

Newsletter

Volume 11

June 2017

2017 Registrations Up 30%

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



Vignettes from counselors:

Two girls had a flare-up. Girl A approached Girl B as she was sitting watching the game.

- Girl A: "I'm sorry. I have anger issues."
- Girl B: "I have anger issues too."
- Girl A: "Do you have PTSD?"
- Girl B: "What's that?"
- Girl A: "It's the only kind I know."

Sitting with a boy one to one while he cooled down from a conflict –he said he is the oldest in his family of 5 siblings, but they are rarely altogether. He lives with one brother, his Mom and her boyfriend. His biological father lived with them for two months when he was a baby before going to jail. He doesn't know him, but would like to. Then he asked: "What's a biological father?"

Yes! It's true! We can't explain it, but we are very happy. Last year, we served 55 children. This year, we have 71 children interested in coming to camp. If they all register, we will have a 30% increase over last year. But...it raises the bar for our fundraising by \$6,000!

Please Do What You Can!

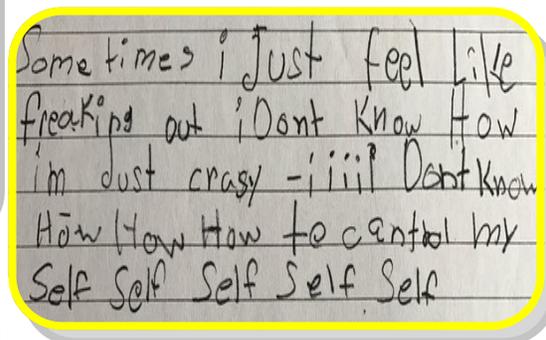
2017 Camp Dates

Ages 8-11: Aug 6-11

Ages 12-14: July 9-14
(returning campers only)

Ages 14-17: July 16-21
(returning campers only)

**All camps held at:
Bethany Birches
Camp, Plymouth, VT**



Check out: www.bethanybirches.org

Volunteers Make Camp Agape Work—THANK YOU !

For several years, I volunteered as relief counselor, swimming, canoeing and building birdhouses with the campers. I relieved the cabin counselors for a spell so that they could take a shower, and a deep breath. Their night in the primitive cabins with the campers did not always translate into one of deep, restful sleep. I so admired those good and hearty souls, who out of devotion to the mission of Camp Agape and its young campers, braved middle of the night bathroom runs, homesick campers, skittering mice, and nothing resembling a Serta for a mattress. I was able to drive home to Middlesex and my own bed every night!!

When Camp Agape moved its program to Bethany Birches in Plymouth two years ago, I volunteered for what seemed like an unappealing job – a bus chaperone. Chris Kapsalis and I rode the bumpy school bus on winding roads with the campers to Bethany Birches, and then back home on the empty bus, a round trip of 140 miles. A week later, we rode the empty bus back to camp and came home on the bus filled with campers, talking excitedly about their past week.

It turned out to be surprisingly rewarding.

Volunteering on the bus offered the chance to interact with campers in another way, talking with them about their hopes for the week ahead. Some were old hands and piled into seats in the back of the bus with friends they had not seen since the summer before. Others were experiencing overnight camp for the first time, and looked timidly for seats. One of them was an eight year old girl in brand new neon pink crocs with a top and shorts to match. She was sitting alone, reluctant to talk with anyone at first. Then she began talking tearfully, concerned about how her mother would do without her, and worried that the girls in her cabin group would not be nice to her. Upon arrival, I gave her a hug, offered words of encouragement and told her I'd be on the bus next Friday to pick her up. It took some convincing to get her off the bus. Thing is, when we arrived at the end of the week, she was crying with a newly-made group of friends because they had to say good-bye – until next summer. For me, that, and other stories of campers discovering their strengths during the week made the hours rattling on the bus worthwhile.

Linda Prescott, Board Member



2016 Financial Summary and 2017 Budget

2016 EXPENSES

Younger Campers (29).....	\$16,200
Older Campers (26).....	\$10,650
Stipends to expand staff.....	\$1600
Camper gear, supplies.....	\$3962
Printing, Mailing, Insurance..	\$3305
Camper Transportation.....	\$1220
Total Expense.....	\$36,937

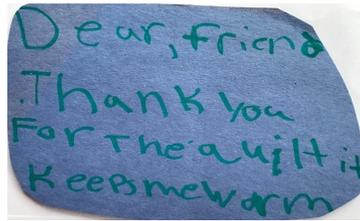
2016 REVENUES

Individual Donors	\$18,903
Congregations.....	\$11,341
Fanny Allen Corporation.....	\$7,500
Total Revenues.....	\$37,744

BUDGET for 2017

Total Camp Tuition (74 campers).....	\$32,080
Stipends to expand staff.....	\$2000
Camper gear, supplies.....	\$4,000
Printing, Mailing, Insurance.....	\$3500
Transportation.....	\$1,500
Total.....	\$43,080

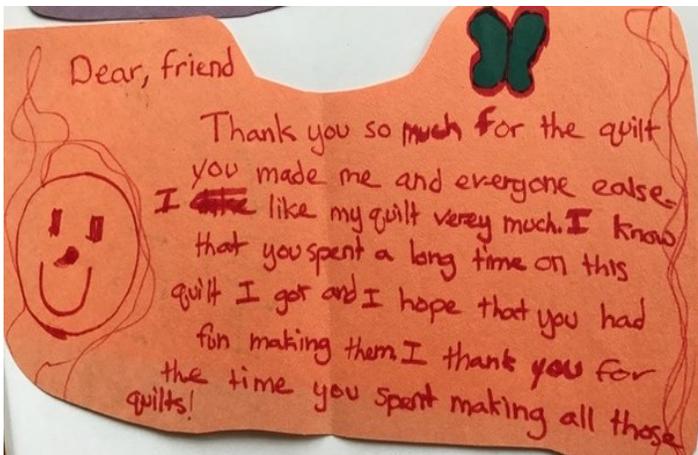
THANK YOU! To Our Volunteer Quilt-makers



Ever since Camp Agape started in 2006, Sharon Osborn has made sure that every young camper has a warm and colorful handmade quilt to snuggle up with in their cabin beds, and even take home as a memory of their week at camp. In twelve years of camp, over 500 quilts have been sewn by a loyal cadre of volunteer quilters throughout Vermont and even New Hampshire.

Sharon, who lives in Topsham, first heard of the camp quilt idea from someone she met on a post-Katrina work trip in Biloxi, Mississippi. When she got home, she sent a letter to several Vermont newspapers calling for volunteer quilters to create and donate quilts for the children of Camp Agape. "That's all it took. Never did another bit of marketing. Word of mouth did it," says Sharon, who was a volunteer counselor the first year Camp Agape began, which she says, "was back in the dark ages."

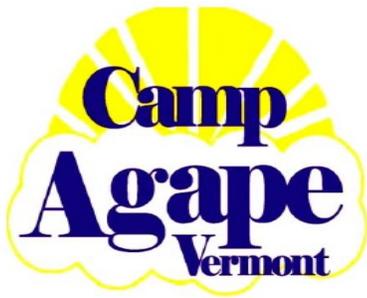
CA board member Chris Kapsalis reports that when he is driving kids to camp, he hears from the backseat the experienced campers telling the new ones about the great quilts they will be receiving and taking home with them. Campers receive new quilts every year, until they join the Older Kids Program at age 12. Some of the campers who return year after year have a collection of them. Many say they hang them on their bedroom walls, reminding them of happy days at camp.



Every year after the holidays, Sharon begins her round of calls to some 30 quilters on her list to start sewing their magic into quilts for Camp Agape. She says, "I have no trouble getting quilters," who range from an 87 year-old woman from Hanover, NH and her niece who lives in the mid-west to other avid quilt-makers closer by.

"No matter the color or design, there is always the right quilt to match a kid," Sharon says. Peanuts-themed quilts are always a sure bet, but there are also quilts sporting nature, cartoon and sports themes, and of course, plenty of the ever-popular equine quilts – everything to suit a young camper's interest.





P.O. Box 8283
Essex, VT 05451

Phone: 802-793-4234
802-439-5773
802-985-3028

**Please
VOLUNTEER**

Please DONATE

Email: 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

With generous assistance from the Fanny Allen Foundation

Camping Plans for 2017

This summer, all of our camp sessions will take place at the Bethany Birches Camp in Plymouth, VT.

8-11 year old Camp Agape ~ Sunday, August 6 to Friday, Aug 11

We will be the only program at Bethany Birches that week. We hope to bring 44 campers and up to 19 volunteers. Special programs will include visits from CLiF, the VT weavers, and therapy dogs.

12-14 year old Older Kids ~ Sunday, July 9 to Friday, July 14

Our 20 middle school Older Kids will be housed together in their own shelters, cooking and eating their meals together, but will participate in the activities of the full Bethany Birches middle school camping program.

14-17 year old Older Kids ~ Sunday, July 16 to Friday, July 21

Our 8 high-schoolers have been camping together for years now. They will have their own shelters and join the full Bethany Birches program.



- ◆ VOLUNTEER
- ◆ DONATE
- ◆ PRAY

Visit our website:

www.campagapevermont.org