

# THE WILDERNESS WAY

WILDERNESS WAY CAMP SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

VOL. 32 ISSUE 3 | SEPTEMBER 2023



## GROUP WORK IS KEY

WRITTEN BY BILL COLLINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Camp specializes in welcoming girls from families who are often exasperated, depleted, at their wit's end, and bordering on PTSD. We gather up to ten girls in a group. It seems that would exponentially increase the level of troubles by concentrating so much in one place. No doubt, there is the potential for explosiveness there. However, our approach to building a group neutralizes much of the potential emotional fireworks. Many elements combine to create a helping healing environment, but a key principle we emphasize is group work.

When a girl considers joining our camp we make it clear that, for anything good to come about, she must see a need for change and be fully committed to receiving and giving help to bring that about. All the girls in a group have made that level of commitment. Each girl sets goals for the change she seeks and we mutually commit to helping. These are the beginnings of the group work process.

Our camp is designed to require a wealth of decision making regarding nearly everything that pertains to a group's daily living. Input is gathered, thoughts and opinions are voiced, and decisions are made. Individual strengths emerge as we work together to meet needs, try new things, and grow. We evaluate the outcomes. Families often recognize the growth in girls' abilities to express their thoughts and concerns rather than closing down or lashing out. Consideration of others grows as well.

This practice of group work - developing ownership, partnership, belonging; sure makes for a healthy work environment for our staff. We make every effort to avoid top-down decision making. Instead, we seek to encourage everyone to have a say in camp plans and development. Romans 12 speaks to this. *"...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..."*.

## THIS ISSUE:

- PATHFINDERS' MTS TRIP
- TRAILBLAZERS' POTOMAC TRIP
- PROJECT UPDATE

...AND MORE!



*Recently, the Pathfinders built an alter fire using group work principles such as teamwork, problem solving, and hard work.*

# TRAILBLAZERS' POTOMAC TRIP



This past session Trailblazers proudly completed a 21-day trip on the Potomac River paddling over 100 miles.

While the group designed the trip to be fun and enjoyable, each girl chose goals to work on for the duration of the trip. The routines of packing canoes, paddling together, setting up campsites, etc. provided opportunities for girls to practice their goals.

Prior to the trip the group work dynamic of Trailblazers was very low. Their focus had the world revolving around themselves verses being focused on the group's success. You can only guess how this played out when trying to solve a problem.

One day on the trip, they had a goal to paddle 9.5 miles in three hours before lunch. This goal helped them learn to be determined **as a group** and to work to accomplish it...together! After reaching this goal, they were able to enjoy a peaceful afternoon siesta beside the river. This was a trip goal as an entire group, to focus on the group's needs/success instead of their own.

Natalie said she learned how to take

responsibility during the trip, and when she was in the wrong, choosing to let go of needing to be right. Jemila was stretched to be open and honest with her fellow campers and chiefs, because it's hard to be honest and let people in close. Caroline mentioned she learned to take responsibility for the group's

***We are now able to sit together and talk about problems instead of making it a big deal!***

plans, instead of wanting to do her own thing. All Trailblazers agreed this trip pulled them together as group, and they were excited to continue at camp the good growth they experienced. They all agreed one of the best parts of being together as a

group resulted in consistently getting to bed on time! Problems became a normal part of the day; huddling up, solving the problem, and then continuing on with their day. Caroline expressed, "We are now able to sit together and talk about problems instead of making it a big deal!"

Examples like the above are the results of healthy group work. In no way does it mean the group is void of problems, but they are together in solving problems, accomplishing what they set out to do, and willing to get to bed on time to have a successful tomorrow.



# Mountain-To-Sea Trail

by Alicia W. (Pathfinder)

“

...OUR GROUP GREW A LOT IN ENCOURAGING EACH OTHER AND STICKING TO A CHALLENGE.”

Last session Pathfinders went on our hiking trip to the Mountain-to-Sea trail from Thursday July 6th through Sunday July 16th for 11 days straight. The weather was great and sunny but the last couple of days were cold and rainy.

We had a lot of challenges throughout our trip like ascending big steep mountains, navigating up big rocks, and finding water. **But we were successful!** About being successful, our group grew a lot in encouraging each other and sticking to a challenge. I grew more in being able to encourage others, stick to it through the hard times, and leading out in a helpful, peaceful spirit throughout hiking. We grew as a group and as individuals while also having fun together. Our highlights included the beautiful views, having fun and laughing together. Another highlight was finding ways to have fun like making a waterslide.

**Good Job Pathfinders!**



## PROJECT UPDATE

### BUNKHOUSE

Praise the Lord, we finally received our building permit for the bunkhouse and have started the building process. Thanks for everyone's support who has contributed to this project.





Wilderness Way Camp School, Inc.  
175 Camp School Lane  
Fair Play, SC 29643

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PERMIT #7  
SENECA, SC

RETURN ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Pathfinders' MTS Trip
- Trailblazers' Potomac River Trip
- Group Work Importance
- ...and more!



### ***New Staff Welcome:***

Ms. Megan Martin came to us from Mill Hall, Pennsylvania. She recently joined our staff team as a Service Coordinator and is loving the variety of tasks. She enjoys being in God's creation whether it's on top of a mountain or down on a river. She loves creating and seeing the beauty of the people and things around her. She is always ready for a cup of coffee and a chat with a friend.

### Current Staff Needs:

1. ***We have an immediate need for a cook's helper***
2. Thrift Store Volunteers
  - a. We are looking for 2 guys and 2 girls to help with our 4 local thrift stores.