

# Camping and Retreat Ministry

## Director's Report 2017

### Karen Dillon

2017 was a year of trying new things. The Camping and Retreat Committee has a new name to more fully represent its mission. CRC has become the Camping and Retreat Ministry or CRM. Two new camping experiences were implemented with surprising results. The ministry of our camps and retreats is expanding and bringing people together to experience God in meaningful ways.

Winter Blast was held in January with the promise of snowball tossing and downhill sledding. Both activities took place even without the use of snow. The winter gathering of children, teens, and adults was so exciting that some of the participants had difficulty going to sleep in the cabins. Throughout the two day camp, campers were laughing, playing games, singing, sharing in devotions, eating together, telling stories, and running all over the camp. Of course, there was plenty of hot chocolate. This winter camp experience was supported by the Cookie Camp proceeds, which paid for the rental costs of the camp. Winter Blast I was so successful that two Winter Blasts are being planned for January 2018, one weekend for campers of Safari Camp and one open to everyone.

Ambassadors from our churches are a wonderful link connecting the Camping and Retreat Ministries with the churches of the District. Our spring and fall meetings keep everyone in the know and help get the messages about programs and camps to our members. Their work is vital in maintaining good communication.

Summer camping season was busy. No camps had to be canceled due to low registration. Many new people volunteered in a wide variety of activities. Over 60 people volunteered for a couple of hours, days, even weeks. With all the extra volunteers, camps were filled with talented, gifted people who freely shared their faith and demonstrated that faith in daily living. Family Camp, Adult/Child Camp, Camp Safari, and Creative Arts Camp were all dynamic in unique ways. We offered a camp for everyone, no matter their age.

One new camp was the Intergenerational Service Camp. This camp brought together a group of campers and leaders who spent their days in service to others in the Dayton area. St. Vincent shelter for women and children was one of the locations the campers worked. Happy Corner welcomed the group to help prepare, serve, and clean-up their Monday Community meal. The last day the campers helped with Camp Safari kids in a carnival of the senses. The evening activity that was a lot of fun was the double hitter of the Dragons. This camp spent time in Bible study and

discussion. Campers grew close and shared their stories from their hearts. There are always needs of service in our communities, so this camp will be looking for more people to participate.

Quilting Camp was a riot of colors, fabrics, laughter, and love. Simple children's blankets from colorful strips of cloth were made and delivered to Brandy's Arms Open Wide organization. Even Ted Foster made a quilt from photos of the campers' hands. This camp has become a highlight for many people. The closeness felt by the campers is strong, but always welcoming to everyone who shows up (sewing machine optional).

Our work with the Brethren Disaster Ministry to host the Golf Scramble was very successful. We had 23 teams and many sponsors who donated items for the drawings or sponsored a hole. A little more than 100 people participated in the Golf Outing. The money raised, nearly \$7000, was split and will support the two organizations.

This fall has included two Adult Bible Schools, one at Troy COB and one at Salem COB. People gathered at these churches to share in fellowship, crafts, Bible study, and friendship. The Brethren Retirement Community is also looking at the possibility of hosting a Bible school for their residents.

Women's Retreat was held at Bergamo Center. I worked with the plans, but due to an injury to my back, was unable to attend. From the positive reports and evaluations, everything ran smoothly. A set apart time for women to pray, reflect, and listen for what God might be telling them, renewed their faith.

This year held many new concepts and experiences as the Camping and Retreat Ministries continues to grow. We had more camps and more campers. The number of volunteers who participate in a variety of ways has really grown. The need to have friends and be accepted is as important to a child, teen or adult. Camps and retreats bring people together to safely share their faith and strengthen their convictions. With this assurance, we are all equipped to take God's message of love and grace as we work to make this a better world.

Thank you for making my life richer and fuller as I strive to make the Camping and Retreat Ministries a vital part of this district's mission.

Respectfully.

Karen Dillon