



Habits

By Michael Unruh

My wife and I recently started exercising with a group. After failing to maintain a workout routine at the local YMCA, even with my wife's help, it was time to try something different. Why were my previous attempts unsuccessful? Because sometimes **good habits are hard to start!**

This new exercise plan involves turning in early. Before bed, I spend time on my phone scrolling through Facebook and looking at the ESPN app to see how the Royals fared, maybe watching a video or two. Pretty soon, it's 30 minutes past the time I wanted to be asleep, and there I am, still on my phone. I wake up tired, but I likely repeat the process the next evening. Why is this so hard to correct? Because sometimes **bad habits are hard to break!**

The word "habit" stirs up images of biting nails, cracking knuckles, brushing teeth, and exercise. Habits like these probably occur daily (at least)! But any time we do anything over and over, it has the potential to become habit. Second nature. Automatic. Part of who we are.

This year, Camp Mennoscah will have summer youth camps and several other retreats. Next year, we will have summer youth camps and retreats again. Those who have had



positive, meaningful experiences one year will be back the next year. And the next year. And...well, you get the idea.

Camp is a habit--one that often begins at a young age and can continue through adulthood. For many, once summer rolls around, it's time for camp. It's just what we do in the summer. For others, camp was a habit, but traveling teams, activity camps,

or other commitments eventually won out. And like my shortcomings in exercise, once the habit isn't regular, it's very difficult to get it back.

Camp is a habit--and it's a habit worth having. Today, most people have busy schedules, each commitment begging for our time. That's what makes camp so important. Our bodies and our spirits need time away from life's craziness, our screen

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New "Sandbar" ready for summer Youth Camps!

By Michel Unruh

After reviewing sixty wonderful cabin name suggestions, the Camp Mennoscah staff have named the new cabin in the boys' cabin area "Sandbar," which also happened to be the most frequently submitted suggestion. The sandbar on the east bank of the Ninnescah at camp holds cherished memories for many current and former campers, and several other sandbars can be found all along the river. We are pleased to have a cabin name that recognizes a meaningful feature of our natural surroundings. If you have not already been planning on it, consider registering (or registering your child or grandchild) for summer youth camp, attending one of our other retreats, or renting our facilities for the weekend. If you do, you may just have the opportunity to spend some time in the "Sandbar!"



Habits (continued)

time, and our typical routine. We need to renew ourselves, reconnect with God in an intimate way, and have fellowship with one another while experiencing God's creation. This is not something we need just once and then we're good to go. We need to care for each other and ourselves in this way regularly. Year after year. Camp does that, and does that very well.

If you are reading this newsletter, there's a good chance Camp Mennoscah has become a habit for you. Or it once was. So, what are you doing to keep up this habit? Are you coming to camp to volunteer or attend a retreat with friends or your church? If you are unable to come, how can you pass along your camp habit to younger family members and

friends? Here are some suggestions: Invite them to a retreat with you. Invite them to come volunteer for a day. Encourage them to attend summer youth camp. Rent out one of our facilities and host your family or small group. By doing these things you are helping camp become a habit for someone else. In a world with so much to do and so little time, we need camp. And we need camp to become a habit.



Cottonwood Falls Trail By Amy Wedel

Nature trails are one of the many great ways to experience God's creation. From the trickling of water to the rustling of tree branches, trails create a space for mindfulness in our otherwise busy lives. Katie Schmidt said, "Nature trails

allow us to see a landscape from the inside - the macro level of looking is by standing back and seeing the entire forest or mountain or prairie, the micro level is journeying inside...to see leaf shapes, lichens, deer tracks, and skunk scat."

Back in March, a group of wonderful volunteers came out to clear a path for the new trail. We thank you, Richard Rempel, Katie Schmidt, Ben & Alli Rudeen Kreider, Maya Kathrineberg, and Chris Reisen for creating this amazing new space for our community.



Katie said this of the volunteer day, "The day of volunteering was one of the best I have ever had! We had a great group that worked together nicely and made incredibly fast progress on the trail. Ben was a wildman with the pole saw; there was no slowing him down! (And Richard kept disappearing into the woods ahead of us as we worked, presumably to see where the trail should go next, and then reappearing behind us like a magician."

For many years, Camp Mennoscah has had simple walking trails through prairie and a bit of tree line. This new trail provides a place to venture farther into the woodland habitat. The name for the trail, Cottonwood Falls, was



suggested by Richard because of the large Cottonwood standing next to the small waterfall found along the path. So next time you are at camp, make sure to check out our new trail!

Mark Your Calendars!

August 13: Camp Sing, 6:30 p.m. - Join us at Faith Mennonite Church in Newton to celebrate a spectacular summer and great friends by singing camp songs and hymns led by our summer staffers and maybe a few guest musicians. Kettle-popped popcorn, generic pop, and fellowship to follow! Everyone invited.

September 29-October 3: Work and Play Camp - This year's Work and Play Camp will again take place over the weekend (Friday-Tuesday) so that weekday workers can join in. Come out on the days that suit your schedule and help camp tackle some tasks that were put on the back burner this summer. Healthy amounts of play and fellowship also included! All ages are invited to attend.

October 1: Camp Mennoscah Annual Meeting, 5:30 p.m. - Come find out what has been going on at camp this past year! We will share highlights from the summer and provide updates on building projects. This is a great opportunity to visit with members of the Board of Directors and other camp supporters. Because the meeting is held during Work and Play camp, join us for Sunday worship, lunch, and an afternoon of retreat at camp! Sunday evening meal will be provided. RSVP appreciated for meal count to office@campmennoscah.org or 620-297-3014.

More information on these events at campmennoscah.org/retreats

Unstructured By Olivia Bartel

I can't stand it when someone tells me what I have to do. Internally, it turns me into a two-year-old, throwing mental tantrums complete with a grumpy face and "I will not" clenched fists. I feel constrained and unable to do what I really want or need to do.

I say this knowing that I'm one of the first to try to create structure and control potential chaos. And for some things, that's needed and good. But for other things, being free and unstructured is better.

For our *Family Weekend*, July 29-30, we're going with "better." We're going with unstructured time for you to be with your family and to be together, unplugged from cell phones and television sets and computers. It's time for you to be free from the push and pull of your daily schedule. You'll be in God's amazing creation with copious time to create. Maybe you'll create a memory of sitting under the "waterfall" at the dam or have that one-on-one conversation

with someone. Other families will be there to create and discover new friendships through swimming, campfire, or crafts, too.

It's probably no surprise that the *Young Adult Weekend*, August 4-6, has a similar schedule. Those millennials love a good weekend of doing what they want, making last minute decisions, and not having to bend to any restrictions except maybe meal times. We're gathering to worship, to play, and to be. To be surrounded by God in creation, to contemplate life, and to laugh.

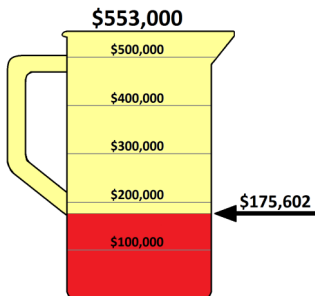


We really want you to be here to experience a weekend of unstructured life, so please come. We promise to feed you and give you all sorts of time to do what you want. No tantrums necessary.

Project Updates By Michael Unruh

Because completing a new cabin isn't the only project we are working on, here are some updates from around camp!

Kitchen: In April, workers put the finishing touches on the exterior of the new kitchen addition, completing the initial phase of construction. Activity will pick back up in the fall and winter as we seek to renovate the existing kitchen space, install new kitchen equipment, renovate the dining hall, and construct a new covered entry and welcome area onto the dining hall. We are excited about this project as it moves



forward, and we are still needing financial support! Help fill the pitcher below by sending cash or check to Camp Mennoscah or donating online at campmennoscah.org/how-to-help/kitchen-renovation/.

Save the Whale! To ensure we provide the safest playground for our campers to use, as well as one that will last for many years, we are continuing to explore possibilities for this structure. We would still like the new playground to resemble The Whale, and we have been visiting with several playground manufacturing companies, architects, and engineers to determine the final design plans. It has been well worth our time to consider all options for play opportunities and safety, though a new playground will not be complete for the beginning of the summer camping season. We are very excited to keep this project moving forward and can't wait for you to see it once it is complete! We are looking for generous people like you who may be able to make a donation to help us offset the cost of the new playground, so that our campers will have a unique place to play at camp! You may send a donation to Camp Mennoscah, or donate to our GoFundMe campaign at gofundme.com/camp-mennoscah-save-the-whale. Help Camp Mennoscah Save The Whale!

Camp Mennoscah 2016 Report

Looking back on the 2016 year, we are challenged by several outcomes, while encouraged by others. Since camp became an independent organization from Western District Conference five years ago, we have continued to learn and grow! Below is a brief summary of our year:

566 YOUTH CAMPERS attended summer youth camp. Western District Conference churches have sent the largest number of campers in the last three years, and South Central Conference has a steady presence. We are reaching more campers from non-Mennonite churches, which we attribute to campers sharing their good experiences with friends.

235 VOLUNTEERS spent time at camp in 2016! Youth Volunteer Weekend provides the opportunity for campers to spend time contributing to the ministry of Camp Mennoscah develop friendships through meaningful work.

We thrive on your continued prayers, encouragement, volunteer efforts, and financial support.

Thank you for joining with us in this important faith formation ministry!

Operating Revenues in 2016 were \$301,509. Contributions, which account for about 40% of revenues, declined in 2016. Executive director transition decreased time spent with constituents and sending only one semi-annual fundraising letters.

Operating Expenses in 2016 were \$338,839. About half of our operating expenses support our year-around staff and summer staff. Other expenses include facilities upkeep, programming, utilities, and groceries for camps and retreats.



Camp Mennoscah

PO Box 65
9458 SE 40th St.
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Camp Wish List

The items on our wish list will keep you happily in your “camp zone” whether that’s relaxing under the shelter or splashing through the river. We added the Amazon items to our Camp Mennoscah wish list (search for office@campmennoscah.org). We encourage you to shop local!

Thank you for the many gifts we have already received!

- ◆ 13" splatter guards (2)--\$9 each
- ◆ Qwirkle board game (2)--\$20 each
- ◆ Blokus Trigon game--\$27
- ◆ **He's Got the Whole World in His Hands** by Kadir Nelson--\$18
- ◆ Stainless steel mixing bowls with lids--\$30
- ◆ Corelle® Livingware™ Winter Frost White 30-pc Dinnerware Set (Item#1088656)--\$100

2017 Summer Staff are Excited...



“... interacting with all of the campers, both old and new!”
-Roxy Gehring, Music



“...for all the fun times and relationships I will make over the summer.”
-Jeff Kauffman, Maintenance



“...to leave campers with a sense of appreciation for God's creation :)”
-Lizzie Schrag, Naturalist



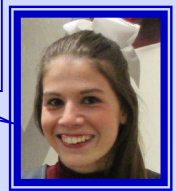
2017 T-Shirt design by
Jesse Graber



“...experience of seeing a camper laugh, cry, and grow in their faith and as people...”
-Josh Carlgren,
Lifeguard/Maintenance



“...to meet new people and grow in my faith.”
Sarah Booth, All-Around



“To see the camp community come alive in this sacred space.”
-Amy Wedel, Office Assistant



“...see how God will work in the lives of so many campers this summer! Woohoo!”
-Keri Kauffman,
Lifeguard



“...getting to know campers and see how they grow at Camp...”
-Hannah Carlgren,
Lifeguard/Maintenance



“...everything: the fantastic people, and the incredible presence of God.”
-Ashlynn Hamm,
Media-Office Assistant



“Honestly, everything. Mostly the campers.”
-Kate Jolliff,
Crafts



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