

# newsletter

Volume 4

Spring 2011

### Partners with:

- The Permanent Fund for the Well-Being of Vermont Children
- Children's Aid Society, Kids-A-Part
- Mobius, The Mentoring Movement

## Kacey's Story

Kacey arrived at Camp Agape in 2006, a spirited eight year old clutching a plastic bag with a few clothes she had packed on her own. The foresight of our founders and the generosity that is the hallmark of our donors, allowed us to fill in the gaps of her crude packing job. She threw herself into all of the activities, made new friends and bonded closely with her counselors. Kacey has been back to camp every year since, sometimes arriving on the first day unregistered, often without a ride home at the last

minute. Her parents are good souls and love her very much, but their struggles with addiction have resulted in family chaos for many years. Kacey has attended six different schools in five years, sometimes living in a tent or on someone's living room couch. Her mother, brother, grandmother and aunt have all been in and out of jail. Yet somehow, Kacey stubbornly gets herself to camp every year. Kacey is now a 13 year old honor student, and chose to attend Camp Nation (activities by consensus)

at Covenant Hills last summer. In 2030, when she runs for office, she'll have our vote.



**God, nature, and *agape* nourish our campers.**

PLEASE NOTE OUR  
NEW ADDRESS:  
P.O. BOX 8283,  
ESSEX, VT, 05451-8283

## The Mission of Camp Agape

To provide a free summer camping experience, in a setting of *agape* (the kind of unconditional love God has for each of us) for children in Vermont who have experienced the incarceration of a parent.

### 2011 Camp Dates

Week 1—August 7-12

Week 2—August 14-19

At

Covenant Hills

Christian Camp

Cabot, VT

## Our Community Partners

Since 2009, Kids-A-Part staff have come to Camp Agape, engaging our campers in novel ways to explore their shared experience of having a parent in prison. In 2010,

Mobius Mentoring staff attended registration, informing parents and care-givers of mentoring opportunities for our campers. The Permanent Fund for the Well-Being

of Vermont Children has graciously assisted us with funding. In 2010, they visited camp along with Department of Corrections Commissioner Andrew Pallito.

# Camp Agape -Past, Present and Future

• Since 2006, Camp Agape Vermont has offered a free week of overnight summer camp to children who have experienced a parent's incarceration in Vermont. The program began with 24 children in the summer of 2006 varying in age from six to fourteen. Enrollment peaked in 2009 with 80 children, straining our ability to recruit and train adequate volunteer staff as well as meet the developmental needs of

such a broad age range. In 2010, we served a total of 65 children. We offered a rich program and a vital sense of *agape* throughout both weeks of camp for 7-11 year olds. As many of our campers have outgrown the program that we are best suited to offer, we provided full camperships for nine older children to attend camp programs at Covenant Hills in music, art, drama, self-governance, and outdoor exploration.

We strengthened the Camp Agape organization by:

- enlarging our board
- forming formal community partnerships
- broadening our donor base
- expanding the recruitment and training of volunteer staff

In 2011, we hope to serve 80 children with the added fruits of all that we have learned.



★ *“At camp I can be just me. The real me.”* ★  
 ★ a three year camper ★



## Our Campers Said:

### BEST MEMORIES:

- Meeting people and New Friends
- Campfires
- Fishing and Swimming
- Canoeing–tipping the canoe
- Archery
- Singing
- Camping out under the stars
- Water balloon fight
- Helping with soup kitchen

### WHAT CAMP MEANT TO YOU:

- It meant a lot to meet other kids that were going through the same things. (said by many)
- Lots of activities I wouldn't have done if I hadn't gone
- Getting to know God better
- Praying more and forgiving others



## Bill and Liz 2011 Camp Directors



We are thrilled to announce that Bill Backhaus and Liz Charron will be co-directors for both weeks of camp in 2011. They come to us with years of leadership on the Camp Agape and Covenant Hills staff. After receiving their undergraduate degrees,

they have spent the last 8 months on a mission trip teaching at the Jubilee School, an orphanage in Kenya. May God bless their work and their travel. Shown here, Bill is singing at camp “What Can Make a Hippopotamus Smile” and Liz teaches in Kenya.



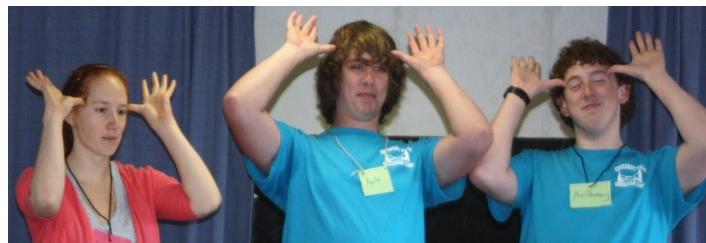
# Camp Reunion-What A Blast

As the snow-banks receded in early April, close to 40 campers gathered for the first ever Camp Agape Reunion at All Saints Church in South Burlington. They were treated to surprise visits by magician Darren Haines and by three faithful and much-loved Covenant Hills counselors—Lauren, Anthony, and Kyle. They played broomball, painted the snow, made cookies, ate pizza, and shared God’s presence with each other in the sanctuary. They re-connected with old friends and made new ones. Most importantly, they deepened their sense of being members of a community committed to love

and acceptance, where all are valued and respected. Heard on the way home: “I can’t wait for camp this year.”



*Referee Tom Whitney puts the ball in play.*



*Lauren, Kyle and Anthony sing about “A Moose Named Fred”*

**PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

- Prisoners
- Children
- Caregivers
- Camp Staff
- Camp Board

## 2010 Financial Summary

**EXPENSES**

Covenant Hills contract (facilities, meals, staff).....\$31,280  
 Stipends to expand staff.....\$1380  
 Camper gear, supplies.....\$4587  
 Program Coordinator.....\$5662  
 Graduate Campers(9).....\$3035  
 Board Insurance, mailings.....\$1363  
 Total Expense.....\$47,307

**IN KIND DONATIONS**

Handmade Quilts.....\$15,200  
 Donated Supplies, storage, printing and mailing.....\$6,700  
 Volunteer Hours @\$10/Hr..\$28,470  
 Total In Kind Donated.....\$50,370



**REVENUES**

Individual Donors (81).....\$24,490  
 Churches (43).....\$18,522  
 VT Permanent Fund.....\$10,000  
 Service Clubs.....\$1,275  
 Prisoner Groups.....\$425  
 Total Revenues.....\$54,712

## Thank You

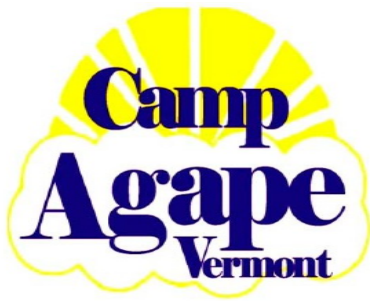
- ◇ To all who have made quilts for our campers. We have enough in stock for 2011.
- ◇ Robert Grist for his six years of magnificent stewardship.
- ◇ All of the volunteer drivers who transport kids to camp.

- ◇ Those who gather toiletries and stuff backpacks.
- ◇ The magician, fishermen, storytellers, music-makers, and drummers who visit camp.

- ◇ **Generous Businesses:**  
 Allen Lumber, Bob’s Camera Shop, Boulevard Gardens, Gadue’s Dry Cleaners, Hannon Home Center, L. Brown and Sons, Printers, Waterbury TruValue Hardware.
- ◇ John Sohlstrom, who prepared 80 birdhouse kits.

And to all of YOU—stalwart volunteers and amazingly generous donors.

**THANK YOU !**



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802-862-4174  
802-885-5775

**Please  
VOLUNTEER**

*Please DONATE*

Email: [campagapevermont@yahoo.com](mailto:campagapevermont@yahoo.com)

An ecumenical ministry of:

The New England Conference of The United Methodist Church

The Episcopal Diocese of Vermont

The Vermont Conference of The United Church of Christ

## What Can You Do ?

-Do you have a special skill or activity to share with campers?

-Can you spend a week being a friend and mentor at camp?

-Can you gather good new or nearly new books for our campers?

-Can you organize your church to contribute funds or supplies?

-Can you come help with fishing or carpentry times?

-Do you have legal, organizational, or fund-raising talent to share with the board?

Call or email today. We need you.

- ◆ VOLUNTEER
- ◆ DONATE
- ◆ PRAY

***“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.”***

Desmond Tutu.



Visit our website:

[www.campagapevermont.org](http://www.campagapevermont.org)