

# Newsletter

Volume 8

July 2015

## It's Our 10th Anniversary!

### 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 Vermont children who have experienced the incarceration of a parent or caregiver



*A mountaintop experience at Covenant Hills Christian Camp*

**This will be our tenth summer of living the miracle of Camp Agape. It is a miracle that each year since 2006:**

- ◆ Our campers have agreed to come.
- ◆ Their families have agreed to send them.
- ◆ Our organizing team has made it happen
- ◆ Our volunteers have given another week.
- ◆ Our donors have given the resources.

**But the most amazing miracle of all is the experience of God's love in and through Camp Agape**

### 2015 Camp Dates

**Ages 8-11: Aug 9-14**  
**At Bethany Birches Camp, Plymouth, VT**

**Ages 12-13: July 12-17**  
**At Covenant Hills Camp, Cabot, VT**

**Ages 13-15: July 26-31**  
**At Siskin-Coutts Camp, Derby, VT**

## Big Changes for our 10th Summer

For nine summers, Camp Agape has been wonderfully hosted by the Covenant Hills Christian Camp (CHCC) in Cabot, VT. CHCC will be suspending its camping program after a reduced season this summer. They were not able to offer the staffing that is needed to safely host the program for our 40 youngest campers. The Camp Agape Board decided to move the program to the Bethany Birches Camp in Plymouth, VT, who has welcomed us enthusiastically with a mission that is completely aligned with ours. Thank you, to both camps!



Check out: [www.bethanybirches.org](http://www.bethanybirches.org)

# Statistics to Think About

- \* 1 in 17 children in VT (6% of all children from birth to 18 years) experiences a parent's incarceration.
- \* On any given day, 1600 VT children have a parent in prison.
- \* Over the course of a year, parental incarceration affects 6000 VT children.
- \* 57.8% of VT inmates experienced the incarceration of a parent or loved one when they were a child.

*From Report to the VT Legislature on Act 168, submitted January, 2015 by the VT Agency of Human Services*



## These Are Our Children

Parental incarceration is different than other forms of absence of a parent. There is an unshakeable cloud of stigma and shame that accompanies the child through no fault of their own. They don't have opportunities to talk about it. Children often feel that they caused it. Most often, they struggle to balance their anger and sense of abandonment with their continuing love for the special person that is their parent. Their lives are disrupted, chaotic, often complicated by poverty and ongoing trauma. They are more likely than their peers to have anxiety, depression, PTSD, ADHD, and serious behavioral challenges. It is not hard to see why they have a 75% likelihood of being incarcerated someday themselves.



## Got Outcomes?

We have been doing this for ten years. Can we say that we have evidence based outcomes? Does what we do actually work? Last year, we had three former campers successfully complete "Advanced Leadership Training" and become Jr Counselors. We have former campers on the honor roll and graduating from high school with college credits under their belt. We also have at least two former campers in jail. Mother Teresa claimed: "We are not called to be successful, but faithful." We are reading the middle of the story. We often don't know what came before, and we certainly don't know how it turns out. Father Gregory Boyle says in his book Tattoos on the Heart: "Salivating for success keeps you from



being faithful, keeps you from truly seeing whoever's in front of you...If you surrender your need for results and outcomes, success becomes God's business. I find it hard enough to just be faithful". So we will continue to play our part in the story, and with God's help, we will be an open channel of the love of God for these children.

# Our Summer Programs Start Soon!

Last year, we served 63 children in our camping programs. This summer, we are planning for the same number. We hope to have 40 children, ages 8-11, come discover all that Bethany Birches has to offer, including a 125 foot waterslide down the hillside and into the pond! We will continue to encourage reading, practice mindfulness,

and sing and talk about God's love for us all. We will be having two groups for "Older Kids" this year. We have registered ten 13-15 year olds. They have a combined history of 51 years of coming to Camp Agape! They are growing up with the knowledge that *agape*, unconditional love and acceptance, is always there for them.



*Did you see that?*

## Camp Changes Cause 17% Increase in 2015 Budget

The decision to move our program to the Bethany Birches Camp was made with care through a prayerful process, listening and yielding to the Spirit as we discerned its movement. Camps everywhere are struggling to remain financially sustainable. Our former home, the Covenant Hills Christian Camp, had valiantly not raised its fees in over seven years

in an effort to keep camp affordable. Finding a new camp home meant a significant rise in camp fees, no matter where we looked. Our top priorities were the safety of the children in our care, and living into our mission. We believe that Bethany Birches will enable us to fulfill these goals. The budget increase is due to increased camp fees, transportation, and equipment costs, but we feel it is well worth it.



*Older campers taking meal orders at the Christ Church Full Ladle Soup Kitchen in Montpelier*

## 2014 Financial Summary and 2015 Budget

### 2014 EXPENSES

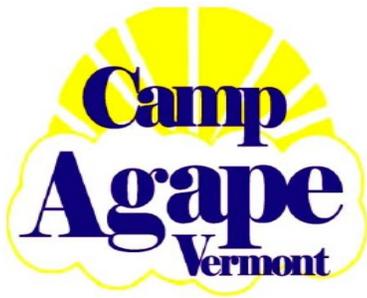
Covenant Hills contract (facilities, meals, staff).....	\$16,320
Stipends to expand staff.....	\$2,350
Camper gear, supplies.....	\$2,683
Graduate Campers(19).....	\$9,190
Printing, Mailing, Insurance..	\$3,714
Total Expense.....	\$34,257

### 2014 REVENUES

Individual Donors .....	\$13,447
Congregations.....	\$15,360
Fanny Allen Corporation.....	\$6,000
Family Foundation (4).....	\$7,100
Other.....	\$1,500
Total Revenues.....	\$43,407

### BUDGET for 2015

Bethany Birches contract (facilities, meals, staff).....	\$19,440
Stipends to expand staff.....	\$1,500
Camper gear, supplies.....	\$4,000
Graduate Campers.....	\$9,000
Printing, Mailing, Insurance.....	\$4,000
Transportation.....	\$2,000
Total.....	\$39,940



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**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

## Camp Agape Needs YOU!

### Camp Registrar's Position is Open

This volunteer "job" can be done in the comfort of your home. All you need is:

- a passion for Camp Agape
- computer skills
- and a willingness to make follow-up phone calls

A brief outline of what you'll do:

1. Update forms each year.
2. Mail registration packets to campers as requests are made.

3. Make follow-up phone calls if packets are not returned.

4. Have ongoing communications with the Camp Agape Board.

Everything will be explained in detail and you will receive 2015 documents on a flash drive to use for 2016.

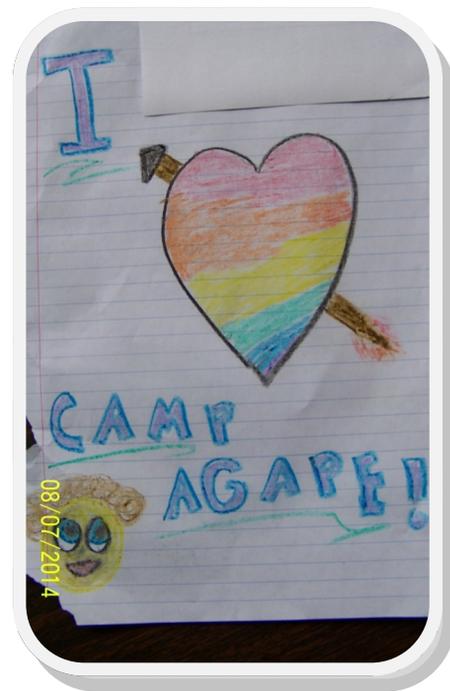
Please don't hesitate to contact me if you are interested.

Carol Whitney

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Visit our website:

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



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