



newsletter

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

Does Camp Agape Change Lives?

Karen Lawsing one of the members of the Organizing Team, was talking with a parole officer from the Department of Corrections a few weeks ago and she heard this story.

The eight-year-old daughter of a woman with a serious problem of drug addiction who has been in and out of prison for a number of years attended Camp Agape last summer – her first camp experience. She returned home to her grandmother who is taking care of her and could talk of nothing else but the wonderful time she had in camp. The little girl, "Angie," continues to have contact and visitation from her mother.



Beach Construction at Camp Agape

Mom is currently in an alternative treatment program. For the first time, she is working her program and is drug free.

What brought about these changes? Why now and after all this time and heart-

ache? Perhaps, the change started in the relationship with her daughter. No longer are they mired in shame, guilt and abandonment. The little girl now brings joy and happiness. Mom can see hope for herself and her daughter. The world is full of opportunity when you have hope.

Books, Books and More Books

Campers enjoy selecting books from the book table: to read during rest period, to take home for themselves and, yes, to take home for their younger siblings. Both chapter books and picture books are in great demand. Last

year the children selected more than 500 books which had been donated from various sources.

This year, volunteers are helping collect books: David Brown, 802-985-5871;

Kathy Chase, 802-864-7324.

Please call one of them if you have age-appropriate (7 to 11) chapter or picture books *in good condition*.

Thank you!

Volume 1, Issue 1

Spring, 2008

2008 Camping Schedule

Covenant Hills Christian Camp

Cabot, Vermont

Session 1—August 10-15

Session 2— August 17-22

How can you help?

- Remember to pray for prisoners, their children, camp counselors and staff.
- Give a scholarship—or a partial one—using the enclosed envelope.
- Volunteer your time at camp or during the year
- Check out our website, www.campagapevermont.org

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Can We Come Back Next Year?

The answer is a resounding ‘Yes!’ For a number of the children, this will be their third year. Even though there are an estimated 4500 Vermont children who have experienced their parent’s incarceration, we believe at Camp Agape that the children should return year after year so that their lives will be enriched and their memories strengthened.

What happens when a child grows beyond the 7 to 11 age limit?

Last year we had a few children who were 12 and 13 so we offered a special program during the day for them. The only requirement was that they

had attended camp the previous year. We’re doing the same thing in 2008 during the second week of camp. We are fortunate to have some very experienced counselors who want to work with these children.

What will happen when a child reaches 14 or 15?

Good question! We will offer scholarships for children who want to go to some other camp. In addition, we know we need to explore the possibility of offering some sort of wilderness or adventure camp for older children since these years are even more difficult and perilous. And it would be

great to have older children return as counselors-in-training. Nothing has been decided at this time.

What happens if a child has to be sent home before the end of camp?

We assure the child that a place has been reserved for him/her for next year. One little boy last year, as he was being driven home when the children were enjoying a water carnival and sliding down a hill on plastic sheets coated with suds, asked “Can we do that the first day next year?” His mother has already signed him up for 2008.

How Much Does Camp Agape Cost?

Nothing! It’s free. For every single camper. But obviously it costs money to send 70 to 80 campers to camp for a week. Covenant Hills Christian Camp charges Camp Agape \$340 for each camper. That also covers the cost of food for the 22-plus volunteers who serve each week.

In addition, every camper receives a free sleeping bag, backpack with flashlight and lots of other camping gear, a cap, T-

shirt, ‘hoodie’ sweatshirt, bible, beach towel and back-to-school supplies. These items amount to at least \$100 per camper since we want to provide every camper with identical gifts. What with administrative costs such as registration packets, mailings, etc., we figure a camper scholarship amounts to \$500 or \$100 a day.

How much does Camp Agape Cost? In money: about \$45,000 for 2008. That’s a little more than what it costs the State of

A camper scholarship amounts to \$500 a week or \$100 a day.

Vermont to keep one person in prison for a year.

How much does Camp Agape cost? In volunteer time and love: priceless.

Trinity Church, Shelburne Youth Group Give A Carwash

Sunday, June first, saw the youth of Trinity Episcopal Church, along with several dads, offering a carwash for Camp Agape during the Sunday services. Advertised as an opportunity for “cleansing your souls while cleaning your car,” the hoses and scrubbers raised \$600 from parishioners and passersby.

Camp brochures were handed out; one man, driving into Burlington for errands, upon return had his car washed and gave \$35—all he had in his pocket! Thank you, good people of Trinity for working at and supporting Camp Agape. Well done!

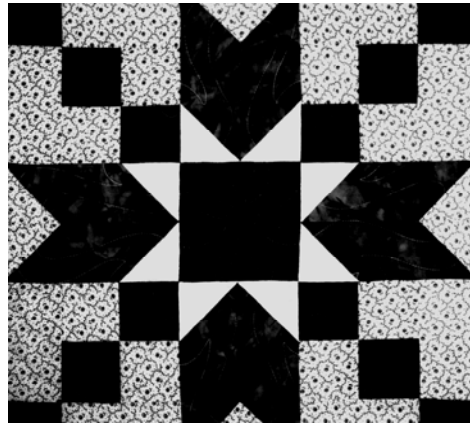


Clean Cars in Shelburne Help Support The Soapy Slip and Slide in Cabot.



Quilts Galore

Many of you have heard the story about last year's quilts. Some of you have not. Last year, when Sharon Osborn of Waterford, Vermont heard about Camp Agape she decided she wanted to help out. Sharon is a quilter—but that's putting it mildly. Sharon is a quilter with a mission: to provide every Camp Agape camper with her or his own quilt. Sharon got busy contacting her quilting friends in Vermont, Ohio, West Virginia, North Carolina and other places. The result? Eighty-five gorgeous, full-size, hand-made quilts!



Agape Design

The counselors had a wonderful time selecting just the right quilt for each child. And that was nothing compared to the peals of delight when the campers returned to their cabins after the last night's campfire and discovered their own, personal quilts folded up neatly on their bunks.

Guess what? The quilting project is going ahead full steam this year and there will be quilts for everybody again. Thank you, Sharon and all your partners.

What's New at Camp This Year?

Every year, as more and more people hear about Camp Agape and want to be part of it, new activities are added. In 2007, Darren Haynes, club football coach at UVM, showed the campers and staff how to do magic tricks; a woman with a floor loom taught children how to weave; some good folk from Trout Unlimited brought fishing rods so the children could have fun fishing.

women will again provide help as the children fish for 'brookies' in the camp pond.



Brookies Unlimited

In addition, two people who are experienced jewelry makers will be teaching the children that craft. And, Roni Lesage, from St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Colchester, will not only be helping the children make music with all sorts of weird and wonderful instruments but also will provide mikes and music for a karaoke session.



This year Darren the magician will be back for both weeks.



2x the Looms in 08



Trout Unlimited Volunteers

This year, Darren the magician will be back for both weeks; the weaver lady will join us with several friends and bring *two* looms; fishermen and

When you use the enclosed envelope, please make out your check to 'Diocese of Vermont' with a memo notation 'Camp Agape'.

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Camp Agape Vermont
P.O. Box 596
Charlotte, VT
05445

Phone: 802-425-5533
802-862-4174
802-878-2778

E-mail: campagapevermont@yahoo.com

Web www.campagapevermont.org



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

My! How We've Grown!

It's hard to believe that just two years ago at this time we were wondering if we would have enough campers and staff to open our first Camp Agape session. Now, in 2008, having had 28 campers in 2006 and 49 last year, we are planning for 70 to 80 campers this summer. More than 60% of last year's campers have already sent in their applications for this year. Many new registrations have come in as well.

But that's not the only way we have grown. Here are some others:

We have a website:

www.campagapevermont.org. You can download this year's two brochures, one for volunteers, the other for campers. We still have more work to do to establish links with other organizations – but it's a beginning and there are great pictures!

We have a part-time coordinator: David Murphy, the retired pastor of Shelburne United Methodist Church and co-director with his wife, Judy, of the 2006 camp, came on board three months ago to help us develop a stronger organization. He is being funded through the generosity of an anonymous donor and has already created an extensive database.

We are incorporated: Our official name is Camp Agape Vermont, Inc. It will take us at least a year to get tax-exempt status from the I.R.S. In the meantime, thanks to the cooperation of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, we have worked out financial arrangements so that gifts for the Camp can be made out to the Diocese with a memo notation, 'Camp Agape.'

PowerPoint Presentation: Because of the skills of Mike Lawrence and some great photographs we have developed a DVD which has proved very effective in service

clubs, church groups, governmental and non-profit agencies involved with the children of the incarcerated. It tells a compelling story and helps to recruit campers and volunteers as well as raise money. Please call Con Quinby at 802-862-4174 to schedule a presentation.

Thank You!

To all of you who have already given to Camp Agape in 2008. We are deeply grateful for your generosity and promise you that your gifts will be a great blessing for all the children. Children are so thrilled when a parent or caregiver calls for information and we can promise them, "Yes, we have a place for you!"