



"People Experiencing People in God's Nature"

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St. John Bosco Camp Association, Fall 2013



The Bosco Wilderness

The Newsletter of the St. John Bosco Camp Association

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is always so hard to come home and get back into the swing of things after being at camp for so long. This year I found it particularly hard because it was such a great spring and summer. Some great things happened this season! Thanks to the Lorne and Evelyn Johnson Foundation we were able to get camp not only new walkie-talkies (which work awesome) but also SPOT GPS Messengers as well. We rebuilt the administration building deck and set up a slide going into the mud. Bosco is constantly growing and we are all so fortunate to be a part of it.

We had a lot of new faces at Bosco this year and some old ones came to visit. Being able to hear some of the old stories about how camp used to be was so interesting. We were told how some of camp's favorite sites were created, history on some of camp's buildings, and met the Director and Assistant Director from 1979! Hearing old stories was great but creating new ones with the staff this year was amazing. Watching new people come to Bosco and fall in love with this place is so inspiring and makes all of the hard work worthwhile.

The success of camp is due to our Board members and all of our volunteers. Bosco is so fortunate too have all of you and your passion for camp is what keeps this place running. Because of what you all do camp can continue to evolve and grow and will persist to have a bright future.

Miranda Bachman
2013 Camp Director

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday, November 10, 2013 at 1:00 PM

Lower Level, St. Joseph's Parish Hall
(Corner of 8th Street & Broadway Ave, Saskatoon)

Please contact the camp office if you wish to be placed on the agenda.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

St. John Bosco Wilderness Camp has successfully completed its 55th summer of providing a quality camping experience to the children of Saskatchewan and beyond. I would like to thank the staff under the directorship of Miranda Bachman and Carlin Pruen. The enthusiasm and Bosco spirit of these two fine leaders and our exceptional staff enabled campers to head home with great memories and a desire to count the days until they can come through the gates of Bosco again.

Over the next few months there will be fundraising opportunities by way of steak nights and Bingos. Please do not hesitate to come out and support us, enjoy some fellowship and keep Bosco top of mind in the winter months. Before you know it, we will be heading into Spring 2014 and Bosco's 56th year.

We need your support and encouragement to forge ahead. We have many projects underway, not the least of which is our new shower facility. Construction has started with an army of volunteers ready to assist, but there is always room for more. We have several other projects in the wings such as window replacement in the chapel and other building projects. Those of us that come to the work weekends have forged friendships that will last a lifetime. Camp isn't just for kids, come be a part.

We are also encouraging group camping, family reunions and other events in the off-season to get more people to experience the place most of us consider our second home. All of these initiatives require a commitment to keep our facilities up to date and in good working order. This takes time and money. So, while the weather is turning colder and the leaves are falling keep the Spirit of Bosco alive. Tell your friends, talk to family. Keep the chatter going.

As I was sifting through some archival documents provided to me by our long time administrator David Godwin, I came across a statement that I would like to share.... "The reasons for Bosco's and popularity can be attributed to the people behind the scenes and their continuous loyal support". So, once again, thank you to all that continue to keep Bosco as the "place to be". Thank you to the staff, volunteers, those that promote us, and lastly my fellow Board members. The tireless passion of all these good people keeps the spirit alive.

God bless and see you next year.

Cheryl Kirzinger
President, SJBWC Board of Directors

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We at camp have a bit of a complicated relationship with modern technology. SJBWC is, of course, a wilderness camp: one of the last refuges from the instant communication and constant bombardment of everyday life. Even with everything that has changed in the world during our 55 seasons, Saskatchewan's boreal forest has stayed much the same. The way that we approach it, however, has been evolving.

Our core approach to the wilderness experience has also stayed much the same. We still believe that pushing yourself physically on a long day of hiking or canoeing makes reaching your destination that much sweeter. We still believe that no TV show can take your breath away quite like the northern lights do when they light up the sky. We still believe that God has a special something to teach you if you take the time to look at His beautiful nature. That is why we still navigate with a map and compass, why we still travel in canoe and kayak, and why we're pretty happy that you can't pick up your texts while you're at camp.

But when the right technology comes along we are happy to use the tools at our disposal. For example, we have recently been moving more of our administration and communication online: this newsletter, our camper registration, and end of year evaluations. All of this helps us to save paper and time. We are becoming more high tech at camp as well: just this year we were awarded a grant from the Lorne and Evelyn Johnson Foundation that allowed us to purchase a tool called the Spot GPS Messenger. These allow groups on trips to check in and confirm their location and well-being. In case of an emergency, they send their coordinates and a distress signal so that help can be sent out.

These are just a few examples of how we are making use of modern technology to make camping safer, and the paperwork easier.

In other tech news, we're getting a new promo video this year. I'm really excited for it.

Martin Plemel
Vice-President, SJBWC Board of Directors

2013 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

We were so excited to welcome back familiar friends and new faces as we opened our gates for the 2013 school programs in June. 293 students came from eight schools in Saskatoon, Lloydminster, La Ronge, and Viscount to experience the Bosco wilderness during our spring programming. We are already booking groups for 2014 and look forward to seeing everyone again and to welcoming new organizations to join the fun!

The summer saw 216 campers join us for our July and August sessions (69 first camp, 77 second camp, 70 third camp). We welcomed 25 Junior campers, 97 Intermediate campers, 85 Senior campers (47 Wilderness Skills, 18 WOTS, 20 COTS) and 9 ALE campers. Numbers were up in almost every program!

After a successful pilot of our formalized camper sponsorship program last year, we were eager to welcome more sponsored campers to the Bosco experience. In April, we approached all Saskatoon public and Catholic schools and asked teachers to nominate campers from low-income and new Canadian families that would benefit from attending Bosco. Campers were chosen based on need, availability of funding and program space. We were blessed to receive a lot of generous financial support this year from the Dakota Dunes Community Development Corporation, the City of Saskatoon, and private donations of cash and Bosco Bucks. To all of our sponsors and funding agencies: words cannot express our gratitude towards your generosity. You've given these children a priceless gift.

Planning is now underway for the 2014 camping season! Stay tuned to www.johnboscocamp.com, our Facebook group (search "St. John Bosco Wilderness Camp"), and Twitter (@johnboscocamp) for 2014 camping dates, program updates, and other news!

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

Camp looks better all the time, and we have you all to thank. Between our funding partners, generous private donations, and the hard work of our volunteers, we continue the challenge of maintaining and updating our facilities. We had a pretty big job list this year and we really made some progress!

Some of the highlights of this year's progress include painting the chapel and replacing the lights, replacing the floor in the Naturelore building, adding new lighting and chinking to Mike's Cabin, building a storage shed for the 'spa' (washroom facility) and installing a hand dryer, rebuilding the deck on the administration building, replacing the chimney in the Quonset, rebuilding the archery backstop, completing the soffit and fascia on the staff accommodation, replacing the roof on the pump-house, and installing satellite internet.... Whew!

We received a generous grant from Our Lady of the Prairies Foundation for additional chapel repairs, and new windows will be installed next spring. We're also laying the foundation (literally) for our new shower building! We installed a septic tank and will pour the concrete pad this fall.

We wish to extend a special thank-you to Alfred Labreque and the St. Joseph's and St. Michael's Knights of Columbus, as well as all the awesome, tireless individuals who came up to lend a hand on our May long work weekend and throughout the summer.

As always, we've got some big plans in the works for 2014. Our doors open on May long weekend for our traditional "work weekend", so mark it on your calendar. If you have some time and elbow grease to spare, we'd love to see you, and show you all the great things we've been up to!

FALL FLING!

Our 2012 Fall Fling was so much fun that we're doing it again!

When: Saturday, November 9, 2013 (time TBD)

Where: St. Joseph's Rectory, Broadway and 8th Street, Saskatoon

Watch our website, your email or the Facebook group for ticket information and plan for a night of fun, friendship, and music! There will be door prizes, a silent auction, 50/50 draw, an open stage, a photobooth, food and beverages, and more! If you would like to help organize, volunteer, donate a prize or auction item, or be involved in any way, we'd love to have you! Leave a message at the office at (306) 978-0019 or contact info@johnboscocamp.com.

FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

We are looking for volunteers to assist us with our winter fundraising endeavors. We have a bingo planned for October 19th and future dates are still in the works.

The money earned at these fundraisers goes towards keeping your camper fees low, but to do this, we need your help! If you can come out to any of our fundraisers and lend a hand for a few hours, there are some Bosco Bucks in it for you! Please contact lynn@johnboscocamp.com for more information.

THANK YOU TO OUR STAFF!

The Board would like to extend a huge **thank you** to the staff of 2013. This year we welcomed many new staff to our energetic crew, as we bid farewell and good luck to senior staff moving on to their next phase in life. These newcomers showed true Bosco spirit like they had spent years there. Thank you also to the staff that were unable to spend the entire camping season with us, but were able to give us a little of their summer. It is greatly appreciated. It is this type of energy that is the life blood of camp and keeps our campers coming back.

Thank you, everyone, for helping us to make a difference in the lives of the youth that come through the gates of St. John Bosco Camp!



Photo by Cheryl Kirzinger

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MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES

So you forked out \$10 for a membership to the St. John Bosco Camp Association when you registered your children. Now what? Well, membership gets you more than just a charitable donation tax receipt. You also receive:

- Voting privileges at the Annual General Meeting, held every November
- A say in the growth of camp
- Semi-annual subscription to our newsletter "The Bosco Wilderness"
- An invitation to register campers early and receive special Alumni Registration discounts
- Notification of fundraising events, work bees, and other events
- A chance to join the Board of Directors
- The opportunity to promote Christian Wilderness camping in Northern Saskatchewan

Anyone can become a member. We have three types of memberships: Catholic Organizations (voting privileges equal to three votes) are \$100, Organization or Commercial memberships (associate member – no vote) are \$25, and Individual/Family memberships (one vote) are \$10.

THANK YOU

We are blessed with a long list of generous people and organizations to thank. So many, in fact, that we've had to move the list to our website! Visit us at www.johnboscocamp.com and click on the "Thank You!" button.

We are a non-profit corporation and a registered charity. Camper fees do not come close to covering the cost of operating camp. Therefore we rely on volunteer labour, grants and donations to help us offer our unique wilderness experience at a reasonable cost. St. John Bosco Camp would not be the camp that it is without the grants and sponsorships that we receive from our sponsors, or the time and effort of our tireless volunteers. If you are interested in making a monetary donation or volunteering in any way to help at camp or with other activities throughout the year please contact us.