

March 2010 National Newsletter

Camp Fire USA Program Quality Assessment Launched

The Camp Fire USA National Office is collaborating with the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. This collaboration has produced new Camp Fire program standards and assessment tools. These tools will be used to assess all Camp Fire programs. This is exciting news for Camp Fire!

Each Camp Fire USA council will be expected to have a program administrator participate in the training and complete program quality assessments. The national office is funding the research, development, and fees for the annual use of the Camp Fire USA Program Quality Assessment (CFPQA) tools. Each council will receive materials to assess up to five program sites between March and August 2010.



Next Steps for Camp Fire USA Program Quality Assessment

- 1. Attend the Welcome Webinar. Each council is expected to have a program administrator participate in the Welcome Webinar: Introduction and Self-Assessment—Register NOW!
 - Choose one date and register at www.cypq.org/CampFireUSA.
 - Remaining Webinar dates: Monday, March 8 at 2 p.m. CST Wednesday, March 10 at 11 a.m. CST
- 2. Order materials. Go to the Camp Fire USA Online Store and order your council's CFPQA Box Set (item # D28100). (One set free!) And order the Camp Fire USA National Program Quality Administration Manual (item #D28000). (One copy free!) Those attending the GROW Council have received their free Program Administration Manual.
- 3. Select your team. Choose an assessment team to complete the self-assessment process at each program site. The assessment team should include some of the staff or volunteers from the program site.
- 4. Attend training. Have at least one person on the assessment team take the online CFPQA Intro and Basics Training Courses. The training at the GROW Conference included the Basics Training Course. Train the rest of the assessment team by using the Intro Course or Crash Course.
- 5. Collect the Data. Complete self-assessments on up to five program sites by August 2010.
- 6. **Have a Scoring Meeting**. Gather each team together to analyze the data, and score the program. The discussion is more important than the actual score. Using the Scores Reporter, send the data to the Weikart Center.
- 7. Make an Improvement Plan. Register for and participate in one of the Planning with Data Webinars, scheduled for May and September. The information from this Webinar will help you make a plan for program quality improvement.

If questions, please contact DD Gass, national director of program services, at dd.gass@campfireusa.org or Connie Coutellier, national training director, at connie.coutellier@campfireusa.org.

Camp Fire USA offers quality programs reflective of best practices in four Core Program Areas because Camp Fire USA...

Cares



Orange County Special Sitters.

Camps



Alaska Council canoeists.

Contributes



SW Louisiana Council volunteers.

Connects



Central Ohio club members



Camp Sebago-Wohelo in 1913 with

the first Blue Birds.

Hanny 100th Birthday Camp Fire USA!

Camp Fire Girls was founded in 1910 by Luther Gulick, M.D., and his wife, Charlotte, as the first nonsectarian organization for girls in the United States. Charlotte introduced innovative programs for girls at the family's camp on the shore of Lake Sebago. She named the camp "Wohelo," a combination of the words "work," "health," and "love," and devised an upright triangular logo to represent these three words. March 17 is



Sunshine Council teens present a birthday cake to an area alum.

known as Founder's Day. The first meetings of Camp Fire Girls were held in Vermont. The name "Camp Fire" was chosen because campfires were the origin of the first communities and domestic life. In 1975, membership was expanded to include boys.

Celebrating Absolutely Incredible Kid Day®—March 18, 2010

Absolutely Incredible Kid Day® (AIKD) is Camp Fire USA's call to action asking adults to write letters of love, encouragement, and inspiration to children. This highly regarded campaign presents a strong national image of Camp Fire and increases awareness of the organization. As Camp Fire councils throughout the country plan mid-March events celebrating AIKD, they can refer to the Absolutely Incredible Kid Day® How to Guide. This resource, which is filled with great ideas, is available on the Camp Fire Compass.

By Valerie Holten



Lots of Ideas for AIKD Events—Let's Connect on Facebook

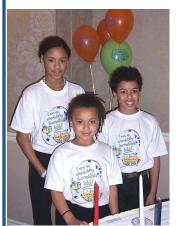
New this year, AIKD now has its own Facebook fan page at http://www.facebook.com/ AbsolutelyIncredibleKidDay. This fan page already has hundreds of friends! It's the perfect place to share council successes, request help, and exchange ideas. In addition, many friends are sharing their incredible kids' stories.

An AIKD event can be as simple as coordinating a letter-writing campaign from parents and adult caregivers to kids in your after-school programs. Anonymous letter writing also works. Senior citizens particularly like to share their life lessons with children. A program with a local senior center may have long-term mentoring opportunities.

Larger events include involving corporations or service fraternities and sororities, such as Alpha Phi Omega or Gamma Phi Beta, Last year Heart of Oklahoma Council partnered with both Gamma Phi Beta and the Incredible Pizza Company. Also last year, Balcones Council hosted a night at the Austin Children's Museum, during which participants could explore all the great things on display. The event also offered Camp Fire USA booths, letter-writing activities for AIKD, and a Camp Fire birthday party. Now that's a celebration!

Media Attention for a Great Event

One of the major benefits of AIKD is the publicity that can be generated for Camp Fire USA. And combining AIKD with Camp Fire's Centennial celebration is a story that only comes around every 100 years.



Local good-will news stories work well. Share a heartfelt story with the press, and don't forget to invite the media to see AIKD in action. Media tips can be found in the last several chapters of the How to Guide. One of my favorite newspaper articles, which appeared in the Tulsa World last year, had a loving mother-daughter story and food (Krispy Kreme donuts)—a winning combination. Read the article at http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx? subjectid=11&articleid=20090318 19 A2 Trishi730728.

A Great Example of AIKD's Impact

Have you ever wondered about the importance of AIKD? Then read on. . . . Orca Council has an ongoing partnership with Mary Bridge Children's Hospital and Health Center. Located in Tacoma, Washington, it is the only pediatric hospital in southwest Washington that specializes in advanced health care for children. Prior to AIKD, Orca Council distributes AIKD posters and information throughout the clinic. On AIKD, council volunteers set up tables; stock them with stationary, pens, and stickers; and engage hospital employees and visitors in a writing campaign. Children in hospitals need a special kind of love—they are absolutely incredible

kids. So, as we work together to celebrate AIKD, let's remember that our program touches—and changes—lives. If council staff need help with an AIKD event, e-mail kidday@campfireusa.org.

Camp Fire USA Centennial Youth Project

The Camp Fire USA Centennial Youth Project was designed to encourage participants in Camp Fire (such as those in clubs, after-school programs, camp programs, and leadership programs) to celebrate the Centennial throughout the year. Through this project, youth will learn about Camp Fire's heritage and plan for the future. Although this project was designed for youth, all Camp Fire participants (youth and adults) and their families and all Camp Fire alumni can earn this national project recognition. Participants will complete activity requirements during the Centennial Celebration—from October 1, 2009, through December 31, 2010. The requirements can be found on the Camp Fire Compass.

Centennial Campfires Update

Plans are well underway for the July 31, 2010, Centennial Campfires. Applications have been received from 42 councils. In March the program agenda will be finalized. Several councils have shared their plans.

- Illinois Prairie Council, due to a large jurisdiction, will be holding two Centennial Campfires.
 (1) The council has partnered with a nearby Bass Pro Shop that has a fire circle, which will serve as one campfire location. It will provide great visibility and a more public venue.
 (2) Northern Chicago is home to a 50-year-old Camp Fire Girls fountain that has been newly refurbished. This will be the site of the second Campfire.
- Northern Star Council will hold its Centennial Campfire in conjunction with a community picnic
 at a local park. The fire department has agreed to be involved for the lighting of the fire. The
 council may partner with Boy Scouts of America and Fargo Parks (both also turning 100) along with a community
 foundation that is celebrating its 50th anniversary.
- Orange County Council will partner with Boy Scouts of America, which is holding a Centennial jamboree on the same day.
- Southwest Louisiana Council will hold a full-day event at its camp. In addition to the Centennial Campfire, there will be
 a picnic, bands, an alumni display, and games. Above the campfire pyre, there will be a wooden Camp Fire USA logo,
 which will be the last thing to burn. The mayor, a senator, and a state representative will be involved. Through the
 newspaper, alumni will be invited to send their camp memories to the council, which will place them in the camp dining
 lodge.
- Green Country Council will hold its Centennial Campfire on the edge of the river near a new shopping and entertainment district. This will provide wider community involvement than if the event were to be held at the council's camp. A band will perform old Camp Fire USA songs, such as Sing around the Campfire. The shopping district restaurants will be asked to provide coupons that can be offered to the public online, which will help track participants.
- Central Oregon Council is partnering with a local historical museum that is hosting a heritage day. The day will end with the Centennial Campfire lighting.
- Gulf Wind Council is planning to work with music stores to hold a Battle of the Bands. Bands will submit videos, and ten will be selected. The bands will then sell tickets. The Battle of the Bands will either be a day-long event leading up to the campfire lighting or commence afterwards.
- West Michigan Council is looking into partnering with the Women's Historical Society, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary too. In addition, the council is researching whether there are other local organizations are turning 100.
- Iowana Council will hold a Centennial Campfire at its camp. There will be seven fires going—one representing each decade. Members will make a quilt out of Camp Fire USA T-shirts and raffle it. Other members will make Camp Fire uniforms for Barbie dolls and display them.
- Southeast Michigan Council will create a time capsule. Empty water bottles will be given out ahead of time to people affiliated with the council (such as board president, campers, and alumni). Recipients will put into their bottles items representing Camp Fire USA today. The bottles will then go into the time capsule, which will be buried, and the site will be clearly marked, along with a notice to not open for 20 years.

Centennial Campfire conference calls are held the second Wednesday of each month at 1 PM CST. For more information about the plans or how to join the calls, please contact Connie Coutellier at connie.coutellier@campfireusa.org or call 800 760 5097.



Sign Up on the National Alumni Registry

Camp Fire USA is 100 years old! Be sure to encourage all alumni and current members to sign up on the national Alumni Registry. Visit http://www.campfireusa.org/Connect_with_Fellow_alumi.aspx to register.



Highlight Centennial Birthday Events

The Camp Fire USA Centennial is a reason to celebrate! Events are being planned by council staff across the country. Be sure to post or link council celebrations on the Camp Fire USA national social networking sites, such as Facebook. And be sure to visit the national social networking sites often, to see what others have posted. The national sites can be found from links on the national website homepage, www.campfireusa.org.

One example of a recent story: Central Coast Council presented a birthday cake to their mayor. The picture was posted on the newspaper Flickr site and the Camp Fire USA notification came through a Google alert.

Technology helps us tell our story! This is an exciting time!

New Program Recognition Items Available

The Camp Fire USA Online Store has new recognition items available for upcoming program events. The new items include the Centennial Birthday Emblem, the Centennial Adventure Camp emblem and the Centennial Youth Project pin. Visit the Camp Fire Online Store to view all of the new items.



Bon Jovi Leads Service Initiative

Jon Bon Jovi has teamed up with the Corporation for National and Community Service to take the United We Serve initiative across the country. Bon Jovi filmed two videos —a public service announcement and a concert video. Each video spread the word about President Obama's national call to service. The videos ask Americans to join together to use their passion to help tackle the nation's challenges. The concert video will be played on the U.S. portion of Bon Jovi's world tour, bringing his service message to millions of his fans. The PSA will be distributed to television stations across the country and is part of a larger United We Serve campaign to engage more Americans in service. Find out more at www.serve.gov.

National Financial Capability Challenge

The National Financial Capability Challenge is an awards program designed to increase the financial knowledge and capability of high school-aged youth throughout the United States, enabling them to take control of their financial futures. The program challenges high school teachers, after-school program staff, and other educators to teach the basics of personal finance to their students, and it rewards students, educators, schools, and states for their participation and success. The goal is to get 1 million high school students to take the Challenge, which includes a voluntary online exam, by April 9.

Please encourage educators and youth to sign up for the Challenge at http://challenge.treas.gov, by March 14. More information is available on this Website. Also, please consider taking the following steps in support of this effort.

- Send a custom message directly to educators, and people who work with them, asking them to view the video message from Education Secretary Duncan and register for the Challenge by March 14.
- Contact influential individuals who could help recruit educators to participate.
- Include a link to the National Financial Capability Challenge Website on your own site.
- Include the Challenge on the council's social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
- Talk about the Challenge during speaking engagements.
- Create additional incentives to encourage educators to participate.
- Offer instructional support to educators new to this topic. For example, link local money experts with educators.
- Download a flier about the program.
- Contact the U.S. Department of the Treasury with questions.

Teacher Toolkit Available

Once registered, educators will be shown how to access and use a Teacher Toolkit to help students prepare for the Challenge exam. Reminder: Information about the FDIC's free *Money Smart for Young Adults* curriculum is available on the Camp Fire USA Compass.

Connie's Risk Management Corner—Rules, Standards, Requirements and Risk Management By Connie Coutellier

This was Julie's third year at camp, and she told her dad that she knew she wasn't supposed to run down the path but three counselors saw her and no one said anything . . . that was until she fell and really hurt her knee. When asked if she knew better she replied, "Nobody cares; maybe they changed the rules!"

Stewart's mother came into the after-school program really steaming. Stewart had cut his eye yesterday. He had told her that Big Joe had been in the kitchen fixing a snack and there were no other staff around when Monty jumped off the table and onto him. The boy's mom said, "Your parent handbook states that you have staff supervising the children."

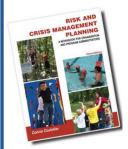
While waiting for the bus to Monkey Zoo, Opal, the staff person, was collecting permission forms. Michelle told Opal that she had forgotten her form, but that it would be okay with her parents if she went with the group. The bus was coming, so they got on anyway.

A little bend here, a little slip there . . . so what? The kids are having so much fun!

Today, youth programs in urban, rural, and suburban communities profess a belief in safety awareness and training. At the same time, in the legal climate that currently exists, virtually anybody can be sued for anything at any time. Even if an organization is insured, its resources can be tied up for a long period of time. The loss of time and the cost of defense may be substantial, even if the organization is found to be without fault. Increased knowledge and awareness of the legal ramifications of actions or non-actions, as well as a good risk management plan, can save the organization both time and money.

This environment has not, however, deterred most youth organizations from continuing to provide challenging programs for children and youth. These organizations generally have sets of policies or standards and licensing requirements or follow the standards set by accrediting bodies.

For example, a Camp Fire USA council, when receiving its charter to conduct programs under the name of Camp Fire USA, is required to operate according to established policies and to maintain the standards of Camp Fire. These policies and standards address themselves to the quality of the programs and the welfare of the children as well as to the entire operation of the council. Policies and standards are an integral part of the training and education of boards, staff, volunteers, and youth involved in the operation and the program planning, delivery, and evaluation.



Camp Fire USA's new national program standards refer to *Risk and Crisis Management Planning: A Workbook for Organizations and Program Administrators* as the national guideline to be used when operating council policies and procedures. There also are references to the "standards of the field." These are accepted as the standards of the field for that industry. In the field of camping, they are the American Camp Association standards; in the child care field, they are the standards of the National Association for Education of Young Children or state licensing requirements. For cases in which there is not an identified set of standards, an organization's practices may be compared with those of similar organizations in defining its accepted standards of care.

The new national program standards of Camp Fire USA are research-based and have been compared with best practices of the field. They are the standards with which your council is expected to comply, both by Camp Fire USA and as the accepted standards of care. The new national program standards can be found on the Camp Fire Compass, as well as in the new *Camp Fire USA National Program Quality Administration Manual*. The new manual can be ordered from the Camp Fire Online Store, or will be available to download from the Camp Fire Compass.

The new national Camp Fire USA program standards express a regard for the well-being of children. They are concerned with not only physical and mental health, safety, and sanitation, but also with creating an atmosphere of living that demonstrates concern for people. In such an environment, emotional and physical safety is inherent.





Michelle Obama Leads Campaign

Join the First Lady, Michelle Obama, in her new campaign, Let's Move!, to end childhood obesity in this generation. This is a nonpartisan effort to stop simply announcing the facts and to start making changes. Check out the Website and the partnership that is supporting her cause. Councils, youth, families, and communities will all play huge roles in this effort, so check it out, and Let's Move! http://letsmove.gov and http://www.ahealthieramerica.org.

After-School Program Resource

Scholastic's Afterschool division offers everything an after-school program director needs to run an effective, high-quality after-school program. All the materials are research-based, with a strong literacy thread. They cover all the core subject areas for grades pre-k–8, but they're fun, hands-on activities that the kids enjoy so much they don't realize they're learning. There are lesson plans, activity ideas, themed sets of books, special ELL materials, and assessment tools for the staffers. The Website was just updated, and you can now download the whole catalog and order online. There are also some nice promotions and free downloadables up at the moment. See the Website at www.scholastic.com/afterschoollearning.

Drug-Free Communities Awards

The Department of Health and Human Services is making \$18.75 million available for 150 awards of up to \$125,000 each, per year, for up to five years for organizations that qualify for its drug-free communities awards. Grantees must build on partnerships that have been in action for the past six months and that address substance abuse prevention. Deadline to apply is March 19. http://samhsa.gov/Grants/2010/SP-10-005.aspx.

Youth Board Members Sought

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is searching for a select group of young people to serve on the Youth Advisory Board (for 2010–2011). The advisory board members will roll up their sleeves for a few hours a month and participate in critical thinking, engaging conversations, good fun, new friendships, and high-profile leadership. Applicants must be between the ages of 8 and 17 when membership begins, July 2010, and live in the United States. Interested youth can visit www.empowerme2b.org for more information.

Additions to the National Staff

The Camp Fire USA National Office has welcomed some new staff members in the past few months. In the last *Resources and Reminders*, Amy Smith was introduced as the new Accounting Manager. Three additional people have joined the staff.

Valerie Holton is joining Camp Fire USA as Interim Chief Marketing Officer. She will primarily be focusing on *Absolutely Incredible Kid Day*® and the upcoming Centennial celebration. A career marketer, she has worked in both the for-profit and not-for-profit

sectors for over twenty years. Valerie lives in Chicago and mainly works from her home.

Danny Kohrs is the new Development Director of the national office and comes to Camp Fire USA from the Hartsook Companies Inc., where he was a vice president. Prior to Hartsook, he was the assistant director of development at the Salvation Army Kansas and Western Missouri Divisional Headquarters. Danny and his wife live in Kansas City. They have two grown sons and three grandchildren.

Paulette Riley returns to the Camp Fire USA

National Office as Director of Heartland Operations. Paulette has worked for the national office as Field Service Director and, prior to Camp Fire, was employed at the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation and YWCA. She also most recently Director of Program Services at the Heartland Council. Paulette and her husband live in the Kansas City area.

Key Dates, Trainings, and Conferences

Camp Fire USA 100th Birthday!

Birthday Week March 14–20, 2010



Founder's Day March 17, 2010

Absolutely Incredible Kid Day® March 18, 2010

Camp Fire USA Centennial Campfires
July 31, 2010

March

National Nutrition Month www.eatright.org

National Youth Leadership Conference March 24–27, 2010 San Jose, Calif. www.nylc.org

American Camp Association Regional Trainings

ACA Mid States Conference March 11–13, 2010 Chicago, III.

www.acamidstates.org

ACA Tri State Conference March 16–19, 2010 Atlantic City, N.J. www.aca-ny.org/tristate

ACA New England Conference March 25–27, 2010 Manchester, N.H. www.acanewengland.org

ACA Southern Cal/Hawaii Conf. April 14–17, 2010 Palm Springs, Calif. www.acasocal.org/ springconference

April

National Child Abuse Prevention Month www.preventchildabuse.org

Earth Day April 22, 2010 www.earthday.net

Global Youth Service Day April 23–25, 2010 www.gysd.org

GROW Conference!

The Camp Fire USA GROW Conference was held February 19–22, 2010, at the YMCA of the Rockies, near Estes Park, Colorado. The conference featured keynote speakers Joanna Warren Smith and Dr. Chris Thurber. The beautiful mountain venue was enhanced by the snow that fell every day of the conference. Some southern Camp Fire participants even had the joy of sledding for the first time. Sunday's keynote and Management Track breakout sessions launched the new Camp Fire Program Quality Assessment Tools.

Comments from GROW Participants:

"GROW has been so inspirational to me. It happens at the perfect time—right before I start getting really busy at camp. I go home excited and motivated for the season to come!" Pearl James, Snohomish County Council

"GROW is a wealth of information from our peers, presented in a fun and energetic way. It re-energizes me, even when I don't think I need it!" Joey Hughes, Central Coast Council

"GROW, to a first-time participant was a hugely warm welcome into the Camp Fire family. The sessions provided the insight, knowledge, and, most important, the fire to go back home and ignite change for youth!" Simon Mitchell, Heart of the Hawkeye Council



Spotlight on ELSA

For 2010, during Camp Fire USA's Centennial year, the Executive Leadership Strategic Alliance (ELSA) is going to promote stronger collaboration and communication, regionally, throughout the councils. There is a lot of excitement around this idea!

New ELSA Officers:

Gayle Orange – Chair for 2010 Stephanie Schiszik – Co-Chair for 2010; Chair for 2011 Bobbie Henderson – Treasurer/Secretary 2010

REMINDER: All council executives are invited to participate in monthly ELSA steering committee conference calls.

- Second Tuesday of each month, 4 p.m. (EDT); 3 p.m. (CDT); 2 p.m. (MDT); 1 p.m. (PDT).
- Call-in 866-502-8312, Participant Code 256401.

Changes in Executive and Board Leadership

The following are recent changes in Camp Fire USA council leadership.

Resignations of Executive Directors/CEOs:

Kim Leslie, Heart of Oklahoma Council, Oklahoma City, Okla. Elaine Vivens, Panhandle Plains Council, Amarillo, Tex. Michael Burney, West Texas Council, Midland, Tex. Teresa Rodocker, Juan de Fuca Council, Port Angeles, Wash.

New Executive Directors/CEOs:

Marty McKiernan, River Bend Council, Mishawaka, Ind.
Paige Peabody, Southeast Michigan Council, Southfield, Mich.
Jan Robinson (Interim), Heart of Oklahoma Council, Oklahoma City, Okla.
Terra Campbell (Interim), Panhandle Plains Council, Amarillo, Tex.
William Shuey (Interim), West Texas Council, Midland, Tex.

Incoming Board Presidents/Chairs:

Greg Durrant, Gem State Council, Chubbuck, Idaho William Slowter, Minnesota Council, Minneapolis, Minn. Karen Prewitt, Midlands Council, Omaha, Neb.

Sally Dellinger and Valerie Mitrione (Co-Chairs), Central Ohio Council, Columbus, Ohio

Dick Nurre, Wilani Council, Springfield, Oreg.

Phillip Flores, Panhandle Plains Council, Amarillo, Tex. Vicky Lee, Wilbarger County Council, Vernon, Tex.

Dusti Webber, Oneida Council, Rhinelander, Wis.



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GROW 2010 session.



GROW 2010 networking.





GROW 2010 Master of Ceremonies and first time sledder, Lavert Rodgers, Balcones Council.

New National YAC Highlights By Ana Zeek, National YAC Member

This year Camp Fire USA celebrates its Centennial, and we are all extremely excited to take part in such a monumental birthday. Since it is the beginning of a new year, we would like to welcome all of our new National Youth Advisory Cabinet (YAC) members: Justin Berl of Portland Metro Council, Kayla Hensley of Central Coast Council, Lauren Lampe of Adahi Council, and Taylor Marts of Southwest Louisiana Council.

The new YAC members bring with them fresh ideas, including some great ones on partnering with the Executive Leadership Strategic Alliance (ELSA). This year, YAC will be helping to unite teens in councils across the nation by working with ELSA and possibly taking part in some Webinars. We are all thrilled to be participating in this and think it will help to bring Camp Fire USA together—a very important aspect of our 100th year as an organization.



The past 100 years have been amazing in regard to our growth and development and the number of kids we have taught, helped, and touched. Hopefully, the next 100 years can be just as great and we can spread the spirit of Camp Fire USA to the next generations. Feel free to check out our Centennial video on the national Website. On behalf of YAC, we appreciate the continued support of the national office. Let's make this century even better than the last!

2010 National Youth Advisory Cabinet Members

YAC is composed of 12 youth between the ages of 16 and 21. YAC members are selected through an application process and serve for two-year terms. Youth can reapply for an additional term, providing they meet the age qualification.

YAC Chair: Emily Cotter, Sunshine Council

YAC Members:

Justin Berl, Portland Metro Council
Warren Chapline, Tejas Council
Heather Crain, Green Country Council
Kayla Hensley, Central Coast Council
Molly Johnson, Sunshine Council
Lauren Lampe, Adahi Council
Taylor Marts, Southwest Louisiana Council
Mary Milton, Mt. Hood Council
Jackson Pritchett, Balcones Council
Anastasia Wroblewski, Patuxent Area Council
Ana Zeek, Central Puget Sound Council



National YAC Chair, Emily Cotter poses with National Board of Trustees President Glenn Cravez and National Interim CEO Pamela Wilcox before the February national board meeting.

Healthy Schools Program

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation recognizes that schools are powerful places in which to teach young people not only the academic skills they need to succeed but also healthy life skills. That is why, in February 2006, the Alliance launched its Healthy Schools Program, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Now supporting more than 7,800 schools throughout the United States, the Healthy Schools Program takes a comprehensive approach to helping schools create healthier environments by working with them to improve access to healthier foods; increase physical activity opportunities before, during, and after school; enhance nutrition education; and establish school employee wellness programs.

The Healthy Schools Network is open to anyone—parent, school staff person, or community member—who wants to help a school in the become a healthier place. Network members get access to resources that will help them become active, engaged advocates. These resources include:

- Online toolkits and Web-based trainings on making schools healthier for students and staff.
- The Healthy Schools Product Navigator and Calculator for selecting healthier snack options.
- Biweekly newsletters with links to useful tools and resources for creating a healthier school environment.
- An extensive resource database that includes quality resources and grant opportunities to assist in implementing healthy policy and program changes at school.

All resources are offered at no cost and sign-up is free and easy, so join the Healthy Schools Network at www.healthiergeneration.org to help a school you care about become a healthier place for students to learn and staff to work. Council members can join the network by signing up as individuals to help their sites at schools become healthier. This is a great way to get community champions involved, form collaborations, and get councils and youth to advocate in the community. Collaboration is key to making change happen! Questions? Contact lauren.wiedt@campfireusa.org.

News From Camp Fire USA Councils

Balcones Council Camp Fire Kids Unplugged

With the mission of providing children and their families with opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and explore nature, Camp Fire Kids Unplugged is based on principles of the national movement, "Leave No Child Inside." The new club program gets kids outdoors to actively experience nature with their families while engaging in fun and educational activities that emphasize healthy living. Kids Unplugged provides program participants with prearranged recreational outdoor activities in a variety of themes. Planned by Camp Fire USA coordinators, outings are scheduled for each weekend and include low-cost equipment rental and qualified experts to lead each activity. For more information about this program, contact Jessica Wilson at jwilson@campfireusabalcones.org.

Buddhist Temple Celebration for Camp Fire USA

Central Puget Sound Council has had a treasured partnership with the Seattle Japanese Buddhist Temple for over 70 years. Currently, there are approximately 60 Camp Fire USA members in several groups that meet after the temple's service each Sunday. The families are active participants in Dad-Kid Weekend each year, and junior high youth work for and earn the Karuna Award, which is a spiritual achievement in the Buddhist Churches of America (a bit like Christian confirmation preparation) that fits nicely with Camp Fire USA. The combined club group is planning a special service and a luncheon for current members and alumni to celebrate the Centennial on Sunday, March 28.

Oklahoma Lowe's to the Rescue!



Each year Lowe's Heroes volunteer program helps to improve the communities in which Lowe's employees work and live. Each store team identifies a community improvement project that will make a difference in its community. Although projects vary by location, Lowe's Heroes volunteers share a common goal—to make their communities better places to live. Seven local Lowe's stores from the Tulsa, Oklahoma, area came together recently and volunteered their time and materials to make some major improvements to Green Country Council's Camp Okiwanee. Teams from each store "adopted" projects and, at the busiest time of day, close to 100 volunteers could be found painting, digging, planting, constructing, building, repairing, and doing various other tasks needed around the camp. With Camp Fire resources already stretched to capacity, Lowe's saved the day not only with their generosity in donating materials but also

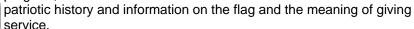
by bringing the many skills and equipment needed to perform all the repairs and projects. "Lowe's came to the rescue when we needed it the most," states Vicki Proctor, Camp Services Director. "Once the day was over and everyone was gone, a Lowe's employee who lived in the community near the camp went above and beyond by seeking out additional funds from Lowe's to repair a septic system that had been out of service for years. He was committed to improving the community that our camp has been a part of for many years, and we will always be grateful to him and Lowe's."

Salute to Veterans

Camp Fire USA has supported the Salute to Veterans since 1975, in cooperation with the Veterans Administration. The purpose of the project is to help children learn about veterans, develop a sense of caring, and give service to others. This project takes place around Valentine's Day as part of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Salute to Veterans Week. Many Camp Fire councils participate in the project. About 1,900 elementary students took part in the Tayanoka Council Volunteers for Vets program. Students created

valentines that were sent to VA Medical Centers in Ohio and West Virginia. As a part of the program, instructors discussed

Thank You Veterans!





The photograph to the right shows some of the Mt. Hood Council youth who participated in the Salute to Veterans project. The group made banners and hand-crafted Valentine cards at the Veterans Health Center and then presented the items to the veterans.

The photograph on the left shows Central Coast Council youth creating Valentines with the residents at a local care center in San Luis Obispo, California. The youth and the residents enjoyed the activity and sharing stories.



Family Strengthening for Families With Special Needs Kids By Ericka Waidley, CEO of Orange County Council

Orange County Council developed a program in 1998 in response to an identified need in the community. A Family Support Needs Assessment conducted by the local United Cerebral Palsy Association in 1995 found that the greatest unmet need for families of special needs children was competent, caring child care and respite care for their parents. Utilizing the Special Sitters program created by Central Puget Sound Council, Orange County Council developed a local Special Sitters program to help fill that need for families.

Orange County Council recruits and trains teens (13–19 years old) to care for children with special needs—including physical, mental, learning, or emotional disabilities; and debilitating illnesses. Sitters receive 12 hours of training in which they learn the fundamentals for speech pathology, active listening, and communication skills; are introduced to wheelchairs and adaptive aides; and learn appropriate play techniques. Special Sitters are also certified in first aid and CPR. Each teen pays a \$50 fee for training, but this is often waived if they help at two Saturday Club events. One of the council's goals is to get most of the training online so the "classroom" training time is less expensive and shorter for its active teens.



Once trained, teens' names are added to the Special Sitters referral list that is provided to families, and the youth are encouraged to work at Saturday Clubs.

United Cerebral Palsy enrolls and maintains a list of families interested in sitters or Saturday Club. At Saturday Club, parents drop off their special needs children to be cared for by Special Sitters and adult supervisors from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. So that the parents truly can enjoy a respite for up to five hours, they also can leave the child's siblings at the site. The program is held six times per year at a local church, which has a preschool with play equipment. The ratio of care is one Special Sitter for each special needs child. Up to 15 special needs children (and their siblings) may be registered for care at each Saturday Club. Each family is charged \$40 for the day and the Special Sitters is paid \$40.

Saturday Club provides an opportunity for many families who have experienced limited success with traditional sitters to meet and become comfortable with particular Special Sitters. Feedback is consistently positive from families, and a few comments are included below.

"Through your program I had special sitters for the past seven years and they provided such wonderful services. I have some of the best sitters that anyone can find. Those special girls helped me when we needed them the most. They helped me keep the family working. My children grew up under the loving and tender care of those sitters. I will always be very grateful for your kindness and assistance." - Andre's parent

"My Special Sitter is the first babysitter who came in that wasn't intimidated by my child's disability." – Wynne's parent

Special Sitters and Saturday Club is an excellent example of a true community partnership, one that is successfully providing family strengthening opportunities to families with special needs children. For more information about starting a Special Sitters Program, contact Ericka@campfireusaoc.org.

Great American Cleanup

Keep America Beautiful is hosting the Great American Cleanup, the nation's largest community improvement program. The cleanup takes place annually from March 1 through May 31, involving an estimated three million volunteers and attendees. Activities included beautifying parks and recreation areas, cleaning seashores and waterways, handling recycling



collections, picking up litter, planting trees and flowers, and conducting educational programs and litter-free events. Find out more at www.kab.org.

Earth Day in April

Earth Day is April 22 and has been celebrated since 1970. Earth Day has been an annual event for people around the world to celebrate the earth and renew a commitment to building a safer, healthier and cleaner world. This is a great time to plan an environmental service project. Find out more at www.earthdav.net.



MLK Day—Make It a Day On ... Not a Day Off!

Initiated by Congress in 1994, King Day of Service builds on that legacy by transforming the federal holiday honoring Dr. King into a national day of community service. Camp Fire USA councils throughout the country planned service events in honor of Dr. King in January.

Knitting for Those in Need

Heart of Oklahoma Council youth participated in a Warm Hands, Warm Hearts service project. Youth and volunteers began last fall with knitting lessons, and then knitted approximately 83 scarves, 26 hats, and 3 pairs of booties. The youth and volunteers delivered the knitted items to the Citizens Caring for Children Resource center. The Center provides new clothing to foster children. While there, the Camp Fire USA youth also volunteered by hanging up clothing and sorting diapers in the Resource Center.



Volunteers Roll up Their Sleeves to Help Restore Natural Lands



To mark the 2010 Dr. Martin
Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, Sunshine Council led more than 160 Polk
County residents in volunteering to help remove Air Potato, an invasive
exotic plant that has been overtaking the forty-acre nature center owned by
the Lake Region Audubon Society in Winter Haven. The group was able to
collect approximately 10,000 Air Potatoes. Camp Fire USA and the Lake
Region Audubon Society partnered for this day of service and invited the
community to join for a "potato pull" and environmental conservation
clean-up. The project was held at the Street Nature Center in Winter
Haven. The 40-acre site is home to many native birds and some not-sonative plants. There was a desperate invasive exotic plant problem, and
they harnessed the manpower of the community to help solve it in a few

hours by working together to remove the vines and collect the "potatoes"

from which the vine grows. The group enjoyed refreshments and lunch provided by the Audubon Society and received commemorative recognition pins for their day's work.

Plan Global Youth Service Day Activities Now

Mark your calendars—Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) is scheduled for April 23–25, 2010. This is an annual campaign that celebrates and mobilizes the millions of children and youth who improve their communities each day of the year through service and service-learning. Established in 1988, GYSD is the largest service event in the world and is now celebrated in more than 100 countries. On GYSD, children and youth, in partnership with families, schools, community and faith-based organizations, businesses, and governments, address the world's most critical issues.



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National Council and Program Services staff enjoy the snow at GROW 2010.