outdoor activities and collaborative, team-building activities.

Bridgeport Camp is a phenomenal partner with Urban Camp and Project Transformation. Visit www.projecttransformation.org for more information on this ministry.



2010 Bridgeport Summer Camp Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Camp</i>	<i>Camp Directors</i>
June 8-12	Children's SEEK	Cheatham, Cheatham, Parks
June 8-12	Children's Music	Ewing, Tisdell
June 8-12	Youth Leadership Camp	Hoffmeister, Stoker
June 14-19	Senior High Camp	Black, Corazao, Jones
June 15- 19	Youth SEEK	Nance, Sharber
June 21-26	Junior High	Cullen, Dietz, Rickwartz
June 28-July 3	Junior High	Harrison, Maletic, Taylor
July 5-10	Senior High	Jones, Moorman, Van Duyne
July 12-16	Junior High IMPACT	Farrar, Garrett, Noschese
	Senior High IMPACT	Garrett, Massingill
July 17-21	Children's Camp	Bishop, George, Livingston
July 22-26	Children's Camp	Andrajack, Dye
July 27-31	Children's Camp	Fecht, Livingston, Stiner
August 2-6	PT Urban Camp	Godawski, Young
August 9-13	Children's Camp	Ferguson, Madrid, Sennott

* Look for registration to open October 15, 2009 for Summer 2010.

Opportunities for Giving

Although very inexpensive compared to other Christian Camps in the Southwest, Bridgeport Camp & Conference Center (BCCC) strives to offer the best camp experience to the children and youth of the North Texas Conference. Over 1,500 campers will attend camp this summer, and many will end up on a waiting list, unable to attend camp due to limited space.

Looking for a great return on your money? Consider giving to BCCC!

There are many ways your resources can be used toward the future of BCCC. Your gifts are tax-deductible and will make a difference in the lives of thousands of children, youth, families, and adults.

Giving is Easy!

If undesignated, your gift will be used where it is needed most. Please contact the Executive Director with any questions concerning gifts at 1-877-683-2555.

Gifts via check can be sent directly to:

Trueman Hoffmeister, Executive Director
 Bridgeport Camp & Conference Center
 PO Box 215
 Bridgeport, TX 76426

Scholarships

BCCC is committed to offering a camp experience to any child or youth regardless of financial situation. More participants can attend camp at Bridgeport because of the generosity of others.

Reconstruction

BCCC has been in operation for many years, and some of the structures built in the late 40's are in need of replacement. Your gifts will help achieve this goal.

Staff Development

BCCC has operated with minimal staff for many years. With new facilities, programs, and increased use, our staff will need to grow. Your gifts can help us attract great people to work with the youth, children, and adults of our conference.

Bridgeport Camp Foundation

Perhaps you would like to give a one-time gift or a larger gift, such as appreciated stock? BCCC wishes to develop a foundation for our future. Gifts to the Bridgeport Camp Foundation can be designated for a specific need such as expansion.

Expansion

Our desire is to offer a quality camp experience to more children and youth of the North Texas Conference. This means major expansion of our center, including new lodging, dining, meeting, recreation, and worship facilities. Our Board of Directors will be working on a master plan during the next several years for expansion. A financial foundation would be a blessing as we begin this monumental task.