



Report to the Board of Directors

Camp Winnataska

Summer 2009

Overview

My sophomore summer as Program Director was a very successful one! Harlan and I had a year of experience under our belt, a competent staff, a full slate of Program Specialists, two efficient new ways to collect data, and two outstanding new employees at Camp Winnataska: Mark Buerhaus and Amy Gilmore Passey. And of course we can't forget - a very successful ACA visitation!

Although I feel we have made significant progress in some of the issues that cropped up when our separation from the Boy Scouts began, we still have a ways to go in resolving some of these issues. I'd like to encourage everyone to use the fall "down time" to build up steam: March will sneak up on us before you know it!



Like last year, I have made many recommendations. Some are strictly for program purposes, and others require Board involvement. I have integrated Amy Passey's report as well. **Critical items are highlighted in blue.**

According to the parent survey,

- ✦ **98.6% of parents would send their child to Camp Winnataska again next year,**
- ✦ **98.9% of parents would recommend Camp Winnataska to a friend,**
- ✦ **99.3% of campers said that, "Camp was fun!"**

Although our goal would be to achieve 100% on all questions, those ringing recommendations sum up our summer very nicely!

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Margaret Shepherd

Summer Program Director

Amy Gilmore Passey

Office Manager

Staff

The Comanches and Blackfeet numbered 12 and 9, respectively. This summer there were 7 Program Specialists, one in each program area, including some “seasoned veterans.” I couldn’t be prouder of the amazing young men and women who serve at camp.

Achievements, successes, goals accomplished:

- ✦ The summer staff of 2009 was a larger and more diverse group. While this meant that they were not as cohesive as the summer before, I do think it is important that not only one “type” of young adult is represented. After all, campers are diverse as well.
- ✦ Having a Program Specialist in each area – one that is *not* also functioning as a staff member – made our ACA visitation run smoothly. Several directors also commented that the program areas seemed to be more substantial. 5 of the 7 Program Specialists were teachers, or in the field of education.
- ✦ There were 5 returning Comanches and 4 returning Blackfeet. This is a 50% retention rate, which is high by ACA documentation. Although plans change over the course of a year, at least 50% -75% indicated that they were planning on returning next year.
- ✦ A great deal of time was spent with staff members in leadership development. Harlan and I both feel very strongly that our job is to facilitate the success of the staff and not to dictate to the staff. While this might have lead to the handling of a situation that was different than how we would have handled it, we always strove to be pro-active, supportive, and readily available.
- ✦ Mark Buerhaus did a fantastic job communicating with the staff this year. They were all appreciative of his great attitude and willingness to work hard along with everyone else.
- ✦ Using a Comanche as the dining hall steward was very successful! We divided it among two first-year recreation (or craft) Comanches. We definitely plan to do this again.
- ✦ To comply with ACA standards, all Program Specialists and Harlan and I were trained in First Aide.
- ✦ According the parent survey, *“How did your camper feel about the camp staff?”*
 - Great! 89.8%
 - Good 9.5%
 - Ok 0.6%

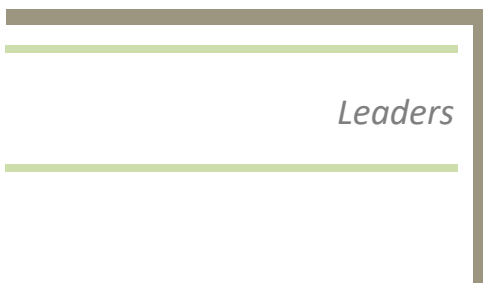


Issues, concerns, problems to be addressed:

- ✦ We may have interested staff members who would like to function as Program Specialists and Blackfeet/Comanches. If this happens, Harlan and I will need to decide on a case-by-case basis if this is best for camp.

Recommendations:

1. **The hiring committee should aim for at least 20 staff members.** Ratios should be for at least 8 Blackfeet/ 12 Comanches or 9 Blackfeet/ 11 Comanches. With this number of staff, program areas – especially ropes and outdoors – are able to divide huts in half. We need this many staff to reduce the amount of waiting and down time for campers.
2. **Continue to provide at least 5 full days of pre-camp training for staff and 6 for Program Specialists.**
3. **Hire a separate Program Specialist for each program area.** The personnel budget should reflect this by compensating the adult professionals adequately. Our current pay of \$225 a week is not adequate.. If we want our programs to grow, we need to have a competitive salary. I recommend the Board purchase the 2007 Camp Salary and Compensation Report published by the ACA.
4. **Set up lifeguard training for staff members at a remote location during the spring** (i.e., UAB aquatics center). Camp should cover some of the expense of training. Waiting until the pool is ready at camp is too “iffy,” and it would be helpful to have as many lifeguard trained staff as possible. This was a goal in 2008 that was not realized.
5. **Add drug testing as a requirement for employment.** This is standard operating procedure for many companies and school districts. We took a step in the right direction last year by running background checks. Look into ACA materials regarding these procedures.



During the summer, over 160 high schoolers and college-aged youth volunteered their time as leaders at camp. For each session that they worked, they received a letter documenting their 80 hours of community service from the office.

Achievements, successes, goals accomplished:

- ✦ From the parent survey: “How did your camper feel about his/her leaders?”

Great	82.9%
Good	12.7%
Just ok	3.8%
Poor	0.6%

- * We had a very large group of 10th grade leaders that will ensure good leadership for the next two years. There were 80 10th grade leaders, and 85 among the 11th, 12th grades and beyond.
- * The leader and staff manuals were updated, and a great deal of new information was added to comply with ACA standards. The new manual is 24 pages in length.
- * Because of this large group of 10th graders, and also just being able to follow up with boys that I knew, we had adequate coverage among boy huts during co-ed week. One week, we even had a waiting list for boys. Right that one down for the record books, folks. The demand of summer sports means that recruiting boy leaders will always be a challenge.
- * All leaders applied through Camp Brain. This made record-keeping and communication much more efficient. Also, certain questions were for leaders only, and other questions were for staff only, thus making the leader and staff application, in essence, separate. This was a goal from summer 2008.
- * Harlan conducted a make-up training session for leaders who missed Leadership Weekend, and those who were not able to attend a training session had to complete an essay exam before their arrival.
- * We were able to give very direct feedback to the leaders in a timely manner from the parent survey. For example, if two or three parents made a comment that one leader “yelled a lot,” I was able to isolate what hut and what week this was, and then follow up with those leader (s).
- * 3 classes of CPR were offered at camp for leaders and directors by nurse coordinator Sheila Ray. These were very affordable (\$5) and well-attended, thus reducing our number of leaders who showed up at camp without CPR certification.



Issues, concerns, problems to be addressed:

- * A fair number of parent/camper complaints in the parent survey stem from inappropriate leader behavior in the huts during the week (i.e., “yelling”). As we all know, how a camper perceives a leader’s instructions can be different from how the leader interprets them. However, there is always room for improvement in the area of behavior management. I hope to address this during leadership weekend and in other ways to ensure that campers are treated respectfully.
- * Overall, hut leaders received very favorable ratings from the parent survey. However, the area that leaders rated the *weakest* in the parent survey was in the area of Parent Communication (Proficient and knowledgeable).

○ Excellent	74.6%
○ Good	18.4%
○ Fair	2.9%
○ Poor	1%
○ Don’t know or N/A	2.5%

- ✱ As a repeat of last year: In January, when the leader application is filled out, high school students are not sure of their summer plans. (Boys especially do not plan so far ahead.) There was an improvement over last year, but there was still a great deal of cancelling, no shows, and switching around of weeks.

Recommendations:

1. **Continue to recruit boy leaders** through high schools and churches, using camp alumni and friends as a resource.
2. **Set the spring schedule now.** I'd like to recommend that we get our leadership weekend, camp spring work days, and CPR classes on the camp calendar now. (See addendum.)
3. **Plan ways to strengthen training program for leaders in the following areas: Parent Communication and Behavior Management.**
4. **Provide more direct and immediate feedback to leader regarding their performance.** Leaders know that they are evaluated by the staff and the weekly directors. Currently, there are no formal procedures that include sharing the information in these evaluations with leaders. Although more time-consuming, I would like to provide some sort of feedback for all leaders. I am currently entering all evaluation data in a spreadsheet so that I can compare and average results.
5. **Provide a special training session for Senior leaders.** We currently have the designated title of Senior Leader, usually a leader with one or two years of experience. I think it would be beneficial to have them apply to be a senior leader, and conduct a special training session for them. The goal would be for the Senior Leader to accept and take more responsibility for the other leader behavior in the huts.

Parents and Campers

Winnataska hosted over 1,000 campers this summer, including three specialty camps.

Here are some statistics about our camper population:

- ✱ **1012 campers total**, including specialty camps
 - 23 Young Teen Asthma campers
 - 25 Camp Takoda campers
 - 18 Friends for Life campers
- ✱ **312 males, 700 females**
- ✱ **The vast majority came from Alabama:**
 - 845 campers from Alabama
 - 45 from Georgia
 - 15 from Tennessee
 - 8 from Florida
 - 7 from Mississippi



- ✱ **40% of our campers, or 440 campers, came from the following zip codes:**
 - 35216 100 campers
 - 35244 84
 - 35242 80
 - 35243 51
 - 35209 50
 - 35226 43
 - 35223 32
- ✱ During the registration process, parents were asked how they heard about Winnataska. The drop-down menu indicated:
 - Referred by a friend 265 campers
 - Internet search 20
 - Brochure 11
 - Camp Fair 3
- ✱ The same question was posed on the parent survey. 135 answered the question accordingly:
 - Referred by a friend 112 campers 83%
 - Internet search 10 7.4%
 - Attended an event at camp 10 7.4%
 - Camp Fair 0 0%
 - Print advertisement 3 2.2%

Achievements, successes, goals accomplished:

- ✱ Like last year, an email was sent out to parents the week before their child was to come to camp. The email contained reminders about check-in, health forms, attachments, a link to the packing list, etc.
- ✱ Daily pictures were hosted by Bunk1.com The downloading process was less labor-intensive, although it did take several hours for the pictures to download. (I did this usually over night.) Because of the format, we were able to post more pictures. Each week averaged 800 – 1,000 pictures. On the flip side, parents would then email that there were too many pictures of Chicos, it took too long to scroll through the pictures, etc. (No comment.) A few parents commented that they did not like having to register to view pictures. Bunk1 was excellent at responding to parent’s emails. Like any change, it will take parents a couple of years to get used to.
- ✱ Parents were able to purchase BunkNotes through bunk1.com for their campers. The notes functioned very much like regular mail. Overall, there were very few problems with BunkNotes. Later in the fall, we will receive a commission for notes purchased. Next year, the percentage that we earn off of BunkNotes will increase because of our continued relationship with them. Now that we know what areas parents found confusing about BunkNotes and pictures, we can address this accordingly in our communication with parents.
- ✱ Because the website and registration materials were changed, there was much less confusion about who is considered a Mainside camper (finished 3rd grade and up) and who is considered a Chico camper (finished 1st and 2nd grade). This was a source of some registration problems last year. We did, however, have at least one (maybe more) parent lie about their child’s age.

- ✱ Stephanie Martin Harless helped me to design a parent survey. It was sent via email to parents when their child got home from camp. About 1/3 of all parents responded, which is a much higher percentage than expected. The information from the parent survey is invaluable!

Issues, concerns, problems to be addressed:

- ✱ Campers – especially oldest girls – continue to bring their cell phones to camp. In some cases, parents allow or even encourage their campers to bring them.
- ✱ Some parents did not receive email communication from info@winnataska.org. Mostly the problem was that the emails ended up in their Spam folder.
- ✱ One of the parent survey questions was, *“How would you rate the camp programs and nightly activities on each of the following topics: Child learned new skills.”*
 - Excellent 59.7%
 - Good 31.3%
 - Fair 3.2%
 - Poor 0.6%

We need to do a better job communicating that their campers do learn new skills; campers probably don't verbalize it as such to their parents. We can do this in our emailing, brochure, website content, and in contact with directors.

Recommendations:

1. **Focus publicity funds on ways that encourage friend referrals.** The vast majority of campers hear about camp this way. While the camp brochure is wonderful and chocked full of pictures, perhaps this is an area that can be cut back, since very few new campers hear about camp this way.
2. **Ask parents to enter info@winnataska.org into their address book, contact list, or “safe list.”**
3. **Continue to work on and improve pre-camp communication with parents.** Include more Bunknotes and picture information, more actual check-in instructions, and answers to frequently asked questions, and lots of information about the skills that their campers are learning.
4. **Update the parent survey and re-enroll in surveymonkey.com for quarterly use.** Look for other ways to use surveymonkey.com.

*Office, Registration,
Website, and Check-in*

The registration process showed dramatic improvement from the year before. We were able to utilize Camp Brain more effectively. The online application form was streamlined. This occurred at the same time as the website reorganization. We were ready to accept registrations at the first of the year, but there is no reason that we couldn't be ready to enroll campers much earlier this year.

Achievements, successes, goals accomplished:

- ✱ From the parent survey: *“How would you rate Camp Winnataska on the following,”*

Website and online registration

Excellent	80.6%
Good	18.0%
Fair	1.1%
Poor	0.4%

Check-in/Check-out procedures

Excellent	70.3%
Good	23.3%
Fair	3.9%
Poor	1.1%



- ✱ Thanks to Foster’s help, we successfully set up a remote desktop connection so that Amy, Kap and I could access the camp computer at any time. The remaining desktop computer in the camp office did not have sensitive camper data on the desktop and could be used for other program and office purposes. Camp Brain is now password-protected.
- ✱ I now have the website software (Macromedia Contribute) on my laptop and can update the website whenever needed. In addition, I now have a laptop!
- ✱ Camp Brain customer support is excellent. We used more parts of Camp Brain this year, including the “Cabinizer” which organizes campers into huts. Also, Amy was able to keep track of the number of complimentary campers (directors and nurses) and camperships. We certainly feel that it is worth the money.
- ✱ Parents received a timely email confirmation from the camp office. Many thanks to Amy Passey for diligently staying on top of this tedious – but very necessary – process.
- ✱ Very few paper applications were received by the camp office. The vast majority of parents applied online. This meant that there was no overbooking, as happened last year.
- ✱ The website was completely redone in November and December. New graphics were added, the new logo was incorporated on the home page, and the content was completely reorganized and updated. We received many positive comments from parents regarding our new website.
- ✱ Creating registration lists was very simple since all the information was in Camp Brain, and very few parents owed a remaining balance. (Another one of Amy’s greatest achievements!)
- ✱ We ordered some attractive and durable signs to help with check-in process.
- ✱ Each camper was emailed a luggage tag to attach to their luggage. Sadly, many of the luggage tags did not make it to the end of the week, but the luggage crew reported that it helped to have the tags during the luggage runs on Sundays.
- ✱ During check-in, the health check with no medicines (a majority of campers) was moved to the gym. This was a positive move for many reasons:
 - The area was shaded and restrooms were available. The line also went through canteen to help sales!
 - More nurse stations could be set up to move the line quickly.

Issues, concerns, problems to be addressed:

- ✦ We did have to add a document to the registration process two weeks before camp started. Per Donald Guthrie's legal counsel, the ropes form had to be added, and every camper, leader, director and staff member had to have one filled out.
- ✦ From Amy Passey: "One of my greatest challenges was the computer in the camp office. Others were always asking to use it for checking emails, printing night activity information, schedules, etc. This was true for the copy machine as well."

Recommendations:

1. **Add the ropes release form to the online application** . We successfully did this last year with the camper covenant.
2. **Continue to have parents bring health forms rather than mail them in.** This was a change in our process; some parents still did not have one, but we did all that we could to publicize this change. We had plenty of copies available. There will always be a few who forget! In our communication, we do need to remind parents not to pack their medicines in suitcases.
3. **Train staff members to do health checks during check-in.** For 6th week check-in, Dr. Buckner trained 6 Comanches to do the health screenings for campers without medications. This made the check-in process very speedy.
4. **Plan to increase wireless internet coverage around other areas of camp.** User groups will definitely use this service.
5. **Provide Amy Passey with computer training in the website software and in Camp Brain.** Camp Brain offers one-on-one training sessions for \$75 an hour. She could use this time to learn more about user groups, summer registration, billing, and database management.
6. **Update the website with pictures from Summer 2009.** Transfer pictures from previous summers to the new website. This is not difficult, just time consuming.
7. **Have a separate Camp Brain/office computer and staff/program computer** – both with printing capability.
8. **Open registration earlier than last year.** Amy and I can get Camp Brain ready to start taking registrations much earlier this year. Perhaps this will help with the wait list for 6th week and other camps might fill up. Maybe we could offer for grandparents to purchase a week at camp as Christmas presents?
9. **Before camp starts, have a registration meeting.** Include staff, nurses, welcome center people, greeters, and others who help with registration. Have we ever all been together in the same room? Would the world implode?

Program Areas

The 7 Program Specialists and Comanches and Blackfeet worked very hard to keep kids engaged, and having fun. Outdoors had both bb guns and archery in the shooting range, and Canoes ran exclusively in the gorge. Three words from summer '09: HIGH ROPES COURSE!

Achievements, successes, goals accomplished:

- * Each Program Specialist felt that they were able to build upon the successes of past years and in addition, add some new and exciting activities to keep campers engaged. Warball armor in crafts was a huge hit. The new shooting range offered lots of shade and less traveling time. Recreation used the open field of the parking lot for ultimate Frisbee.
- * The low ropes course had several elements repaired. The high ropes course was, without a doubt, the star of the summer!
- * Overall I was pleased with Choose Your Own Adventure (CYOA). The campers were offered choices and ranked them on a sheet of paper. They were then assigned adventures according to their rankings. I was able to secure the help of some former camp people to help teach specialty classes, including a session on the Choctaw by a former Comanche. Several staff members were able to use their talents (drama, photography). Oldest huts were involved in the high ropes course during these periods. A special canoe/horse trip was implemented for the middle huts. This was pretty time-consuming for me, but I improved the system each week to make the process quicker.
- * Instead of having a schedule for the week, there was a schedule for the day. This change was necessitated by the new high ropes course. The periods were lengthened by 15 minutes, and each day had a different order of events. Although this took away the ease of glancing at one schedule for the entire week, it did allow us to have more flexibility in scheduling to meet the campers’ needs and interests. Some campers missed doing every activity every day (Mostly the Navajos who have been coming to camp for 8 years...they do not like change.) Some mistakes were made in making the schedules, like scheduling two huts in the same activity at the same time. However, despite these negatives, I feel that it was a step in a very positive direction. I will continue to modify and adjust the schedule to best-meet the needs of campers.
- * In the camp survey, parents answered “*What was your child’s favorite thing about camp?*” (Campers could list more than one thing.) Three program areas had a huge number of votes.

▪ High Ropes	62 campers
▪ Horses	59
▪ Canoes	57
▪ Night Activities	31
▪ Friends	31
▪ Swimming	24
▪ EVERYTHING	22
▪ Daily activities	16
▪ Leaders	16
▪ Crafts	12
▪ Staff	11
▪ Food	10
▪ Outdoors (BB, archery, fishing)	10
▪ CYOA	8

- Others answers included Mission Impossible, Grail, Indian Night, Country Night, rest period, Recreation, Pirate night, Wacky Tacky night, singing, and the new schedule.

- ✦ From the parent survey: *“As a camper, let us know about the activities”*

Awesome!	86.9%
Fun	12.5%
Just ok	0.6%
Didn't like them	0%

- ✦ The rainy day tubs were improved with more games and ideas to entertain campers during rain.



Issues, concerns, problems to be addressed:

- ✦ The campout format was changed with mixed reviews. The Program Specialist felt strongly that the campouts needed to be single-sex instead of co-ed. There were as many reasons to support this change as to keep it the same. Harlan and I need to have some long discussions before deciding how to proceed for next summer.

Recommendations:

1. **Hold a program retreat to generate new ideas for program areas.** I'd like to invite staff members, directors, CWOC and other interested individuals to a brainstorming session to discuss new programming ideas. The date that seems to work best is the Saturday after Thanksgiving – Saturday, November 28. I'd like to divide up the large group into smaller groups in areas that interest them. If people would like to spend the night at camp, lodging would be available.
2. **Purchase permanent games and activities to offer to campers during down time on Mainside.** The Chico playground fills this need up on Chico Hill. True, campers do not have much downtime, but campers on Mainside (especially boys) roam around between activities, and would enjoy something like tetherball. This is a previous goal from 2008.
3. **Establish a long-term savings account for big program purchases.** Currently, the budget gives only a little “wobble room” to buy new items year-to-year, but if we were to consider a “bigger purchase” like kayaks, we would have no money to do so.
4. **Look into purchasing our own inflatable.** In the long run, it might make more financial sense to buy one than continue to rent.
5. **Create a new horse trail and a trail down to the gorge to use for fishing.** Campers consistently asked for new trails on their weekly evaluations.
6. **Continue to modify and adjust the schedule.** Work on ways to make it easy for campers, leaders and directors to use the schedules.

Night Activities

For many campers, the night activities are the most exciting part of camp. Pirate night was continued as the Wednesday night activity, while the oldest girls' hut was on camp out. The staff takes a great deal of pride in organizing and leading the night activities. They make it fun!

Achievements, successes, goals accomplished:

- ✦ Country night, Mission Impossible, and Indian Night all ranked first at least once when the campers voted on their favorite night at the end of the week. The Pirate night crew was very excited the Pirate night came in 2nd one week.
- ✦ Two weekly directors chose to hold the pageant of the Holy Grail on Thursday evening of the camp session. Both sets of directors, Mainside and Chico, had very positive comments about the order of the night activities. In addition, the co-ed campers enjoyed ending camp with Country Night. I do feel that the message of Grail was still imparted to the campers, which is important to many people who have been connected with camp for years. I did hear from some who did not wish for the change in night activities to occur. If Grail is to be held on Thursday night, this can be communicated to parents on the website when they register their campers.
- ✦ From the parent survey: *“As a camper, let us know about the nightly programs”*

Awesome!	78.9%
Fun	19.2%
Just ok	1.6%
Didn't like them	0.3%



Issues, concerns, problems to be addressed:

- ✦ Wacky Tacky night consistently rates lowest among campers. Although I feel that any Sunday night activity is going to rank as least favorite – campers are still warming up to their week at camp – there is always room for improvement. The staff modified and adjusted the schedule according to feedback from campers and directors, including a new game called “You Can’t Handle the Truth.”

Recommendations:

1. Offer to co-ed weekly directors the choice to have Grail on Thursday or Friday night.

*Facilities, Scheduling, and
Specialty Camps*

Achievements, successes, goals accomplished:

- ✱ Campus dining continues to offer great food. Chris Vizzina, Ms. Edna and Mr. Kenny are extremely pleasant to work with!
- ✱ Once again, canteen items were ordered from City Wholesale. This saved staff time and money.
- ✱ Camp Takoda hosted more campers this summer. The group was divided into an older group and a younger group. They also spent an extra night at camp. The AASCG founder, Kerry Mataya, serves as the director for this camp and brings staff to work with behavior. We need to work to include these campers and their siblings as a part of our Winnataska family. They have such a positive experience that I believe we could recruit their siblings.
- ✱ Because Wheezeaway was not held at Winnataska, Young Teen Asthma was significantly smaller this year, with 23 campers. YTA is a great trial-run for the staff.
- ✱ As always, Friends for Life is a very rewarding experience for the staff, and campers from the Exceptional Foundation.
- ✱ We had new Cobra radios. A few of them had glitches, but they are very easy to replace and inexpensive. In the long run, this investment makes sense. The old radios just needed to go radio heaven!

Issues, concerns, problems to be addressed:

- ✱ The bathhouses. When asked in the parent survey, *“What did your camper like least about camp?”* the number one answer was the restrooms/showers/bathhouses. In the section where parents could provide comments, over 100 parents made comments such as, *“Overall bath facilities just need improvement or renovation,”* to, *“The bathrooms were not clean and nasty.”*

Also from the parent survey, *“Please rate the camp facilities in each of the following topics: Restrooms/Bathhouses”*

Excellent	14.5%
Good	46.9%
Just ok	21.9%
Poor	9.3%
Don't know	7.4%

With each question, the results are averaged. (Excellent is a 5, and so on.) This question's average was 3.38, which was the lowest scoring question on the entire parent survey, and the only question to dip below an average of 4.

- ✱ Several of the camps continue to be at very low capacity
 - **1st week- co-ed** **31% capacity**
 - 2nd week girls 53% capacity
 - 3rd week girls 81% capacity
 - 4th week co-ed 59% capacity
 - 5th week co-ed 76% capacity
 - 6th week co-ed 98% capacity

- ✱ The camp radios get passed around a lot, and sometimes get borrowed and then not returned to the owner – the one in the camp office constantly went missing. In the past, this was tolerated and everyone shared because the radios were so expensive.

Recommendations:

1. **Set the summer schedule by November and have it readily available for parents.** (See addendum for proposed schedule.)
2. **The parents and campers have spoken: The bathhouses need renovating.** This is a very large undertaking, I understand, and there are many pressing needs to keep camp running – pool triage, for example. Camp needs to be planning long-term to renovate the bathrooms.
3. **Make changes to increase attendance the first week of camp.** Changing 1st week camp from all girls’ camp (2008) to a co-ed camp (2009) resulted in a decrease of 4 campers. If we are going to offer a discount, it needs to be a very deep discount, and established and advertised early. Or you could give the camp a specialty or theme, like more horseback riding time. I’m up for anything creative!
4. **Order more radios so that staff members do not have to borrow them.** They are inexpensive enough that if a staff member loses or breaks them, they can be replaced.
5. **The camp office needs to be a separate building.** Both Amy Passey and I strongly feel that the camp office does not need to double as a facility for anything other than an office.
6. **Specialty camps need to register through Camp Brain.** Amy has spent a great deal of time manually entering information. (This does not apply to Friends for Life campers.)
7. **Budget needs to include funding for camp maintenance issues for use by the caretaker.** It costs money to maintain the camp and Mark has no means other than petty cash or charging at Pioneer hardware to make repairs and purchase supplies for lodges for User Groups. When something needs to be fixed or repaired in the summer, it is critical that Mark get the materials he needs in a timely manner.



Amy Gilmore Passey worked as registrar and manned the camp office in 2009. Her professional and caring attitude goes a long way toward good public relations with parents. Amy has added many suggestions to items in this report; I submit Amy’s specific recommendations below.

Recommendations:

1. **Hire an executive director.** The number one recommendation I would make based on the last year as office manager is the need for one central person to make final decisions. There is no need for the overlap and inconsistency we have at camp. While Mary Margaret does a fabulous job with summer programs, it is often difficult because the chain of command is so unclear for all employees and

volunteers. If camp is not in the position to afford an executive director, then I suggest we at least delegate someone who has final say so with the input of CWOC or BOD or whoever.

Often I have been placed in a position where I am forced to make a decision that I am not qualified to make because, depending on who you ask, the person in charge may vary. We are blessed to have a great amount of expertise, but often the right hand has no idea the left hand is doing something, and we overlap or things fall through the crack. I would argue we cannot afford NOT to hire an executive director.

2. Please consider adjusting paid personnel for office in spring and summer months. An hourly rate has worked well in establishing an office, however it would be very beneficial to camp to have an office person long-term. I would like to suggest a salaried position be considered, if only for the summer months. Much work can be done from in town, but during the summer season being on site has great value.

3. Long range plans should consider having an office in town as well as one at camp. Other than receiving mail in the off-season, most work can be done in town. I'm aware that an in-town post office box was not successful in the past. However, I think it should be revisited to solve commuting issues. The office personnel would have primary access to the post office box, instead of a large number of folks.

4. Create a central billing department. If it is not run through an office, there is no way of knowing who has been billed for what, who spent what, and what has been paid and when. Billing alone may require hiring a person for just that job. Billing campers, paying utilities, expenses, User Groups, etc is a huge job and does not need to fall under general office staff.

5. Budget needs to include funding for office equipment and maintenance. I realize this has not been an issue to date as we have not funded an office.

6. Standardize the number of complimentary campers for nurses and directors. I suggest we offer 2 complimentary for a full week session to directors and nurses. The policy of allowing nurses to send multiple children and not solely for the week in which they serve, is costly for camp. Nurse benefits should be exact same as director benefits. (Remember, complimentary are different from the camperships that are designated by Mary Owen and committee.)

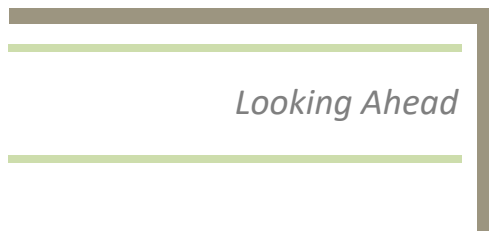
7. Do away with coupons as a means of public relations. We have tried many various combinations of coupons in the past and not seen any real results. Creating the coupons is timely, costly, and of little benefit to camp. In today's economy, we simply can't afford to give coupons to all school and other organizations that ask. Many such organizations asked last year. They are basically not offering us anything in return other than a small amount of publicity for a \$560 freebie.

8. Offer the Early Bird discount at the same rate as last year. A \$50.00 discount for Early Bird was all we offered last year and many people took advantage of it. I was flooded with calls about paying prior to the deadline. I understand that there has been mention of offering a greater discount for Early Bird, however I would discourage this in that based on what I observed. \$50.00 was enough to make a difference to many. There is no need to give away more than we have to.

9. Offer few, if any, discounts. Decide on discounts when dates are set. Offer the discounts only for early registration or multiple sessions. Last year we eliminated the multiple child discounts with minimal difficulty. I had a few calls, but when told we no longer offered that discount, most registered anyway. They were simply asking because we had done it in the past. Our fees were extremely cut-and-dry last

year, making bookkeeping and data entry easier. While I realize the goal is not to make my job easier, we also wish to keep fees simple and understandable for parents as well. Parents commented that in the past, it was difficult for them to figure out the balance due.

10. Create a volunteer coordinator. I suggest we create a coordinator of volunteers so when the many folks who offer to help come forth, there is some sense of organization. I had numerous calls and emails concerning people who want to donate time and effort. However, coordinating such volunteers take a great deal of time that I did not have in the spring and summer. We want to utilize the free help being offered, not give people the impression they are not needed.



It is my intention to return to Camp Winnataska next year as Program Director, if the Board is inclined to offer the job to me.

I would also like to take a minute to acknowledge what a great team we have in place currently. Mark, Amy, Harlan and I all work wonderfully together. Camp is very fortunate to have attracted such dedicated employees.

I have mentioned this to many involved with camp; I beg your pardon for repeating myself. I do believe very strongly that Camp Winnataska needs an executive director. My unique situation – living 300 miles from camp – seems to be working out satisfactorily, but the fact is that camp will plateau without the direction of a full-time and strong leader. The Board of Directors and CWOC do an amazing job of keeping camp afloat under the direction of volunteers, but there is a crucial difference between a volunteer and an employee. If the Board of Director’s charge is to think about the long-term goals of camp, then I urge you to consider this as one of your most important goals.

PROGRAM NEEDS FOR SUMMER 2010

Each Program Specialist listed items that that they felt are essential to their program for next year. I've included items \$100 or more.

Item (s) needed	Program Area	Estimated cost
Life jackets (40)	Canoes	\$25 x 40 = \$1,000
Saddle blankets (5)	Horses	\$500
Pony grove fence repairs	Horses	?
Horse trail near barn needs work	Horses	?
Blenders	Crafts	\$100
Static belay ropes (3/4)	Ropes	\$350
Aluminum carabineers	Ropes	\$100
Pool repair	Pool	? (big bucks!)
Slide repair	Pool	\$2,000

PROGRAM WISH LIST

We asked the Program Specialists to work with their staff to develop a “wish list.”

Item (s) wished for	Program Area	Estimated cost
Water trampoline, slide, or blob	Canoes	\$1,000 - \$3,000
Electricity in the pony grove	Horses	?
Photo printer	Crafts	\$300
Digital still cameras	Crafts	\$300
Video cameras	Crafts	\$300
Green harnesses (10)	Ropes	?
Sod for the high ropes area	Ropes	?
Shelter for the high ropes area	Ropes	?
Volleyball net	Recreation	\$300
Parachute	Recreation	\$200
Scooters (10)	Recreation	\$200
Permanent PVC basketball goals	Pool	\$200

PROPOSED DATES FOR 2009/2010

November 15	Open registration for summer 2010
November 28	Program retreat at camp
December 13	Carols and candles
December 15	Open up staff and leader applications
December 27	Christmas tea
January 15, 2010	Applications for staff/leaders due
January 30/ February 6	Interviews for staff and leaders
February 19-21	Leadership training at Camp Winnataska
April 17	Make up leadership training/CPR/spring work day

- * With this timeline, interviews are moved up to avoid the President’s day weekend. Leadership weekend is earlier to avoid the ACT, spring sports, and college spring breaks.

PROPOSED SUMMER SCHEDULE

This was submitted to Paul Bentley in July. Changes proposed:

- * Bump the entire schedule up a week.
- * Since July 4th falls on a Sunday, do not hold a regular camp that week. As proposed, Takoda specialty camp would be at the end of that week.
- * Move Friends for Life after the camping season.
- * Add a mini-chico session to either 4^t, 5th or 6th week.

2010 Proposed Schedule	Start date	End date
Precamp	Saturday, June 5	
Young Teen Asthma Camp	Wednesday, June 9	Saturday, June 12
Session 1: Co-ed Mainside	Sunday, June 13	Saturday, June 19
1B: Co-ed mini Chico	Sunday, June 13	Wednesday, June 16
1C: Co-ed mini Chico	Wednesday, June 16	Saturday, June 19
Session 2: Girls Mainside and Chico	Sunday, June 20	Saturday, June 26
Session 3: Girls Mainside	Sunday, June 27	Saturday, July 3
3B: Co-ed mini Chico	Sunday, June 27	Wednesday, June 30
3C: Co-ed mini Chico	Wednesday, June 30	Saturday, July 3
BREAK July 4, 5, 6		
Camp Takoda	Wednesday, July 7	Saturday, July 10
Session 4: Co-ed Mainside and Chico	Sunday, July 11	Saturday, July 17
Session 5: Co-ed Mainside and Chico	Sunday, July 18	Saturday, July 24
Session 6: Co-ed Mainside and Chico	Sunday, July 25	Saturday, July 31
Friends for Life (post-camp clean up)	Sunday, Aug 1	Monday August 2

