

DIALOGUE

Published by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Diego in order to promote love, growth, and right relations both locally and globally.

**UU The Vote - UUFSD Helped Get Out the Vote
Faith, Love, Action, Together
Pages 6 & 7**



**Camp deBenneville Pines
Pages 9 through 16**



Table of Contents

Rev Jo's Corner	Pg 2
Happenings	Pgs 3-5
UU the Vote	Pgs 6-7
Casas De Luz Cottages	Pg 8
DeBenniville Pines	Pgs 9-16
Name Tag Cartoon	Pg 16

Rev Jo's Corner



Many blessings for a Happy New Year! So many of us are so relieved to see 2020 end that we are thrilled at the thought of 2021, no matter what it holds!

I wrote those words at the beginning of the year and I feel compelled to edit. For the other day was the Wednesday that will be remembered always in our country's history. The day that domestic terrorists stormed the Capitol building and 5 people died. That is not a memory I wish to have opening a new year, and yet, that is life, that is what has happened and I have hope and optimism that it will bring positive change to our country. This affects all of us in our community, something we wish didn't, and yet it is now embedded in our memories. We anticipate the Inauguration to happen in a couple of weeks and this new administration will

bring new life and new blood to our government and a new hope, I believe. We are in need of a new hope.

That is also my wish for this coming year for this congregation, a new hope. A few vaccines have been released and soon our community will be able to receive it. This will allow for some freedom from the shelter in place restrictions we've all been living with all these many months. With that hopefully, will bring new social distancing guidelines and my dream is to be in our Sanctuary to begin our new congregational year next September! That is a new hope, that is positive thinking. I have yet to meet nearly all of the members of this congregation and have seen on Zoom a few others. But the vast majority of you I barely know, which tugs at my heart, as I want to know you and I want you to know me. I and the staff here at UUFSD have been brainstorming what different events we could create or how we could change the experiences of all of you to feel more connected and that has been difficult. We are doing the best we can and yet it doesn't feel like enough. Know that we are still conceiving of new ideas, working on offering new experiences, thinking of all of you and how we can bring spiritual experiences to you, helping to connect us as a community, discerning how to best use the technology we have and safeguard ourselves in the meantime until the danger of this virus has passed.

I am grateful that you have called me to your congregation and know that one day we will have what we consider regular, ordinary, common experiences with each other that before, we took for granted, was an everyday occurrence. If nothing else, we all have come to appreciate what community we had before the pandemic, what love and friendship we felt in a typical day, what comradery we felt in an easy, relaxed atmosphere. We will return to those relationships in person sooner than we think. That is my wish for all of you this year, a relaxed, peaceful way of life doing good work and being in community.

Blessings for a peaceful new year!!

Happenings - Living Our Values



Sat, Oct 2: Blessing of the Animals Drive Through

The Blessing of the Animals service spotlighted everyone's beloved furry friend. Rev Jo and Alison were at the Fellowship Campus and blessed pets that members and friends brought in person. Members who were not able to go onsite for the ceremony, sent a photo of their beloved animal to Joe Cantrell who created a montage of all of our beloved furry friends that mean so much to us.

The blessing was then shown at the Sunday Service on October 3.

Sunday, October 30: Dia de Los Muertos



It was not easy celebrating Dia De Los Muertos this year. It was difficult not only to connect and lift up our departed loved ones, but also trying to connect safely with each other. At such a deeply moving holiday, not being able to hug and hold one another in comfort was very difficult. But we managed with a little extra effort, to bridge the experience for people both in the living realm and our loved ones who are departed.

A huge thank you goes out to Susan Hahm who built the ofrenda at the Fellowship where we were able to gather, be socially distanced from one another, and share. It was a beautiful experience albeit a bit different than one we are accustomed to. One thing that I believe we have all learned to do is to adapt. We adapt to a new normal when our loved ones pass, as we have adapted to living in a pandemic. We are creatures who do not like change all that much, but I am so proud of us for finding ways to connect.

Happenings - Living Our Values

Food and Toiletries Drive For CRC



Social Justice Action “Helping Our Neighbors” Initiative

Well, this was an annual food drive like no other in our history. The Covid-19 epidemic caused us to condense a month long effort into a weekend event. We met the criteria of physical separation by having a “Drive Through Collection.” Members and friends drove by the lower parking lot and dropped off toiletries and food items.

Thank you to all the members and friends who made this much abbreviated effort such a great success. Despite the rotten weather we collected hundreds of toiletry items, including shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, body lotion, body wash, bar soap, sun screen tooth paste and tooth brushes and diapers. Food items: included cooking oil, mayo, mustard, ketchup, relish and a variety of spices. We also received approximately \$450 in cash donations. Thanks again. CRC can use our cash donation to purchase food products from large local food bank organizations for pennies on the dollar.

UUFSD ART FAIR Nov. 8-14



Betsy Gulpin



Jill Ballard
and



Pete di Girolamo

Our 2020 Art Fair featured nine artists and over 380 items were up for sale. Most artists gave 25% of their income from sales to the Fellowship and two artists donated 100% of their sales. Two of our local artists gave 100% of their sales to the general fund.



Happenings Thanksgiving in Times of Covid 19



Thursday, Nov 26, Thanksgiving Dinner in the Time of Covid
First and foremost, we want to thank Louise Garret for coming up with the idea of a semi virtual Thanksgiving dinner.

This is our first Thanksgiving without being in community. Traditionally we would gather at the Fellowship with family and friends. This year Louise created a semi virtual Thanksgiving. She and helpers prepared forty-two traditional turkey and fabulous vegan/vegetarian meals, with all the trimmings, dressing, gravy, different kinds of potatoes, cranberry sauce, bread, and green beans, with dessert of course that was served in take out form. Members and friends met virtually on ZOOM at 1:30 and ate together and were thankful that they could, at least see each other in this way.

Special thanks to Larry Jones, Barbara Walker, Wenda Alvarez, Charlotte, Ed and Trent Ulm



UU The Vote - UUFSD Helped Get Out the Vote Faith, Love, Action, Together

EXCERPTS FROM A message from Nicole Pressley, UUA National Organizer Wednesday, November 4, 2020



Today, we know that voters showed up in record numbers. And that over the last few months thousands of UUs have showed up to #UUtheVote by calling, texting and writing voters—as well as helping defend the election by creating joy at the polls.

I am so proud of the work we have done together. **Through UU the Vote we have reached out to nearly 3 million voters!** Those numbers are still coming in, too!

It is also true that today, we watch the vote counts and find that, again, white supremacy is not just on the table, but is the table. From the beginning, UU the Vote has been clear—when we #VoteLove we rise together to affirm that we are pro-migration, pro-democracy, pro-equity, pro-Human and Civil Rights for all, pro-reparations, and pro-sustainability. We defeat hate by joining in solidarity with all those who resist Authoritarianism, colonialism, criminalization, extractive capitalism, white

supremacy, and environmental exploitation.

My friend, we are working towards a future where all of us can thrive. **We have to make every day count.** Not just in the days ahead during this election, but for the years to come!

UU the Vote is a part of the legacy of electoral organizing that has continuously proven to bend the moral arc of justice. Let's make every day count to build a democracy where all of us can thrive.

Our work is not done. I echo the words from the activist group Southerners on New Ground, that we need “more of us, and more from us.”

Let's get ready!

UUFSD Get Out the Vote Efforts

In early summer, Laura Colban rallied a few UUFSD congregation members with an urgent message: **we must help get out the vote.** She laid the groundwork by researching and vetting partnering options. Most importantly, she helped inspire others to take on the months' long effort, which included letter writing, calling, texting and operational support.

Linda Luisi, Linda Kavanagh and Eleanor Batho picked up the ball and were among key contributors to nonpartisan campaign identification. Our denomination's '[UU the Vote](#)' campaign was the priority. And more than 2000 letters and hundreds of calls were tallied on associated campaigns.

Ted Foster took on UUFSD's GOTV leadership with a full time commitment to encouraging, researching and coaching congregation members. He was quickly up-to-speed on phone- and text-banking training and technology. And Ted and Ron Demuth authored a grant that funded postage and envelopes for those working on 'Vote Forward,' a nonpartisan campaign.


On a parallel track, other congregation members were already hundreds of letters down the road: Rick Appleton, Alice Brzovic, Nancy Hebert, Angie Knappenberger, and Norma Showalter among them. Independent of UUFSD's nonpartisan efforts, members and friends also invested time and talent in partisan campaigns. Canvassing, door-hangers, calling and texting were ways to make a difference with laser focus and/or flex in response to greatest need.

UU The Vote - UUFSD Helped Get Out the Vote

Ron and Sylvia DeMuth were among those who continued to respond, including transforming their dining room into a staging area for food and water essentials to sustain local voters and volunteers in the election’s final days.

Many thanks to the following, and, please, accept our apologies for any accidental omissions

Wenda Alvarez, Charles Alvarez, Rick Appleton, Jill Ballard, Steve Bartram, Eleanor Batho, Greg Brown, Alice Brzovic, Laura Colban, Rigdon Currie, Julia Darling, Becki DeBont, Caroline DeMar, Ron DeMuth, Sylvia DeMuth, Ilene Dunagan, Karen Eckhart, Nancy Evans, Ted Foster, Louise Garrett, Betsy Gilpin, Dale Gottdank, Kelli Griffis, Alisa Guralnick, Phyllis Hauptfeld, Nancy Hebert, Debbie Hecht, Barbra Hogan, Robert Jones, Linda Kavanagh, Angie Knappenberger, Linda Luisi, Elizabeth Michel, Nancy Romig, Robin Sales, Lisa Shaffer, Norma Showalter, Eva Stjernfeldt, Louisa Triandi, Eliane Vuong, Livia Walsh

UU the VOTE

**Faith. Love. Action.
Together.**

Casas de Luz Transitional Sleeping Cottages

CASAS DE LUZ RESPONDS TO OUR HOMELESS CRISIS



TRANSITIONAL
SLEEPING
COTTAGES

FEATURES

- 8x10ft on trailer
- Scalable on concrete foundation
- Fully furnished
- 3 windows
- Porch

An interfaith collaboration bringing San Diegans together.

LEARN MORE

info@casasdeluz.org
www.casasdeluz.org

HOW TO HELP

Donate: help fund a new community of hope.

Land: properly zoned for building.

Contacts: individuals looking for home solutions.

OUR VISION

Build hope and community through transitional sleeping cottages in San Diego.



Martin Banks Photography

North County is facing a very difficult situation. Increasing numbers of people are without a safe and stable home. And this trend is likely to accelerate with evictions resulting from Covid. At the same time, congregate shelters, like those offered by the Interfaith Overnight Shelter Network, of which we are a part, are unable to operate because of safety concerns.

Casas de Luz is responding using a model which proved successful in other cities in helping residents transition to permanent housing. Working with the Interfaith Network, CRC, local charitable groups and individual religious groups, Casas de Luz is offering to build transitional sleeping cottages, like the prototype in our parking lot, for people who are without housing. These cottages, which are fully insulated and wired, offer site flexibility. They could be grouped in a small community in a permanent location that includes a community center. They could be grouped in smaller numbers or moved periodically from one location to another. Also individual units could be combined to house families.

Regardless of the cottage arrangement, each resident would receive case management services from partners of Casas de Luz, such as CRC. Residents would be expected to complete their stay within six months. Casas de Luz would be primarily responsible for construction.

We are working with our partners and local governments to identify potential locations for our first Community and hope to have an initial location selected early next year. Thank you for your past and continued support of Casas de Luz.



Camp de Benneville Pines

From the Beginning - Excerpts and Editing of “Remembering the Journey that Helped Create our Sacred Home in the Mountains” by Rev. Ray Manker - 1955-1963

In 1955 Rev Ray Manker, a Universalist minister, transferred to Riverside, CA to become the Settled Minister of the Riverside Universalist congregation. Shortly thereafter he became the first District Executive for this area (Southern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and West Texas).

The Universalists had sold two of their buildings, one in Los Angeles, and one in Hollywood, and the money from these sales was held “on account” at the Universalist headquarters and designated for use in Southern California.

The Pacific Southwest Institute of Religious Liberals (PSWIRL) had been renting a camp, Camp Radford, for their annual summer family camp. But Radford had become too small, and they asked Rev. Manker to find a new site. He formed a committee and proceeded with plans to build a camp in the San Bernardino Mountains. At the time, a Boy Scout camp, Camp Arataba, which was at about 6800 feet altitude was for sale and seemed to be ideal. The committee deliberated and decided to go ahead with purchasing it.

The District Universalists wrote to headquarters to ask for the money (\$40,000) from the sale of the two churches. As the money originally came from the Universalists, Rev. Manker made sure a Universalist name was on the camp. They chose to honor George de Benneville from among a few choices, hence the name de Benneville Pines.

The committee discovered that the US Government was currently selling WWII buildings at March and Edwards Air Force bases and decided to purchase several of them. The buildings were trucked in to the camp. It was a great time! The churches sent up teams of teens and adults to help with the digging and building. They all used the camp quite enthusiastically and Rev. Manker became the first camp manager. At this point, the United States Forest Service told them that they had to be open all year or make it available for other groups to use when the District UUs weren't using it. So, the camp became year-round.

However, once committed to year-round use, they had to make the cabins winter proof. They were very fortunate to have several congregants who were excellent builders and who were willing to be involved with this conversion. They put foundations under the cabins, removed all the siding off to allow for the installation of insulation, and then put new siding on. All the roofs had to be redesigned and replaced to carry the snow load.

Mrs. Homet Patterson of Throop Church was approached about funding a new lodge. She agreed after hearing of our vision and visiting the site. She asked that we name the building after her maiden name, Homet.

In 1963, Rev Manker stepped down from the District Executive position.

Note: Rev Manker passed away in 2019. His legacy lives on at Camp de Benneville Pines. Thousands of campers are grateful for his vision and commitment to create this sacred home in the mountains for all of us to enjoy.



Rev. Ray Manker at
Camp dedication



Camp de Benneville Pines

“From the Mountain Top 2020 - An Unprecedented Year for Camp”
Janet James, Director (Excerpts from the Camp de Benneville Pines Newsletter)



I was so excited at the outset of 2020 to be entering into a banner budget year, with a sold-out camping season and an expectation that 4600 happy campers would be enjoying activities at Camp de Benneville Pines. Who could have foreseen the COVID-19 pandemic and the El Dorado fire crises upon us now? Both have had devastating effects on the business of Camp. In my 25 years at Camp, I have faced many challenges, and this, by far, is the greatest of them all. With no income from camp rentals and fees, Camp is surviving on donations. And now with the El Dorado fire, comes the threat of mudflows into our site. We have so much to lose if we lose our collective home and heart upon the mountain top!



First the COVID-19 Pandemic When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and with due caution, the board of directors elected to cancel all camps for the entire 2020 camping season, with an extension into 2021. This decision, although necessary, resulted in a financial crisis for Camp. Fixed costs run \$50,000 per month, so we determined in March to fundraise \$600,000 to preserve Camp until we could safely reopen. The COVID-19 Emergency Campaign has raised over half its goal— such great news! And now, the El Dorado Fire has burned right to Camp. Talk about a double whammy. Talk about the need to double down on all fundraising efforts!

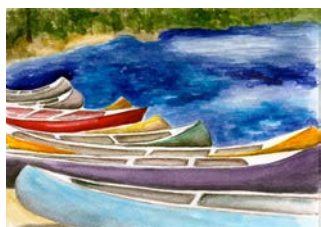


Then, the El Dorado Fire Our dedicated Camp volunteers and staff worked hard this summer to get our fire clearance done. During the El Dorado fire, the valiant San Bernadino County fire fighters worked tirelessly to keep our buildings from burning. As a result of these two efforts, our Camp looks largely unscathed. Unfortunately, the surrounding forest above and adjacent to Camp burned completely. The critical forest vegetation that holds back water on the mountainside is now burned to ash. Without it, there is nothing to hold back rock and mud from rushing down the mountain side into the Camp. At highest risk are the buildings on the high side of Camp—Craig’s Cabin, Staff House, Cabin 6, Maintenance House and Cabin 3.



9,000 Sandbags and 112 Tons of Sand To safeguard buildings, we have jumped into “sandbagging” mode quickly. With volunteer effort, we have filled an estimated 9000 sandbags to help direct water away from buildings. Contractors will be hired to set straw wattles, silt curtains, and straw bales on the burned mountainside in an effort to protect the water tanks and wellhead from disappearing under mud flows. Winter comes earlier up on the mountain, so we need to get this work done very quickly. With the upcoming

Camp de Benneville Pines



We continue our fundraising efforts by moving forward with the 2020/2021 Emergency Fund Campaign. This fund will now encompass both the costs of staying in business while camps are furloughed, and the costs of preserving the site with mud flow mitigation efforts. And every donation received between September 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020, will be **matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$100,000**. Please donate during this time period to maximize the impact of your gift.

Camp will remain closed to any type of programming or retreat activity at least through the end of March 2021, and quite possibly beyond. But with your consistent support through donated dollars and volunteer work, I know we can get through this crisis together. Along with the board of directors, I pledge my hard work to see Camp through this great economic and physical disaster, and I also pledge my personal dollars. Please join with me in becoming a member of the 12-month Pledge Program, and help me to ensure that Camp de Benneville Pines continues to change lives and uplift spirits for the next 60 years.

With hope in my heart that we shall see each other at Camp once again,

Janet James, Executive Director
director@uucamp.org Cell (909) 435-6298

12-month Pledge Program

Please consider joining our 12-month Pledge Program and making an auto payment each month that will assist with preserving Camp through this extreme crisis. It is vital that we have recurring monthly income to manage Camp's expenses during the closure. If you can manage a donation this month, perhaps you can manage a donation each month for one year? If so, your gift will be both impactful and meaningful, and will provide Camp with a base level of ongoing support.

Here's how it works:

Donate \$25 one time = \$25 of support. When matched = \$50 of support.

Donate \$25 one time = \$25 of support. When matched = \$50 of support.

Donate \$25 each month for 12 months = \$300 of support. When matched = \$600 of support.

Donate \$50 one time = \$50 of support. When matched = \$100 of support.

Donate \$50 each month for 12 months = \$600 of support. When matched = \$1,200 of support.

Donate \$100 one time = \$100 of support. When matched = \$200 of support.

Donate \$100 each month for 12 months = \$1,200 of support. When matched = \$2,400 of support.

Camp de Benneville Pines

Testimonials



Betsy Gilpin

I first went to Camp de Benneville Pines during Family Camp to attend a Renaissance Module. My kids (ages 4 and 7) came with me and had a glorious time in the kid-group while I was in class. Eventually, after a number of Family Camps, I had taken all the Renaissance Modules and what I learned was very helpful to me as chair of the UUFSD RE Committee.

During this time, a neighbor of mine brought her two girls to Family Camp. My daughter bunked with them and my son and I with another mother/son duo. The boys were good friends in no time. Then one year it was the father who brought his son to camp as the mother had recently died. This was a great shock to both me and my son.

Each year the drive from Angelus Oaks to Camp seemed for the kids to take as long as the drive from home to Angelus Oaks. Are we there yet? How much further? Do you think Matt will be there already? Can we tie-dye our PJs? As soon as we pulled into a parking space by the lodge to get our room assignment, they were out the car door and running off to find their friends.

Once I was finished with the Renaissance Modules, I taught one of the morning kids groups, but not the ones with my kids. Then, I was tapped to be on the Family Camp Planning Committee for the next year, eventually becoming Camp Dean (but that is a whole another story).

After 10 straight years of Family Camp, the kids were off to other pursuits and I did not come to camp for about 5 years. When my youngest was off to college, I came up for Women's Weekend and the week-long Adult PSWIRL camp, and I fell in love with Camp all over again. Ed Burditt, Kathryn Sturch and I organized the very first All Fellowship Weekend at Camp. But for Covid, this tradition loved by all, would have seen our 19th year.

Eventually I was tapped to serve on the Camp de Benneville Pines Board of Directors. In various years I served as Secretary or Vice President, but termed out at 9 years last April. It was a very rewarding experience working with other Camp enthusiasts to make everything run smoothly. I still keep my finger in the pie, serving on the Stewardship Committee.

Board members were encouraged to attend work weekends, and I tried to attend as many as possible. It was fun working with folks from other congregations, sharing experience and ideas, to stain decks, rake leaves and clean the pantry. This spring and summer I went up to camp 7 times to paint the insides of cabins, stain the outsides of buildings, rake leaves and fill sandbags. These excursions kept me sane during Covid by provided a socially-distanced interaction with other volunteers.

When Laura Janes, the Camp Artistic Director, moved on, I took over the planning and was Dean of Art Camp for several years. This Camp is a luxurious week of doing nothing but Art from 9am to 9pm each day. We did it virtually this year but hope to be back at Camp next August with our vaccinations. Several of the Art Campers and I go up to camp for several days each year when there are no campers to freshen up the art work in the cabins that was designed and executed by Laura Janes and her "Art Slaves" (I was one).

When I turned 76, my kids (miscalculated and thought I was 75) accompanied me to Family Camp along with their boys (ages 4 and 8). The boys got along wonderfully, the older one looking after the younger and the younger worshipping the older. It was wonderful for all! My daughter-in-law became a UU thanks to Frank Willey's afternoon worships, and the family now belongs to the UU Congregation of Tuscaloosa. The 8-year-old discovered archery at Camp and was really talented at it. His parents got him a good bow for Christmas, and he has been shooting ever since, making bull s eyes at 30 yards consistently. At Family Camp, my son took lots of pictures and my daughter used them to make a photo album as my Christmas gift. I cried with joy when I opened it!

All these family memories and interactions with wonderful people over the years give Camp a really special place in my heart. After UUFSD, Camp gets the next biggest donation from me each year.

Camp de Benneville Pines

Testimonials



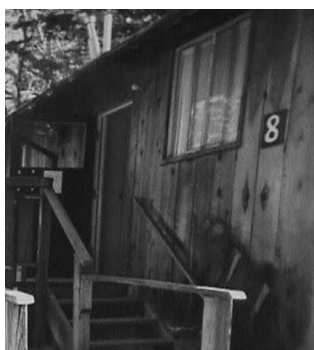
Early Days, remembrances of Carol Mason

When our kids were 10 years old and younger (now they are in their 60s) my family went up to Camp de Benneville Pines with other Fellowship families to work on the site. Sometimes families from other congregations would be included. All they had to do was call up and reserve a weekend. They camped out, sleeping in tents or in our family's case a VW bus, fixing their own meals. At that time the Lodge was just a slab on the ground and the pool was empty. There was debris to clear and paths to create and they dug in.

There were no programmed activities. so while the adults worked, the kids roamed free. Many a family had boys around the same age and they all explored the site and built forts just as kids do today. In the evenings there would be campfires, with singing and roasting of marshmallows. Everyone was delighted to have a place where they could go and share these experiences.

We can thank these families and all the others in the District who participated for their efforts to build the foundations, literally and figuratively, for Camp as it exists today. Somehow they also managed to raise the funds to install the buildings, rebuild the lodge and rehabilitate the swimming pool. Their hard work and vision created our beloved Camp.

I can still hear in my head the wonderful sounds of happy kids hooping and yelling as they clambered over rocks and ran through the trees. Same as now.



Honeymooning at DeBenniville Pines

UUFSD members Lola Larson Gooding and Bobby Gooding were married on Saturday, April 3, 2010, and spent their honeymoon at the DeBenniville Pines UUFSD Family Camp. Lola was 84 years young and Bobby was 82 years young.



Alison ALG McLeod

I have watched hundreds of our children find and connect to the sacred at DeBenneville Pines. They have understood, some for the first time, that ours is a religion and not just a supportive community. The look upon the youth's faces as they inhale the sweet clean air, it's as if the weight of the world is shrugged off and left in the parking lot. These trees and rocks, paths and branches have healed wounds not expressed to anyone. This camp has renewed the spark of life, unbeknownst to me, as down the mountain I was told, "Alison, I was going to kill myself after camp. But I met all of these people who actually cared if I was to live or die."

There are hundreds of sacred, life changing moments that happen here we will never know about. Let us all work to save this legacy of healing love.



Camp de Benneville Pines

Testimonials



Hannah Reed-Elliot – Wash Your Spirit Clean

“Keep close to Nature’s heart... and break clear away, once in awhile, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.” - John Muir

The thing that I have come to realize is that everytime I go to camp I leave the week fulfilled in ways I didn’t even know I was lacking. Time amongst the gently swaying trees and talking and laughing with the people I treasure the most “washes my spirit clean” in ways that nothing else can. My camp experience can’t be summed up in any one memory because what makes camp wonderful isn’t in individual moments, but in the state of being

that is attained there. That being said, one of my most recent camp memories is one that I will remember with clarity forever. I was walking along the road surrounded by the voices of my friends and the darkened forests of the mountain. We reached a spot off the side of the road where we could lay down and everyone on the hike found a spot. When we were all quiet, worship began. The night sky at De Benneville is one of my favorite sights in the whole world, and we all lay transfixed by the boundless expanse of Milky Way above us. When you look up at camp the sky isn’t flat. Tree tops border any vision of the stars creating the effect of dome. Laying on the warm pavement with the dome of starlight above us I could almost feel the earth moving beneath me. As the worship drew to a close we all sang Imagine by the Beatles and the biggest shooting star I have ever seen danced across the sky. Everyone there saw its brilliant dash across the heavens at the same moment, and our collective gasp became a new note in the song. On the walk back we decided, instead of talking, to keep singing. We sang hymns and overplayed pop songs and we held hands to keep track of each other in the dark. We sang Moonshadow as we walked towards the watchful globe above us. The feeling that the abundance of moments like these creates, besides sheer, unadulterated joy, is one of utter peacefulness. The peace comes from the knowledge that in the world of hurt and hate around us, there can be moments like this. Moments when you can feel the Earth turn beneath you. Moments when you can feel your connection to the moon and the trees and the owls and, most importantly, the people holding your hands as you walk through the darkness, helping to wash your spirit clean.



Camp de Benneville Pines

Testimonials



Derek (Teen) I volunteered at Camp DeBenneville Pines because I have been going here for many years and I want to help maintain and support the camp to be as great as it can be, especially in times of fire hazards. I felt as if my help was small, but I knew that any little bit it could help in a major way. I felt happy and almost satisfied knowing that camp could be safe and ready the next one.

I would 100% do it again, since actual camps aren't happening for a while, it is nice to see the place more often than not. I would definitely recommend this to other youth because it'll help make them feel more attached to the camp and like they truly belong to it.

Rowan & MJ (Teens) We had a great time and enjoyed being a part of helping camp. It was very intense to see how camp has changed and our family was touched emotionally. Working as a group to support the well-being of camp was fun.



Dimitrije (Teen) I volunteered at Camp DeBenneville because of the community around the camp. Everyone at camp and church is very giving and kind and I just wanted to help out those who have been kind to me

Zuzia (Teen) I volunteered because I would never want to lose camp, I felt happy about it, but insignificant at the same time, we need more people, I would do it again, I would recommend it because we need all the help we can get.

Maggie & Mike (Parents) Volunteering at DeBenneville pines as a family with our beloved community was healing in a way I had not expected. Seeing how the land was impacted by the fires, was nothing short of a miracle. Camp is alive, and yet there has been no campers giving life to camp for some time.

There is a kind of magic in working together. being a part of something that is greater than yourself. We felt that at camp. We don't remember the number of sandbags we filled. we didn't weigh the sand we moved. We only count each of those souls that shoveled, tied, crossed, tossed, carried and laid, as family. Camp is family you choose. We choose camp!

Patricia (Parent) I volunteered at Camp DeBenneville filling sand bags and clearing the grounds of fire hazards because camp has been such a special place for me and my son. A place where I have felt that I belong to a larger community not just my fellowship, a place where I don't feel isolate, where the people I meet are also striving to live the 7 principles.

The work was hard for me, my body was tired, but I felt so filled with joy and a great sense of fulfillment. That at the next opportunity, I did not hesitate to do it again. When we arrived at Camp and realized that the fire was so close to the cabins, and that Camp could have been gone, only then I appreciated what an enormous loss this would have been. I am grateful that we have the privilege to continue enjoying this enchanted place and that future generations could also call it home. I highly recommend volunteering at Camp. I feel more than ever that it is my home, that I belong. A beautiful place where and I could send my son to and know that he would be safe and happy.

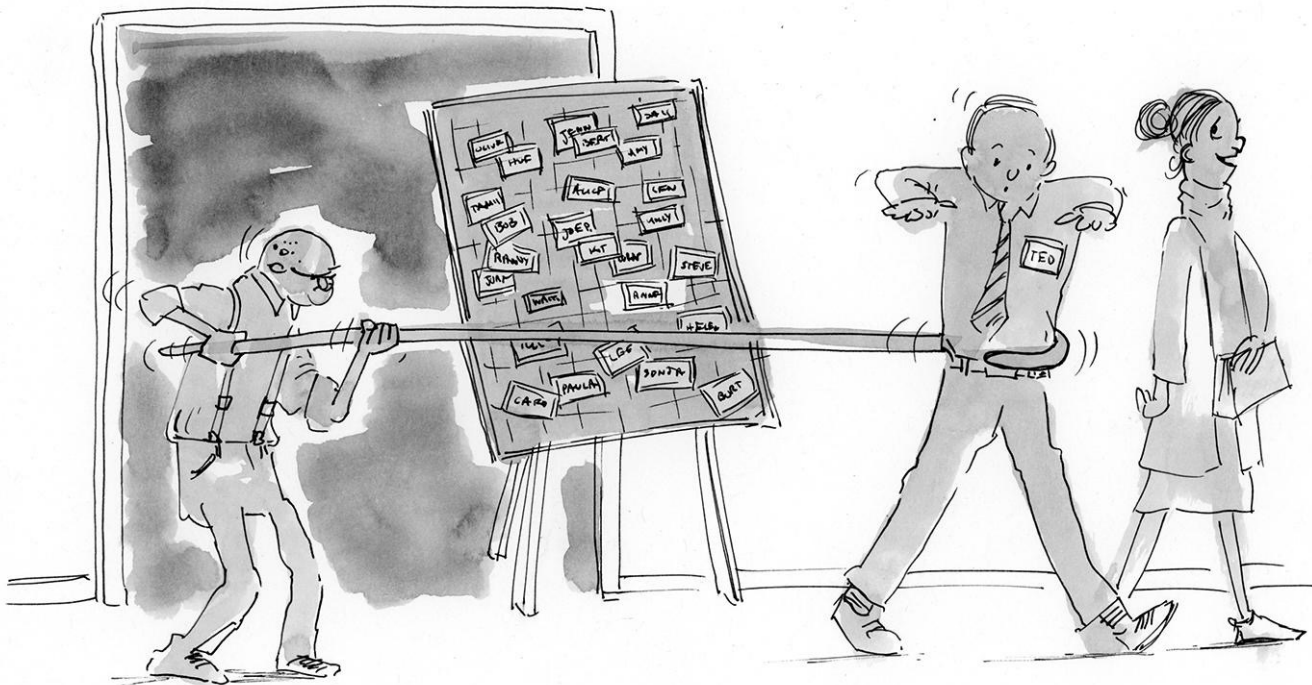


Camp de Benneville Pines

Stephanie & Scott (Parents) Our family volunteered at DeBenneville to support a place that has given our family so much. Our older two kids have attended camp there for years and have both become counselors – it is so special to them, and we believe the counselor and other training is some of the most important education they have received. We were so happy to volunteer as a family, to get to spend time in this beautiful place, do manual labor which is therapeutic for mind and body, and feel a part of community during this time that has been so isolating. We will continue to volunteer as much as we are able. We would like to add that we feel strongly that it is important to teach our children that service is an expected part of being in a community and a family and this was a great opportunity for them to be able to do that.

A Place For Everything - Everything In It's Place

Cartoon Courtesy of Edward Himelblau



Looks like someone forgot to hang up their name tag again.