



newsletter

The mission of Camp Agape is to provide a free summer camping experience, in a setting of God's unconditional agape love for Vermont children who have experienced a parent's incarceration.

Why I Return to Camp Agape Each Year



Baiting the Hook at Camp Agape

I first heard about Camp Agape from a fellow mentor at Charlotte Central School. I was intrigued about a camp especially for children whose parents were caught up in the criminal justice system. Recently retired, I knew I wanted to work with disadvantaged children and realized that Camp Agape was exactly what I was looking for -- a clear need in a program where I could make a significant direct contribution.

I signed up to be a cabin counselor for two weeks the sum-

mer of 2007 and have been back each summer since. The first year was particularly challenging because I had a lot to learn about how to work effectively and empathetically with the kids. The Covenant Hills staff and other Agape volunteers were very supportive and worked well as a team. There were enough staff members around to allow us to spend precious one-on-one time with kids when that was needed.

One thought that frequently inspired me during each week was what "holes" there probably were in these children's lives. Perhaps a father not there to shoot baskets in the backyard or come to watch a baseball game. Perhaps a mother away from the home, not there to listen to problems or sympathize with the way a child is feeling. My belief is

that this is the best of what Camp Agape offers -- a full week of enriching the lives and spirits of emotionally undernourished and wounded children.

When getting ready for Camp the first summer, my wife suggested taking a couple of children's books (which she wisely selected). She maintains that there is no child who doesn't love to be read to. A little skeptical, I asked my cabin at the start of the first rest hour if they'd like me to read to them. There was little enthusiasm and some outright scoffing at the idea. Then I got them to agree to a deal -- they would be quiet while I read to them for exactly ten minutes. At the end of that time, they would vote on whether or not I should continue reading. We finished the book that week and you could have heard a pin drop in the cabin while we were doing it.

-- Rocky Ober

From a Grandmother & Her 3 Grandchildren

"Thank you so much for letting my three children go to Camp Agape. They had such fun and it was Dylan's first time away from home. I finally got the adoption finalized in November, 2009. I adopted as a single parent and the kids all kept their own names. Thank you so much on behalf of my kids."

-- Carol Guillemette

"Dear Camp Agape, I loved going to Camp Agape last year! Thank you for letting me go. My favorite part was socializing with people outside our little town of Colchester. Thanks again. I hope to go again this year. P.S. I had a great time!!"

-- Lakysa

"Thank you Camp Agape for letting me sleep in a cabin. I loved the fishing."

-- Dylan

"Dear Camp Agape, Thank you for letting me come. I really love your camps. I loved the swimming and all the fun things. I love my friends. THANK YOU"

-- Kylee

Volume 3, Issue 1
Spring, 2010

2010 Camping Schedule

Covenant Hills Christian Camp Cabot, Vermont

Session 1—August 8-13

Session 2—August 15-20

- Remember to pray for prisoners, their children, camp counselors and staff.
- Give a scholarship (\$500)- or a partial one—using the enclosed envelope.
- CAV is a tax-exempt Vermont non-profit.
- Volunteer your time at camp—counselors are urgently needed—or offer a skill such as fishing, crafts, music or a specialty.
- Check out our website:
www.campagapevermont.com

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Camp Agape: A Place Where We Give “Chances”



Two summers ago, when my children went off to a wonderful overnight camp experience, I was reminded of the college summers I'd spent as a camp counselor. A young man who heard me wax poetic about it asked me why I didn't become a counselor and I replied truthfully, “They don't want moms there, they want cool

counselors like you.”

But when I heard about Camp Agape I thought, “There's a place that could use moms!” I met with Beth Ann Maier who waxed poetic herself and last summer I found myself as a counselor at Camp Agape.

On opening day, as I was walking with a girl to our cabin, she told me that her brother who was also at camp had not had a successful week at a different camp earlier that summer.

“Well, he has a new start here,” I said.

“He got into a lot of trouble and got sent home,” she warned.

“Hopefully we can help him if he makes mistakes so he can stay here the entire week.”

“You mean, you give *chances*?”

Yes, here at Camp Agape we give chances. Everyone who arrives has a fresh start. It doesn't matter what school was like or what a different summer camp experience was like. Each day we have a chance to be a better person than we were the day before, learning from our mistakes and learning how to make better choices.

Camp Chances. That's where I'm heading this summer. Will you join me?

-- Paige McIntire

Why I Love to Come to Camp Agape

Our editor had the privilege of interviewing Brianna Bessette, 11 years old, who has come to Camp Agape since it started in 2006.

CAV: Brianna, why do you keep coming back?

BB: It's really fun to meet people. It's nice up there. I've missed people.

CAV: Anything especially nice?

BB: Everyone there, the cabins, the lake, the food, the campfires and smores.

CAV: What would you say to someone who's thinking about going to CA?

BB: The first year I was nervous but when I got there, there was so much to do, so much fun, a chance to meet people. At the end I was really teary—I didn't want to leave.

CAV: Any important memory?

BB: Talking with ‘Big E,’ [a counselor] he's a very good person.

CAV: Anything special you've learned at Camp Agape?

BB: There's always someone there at camp loving you.

CAV: Brianna, it sounds to me that you

like people and you like being at Camp Agape because you are free to enjoy yourself.

BB: Yes, that's it.



Listen to Our Campers

“This is the first time in a long time that I've had three meals a day.”

“This is the first time in two years that I've felt safe.”

“I'm ten years old. When my mom gets out of prison, I'll be 35.”

“I didn't believe that someone could love me without even knowing me. Then I came here and it's true.”

“I want to stay here forever. I wish I could clone myself and send my clone home.”

How to Contact Us

Beth Ann Maier

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Program Coordinator, to volunteer at camp,
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Con Quinby

Past President, 802-862-4174

Why Camp Agape?

Listen to Dr. Beth Ann Maier, a pediatrician, Board President of the Camp, counselor at every camp since we started in 2006:

“There are an estimated 4000 children in Vermont who have experienced a parent’s incarceration. One in five children with an incarcerated parent has clinically significant problems of anxiety, depression and withdrawal. One in three has clinically significant problems of attention problems, aggression, and disruptive behaviors. They are often experiencing an accumulation of risk factors such as poverty, frequent moves, mental health problems in their care-givers, witnessing violence and substance use.

Youth resilience studies demonstrate the protective nature of several factors that can reduce risk and vulnerability. These include a network of friends, connections with positive role models, faith or spirituality, self-confidence, mastery of skills, a sense of humor, good health, and someone who believes in them. All of these attributes can be promoted and strengthened in our camping environment. As Con Quinby, one of the founders of Camp Agape says, ‘We do not offer therapy, but we do offer a wonderfully loving and healing environment.’

“From morning worship, to sitting down to three healthy meals each day, to participating in a wide array of activities and crafts and outright silliness and fun; from reading and being read to, to campfire chats, to being showered with gifts of full backpacks, quilts, books, hoodies, and caps; from bonding with a young enthusiastic counselor, to being listened to seriously by an elder, to making friends with peers who share your life experience; the children are able to access their own strengths, and re-discover their own potential for goodness.”

Urgently Needed: Cabin Counselors



You’ve read the stories here in this Newsletter—from campers and counselors. Now we need you!

If you enjoy being with children, have a sense of humor, can spend a full day walking on uneven grounds, welcome the challenge and joy of being with some great children. If you like to laugh, sing, pray, play tag or sit quietly listening to a child’s story. If you hunger to see God’s unconditional love in action, please call us.

Our cabin counselors, co-directors and program leaders range in age from 17 to 80. They are retired teachers, CEO’s of corporations, pastors, doctors, college students and homemakers who know the

power of positive role models. They are folks who want to provide a safe, fun and memorable experience while being surrounded by the beautiful hills of the Northeast Kingdom.

As a cabin counselor, you will be with 2 other trained adult counselors and five children. There will be day-time relief so that you can take a good long shower, sit in the sun, relax!

If you want to make an important difference in a child’s life—or know of someone who does—please call or email Sherry Osborn, Program Coordinator, at 802-885-5775 or sherryosborn@vermontel.net. Thank you!



Our Budget for 2010

Income:

Churches and Service Clubs	\$15,000
Individuals	25,000
Foundations	<u>12,000</u>
Total Income	\$52,000*

Expense:

Covenant Hills Christian Camp contract	\$35,280
T-shirts, hoodies, caps	3,400
Backpacks, sleeping bags	2,000
Miscellaneous	1,000
Administration: staff, insurance supplies	<u>10,360</u>
Total Expense	\$52,040

*This sum does not include the more than 3500 hours spent by over 60 volunteers at the 2 weeks of camp, more than 1000 hours from making quilts to boards-man-ship and generous in-kind contributions.



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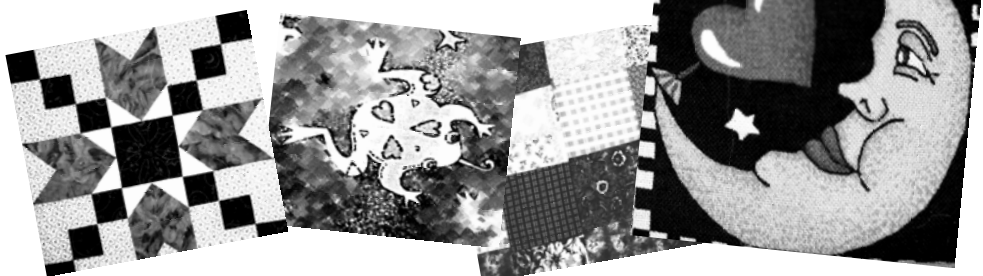
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website



An ecumenical ministry of the Troy Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont and the Vermont Conference of The United Church of Christ

The Quilts Keep Coming



Thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Sharon Osborne and her army of quilters, once again every camper will receive a full-size hand-made quilt. Colorful, cuddly and gorgeous, they are a delight to see and enjoy. What a gift! Another example of God's unconditional love.



Thank You

So many people have been so generous over the 5 years Camp Agape has been offering a week of free camp for children who have experienced a parent's incarceration.

Thank you for making it possible!

You have helped transform lives and been a blessing to both campers and all those who serve at camp.

If you haven't already done so, send in a gift **today** in the enclosed envelope.

Please keep the blessings coming!

Thank you!